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THE IZMIT EARTHQUAKE SHOWS THE TURKS THE EXTENT OF THEIR STATE'S CORRUPTION AND INCOMPETENCE

AN earthquake, of 7.3 degrees magnitude on the Richter scale, badly shook the towns on the Eastern coast of the Sea of Marmara, the most densely populated region in Turkey. An official, though provisional, assessment reports "over 15,000 deaths", while other sources talk of 30 to 40,000 deaths and over 600,000 homeless. The material damage is enormous: between \$

4 and 7 billion according to American estimates and \$ 7.5 to 12 billion according to the Turkish authorities.

The towns of Izmit, Yalova, Adapazari and the naval base of Gölçük were amongst the sites most seriously affected by this earthquake, which is the most violent and murderous in the country's history since the 1939 earthquake which had caused

39,000 deaths in the Kurdish Province of Erzincan. The earthquake was even felt in Istanbul, causing several hundreds of deaths in the Avcılar suburb, largely inhabited by Kurdish immigrants and displaced persons.

In addition to the human and material damage caused, this earthquake has severely shaken Turkish public opinion on two issues:

1/. **The corruption and incompetence of the State:** The majority of the buildings affected

were poorly built. Shady business men, working hand in glove with corrupt Town Halls, Members of Parliament and Ministers had succeeded in obtaining official building permits for blocks of flats that often did not even have proper foundations, and were made of cement using sand rather than gravel and only 30 to 40% of the steel reinforcement required. Result: 90% of these defective buildings collapsed, like so many houses of cards, on their occupants, resulting in their deaths.

The businessmen fingered by the media all are known for their connections and even intimacy with the highest levels of the Turkish State. As a result of repeated political purges, the Turkish system has produced a political caste essentially composed of unscrupulous business wheeler dealers who consider office as a means of getting a slice of the cake of state contracts and government bonds. When the balance sheet was drawn up, this system of misgovernment was shown to cost the ordinary citizens a heavy price.

The latter were also shocked at the sheer incompetence and inefficiency of the State machine. Four days after the quake, the State was still completely absent from the site of the disaster. The

victims' families had often to dig with their bare hands or with the help of foreign helpers to try and find the bodies of their relatives under the rubble. Public opinion was staggered to discover that the Army and Security forces, which altogether employ 1,200,000 people and consume 40% of the national budget, had not a single unit or even first aid team available for dealing with natural disasters. An army equipped for airborne operations in Turkish or Iraqi Kurdistan, capable for destroying thousands of Kurdish villages with flame-throwers did nothing to help the stricken population. The Army High Command had to bang the table to demand *"that the Army's moral should not be undermined"* and a private TV network was banned for *"excessive criticism"* while the written press was called to order...

These administrative measures, however, will not prevent the Turkish population's loss of confidence in the Army and the State. Even the Turkish Red Crescent, a para-Statal First Aid organisation, suffered from the general discredit of the Turkish State. The latter had, in fact, pushed its political zeal so far as to forbid humanitarian action by certain NGOs from the ordinary civil society on the grounds that they were if Islamic inspiration...

2/ The actions of solidarity from countries hitherto presented as "enemies": The extraordinary impulse of international solidarity struck the imagination of a Turkish population, long conditioned by the paranoiac slogan *"The whole world is against the Turks. The Turks have no other friends but the Turks"*. The solidarity from States that were Turkey's friends or allies, like the United States, Israel or France were generally regarded as politico-diplomatic gestures. On the other hand, that from "enemy" States like Greece and, to a lesser extent Armenia, went to the hearts of the Turkish public and provoke a considerable change in the climate between Turkey and its neighbours.

In this climate of emotion and solidarity, the PKK announced that it would not wait till 1 September for beginning its withdrawal from Turkey *"so as to contribute to establishing a context of peace and fraternity"*. Iraq offered \$ 10 million worth of oil to the victims of the earthquake. Massoud Barzani's KDP also made a gesture with the gift of \$ 2 millions of fuel for the victims. The Kurdish town Councils, themselves hard hit by the economic and human consequences of the war, organised campaigns to help the victims of the earthquake. Many of these, indeed, proved to be

Kurdish immigrants, displaced by the war and gone to find work in this privileged industrial zone called "the Marmara Principality" because of its concentration of wealth.

Many commentators state that the August 1999 earthquake will mark a watershed in Turkish history, that the Turkish State

must be reformed radically to regain the confidence of its citizens. Others raise more crudely the taboo question: *"Since its creation, the Turkish Republic has constantly been on a war footing against internal (Kurdish nationalist, communist and Islamist) and external enemies. How can it possibly survive without enemies?"*

Mr. KOH, AMERICAN UNDER-SECRETARY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, VISITED LEYLA ZANA AND AKIN BIRDAL IN THE ANKARA CENTRAL PRISON

THE American Under-Secretary of State for Human Rights, Democracy and Labour, Harold Koh, has not ceased irritating the Turkish authorities. Stressing the Kurdish problem, the American official proposed a process of political dialogue. *"The South-Eastern question cannot just be settled by military means. A process of political dialogue is necessary (...) I have the impression that a fresh phase is beginning. The question that is emerging is complex, covering the political, economic and Human Rights development of this region"* he stressed. He also asked the Turkish government to eliminate all the restrictions that impede the development of Human

Rights in Turkey insisting that *"the rights of Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin are a major problem"*.

Furthermore, on Thursday 5 August 1999 Mr. Koh visited Leyla Zana, former M.P. for the Party for Democracy (DEP □ banned), sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, and Akin Birdal, former President of the Turkish Association for Human Rights, sentenced to over a year's imprisonment, both for their pro-Kurdish remarks. The American Under-Secretary is the first Western official to be allowed to meet prisoners of opinion since 1996. Hitherto, the gates of the Ankara Central Prison, in which Leyla Zana and

her colleagues are incarcerated, have been closed to all such officials including, recently, the German Foreign Minister, Joschka Fischer. Mr. Koh's request had, at first, been refused by the Ministers of Justice and Foreign Affairs but, faced with the insistence of the American authorities, Turkey, for the first time, gave way to its powerful ally. However, Mr. Koh's remarks aroused sharp reactions in Turkey and unleashed the ire of the Turkish Press: the daily paper *Hurriyet* displayed, on its front page of 9 August, the picture of a young Turk *"incredibly tortured"* by the American police with a headline advising Mr. Koh to *"abandon Sirmak* (Editor's Note: one of the Kurdish town most seriously devastated by the war) *and to look rather to Utah"*. The next day it was *Milliyet's* turn to show, on its front page the picture of a Turk said to have been ill-treated by the FBI in the United States. The Turkish editorial writers let themselves go on the subject of discrimination against Blacks and Indians in the United States, telling the Americans : sweep your own doorstep clean. Already on bad terms with most European countries, is Ankara now going to quarrel with the Washington as well?

ABDULLAH OCALAN CALLS FOR THE DROPPING OF ARMED STRUGGLE AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE PKK FROM TURKEY

ON 3 August 1999, Abdullah Ocalan, through his lawyers, called on his supporters of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to abandon armed struggle and withdraw beyond Turkey's borders for the sake of peace, starting from 1 September 1999. He called on the Turkish State to respond positively to this "peace & fraternity process" to put an end to the Kurdish conflict. The PKK Command Council as well as the ARGK, the PKK armed wing, had announced on 6 August that it would end its operations, in accordance with their leader's appeal. "As from 1 September we will put into effect the plan proposed by our comrade Abdullah Ocalan (...) We will not carry out any armed operations, except to exercise our right to self defence" the ARGK communique reads.

Loyal to the Turkish Army's line, the day after the appeal Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit rejected any "bargaining" with a "terrorist" organisation. For his part, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel stated clearly that the State had no intention of altering its policy. Husnu Yusuf Gokalp, Minister of Agriculture

and Rural Affairs and member of the National Action Party (MHP - ultra-nationalist extreme Right), the second largest party in the coalition government, declared that Turkey will continue to hunt down PKK rebels despite the appeal, adding "we will capture those who lay down their arms and bring them back (...) Who do they think they are to proclaim a truce with us?"

Faced with this complete rejection by the Turkish authorities, Abdullah Ocalan reiterated his appeal on 6 August 1999. "I would like to stress that I did not make this appeal simply for tactical reasons. It is strategic" he stated, pointing out that he could not purely and simply ask his supporters to surrender because it would have been "neither realistic or practical". For its part, the PKK announced on 9 August that it would hold a Congress to adopt a more politically oriented programme, but without giving either date or place. The Central Committee declared that "while the armed struggle may sometimes be necessary, it has lost its predominant role in the course of the century (...) It has been replaced by political struggle. The forces

incapable of changing will become insignificant". Moreover, on Monday 9 August, the PKK offered a cease fire to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) that governs Northern Iraq and controls the Turkish border area. The KDP greeted the proposal for a withdrawal of the PKK from Turkey with suspicion, fearing that its territory would be the principal destination of the PKK fighters.

The Turkish political caste has very mixed feelings, when it's not outright hostile, to this appeal but the end of the fighting puts the Turkish authorities in a uncomfortable situation. Ankara has always stated that it could not examine Kurdish cultural demands so long as the PKK's armed campaign continued. Europe has several times invited the Turkish authorities to find a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question and has each time heard them reply that "terrorism" justified their repressive policy. On Monday 9 August the German government called for Ankara to show "wisdom" and described the appeal and the Turkish authorities' reaction as "an interesting political development". A good number of Turkish journalists and intellectuals, while remaining doubtful of the reasons that led Ocalan to make this appeal, have clearly demanded that, this time, the

opportunity be seized and the law on repentants be brought out of the cupboard. Meanwhile the Public Prosecutor of the Court of Appeals, Vural Savas,

has demanded that the death sentence on Abdullah Ocalan be confirmed and the court has fixed the date of the appeal hearing for 7 October.

SEVEN KURDISH MAYORS MET BY TURKISH PRESIDENT SULEYMAN DEMIREL

ON 7 August, the Turkish President, Suleyman Demirel, met the HADEP party mayors of seven Kurdish towns: Diyarbakir, Van, Agri, Siirt, Hakkari, Batman and Bingol. The Kurdish elected officials explained to Mr. Demirel the serious problems facing their towns and asked that exceptional financial resources should be made available to these towns, so hard hit by the war and the resulting train of three million displaced persons. People's Democratic Party had won several local councils with overwhelming majorities in the municipal elections of April 1999, despite great pressure and a difficult campaign conditions. It has also, since January, been faced with legal procedures aimed at banning it on grounds of "organic links" with the PKK. Many HADEP members have already been sentenced and some, like the Mayor of Agri, had to conduct their election campaign from jail.

"Any demand is legal if it is made in the context of the Constitution. Otherwise it could engender serious problems (...) All Turkish citizens enjoy the same rights, whether they

be from the South-East or the West. We are under an obligation to maintain the harmony of the country so as not to degrade social peace" Mr. Demirel answered them. The present Turkish Constitution was imposed by the Turkish Generals who had organised the last coup d'État in 1980. It extols a unitary, highly centralised State, having only one people, one language and one culture in the land. So, in Turkey, dialogue continues to be carried out on different wave lengths.

AS WELL AS...

TURKISH TESTIMONY: A TURKISH JOURNALIST'S DREAM. Zulfu Livaneli, editorial writer in the Turkish daily *Sabah*, wrote in the 7 August 1999 issue, about his hopes since Abdullah Ocalan's appeal. He stated his article in the manner of Martin Luther King's famous speech: "I had a dream!"

"That there were statesmen in Ankara! Men who placed the public interest above everything else, men free of all personal obsessions, all ambition, free from the traps of money and the vagaries of chance, Statesmen who knew how to overcome their egos (...) These men are aware of Turkey's growing problems. They refuse to bear the

responsibility for a State that is at loggerheads with 11 neighbouring countries and is becoming increasingly isolated. They are on the point of setting up a strategy of peace and reconciliation. A strategy that values the victories of peace and culture above those of war. They make the most of Abdullah Ocalan's appeal calling for the abandoning of armed struggle and withdrawal of armed fighters from the country.

To give peace a chance...

They set up a period in which they look after the sorely tried people of the South-East, whose inhabitants will be considered first class citizens, whose culture will be respected, a period that can be summed up by the term "binding up the wounds". So that never

again should our children die or we lose 30,000 of our citizens (...) Our dear Statesmen will also review our international relations. They will stubbornly struggle to put an end to the conflictual situation we have with Europe, with the Moslem countries, the Scandinavians, the Mediterraneans, in short with everyone except the United States. They develop bilateral relations (...) A Turkey that has achieved internal peace, improved its Human Rights record and resolved its ethnic and religious problems announcing proudly to the whole world that it is a "land of peace and well being" (...) Observing these advances the people regains confidence in its own country (...) Turkey becomes richer, the distribution of wealth reaches greater peaks (...) I am sorry: even if it is only a dream, I can't go on with it. Because the idea of knowing that all this is possible but never achieved is too painful. Since the padlocks on heads and hearts are locked, a great country is sentenced to a diminishing rate of growth, to hostility, rejection and poverty."

HURRIYET: "LET'S NOT UPSET THE TORTURERS".

Oktay Eksi, President of the Turkish Journalists' Association, leading editorialist on the daily *Hurriyet* and close to the Turkish Army circles, openly denounced, in his column of 10 August, torture for being an official policy of his country. The following are extracts from his article:

"The reform project has not had much notice from our press. Perhaps it is for this reason that you have not noticed it very much. Parliament's Justice Commission began last week to discuss the Bill on "torture", an issue which puts Turkey in a position where it cannot look others in the face. Truly, Turkey has been so pin-pointed on this issue that yesterday Sukru Elekdag (Editor's Note: Another of *Hurriyet's* journalists, a former ambassador and the paper's economics columnist) wrote in his column: "external trade and our external economic relations" had also deteriorated because of this... In short, foreigners have reached the point of saying: "we won't sell anything to a country of torturers". Let us continue to sulk while repeating "those foreigners don't understand us". Moreover, only a few days ago the Minister of Justice himself, Hikmet Sami Turk, personally recognised that "torture is one of the reasons why Turkey is unfavourably judged by certain international organisations". Furthermore, everyone knows that legal proceedings against Turkey before the European Human Rights Court on these grounds have repeatedly led to its being found guilty. Starting from that, it is vain to claim that "in Turkey, torture is not the result of official policy". If that had not been the case, torture would have been eradicated long ago. Nevertheless, for the first time ever, the government has taken the matter seriously in hand and sent a

Bill to Parliament, reforming items of the Penal Code and increasing the penalties for torturers.

However, the sub-committee, under the chairmanship of Yasar Topcu of the ANAP party, did the very opposite (...) It separated the notions of "torture" from that of "inhuman and degrading treatment" (...) which only leads to a sentence of 3 years 3 months for any officer who treats a citizen "brutally". Do you know the reason why? Turan Genc, Assistant Director General of the Police, who took part in the discussions, defended the torturers. "They also have children ... One must not play with the bread of the torturers" he maintained. What awareness of "respect for humanity" do these DSP, ANAP and MHP members of Parliament have to accept such stupid arguments and lower the prison sentences (intended to dissuade torturers). You see how difficult it is to be just in this country".

A MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT WHO STATED THAT HE SPOKE KURDISH CALLED TO ORDER. The Turkish authorities who declare, to all and sundry, that there are sitting Members of Parliament of Kurdish origin, have once again given proof of their fundamental intolerance. The ultra-nationalist M.P.s of the National Action Party (MHP) found it unbearable that the expression 'Kurdish

language' should appear in official documents of the Turkish Parliament. Asked to provide a CV for Parliamentary records, the Islamic Member Mehmet Fuat Firat, who is of Kurdish origin, stated that he spoke "Turkish, Persian, Arabic and Kurdish". Ensued an uproar amongst the nationalist M.P.s,

who form the majority in the House. MHP members immediately complained to the President of the Assembly, demanding that Kurdish should not be mentioned. Yildirim Akbulut, the President of the Assembly and a former Turkish Prime Minister who had, during his Premiership, forbidden the

use of Kurdish, gave way to their demands. For him, Kurdish is not a language but "*a dialect*" and so could not be mentioned in any official Parliamentary documents. Turkey has, once again, proved that Kurdish M.P.s who regard themselves as such, cannot sit in the Turkish Parliament.

Demirel: la décision d'exécution d'Ocalan est "sensible et politique"

ANKARA, 1er août (AFP) - 12h07 - Le président Suleyman Demirel a déclaré que la Turquie était confrontée à une décision délicate: exécuter ou pas la peine de mort prononcée contre le chef de la rébellion kurde Abdullah Ocalan, alors que les appels à la clémence se multiplient à l'étranger.

"La décision d'exécution est politique. Bien entendu, c'est un sujet très sensible. La Turquie ne s'est pas trouvée face à un sujet si sensible depuis des années", a déclaré M. Demirel, cité par la presse turque dimanche.

Le chef du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie) a été condamné à la peine capitale le 29 juin sur la base de l'article 125 du code pénal turc pour "atteinte à l'intégrité territoriale de la Turquie" au terme d'un procès de près d'un mois sur l'île-prison d'Imrali (ouest), dont il est l'unique détenu.



Un responsable américain dénonce le manque de droit d'expression des Kurdes

DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 2 août (AFP) - 13h22 - Un responsable américain a dénoncé lundi les "problèmes de droits de l'Homme et d'expression" des Kurdes, dans une déclaration à l'AFP à Diyarbakir, capitale du sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde.

"Il y a des problèmes de droits de l'Homme et d'expression" dans cette région, a souligné le sous-secrétaire d'Etat pour les droits de l'Homme, la démocratie et le travail Harold Koh. "Les Kurdes ne peuvent pas s'exprimer facilement".

"Les gens qui émigrent de leur village ont des problèmes, et il y a aussi des problèmes dans les prisons", a ajouté M. Koh.

Il a toutefois relevé également "une amélioration dans le domaine des droits de l'Homme en Turquie".

M. Koh effectue une visite en Turquie qui doit donner lieu à un rapport l'an prochain concernant la situation des droits de l'Homme dans ce pays et dans plusieurs autres.

Il a rencontré à Diyarbakir l'association des avocats et devait rendre visite au maire de la ville, membre du parti pro-kurde de la démocratie du peuple (HADEP) Feridun Celik.

Le responsable américain s'est également rendu à Urfa et Mardin et a visité des villages, rencontré des habitants et plusieurs maires.

Dimanche, M. Koh, cité par l'agence de presse semi-officielle Anatolie, avait préconisé une aide humanitaire pour le sud-est, zone d'affrontements entre l'armée et les séparatistes kurdes du PKK.

Le sud-est anatolien est la région la moins développée du pays, avec un fort taux de chômage.

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 dans cette région une lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant. Les violences liées à la rébellion ont fait plus de 31.000 morts.

Le chef du PKK Abdullah Ocalan a été condamné à mort le 29 juin par la justice turque pour trahison et séparatisme.



Six villageois tués et 7 blessés dans une attaque du PKK dans le sud-est

DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 3 août (AFP) - 9h47 - Six villageois ont été tués et 7 autres blessés lors d'une attaque de la rébellion kurde dans la province de Diyarbakir (sud-est), a-t-on appris mardi de sources de sécurité locales.

Un groupe de militants du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) a ouvert le feu lundi soir contre les villageois qui quittaient le café pour rentrer chez eux dans le village de Cigdemli, près de la ville de Silvan, selon la même source.

D'autre part, un rebelle du PKK a été tué lors d'un affrontement avec les forces de sécurité lundi soir à Ercek, dans la province de Van (est), a annoncé l'agence Anatolie. Une fusillade a éclaté alors que le rebelle achetait à manger dans un magasin avec un ami qui a réussi à fuir, selon l'agence.

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde. Les violences liées à la rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

Le chef du PKK Abdullah Ocalan a été condamné à mort pour trahison et séparatisme fin juin par la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat (DGM) d'Ankara. La cour de cassation doit se prononcer sur la sentence, vraisemblablement après la rentrée judiciaire en septembre.

Sa condamnation avait été suivie par une vague d'attentats à l'explosif et de fusillades en Turquie.

La branche armée du PKK, l'Armée populaire de libération du Kurdistan (ARGK), avait appelé ses militants à ne pas s'attaquer aux civils "jusqu'à nouvel ordre", dans un communiqué diffusé le 13 juillet.

Mais le Conseil de commandement du PKK avait menacé la Turquie de "représailles" le 22 juillet après la capture en Europe d'un de ses responsables, Cevat Soysal.

Soysal a été inculpé le 23 juillet pour "formation de bande armée" par le procureur de la DGM d'Ankara.

Ex-Inspector Accuses UN Officials of Yielding on Iraqi Arms

By Judith Miller
New York Times Service

NEW YORK — In a defense of his troubled tenure as chief of the United Nations Special Commission responsible for disarming Iraq of weapons of mass destruction, Richard Butler has accused Secretary-General Kofi Annan of trying to destroy the commission because it was "too independent."

Mr. Butler, who resigned as chairman of the commission on July 1, also savagely criticizes virtually everyone else associated with the effort to disarm Iraq of unconventional weapons. The exception is the Clinton administration, which he says, contrary to allegations by Scott Ritter, a former weapons inspector, was largely steadfast and alone in its efforts to "hold Saddam's feet to the fire."

He also repeats allegations that Yevgeni Primakov, the former Russian prime minister who was foreign minister at the time, received payments from Iraq. He provides no evidence for this charge, which Russian officials have denied, other than citing what he calls "intelligence reports from an outstanding source."

Mr. Butler, a former Australian ambassador to the United Nations and disarmament specialist, issues his bitter indictment of many of his former colleagues, along with Iraqi and Russian officials, in an article to be published Monday in the first issue of *Talk*, the heavily promoted monthly magazine edited by Tina Brown, the former editor of *The New Yorker*

and *Vanity Fair*.

Billed as the "inside story" of his efforts to disarm Iraq, the article is Butler's first detailed account of the decline and fall of the Special Commission, known as Unscm. It contains little that is new about Iraq's cheating, the events that ultimately led to the Special Commission's problems and its expulsion from Iraq, or the extent to which Mr. Butler's personality and uncompromising style may have compounded the commission's difficulties. But it does reveal the depth of Mr. Butler's fury and frustration over his failure to win allies among the senior UN officials on whom his mission depended.

The account highlights in particular his contempt for Mr. Annan and other UN officials and diplomats who, in Mr. Butler's view, have permitted President Saddam Hussein of Iraq to retain the capability for mass murder.

Calling Mr. Annan's behavior "deeply alarming," Mr. Butler describes a succession of incidents, several of which have not been previously reported, in which he says the secretary general dealt with Iraq's political challenges and cheating by "papering them over with diplomacy."

"Annan and his immediate staff sought to hand Saddam the greatest possible prize: the destruction of Unscm," Mr. Butler asserts, because "Unscm was too independent to work within the mainstream of the UN."

Shashi Tharoor, Mr. Annan's spokesman, called Mr. Butler's assertion that the secretary general had tried to destroy the Special Com-

mission "bizarre" and "errant nonsense."

He noted that Mr. Annan had involved himself in Unscm affairs only "at critical moments to resolve specific crises."

According to Mr. Butler, the UN "cave-in" to Mr. Hussein began in 1996 when Rolf Ekeus, the highly regarded Swedish diplomat who was Mr. Butler's predecessor, agreed to Iraqi restrictions on the access of weapons inspectors to sites that Baghdad deemed "sensitive" for national security reasons. Mr. Butler calls the move a "direct violation" of Security Council resolutions.

After Mr. Butler took over in 1997, Russia, China and France refused to block Iraqi efforts to bar the inspectors from "presidential sites," which, as Mr. Butler states, were eight areas covering 30 square miles that included 1,100 buildings, many of which were ideal for weapons storage.

Mr. Butler charges that Mr. Annan was not only soft on Mr. Saddam and enamored of diplomacy for its own sake, but tried to undermine Unscm's work. For instance, Mr. Butler asserts that Mr. Annan pressed him to accept Iraq's exclusion of U.S. citizens from inspection teams. "I was incredulous," Mr. Butler writes. He said he prevailed only after explaining to Mr. Annan that giving Iraq veto power over the composition of teams would undermine their quality and set an "unacceptable precedent."

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M. Ecevit exclut tout "marchandage" avec Ocalan et le PKK

ANKARA, 4 août (AFP) - 13h36 - Le Premier ministre turc Bulent Ecevit a rejeté mercredi l'appel du chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan qui a demandé à ses combattants de se retirer de Turquie et à l'Etat turc de soutenir ce "processus de paix".

"L'Etat turc ne s'engage dans aucun marchandage avec une personne ou une organisation", a dit M. Ecevit devant la presse.

"L'organisation terroriste est acculée dans une impasse. Apparemment, Ocalan ne s'en est aperçu qu'après sa capture et sa condamnation en Turquie", a estimé M. Ecevit.

Le chef du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatiste) a appelé ses militants à déposer les armes et à se retirer de Turquie "pour le bien de la paix" à partir du 1er septembre 1999, dans un communiqué diffusé mardi par ses avocats.

Interrogé pour savoir s'il trouvait l'appel d'Ocalan positif, M. Ecevit a répondu: "Nous ne savons pas s'il aura des résultats. Le temps le montrera".

Ocalan a été condamné à mort le 29 juin pour trahison et séparatisme. Pendant son procès, il avait lancé plusieurs appels à une solution négociée au conflit kurde, laissés sans réponse par l'Etat turc pour lequel le PKK est une organisation "terroriste".

La condamnation d'Ocalan avait été suivie par une vague d'attentats à l'explosif et de fusillades en Turquie.

La branche armée du PKK, l'Armée populaire de libération du Kurdistan (ARGK), avait ensuite appelé ses militants à ne pas s'attaquer aux civils "jusqu'à nouvel ordre", dans un communiqué diffusé le 13 juillet.

Mais le Conseil de commandement du PKK avait menacé la Turquie de "représailles" le 22 juillet après la capture en Europe d'un de ses responsables, Cevat Soysal, ensuite inculpé pour "formation de bande armée".

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde. Les violences liées à la rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

Le dialogue se poursuit entre l'Irak et les Kurdes, selon Bagdad

BAGDAD, 3 août (AFP) - 11h10 - Un responsable irakien a affirmé mardi que le dialogue se poursuivait entre Bagdad et les partis kurdes qui contrôlent le nord de l'Irak, en dépit des pressions américaines pour l'empêcher.

"Les portes sont toujours ouvertes et le dialogue avec les Kurdes ne s'est pas interrompu, en dépit des pressions américaines", a assuré le sous-secrétaire à l'Information et à la Culture, Hamid Saïd.

M. Saïd, cité par l'hebdomadaire al-Ittihad, a critiqué les dirigeants des deux partis kurdes rivaux, l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK de Jalal Talabani) et le Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK de Massoud Barzani) pour avoir tenu fin juin des négociations à Washington sous le parrainage des Etats-Unis.

"Ce n'est qu'à Bagdad qu'il est possible d'engager un dialogue et de débattre de l'avenir, et tous les projets de solution qui sont parrainés par l'étranger sont voués à l'échec car il sont tributaires des intérêts étrangers", a-t-il dit.

"On peut dire objectivement que la rencontre de Washington n'a enregistré aucun progrès pour surmonter la division des Kurdes", a-t-il ajouté.

La réunion avait pour but de pousser les deux mouvements, qui se disputent le contrôle du nord de l'Irak, à surmonter leurs divergences sur l'application d'un accord conclu sous l'égide des Etats-Unis en 1998, qui prévoyait la formation d'un gouvernement de coalition en vue de l'élection d'une assemblée régionale.

Les deux partis sont tiraillés entre le régime de Bagdad et l'administration américaine qui a promis une aide de 97 millions de dollars à l'opposition irakienne pour l'aider à renverser le président Saddam Hussein.

Tant M. Talabani que M. Barzani ont critiqué les plans américains. Le numéro deux du PDK, Nijirvan Barzani, a affirmé la semaine dernière que son parti ne permettrait jamais que les régions qu'il contrôle "servent de tremplin" pour renverser le régime irakien.



Abdullah Ocalan brûle ses dernières cartouches

ANKARA, 4 août (AFP) - 16h58 - Le chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort pour trahison et séparatisme, brûle ses dernières cartouches avant la décision sur son exécution en appelant son Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) à abandonner la lutte armée et à se retirer de Turquie.

"J'appelle le PKK à abandonner la lutte armée et à retirer ses forces hors des frontières (de la Turquie) pour le bien de la paix à partir du 1er septembre 1999", a-t-il déclaré dans un communiqué diffusé mardi.

Il met ainsi en jeu son autorité de président du PKK et les semaines qui viennent devraient permettre de vérifier s'il contrôle encore son organisation, et peut donc jouer le rôle d'agent de la paix auquel il prétend en échange de la vie sauve.

Le PKK n'avait pas réagi, plus de 24 heures après cet appel, lancé par un chef avec lequel il n'a plus de contact depuis sa capture mi-février au Kenya, et qui est détenu en isolement sur l'île prison d'Imrali (ouest).

Ocalan a demandé à l'Etat turc de répondre positivement à ce "processus de paix et de fraternité" pour mettre fin au conflit kurde qui déchire le sud-est de la Turquie depuis 1984.

Mais le Premier ministre Bulent Ecevit a refusé mercredi tout "marchandage" avec une organisation "terroriste", fidèle à la ligne de conduite de l'Etat et l'armée turcs.

Autre signe d'inflexibilité: un projet d'amnistie actuellement préparé par le gouvernement exclut les rebelles kurdes. Et la loi sur les repentis annoncée par M. Ecevit avant qu'il ne forme un gouvernement comprenant le parti d'extrême droite de l'Action nationaliste (MHP) est aux oubliettes.

La Turquie continue de privilégier une solution militaire au conflit. D'autant que le PKK est en position de faiblesse sur le terrain, a perdu sa base en Syrie d'où il a été expulsé en octobre, a vu en quelques mois son chef capturé au Kenya mi-février, puis un de ses responsables, Cevat Soysal, en Moldavie en juillet, et semble divisé.

Une fracture est apparue entre branche politique (Front de libération nationale du Kurdistan, ERNK), et branche armée (Armée populaire de libération du Kurdistan, ARGK), que l'appel d'Ocalan pourrait encore accentuer.

Malgré ses appels répétés à déposer les armes et sa condamnation des attentats, l'ARGK avait revendiqué une attaque sanglante contre des civils dans le sud-est à majorité kurde, à Elazig, après sa condamnation à mort fin juin.

Entre-temps, la branche militaire a demandé mi-juillet à ses combattants d'arrêter les attaques contre les civils. Mais lundi soir encore, peu avant que l'appel d'Ocalan soit rendu public, un groupe de villageois était mitraillé par des rebelles présumés dans la province de Diyarbakir, faisant 6 mort et 7 blessés.

Les affrontements entre l'armée et la guérilla se sont en fait intensifiés ces derniers mois dans l'est et le sud-est à majorité kurde, faisant 35 morts dans les dix derniers jours.

Reste donc à voir si les maquisards du PKK vont effectivement suivre l'appel de leur chef.

L'hypothèse la plus probable pour un retrait serait un repli vers le nord de l'Irak, qui échappe au contrôle de Bagdad depuis la guerre du Golfe en 1991 et où le PKK a installé une base arrière. Mais l'armée turque y mène régulièrement des incursions pour les déloger.

Le processus lancé par Ocalan doit débiter le 1er septembre, soit peu avant la rentrée judiciaire au cours de laquelle la Cour de cassation doit se prononcer sur la sentence de mort rendue contre lui.

Si elle la confirme, le parlement sera saisi et devra se prononcer, sous la pression d'une opinion publique en général favorable à la pendaison. Le président Suleyman Demirel ratifiera ensuite la décision.

U.S. Human Rights Official Gets an Earful in a 'Listening Tour' of Turkey

By Amberin Zaman
Washington Post Service

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey — It was another stiflingly hot night July 14, so Medine Oncel and her younger sister, Devran, like many in this mainly Kurdish city, decided to sleep on the balcony of their seventh-floor apartment.

"It was around 3 a.m. when we first heard the voices," Devran, 15, recalled in an interview. "When we looked down, we saw four armed policemen. Two of them had black ski masks over their heads." Within minutes, she said, they had broken into the Oncel home.

"They said they wanted to take me and Medine in for questioning," Devran said. "I headed for the bedroom to get dressed, but Medine ... went straight to the window and jumped."

Duriye Oncel, the girls' mother, explained: "My daughter, you see, preferred death to being tortured once again."

Medine's story is not unique in Turkey, as Harold Hongju Koh, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, discovered Tuesday in Diyarbakir as he was briefed by human rights activists. Mr. Koh arrived in Turkey last Thursday to undertake what he described as a "listening tour" that will include stops in Istanbul, the southeastern province of Sanliurfa and the capital, Ankara.

Human rights groups frequently accuse the U.S. government of turning a blind eye to Turkey's human rights record. They say Washington puts a higher priority on good relations because

of the country's strategic location south of the former Soviet Union and northwest of Iraq.

Although Mr. Koh's visit is not the first by a U.S. State Department human rights official, rights advocates here hope it will signal to the country's new coalition government, led by Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, that the Clinton administration may no longer be as accommodating.

Medine Oncel, a 22-year-old brick factory worker, had never quite recovered from her first detention last November by Turkey's anti-terror police, according to her sister and mother. She was rounded up, they said, along with about 100 members of the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party, for staging a hunger strike in support of the Kurdish rebel chief, Abdullah Ocalan.

Mr. Ocalan, who was captured by Turkish special forces in Kenya in February, was condemned to death by a Turkish court in June for founding and leading the Kurdish Workers' Party's 15-year uprising for Kurdish independence. The Turkish parliament must approve the death sentence, which has been appealed by Mr. Ocalan's lawyers, before it can be carried out.

Family members and cellmates said Medine, a staunch Ocalan supporter and militant Kurdish nationalist, was severely beaten and sexually abused during the 10 days she spent in a detention center. "Medine always said she would kill herself rather than go through the same hell again," Devran said. "I never thought she'd have the guts to do it, but she did."

The government has classified Medine's death as a routine suicide. It has not commented on

allegations that it was linked to her earlier imprisonment. But it has acknowledged police abuses in general and vowed to bring them under control. Mr. Ecevit issued a sternly written warning on June 25 against police abuses. Within days, however, two men died in custody in the western provinces of Izmir and Cannakale. Both bore marks of torture.

Mehmet Ali Irtemelcelik, Turkey's newly appointed minister in charge of human rights, says his government is determined to push legislation through parliament that will crack down on abuses and drastically increase penalties for security officials accused of torture.

Too often, however, rights groups complain, such laws are never enforced.

Recent figures show that nearly 400 torture victims applied for treatment at rehabilitation centers operated by the Human Rights Foundation since the start of the year. Commonly applied torture methods include electric shocks, beatings of the soles of the feet and genitalia, and sexual violation with truncheons.

■ Ocalan Seeks to Halt Attacks

Mr. Ocalan has called on his fighters to halt their attacks by Sept. 1 and withdraw to bases outside the country. The Associated Press reported. In a statement released by his lawyers, Mr. Ocalan said a cease-fire would ease "the impasse in the Kurdish question," and encourage "dialogue for a democratic solution."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE,
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4, 1999



Ankara critique les propos d'un responsable US sur les droits de l'Homme

ANKARA, 4 août (AFP) - 12h19 - La Turquie a critiqué mercredi les déclarations d'un responsable américain qui a dénoncé les problèmes de respect des droits de l'Homme lors d'une visite dans le sud-est anatolien, en proie à la rébellion du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatiste).

"La Turquie est un pays libre et toute personne est libre de voyager. Nous attendons des invités étrangers qu'ils respectent les sujets auxquels la Turquie est sensible", a indiqué lors d'une conférence de presse un porte-parole du ministère turc des Affaires étrangères, Sermet Atacanli.

"Certaines déclarations du sous-secrétaire d'Etat américain n'ont pas ce souci", a-t-il indiqué.

M. Atacanli faisait référence à des déclarations faites lundi par le sous-secrétaire d'Etat américain pour les droits de l'Homme, la démocratie et le travail, Harold Koh, à Diyarbakir (sud-est), dénonçant les problèmes de respect des droits de l'Homme et d'expression des Kurdes en Turquie.

"Les Kurdes ne peuvent pas s'exprimer facilement dans cette région", a souligné M. Koh, relevant cependant une amélioration dans le domaine des droits de l'Homme en Turquie.

Le porte-parole turc a ajouté que l'ambassade des Etats-Unis à Ankara avait été informée de la position turque concernant les déclarations de M. Koh.

Celui-ci effectue actuellement une visite en Turquie qui doit donner lieu à un rapport l'an prochain concernant la situation des droits de l'Homme dans ce pays et dans plusieurs autres.

Outre Diyarbakir, M. Koh s'est rendu à Urfa et Mardin et a visité plusieurs villages.

Dimanche, il avait préconisé une aide humanitaire pour le sud-est, région la moins développée du pays.

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 dans cette région une lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant. Les violences liées à la rébellion ont fait plus de 31.000 morts.

Le chef du PKK Abdullah Ocalan a été condamné à mort le 29 juin par la justice turque pour trahison et séparatisme.

M. Koh sera reçu jeudi à Ankara par le Premier ministre Bulent Ecevit et donnera une conférence de presse avant de quitter la Turquie.

Un responsable US préconise le dialogue pour régler le conflit kurde

ANKARA, 5 août (AFP) - 17h23 - Un responsable américain a estimé jeudi que les problèmes dans le sud-est anatolien, en proie à la rébellion du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), ne peuvent être uniquement réglés par des moyens militaires, préconisant un processus de dialogue politique.

"La question du sud-est ne peut pas uniquement être réglée par des moyens militaires. Un processus de dialogue politique est nécessaire", a dit le sous-secrétaire d'Etat américain pour les droits de l'Homme, la démocratie et le travail, Harold Koh, lors d'une conférence de presse à Ankara après une visite dans le sud-est.

"J'ai l'impression qu'une nouvelle phase débute. La question qui apparaît maintenant est complexe, comprenant le développement politique, économique et des droits de l'Homme de cette région", a-t-il indiqué.

La visite de M. Koh en Turquie doit donner lieu à un rapport l'an prochain sur la situation des droits de l'Homme dans ce pays et dans plusieurs autres.

"Les droits des citoyens turcs d'origine kurde constituent un important problème", a noté M. Koh, demandant au gouvernement turc d'éliminer toutes les restrictions qui se dressent au développement des droits de l'Homme en Turquie.

Il a précisé que son pays soutenait le droit de la Turquie de se défendre contre l'"organisation terroriste PKK". "Mais on peut être contre le terrorisme et soutenir en même temps les droits de l'Homme", a-t-il ajouté.

M. Koh a également rencontré à Istanbul les chefs religieux des communautés syriaque, arménienne, juive et orthodoxe.

Il a rendu visite jeudi à la prison d'Ankara à Leyla Zana, ancienne députée d'un parti pro-kurde dissous pour activités séparatistes qui purge une peine de 15 ans de prison, et à Akin Birdal, défenseur des droits de l'Homme, condamné à un an de prison pour des propos sur le conflit kurde.

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 dans le sud-est à majorité kurde une lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant. Les violences liées à la rébellion ont fait plus de 31.000 morts.

Son chef Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort pour trahison et séparatisme, a appelé mardi le PKK à déposer les armes et à se retirer de Turquie. Le PKK a annoncé mercredi qu'il soutenait cet appel.

Le PKK soutient l'appel d'Ocalan, le procureur général réclame son exécution



ANKARA, 5 août (AFP) - 12h27 - Le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatiste) a annoncé jeudi qu'il soutenait "totalement" l'appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan à se retirer de Turquie à partir de septembre, le jour même où le procureur général réclamait la pendaison pour Ocalan.

"Notre parti déclare clairement qu'il soutient totalement la déclaration historique du camarade président Abdullah Ocalan du 2 août et qu'il poursuivra ses efforts sur cette base", a déclaré le Conseil de commandement.

Dans un communiqué daté du 2 août, Ocalan avait appelé le PKK à "abandonner la lutte armée et retirer ses forces hors des frontières (de la Turquie) pour le bien de la paix à partir du 1er septembre 1999".

Le texte avait été rendu public mardi par ses avocats, qui rendent régulièrement visite à leur client sur l'île-prison d'Imrali (ouest) où celui-ci a été condamné à mort le 29 juin pour séparatisme et trahison par la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat (DGM) d'Ankara.

Le Conseil de commandement a qualifié l'appel d'Ocalan de "tournant dans l'histoire des peuples kurde et turc".

Le PKK a en outre appelé l'Etat turc à "adopter une attitude responsable et respectueuse" envers leur démarche.

Le Premier ministre turc Bulent Ecevit a rejeté mercredi l'appel d'Ocalan, indiquant que "l'Etat turc ne s'engage dans aucun marchandage avec une personne ou une organisation".

Alors que le PKK annonçait son soutien à l'appel "historique" de son chef, le procureur général de la Cour de cassation Vural Savas demandait à la Cour de confirmer la sentence rendue contre Ocalan.

M. Savas a estimé qu'Ocalan avait "violé des centaines de fois l'article 125" du code pénal turc qui sanctionne l'atteinte à l'intégrité territoriale de la Turquie "en faisant commettre à ses militants des actes dont chacun peut être considéré comme un crime contre l'humanité".

Qualifiant le PKK "d'organisation terroriste la plus sanglante du 20e siècle", il a estimé que la Cour qui l'a condamné lui avait réservé un "procès équitable" en donnant le droit à l'accusé et ses avocats "de se défendre de la meilleure façon possible".

M. Savas a rendu sa recommandation dans un document de deux pages remis à la Cour de cassation qui doit à son tour examiner l'affaire, probablement après la rentrée judiciaire le 6 septembre.

Il a souligné que la DGM avait mené le procès "dégagée de toute influence". Et ce, "malgré les efforts pour faire pression sur elle de certains pays étrangers qui ont aidé Ocalan et son PKK (...) et d'associations et organisation qui défendent prétendument les droits de l'Homme mais ont une attitude hostile envers la République turque".

"Je demande donc que la sentence soit confirmée, a-t-il conclu.

Les avocats d'Ocalan ont demandé dans leur appel que le jugement soit cassé en faisant valoir de nombreuses irrégularités dans le procès dont "chacune d'elle est suffisante pour mettre en doute la légalité de la sentence".

Si la Cour de Cassation confirme la sentence, elle sera ensuite examinée par le parlement, qui votera pour ou contre la pendaison du chef rebelle. Le président Suleyman Demirel devra ensuite ratifier la décision.

M. Demirel avait récemment souligné qu'il s'agissait d'une décision "très sensible et politique".

Le PKK, créé en 1978, a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde. Les violences liées à la rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

Soutien du PKK à l'appel de paix d'Ocalan : Washington veut des actes



WASHINGTON, 5 août (AFP) - 21h31 - Les Etats-unis se sont déclarés sceptiques jeudi après que les rebelles kurdes du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan eurent apporté leur soutien à l'appel de leur chef Abdullah Ocalan à se retirer de Turquie.

"Nous attendons des actes, pas des paroles", a déclaré le porte-parole du département d'Etat, James Rubin, soulignant que le PKK avait déjà fait des promesses de ce genre par le passé, sans les tenir.

"Malheureusement pour le peuple de Turquie, Ocalan et le PKK ont déjà rejeté le terrorisme par le passé, y compris début juin, et des éléments du PKK ont continué à mener des activités terroristes", a poursuivi M. Rubin.

Le Conseil de commandement du PKK a affirmé jeudi qu'il "soutenait totalement la déclaration historique du camarade président Abdullah Ocalan du 2 août et qu'il poursuivrait ses efforts sur cette base".

Dans un communiqué daté du 2 août, Ocalan avait appelé depuis sa prison le PKK à "abandonner la lutte armée et retirer ses forces hors des frontières (de la Turquie) pour le bien de la paix à partir du 1er septembre 1999".

L'Allemagne ne compte pas relâcher sa surveillance du PKK

BERLIN, 6 août (AFP) - 21h16 - Les renseignements intérieurs allemands ne comptent pas relâcher leur surveillance du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), malgré l'appel du chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan à un retrait de ses combattants de Turquie, selon le quotidien Berliner Morgenpost de samedi.

"Il faut voir le contexte général: le PKK reste une organisation extrémiste", a affirmé au quotidien un porte-parole de l'Office de protection de la Constitution (renseignements intérieurs et contre-espionnage).

Un changement d'attitude face au mouvement indépendantiste kurde ne pourra être envisagé qu'une fois constatée une modification réelle de la situation sécuritaire et rien ne laisse penser cela pour l'instant, a-t-elle ajouté.

"Le fait est que le PKK est la plus grande organisation étrangère extrémiste en Allemagne. Elle est capable de frapper et organisée de façon rigoureuse", selon la porte-parole.

Les renseignements intérieurs ont dénombré 22 groupes de membres du PKK en Allemagne, qui y est interdit, rassemblant 11.000 personnes environ, selon le journal.

La branche armée du PKK a annoncé vendredi qu'elle arrêterait les combats et se retirerait de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre, conformément à l'appel d'Abdullah Ocalan.

Ocalan, 50 ans, condamné à mort pour trahison et séparatisme fin juin par la justice turque, avait appelé ses militants en début de semaine à arrêter les combats et à se retirer de Turquie "pour le bien de la paix".

Le procès en appel d'Abdullah Ocalan s'ouvrira le 7 octobre

6 août 1999, 17h10

ANKARA (AP) -- Alors que le mouvement séparatiste kurde armé PKK a accepté l'appel au cessez-le-feu lancé par son chef emprisonné et condamné à mort, le procès en appel d'Abdullah Ocalan s'ouvrira le 7 octobre, a annoncé vendredi l'agence Anatolie.

Par ailleurs, dans son deuxième communiqué en deux jours, la guérilla a fait savoir qu'elle n'hésiterait pas à riposter en cas de violation du cessez-le-feu par l'armée turque.

"Aucune action armée ne sera menée par nos forces excepté l'utilisation de notre droit à l'auto-défense contre de possibles attaques", a déclaré le PKK dans un communiqué. La guérilla kurde craint que les forces turques interprètent ce cessez-le-feu unilatéral comme un aveu de faiblesse.

Plusieurs cessez-le-feu annoncés par les rebelles ont déjà échoué dans le passé, pas seulement à cause du refus de la Turquie de discuter avec les combattants kurdes, mais aussi à cause de nouveaux affrontements entre des soldats et des rebelles qui étaient restés sur leurs positions.

Les conservateurs iraniens se dotent de nouvelles armes contre M. Khatami

Deux projets de loi visent à légitimer la répression

Une journaliste et un responsable étudiant ont été arrêtés au cours des derniers jours en Iran, où le pouvoir judiciaire contrôlé par les conservateurs a donné lundi

2 août son accord à un projet de loi donnant des délits politiques une définition si étendue qu'elle réduit considérablement toute liberté d'expression et d'action.

LES CONSERVATEURS iraniens, jamais à court d'idées, et visiblement résolus à mettre à profit tous les pouvoirs qu'ils détiennent encore, ont multiplié ces dernières semaines les mesures d'intimidation destinées à décourager leurs adversaires réformistes et singulièrement le président de la République, Mohamad Khatami. D'un nouveau projet de loi sur la presse, dont les grandes lignes ont été adoptées début juillet par le Parlement (*Le Monde* du 9 juillet), à un autre sur les délits politiques, que le pouvoir judiciaire a entériné lundi 2 août – et qui reste à confirmer par les pouvoirs exécutif et législatif –, les adversaires de M. Khatami se dotent des armes légales de leur croisade. Ils cherchent à légitimer, en l'inscrivant dans des textes de loi, la terreur que faisaient régner jusqu'à maintenant – par le meurtre à l'occasion – ceux que les Iraniens appellent les « groupes de pression » obscurantistes.

Selon ses grandes lignes révélées par les journaux, le projet de loi sur les délits politiques définit comme tels « tout acte visant à violer l'indépendance du pays (...) et toute tentative de semer la discorde parmi la population, ainsi que la publication d'informations confidentielles sur la politique intérieure ou extérieure du pays ». Sont également classés

« délits politiques », « la propagation d'informations mensongères ou de rumeurs, tout contact et échange d'informations, d'interview et de complicité avec les ambassades, les organisations, les partis ou les médias étrangers, à quelque niveau que ce soit, qui seraient préjudiciables à l'indépendance, à l'unité nationale ou aux intérêts de la République islamique ».

Il y a là de quoi « convaincre » les Iraniens de se replier sur soi, l'expérience des années passées ayant montré que lorsqu'elles le jugent nécessaire, les autorités savent tout interpréter comme étant « préjudiciable à l'indépendance, à l'unité nationale ou aux intérêts de la République islamique ». Tout bien, si superficiel soit-il, avec des non-Iraniens risque d'être tenu pour un argument à charge. L'Iran avait notamment connu en 1995 et 1996 une période noire de ce type, lorsqu'un certain nombre d'écrivains et d'intellectuels furent retrouvés morts dans des circonstances jamais élucidées et que d'autres furent interpellés lors d'un dîner au domicile de l'attaché culturel allemand à Téhéran.

77 DISPARUS

Ces intellectuels faisaient partie d'un groupe de 134 hommes de

lettres qui avaient écrit un manifeste réclamant une plus grande liberté d'expression. Le dîner chez le diplomate allemand avait été présenté par certains organes de presse comme un « complot » contre le régime. Par la suite, lorsque le journaliste Faraj Sarkouhi, l'un des 134 signataires, fut arrêté, il fut accusé d'être un agent de l'Allemagne et de la France. Cela avait suffi pour glacer d'effroi nombre d'Iraniens.

Le projet de loi sur la presse, qui, avec la fermeture du quotidien réformateur *Salam*, furent les détonateurs de la récente révolte des étudiants, prévoit, selon nos informations, le renforcement du rôle des tribunaux révolutionnaires dans les procès de presse – c'est devant un tel tribunal que vient d'être traduit le rédacteur en chef du quotidien *Salam* –, la possibilité d'engager des poursuites judiciaires contre les directeurs de publication et les journalistes individuellement, et l'interdiction de l'accès aux journaux de tout « groupe contre-révolutionnaire ou qui ne serait pas officiellement autorisé ».

Parallèlement à cet arsenal législatif, les arrestations, « disparitions » et autres formes de répression continuent. L'organisation de défense des droits de l'homme Hu-

man Rights Watch (HRW) indiquait, dans un communiqué publié le 31 juillet, que soixante-dix-sept personnes seraient encore en détention ou portées disparues depuis la révolte des étudiants. Sur la base d'informations qui lui ont été fournies par le Conseil élu des étudiants protestataires, HRW publiait les noms de ces personnes, « pour la plupart des étudiants ». Cinq étudiants ont « disparu » après avoir participé à une réunion à l'université de Téhéran, le 23 juillet, c'est-à-dire bien après la fin des troubles.

Les quotidiens iraniens ont en outre rapporté qu'une jeune femme, Camélia Entekhabi-Fard, journaliste au quotidien *Zan*, proche des réformateurs – et fermé depuis le mois de février par une décision de justice –, et un responsable étudiant, Ali Tavakoli, ont été arrêtés, la première à son retour d'un séjour aux Etats-Unis et le second après avoir été entendu « à titre de témoin » par un juge. D'après le journal *Nechat*, le penseur réformiste Abdolkarim Soroush a été agressé à la fin de la semaine dernière dans la ville sainte de Machhad.

Enfin, le chef des gardiens de la révolution, le général Rahim Safavi, a menacé les journaux de les poursuivre en justice s'ils propageaient de « fausses nouvelles visant à affaiblir » le corps d'élite qu'il dirige. D'autre part, 50 000 *bassidjs* (le corps de miliciens volontaires) devaient se livrer, mercredi et jeudi, à des manœuvres militaires, les premières du genre, à Téhéran.

S'il est vrai, comme le pensent nombre d'experts, que la férocité de l'offensive des conservateurs vise à préparer le scrutin législatif prévu pour février 2000, les tensions devraient aller s'exacerbant.

Mouna Naïm

La branche politique du PKK appelle l'Europe à "jouer un rôle actif"

ANKARA, 6 août (AFP) - 13h44 - La branche politique du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) a demandé jeudi à l'Europe à "jouer un rôle actif" pour soutenir l'appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan à l'arrêt des combats et à un retrait de ses troupes de Turquie, dans un communiqué.

La branche européenne du Front de libération nationale du Kurdistan appelé "le Conseil de l'Europe, le parlement européen, l'Union européenne et (...) en particulier les Etats et gouvernements européens à jouer un rôle actif pour soutenir cette décision historique", dans ce communiqué cité par l'agence pro-kurde DEM, basée en Allemagne et reçue à Ankara.

Ocalan a appelé en début de semaine ses militants à arrêter les combats et à se retirer de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre "pour le bien de la paix".

"Tout le monde doit réaliser le sérieux et la responsabilité qui sous-tendent cette décision historique", a ajouté la branche européenne de l'ERNK.

Ocalan a reçu l'appui du Conseil de commandement de son parti, puis de sa branche militaire, l'Armée populaire de libération du Kurdistan vendredi. Le Conseil de commandement regroupe l'ERNK et l'ARGK.

La branche politique européenne appelle aussi "le peuple kurde à soutenir cette décision historique et courageuse jusqu'au bout et adopter une attitude responsable pour la mettre en oeuvre", selon DEM.

Elle demande à l'Etat turc d'"agir de façon responsable" et aux "cercles politiques, démocratiques et intellectuels de Turquie" de soutenir le processus.





Koh: Time to go ahead with reforms

- US official impressed with the widespread will across the Turkish society for reforms and improvement of Turkey's human rights record

ILNUR CEVIK

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Labor and Human Rights Harold Hongju Koh says the current conditions in Turkey are ripe for reform and improvement of the country's sagging human rights image.

The American human rights official, who has met with several leading Turks and toured the troubled southeastern provinces, told the Turkish Daily News in a special interview that there is a very strong will in Turkey to bring the country's human rights record to universal standards, "...and again, I think there is a very strong will across the country to bring this about."

After meeting more than 1,000 Turks from various sections of Turkish society who support reforms, Koh said, "It's been an experience that has made me personally deeply committed to getting my government to help the Turkish people achieve these aspirations."

About the problems of the people of southeastern Turkey, Koh said: "This is a moment of opportunity on this issue. Ocalan has been arrested, his case is proceeding, the security dimensions of the PKK conflict are receding. And now I think there is an opportunity for all elements of Turkish society, but particularly the government, to move on the question and to come up with a program to deal with the problems of the Southeast. And I think it's one that needs to take into account the aspirations of all Turkish citizens, to realize all their rights under Turkish law and under international law."

TDN: Now I would like to hear from you: You have a kind of checklist about what a civilized Western democracy should be. For instance, the role of the military, the role of civil organizations and so on. You mentioned these at a dinner two nights ago in Istanbul. What is the ideal democratic situation, do you think, in a country?

KOH: I don't have any checklists, but I do believe that there are certain universal standards. I think what was meant to be a wonderful thing about this trip is that it not only gave me a chance to meet Turkish people and travel around the country, but I also got the chance to get together with all elements of society. And what I found is that with everyone who talked to me, I am almost a mirror for their own concerns, and so the various press reports all reflect in many ways the concerns of the people who spoke to me. I have been really trying to listen to all of what people are saying. What is very exciting is that in Turkey, all aspects of society -- governmental or nongovernmental or at the national, regional and local level -- are focused on the issue of how to bring human rights up to international standards and how to give Turkey a world-class human rights record. That's what I think has been the exciting part of the discussions.

In the days that I've been here, I was eating watermelon with villagers on little mountains in southeastern Turkey, and they were telling me about their problems. And yesterday we ate dinner on top of a beautiful hotel in Istanbul, with Turkish businessmen, and the people were talking about the same thing -- democracy, human rights -- and it showed me that these are aspirations of the Turkish people. And as the human rights official of the U.S. government, which is Turkey's close friend and ally, this is something we are trying very much to support.

Now, with that background, what are the elements of a democratic society? I think a democratic society is one that has a rich civil society, and I think that means a free and inquisitive press and vibrant freedom of expression and an independent judiciary, active labor unions, the participation of

all women and all groups in political discussions, that has a government that's committed to democracy and political change, and I think that those are things that the Turkish people and this government are striving for. I think it's also a government that's deeply connected to the world, that is not only part of the world but also understands that there are universal standards to which it needs to bring its conduct into line. And again, I think there is a very strong will across the country to bring this about. Now how to get there from here is the challenge, and that's the challenge I've been discussing with many, many people. I think it's fair to say that on my trip, with contacts and conversations, I've met over 1,000 people. I've talked to over 1,000 people, and it's been an experience that has made me personally deeply committed to getting my government to help the Turkish people achieve these aspirations.

TDN: Well, I think you are the first American official dealing with human rights to have stayed in Turkey so long, getting the feel of the country. Now after all that, what is your analysis... You say there is a will, but how to achieve that will, what do you propose should be done? And judging from your discussions with the people, what do they think should be done?

KOH: Let me go to the first point. I think my predecessor John Shattuck visited this country a number of times, but I think just through circumstances I've had more of a chance to be here and to travel a little bit more widely than any senior American official. What are the areas where I think change is needed? Well, let me tell you about where I think there is very broad consensus about a need for change. The first setting goes to freedom of speech and expression. I think there is widespread belief that free speech should not be criminal activity. Obviously everyone recognizes that there may be cases where speech is connected to violence, terror, real threats to the state, and I think every country in the world has exceptions for those circumstances. But I think that the kind of speech that contributes to the vibrant political discussion ought to be encouraged and that those acts should not be criminalized. Now I think the government is starting to work and move a reform package that is beginning to address these questions. The government officials I've spoken to have identified it immediately as one of their top priorities, and we at this point think this clearly something that ought to be supported.

Second, the treatment of human rights defenders, that includes nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], doctors, lawyers, parliamentarians who speak in support of human rights. In our country these groups have become very much a part of the political discussion and have contributed very actively to the debate. The American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU], the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP] pushing the civil rights movement, and again, we believe that these are groups that ought to be able to conduct their activities freely, and I think that the government of Mr. Ecevit recognizes and has begun to take steps on that front as well.

A third area which I think is a prevalent problem, particularly in the region, is the treatment of people who are being detained. Officials at the highest level, Foreign Minister [Ismail] Cem and Justice Minister [Hikmet] Sami Turk, Human Rights Minister [Mehmet Ali] İtemcekik, have all recognized that torture is a serious problem, and the European Court of Human Rights has addressed that issue as well. Now on that score as well, the government has taken some progressive, much-needed steps. Not only have they issued a zero-tolerance policy and issued a circular, but they have followed now with kicking off a public information campaign. In the Southeast I think we found that this campaign is barely known. It's a big country, and I guess that's inevitable, but I do think that this is an area in which part of the problem of implementing this political will is to address that problem. Furthermore, another element of the problem is to make sure that those who commit acts of torture do not have impunity. There's a well-known case in the United States of an immigrant was tortured by police in New York. It got very high publicity. On the one hand, I think it's been the subject of great concern, but on the other hand it shows that we have programs to aggressively enforce that. The reason it has become so well-publicized is that the police officials who did it were convicted and prosecuted and sentenced. We have no tolerance for this kind of practice; it has no place in a civilized society.

I think the most difficult issue to face, and this is the reason I went to the Southeast, is how to deal with the problems of that region. And they are very complex. Whatever was painted of my trip to the Southeast, I met with every group I could see, just really trying to understand the situation. We went from the Ataturk Dam to Diyarbakir. We met with businesspeople, we met with regional governors, we met with mayors, we met with journalists, we met with NGO officials. And villagers, ordinary citizens, and I should say that that includes people who have been harmed directly by the Kurdistan Workers' Party [PKK], to whom we expressed our sympathy, and people who have fled from the villages to the cities, and who are, frankly, just puzzled as to what is going to happen to their life. And I think what I learned from that is that this is a moment of opportunity on this issue. Ocalan has been arrested, his case is proceeding, the security dimensions of the PKK conflict are receding. And now

I think there is an opportunity for all elements of Turkish society, but particularly the government, to move on the question and to come up with a program to deal with the problems of the Southeast. And I think it's one that needs to take into account the aspirations of all Turkish citizens, to realize all their rights under Turkish law and under international law.

TDN: Well you are taking a rather conciliatory tone about the willingness of the Turkish administration to take measures against human rights abuses, but meanwhile we see that the government is not implementing new reforms or legislating new reforms that would make a non-crime of freedom of expression. We are seeing people being pardoned, or their sentences reduced because they have expressed their views. But the fact that expressing your view remains a crime in Turkey, is still a crime in Turkey. Did you get any sense of what the Turkish authorities want to do and why they cannot actually legislate making freedom of expression a non-crime in Turkey?

KOH: Well, you said I take a conciliatory view. We are allies; we have a relationship. This is part of the agenda they've announced, and we support them in it. I'm not part of the government of Turkey; I'm part of the government of the United States, and I'm here because of my obligations in my own job under U.S. law to report on human rights conditions. But in my discussions with Turkish officials, I think they see the dimensions of the free expression problem, and I've also outlined it as we see it. What we see is the need for a lifting of those restrictions on freedom of expression which impinge on the kind of speech which is part of open and ordinary political debate, which has nothing to do with support of violence and terrorism. Now I think it's true that their first steps have been in regard to proposals for amnesty, but there are proposals on the table that will address the underlying speech crimes, and we support those, and I think that has to be extended so that these reforms are full, effective and through-going. But I think it took a while for the current legal structure to come into existence, and there has to be a sensible but concerted program to remove the vestiges of it systematically. The process has begun, and we want to support them in this agenda.

TDN: Some Western governments have been frustrated with the slow pace of change in Turkey. For instance, after the collapse of the Soviet empire, Eastern European countries adapted to more democratic rules faster than Turkey did. Does the United States share this frustration?

KOH: Well, Eastern Europe is a big area. I mean, I review the democracy and human rights conditions of all the countries in the world. And what I attempt to do is to first report and evaluate on what's going on. And that requires me to educate myself about different countries, and in particularly important countries, it requires me to spend time, to understand how the institutions of government, the laws, the historical and societal traditions fit together, which I what I've been doing on my trip here. It also requires me to be very curious; I had to ask a lot of questions. Because I think only to understand the society is to understand both how you got to where you are and how you get to where you want to go. I think that there is no doubt that Turkey's human rights record has held it back in the past and has been the subject of a lot of criticism. It's also very clear that different pieces of that record fall well below international standards. But again, by saying this I'm saying exactly what Mr. İtemcelik said in an interview with you: It has to be placed at a priority, and it's very clear that it's been made a priority. I think what we are looking for is for the various elements of Turkish society, governmental and nongovernmental, to work together on a realistic, implementable plan that eliminates quickly those aspects of the human rights record that could be quickly changed and to work consistently and hard on those that require other kinds of legislative changes. Some cases require statutory changes, some cases require constitutional changes. I think the important thing is that this is the moment of very significant opportunity because of the new government, the parliamentary majority, the high priorities that the government has placed on the human rights record. We also have the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE] summit in November, which I think will place the spotlight on Turkey's human rights record and will be another opportunity for Turkey to engage with the world on these questions.

TDN: Of course, I also want to ask... You said you were studying various countries on human rights. Is there any other NATO country that you are studying on the human rights dimension besides Turkey?

KOH: Oh, yes. We study every country on the human rights dimension. There is no country including our own that doesn't have significant human rights problems. I've alluded to the problems we've had with dealing with torture in our country. We've had serious problems with civil rights; we've had serious problems with indigenous peoples; we address the problem of freedom of expression in the context of the McCarthy era; and we face problems of religious freedom, the bounds between separation of church and state and of free exercise of religion. We've reached certain solutions, and it's a work in progress. The other NATO countries, I report on all of them, and I have dialogues with many of them. In various parts of Europe there are questions about religious expression; there are countries in which there are questions of treatment of those who are criminal suspects but

considered to be connected with terrorism. In other parts of Europe there are questions about the treatment of groups in society who are minority groups. So we address these problems with all countries, and that includes our NATO allies; and by the way, they address these issues with us. And I think that's part of this global human rights process.

TDN: It's a checks and balances thing...

KOH: Well, the world is interconnected now. There's the Internet, there's world travel, which allows me to be here. And there are certain things which are becoming part of the international language, and one of them is the language of human rights. When I first began this job, people said, 'Well, you know there are certain Asian values, which means that in Asia, human rights are not respected.' Nothing could be further from the truth. I am Asian by origin. My father came to America because he believed in democracy and human rights, and I believe these are part of the universal discourse. But it's a process of dialogue, it's a process of education, and it's a process of working together. Much of the valuable part, by the way, is in areas where our country has struggled with the problem and addressed it, to say to someone else who is struggling with the problem, 'Here's how we coped with the question.' Let me take, for example, the free speech question. I think in the context of McCarthyism, there is a period in which a lot of people suffered because of the suggestion that their speech was criminal. Finally over time our Supreme Court adopted a notion that there has to be a clear connection between the speech and a clear and present danger to the government. And in the absence of that connection, even speech which is disrespectful of the state, the burning of flags, is something that we might personally disagree with but which our society can tolerate. And I think it's made us a stronger society.

TDN: Did you, during your discussions here, your fact-finding mission, see a McCarthy-type period here in Turkey at the moment?

KOH: I think I saw a Turkey which is emerging from some 15 years of intense conflict which has consumed the energies of governments, which had a devastating effect on a region and a large group of people and in which a crisis environment was created, and quite literally a state of emergency was declared. I think at this point, we are now in a different phase. I think, as I said, the security aspects of the issue are moving to the background, and then the question becomes: What affirmative agenda does Turkey have for this region? Not just opposing the PKK, which the United States has supported. No country has supported the government more strongly in opposing terrorism, and our human rights report chronicles in great detail human rights abuses that have been committed by the PKK. But I think the human rights issues now extend to the extent to which citizens of that region are going to be able to find those pieces of a meaningful life. Will they have education? Will they have housing? Will they have basic shelter? How will they pursue their livelihood? And these are questions which may have been more difficult to address in the past but which certainly need to be addressed now.

TDN: And you were in the area, in southeastern Turkey, for a couple of days. Then you moved to Istanbul and you talked to businessmen. Were they aware of the realities, as you were, about southeastern Turkey during your discussions?

KOH: I think they were aware. I met with about 12 or 15 businessmen from around the country. I met with the president and past president of TUGIAD, and then I met with TUSIAD. I met with a number of individual, like Cem Peker, who I guess are both businesspeople and also thinkers. I think that what they understood, and what they conveyed to me was the complex nature of the problem: Political, economic and human rights being interlinked, and also with the democracy problem. Much of it also connected to the question of how to bring capital and investment to the region. I think it's very clear to me that the business community is a vibrant and active element of civil society in this country. And I think it was put very well to us by one member of society: Civil society needs to support other aspects of civil society. For example, it's very much in the interest of the businesspeople to support free speech. It's very much in the interest of the businesspeople to support the rule of law and the development of independent institutions. It's very much in the interest of the businesspeople to support the active involvement of nongovernmental organizations. And they expressed that sensitivity. They also, I should say, are acutely aware of the relevance of international standards to what they do. Many of them support the movement towards international arbitration, and I think they recognize that if this country enters regimes of international arbitration, that it should also be understood in light that they are subject to regimes of international human rights, and that it's part of being an international player, which Turkey is and will continue to be.

TDN: My last question has to do with religious freedoms in Turkey. There seems to be a crackdown on religious groups in Turkey, on the pretext that there is a fundamentalist threat against the secular

state. From your trips, again, from your contacts in Turkey, how do you see this thing shaping? Is it becoming a major human rights problem, or is it simply as they said, a crackdown on anti-secularist forces?

KOH: Well, religious freedom is a human rights problem. And one of my jobs, and another reason I was here, is that we report particularly on the religious freedom problem in all countries in the world. And by the way, it is something on which I report extensively throughout Europe. Now, I think there is an interesting situation here, that there are certain religious minorities that have received specific protection under the law. By the way, I should say we spoke to all members of those specific minority communities -- Syriac Christians in Midyat, Jewish groups in Istanbul, Armenian groups in Istanbul, the ecumenical patriarch in Istanbul -- and I think generally speaking they showed comfort with the level of religious freedom they are experiencing. There have been, in the case of the ecumenical patriarch, some unexplained incidents around their property, attacks on their property. They still don't know where they came from.

I think there is another question, though, which is what is the relationship between the reality of Islam in daily life and the political commitment to secular society? Now what we learned in the United States is that we have balanced this. On the one hand we have separation of church and state, which means, for example, that the state cannot support religious schools; we don't have prayer in our public schools and so on. But on the other hand there is a very strong and protected will towards free exercise of religion, which is designed to protect both majority and minority religions. And I think that some of the tension we see here is that one the one hand the commitment to secularism is there and it's strong. I think that part of Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a commitment to the freedom of thought, conscience and religion, to the free exercise and expression of religion. And I think that is something we heard a lot about in our travels.

TDN: The last thing, of course: What should Turkey do before this OSCE summit? On human rights, of course...

KOH: Well, I think I've outlined some of the areas. I think it should continue aggressively and proactively on the agenda it has already set for itself and which I think is widely supported by different elements in society, and that is the decriminalization of freedom of expression, the release of those, particularly journalists, who have been imprisoned because of freedom of expression. I think that means that prosecutions of those based on speech acts should be avoided. I think a very active move on the issues of torture and impunity that I've discussed, respect for the rights of human rights defenders, and I think seizing on the opportunities that are presented to begin to address the Kurdish question.

Now I don't think we need to set artificial dates for these; this is an agenda that must be carried out over the course of a number of years, and the important thing is that it not be an agenda that rises or falls on a particular government. It's national agenda, it's a societal agenda, it's not the particular agenda of any particular party. It should not be in any country that human rights is a political issue. In fact, let me make what I think is a very important point: In our country, human rights is a term which has acquired great moral respectability, great moral authority, because it comes out of John Locke, the civil rights movement. There is always the danger that people will use the term human rights to their own ends. I think it's very important for people to understand that in the United States we oppose terrorism but we support human rights in dealing with the victims of terrorism. We support human rights, but that does not mean in any way that we support any form of separatism. We support human rights, but that does not mean that we intend to interfere with a country's commitment to have the separation of church and state which we have ourselves.

PKK terrorists attack Kurdish rivals in northern Iraq

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants operating from bases in Iran carried out an artillery attack Tuesday night on an Iraqi village controlled by the Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party (IKDP). One person died and four others were injured in the attack, which took place in the Hacıumran district near the Iran-Iraq border, the Anatolia news agency reported.

On the same day, the PKK raided Suraban, a village under the control of the Union of Iraqi Kurdistan Patriots (IKYP), and robbed two people.

PKK terrorists have launched similar attacks from Iran in the past, hitting Hacımran on July 29 and the town of Kasri on July 14.

IKPD representatives said that they had discussed the issue of increased PKK activities during meetings with the IKYB in northern Iraq on July 23 and Aug. 1.

La branche armée du PKK annonce qu'elle va se retirer de Turquie

ISTANBUL, 6 août (AFP) - La branche armée du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) a annoncé vendredi qu'elle allait arrêter les combats et se retirer de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre, dans un communiqué parvenu à l'AFP à Istanbul.



"Nous, les forces de l'ARGK, considérons comme un ordre l'appel du président Apo (diminutif d'Abdullah Ocalan) à nos forces armées d'arrêter la guerre à partir du 1er septembre", a déclaré l'Armée populaire de libération du Kurdistan (ARGK) dans ce communiqué.

"Nous annonçons que nous commencerons à mettre en oeuvre le plan présenté par notre commandant suprême, le camarade Abdullah Ocalan, à partir du 1er septembre".

Ocalan, 50 ans, avait appelé en début de semaine depuis sa prison ses combattants à arrêter les combats et se retirer hors de Turquie "pour le bien de la paix".

Jeudi, le conseil de commandement du PKK, qui regroupe l'aile militaire et l'aile politique (Front de libération nationale du Kurdistan ERNK), avait apporté son soutien à l'appel d'Ocalan.

Mais l'ARGK, qui n'a pas toujours suivi les recommandations de ce Conseil, bien qu'elle en fasse partie, a pris le soin d'enfoncer le clou, signalant ainsi à ses hommes dans les montagnes qu'elle avait cette fois l'intention de s'aligner sur la direction.

Le même jour, le procureur général appelait la Cour de cassation à confirmer la sentence de mort rendue par la justice turque fin juin contre Ocalan pour trahison et séparatisme.

L'ARGK a toutefois averti l'armée turque qu'elle ne devait pas interpréter son retrait comme un signe de faiblesse et attaquer ses forces lors de leur sortie du territoire, soulignant qu'elle se réservait le droit d'autodéfense.

"En dehors de l'usage de notre droit légitime d'autodéfense contre des attaques lancées sous la présomption que la réalisation de notre plan (de retrait) est une faiblesse, il n'y aura pas d'action armée de la part de nos forces", a souligné l'ARGK.

Le communiqué ne précise pas où les forces de l'ARGK se retireraient.

Le nord de l'Irak, où le PKK a déjà plusieurs bases, apparaît le pays le plus probable.

Mais la presse turque soulignait vendredi que le nord-ouest de l'Iran était aussi possible, dans la mesure où le PKK a pu y tenir un congrès clandestin au printemps.

L'annonce du PKK qu'il était prêt à se retirer de Turquie a créé un espoir mesuré en Turquie et dans la diaspora kurde que le conflit vieux de 15 ans puisse voir une fin.

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est anatolien à majorité kurde. Les violences liées à cette rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

"Bien sûr, tout le monde serait content que le terrorisme prenne fin. Nous ne marchanderons avec personne sur cette question", a déclaré jeudi soir à des journalistes le Premier ministre Bülent Ecevit.

La presse turque appelait vendredi le gouvernement à agir pour améliorer la situation dans le sud-est.

Les commentateurs voyaient dans l'appel d'Apo une reddition mais soulignaient prudemment que l'affrontement entre le PKK et les forces de sécurité turque n'était pas le seul problème affectant la région.

L'éditorialiste de Milliyet estimait que "le mouvement politique kurde sera toujours là... Jusqu'à maintenant, la lutte contre le terrorisme et la violence était de nature militaire. Maintenant, nous avons besoin de scénarios d'une nature plus économique et sociale", a-t-il dit.

Le quotidien à grand tirage Hurriyet estimait qu'il était grand temps que les autorités reconnaissent les vraies raisons ayant conduit au conflit.

"Nous avons besoin de nommer le vrai problème. Le cancer est une sale maladie, mais nous l'appelons une grippe et nous ne le traitons pas", a souligné le journal.

Le PKK, un mouvement de guérilla armée qui rêvait d'un Etat kurde

ANKARA, 6 août (AFP) - 12h33 - Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), dont la branche armée s'est dite prête à cesser les combats et à se retirer de Turquie, mène depuis 15 ans une rébellion armée, lancée dans le but de créer un Etat kurde indépendant à partir du sud-est de la Turquie.

L'organisation s'est lancée en août 1984 dans la lutte armée contre l'Etat turc, se présentant comme un mouvement marxiste, mais avec pour but le "socialisme dans un seul pays": le Kurdistan, un Etat qu'il comptait tailler sur la Turquie, l'Irak, l'Iran et la Syrie, pour regrouper quelque 20 millions de Kurdes.

La rébellion a fait de la question kurde le principal problème de la Turquie, et 31.000 morts.

Le PKK est dirigé depuis sa création en novembre 1978 par Ocalan, dit "Apo", 50 ans, condamné à mort fin juin par la justice turque pour trahison et séparatisme.

Ocalan a longtemps résidé en Syrie ou dans la plaine libanaise de la Bekaa sous contrôle syrien, avant d'en être expulsé en octobre 1998 au terme d'un accord conclu entre Damas et Ankara qui a privé le PKK d'un précieux soutien.

L'arrestation le 15 février au Kenya de son chef charismatique lui a porté un coup décisif.

L'organisation avait déjà subi sur le terrain d'importants revers depuis le déclenchement, en 1993, de vastes offensives des forces de sécurité turques sous le gouvernement de Mme Tansu Ciller.

Ses effectifs sont estimés à quelque 6.000 combattants, dont quelques milliers stationnés dans le sud-est de la Turquie, et la plupart dans le nord de l'Irak qui échappe depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991 au contrôle de Bagdad et se trouve sous le contrôle de mouvements kurdes rivaux.

La Turquie accuse en outre l'Iran de fermer les yeux sur les incursions des rebelles depuis son territoire, ce que Téhéran dément.

Le PKK est composé d'une branche politique, l'ERNK (Front de libération du Kurdistan), surtout active en Europe, et d'une branche militaire, l'ARGK. Depuis la capture d'Ocalan, il est dirigé par un "Conseil de commandement provisoire" regroupant les deux branches.

Le PKK est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie, les Etats-Unis, la France et la Grande-Bretagne.

Son leader a au fil des ans réduit ses objectifs: après un Etat kurde, Ocalan a évoqué une "autonomie" pour les Kurdes de Turquie --catégoriquement exclue par Ankara qui y voit une menace à terme pour son intégrité territoriale-- ou une fédération.

Lors de son procès, il s'est borné à réclamer des droits culturels limités pour les Kurdes au sein d'un Etat turc unifié.

Le programme du PKK exclut pourtant formellement toute concession sur son objectif initial. Mais le parti a fidèlement soutenu les appels successifs à la paix de son chef, menacé de pendaison.

La guérilla kurde soutient totalement l'appel d'Ocalan à abandonner la lutte armée et à se retirer du territoire turc

Le PKK place la Turquie devant ses responsabilités

Déjà condamné à mort par l'Etat turc, le chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan a pris le risque mardi de jouer sa tête auprès de ses troupes du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK). Et il l'a sauvée: le Conseil de commandement de la guérilla kurde a annoncé hier qu'il soutenait *totalement* l'appel de son chef à abandonner la lutte armée et à retirer ses forces hors des frontières turques à partir du 1^{er} septembre.

Qualifiant l'appel d'Ocalan de tournant dans l'histoire des peuples kurde et turc, le Conseil de commandement annonce qu'il mènera désormais ses activités sur cette base, dans l'espoir de parvenir à la paix et à la démocratie (...). S'il n'a pas posé de conditions, le PKK a néanmoins appelé l'Etat turc à adopter une attitude responsable et respectueuse envers sa démarche.

«UNE OCCASION CONCRÈTE»

Les Etats-unis se sont montrés sceptiques devant l'annonce du parti kurde. Nous attendons des actes, pas des paroles, a ainsi

déclaré le porte-parole du département d'Etat, James Rubin, soulignant que le PKK avait déjà fait des promesses de ce genre par le passé, sans les tenir.

Mais l'engagement est important. Une division aurait été fatale. A Ocalan, au PKK et à la question kurde. Le maintien de l'unité laisse la Turquie seule responsable de la suite des événements. Officiellement, le Premier ministre Bülent Ecevit l'a encore rappelé mercredi, il n'est pas question pour Ankara de négocier quoi que soit avec une organisation terroriste.

Mais nombre d'observateurs se plaisent à percevoir un frémissement positif.

Des petites phrases de M. Ecevit alimentent les spéculations. Une phrase considérant que les efforts de tous sont nécessaires pour mettre fin à la guerre: pour le quotidien turc «Hürriyet», *cela signifie qu'il dit au PKK que s'il fait ce que son chef demande, il peut attendre une nouvelle approche de la Turquie.* Le journal pro-kurde «Özgür Politika», publié en Allemagne, met lui en

exergue une autre citation du Premier ministre, selon laquelle le temps montrerait si le geste d'Ocalan peut apporter la paix — ce qui laisse entendre qu'il y voit une ouverture.

D'une manière générale, la presse turque perçoit en tout cas dans l'appel d'Ocalan une évolution positive après 15 ans d'un conflit meurtrier, qui a coûté des fortunes à l'Etat turc. Et elle appelle Ankara à saisir cette chance de paix. *Si la Turquie fait bon usage de cette occasion, il y a pour la première fois une chance concrète de mettre fin à l'effusion de sang,* souligne ainsi le quotidien «Radikal».

Bref, tout le monde spéculé sur une possible entente permettant de mettre fin à la guerre tout en ménageant à chaque camp une issue honorable.

Il n'en reste pas moins que, hier, le procureur général de la Cour de cassation, Vural Savas, a demandé à cette même Cour de confirmer la condamnation à mort prononcée contre Ocalan.

En faisant commettre à ses militants des actes dont chacun peut être considéré comme un crime contre l'humanité, M. Savas a estimé que le chef du PKK avait violé *des centaines de fois* l'article du code pénal qui sanctionne l'atteinte à l'intégrité territoriale de la Turquie.

CONFIRMER OU NON LA MORT?

La seule raison pour ne pas confirmer la peine de mort aurait été un procès injuste. Or, pour le procureur général, Ocalan a eu droit à un *procès équitable.* Et ce malgré les efforts pour faire pression sur elle [la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat d'Ankara] de certains pays étrangers qui ont aidé Ocalan et son PKK (...) et d'associations et organisations qui défendent prétendument les droits de l'homme mais ont une attitude hostile envers la République turque.

La marge de manœuvre est désormais restreinte. Ou bien la Cour de cassation désavoue le procureur général, ce qui semble peu probable. Ou bien elle confirme la sentence. Dans ce cas, le parlement devra se pro-

Le Soir du vendredi 6 août 1999

noncer pour ou contre la pendaison d'Ocalan.

Le président, Suleyman Demirel, devra ensuite ratifier la décision. Celui-ci a récemment déclaré qu'il s'agissait d'une décision très sensible, très politique. Preuve, au moins, qu'il est conscient de l'importance de l'enjeu.

A. Gn (avec AFP.)

Le kurde, langue étrangère

! Les islamistes ne sont déjà pas en odeur de sainteté en Turquie. Mais si leurs députés se mettent à

faire cause commune avec les Kurdes, là, c'en est trop! Les parlementaires ultranationalistes du MHP — formation qui patronne les tristement célèbres Loups gris et qui participe aujourd'hui au gouvernement — sont entrés dans une rage folle contre un de leurs collègues, Mehmet Fuat Firat, du Fazilet, le parti islamiste de la Vertu. Objet de cette colère (noire): un curriculum vitae.

Le CV ne mentionne aucune formation douteuse, aucune fonction répréhensible, aucun passé trouble dont on pourrait faire reproche à M. Firat. Ce qui pose problème, ce sont les langues qu'il prétend parler: outre l'arabe et le persan, il cite... le kurde. Scandale! «Le kur-

de n'est pas une langue officielle. Il ne peut pas être cité dans les documents officiels du parlement», s'est insurgé le député MHP Mehmet Ceylan. «Cela revient à ne pas reconnaître l'Etat turc.» Et les ultranationalistes d'envoyer une pétition au bureau du président du parlement pour que la «mention malheureuse» soit retirée des registres et qu'un avertissement soit adressé à M. Firat. Mais celui-ci n'est pas idiot. Il n'ignore pas que les Kurdes ne sont pas considérés comme une minorité en Turquie et que leur langue n'y est pratiquement pas autorisée ailleurs que dans la sphère privée. Et le député islamiste a sans doute déjà mûrement réfléchi à sa réponse. Lé-

gèrement, il n'y a aucune raison qu'il encoure des représailles puisqu'il a placé le kurde dans la rubrique «langues étrangères». Après tout, il y a bien des Kurdes dans d'autres pays que la Turquie...

AGNÈS GORISSEN

Le président Demirel reçoit les maires des provinces de l'Est et du Sud-est

ANKARA, 7 août (AFP) - 16h21 - Le président turc Suleyman Demirel a reçu samedi les maires des provinces de l'Est et du Sud-est anatoliens, en proie à la rébellion du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), et leur a demandé de respecter la constitution.

"Toute revendication est légale si elle est faite dans le cadre de la constitution. Sinon elle peut engendrer de gros problèmes", a dit M. Demirel en recevant les maires de sept provinces, élus lors des municipales du 18 avril sur les listes du parti pro-kurde de la démocratie du peuple (HADEP).

"Tous les citoyens turcs jouissent des mêmes droits qu'ils soient originaires du sud-est ou de l'ouest. Nous sommes dans l'obligation de préserver l'harmonie dans ce pays afin de ne pas détériorer la paix sociale", a-t-il indiqué.

Le parti nationaliste kurde a remporté plusieurs mairies dans l'Est et le Sud-est à majorité kurde, dont celle de la plus grande ville de la région, Diyarbakir, ainsi que Van, Agri, Siirt, Hakkari, Batman et Bingol.

Le HADEP fait l'objet depuis fin janvier d'une procédure d'interdiction pour "liens organiques" avec le PKK, lancée par le procureur de la Cour de cassation Vural Savas.

Plusieurs membres du HADEP ont déjà été condamnés par des tribunaux pour liens présumés avec le PKK, dont la rébellion armée déclenchée en 1984 dans le Sud-est pour y créer un Etat kurde indépendant a fait près de 31.000 morts.

Le maire de Diyarbakir Feridun Celik a pour sa part qualifié l'appel du chef du PKK Abdullah D'Ocalan à ses militants à déposer les armes et à se retirer de Turquie de "tournant" pour la région.

"Il faut faire des pas courageux. Tous les citoyens de ce pays, surtout ceux de notre région, ont grandement besoin de la paix", a-t-il souligné.

Il a également demandé que la peine de mort soit abolie et que des arrangements constitutionnels soient réalisés pour le développement des droits de l'Homme dans sa région.

Abdullah Ocalan a été condamné à la peine capitale pour trahison et séparatisme.

La branche armée du PKK a annoncé vendredi qu'elle arrêterait les combats et se retirerait de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre conformément à l'appel de son chef, une décision sans précédent en 15 ans de rébellion.

Des rebelles du PKK attaquent un barrage en construction dans l'Est

ANKARA, 8 août (AFP) - 9h35 - Des rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatiste) ont attaqué dans la nuit de vendredi à samedi un barrage en construction dans la province de Mus (est) et mis feu à des machines, a rapporté dimanche l'agence Anatolie.

Un groupe de maquisards, qui a fait irruption dans le chantier du barrage d'Alparslan, situé dans le district de Bulanik, a mis le feu à quatre excavatrices et désarmés deux "protecteurs de village" — miliciens kurdes pro-gouvernementaux armés par l'Etat —, avant de prendre la fuite, selon l'agence.

Ce barrage en construction avait déjà été la cible d'une attaque similaire la semaine dernière qui avait fait un mort et sept blessés parmi les soldats qui le protègent.

Les maquisards du PKK mènent fréquemment des attaques contre des chantiers de l'Etat, surtout dans l'est et le sud-est anatoliens, théâtre de leur rébellion armée, pour saboter les efforts de construction d'infrastructures.

Le PKK a lancé sa lutte armée en 1984 pour créer un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est. Les violences liées à cette rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

Le chef du PKK Abdullah Ocalan a été condamné le 29 juin à la peine capitale pour trahison et séparatisme.

La branche armée du PKK a annoncé vendredi qu'elle arrêterait les combats et se retirerait de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre conformément à l'appel de son chef.

Kurds Hint At Ending Long War With Turks

Rebel Group Declares It Will Heed Ocalan And Leave Country

By Amberin Zaman
Washington Post Service

ANKARA — In a move that could end their bloody 14-year long insurgency, rebels of the outlawed Kurdish Workers Party vowed Thursday to abide by a call from their condemned leader, Abdullah Ocalan, to stop fighting for self-rule in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast region.

Kurdish activists here described the announcement as a turning point marking the transition of their decades-long struggle for ethnic and political rights from the military arena to the political domain.

They also held it up as irrefutable proof that Mr. Ocalan, from his prison island cell south of Istanbul, continues to wield uncontested authority over the guerrilla movement he founded and led for more than two decades.

In a statement issued through the pro-Kurdish DEM news agency, the leadership of the Kurdish Workers Party, known as the PKK, said: "Our party openly declares its full compliance with Comrade General Chairman Abdullah Ocalan's Aug. 2 statement and will carry out all of its activities on this basis."

The PKK leader issued a statement from his island prison through his lawyers Tuesday calling on his fighters to abandon their armed campaign against the Turkish state. The fighting between the PKK and the Turkish Army, he said, "constitutes obstacles to the development of human rights and democracy. The violence which has occurred primarily because of the Kurdish problem plays a basic role in this."

But Mr. Ocalan, who is 51, stopped short of asking his fighters to surrender altogether, saying they should withdraw outside Turkish territory instead. Blamed for the deaths of more than 30,000 Turkish citizens, Mr. Ocalan was condemned to death by hanging on treason charges by a Turkish court last June.

Vural Savas, Turkey's hawkish chief prosecutor called on the court Thursday to do just that. The Turkish Parliament and president need to approve the sentence before it can be carried out.

Turkish officials dismissed Mr.

Ocalan's call Thursday as a further attempt to save his own life, saying they would not negotiate with "a terrorist."

Signaling Turkey's determination to press ahead with its military campaign against the PKK, President Suleyman Demirel said Thursday: "The state needs no help in finishing this struggle. Orders such as 'carry on the struggle' or 'end it' in no way affect the state's determination in ending this struggle."

But analysts say that with the rebel announcement the Turkish state was under greater pressure than ever to rethink its Kurdish policy.

"Turkish officialdom," said Dogu Ergil, a leading expert on the Kurds at Ankara University, "has now been robbed of the argument that it is fighting against terrorists and will now have to face up to the Kurds in the arena of international diplomacy, which is far more dangerous in fact."

Harold Hongju Koh, U.S. assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, told a news conference Thursday before wrapping up a weeklong "fact-finding mission" here:

"The United State has long maintained that there can be no purely military solution to Kurdish issues. Any enduring solution must lie in the expansion of democracy."

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, FRIDAY, AUGUST 6, 1999

Syria Glimpses Peace in Golan

Assad's Policy Encourages Optimism in Long Conflict

By Douglas Jehl
New York Times Service

QUNEITRA, Syria — From here, only a few coils of barbed wire lie between Syria and the sliver of its land that Israel has held for 32 years.

To Syrians, the high-tech observation posts on surrounding hilltops seem to laugh down at them, a boast about just who controls the Golan Heights.

The streets of Quneitra are all but deserted, off-limits to most Syrians. The buildings are rubble, sacked by Israeli forces years ago and left that way by the Syrians to rally foreigners' anger and refresh bitter national memories.

But the mood in Syria now is such that when visitors like Ahmed Abu Khalid gaze from Quneitra into the middle distance, where Israeli traffic is plainly visible, they say they see an Israeli-Syrian peace that may be nearer than ever before.

"I hope that in six months everything will be O.K.," Mr. Abu Khalid said.

Syrians, particularly those like Mr. Abu Khalid, 27, a plain-clothed policeman, are not known for being loquacious with foreign journalists. But that customary reserve has begun to

soften, and more than just a little, in an atmosphere of optimism and urgency about peace that seems to begin at the very top.

In the last six weeks, President

Hafez Assad has praised Ehud Barak, the new Israeli prime minister, as "a strong and honest man" — a big bouquet from a man who could barely bring himself to pronounce the word "Israel" a few years ago.



The Syrian Foreign Ministry has said it is prepared to match any new peace moves from Israel "step by step," and its former chief negotiator, Walid Mualem, the ambassador to Washington, has gone so far as to suggest that an agreement with Israel may be possible within "a few

months."

A Damascus-based diplomat said a determined Syrian effort to make peace with Mr. Barak's government appeared likely.

"There's a decision, I think, that here comes the gold ring again, maybe for the last time, so let's make it a full-court press," he said.

The fundamental reasons, diplomats and some Syrians say, are simple. Syria believes it missed an opportunity in early 1996, when what had been a promising round of peace talks with Israel was suspended over a wave of terrorist bombings.

And Mr. Assad has plainly aged in the three years since. He turns 69 in October, and is looking frail.

Buoyed by American assurances that Mr. Barak's election has indeed set the stage for a fresh chance, the diplomats and Syrians say, Mr. Assad is eager to secure a peace that

would be his crowning legacy and could help to smooth the way for his son, Bashar, 34, to take his place someday.

"There is no doubt that the single most important factor driving this is to open the way for his son to carry on," a Western diplomat said.

Still, as eager as Mr. Assad may be for a deal, a dramatic Syrian gesture seems unlikely.

Mr. Assad has yet to meet an Israeli leader and he abruptly canceled a trip to Morocco nine days ago for the funeral of King Hassan II after the Israeli foreign minister, David Levy, was quoting as saying he hoped the occasion would produce the first handshake between Syrian and Israeli leaders.

In the 29 years in which he has held power, President Assad has repeated his basic demand so often — that the price for peace is a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights — that it is all but inconceivable that he would lower the bar now.

"The Syrians may be flexible on a lot of issues this time," a Western diplomat said. "They clearly want this done. But unless the deal means that every last Israeli withdraws from the Golan Heights, Assad would be seen internally as weak. And even if he can stand that, he knows his son could not."

The extent to which that bottom line has become imprinted on the consciousness of most adult Syrians can be heard in ordinary conversation, including several held at random on a government-sponsored visit to the Syrian side of the Golan.

Over and over again, people referred specifically to UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for withdrawal to the

line of June 4, 1967, the day before the Six-Day War in which Israel occupied the Golan Heights.

And over and over again, people said that Mr. Barak is better than his predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, and that peace is now within reach, but that it will depend on how far the Israeli leader will go.

"I am optimistic now," said Samira Osman, a 40-year-old widow who is one of the few people who lives in the town. "But it all depends on what Barak will do."

Syrians have allowed themselves to grow optimistic about peace before and then have seen their hopes dashed.

In late 1995 and early 1996, before the Israeli-Syrian talks were suspended, some investors began to buy property on the Syrian side of the Golan, seeing it as the new gateway to reclaimed land.

This time there has been no such property rush, said Mufeed Badieh, 28, the spokesman for Quneitra, where 53,000 Syrians once lived. But hotel and restaurant owners and investors in Damascus and Aleppo say they have begun to dream again of a post-peace boom, including a surge in tourism.

What makes the current Syrian push for peace different from any in the past is the vigor with which President Assad has been trying to present a gentler face. The main target, it appears, is the Israeli public, where people have been accustomed to denunciations of "the Zionist enemy."

If Israelis can be persuaded that Syria is a committed peace partner, according to what diplomats presume to be the Syrian thinking, Mr. Barak may find himself with more room to maneuver.

And with another round of American presidential elections on the horizon, there is concern that the administration of President Bill Clinton, seen by Syrians as a vital peace broker, will become increasingly distracted by domestic politics.

With Syria's economy sputtering and unemployment running at 20 percent, the prospect of a post-peace influx of Western aid and a reduction in military spending appear increasingly attractive.

"Syria has had to become more realistic," said Hamdan Hamdan, a Palestinian writer based in Damascus, "particularly after waiting through three long years of Netanyahu, when there was no hope for peace."

■ Fatah Attacks Syrian Defense Chief

Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction of the Palestinian movement called Thursday in a leaflet for the execution of the Syrian defense minister, Mustafa Tlas, on the ground that he accused Mr. Arafat of selling out the Palestinian cause. Reuters reported from Gaza.

The leaflet, published in several Palestinian newspapers, countered a derogatory speech by Lieutenant General Tlas by firing a broadside against the government of President Hafez Assad.

The leaflet called the lieutenant a "filthy traitor" and said the Syrian regime was "fully responsible for the statements of betrayal."

General Tlas accused Mr. Arafat in his speech marking Army Day in Syria and Lebanon of having abandoned the Palestinian cause.

He likened the Palestinian leader to a "stripper" for making concessions to Israel.

America Has Made a Mess of Its Policy Toward Iraq

By Jim Hoagland

LONDON — The Clinton administration looks from abroad to be losing energy, focus and altitude daily in an August that is searing London, Paris and other European capitals as it scorches the United States.

Serious British newspapers devote banner headlines to the Clintons' marriage but ignore the president's policy agenda. A lackluster, unfocused Clinton performance at the Balkans summit meeting in Sarajevo and the inept handling of the change of NATO's commander have stirred concerns in Brussels and elsewhere about Washington's alliance management capabilities over the next 17 months.

And on another weathervane issue, Iraqi exile leaders here have just learned that the Clinton administration has backed away from a daring plan the leaders had drawn up to challenge Saddam Hussein politically on Iraqi soil this month. This retreat threatens to undercut White House pledges to work more seriously for "re-

gime change" in Baghdad.

Hope rose within the exile community last spring that the White House had decided to put more muscle and commitment into cleaning up its most visible foreign policy failure. On May 24, Sandy Berger, President Bill Clinton's national security adviser, met with representatives of seven Iraqi groups that the U.S. administration had prodded into uniting as the democratic opposition to Saddam. Several present at the 25-minute session say they heard Mr. Berger declare a determination to get rid of Saddam's regime by the end of Mr. Clinton's second term.

This spurred the interim leadership of the Iraqi National Congress to draw up plans to use U.S. funds and equipment that Congress had already mandated to help them resist Saddam's dictatorship. Its most ambitious political proposal was for a plenary session of its legislature, the Iraqi National Assembly. It proposed to hold that meeting in northern Iraq's

Kurdistan, across a de facto border from Saddam's forces.

The seven-member leadership group wrote to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on July 7 asking for U.S. military protection for the assembly. Only the shadow of U.S. muscle would deter Saddam from attacking and ensure that key leaders such as the Kurdish chieftain Massoud Barzani would attend. U.S. physical support would also symbolize the administration's new commitment.

But the idea failed to gain White House or Pentagon support at a high-level decision-making meeting on July 22. On July 29, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott dashed the hopes of the Iraqi leaders for a new approach. His letter to them supported the assembly meeting but added, "Should you decide to hold the conference inside Iraq, responsibility for security will lie with the popular resistance forces on the ground."

Mr. Talbott noted previous U.S. promises to "respond in a

strong and sure manner ... if the Baghdad regime were to move against the people of the north," but said that promise would be treated as "a separate matter" from the assembly meeting.

Iraqi National Congress leaders are now discussing plans to gather in the historically important town of Halabja, where Saddam used poison gas against the Kurds in 1988. Halabja is currently under the control of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan, which is friendly to Iran. Tehran would gain in prestige locally by seeming to provide protection against Saddam that Washington dared not offer.

The renewed caution of the Clinton team in confronting Saddam has also surfaced in its efforts to play down the possibility that Iraq has used the year in which it has been totally free from UN inspections to develop atomic, biological and chemical weapons.

In a complete turnaround from its nearly hysterical reaction to Iraq's expulsions of UN inspectors in the past, the administration now professes to see no cause for concern about Saddam's breaking out of the

inspection regime pioneered under President George Bush's administration.

In Iraq the Clintonites have taken the weak but tenable hand they inherited and turned it into a total mess. UN inspections are gone. Northern Iraq, where Kurdish factions were cooperating in forming a functioning regional administration when Mr. Clinton came to office, is today a cauldron of competing armies and guerrilla groups.

Neither Al Gore nor George W. Bush is likely to be eager to talk about Iraq in the coming campaign. But U.S. policy there could become a perfect "outsider" issue for candidates such as John McCain or Bill Bradley, who are not tied to past mistakes, or for their political allies.

The Iraqi National Congress tells me that it would welcome a U.S. congressional delegation or high-profile observers at Halabja. Anyone feeling more daring than Bill Clinton?

The Washington Post.

Kurds Vow to Reply if Turks Attack During Their Retreat

The Associated Press

ANKARA — Fearing attacks by Turkey's military during their promised retreat in Turkey, Kurdish rebels said Friday that they reserved the right to defend themselves even after their promised cease-fire.

The rebels' imprisoned and condemned leader, Abdullah Ocalan, has ordered that his guerrillas stop fighting and withdraw from southeastern Turkey.

"No armed action will be carried out by our forces other than using our right to self-defense against possible attacks," the group said, adding that Turkish forces might misinterpret the retreat as a sign of weakness.

It would be the rebels' first retreat from the southeast, where Kurdish guerrillas and Turkish troops have fought since 1984. The conflict has killed 37,000 people, mostly Kurds.

"This is a very serious sign that raises the hope that the terrorism problem, which has been giving a headache to Turkey for the past 15 years, will end," said Oktay Eksi, chief columnist for the daily *Hurriyet*.

Despite the cease-fire pledge, due to take effect at the end of the month, rebels ambushed a military patrol in the southeastern Turkish province of Van late Thursday, killing a reserve officer and wounding a private, the semi-official Anatolia press agency reported.

On Friday, Mr. Ocalan said that "unless it is necessary, engaging in clashes should be avoided."

Responding to some Turkish suggestions that the withdrawal was not satisfactory as the rebels were not going to surrender, Mr. Ocalan said such expectations were "unrealistic."

Sunday August 8 8:40 AM ET

Minister Vows Turkey Will Pursue Kurd Rebels

By Steve Bryant

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkey will pursue separatist Kurdish rebels and bring them to justice even if the guerrillas hold to a pledge to stop fighting and withdraw their forces outside the country, a Turkish minister said Sunday.

The comments from Farm Minister Husnu Yusuf Gokalp, of the hardline nationalist wing of the coalition, underlined Turkey's refusal to talk to the rebels, who are seen as trying to shift their campaign for Kurdish self-rule from arms to negotiation.

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) said Friday it would comply with a call from condemned leader Abdullah Ocalan "to end the armed struggle and withdraw their forces outside the borders of Turkey for the sake of peace from September 1, 1999."

Anatolian news agency said PKK rebels attacked a dam construction site in the mainly Kurdish southeast late Friday, setting fire to four bulldozers and stealing weapons from guards in the first reported attack since the PKK pledge.

More than 30,000 rebels, troops and civilians have died in the conflict since the PKK took up arms in 1984.

No casualties were reported in the attack on the Alparslan-1 dam site in Mus province, part of a network of dams that have disturbed downstream neighbors Iraq and Syria.

Turkey says a resolute military campaign, combined with Ocalan's capture, has greatly weakened the guerrillas.

"Putting down their arms and moving abroad will not save the PKK, we will grab them by the ear and bring them back," Anatolian news agency quoted Gokalp as saying during a visit to the eastern province of Sivas.

Turkish forces captured Ocalan in Kenya in February and brought him to trial in Turkey. They also captured a senior rebel commander in northern Iraq last year and brought a third rebel to Turkey in July this year.

Ocalan is now appealing against a death sentence a court handed him in June. He has portrayed himself as the man Turkey must talk to if it seeks a peaceful end to the conflict.

Gokalp said the rebel leader's peace overtures were insincere attempts to save his life.

"It comes from the separatist bandit's misery and baseness," he said.

Turkish newspapers said withdrawing PKK forces intended to gather in the Kurdish-held enclave of northern Iraq where they would hold a congress on the rebel movement's future policy.

The rebels already have bases and fighters in the region, where they are often attacked by Turkish air and ground forces.

Operational control of the PKK is held by a number of commanders at large in northern Iraq and, possibly, Iran. Analysts say some favor maintaining a military offensive while others support a political dialogue.

Turkey refuses any talks with a group it calls "terrorist."

President Suleyman Demirel met members of the country's main legal Kurdish party at the weekend. The party faces possible closure in a case before the constitutional court charging it with acting as the political wing of the PKK.

Saturday August 7 12:46 AM ET

Ocalan Says Kurd Rebel Surrender Unrealistic



Reuters Photo

Full Coverage

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By Jon Hemming

ANKARA, Turkey (Reuters) - Condemned Kurdish rebel chief Abdullah Ocalan said Friday it was unrealistic to expect his guerrillas to surrender and such a demand would have no chance of ending Turkey's Kurdish conflict.

His statement followed a call he issued from his island jail Tuesday for his Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) "to end the armed struggle and withdraw their forces outside the borders of Turkey, for the sake of peace, from September 1, 1999."

Ocalan, condemned by a Turkish court in June to hang for treason, was criticised in Turkey for not going far enough and ordering PKK militants to lay down their arms.

"To question why I did not make a call to surrender is an attitude aimed at making the task more difficult," Ocalan said in a statement conveyed by his lawyers from Imrali island.

"It is unrealistic, has no chance of implementation and serves to deepen the deadlock."

Both Turkey's government and the powerful military have so far rejected any possibility of negotiation with Ocalan, repeating their well-entrenched position that the PKK is "terrorist."

"The Turkish armed forces are not interested in decisions taken by the head of the terrorist organization," a senior officer in the southeast who declined to be named told Reuters.

The army says it has all but defeated the PKK militarily.

"Our military forces have dealt severe blows to terrorism and are determined to finish it off," the officer said.

Analysts also point to possible splits in the ranks of the rebel leadership between those who support a political dialogue and hawks who want to maintain their military offensive.

An order to surrender, they say, would almost certainly not be obeyed by some of the guerrilla group.

But Ocalan, who founded the PKK in 1978 and led its campaign for Kurdish self-rule until he was snatched by Turkish special forces in Kenya this year, insisted the rebels leave Turkey.

"Withdrawing outside the borders is best for everyone, he said."

Some recent attacks, including one on a minibus in which four men and two children died, were the work of provocateurs. Turkey and the PKK blamed each other for the attack, he added.

"When the PKK forces have left, the provocateurs will be clearly identified," Ocalan said.

The armed wing of the party said it would obey Ocalan's order but would resist any attack by Turkish forces.

"We will not carry out any armed actions, except using our right of self-defense," it said.

But exactly how the estimated 4,000 fighters will march hundreds of miles to Iran or Iraq through areas brimming with thousands of Turkish troops is open to question.

Troops patrolling the Ercis region of Van province overnight came across a group of Kurdish guerrillas, a security official told Reuters. A clash broke out and two PKK rebels were killed. There were no military casualties, he said.

More than 30,000 people, around two-thirds of them rebels, have been killed in the nearly 15-year-old conflict.

Analysts said the most likely option for the rebels was to try to break through to the Kurdish-held enclave in north Iraq which has been out of Baghdad's control since the 1991 Gulf War.

"It is already clear. The place where the PKK bases itself will be northern Iraq because that is the only place where there is a power vacuum," commentator Enis Berberoğlu told Reuters.

Thousands of Turkish troops backed by tanks and air power mount regular offensives into the remote region to hunt down the rebels who use bases there to strike into southeast Turkey.

"If they leave Turkey for northern Iraq, then that place will be the new scene for the conflict," said Berberoğlu.

"They are not part of the political life of Iraqi Kurdistan and they are not welcome there," said Safeen Dizayee of Iraq's Kurdistan Democratic Party, whose "peshmerga" fighters are allied with Turkey against the PKK. "It creates concerns for us and it is our duty to prevent it," he said.



La Turquie continuera de traquer les rebelles du PKK, selon un ministre

ANKARA, 8 août (AFP) - 14h27 - La Turquie continuera de traquer les rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatiste) en dépit de l'appel de son chef à déposer les armes, a déclaré dimanche un ministre turc cité par l'agence Anatolie.

"L'appel lancé par son chef aux militants de l'organisation terroriste ne va rien changer pour nous. Les rebelles du PKK ne pourront se sauver impunément", a dit le ministre de l'Agriculture et des Affaires rurales Husnu Yusuf Gokalp, membre du parti de l'Action nationaliste (MHP, ultra-nationaliste), deuxième parti du gouvernement de coalition tripartite.

Le chef du PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à la peine capitale pour trahison et séparatisme, a appelé la semaine dernière les militants de son parti à déposer les armes et à se retirer de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre. Son appel a été approuvé par la branche armée du PKK, l'ARGK.

"Nous capturerons ceux qui déposeront les armes pour les ramener" en Turquie (...) Ils se prennent pour qui pour proclamer une trêve avec nous?", a ajouté M. Gokalp.

Le PKK a lancé sa lutte armée en 1984 pour créer un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie. Les violences liées à cette rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

Des rebelles du PKK ont attaqué dans la nuit de vendredi à samedi le chantier du barrage d'Alparslan en construction dans la province de Mus (est). Les maquisards ont fait irruption sur le chantier situé dans le district de Bulanik et mis le feu à quatre excavatrices avant de prendre la fuite.

Le PKK mène fréquemment des attaques contre des chantiers de l'Etat, surtout dans l'est et le sud-est anatoliens, théâtre de la rébellion armée.

Le cessez-le feu décrété par le PKK place Ankara dans une position inconfortable

L'arrêt des opérations militaires proposé par Abdullah Öcalan devrait forcer les autorités turques à trouver une solution politique au problème kurde

ISTANBUL

de notre correspondant

L'ARGK, l'aile armée du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), a confirmé, vendredi 6 août, une décision annoncée la veille par le Conseil de la présidence du mouvement kurde, qui avait répondu à l'appel à la paix lancé par son dirigeant, Abdullah Öcalan. « A partir du 1^{er} septembre, nous commencerons à appliquer le plan envisagé par notre camarade dirigeant Abdullah Öcalan. Nous ne lancerons pas d'attaques armées, sauf en cas de légitime auto-défense », a annoncé l'ARGK.

« Nous appelons l'ensemble de nos forces et notre peuple patriote à œuvrer pour offrir à notre peuple un avenir dans la paix, la démocratie, la fraternité et la liberté », indiquait le communiqué du Conseil de la présidence du PKK publié jeudi. Condamné à mort le 29 juin et actuellement détenu dans l'île-prison d'İmralı, Abdullah Öcalan avait, par l'intermédiaire de ses avocats, demandé, le 2 août, à ses combattants de mettre fin à une lutte armée commencée il y a près de quinze ans et de se retirer du territoire turc.

Les déclarations du PKK ont été accueillies avec scepticisme dans les cercles gouvernementaux.

« Tous ceux qui s'intéressent à la Turquie doivent contribuer à mettre fin au terrorisme séparatiste, a déclaré le premier ministre, Bülent Ecevit. Mais l'Etat turc ne négociera jamais avec qui que ce soit. Nous ne savons pas ce qui va se passer. Le temps nous le dira. » Quant au président Suleyman Demirel, dont les propos reflètent souvent les vues de l'armée, il a clairement affirmé que l'Etat n'envisageait pas de réviser sa politique.

Le cessez-le-feu pourrait néanmoins marquer un tournant important dans le conflit, qui a fait à ce jour plus de 30 000 victimes. Il traduit certes la prise de conscience par le PKK que la lutte armée n'apportera pas les résultats escomptés. Mais l'arrêt des combats – s'il est respecté – et l'appel à la paix placent les autorités turques dans une position inconfortable. Le conflit armé pourrait prendre fin, mais le problème kurde n'est toujours pas réglé. Qui plus est, après le procès d'Abdullah Öcalan, ce problème est désormais débattu sur la scène internationale.

SOLUTION POLITIQUE

Depuis la condamnation à mort du dirigeant kurde, plusieurs gou-

vernements ont appelé Ankara à saisir l'occasion qui lui est ainsi offerte pour faire preuve de clémence et trouver une solution politique à l'épineuse question kurde. Jusqu'à maintenant, l'Etat turc a rejeté cette option, préférant poursuivre la politique militariste adoptée depuis de longues années. Malgré l'arrestation d'Öcalan, en février, des affrontements armés ont lieu quotidiennement dans le Sud-Est anatolien, et le conflit continue de faire des victimes.

La décision du PKK a coïncidé avec la visite en Turquie de Harold Koh, sous-secrétaire d'Etat américain pour les droits de l'homme, la démocratie et le travail. M. Koh s'est rendu dans le Sud-Est anatolien et a rendu visite, dans sa prison, à l'ancienne députée kurde Leyla Zana, détenue depuis 1994, condamnée à une peine de quinze ans d'emprisonnement pour séparatisme. Se dégageant du langage souvent convenu des responsables américains, M. Koh a clairement indiqué que les Etats-Unis, la puissance la plus influente en Turquie, souhaitaient voir Ankara accorder des droits culturels et linguistiques aux Kurdes, ainsi que le droit de s'exprimer par l'in-

termédiaire de partis politiques.

M. Koh, dont les propos ont suscité de vives réactions en Turquie, a également évoqué la nécessité de permettre aux Kurdes, forcés d'évacuer leurs villages, de rentrer chez eux. « Une solution aux problèmes de la région ne peut pas être purement militaire. Cela doit passer par le dialogue et un processus politique dans lequel les droits de tous les citoyens turcs sont respectés, a-t-il déclaré. Loin de porter atteinte à l'intégrité de la Turquie, une politique qui inclurait ces droits renforcerait l'Etat turc, en donnant à la communauté kurde un véritable intérêt dans l'avenir du pays. »

Le cessez-le-feu décrété par le PKK n'est pas le premier du genre, et les risques de dérapage persistent, notamment à l'approche du quinzième anniversaire, le 15 août, du début de la lutte armée. De nombreuses questions demeurent sans réponse – telle celle de savoir comment et où les combattants du PKK vont se reposer. Mais après des années d'impasse totale, ce développement offre une petite lueur d'espoir.

Nicole Pope

■ Le secrétaire général de la Confédération des syndicats ouvriers de Turquie, Semsi Denizler, a été assassiné dans la nuit du vendredi 6 au samedi 7 août, près de son domicile à Zonguldak (Nord). La police a arrêté un suspect, qui a affirmé avoir tué le syndicaliste à la suite d'un différend concernant des dettes. – (AFP)

Le Monde

— DIMANCHE 8 - LUNDI 9 AOÛT 1999 —

Scepticisme et méfiance chez les Kurdes irakiens

« ABDULLAH ÖCALAN et le PKK [Parti des travailleurs kurdes de Turquie] commencent à semer la pagaille. S'ils ont vraiment l'intention d'arrêter la lutte contre l'armée turque, ils devraient tout simplement démanteler leur structure militaire. Sinon, leur offre est cousue de fil blanc. Tout ça n'est pas bien net. » Ce n'est pas un dirigeant turc qui tient des propos aussi méfiants, mais un responsable kurde

irakien, et ses déclarations reflètent l'état d'esprit d'une partie au moins des Kurdes d'Irak, après l'annonce par le PKK de l'arrêt des combats contre l'armée turque et du « retrait » des combattants du territoire turc.

« Où voulez-vous qu'ils se replient ? », demande ce responsable interrogé par *Le Monde*. « La Syrie n'en voudra pas », Damas étant lié, depuis le 20 octobre 1998, par un

accord conclu avec la Turquie, en vertu duquel la Syrie s'est engagée à ne plus offrir d'assistance au PKK – et dont la principale conséquence fut l'expulsion d'Öcalan. « L'Irak ne sera pas plus accueillant », ayant déjà suffisamment maille à partir avec Ankara, qui l'accuse d'avoir pris le relais de la Syrie comme principal soutien du PKK. « Les combattants du PKK vont donc se retrouver dans le Kurdistan irakien », en conclut ce responsable, non sans noter que l'annonce de leur retrait du territoire turc semble surtout déclamatoire, puisque « d'ores et déjà c'est dans le Kurdistan d'Irak et dans les régions frontalières iraniennes que le PKK maintient l'essentiel de ses forces ».

Si ce responsable ne souhaite pas être identifié, c'est « parce que, dit-il, nous avons déjà assez de pro-

blèmes ». Et le PKK n'est pas le moindre, dans un Kurdistan d'Irak où la situation est passablement compliquée. De fait, la présence civile et militaire du parti d'Abdullah Öcalan est l'une des principales pommes de discorde entre les deux principales formations kurdes irakiennes, l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK) de Jalal Talabani et le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) de Massoud Barzani.

Cela fait des années que le PDK, allié à l'armée turque, pourchasse le PKK. Il exige de l'UPK de s'associer à cette guerre et en fait une condition sine qua non d'une réconciliation avec l'UPK – à laquelle l'oppose, pour l'essentiel, une lutte pour le pouvoir. Mais la formation de M. Talabani ne veut pas se laisser entraîner dans une « kurdisation » du conflit qui oppose la

Turquie à son importante minorité kurde. En fait, le PKK irrite profondément l'UPK à cause de son activisme militaire suicidaire, mais il n'en est pas moins une carte dans le conflit qui l'oppose au PDK. Qui plus est, selon des sources kurdes irakiennes, le PKK entretient des contacts avec le pouvoir central à Bagdad.

« MÉTHODES REPOUSSOIR »

Les Kurdes irakiens, UPK incluse, avaient déjà vu d'un mauvais œil la création par le PKK, en février, d'une section du « Kurdistan du Sud » (le Kurdistan d'Irak), où il tente de recruter des jeunes du cru. « Compte tenu de l'interminable conflit qui oppose entre eux les

Kurdes irakiens et d'une certaine désespérance de la jeunesse locale, le PKK aurait pu ratisser large, selon ce responsable. Mais ses méthodes à la fois stalinienne et irrespectueuses des traditions locales servent heureusement de repoussoir. »

« Dès le début des années 90, nous avons essayé de convaincre Öcalan que les choses avaient chan-

gé dans la région et qu'il devait concevoir d'autres moyens de lutte. Il n'a rien voulu entendre », dit-il encore. Il lui paraît indispensable que la direction du PKK prenne ses distances par rapport à Öcalan pour pouvoir « réfléchir et agir de manière rationnelle ».

Mouna Naïm

President Demirel makes a new opening

9 August, 1999, Copyright ©

Turkish Daily News

- The head of state told the pro-Kurdish mayors of southeastern provinces that his door is always open to them and urged them to serve the people...

Editorial by Ilnur Cevik

On Saturday President Suleyman Demirel received the pro-Kurdish mayors of Diyarbakir, Van, Batman, Siirt, Hakkari, Bingol and Agri and told them his door is always wide open to them and added "you can always call me or visit me."

The mayors, all from the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP), presented files about the problems of their cities to the president, who told them: "The state will always be at your side. There is no reason for concern."

Of course, these are the statements of a responsible head of state who represents the people of the Turkish Republic, and thus is not unusual. But after the bitter experiences of the past decade, such statements become very meaningful.

In a western democracy such things would be taken for granted, and thus a visit by the mayors of a region would be routine. But Turkey is an unusual country, and the circumstances are far from normal...

Turkey has suffered a long terrorist campaign in the hands of Kurdish separatists, and this has affected our social, economic and political life. So when President Demirel makes such statements, it is more than significant.

Some people may say, "The HADEP mayors are elected officials, and thus it is only normal for a president to treat such people accordingly." But in the past, deputies elected from southeastern provinces have been thrown out of Parliament for their views. Some of them are in prison today while others live in exile... So the way Demirel received the mayors and spoke to them is very sensitive at a time when the PKK is talking about laying down its arms and pulling its militants out of Turkey.

The HADEP mayors have done the sensible thing by visiting Demirel and discussing the problems of their cities. They have shown that they are not trapped in this unfruitful notion of defying the central administration in Ankara and playing on regional sentiments with a separatist aim... Demirel, for his part, has put aside the famous Turkish state rigidity of treating the mayors as a group of separatist terrorists...

We can now build on this new opening. The state can genuinely help the mayors to overcome their problems with the help of the president and the government. On the other hand, the mayors can serve this country by concentrating on solving the problems of their cities and overcome the suffering of the local people by pushing aside separatism and ethnic identity.

But if the mayors fall into the trap of Kurdish separatism like the deputies of the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party (DEP) did in the past and thus antagonize the Turkish masses, then we will be back to square one. The mayors should hold on to the current golden opportunity and build on this. This opening could serve for the eventual solution of the southeastern problem.

LES KURDES D'ÖCALAN BAISSENT LES ARMES

Le gouvernement turc dément négocier avec le PKK

Cela ne se veut pas une reddition mais l'appel à l'arrêt «des opérations militaires» lancé depuis sa prison par le chef rebelle kurde emprisonné Abdullah Öcalan, repris ensuite par la direction du PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, séparatiste) et par la branche militaire sonne comme un véritable adieu aux armes. Il y a trois jours «Apo» («l'oncle», comme l'appellent ses partisans) dans un message écrit dans l'île-prison d'Imrali et destiné «à l'opinion publique turque et mondiale» demandait au «PKK de mettre fin à la lutte armée à partir du 1^{er} septembre 1999 et de faire sortir ses forces hors des frontières de la Turquie». Fort du soutien de l'ensemble d'une organisation sur laquelle il régnait sans partage jusqu'à son arrestation en février dernier au Kenya, le chef rebelle kurde est revenu hier à la charge. «Je voudrais souligner que je n'ai pas lancé cet appel pour de simples raisons tactiques. Il est stratégique», affirme Abdullah Öcalan qui cite le Premier ministre turc Bülent Ecevit pour qui «chacun devrait faire son devoir» en vue de mettre fin au conflit. Il affirme n'avoir pas pu demander la reddition de ses hommes, car cela n'aurait été «ni réaliste, ni pratique».

De plus en plus pressant. Condamné à mort le 29 juin dernier «pour tentative de diviser le territoire turc» le chef rebelle kurde avait, dès le début de son procès, tenté de sauver sa tête en lançant un appel à la conciliation pour mettre fin à une guerre qui a fait plus de 30 000 morts en 15 ans. Dans le même temps, il avait menacé la Turquie d'un bain de sang s'il était exécuté. La Cour de cassation doit examiner en octobre l'appel déposé par ses avocats. Les propositions du chef kurde se font de plus en plus pressantes et de plus en plus précises pour éviter de finir au bout d'une corde.

Les dirigeants du PKK en exil acceptent la nouvelle ligne parce qu'ils pensent que des discussions ont lieu entre leur chef emprisonné et de hauts responsables de l'Etat turc. Dans les milieux kurdes on glo-



Un membre du PKK, en 1991, dans un camp d'entraînement de la plaine de la Bekaa, au Liban. La guerre a fait 30 000 morts en quinze ans.

se beaucoup autour de la visite effectuée il y a quelques jours à Imrali par le général Cevik Bir, volontiers considéré comme le plus brillant et le plus politique des hauts responsables militaires d'Ankara. Le prétexte officiel, celui d'une inspection des conditions de détention du chef kurde, n'est pas très convaincant. Mais la réalité de ces contacts ne signifie pas que des négociations sont engagées avec le PKK, même si l'organisation séparatiste aux abois cherche à tout prix à montrer qu'elle reste un incontournable interlocuteur pour une solution politique de la question kurde.

Officiellement, les autorités d'Ankara affichent tou-

**«Les ordres tels que "poursuivez le combat" ou "arrêtez-le" n'affectent pas la détermination du gouvernement.»
Le président turc Suleiman Demirel**

jours leur refus «de tout marchandage» avec ce qu'elles considèrent être «une organisation terroriste sanguinaire». Elles pensent que l'arrestation d'Öcalan a porté un coup fatal à l'organisation séparatiste. «Les ordres tels que "poursuivez le combat" ou "arrêtez-le" n'affectent en aucun cas la détermination du gouvernement dans son combat. L'Etat n'a besoin de rien pour terminer ce combat», affirmait hier le président turc Suleiman Demirel. La veille, Bülent Ecevit s'interrogeait sur les motivations réelles du leader séparatiste: «Comprenez bien qu'Öcalan fait ce genre de constat après avoir été arrêté,



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emprisonné et condamné. Mais derrière cette intransigeance de façade, les dirigeants turcs, forts de leur victoire militaire sur la rébellion kurde, hésitent sur l'attitude à prendre vis-à-vis d'Öcalan, d'autant que les Européens multiplient les pressions pour éviter sa pendaison. Le président Suleiman Demirel, à qui reviendra l'ultime décision après le verdict de la Cour de cassation et le vote du parlement, reconnaissait il y a une semaine qu'il s'agit d'une question «très sensible» et que le choix sera «politique». En outre, une fraction croissante de la société civile, hommes d'affaires ou intellectuels, souligne qu'il faut maintenant faire des gestes vis-à-vis des quelque 13 millions de Kurdes de Turquie (1/5^e de la population), qui disposent individuellement de tous les droits des autres citoyens turcs, mais ne peuvent pas collectivement se revendiquer comme Kurdes, ni recevoir un enseignement dans leur langue ou, a fortiori, disposer de la moindre forme d'autonomie. La plupart des éditorialistes, y compris ceux de la grande presse populaire, jugent positivement l'appel

du chef kurde et pressent l'Etat de saisir cette chance pour la paix. «Il faut faire preuve de sang-froid et bien réfléchir avant de rejeter cette proposition», affirmait hier Hasan Djemal, l'un des plus populaires éditorialistes du quotidien *Miliyet*, soulignant que les vraies raisons de l'appel d'Öcalan – «sauver sa tête, négocier avec l'Etat ou transformer son parti en mouvement politique après avoir constaté que la lutte armée était sans issue» – n'avaient à cet égard guère d'importance.

«Alibi». Encore plus catégorique, Enis Berberoglu soulignait dans les colonnes du quotidien *Hurriyet*: «Il faut regarder les choses en face et, quand on a un cancer, ne pas le qualifier de grippe», écrit l'éditorialiste qui, la veille, pourfendait «ceux qui croient faire de la politique en exploitant les martyrs», c'est à dire les soldats tombés dans la lutte contre la rébellion. Kendal Nezan, président de l'Institut kurde de Paris, reconnaît que l'abandon de la lutte armée par le PKK représenterait «un vrai tournant»: «La lutte armée représentait une impasse. Désormais, les dirigeants turcs n'auront plus d'alibi pour refuser les droits culturels et politiques aux Kurdes.» ●

MARC SENO

Huit rebelles kurdes et deux soldats turcs tués dans des combats

ANKARA, 9 août (AFP) - 13h35 - Huit rebelles du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) et deux soldats turcs ont été tués lors d'affrontements dans l'est et le sud-est de la Turquie, a indiqué lundi l'agence Anatolie.

Six rebelles et un soldat ont été tués dans des régions rurales des provinces de Van, Mus (est) et Diyarbakir (sud-est), selon l'agence, qui cite les autorités locales, sans donner de date.

Lors d'un affrontement séparé dans la province d'Elazig (est), un soldat et deux rebelles ont été tués, et un soldat blessé, lundi près du village de Doganoglu, selon Anatolie.

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde. Les violences liées à cette rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

Son chef Abdullah Öcalan 50 ans, condamné à mort pour trahison et séparatisme par la justice turque, a appelé la semaine dernière ses partisans à arrêter les combats et à se retirer de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre.

Le PKK, en particulier son aile militaire l'Armée populaire de libération du Kurdistan (ARGK), a répondu qu'il se plierait à cet appel, tout en soulignant qu'il userait de son droit de représailles si l'armée turque l'attaquait.



Le PKK offre un cessez-le-feu à une faction kurde du nord de l'Irak

ISTANBUL, 9 août (AFP) - 15h41 - Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, rébellion kurde de Turquie), a offert un cessez-le-feu au Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK), l'une des factions kurdes qui contrôle le nord de l'Irak, a annoncé lundi l'agence pro-kurde Dem dans un communiqué.

Cette offre du comité central du PKK est la première indication claire que les rebelles ont l'intention de se replier vers le nord de l'Irak lors de leur retrait de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre.

Le PKK a dit qu'il était "prêt à un arrêt unilatéral des combats contre le PDK à partir du 1er septembre 1999" tout en se réservant le droit d'auto-défense.

"A partir de cette date et aussi longtemps que les forces du PDK n'attaqueront pas, l'ARGK (Armée populaire de libération du Kurdistan) n'engagera aucune action militaire", a souligné Dem, citant un communiqué du comité central du PKK.

Le PKK a annoncé qu'il arrêterait les combats et se retirerait de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre, conformément à un appel de son chef Abdullah Öcalan, condamné à mort pour trahison par la justice turque.

Le PDK est allié depuis mai 1997 au gouvernement turc dans sa lutte contre le PKK dans le nord de l'Irak, utilisé comme base arrière par la rébellion kurde de Turquie.

L'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK), faction rivale du PDK dans le nord de l'Irak, s'est également engagée à ne pas offrir refuge aux militants du PKK.

Le PDK et l'UPK se disputent le pouvoir dans le nord de l'Irak qui échappe depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991 au contrôle de Bagdad.

Intelligence reports say there are 50 PKK camps in Iran

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

Despite denials by Iranian authorities that they are providing support to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), support by Iran for the outlawed terrorist group has reached frightening dimensions, with Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit stating it has taken on Syria's role.

A series of reports on the extent of the aid has been prepared by the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) in which the following are noted:

Aerial Logistic Support: At present there are approximately 50 PKK camps in Iran, in which 1,200 terrorists are being trained every year. These terrorists are being brought to the Turkish border by military planes which belong to Iran.

Iranian officers training the terrorists: Iranian officers are training PKK terrorists in the camps in Iran as well as in northern Iraq. Iranian intelligence service Savama agent Agay Muhammedi is responsible for maintaining coordination between the PKK camps in Iran and northern Iraq. The PKK terrorists living in Iran have been issued official residence papers stamped "West Azerbaijani State Permanent Residency Affairs."

More support for more demonstrations in Turkey: Terrorists Osman Ocalan, Cemil Bayik, Nizamettin Tas and Mustafa Karasu, who are members of the central PKK committee, have carried out activities with the help of Savama. It has been proven that Tehran maintains the attitude that "Tehran would continue supporting the PKK in return for more PKK terrorist activities in Turkey."

Financial support: Iran has given \$900,000 to the PKK from 1995 until now. When Osman Ocalan spent \$150,000, given to him as support for the PKK, on personal interests, relations between Iran and the PKK were destroyed. However, the situation is now back to normal with the efforts of Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the PKK.

Storage areas: Iran is giving logistic support to PKK terrorists. The PKK is using Iran's Maku-Dambad district as a storage area. The PKK terrorists who are active in Turkey also maintain logistic support from this district.

Hit-men: Iran also asks for favors from PKK terrorists in return for their support to the PKK. They asked PKK terrorists to kill the leading figures and members of the Iran Kurdistan Democrat Party. More than 100 members and 11 key figures were killed by PKK terrorists.

Medical care: Three hospitals which were given to the PKK are continuing to operate. PKK terrorists are treated in these hospitals.

Representative offices in six cities: There are PKK representative offices in six cities in Iran, which maintain that they are not in favor of terrorism.

PKK magazines: Iran is continuing to print promotional material for the PKK. Recently, the magazine "Denge Artese Gele," which belongs to the PKK, has started being printed by the Iranian government.

Breach of agreement: Iran did not obey the agreement between Turkey and Iran signed on April 6, 1999 for a simultaneous and joint operation against the PKK. Iran signed this agreement due to pressure from Turkey but then informed the PKK militants about the operations in the district and enabled them to leave.

They are using Talabani: Tehran also has close relations with the Union of Kurdistan Patriots (KYB), which is a supporter of the PKK. Iran is transferring money to the PKK through KYB, which is led by Talabani.

Ammunition: The PKK is transferring ammunition from Iran's Piransehir, Sardosth and Osnaviye districts to Turkey's Van and Hakkari districts. Meanwhile, the PKK terrorists are continuing to settle in Iran's Sardosth district.

Illegal border crossings: In addition to the logistic transfers between Iran and Armenia, it is observed that recently there have been intensive illegal border crossings from Iran to Turkey.

Meanwhile, the Iran News Gazette stated that "Turkish soldiers who have been in Iran since July 22, would be released within a week."

lundi 9 août 1999, 17h41

Le PKK pense à son avenir politique, propose une trêve élargie

REUTERS

DYARBAKIR, Turquie. 9 août - Parallèlement à l'arrêt de leur lutte armée, les séparatistes kurdes vont tenter d'obtenir une certaine légitimité politique en vue de faire pression sur les autorités turques de façon démocratique, selon Osman Öcalan, frère du leader séparatiste emprisonné.

"Le combat politique est considéré comme essentiel pour parvenir à des changements démocratiques par opposition à la lutte armée, qui n'est plus jugée vitale", dit-il dans une interview publiée par le quotidien turcophone Ozgur Politika.

L'accent mis sur le politique et l'abandon de la lutte armée, en réponse à l'appel à la trêve lancé la semaine dernière par Abdullah Öcalan, pousseront le gouvernement turc à octroyer des droits culturels à la communauté kurde, espère Osman Öcalan.

Toutefois, le frère du fondateur du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) ne précise pas les moyens de parvenir à cette reconnaissance politique.

Les journaux turcs de lundi parlent d'un prochain congrès des membres du PKK dans le nord de l'Irak pour décider de l'avenir du mouvement.

Depuis l'arrestation d'Abdullah Öcalan, en février dernier, le mouvement séparatiste, qui avait déjà modéré ses visées autonomistes, est dirigé par un groupe de jeunes combattants, dont Osman Öcalan, qui se trouveraient en Irak ou en Iran.

Trêve élargie

Visiblement prêt à joindre le geste à la parole, le PKK a fait savoir lundi qu'il se préparait à annoncer un cessez-le-feu avec le PDK (Parti démocratique kurde, irakien) de Massoud Barzani, qui collaborait occasionnellement avec les soldats turcs contre le PKK.

Selon l'agence DEM basée en Allemagne et proche des rebelles, le PKK se dit prêt à concrétiser cette initiative dès le 1er septembre, date à partir de laquelle il s'est engagé à mettre fin à sa lutte armée pour l'autonomie du sud-est de la Turquie et à se retirer hors des frontières turques.

Selon des analystes, la destination la plus probable des combattants du PKK serait l'enclave du nord de l'Irak sous contrôle kurde, région montagneuse dominée par deux factions kurdes irakiennes rivales.

Le PKK dispose déjà de centres d'entraînement et de logistique dans la région, mais ses activités s'y heurtent à l'opposition du PDK et de la Turquie, laquelle a monté plusieurs offensives à l'intérieur de l'enclave.

L'armée turque affirme être venue à bout des forces kurdes mais les affrontements se poursuivent dans le sud-est du pays et dans le nord de l'Irak, sur lequel on ne peut obtenir aucune information étant donné que les journalistes n'y sont pas admis. Plus de 30.000 personnes ont péri en quinze années de conflit kurde. /PBR/LBR

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Le PKK annonce la tenue d'un congrès pour "politiser" son programme

AFP

ANKARA, 9 août (AFP) - Le parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, rébellion kurde de Turquie) a annoncé qu'il tiendrait un congrès pour adopter un programme à orientation plus politique, dans la foulée de l'appel à l'arrêt des combats lancé par son chef Abdullah Öcalan.

Dans un communiqué diffusé lundi par l'agence pro-kurde Dem basée en Allemagne et reçue à Ankara, le comité central du PKK souligne que cette décision a été prise à l'issue d'une réunion du 23 au 29 juillet.

"Bien que la lutte armée soit parfois une nécessité, elle a perdu de sa nature dominante au cours du siècle", estime le comité central du PKK.

"Elle a été remplacée par la lutte politique. Les forces incapables de changer deviendront insignifiantes", ajoute la déclaration citée par Dem.

Ce changement est nécessaire sous "le nouvel ordre international dirigé par les Etats-Unis qui influence aussi le Proche-Orient", souligne le communiqué.

Il ne donne ni date ni lieu pour ce congrès extraordinaire, qui se focalisera sur "une transformation démocratique basée sur la lutte politique", selon le communiqué.

Il n'exclut pas la possibilité d'un "dialogue et d'une unification sur une base commune" si une solution est trouvée au conflit kurde sur la base d'une "République (turque) démocratique".

Abdullah Öcalan 50 ans, condamné à mort pour trahison et séparatisme par la justice turque, a appelé la semaine dernière son parti à arrêter les combats et à se retirer de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre.

La sentence doit être examinée en octobre par la Cour de cassation

Le PKK, en particulier son aile militaire, l'Armée populaire de libération du Kurdistan (ARGK), a répondu qu'il se plierait à cet appel, tout en soulignant qu'il userait de son droit de réponse si l'armée turque l'attaquait.

Ocalan a pendant son procès lancé plusieurs appels à une solution négociée du conflit kurde dans laquelle il jouerait le rôle d'intermédiaire. Mais l'Etat turc a répondu qu'il ne négocierait jamais avec des "terroristes".

Depuis sa capture mi-février, les combats se sont même intensifiés dans le sud-est.

Un soldat turc et 6 rebelles du PKK ont été tués lors d'affrontements dans des zones rurales des provinces de Van et Mus (est) et de Diyarbakir (sud-est), ont annoncé lundi les autorités locales à Diyarbakir, citées par l'agence Anatolie, sans donner de date.

Le PKK avait annoncé en mars avoir tenu son 6-ème congrès après la capture de son chef mi-février au Kenya, dans le "Kurdistan nord", soit en Turquie dans sa terminologie. Il avait alors réélu Ocalan président.

Selon la presse turque, ce congrès se serait en fait déroulé en Iran.

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde. Les violences liées à cette rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

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Le PKK doit laisser le nord de l'Irak en paix, selon une source kurde

ANKARA, 11 août (AFP) - 17h18 - Les rebelles kurdes de Turquie doivent laisser le nord de l'Irak en paix et cesser de s'ingérer dans ses affaires, a-t-on souligné mercredi de source kurde à Ankara, après une offre de cessez-le-feu du PKK à l'une des factions kurdes qui contrôle le nord de l'Irak.

Le parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) "est une organisation de Turquie et n'appartient pas au système local dans le nord de l'Irak. Ils ont amené leur propre guerre dans notre région. Nous voulons qu'ils nous laissent en paix et qu'ils n'interviennent pas dans nos affaires", a-t-on déclaré de même source.

L'offre de cessez-le-feu du PKK est "certainement une bonne nouvelle" s'il est sincère mais "ne donnera pas lieu à un marchandage en vertu duquel leur présence sera tolérée parce qu'ils ne mènent pas des attaques", a-t-on prévenu de même source.

Le PKK, qui se sert du nord de l'Irak comme base arrière, a offert un cessez-le-feu au parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) de Massoud Barzani à partir du 1er septembre, indiquant ainsi qu'il avait l'intention de se replier dans le nord de l'Irak après un appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan à se retirer de Turquie.

Le nord de l'Irak échappe depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991 au contrôle de Bagdad. L'armée turque y mène de fréquentes incursions pour en déloger le PKK, qui a lancé en 1984 une lutte armée pour obtenir la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie.

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Peine de mort requise contre un responsable du PKK capturé en Moldavie

ANKARA, 11 août (AFP) - 17h01 - Un procureur turc a requis mercredi la peine de mort contre Cevat Soysal, responsable du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) capturé en Moldavie par un commando turc en juillet, pour tentative de diviser la Turquie, a annoncé l'agence Anatolie.

Dans l'acte d'accusation remis à la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat d'Ankara, Nuh Mete Yuksel a demandé que Soysal, 37 ans, soit jugé en fonction de l'article 125 du code pénal, qui prévoit la peine de mort pour "activités visant à diviser le territoire turc pour créer un Etat séparé".

Cevat Soysal, qui bénéficiait du statut de réfugié politique en Allemagne, avait été capturé en juillet par un commando turc en Moldavie et ramené en Turquie pour y être jugé. Ankara l'avait présenté comme le numéro deux du PKK, tandis que le mouvement rebelle kurde avait minoré son importance et menacé de représailles.

Selon l'acte d'accusation de 10 pages, Soysal a ordonné l'attentat le plus sanglant commis en Turquie après la capture du chef du PKK Abdullah Ocalan au Kenya mi-février: une attaque à la bombe contre un centre commercial à Istanbul qui avait fait 13 morts le 13 mars.

Le document affirme que sous ses ordres, des centaines d'attentats à la bombe, incendies, grèves de la faim et tentatives d'attentat suicide ont été perpétrés en Turquie.

Ocalan a été condamné à mort fin juin pour trahison et tentative de diviser la Turquie. Sa capture a été suivie par une vague d'attentats en Turquie.

Iranians Want Progress

Iran's conservative mullahs have silenced the student protest movement that surged through the streets of Tehran last month and are now moving against its leaders with arrests and threats of long imprisonment. By using the clerically controlled courts and police to intimidate supporters of Iran's reform-minded president, Mohammed Khatami, religious conservatives hope to strengthen their own authority within Iran's divided power structure and undermine reform candidates in parliamentary elections early next year.

The mullahs should remember that Mr. Khatami and his allies speak for tens of millions of Iranians impatient to see less oppressive, more accountable government. That was the platform they voted for when they overwhelmingly elected him two years ago over a candidate favored by the clerical establishment. That was also the demand of last month's student protests, which

drew broad public support.

Adding to the pressures for change, Iran's economy is badly hurting. Depressed international oil prices, skittish foreign investors and years of economic mismanagement have brought hardship to poor and middle-class Iranians and sharpened criticism of clerical rule.

More than 200 students are still in jail as a result of the July demonstrations. Officials have denounced four student

leaders for counterrevolutionary activities and collaboration with Israel and the United States. Those charges could carry a death penalty. Three of the four have been shown making televised confessions, almost certainly under duress. Non-student activists have also been seized, reform newspapers shut down and top editors arrested.

Under Iran's constitution, President Khatami's power is limited. The religious leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali

Khamenei, holds supreme authority. But if next year's parliamentary elections produce a majority supporting reform, Mr. Khatami will exercise greater authority over government ministries and have more scope to expand the rule of law and revive the economy. If Ayatollah Khamenei is wise, he will support such a course, recognizing that Iran's Islamic republic must modernize to survive.

But to keep this path to peaceful reform open, clerical leaders must allow Iranians to choose freely and without fear in the coming elections, informed by an unshackled press. With Iran's economy sinking, its voters demanding reform and its young people clamoring for increased personal freedom, inflexible clerical resistance to change could provoke social and political upheaval.

—THE NEW YORK TIMES.

Iraq Ignoring UN Call to Use Oil Windfall For Children

By Barbara Crossette
New York Times Service

UNITED NATIONS, New York — Rising world oil prices coupled with a big increase in Iraqi production could earn Baghdad a record \$6.3 billion in the current six-month phase of the program that allows Iraq to sell oil to raise money for food, medicines and other civilian goods, officials and diplomats said.

Despite the windfall, the government refuses to spend more on childhood nutrition and maternal health, ignoring the advice of UN officials, the executive director of the United Nations' Iraq program, Benon Sevan, has told the Security Council. And medical supplies remain stockpiled in warehouses.

Mr. Sevan said he had asked the Iraqi government on a recent trip there to take an inventory and explain why goods had not moved.

The UN Children's Fund, Unicef, and the Iraqi government have recently completed a survey of children's health that is expected to show a steep deterioration since the Gulf War in 1991 and the imposition of sanctions on Iraq.

The release of the findings is being held up by the Iraqis, UN officials say. Some suggest that it will show greater advances in nutrition and maternal health in Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, where the United Nations has been running the program, than in the regions where Iraqis have been in charge.

By the end of July, Iraq was pumping an average of 2.84 million barrels of oil a day, according to Bridge News in London, a specialist news service. That brings Iraq close to its target of 3 million barrels a day. Excluding subsidized sales to neighboring Jordan and oil for Iraq's own use, the output leaves oil worth about \$2.3 billion for export in the six-month period that ends in November. Oil prices have more than doubled in the last six months, and if they remain high, Iraq could outdo even the most optimistic projections.

Under the program, known as oil for food, Iraq is permitted to sell up to \$5.2

billion in a six-month period. Until now Iraq has not been able to meet the target, and diplomats expect that previous shortfalls will be taken into account and that the Iraqis will not be penalized if they exceed the limit.

A third of the money goes to compensate victims of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990, and a fixed amount is also set aside for aid to the Kurdish regions. The program began in 1996 — nearly five years after it was first offered to President Saddam Hussein, who held out instead for an end to sanctions — and more than \$3.4 billion in food and \$700 million in medicines and medical equipment have reached Iraq.

The Iraqis and key UN officials say that to raise public health standards, Iraq must also rebuild or improve electricity supplies and sanitation services. But numerous Iraqi requests to buy machinery for these programs have met resistance in the Security Council.

Last week, Mr. Sevan wrote to the chairman of the sanctions committee, with a long list of items that Iraq wants to buy that have been blocked by the United States and occasionally by Britain. But U.S. officials contend that many of the items that Washington has put on hold are suspect because they could be intended for weapons programs.

Doomed Kurd Promises Peace To Turks in Return for Amnesty

Compiled by Our Staff from Dispatches

ISTANBUL — Abdullah Ocalan, the condemned Kurdish rebel leader, said Friday that his guerrilla followers would be prepared to lay down their arms if Turkey offered them a general amnesty in a search for a political solution to 15 years of conflict.

In a statement issued from his island prison cell via his lawyers, Mr. Ocalan said his Kurdistan Workers Party was determined to abandon the armed struggle for Kurdish self-rule.

The rebels have already pledged to obey a call from Mr. Ocalan to stop fighting except in self-defense and to

withdraw to sites outside Turkey.

"We could give up our weapons with a general amnesty as a part of the legal reforms all parties have mentioned in their promises to Turkey," Mr. Ocalan said. It was not clear what legal reforms he meant.

During his trial in June on charges of treason, he called for the end of legal barriers to Kurdish-language education and broadcasting, which he said fueled

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the resentment behind the Kurds' insurgency.

Mr. Ocalan's appeal came as Turkey and Iran signed a security memorandum to increase cooperation in fighting the

Kurdish rebels, but they failed to agree on issues that had recently strained their relations. Turkey failed to get assurances from Iran that it would expel Kurdish rebels from its territory, and Turkey re-

fused to pay compensation for a bombing raid last month that Tehran says hit its territory. (Reuters, AP)

U.S. and British Planes Waging a Little-Noticed War in Iraq

By Steven Lee Myers
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — It is the year's other war. While America's attention has focused on Kosovo, U.S. warplanes have methodically and with virtually no public discussion been attacking Iraq.

Over the past eight months, American and British pilots have fired more than 1,100 missiles against 359 targets.

That is more than triple the targets attacked in four furious days of strikes in December that followed Iraq's expulsion of United Nations weapons inspectors, an assault that provoked an international outrage.

By another measure, the pilots have flown about two-thirds as many missions as NATO pilots flew over Yugoslavia in 78 days of around-the-clock war there.

The strikes have done nothing to deter Iraqi gunners from firing on American and British planes patrolling the "no-flight" zones over northern and southern Iraq. They, like officials in Baghdad, are acting as defiant as ever.

And there appears to be no end in sight to the war, to the surprise and chagrin of some officials of the Clinton administration and the Pentagon.

[Responding to Iraqi missiles and artillery fire, U.S. warplanes hit Iraqi defense sites Friday in the northern air-exclusion zone, The Associated Press reported from Ankara, based on a statement released by the U.S. European Command, based in Stuttgart, Germany.

[The strike was triggered by Iraqi surface-to-air missiles and anti-aircraft artillery fired at U.S. warplanes in the vicinity of the city of Mosul, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) north of Baghdad, the command said.]

The cycle of tit-for-tat skirmishes has gone on so long that the Clinton administration is debating whether to intensify the attacks, expanding the list of targets to include more significant military targets, from air defenses to things like bases and headquarters, as long as Iraq fires at American and British jets, according to senior administration officials.

President Bill Clinton has not made a decision, but within the administration, some hawkish officials have contended that broader, more punishing strikes would deter the Iraqis and do more to weaken President Saddam Hussein's government, the officials said.

On the other hand, a tougher stand could also draw attention to strikes that have generated little opposition at home and abroad, in part because no American pilots have died or been injured.

"Our use of force so far has not risen to a threshold to cause international concern," especially among Arab allies in the Gulf, a senior official said. "Disproportionate responses might."

Overshadowed for much of the year by the war in the Balkans, the Clinton administration's policy

toward Iraq is increasingly facing criticism.

On Wednesday, a bipartisan group of prominent members of the Senate and House of Representatives sent a letter to Mr. Clinton scolding him for what they called "the continued drift" in policy.

While they expressed support for the strikes, they called on Mr. Clinton to give Iraq a new deadline to comply with UN inspections and to threaten "serious consequences" if Mr. Saddam refused, including more potent air strikes throughout Iraq and an expansion of the "no-flight" zones. They also called for increased support, including military aid, to Iraqi opposition groups.

Administration and Pentagon officials defend their policy — including the air strikes — as a firm, but measured, effort to isolate Mr. Saddam and

weaken his armed forces. They concede, however, that the Iraqis have proved more resilient than expected. They have quickly repaired damage done to air-defense weapons, forcing the Americans to bomb some targets over and over.

The Iraqis also have rebuilt some of the factories, barracks and other sites destroyed in the raids in December, including buildings at the Al Taji missile complex, one of the critical targets, according to Defense Department officials.

Of greater concern is Iraq's ability to rebuild its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, which Mr. Saddam pledged to halt as part of the cease-fire that ended the Gulf War in 1991. In their letter, the lawmakers said there was "considerable evidence" that Iraq continued to pursue those weapons, though neither the lawmakers nor their aides elaborated.

The administration and Pentagon officials maintain there is no evidence of that, but without international inspections, some acknowledged, there is little to stop Iraq from doing so. That is why the administration is quietly supporting a draft UN Security Council resolution by Britain and the Netherlands to renew the international weapons inspections. That resolution, which would create a new inspection agency to replace the United Nations Special Commission, is expected to go before the council in September, but it still lacks support from France, Russia and China, which have veto power.

Without some inspections, the patrols of the "no-flight" zones remain the core of the administration's effort to contain Mr. Saddam. The United States and its allies created the zones — north of the 36th parallel and south of the 33rd — in the years after the Gulf War to protect ethnic populations long repressed by Mr. Saddam's government. Iraq did not recognize the zones, but it had rarely challenged allied patrols of them.

After the raids in December, however, Mr. Saddam declared the zones a violation of Iraq's sovereignty, and his forces have made good on threats to challenge them.

Iraqi MiG jets dart in and out of the zones. Missile radars have tracked allied patrols, and gunners have fired anti-aircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles at them.

American and British warplanes respond when challenged, though not every time. Every few days they have struck missile sites, radar stations and radio towers across both the northern and southern zones. Since late July, there has been a new flurry of strikes in response to newly vigorous Iraqi challenges.

Sous la pression internationale

Ankara révisé la question kurde

Le gouvernement a mis au point un projet de loi d'amnistie pour les repentis.

Le chef kurde Abdullah Ocalan a assuré hier que son Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) était prêt à rendre les armes en échange d'une amnistie générale et de réformes. « Nous pouvons rendre les armes au moment où il y aura les réformes légales que tous les partis ont promises et l'amnistie générale qui est une partie de ces réformes », déclare Ocalan dans un communiqué rédigé après une visite de ses avocats sur l'île prison d'Imrali. (AFP.)

ISTANBUL :
Éric BIEGALA

Dès l'arrestation d'Abdullah Ocalan, en février, des voix s'étaient élevées pour demander une libéralisation du régime d'Ankara. Mises en veilleuse durant la campagne électorale puis pendant le procès du chef kurde, elles se font de nouveau entendre. Elles sont même de plus en plus nombreuses depuis qu'Ocalan a demandé au PKK de cesser le combat et d'évacuer le territoire turc d'ici au 1^{er} septembre. Un appel relayé par la direction du PKK et qui semble suivi d'effets puisque certains quotidiens d'Ankara affirment que ce retrait est déjà plus qu'à moitié achevé.

Ces appels à une libéralisation ou à une gestion plus « politique » du problème kurde accompagnent une indéniable volonté réformatrice du nouveau gouvernement. L'équipe de Bülent Ecevit s'est en effet attelée au problème



Abdullah Ocalan a demandé au PKK de cesser le combat et d'évacuer le territoire turc d'ici au 1^{er} septembre. (Photo AP.)

des droits fondamentaux qu'elle affirme être sa priorité.

Un premier projet de loi a été finalisé, renforçant les peines à l'encontre des tortionnaires. Il y a quelques semaines, le premier ministre avait déjà appelé les 80 gou-

verneurs du pays à conduire des inspections dans leurs provinces respectives pour y déceler les actes de torture et les réprimer.

Tentative de libéralisation

La Fondation pour les droits de l'homme (TIHV) qui tente de soigner et de réinsérer les victimes de tortures en Turquie a traité plus de 4 000 cas depuis 1990, la majorité des victimes étant d'origine kurde.

Autre signe de libéralisation : le gouvernement prépare un projet de loi prévoyant une amnistie partielle ou totale pour les rebelles prêts à se rendre, à condition qu'ils n'aient pas porté les armes et qu'il ne s'agisse pas de responsables.

Promise avant les législatives d'avril, cette loi n'est pas la première du genre, elle est même sensiblement en retrait par rapport aux textes précédents. Les réductions de peine prévues sont par exemple proportionnelles à l'utilité des renseignements fournis par les repentis.

C'est que toute tentative de libéralisation ou de démocratisation rencontre des résistances tant les mentalités semblent parfois enfermées dans un carcan idéologique. Lors de la discussion du projet de loi contre la torture, le ministre de la Justice en a fait l'expérience. Hikmet Sami Türk a dû batailler ferme en effet pour que son texte ne soit pas vidé de toute substance par des députés plus que réticents à rogner les prérogatives des forces de sécurité.

Pressions occidentales

Malgré les appels à la libé-

ralisation, nul ne se risque à de véritables propositions concrètes. « Le gouvernement doit faire face à ses responsabilités et cesser d'avoir recours à la facilité en sous-traitant la tâche aux militaires. Il doit formuler une stratégie pour résoudre le problème kurde », se contente par exemple d'écrire l'ancien ministre Sükrü Elekdağ dans le quotidien *Milliyet*.

Le projet de loi sur la décentralisation, l'unique texte qui aurait permis aux Kurdes du Sud-Est anatolien de s'affranchir quelque peu de la tutelle d'Ankara, a été enterré avec le renouvellement de l'Assemblée. Pour le moment, nul ne s'est avisé de le ressusciter. Aucun des partis représentés au Parlement n'a d'ailleurs le moindre projet visant à résoudre ou même à aborder la question kurde.

Restent les pressions occidentales. Les Européens ont été récemment rejoints par les Américains qui viennent de dépêcher en Turquie leur sous-secrétaire d'État en charge des droits de l'homme. Elles devraient même s'accroître avant l'arrivée de Bill Clinton en Turquie pour le sommet de l'OSCE, les 17 et 18 novembre.

Ces pressions portent généralement leurs fruits, du moins sur le court terme, les Turcs étant très soucieux de leur image à l'étranger. La sinistre réputation du pays en matière de droits fondamentaux a été ainsi le principal argument utilisé par le gouvernement pour faire accepter son texte sur la torture.

E. B.

La Turquie demande à l'Iran de refuser l'asile aux combattants kurdes

La Turquie a demandé à l'Iran mardi de refuser l'asile aux combattants kurdes, proposant au contraire d'engager contre eux des opérations militaires, a annoncé la télévision privée turque NTV.

Parallèlement, Abdullah Ocalan, le chef emprisonné du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), a déclaré que ses combattants étaient prêts à déposer leurs armes si la Turquie mettait en place les conditions adéquates. Abdullah Ocalan a appelé la Turquie à reconnaître les Kurdes comme une communauté distincte, à lever les interdictions concernant l'éducation en langue kurde et la diffusion d'émissions dans cette langue, et à accorder une amnistie générale à ses combattants. « Si la Turquie prend des mesures, les armes seront déposées », a fait savoir Abdullah Ocalan dans un communiqué rendu public mardi par ses avocats.

Les combattants kurdes ont déjà annoncé un cessez-le-feu et un retrait de leurs troupes du sud-est de la Turquie, où ils combattent depuis 15 ans pour obtenir leur autonomie.

AOÛT 14-15, 1999

LE FIGARO

12 AOÛT 1999



The Iraq Deadlock

When Richard Holbrooke takes over as America's representative to the United Nations, one of the most important issues he will face is the stalemate over Iraq. The Security Council has been in disarray on Iraq, and Saddam Hussein has been taking advantage. With no international arms inspectors present, he has been free to rebuild his purchasing networks and resume production of toxic and nuclear weapons and missiles to deliver them.

Since December, U.S. and British jets have launched more than 1,000 missile strikes answering challenges to enforcement of Iraq's two no-flight zones. But these attacks are no substitute for on-site arms inspection. When the Security Council resumes discussions on Iraq next month, Mr. Holbrooke must apply his talents to uniting its members around a new plan for sending inspectors back with full authority to carry out the requirements imposed on Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War.

Recent accounts by Richard Butler, the former chief weapons inspector,

Scott Ritter, who led inspection teams inside Iraq, and Tim Trevan, a former inspection commission spokesman, offer sharply competing interpretations of how inspections broke down in 1997 and 1998. But one theme common to all three accounts is Iraq's successful campaign to manipulate divisions on the Security Council. Those divisions ultimately thwarted efforts to hold Iraq to its disarmament obligations.

The council lineup pits France, Russia and China against the United States, Britain and a large majority of other members. All agree that resuming inspections is necessary and all are willing to offer Baghdad the suspension of some UN sanctions if it provides substantial cooperation. But the three main holdouts would concede too much financial relief in exchange for too little cooperation.

The majority position is reflected in a British draft, which Washington provisionally supports. It would create a new inspection commission that would

hand Baghdad a list of the most important remaining disarmament requirements. If Iraq readmitted inspectors and complied with these requirements, export sanctions would be suspended for four months, with the revenues going into an internationally supervised account. If Iraq kept cooperating, the suspensions would continue. If it cheated, sanctions would be reimposed.

Washington would prefer that no sanctions relief be granted until Iraq had met all of its obligations in full and Saddam Hussein was out of power. But the White House has rightly been willing to compromise to rebuild international unity. France is demanding a less onerous list of initial disarmament tasks, wider sanctions relief and looser controls over Iraqi revenues. Washington must insist on a strict task list and financial controls.

Passing a new UN resolution will not guarantee that Iraq will readmit inspectors or provide consistent cooperation. Saddam Hussein has a long record of defiance. But even he has generally shied away from confronting a united Security Council.

—THE NEW YORK TIMES.

An Ineffective Policy Toward Baghdad

By Scott Ritter

HASTINGS-ON-HUDSON, New York — Bipartisan moments are increasingly rare in the U.S. Congress, but last week we had one. On Wednesday, eight senior senators and representatives from both parties delivered a letter to President Bill Clinton that decried the "continued drift in U.S. policy toward Iraq."

The letter expressed concern that despite rhetoric from the U.S. administration about the imminent danger posed by Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, no progress has been made toward getting meaningful inspections back on track or, in their absence, quantifying and dealing with the Iraqi threat. The delegation also pointed out the considerable shortfalls in carrying out the Iraqi Liberation Act, which Congress passed last year to finance groups bent on overthrowing President Saddam Hussein.

The lawmakers are rightly critical of the current policy toward Iraq. Unfortunately, they fail to propose a clear alternative.

For example, how do they define the "appropriate security measures" that they advocate providing to the Iraqi opposition? What exactly do they mean by the creation of a "no-drive zone" in terms of the commitment of American military power? How many combat aircraft will be required, and at what cost? What are the contingency plans if the Iraqi opposition fails to achieve success on the battlefield or, worse, suffers defeat at the hands of the Iraqi Army? Will American ground troops be committed? If so, under what circumstances and in what numbers?

Sanctions against Iraq should be lifted in exchange for the resumption of arms inspections.

These questions should be answered before the United States expands its military role. We Americans are already engaged in a warlike situation, to use language that the Pentagon might use. So far in 1999, the United States has flown more than 115 bombing missions against targets in the northern and southern parts of the country.

This war of attrition is intended to weaken Iraqi government control of these areas, and it represents an alternative to the strategy of the past. Then there would be an American military buildup whenever Iraq acted up, and a retreat when it backed down. Such cycles were expensive and, because they could be turned on and off at the whim of Iraq, ultimately ineffective.

But at least that approach was in response to something tangible: supporting the UN Security Council resolutions mandating Iraqi disarmament. The current military campaign lacks any such focus.

The problem with both the Clinton administration's Iraq policy and the bipartisan congressional approach is that America cannot demand compliance with Security Council resolutions while simultaneously shunning the Security Council by pursuing a unilateral campaign to remove Saddam from power. Until the United States recognizes that its policy is inherently contradictory, it will not achieve either disarmament or Saddam's removal.

Disarmament requires fashioning a consensus that is acceptable to all Security Council members: ousting Saddam entails the commitment of American combat power. Neither option is ideal, but neither stands a chance if they are attempted in tandem.

Future American policies toward disarmament, non-proliferation, humanitarian intervention, the handling of rogue states, the role of the United Nations and the commitment of American military power are all tied to the situation in Iraq.

The United States should pursue a diplomatic solution to this problem. We should support the lifting of economic sanctions in exchange for the resumption of meaningful weapons inspections. Such a course would take a step toward reuniting and reinvigorating the Security Council. It would also bring credibility to U.S. foreign policy in ways that the current military intervention never can.

Mr. Ritter, author of "Endgame," was a UN weapons inspector in Iraq. He resigned last year to protest American policy there. He contributed this comment to The New York Times.

Irak-Etats-Unis: «l'autre guerre» invisible

19 Irakiens auraient été tués par les raids américains.

Washington

de notre correspondant

Dans le ciel irakien, rien de bien nouveau, est-on tenté de dire après le bombardement mené mardi par l'aviation américaine au nord et au sud de l'Irak. Ces raids «criminels», selon l'agence irakienne INA, auraient tué 19 civils et en auraient blessé 11 autres. Ils auraient frappé des localités situées hors des «zones d'interdiction aérienne» (nord du 36^e parallèle et sud du 33^e parallèle) que les avions américains patrouillent quotidiennement depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe, en 1991. Le Pentagone répond que ses pilotes n'ont fait que «riposter» à des «provocations» de la défense irakienne qui les vise régulièrement depuis décembre 1998 — à l'aide de canons antiaériens mais aussi de missiles sol-air SA-2. Les cibles visées étaient des installations militaires. Mais le porte-parole du Pentagone, Kenneth Bacon, reconnaît qu'«une des tactiques de Saddam Hussein est d'installer sa défense antiaérienne au milieu des populations civiles», et que des «dommages collatéraux» — des victimes civiles — sont possibles. Selon les Irakiens, 134 civils auraient été tués par des



Des femmes se lamentent après les raids, mardi à Jassan (Sud Ouest).

bombardements américains depuis le début de l'année. En fait, il s'agit bien d'une «guerre de basse intensité» que se livrent les Etats-Unis (soutenus par la Grande-Bretagne) et l'Irak depuis que Saddam a chassé de Bagdad en décembre les inspecteurs de l'ONU chargés de vérifier le désarmement irakien. Cette décision avait entraîné quatre jours d'attaques intenses contre l'Irak (opération Renard du désert). Mais, depuis lors, ce que la presse américaine appelle «l'autre guerre» (pour la distinguer de celle menée au Kosovo) n'a jamais cessé. L'US Air Force et la Royal Air Force ont tiré plus de 1100 missiles contre plus de 360 cibles irakiennes depuis le

début de l'année (presque autant que pendant la campagne du Kosovo). Cette guerre invisible, qui se déroule dans une indifférence quasi générale, en particulier de l'opinion américaine, coûte 1 milliard de dollars (6 milliards de francs) par an, et mobilise 200 avions de combat, 19 navires de guerre et plus de 20000 GI's. Kenneth Bacon a assuré hier que les raids ont permis de réduire de 40 à 50 % les défenses antiaériennes irakiennes depuis décembre. «Nous continuerons tant que ce sera nécessaire», se contente de répondre le secrétaire à la Défense, William Cohen, quand on lui demande quand cessera ce jeu du chat et de la souris. Le 10 août, un groupe de sénateurs

influents, tant républicains que démocrates, ont envoyé une lettre ouverte à Clinton pour faire part de leur inquiétude devant «une politique qui va à vau-l'eau», exiger une intensification des «punitions» infligées à Saddam pour son défi des résolutions de l'ONU, et proposer que les Etats-Unis lui lancent un ultimatum pour l'obliger à accepter le retour des inspecteurs de l'ONU. Mais un conseiller de Clinton expliquait récemment que les Etats-Unis ne veulent pas «franchir le seuil dans l'usage de la force qui susciterait l'inquiétude internationale». Ils se contentent donc de soutenir un projet de résolution que la Grande-Bretagne et les Pays-Bas présenteront au Conseil de sécurité quand celui-ci reprendra ses travaux le mois prochain. Ce projet, auquel la France (comme la Russie et la Chine) est opposée, proposerait le retour en Irak des inspecteurs de l'ONU en échange d'une levée provisoire d'une partie des sanctions en vigueur depuis 1991. Le dossier Irak sera un des premiers que devra traiter le nouveau représentant américain à l'ONU, Richard Holbrooke ●

PATRICK SABATIER

Les 13 juifs d'Iran bientôt jugés

Téhéran rejette la demande de libération de Washington.

Le ministère iranien des Affaires étrangères a rejeté, hier, une demande de Washington de libérer les treize juifs iraniens détenus pour espionnage en faveur d'Israël. Le porte-parole du ministère, Hamid-Reza Assefi, a mis les Etats-Unis en garde contre «toute ingérence dans les affaires intérieures iraniennes». Les «espions» ont été arrêtés en février et mars dernier à Chiraz, dans le sud de l'Iran, où vit une grande partie des quelque 27000 juifs iraniens. Leur arrestation, rendue publique en

juin, avait soulevé l'inquiétude dans plusieurs pays, notamment en Israël, en France et aux Etats-Unis. Un détail n'a encore été divulgué sur les supposées activités d'espionnage au profit d'Israël qui leur sont reprochées. L'appel américain intervient alors que la presse iranienne vient d'annoncer leur prochain jugement. Le journal conservateur Entekhab a affirmé, lundi, que les «dossiers» des treize juifs iraniens «seront transmis à la justice d'ici à la fin de cette semaine».

Selon la loi iranienne, la remise des dossiers à la justice signifie la fin de l'enquête, et permet à la justice de choisir une juridiction et de fixer une date pour la première audience du procès, qui devrait avoir lieu devant le tribunal révolutionnaire de Chiraz. Le nouveau code pénal iranien de 1996 prévoit explicitement la peine de mort pour les personnes reconnues coupables d'espionnage au profit des deux plus grands ennemis de l'Iran, les Etats-Unis et Israël ●

D.H. (avec AFP)



Ezzat Ibrahim
Le n°2 irakien échappe à un scénario Pinochet

Le syndrome Pinochet frappe à nouveau. Venu en

cure à Vienne, Ezzat Ibrahim, le numéro 2 irakien, a quitté l'Autriche de justesse alors que l'état judiciaire se refermait. Des opposants irakiens en exil et des organisations des droits de l'homme venaient de lancer une procédure contre lui. De son côté, Washington avait demandé à Vienne de bloquer ses mouvements. Pliant bagage précipitamment, Ibrahim s'est alors

retrouvé bloqué à l'aéroport de Vienne par une fausse alerte à la bombe visant à retarder son départ le temps de lancer un mandat d'arrêt. Mais après quatre heures de fouilles, l'avion a décollé. «Les responsables irakiens devront choisir la Russie ou la Chine, pour se faire traiter», selon des diplomates.

IRAK

A l'ombre de l'ONU, le Kurdistan renaît de ses cendres et prospère

En dépit de la misère et des conflits entre les Kurdes, le Kurdistan se reconstruit dans les zones autonomes et devient un eldorado aux yeux de beaucoup d'Irakiens.

AL HAYAT
Londres

Les conflits politiques ou armés entre les mouvements kurdes n'ont pas empêché la réussite des travaux du Haut Comité de liaison de l'ONU, qui pilote les dossiers économiques et se charge de planifier le développement du Kurdistan irakien. L'administration kurde, dans les deux régions autonomes, a su tirer le meilleur parti de la présence des Nations unies, venues mettre en œuvre la résolution 986 du Conseil de sécurité (pétrole contre nourriture). Les cadres kurdes en ont profité pour acquérir plus d'expérience et procéder aux réformes structurelles nécessaires.

La réalisation la plus probante des jeunes cadres Kurdes est le repeuplement à plus de 80 % des villages qui avaient été détruits et abandonnés au début des années 80 et dont le nombre s'élève à plus de 4 500. En de nombreuses occasions, il a fallu abandonner des traditions héritées de l'ère de l'Etat centralisé, avec sa bureaucratie spécialisée dans la corruption active et passive. Les succès de l'administration kurde à Arbil et à Sulaimaniya ont permis d'éviter à ces régions les souffrances provoquées par l'embargo international imposé à l'Irak depuis 1991. Bien que beaucoup de besoins vitaux ne soient pas entièrement satisfaits, sans parler de confort technologique ou de produits culturels, le Kurdistan se félicite de ne pas avoir connu l'élévation du taux de mortalité infantile ni les épidémies causées par le manque de médicaments et de vaccins touchant les autres régions irakiennes. De même, le Kurdistan est capable de produire des denrées alimentaires, légumes, lait et viande, au point que la région exporte ses excédents dans le reste de l'Irak.

Cette repopulation de milliers de villages a exigé une grande part des fonds affectés à cette région, dépensés en priorité pour la reconstruction des demeures détruites puis pour la remise en état des routes et des ponts. L'opération s'est déroulée dans une ambiance de course contre la montre. Les contradictions politiques se répètent de temps à autre sous forme de combats entre factions kurdes



rivales et paralysent la construction, voire la ramènent au point zéro. Beaucoup de responsables de l'administration kurde considèrent néanmoins que la situation dans les zones rurales est préférable à celle des villes, puisqu'on y trouve les denrées de première nécessité à des prix ne grevant pas le budget des citoyens.

UN DRAPEAU KURDE À CÔTÉ DU DRAPEAU IRAKIEN

L'économie du Kurdistan, comparée à celle de l'Irak, pourrait être considérée comme florissante. Le dinar du Kurdistan (ce dinar que l'on appelle "frappe suisse" et qui n'a pas cours légal dans le reste de l'Irak) atteint cent fois la valeur du dinar irakien "régulier". Cette relative "prospérité" a naturellement incité beaucoup de techniciens, de médecins, d'ingénieurs et d'universitaires à venir travailler dans les universités et les usines sous administration autonome kurde. Un professeur d'université gagne en huit jours de travail par mois à l'université d'Arbil ou de Sulaimaniya dix fois le salaire qu'il toucherait à Bagdad. Au cours des deux derniers mois, Bagdad a promulgué des décrets interdisant aux citoyens irakiens d'aller travailler en secteur kurde.

La même situation se retrouve dans le sport : la zone autonome

accueille un grand nombre de joueurs de football de l'équipe nationale irakienne et des entraîneurs des grands clubs du pays. Bien entendu, les responsables des clubs d'Arbil ou de Sulaimaniya sont ravis de cet afflux de professionnels venus remonter le niveau local. On raconte même que, profitant de leur fortune, les supporters des clubs de football kurdes qui accompagnent leurs équipes en déplacement à l'occasion des matchs de championnat, s'installent à Bagdad dans des hôtels cinq étoiles. En ce qui concerne le bien-être économique, le Kurdistan commence à représenter pour le citoyen irakien ce qu'était autrefois le Koweït.

Toutefois, les Kurdes insistent sur le fait qu'en dépit de tous les changements survenus leur administration autonome se conçoit comme un élément de l'entité irakienne. Les lois irakiennes sont toujours en vigueur dans la zone, à l'exception de celles qui distinguent les citoyens sur la base de leur appartenance ethnique ou de leur affiliation politique. Mais, même si le drapeau irakien demeure le drapeau officiel du Kurdistan autonome, le Parlement kurde, à Arbil, est sur le point de déposer un projet de loi établissant un drapeau national distinct qui serait élevé aux côtés du drapeau irakien. Ce projet de drapeau (rouge, blanc, vert, avec un soleil au centre), assez proche de l'emblème de l'éphémère république de Mahabad, dans les années 40*, a été l'objet d'une longue polémique entre le camp jusqu'au-boutiste, qui appelle à l'abandon du drapeau irakien dans tout le Kurdistan, et le camp modéré, qui préfère hisser le drapeau kurde à côté de l'irakien.

Ismail Zayer

* République kurde créée dans le Kurdistan iranien en 1946 et écrasée dans le sang.

COURRIER INTERNATIONAL N° 459

DU 19 AU 25 AOÛT 1999

Quake Toll Nears 4,000 as Aid Teams Rush to Turkey



The Associated Press

Emergency workers rescuing Umran Savus, 30, from the ruins of an Istanbul building on Wednesday.

A Frantic Search for Survivors In Nation's 'Greatest Disaster'

By Stephen Kinzer
New York Times Service

ISTANBUL — More than 1,000 relief workers from 19 countries streamed into Turkey on Wednesday and immediately joined the frantic search for survivors of Tuesday's devastating earthquake.

Although Turkish and foreign workers rescued many people from the rubble of collapsed buildings, the death toll climbed steadily.

By Wednesday night, according to an official count, 3,879 bodies had been recovered. More than 16,000 people were listed as seriously injured.

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit warned that the death toll could rise further. He said rescue teams had been unable to reach some areas because roads were impassable and communications were disrupted.

Parliament met in special session, and members listened gravely as the minister of public works and housing, Koray Aydin, described the extent of the calamity.

"We are facing the greatest natural disaster in the history of the Turkish Republic," Mr. Aydin said. "For the first time, we have had an earthquake that affected the area where 45 percent of the Turkish population lives."

Fatal earthquakes are common in Turkey, occurring about once every two years. Most, however, strike the rugged and sparsely populated eastern provinces. This one hit the country's densely populated industrial heartland, the region southwest of Istanbul.

Some neighborhoods in Istanbul itself were also damaged, but the quake on Tuesday was not the massive one that

some scientists say is likely to strike this teeming metropolis sometime in the coming decades. Historic monuments such as the Hagia Sophia, once the seat of Byzantine power, and Topkapi Palace, from which Ottoman sultans ruled, were unscathed.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake measured 7.8 on the open-ended Richter scale, making it one of the strongest of the century anywhere in the world. Turkish seismologists put its strength at 7.4.

"It's an extremely serious quake, really terrible," said a foreign diplomat who toured the affected area by car and helicopter.

"You see these huge heaps of rubble and you ask, 'How are they ever going to get anyone out of there?' It's a God-awful mess."

There were no new severe aftershocks on Wednesday, although four tremors were felt in Greece, causing no damage or injuries.

Many Turkish families in the earthquake zone, fearing more buildings will collapse, have nonetheless chosen to

remain in tents or other outdoor shelters for a few more days.

With so much effort being made to rescue those believed still alive, there has been little time to assess long-term damage. But television footage from many towns showed utter destruction that will certainly cripple Turkey's effort to climb out of the economic troubles into which it has fallen this year.

Teams of rescue workers arrived steadily at the Istanbul airport Wednesday. Officials carrying clipboards walked through the arrival lounge asking passengers, "Are you rescue people?"

Among emergency workers who arrived Wednesday were 70 from the United States, most of them firefighters who rushed to Izmit, a city 55 miles east of Istanbul where the country's largest oil refinery burned through the day. Specially equipped French and German planes that were used to extinguish oil-well fires after the Gulf War were due to arrive Wednesday night.

Nearly every European country sent money, relief workers or equipment, including Greece, which is Turkey's principal rival in the eastern Mediterranean. The European Union contributed \$2.1 million in emergency aid. Relief planes also arrived from non-European countries including Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Pakistan and Japan.

The largest foreign contributor so far has been Israel, which dispatched two firefighting planes, teams of dogs trained to track buried humans, and 350 relief workers, some from specialized military units that joined the search for survivors after U.S. embassies in Africa were bombed last year. Israel has also pledged to send a fully equipped field hospital within a few days.

Turkey and Israel have forged a strong strategic partnership over the last few years, and Israel is evidently anxious to show that it can be a good friend when Turkey is in need.

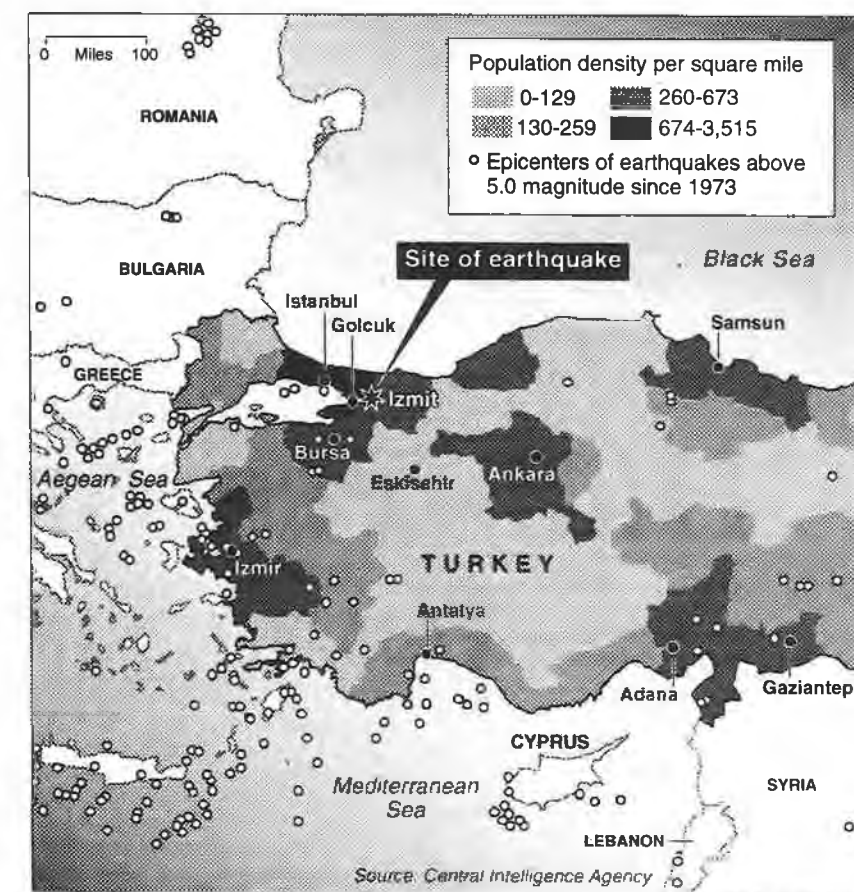
Foreign help is especially vital here because early rescue efforts by the Turkish authorities have been plagued by inexperience, poor organization and lack of supplies. In some stricken towns, newly arrived foreigners found no organized rescue effort under way and took charge themselves, directing battalions of eager volunteers.

News commentators pilloried the government for what they said were inexcusable lapses, both in preparing for an earthquake that scientists said was sure to come and in dealing with it after it struck.

"The rescue effort is a fiasco," one Istanbul newspaper asserted.

"Rescue and relief are coming late or not at all," said another.

Several experts blamed unscrupulous contractors and ineffective inspectors for having contributed to the scope of the



The New York Times

catastrophe by allowing the construction of flimsy edifices that could not withstand a quake.

"The inevitable happened, despite years and years of repeated warnings," said Ahmet Ercan, a professor of geophysics at Istanbul Technical University. "Officials refused to face facts. They never insisted that contractors survey the risks and build earthquake-resistant structures."

"Maybe after this bitter experience, we will update our regulations along the lines of Japan, the United States and Mexico."

Turkish television stations broadcast nearly nonstop coverage of relief efforts. The most poignant scenes showed victims being brought out from the wreckage of collapsed buildings.

Overwrought spectators cheered and sobbed each time a survivor was found, and simply sobbed when bodies, including many of small children, were seen to be lifeless.

Although Izmit and the nearby town of Adapazari were believed to have been the hardest hit, another focus of the relief effort is the port of Golcuk on the Sea of Marmara. The navy base there was destroyed, and local officials said that 100 or more soldiers and officers, including several generals, might lie beneath the

rudder. Turkey sits atop some of the world's most unstable geology.

Scientists said that the earthquake on Tuesday was along the Anatolia Fault, a 100-mile arc that winds beneath northwestern provinces near Istanbul.

"It was certainly no surprise," said Ahmet Mete Isikara, director of an observatory in Istanbul and a leading specialist on earthquake risk.

"There is no technique for predicting earthquakes, so we couldn't say when it would happen. But we knew it would, sooner or later."

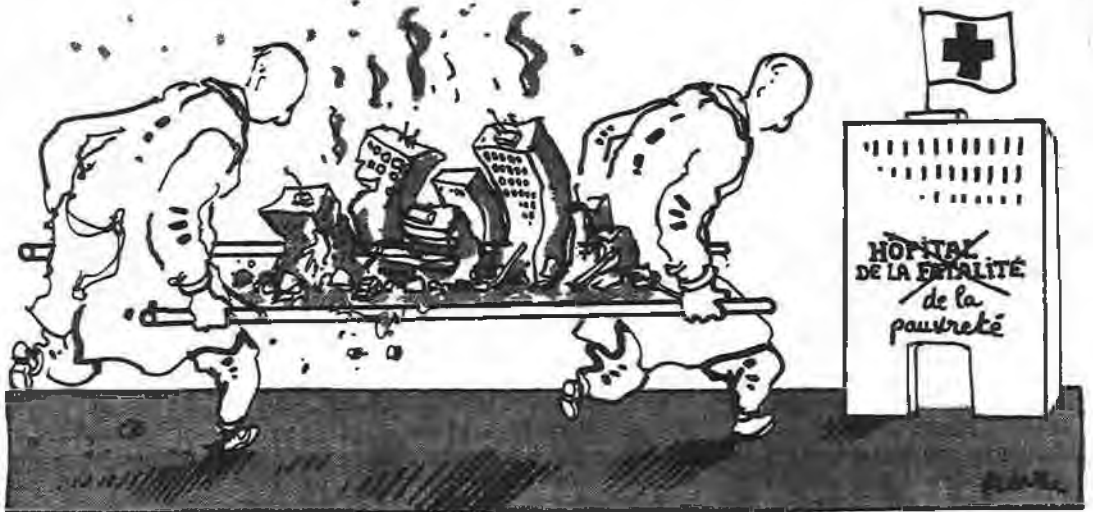
"This Anatolia Fault zone is quite complex, but certainly the possibility of an even bigger earthquake, even one in Istanbul, is still there," Mr. Isikara said. "Most probably we will get a lot of lessons from this quake. We have to, otherwise we will suffer the same thing in the future."

Séisme en Turquie : le bilan s'alourdit

- Mercredi, on dénombrait plus de 3 000 morts après le tremblement de terre d'Izmit
- Plusieurs milliers d'habitants de cette région industrielle étaient encore sous les décombres
- La presse turque dénonce l'incompétence et la corruption ● Les secours sont insuffisants

LA TURQUIE est en deuil. Le tremblement de terre qui a ravagé une partie du nord-ouest du pays dans la nuit lundi à mardi a fait au moins 3 000 morts et plus de 15 000 blessés, selon des informations données, mercredi 18 août, par la cellule de crise mise en place par le gouvernement. Mais ce bilan risque fort de s'alourdir car des milliers de personnes étaient encore, dans la matinée, prisonnières des décombres, tant à Istanbul qu'à Izmit, épice de la catastrophe. La base navale et la ville de Golcuk ont également été sérieusement endommagées et les moyens de secours y sont nettement insuffisants.

La presse turque de mercredi n'était d'ailleurs pas tendre avec les autorités et surtout les professionnels du bâtiment qui négligent les normes de sécurité des constructions. L'aide internationale commence à se mettre en place. De nombreux pays ont promis ou déjà envoyé une assistance



médicale et technique. La France, par exemple, a mobilisé soixante hommes de l'Unité d'intervention de la sécurité civile, qui sont arrivés dans la zone sinistrée. Ils sont accompagnés de chiens et de quinze tonnes de matériel.

Ce séisme, d'une magnitude de 6,7 sur l'échelle ouverte de Richter, est le plus violent ayant touché le pays depuis plus de sept ans. Le 13 mars 1992, une secousse tellurique, dans l'Est, avait fait 653 morts et environ 700 blessés.

Le plus terrible tremblement de terre enregistré au cours des dix dernières années s'est produit en Iran, le 21 juin 1990, faisant quelque 40 000 morts.

La presse turque accuse Les secours ont été trop lents, et les deux tiers des constructions sont illégales.

La photo des coupables côtoie celles des victimes à la une des quotidiens turcs, au lendemain du séisme: ce sont ces bâtiments construits sans permis et hors de toutes les normes de sécurité. Selon la chambre de commerce turque, ils constituent près de 65% de l'habitat du pays. «Assassins!» s'exclame le quotidien à grand tirage *Hurriyet*, qui publie des images où des immeubles effondrés côtoient des bâtisses intactes. «Les voisins sont sains et saufs», commente la légende d'une photo montrant une femme écrasée sous un bloc de béton.

Dans le journal *Radikal*, l'éditorialiste Ismet Berkan s'en prend aux hommes politiques et aux magnats du bâtiment: «Rien ne changera parce que vous êtes comme vos prédécesseurs.» Dans ce pays à haut risque sismique, la plupart des

journaux soulignent les avertissements incessants sur les effets qu'aurait un séisme dans la région du Nord-Ouest, où vit près de la moitié de la population turque. C'est là que la terre a tremblé. Dans les décombres et les pleurs, la Turquie enrage. Attisant la colère, les

chiffres n'en finissent pas de monter. Hier, à 20h20, le bilan était une nouvelle fois revu à la hausse: 3839 morts et près de 19000 blessés, selon le centre de crise du gouvernement turc.

L'organisation des secours est, elle aussi, vivement critiquée. Les responsables turcs avaient d'ailleurs reconnu les difficultés dans l'acheminement des secours vers la région sinistrée, mettant en cause les routes endommagées ou embouteillées. «Dé-

sastre la nuit, scandale le jour», résume le quotidien islamiste *Zaman*.

Morgue saturée. A Sakarya (plus de 700 morts), les habitants des districts éloignés se plaignent de n'avoir reçu ni eau ni nourriture vingt-quatre heures après la catastrophe. La morgue de l'hôpital de la ville est saturée. Des camions frigorifiques ont été réquisitionnés afin d'entreposer des cadavres. A Yalova, sur la mer de Marmara, les habitants, hébétés, déambulent dans les rues en silence, laissés à eux-mêmes. Ici, à 60 kilomètres

d'Izmit, 300 victimes ont été dénombrées. Partout dans le pays, les blessés sont amenés dans des écoles ou dans des stades parce que les hôpitaux sont débordés.

Les recherches se poursuivent pour retrouver des survivants sous les décombres, à mains nues ou

avec l'aide d'équipes de sauveteurs turcs ou étrangers. Ces derniers ont commencé à arriver hier, après une journée d'intense agitation. L'Italie, la Grèce, la Suisse, la Grande-Bretagne, la France, l'Algérie et les Etats-Unis ont

envoyé entre 40 et 150 hommes appartenant à la Sécurité civile et équipés de matériel spécialisé. Israël, l'Egypte et la Grèce ont préféré dépêcher des équipes militaires, tandis que l'Allemagne a signé un chèque de 510000 euros.

Dans la nuit de mardi à mercredi, cinq nouvelles secousses d'une magnitude supérieure à 4 ont été enregistrées. Par crainte, des dizaines de milliers de Turcs ont, une nouvelle fois, dormi dans les squares et dans les parkings ●

Service étranger
avec AFP et Reuter

LE MONDE / VENDREDI 20 AOÛT 1999

ÉDITORIAL

Le drame turc

CES images-là sont trop connues, horriblement banales, trop de fois vues, suscitant impuissance, rage et effroi : celles du malheureux cherchant à dégager à mains nues les membres de sa famille encore emmurés sous les décombres ; celles de survivants hagards, émergeant d'un nuage de poussière ; celles de rescapés, souvent les plus pauvres d'entre les pauvres, contemplant la ruine de bicoques mal construites, immeubles érigés sans permis, hors normes, lèpre urbanistique habituelle où va se loger la misère et à laquelle le destin vient de porter un coup de plus ; celles de mini-gratte-ciel abattus comme châteaux de cartes aux côtés d'autres, à quelques mètres, mystérieusement

épargnés, comme dans un drame sans règle, sans motif et qui laisse sans recours.

Ce sont les images de l'ouest de la Turquie, et plus particulièrement de la ville d'Izmit, ravagée mardi par un tremblement de terre. Le bilan officiel donnait, jeudi, quarante-huit heures après la secousse, 4 000 morts et des dizaines de milliers de disparus ; chacun sait déjà, là bas, que le bilan des morts risque d'être beaucoup plus élevé et immense celui des destructions matérielles.

Le drame a cumulé les paramètres les plus mortifères. Le séisme a été l'un des plus puissants jamais enregistrés en cette partie du monde ; il a frappé la nuit ; il a touché une région très construite et manifestement mal construite. Mais aucun pays n'est jamais prêt pour un trem-

blement de terre. Pas plus les riches que les pauvres, pas plus l'Italie que le Japon, la Turquie que l'Iran. Les scientifiques multiplient les avertissements sur la dangerosité de telle ou telle région - c'était clair dans le cas d'Izmit -, mais ne donnent ni l'année ni le mois du désastre, toujours prédit, jamais vraiment annoncé. Alors, au petit matin, dans l'ampleur des ruines et des morts, c'est toujours le même refrain : le choc, la rage, l'interrogation sur la surprise, la colère contre des secours impréparés.

Avec raison, parce que c'est son affaire, la presse turque se refuse à n'incriminer que la fatalité, le jeu de plaques tectoniques qui ne préviennent pas de leurs mouvements. Elle accuse le pouvoir à la une : « Assassins » ; elle stigmatise non la géologie mais une logique

mafieuse ; elle dénonce ce jeu bien politique, où mafias et partis, entrepreneurs et élus de tous bords s'entendent pour bâtir « à la sauvage », hors normes, gagnant sur la sécurité. La presse met en lumière les failles d'un système, d'un régime. Elle s'interroge sur la lenteur de la puissante armée turque - le vrai pouvoir, l'institution qui se taille la part belle du budget, cette armée membre de l'OTAN, tout occupée à mener « sa » guerre dans le Kurdistan de Turquie - à se mobiliser au service des victimes.

Proximité géographique et culturelle oblige : l'Union européenne, elle, fait bien de se porter au secours de la Turquie, sans réserve, immédiatement. L'urgence humanitaire est là, immense.



A Izmit, deux femmes en pleurs devant les ruines de leur maison.



Le cimetière de Sakarya.



Hier à Izmit, des secouristes recouvrent les cadavres de chaux et de désinfectants pour éviter les épidémies.

Sous les décombres, 35 000 disparus

Le nombre de victimes du séisme ne cesse de grandir. La presse et l'opinion s'en prennent aux pouvoirs publics et à l'armée.

Quand les phénomènes naturels s'apaisent, ce sont les chiffres qui s'affolent. Des bilans en avalanche s'abattent sur la Turquie, quelques jours après que la terre a tremblé. Parti d'un premier bilan de 7 morts, mardi à l'aube, peu après les 45 secondes de la secousse majeure, le décompte provisoire atteignait plus de 10 000 morts trois jours après. A la veille du week-end, un responsable humanitaire de l'ONU, Sergio Piazzi, a provoqué un d'électrochoc en avançant comme «possible» un total de 40 000 tués.

L'horreur réside dans le calcul, ou plutôt dans la soustraction. Parlant des personnes toujours ensevelies sous les décombres, la cellule de crise du gouvernement turque à Ankara faisait état vendredi de «chiffres effroyables, beaucoup plus que ce qu'on pensait. Des dizaines de milliers d'immeubles se sont effondrés». Certains spécialistes estiment à plus de 35 000 les victimes toujours coincées, sans qu'il soit possible d'évaluer la proportion de survivants. En règle générale, 85 % à 95 % des personnes sont retirées vivantes des décombres lorsqu'elles ont pu être secourues dans un délai de 24 à 48 heures après le séisme, selon l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS). Ce délai pourrait être étendu dans le cas de la Turquie, peut-être jusqu'à lundi ou mardi, espère Sergio Piazzi, qui invoque notamment des condi-



tions atmosphériques favorables.

En revanche, encore et toujours, chacun souligne l'insuffisance des secours qui n'arrivent pas à couvrir la totalité de la vaste zone ravagée par le tremblement de terre dans cette région du nord-ouest, la plus densément peuplée de Turquie. Depuis trois jours pourtant, la tragédie turque a

Des dizaines d'administrations provinciales ont expédié camions, tentes, générateurs, tandis que certaines villes ont dépêché leurs éboueurs pour aider à dégager les gravats et les ordures.

Du monde entier l'aide continue d'affluer: plus de 2 000 spécialistes et 120 chiens venus de 20 pays. Une générosité particulière est venue d'Etats avec

*«Souvent, les gens savent que les leurs sont morts. Ils nous demandent de chercher pour récupérer les corps.»
Un sapeur français*

lesquels la Turquie entretient de difficiles relations en temps normal. En tête, la Grèce, sœur ennemie de la Turquie au sein de l'Otan. Fait sans précédent, le ministère grec de la Santé a appelé les Grecs à donner leur sang afin de

parer aux besoins des victimes turques. Régulièrement accusés de soutenir la rébellion kurde, l'Iran et la Syrie ont proposé leur aide. Le gouvernement irakien a offert du pétrole pour une valeur supérieure aux dons des Etats-Unis, alors que la Turquie accueille dans sa base d'Incirlik les avions

américains qui bombardent régulièrement le nord de l'Irak. Mais ni le cœur, ni la politique, ni la technique ne suffisent. En Turquie, depuis trois jours, on ne compte plus que sur les miracles. Il s'en produit, ici où là, après des heures et des heures d'efforts. Chaque équipe fête le sien. Pendant trois jours, des soldats israéliens ont creusé pour atteindre une fillette bloquée sous un bâtiment à Cinarçik. «Il est surprenant qu'elle soit parvenue à survivre», dit un médecin de l'équipe. Au bord de la mer de Marmara, vendredi, les sapeurs-pompiers français ont enfin aperçu les pieds d'un homme qu'ils tentaient de sauver depuis douze heures. Il était couché dans son lit, sa femme morte depuis quatre jours à ses côtés, au milieu d'un enchevêtrement de meubles et d'appareils électroménagers qui formaient un espace de survie. Il priait en attendant la fin.

Mais le plus souvent, «les gens savent que les leurs sont morts. Ils nous demandent de chercher pour récupérer les corps», explique un sapeur français. En cinq heures, son chien a reniflé huit immeubles, mètre carré par mètre carré, et n'a repéré que des cadavres. «C'est démotivant pour l'animal car sa mission consiste à retrouver les vivants. Il ne comprend plus ce qu'il fait là. Nous sommes contraints de le stimuler. S'il le faut, l'un d'entre nous se cache sous les décombres et il doit le retrouver.» ●

Service étranger
(avec AFP et Reuter)

LIBERATION SAMEDI 21 ET DIMANCHE 22 AOUT 1999

Quake Provides Reminder Of Turkey's Split Identity

Religions, Culture and Continents Divide Nation

By Lee Hockstader

Washington Post Service

ISTANBUL — She is a yuppie from Istanbul, a 30-something Turk who speaks fluent English, favors attractive European fashions and works on a computer in a sleek modern office at a private university. She is, like so many middle-class Turks, thoroughly Western.

But when she joined a small army of free-lancers and private relief organizations that rushed to assist the victims of Turkey's earthquake the other day, the response she encountered was thoroughly Third World.

"Call back tomorrow," said the desultory Turkish soldier who answered her phone call at a local crisis center, when she asked where to deliver emergency medicine and supplies. "We closed at 5 P.M."

Her experience was telling, for the

staggering quake east of Istanbul last week — or rather the country's response to it — has reminded many people here of Turkey's split personality, and its unique position straddling east and west, First World and Third.

Muslim, embattled, military-dominated, callous on human rights and burdened by high inflation, Turkey does not much resemble the prosperous nations of Western Europe. Many Turks acknowledge their country is a poor fit with the Continent's wealthy democracies — that it is too big and too poor, perhaps, and certainly too Muslim.

Yet most are adamant that Turkey — democratic, largely secular and intensely commercial — somehow belongs in Europe. Even if just 3 percent of its land mass is west of the Bosphorus, the narrow strait separating Europe and

Asia, and its application for membership in the European Union has repeatedly been rejected.

Turkey still does the vast majority of its trade with Europe and the United States, and only a modest and ever-dwindling amount with the Muslim world. When Turkey's latest bid to join the EU was rejected two years ago, the country erupted in anger.

The contradiction in Turkish attitudes — between acknowledging their distance from Europe, yet insisting on their right to join it — reflects geography and history in a country straddling two continents and, to an extent, two cultures.

That contradiction was visible from the outset following the earthquake.

In some respects, the collective response bore an unmistakable resemblance to Western liberal democracies.

Turkey's freewheeling newspapers embarked on an immediate hunt for scapegoats, a spasm of criticism, soul-searching and finger-pointing that would be unimaginable in the docile media in most of Turkey's Arab and Islamic neighbors in the Middle East.

Building contractors, government ministers and even the much-vaunted army have been raked over the coals. Demands for resignations and top-down reorganization are commonplace.

"Murderers," screamed a headline in *Hürriyet*, a leading Turkish newspaper that has led the charge against contractors it blames for shoddy construction.

**NEWS
ANALYSIS**



Survivors of Turkey's earthquake standing in front of their ruined home on Wednesday in the city of Golcuk.

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune

FILED HERE WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WASHINGTON POST

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 1999

Michael Dolder/Bettow

"What is this thing called the state?" sneered Radikal, a paper with an intellectual bent that launched a frontal assault on the alleged incompetence of the authorities.

Some analysts suggested the media were even too aggressive.

"They were too tough on public officials," said Ilter Turan, a political scientist who is president of Bilgi University in Istanbul. "They were doing their best under terrible conditions."

Still, no matter how fair the search for a culprit appeared, the sense that someone should be held accountable seemed distinctly Western and democratic, analysts said.

"If you're not stepping on the taboos regarding ethnic Kurdish separatism or Islamic fundamentalism or the persona of Mustafa Ataturk, there is virtually no limit," said Alan Makovsky, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, referring to the founder of the Turkish state. "It's no holds barred."

Ordinary Turks, outraged by the government's sluggish, disjointed response to the disaster, also took up the cry. Many told anyone who cared to listen exactly what they thought of the authorities, then helpfully spelled their full names for journalists.

There was also something distinctly reminiscent of a lively, Western-style civil society in the massive response to the quake by Turkish individuals, non-governmental groups, entrepreneurs,

companies, universities and other institutions — a response that took many Turks by surprise.

"It was a cliché about Turkey for decades that civic associations don't work and that people sit back and wait for the state to do everything," Mr. Makovsky said. "That's a cliché in the process of being erased from the Turkish lexicon."

Historically, Turkey has had uneasy relations with its Arab and Iranian neighbors, whom many Turks regard with thinly disguised hostility. It is telling that no university in the country has a department of Middle Eastern studies, despite a plentiful supply of academics who specialize in the field.

Nonetheless, Turkey's Eastern and Third World aspects were, arguably, even more pronounced than the Western face it turned toward the worst disaster to befall the country in decades.

The interior minister, Saadettin Tantman, decreed that restaurants and night clubs should play no music for 45 days. Most entertainment establishments complied:

The army, which has forced four governments from power by military intervention or pressure in the past 40 years, let it be known that it had considered declaring martial law.

And some government officials, perhaps seeking to avert panic, gave low and misleading estimates of the ultimate number of dead.

There were reminders, too, in the demographic pattern of the quake's dev-

astation, of Turkey's status as a part of the developing, not the developed, world.

Much of the death and destruction occurred in industrial cities of western Anatolia swollen with working-class Turks who had migrated from the poorer and more rural east in search of jobs and better lives.

In a typical Third World pattern, their presence in rapidly expanding urban areas intensified the demand for cheap and often shoddily built housing. The result was the proliferation of apartment blocks, hastily erected and made of sub-standard materials. In their thousands, these scruffy buildings collapsed into what rescue workers called "pancakes" when the quake struck a week ago.

As the government's crisis response received harsh judgment, critics suggested that Turkey could take some lessons from the West. In interviews, many Turks praised the efficiency of Western rescue teams and criticized their own efforts. The comparisons may have been unfair and may have betrayed an inferiority complex that has long figured into Turkey's complex relations within the West.

"They compare themselves with Germany and France and see how far behind they are," Mr. Makovsky said. "But an outsider can't help but be struck that whatever direction you come from, when you arrive in Turkey you feel like you've entered the other world."



Michael O'Leary/Reuters

In the western town of Korfez, a young woman weeping on Wednesday as she looked at the ruins of her home.



The Associated Press

A woman buried under debris reaching for help, above, with her free hand as rescue workers try to help in Izmit, Turkey. She was eventually freed. Below, a collapsed building on the Marmara coast in the quake's aftermath.



The Associated Press

Quake Puts Kurd Issue On Turkey's Back Burner

By Stephen Kinzer
New York Times Service

ISTANBUL — As recently as two weeks ago, advocates of political and economic reform in Turkey were looking forward to a busy and perhaps historic autumn.

Parliament was due to consider several far-reaching proposals, including a series of measures to address the Kurdish conflict that has cost tens of thousands of lives over the last 15 years. With the principal Kurdish rebel leader, Abdullah Ocalan, imprisoned and calling for an end to the conflict, the time seemed ideal for government initiatives.

But in the wake of last week's earthquake, even major issues like the Kurdish conflict have been pushed off agenda. Debate over the government's proposal to offer amnesty to guerrillas who surrender, for example, has been postponed indefinitely. And although Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit an-

nounced his support for large investments to combat poverty and unemployment in the mostly Kurdish southeast, there will probably be no money to pay for such programs now.

"There wasn't much money around anyway, but now even the modest funds that might have gone to development projects in the southeast are going to be diverted to earthquake relief," said Dogu Ergil, director of a foundation that has advocated new approaches to the Kurdish problem.

"If you ask any politician today what is going to happen to the Kurds now, he will say, 'Are you crazy? What are you talking about? This is no time to talk about the Kurdish situation.' It is no longer a primary or even a secondary item on the political agenda."

Caring for earthquake victims and rebuilding destroyed homes and businesses is expected to cost billions. The need for these funds means not only that many other initiatives will be postponed, but also new taxes.

Turkey has been negotiating with the International Monetary Fund for a multi-billion-dollar loan, and officials say they are determined not to relax fiscal discipline despite the pressing need for earthquake relief. "Out of the question," said the central bank president, Gazi Ergel.

Kurdish politicians, who won a series of sweeping victories in southeastern cities in April's elections, are anxious to show that they share the concerns. They are helping to raise funds for earthquake victims and have carefully avoided pleading their own case.

"We have been through a similar

situation," said Mayor Huseyin Umit of Hakkari, a leader of the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party. "We had our own 'earthquake' when our villages were evacuated and we became very poor. Nobody has given us any help or compensation, but we want to be mature and patient. Although promises have been made to us, we can't expect that they will be kept until these difficult days are over."

Some Turks hope that the public anger over failures in the relief effort will lend new urgency to proposals to restructure the state. Others, however, fear that politics will continue as usual.

"Everyone is still in a daze," said Kemal Koprulu, an advocate of political reform who has been working to coordinate private earthquake relief. "Not just the Kurdish issue, but every issue has been pushed off the agenda because the country is focused on just one thing. But they'll come back, because they have to be tackled in some way."

"As far as the Kurds go, there may be some positive results of this tragedy. First of all, we've been seeing how even the poorest Kurdish towns in the southeast are sending help to the earthquake area, which shows that they feel very much a part of this country."

"Also, some of the resistance to changing policy toward the Kurds has been the fear that this issue is part of a plot by the rest of the world, which hates us and is out to destroy us. That thesis has been destroyed by the fantastic aid we've gotten from 60 countries, starting with Greece. So maybe we'll be able to look at this situation more rationally now."

De notre envoyée spéciale à Izmit

45 SECONDES ET LA

Le tremblement de terre de magnitude 7,4 qui a frappé les cités du sud-est d'Istanbul à 3 heures du matin le 18 août n'a pas seulement provoqué la mort de dizaines de milliers de personnes et détruit au moins 40 000 bâtiments, il a révélé l'ampleur des maux qui sapent la société turque : corruption, inflation, laisser-faire et chaos politique



« Deprem ! » Tremblement de terre ! Curieux, personne ne l'a noté, mais en avril déjà, la presse turque faisait ses gros titres avec ce mot. Ce tremblement

de terre-là était symbolique, il s'agissait de la surprenante et puissante victoire de l'extrême-droite lors des élections (du 18 avril), 18% de voix pour les fascistes, les Loups gris, ces tueurs de l'ombre qui pendant des années de plomb ont accompli les basses œuvres du régime (assassinats d'intellectuels de gauche et de syndicalistes, de défenseurs de la cause kurde, d'Alevi (musulmans à tendance mystique et très tolérants), 18%, pour un parti constitué de bandes de nervis liés à la mafia, alors que le parti majoritaire du Premier ministre sortant, Bülent Ecevit, le Parti de la Gauche démocratique, ne faisait que 21%. A terme, murmurent les gens de gauche, inquiets, doublement secoués, ce tremblement de terre politique pourrait se révéler aussi meurtrier que l'autre, le vrai, celui qui a tué au moins 14 000 personnes – et sans doute 40 000 – dans la nuit du 18 août. Car ces deux *depremler*, à quelques mois d'intervalle, ont été des révélateurs. D'une brutalité prophétique. Deux avertissements coup sur coup. Turquie, réveille-toi, tu n'es pas celle que tu croyais : « L'économie la plus dynamique, les forces armées les plus avancées et la démocratie la plus ancienne de la région, pont entre l'Europe et l'Asie », comme le prétendait récemment M. Ismail Cem, le ministre des Affaires étrangères.

« C'est quand même bizarre, dit un prof, bizarre que cette armée de 600 000 hommes "la plus disciplinée du monde", comme ils disent, capable d'envoyer 100 000 hommes en Irak, avec une logistique impeccable, soit incapable au lendemain d'un tremblement de terre aux portes d'Istanbul d'organiser les secours ou même simplement le ravitaillement des rescapés. » Les hauts responsables de l'armée se défendent en rappelant qu'ils ont demandé au gouvernement de déclarer l'état d'urgence (deux jours plus tard !), mais que les politiques ont refusé. Quand on voit comment le MGK (Conseil national de Sécurité,

moitié militaire, moitié civil), véritable gouvernement de l'ombre, décide de tous les aspects de la vie publique, dans ce pays où le chef d'état-major a plus de poids que le ministre de la Défense, on ne comprend pas cette soudaine humilité galonnée. Il est vrai que l'armée a payé, dans le tremblement de terre. Sa base navale de Gölçük a été ravagée, des centaines de soldats et plusieurs dizaines de hauts gradés sont morts, ils venaient juste d'inaugurer de nouveaux bâtiments à la base. Bâtiments construits par Korkmaz Yigit, ami et homme de paille du parrain turc Alaattin Çakiri, lui-même ancien Loup gris. Ce promoteur, autre coïncidence, était très lié avec l'amiral Guven Erkaya, retraité mais resté très influent dans l'armée...

« Les islamistes n'ont pas tort, dans le fond, de dire que c'est une punition, plaisante à moitié Zeynep Sardağ, auteur d'une thèse de Sciences-Po sur le rôle de l'armée turque depuis le coup d'Etat de 1980 ; le péché, c'est la corruption. Nous sommes punis à cause de toute cette pourriture que nous avons laissée proliférer. »

« La corruption ne provoque pas de séismes, mais elle est largement responsable de ces dizaines de milliers de morts », explique le jeune président de la Chambre des Architectes d'Istanbul, Eyup Muhcu Bey (voir encadré). « L'Etat est moins efficace qu'une poignée de bénévoles », accuse l'édito du quotidien « Akut » (islamiste), qui ajoute : « L'odeur de pourriture de l'Etat décadent est plus forte que l'odeur des morts. »

« Cette catastrophe a son origine en 1980, dit Mehli Açıç, rédacteur en chef à « Milliyet », au moment du coup d'Etat militaire, le début d'une ère de libéralisation, de "réalisme du marché", le début des années frie et mafia. Ce n'est pas que ça n'existait pas avant, mais là, le cynisme et la corruption ont pris leur vitesse de croisière. Au même moment, on a essayé une "solution" pour régler le "problème kurde" : déporter le peuple des montagnes vers les grandes villes. Voyez : 2 millions d'habitants à Istanbul en 1960, 12 millions aujourd'hui. C'était un plan délibéré du gouvernement pour "assimiler" les Kurdes de force. »

Les municipalités n'ont pas eu de politique d'urbanisation, les gens se sont installés n'importe



comment, ont construit de brique et de broc et le clientélisme des partis locaux a fait le reste. Tu paies, on te donne un permis, un titre de propriété. A tous les niveaux, on paie. A la fin, l'argent retourne dans la caisse des partis. Et la boucle est bouclée. Ajoutez à cela une inflation chronique, 75 à 80% par an depuis quinze ans... Conséquence : l'argent du pauvre va dans la poche du riche. Et le pauvre, pour se garder de l'inflation, va investir dans la pierre, tout est lié ! Dernier point : la presse, les médias n'ont pas fait leur boulot. Les journalistes aiment bien leur petit confort, leurs petits réseaux.

TURQUIE S'ÉCROULE



A Yalova, une des villes les plus touchées par le séisme, station résidentielle pour riches stambouliotes, Veli Göcer, le promoteur qui avait construit un luxueux programme de résidences, a pris la fuite. Le maire de la ville aussi. « Le plus sinistrement drôle, raconte encore Mehli Açık, de "Milliyet", c'est que ces appartements étaient offerts comme premier prix aux heureux gagnants d'un jeu genre "Roue de la fortune", sur une des chaînes câblées appartenant à un ami de Göcer ! » La stupeur et le désarroi des habitants de Yalova (très secourus, contrairement à ceux d'Izmit, plus populaires, eux-mêmes bien mieux lotis que ceux d'Avçılar,

A Izmit, le 23 août 1999.
Corruption, clientélisme et désorganisation, les Turcs, laissés à eux-mêmes, ont fait ce qu'ils ont pu. Révoltés et amers, ils ont perdu confiance.

un faubourg d'Istanbul peuplé en majorité de Kurdes) agit sur les consciences des « nouveaux riches » comme un électrochoc. « Il y a déjà eu des tremblements de terre en Turquie, dit cette jeune femme de la bonne bourgeoisie d'Ankara, mais

c'est la première fois que ça frappe aussi des riches, des vedettes de la télé, des stars du foot et même des promoteurs immobiliers ! » Les riches pleurent aussi. Et commencent ouvertement à critiquer l'armée. Du jamais entendu ! « Quand on voit le professionnalisme des équipes de sauveteurs étrangères, et notre armée incapable ! Même les Russes sont mieux que nous ! » Le nationalisme, la chose en Turquie la mieux partagée, en prend un sacré coup.

« Même les chiens de sauvetage turcs sont nuls, souligne ce sauveteur bénévole à Izmit. Ils sont dressés pour attraper des fuyards, ils mordent les rescapés qui courent ! » Et après une semaine de détresse et

« L'Etat ne contrôle rien »

Eyup Muhcu Bey est le président de la Chambre des Architectes d'Istanbul. Trentenaire au regard vif, barbu à la Nanni Moretti, il explique comment le système de construction sauvage dans les villes turques a amplifié la catastrophe

Le Nouvel Observateur. – Ça se passe comment, la construction d'un immeuble ?

Eyup Muhcu Bey. – Il y a deux façons de procéder : l'une totalement illégale, l'autre normale. Normalement, il faut un permis de construire. Quand la construction est illégale, ça se fait sans permis, sans titre de propriété du terrain, sans rien ! Souvent ce sont les gens qui construisent eux-mêmes leur maison, dans les bidonvilles des banlieues (les Turcs appellent ces quartiers *gecekondus*, ce qui veut dire « poussés en une nuit »). Après avoir squatté le terrain ils finissent par construire en dur, puis de petits entrepreneurs vont ensuite élever des immeubles, sans aucun contrôle. Au bout de quelques années, en général avant une élection, la municipalité va « amnistier » ces promoteurs sauvages et leur offrir des titres de propriété du terrain. Depuis 1983, les constructeurs ont toujours fini par être « amnistiés », avant chaque élection. 70% des immeubles d'Istanbul ont été construits de cette façon.

Un maire qui essaierait de raser ces immeubles illégaux perdrait à coup sûr les élections. Leurs propriétaires, qui ont choisi d'investir massivement dans la pierre à cause de l'inflation (80% par an), et qui peuvent ainsi gagner très vite beaucoup d'argent, financent les partis qui tiennent la municipalité. S'il arrive qu'un promoteur soit condamné, la peine maximale prévoit une amende de 500 000 liras (à titre d'exemple, le péage du pont sur le Bosphore est de 500 000 liras). Bien sûr il existe des promoteurs

sérieux, mais finalement la fiabilité des bâtiments dépend de la morale individuelle des constructeurs, puisque l'Etat ne contrôle rien.

Normalement, la procédure est la suivante : un projet, élaboré par un architecte et un ingénieur, est déposé à la mairie afin d'obtenir le permis de construire. Ensuite, lorsque les fondations de l'immeuble sont finies, un employé de la municipalité vient contrôler. Il tient compte de l'avis spécialisé de l'architecte et de celui de l'ingénieur. Pourtant, dans la légalité même, il y a un hic : soit l'architecte, soit l'ingénieur sera choisi par le constructeur pour diriger le chantier. Le salarié du constructeur va donc contrôler le bâtiment de son employeur !

N. O. – S'il y a un problème, un effondrement par exemple, que se passe-t-il ?

E. Muhcu Bey. – Ça arrive souvent. Si on ne trouve pas le responsable, au bout de cinq ans il y a prescription. Il y a de toute façon un vide juridique, la loi ne dit pas ce qui doit être contrôlé ni comment, donc personne ne peut être tenu pour responsable de vices de construction... A plusieurs reprises, notre Chambre des Architectes et d'autres associations professionnelles ont de-

mandé au gouvernement de changer la loi, sans résultat. A la suite du tremblement de terre, un débat vient d'éclater sur la faute des constructeurs, mais pas du tout sur la responsabilité de l'Etat ou celle des municipalités.

Quand une municipalité établit un POS (plan d'occupation des sols), elle doit tenir compte des zones non constructibles ou à risques (zone sismique, inondable...). Mais le maire étend le POS jusque dans ces zones. Pourquoi ? A cause de la pression des entrepreneurs du bâtiment. Quel genre de pression ? Eh bien, ces entrepreneurs vont aider les maires qui leur sont favorables pour leur réélection. Et très souvent les élus sont également promoteurs ou entrepreneurs du bâtiment. De ce fait, on construit à tout va, dans l'irresponsabilité la plus totale, la seule fondation bien bâtonnée étant l'appât du gain.

Alors pourquoi tout cela n'est-il pas contrôlé par le gouvernement central, me direz-vous ? Parce que maire et promoteur sont souvent du même parti, que ce soit le Fazilet Partisi (islamique) ou le DSP (Parti de la Gauche démocratique). Pour la vitrine, ils vont commander des rapports sur les risques sismiques et les précautions à prendre, mais ils n'en tiendront aucun compte. Si, comme le prévoient les sismologues, Istanbul est touchée un jour, je crains que ce système ne provoque la mort de 1 million d'habitants.

N. O. – Si ces milliers d'immeubles effondrés durant le tremblement de terre avaient été construits selon les normes antisismiques turques (et bien qu'elles soient moins contraignantes que celles du Japon par exemple), est-ce que cela aurait changé quelque chose ?

E. Muhcu Bey. – Rien ne serait arrivé.

Propos recueillis par
Marie Muller



Veli Göçer, le constructeur de logements de luxe à Yalova, s'est enfui le lendemain du tremblement de terre. 90 % des immeubles qu'il avait fait construire se sont effondrés.

sins sont ouverts, sauf ceux qui sont écroulés. L'épicier du jardin public près de la mairie envahi par les sans-abri, tranquilles et dignes comme des familles en pique-nique et dont personne ne s'occupe, a augmenté ses prix de 300%. « On s'occupera de lui ce soir », marmonnent des hommes très calmes qui, de loin, assistent à l'algarade entre le commerçant et des clients furieux. Les groupes de bénévoles finiront par s'auto-organiser, distribuer eux-mêmes les vivres et médicaments apportés en voiture, en camion, en car, par des citoyens ordinaires. L'entrepôt de l'armée, le seul, entre Izmit et Gölçük, distribue l'aide internationale avec une lenteur, une ébauche de tampons et de paperaseries décourageante. Et de toute façon, il n'y a pas de camions pour le transport. Les gars d'Adana sont allés quérir le camion d'un copain, à

300 kilomètres de là. Mais cette timide ébauche d'auto-organisation et la solidarité spontanée et bénévole des gens venus de partout, sans l'Etat, sans l'armée, « qui a abandonné son peuple », va laisser des griffures dans les esprits.

« Et maintenant ils parlent des militaires morts à Gölçük comme de martyrs ! C'est quoi, ces foutus martyrs ? C'est juste des pauvres gens morts parce qu'un constructeur véreux, qui se fait du fric avec de mauvais matériaux, a construit une partie de la base navale, parce qu'il est pore avec des haut gradés ! Dites-le ! Il n'y a pas d'Etat dans ce pays ! Et nous avons payé, nous payons pour dire ça ! Les meilleurs, les vrais journalistes de ce pays sont en prison (67 en 1998) ! Beaucoup sont morts assassinés. » Suleyman Yildiz est le rédacteur en chef d'« Antimedya », un fanzine indépendant, le seul, très critique envers ces médias et cette nomenclature mafia-show-biz que Suleyman connaît très bien. « Ces gens-là possèdent les journaux, les télé, les radios, les banques. Ils possèdent les journalistes. Voyez les plus grands patrons de holding, là, à la télé, la main sur le cœur, qui disent qu'ils vont distribuer des millions de dollars aux victimes, vous savez ce qu'ils ont fait ? » Il explique. Le déficit public. Les emprunts d'Etat. 120% d'intérêt. Par an ! Qui y souscrit et s'enrichit sur le dos du contribuable ? Eux les patrons de holding. « Le jour même où ils faisaient l'annonce médiatique de leur « beau geste » [en français dans le texte], ils avaient exigé – et obtenu – de l'Etat, qu'il augmente encore les intérêts de 8%. »

MARIE MULLER

d'angoisse, la bravoure des sauveteurs grecs, les ennemis de toujours, a achevé de tourbeuler les cœurs : « Trop d'émotions : la colère, la haine contre les pourris, la reconnaissance, l'amour du monde entier pour nous, c'est pas possible, les choses vont bouger, plus rien ne restera comme avant. » Bülent Bali, 31 ans, assistant au département des finances publiques de l'université de Marmara, parle d'un grand vide. « 45 secondes et le monde s'écroule. Tout a perdu son sens. L'Etat a perdu sa légitimité. Voyez les gens, ils crient tous : où est l'Etat ? Les gens simples voient l'Etat comme un père sévère, mais qui les protège. Et là, dans une situation de crise, ils se rendent compte : il n'y a pas d'Etat. C'est une coquille vide. Un décor pour les affairistes et les mafieux. » Exactement ce que ressent ce groupe de 40 hommes, des bénévoles, employés de la mairie d'Adana. Ils ont fait 800 kilomètres par leurs propres moyens pour venir aider à Izmit, dans la chaleur de la mort qui flotte sur la ville. Ils disent leur écœurément devant l'égoïsme des habitants. La vie continue, les petits jeunes friment avec leurs portables en matant comme d'habitude les filles qui rigolent dans les rues où tous les maga-

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR

26 AOUT - 1^{er} SEPTEMBRE 1999

Une interview du Premier ministre turc « Je comprends la colère de la population »

PAR BÜLENT ECEVIT

Notre envoyée spéciale Kenizé Mourad a pu interroger le chef du gouvernement d'Ankara sur les carences de l'administration turque dans l'organisation des secours. Et aussi sur le problème des droits de l'homme et sur celui des Kurdes



Le Nouvel Observateur. – Les propos méprisants de votre ministre de la Santé sur les secours internationaux ont choqué non seulement les

étrangers mais tous les Turcs, qui demandent sa démission. Qu'en pensez-vous ?

Bülent Ecevit. – Je pense qu'il s'est mal exprimé. En tout cas, ses propos sont contraires à tout ce que nous pensons. Nous sommes infiniment reconnaissants à la communauté internationale de son aide efficace et si généreuse et nous remercions notamment nos voisins grecs dont la solidarité nous touche profondément.

N. O. – Lors de ce tremblement de terre, la population a vivement critiqué l'inefficacité de votre gouvernement et de l'armée.

B. Ecevit. – Je les comprends, étant donné l'horreur de la situation. Mais c'est un peu injuste. Pendant quarante-huit heures, les téléphones et les routes étaient coupés. Il n'y avait aucun moyen de communiquer. On ne pouvait atteindre les régions sinistrées qu'en hélicoptère, ce qui permettait aux télévisions d'être présentes mais pas aux ambulances et aux grues d'y aller. Par la suite, le travail a été très difficile car le sinistre touche villes et villages sur un territoire de 31 000 kilomètres carrés, la taille de la Sicile.

N. O. – Mais pourquoi au septième jour a-t-on demandé aux équipes étrangères de partir afin de pouvoir déblayer, alors qu'il y a peut-être encore des survivants ?

B. Ecevit. – Nous n'avons jamais demandé cela ! Les Turcs ne sont pas des monstres ! C'est à ces équipes de décider s'il y a encore de l'espoir. La

plupart pensent que non et ont décidé de s'en aller. D'ailleurs, la chaleur est telle que les cadavres sont en état avancé de décomposition et qu'il y a un risque important d'épidémie. Il est vital maintenant de déblayer vite, sinon nous courons au désastre.

N. O. – Comment se fait-il – alors que la Turquie est située dans une zone sismique à haut risque et que vous avez subi, ces dernières années, deux tremblements de terre – que vous n'ayez ni équipes, ni matériels spécialisés, ni plan d'urgence ?

B. Ecevit. – Après être revenu au gouverne-



Le Premier ministre de Turquie, Bülent Ecevit, et Kenizé Mourad à Ankara le 23 août 1999.

Un nationaliste de gauche

Ancien journaliste, le Premier ministre de Turquie, Bülent Ecevit, 74 ans, est un curieux mélange d'homme de gauche, partisan de plus d'égalité sociale, défenseur des libertés civiles et de la laïcité et adversaire convaincu de la peine de mort. Mais c'est également un nationaliste intransigeant qui, en 1974, lors du coup d'Etat de la junte grecque, envoya l'armée turque à Chypre, et refuse toujours

une solution fédérale car, dit-il, la minorité turque serait dominée par les Grecs.

Unaniment respecté pour son honnêteté, après quarante ans de carrière politique – où, entre divers séjours en prison, il fut plusieurs fois ministre et Premier ministre –, il ne possède que son appartement de banlieue ; ce petit homme modeste, parfois timide, est doté en fait d'un tempérament autoritaire. Mais, réaliste, il sait composer avec sa coalition de droite et surtout avec l'armée, pilier incontournable de la vie politique turque. K. M.

ment en 1997, j'ai moi-même mis en place un programme d'organisation de défense civile, d'équipes de secours, de cours de secourisme dans les écoles et les universités. Mais un instrument efficace ne peut se créer en un jour. Sur un autre point, il est vrai, nous avons manqué de prévoyance : lorsque nous avons installé notre zone industrielle, nous n'avons pas suffisamment pris en compte les données géologiques. Désormais il sera obligatoire d'étudier à fond ces données avant toute construction. Quant au contrôle de la qualité des constructions, il a été très insuffisant. En fait, il faudrait non seulement contrôler les entrepreneurs mais également les contrôleurs eux-mêmes. Nous n'en avons pas les moyens, aussi avons-nous décidé d'adopter une loi obligeant à assurer toute bâtisse. Ainsi ce sont les compagnies d'assurances qui vérifieront la solidité des constructions, et elles ont tout intérêt à le faire avec rigueur.

N. O. – Mais aujourd'hui ? Les familles attendent que l'on châtie les entrepreneurs marrons et les fonctionnaires qui leur ont délivré les permis de construire.

B. Ecevit. – Il va être quasiment impossible d'établir les responsabilités. J'en ai discuté longuement avec des professeurs de l'université technique. Il faudrait présenter les débris aux juges et aux experts, mais, à coup sûr, l'accusé se défendra en prétendant que les pièces à conviction ne viennent pas de ses propres constructions mais de celles du voisin. Et dans un tel champ de ruines, comment déterminer l'origine ?

N. O. – Si vous ne faites rien, les gens vont encore plus désespérer des politiques. Certains impliqués dans un scandale énorme ces dernières années n'ont jamais été inquiétés.

B. Ecevit. – C'est pourquoi nous avons préparé une loi permettant la levée partielle de l'immunité des parlementaires, des ministres et du Premier ministre. Mais elle doit être votée par le Parlement et je crains qu'elle ne soit rejetée. Par contre, depuis quatre mois que nous sommes au pouvoir, nous avons présenté plusieurs lois sur les droits de l'homme. Par exemple, l'une porte à huit ans de prison au lieu de trois les peines encourues par les tortionnaires.

N. O. – Et les prisonniers politiques, des journalistes comme Oral Calışlar, des défenseurs des droits de l'homme comme Akın Birdal ?

B. Ecevit. – C'est au judiciaire d'en décider.

Mais nous essayons actuellement de faire passer une loi d'amnistie. Il y a aussi une loi sur le repentir pour les gens du PKK : s'ils arrêtent la lutte armée, dans la mesure où ils n'ont pas commis de crime de sang, ils ne seront pas inquiétés. Il y a également une loi qui rendra très difficile la suppression des partis politiques.

N. O. – Et la peine de mort, vous êtes contre ?

B. Ecevit. – Oui, moi et mon parti avons toujours été contre. Mais (il sourit) ne me posez pas la question suivante, pas pour le moment.

N. O. – Mais vous réalisez que l'exécution d'Öcalan, le dirigeant kurde condamné à mort, serait catastrophique pour l'image de la Turquie et ne résoudrait en rien le problème kurde ?

B. Ecevit. – Le procès est en cours. Je ne peux rien ajouter. Je vous en ai déjà dit suffisamment.

N. O. – Pourquoi l'Etat turc ne cherche-t-il pas une solution avec les Kurdes modérés ?

B. Ecevit. – Mais les modérés sont représentés partout ! Au Parlement, où ils sont environ deux cents députés sur cinq cent cinquante, et à de très hauts postes dans l'armée et le gouvernement. Il y a même des maires du Hadep, parti légal.

N. O. – Et vous croyez vraiment que l'autonomie culturelle demandée par le PKK représente un danger ?

B. Ecevit. – Ils parlent d'autonomie culturelle.

mais tout le monde sait bien qu'ils veulent l'indépendance. La Turquie a été suffisamment tronçonnée après la Première Guerre mondiale, nous n'accepterons jamais une nouvelle atteinte à notre intégrité. D'ailleurs, même si certains pays occidentaux soutiennent le PKK, ce que désire la population kurde, c'est le développement économique. Car, do-

minés pendant des siècles par des féodaux, les Turcs comme les Kurdes sont très pauvres. Nous faisons depuis quelques années un énorme travail d'infrastructure et offrons de multiples avantages aux entreprises qui s'installent. C'est difficile car le PKK détruit tout ce qu'il peut.

N. O. – Mais les Kurdes pourraient avoir leurs journaux, leur télévision, leurs écoles ?

B. Ecevit. – Il n'y a aucune restriction sur les journaux ou les livres. Pour l'école, c'est l'école de la République, dans la langue de la République, comme en France. Quant à la télévision, ce n'est pas encore possible. L'opinion est trop montée contre le PKK qui a tué des milliers de civils. C'est une autre étape.

Propos recueillis par
KENIZÉ MOURAD

IRAK

Les louveteaux de Saddam sous un soleil de plomb

Le "dressage" militaire des adolescents irakiens alarme leurs familles. A leur retour des camps d'entraînement, les jeunes adoptent des comportements brutaux et souffrent de maladies ou de malnutrition.

► Les enfants de l'Irak. Sur la plaque : sanctions internationales. Dessin de Haddad paru dans Al Hayat, Londres.



AL HAYAT
Londres

Le Haut Comité des camps de louveteaux de Saddam s'est réuni pour préparer son huitième stage d'entraînement. Le président irakien, Saddam Hussein, a en effet ordonné que les adolescents de 10 à 17 ans reçoivent une formation militaire et politique lors de stages en internat d'une durée de vingt et un jours. Selon le commandant du bataillon de Bagdad-Al Rasafa, Sahban Ibrahim, les centres d'entraînement d'adolescents en Irak sont soumis à un seul et unique programme. Les louveteaux de Saddam, ajoute-t-il, sont "les glaives guidés par la main droite du chef suprême pour combattre l'ennemi".

Dans le camp d'entraînement du quartier de Rustumiya, dans la banlieue de Bagdad, un soldat annonce au son du clairon le lever matinal. C'est l'heure, pour les louveteaux, de prendre leur petit déjeuner avant de revêtir l'uniforme de parade. Le commandant Abdel Rahman Hachem,

l'un des formateurs, explique : "Après avoir défilé devant le chef de camp, les louveteaux pratiquent divers sports jusqu'à 8 heures ; ensuite commence la formation militaire proprement dite : maniement des armes, tir à balles réelles, explosifs, arts martiaux..."

Dans les camps de Bagdad comme dans ceux de province, le Haut Comité essaie d'atténuer l'extrême rigueur des exercices par l'organisation de conférences culturelles et poli-

tiques, de compétitions sportives et la projection de films "édifiants".

Iyad Khalil Zaki, le gouverneur de Mathna (à 360 kilomètres au sud de la capitale), indique qu'il a ordonné aux organes compétents du gouvernement d'équiper les camps d'un réseau d'eau potable et de services sanitaires, et d'y contrôler l'approvisionnement et la nourriture. Cette déclaration fait suite à l'augmentation des malaises chez les jeunes recrues. Sous le soleil torride de l'été irakien (plus de 50 °C), les louveteaux sont fréquemment victimes de syncopes dues à l'épuisement

et à la malnutrition. On voit aussi se propager des maladies comme la typhoïde et les intoxications alimentaires. Par ailleurs, pour prévenir la diffusion du paludisme, des équipes sanitaires spéciales ont commencé à répandre des insecticides dans les

camps et les quartiers alentour. Les familles se sont inquiétées du sort de leurs rejetons, envoyés dans les camps par le parti Baas au pouvoir avec la collaboration des administrations scolaires. Les établissements ont en effet reçu l'ordre de n'accorder aux élèves leur certificat de fin d'année qu'une fois accompli leur stage d'entraînement. Le Haut Comité a donc autorisé les familles à rendre visite à leur progéniture. Chaque vendredi, à 8 heures du matin, des autocars spéciaux s'ébranlent, conduisant les parents vers les camps. Ceux-ci apportent de la nourriture et des fruits pour pallier la maigreur de la pitance servie aux enfants et leur éviter syncopes et autres malaises. Beaucoup d'enfants, dans ces camps aux portes closes,

séjour pour la première fois loin de leur famille. A peine aperçoivent-ils leurs proches qu'ils éclatent en sanglots, tant sont violents leur frayeur et leur sentiment d'isolement.

Selon un responsable du ministère de l'Education, la moitié des crédits et des personnels affectés aux pro-

grammes d'entraînement des louvetes suffirait à améliorer les infrastructures éducatives en Irak, et notamment à équiper les classes et à recruter plusieurs centaines d'enseignants. Ce même responsable, qui a préféré garder l'anonymat, ajoute que "le jeune novice fera resurgir à l'école et

chez lui la brutalité qu'il aura subie dans les camps", et que la part essentielle de l'éducation – celle qu'assume la famille – sera battue en brèche tant que le programme d'entraînement "proclamera la nécessité de forger la personnalité du loupveteau en le faisant séjourner longtemps loin des siens". **Ali Abdel Amir**

Chronique d'une guerre fratricide annoncée

La lutte pour le pouvoir en Irak s'exacerbe entre Oudaï et Qoussaï, les deux fils de Saddam Hussein. Après le meurtre des cousins, des oncles et des gendres, le clan au pouvoir à Bagdad poursuit ses vendettas.

AL HAYAT

Londres

En Irak, les informations relatives à la famille de Saddam Hussein ont toujours été liées, inextricablement, aux informations concernant le pouvoir... et vice versa. Quand le Baas s'empare du pouvoir, en 1968, deux hommes occupent la scène : Saddam Hussein al-Takriti et son cousin Ildan. Le feuilleton s'achève par la mort "mystérieuse" de Hardan au Koweït. Puis, non moins mystérieusement, le sort du "duo Takriti" [on appelle "Takriti" les Irakiens originaires de la ville de Takrit] – Ahmad Hassan al-Bakr* et Saddam Hussein – est tranché : le premier rentre dans ses foyers tandis que le second gravit les marches de la présidence. Nouvel épisode : la mort, "mystérieuse" elle aussi, du cousin de Saddam Hussein et ministre de la Défense Adnan Kheirallah al-Takriti. S'ouvre ensuite le dossier du frère de Saddam, Barzan al-Takriti, qui émigre "mystérieusement", puis revient tout aussi "mystérieusement"... sans être vraiment de retour.

Pendant ce temps, les rejetons de

■ Valse viennoise

Le bref séjour à Vienne du numéro deux irakien, Izzat Ibrahim el-Duri – il s'était fait soigner dans un hôpital de la ville –, a provoqué un vif débat en Autriche. Peter Pilz (Verts) avait demandé l'arrestation immédiate du "criminel de guerre" irakien, rapporte *Der Standard*. Toutefois, devant la peur d'une affaire Pinochet bis, Izzat Ibrahim el-Duri a brusquement dû mettre un terme à son séjour et rentrer illégalement à Bagdad.

Saddam, Oudaï et Qoussaï, grandissent. C'est alors que la saga familiale resplendit d'un nouvel éclat avec la fuite en Jordanie des deux gendres, leur retour et... leur élimination. Du début à la fin, on ne parle que de "mystère", cela sans le moindre embarras.

Il s'agit là seulement des gros titres, mais il y a plusieurs sous-titres : Taher Yahia al-Takriti (membre du clan de Saddam Hussein), dans les années 60, puis Watban (demi-frère de Saddam Hussein), à la fin des années 90. Et ce n'est pas fini... Il faut croire qu'au sein de la première famille d'Irak tout individu est destiné au pouvoir.

Un nouveau chapitre s'ouvre aujourd'hui, qui concerne tous les membres de la famille : celui des deux frères stars, Oudaï et Qoussaï, dignes rejetons de leur géniteur Saddam Hussein. La rivalité fraternelle est une vieille histoire. Elle plonge ses racines dans la Genèse et la mythologie. Elle est le plus souvent, dans la réalité comme dans les mythes, éblouissante de sang.

Dans la Genèse, Caïn, le cultivateur, tue son frère cadet, le pasteur

Abel. Dans la mythologie biblique, le pasteur Jacob, qui devait naître le premier, se bat avec son frère jumeau, le chasseur Esaü, dans la matrice maternelle. Esaü menace de fermer celle-ci et de tuer leur mère, aussi Jacob lui

cède-t-il : Esaü naîtra donc avant lui. Dans la mythologie antique, enfin, Romulus tue son jumeau Remus, puis fonde la ville de Rome, à laquelle il donnera son nom.

Avec la première famille d'Irak, rien de tel ne nous est promis : ni l'édification de Rome, ni la victoire des cultivateurs sur les pasteurs, ni l'avènement d'une nouvelle phase de la civilisation. On nous promet seulement de restituer Bagdad à la mythologie et de la faire sombrer dans le tribalisme et le sang. Saddam Hussein peut, à sa manière, être fier : la Genèse n'est-elle pas née entre le Tigre et l'Euphrate ? ■

* Ancien président de l'Irak. En 1979, officiellement pour raisons de santé, il démissionna de son poste au profit de Saddam Hussein. Tout comme son successeur, il est originaire de Takrit (localité au nord de Bagdad).

LE MONDE / SAMEDI 28 AOÛT 1999

L'Irak retarde l'application de programmes d'aide alimentaire

NEW YORK (Nations unies). Benon Sevan, directeur exécutif du programme humanitaire de l'ONU pour l'Irak, a accusé Bagdad de ne pas utiliser pleinement les revenus de la vente de pétrole pour acheter de la nourriture. M. Sevan en a informé, jeudi 26 août, le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU. Par ailleurs, une délégation d'attachés parlementaires américains et de membres de deux instituts basés à Washington devait se rendre vendredi en Irak, pour évaluer l'impact des sanctions économiques imposées par l'ONU.

Le département d'Etat n'approuve pas le voyage et un porte-parole du département, James Foley, a déclaré, jeudi 26 août, que les passeports de ces assistants parlementaires ne seraient pas validés. Washington interdit tout voyage en Irak depuis l'invasion du Koweït par ce pays en 1990, mais des dérogations sont possibles, sous la forme de « validations de passeports » délivrées par le gouvernement. – (AFP)

La France demande le déblocage de fonds européens à la Turquie

JACQUES CHIRAC a écrit au président en exercice du Conseil européen et à la présidence de la Commission européenne pour demander le déblocage de fonds dus à la Turquie afin d'aider à la reconstruction après le tremblement de terre. « Il me paraît indispensable, comme au gouvernement, qu'en cette occasion l'Union européenne, en tant que telle, marque clairement sa solidarité avec la Turquie », écrit le chef de l'Etat français dans une lettre adressée au président finlandais Martti Ahtisaari, rendue publique mercredi 25 août. « Dans ce contexte, le déblocage du protocole financier offrirait des possibilités d'actions concrètes et rapides à l'UE », poursuit M. Chirac, faisant référence à l'aide prévue pour la Turquie dans le cadre de son union douanière avec l'UE (environ 2,5 milliards de francs), dont le versement est bloqué par le veto de la Grèce depuis des années.

L'aide à Ankara, au-delà de l'assistance humanitaire d'urgence, devrait être évoquée lors de la réunion informelle des ministres des affaires étrangères de l'UE les 4 et 5 septembre à Saariselkä (Finlande). Selon un nouveau bilan provisoire officiel publié jeudi, le séisme a fait 13 009 morts et 26 606 blessés. – (AFP, Reuters.)

dimanche 22 août 1999, 23h39

Jalal Talabani désigné ``gouverneur'' du Kurdistan d'Irak par son parti

AP

**Associated
Press**

LE CAIRE (AP) -- L'Union patriotique du Kurdistan, qui contrôle une bonne partie du nord de l'Irak, a nommé son chef Jalal Talabani ``dirigeant du mouvement de libération kurde'', l'équivalent de gouverneur général de la région autonome du Kurdistan d'Irak.

L'UPK partage le contrôle de la région avec son rival, le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan de Massoud Barzani. L'élection de Talabani risque de mécontenter Barzani, qui se considère chef des quelque 3,5 millions de Kurdes irakiens.

En 1992, les deux groupes avaient décidé qu'un parlement élu devrait choisir un gouverneur du Kurdistan, mais la rivalité entre Barzani et Talabani a retardé cette désignation. Opposés au régime de Saddam Hussein, ces deux groupes passent en fait plus de temps à se combattre l'un l'autre.

Dans son communiqué, l'UPK précise qu'un remaniement ``ministériel'' a eu lieu au sein de l'administration gérant la zone sous contrôle de l'UPK, qui compte quelque deux millions de Kurdes. La zone contrôlée par le PDK dispose d'une administration similaire.

.....

Une société britannique avait proposé d'assassiner Abdullah Ocalan (presse)

LONDRES, 22 août (AFP) - 1h41 - Une entreprise privée britannique spécialisée dans la sécurité avait proposé à Ankara d'assassiner le dirigeant kurde Abdullah Ocalan pour un montant de 9,2 millions de dollars rapporte le journal dominical britannique The Sunday Times.

Selon le journal, la société Aims Ltd, basée à Salisbury (est de l'Angleterre), qui maintient des liens avec l'unité d'élite de l'armée britannique SAS et les services de renseignement, avait proposé de "se débarrasser" du dirigeant du Parti des Travailleurs kurdes (PKK).

La proposition avait été faite après que le gouvernement turc eut demandé à la société en 1995 de le conseiller sur la manière de neutraliser Ocalan, précise le Sunday Times.

Aims avait offert de le retrouver et d'organiser son assassinat en suggérant d'utiliser des soldats des SAS pour entraîner un commando turc à mener l'attaque dans un pays étranger ou de faire enlever le dirigeant kurde pour le ramener en Turquie.

Dans un document cité par le journal, la société précisait qu'"il était plus simple de se débarrasser" d'Ocalan là où il se trouvait.

Selon le Sunday Times, le gouvernement turc aurait alors décidé de ne pas faire assassiner Ocalan.

Le journal précise que Aims, ainsi qu'une deuxième société privée britannique, la centrale américaine de renseignement CIA et le service israélien Mossad ont aidé Ankara à enlever Ocalan en février dernier au Kenya.

Les deux sociétés britanniques ont été grassement rémunérées pour leur rôle dans l'entraînement des commandos spéciaux turcs qui ont mené l'opération, ajoute le journal.

Ocalan a été condamné à mort en juin dernier par un tribunal turc.

.....

Les combats se poursuivent dans le sud-est: 25 rebelles kurdes tués

AFP

ANKARA, 23 août (AFP) - 11h39 - Les combats entre l'armée turque et les rebelles kurdes se poursuivent dans le sud-est de la Turquie, où 25 rebelles ont été tués en deux jours, pendant que le nord-ouest tente de se remettre du séisme qui a fait plus de 12.000 morts, a-t-on appris lundi de source officielle.

Quatorze rebelles ont été tués lundi dans les localités de Baskale et de Catak, dans la province de Van (est), selon un communiqué de la super-préfecture de Diyarbakir, chargée de coordonner la lutte contre le PKK.

Onze autres rebelles ont été tués dimanche à Diyarbakir, Batman (sud-est), Sirnak, à la frontière avec l'Irak, et à Tunceli (est).

Onze rebelles ont été capturés par les forces de sécurité dans ces régions, selon le communiqué.

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde. Les violences liées à cette rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

Son chef Abdullah Ocalan, 50 ans, a été condamné à mort pour trahison et séparatisme par la justice turque. Il a appelé ses partisans à arrêter les combats et à se retirer de Turquie à partir du 1er septembre.

Le PKK, en particulier son aile militaire, a répondu qu'il se plierait à cet appel, tout en soulignant qu'il userait de son droit de réponse si l'armée turque l'attaquait.



L'actualité



Le PKK annonce le début de son retrait du territoire turc

ANKARA, 25 août (AFP) - 11h48 - Le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatiste) a annoncé mercredi que ses forces armées avaient entamé leur retrait de Turquie, conformément à l'appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan, selon un communiqué du conseil de commandement diffusé par l'agence DEM.

"Nos forces armées ont entamé leur retrait du Kurdistan nord avant même d'attendre le 1er septembre", date pour laquelle le chef du PKK avait appelé le 2 août ses partisans à arrêter les combats et à se retirer de Turquie.

Dans la terminologie du PKK, le "Kurdistan nord" veut dire le sud-est de la Turquie et le "Kurdistan sud", le nord de l'Irak, qui échappe depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe (1991) à l'autorité de Bagdad.

"Pour accélérer le retrait de nos forces (...) l'Etat turc doit contribuer aux travaux nécessaires qui visent essentiellement à la paix", précise le communiqué, qui ne donne aucun détail sur le pays vers lequel les rebelles ont commencé à se retirer.

"Les affrontements (ndlr: avec l'armée turque) ont été ramenés au niveau le plus bas et le PKK ne se trouve pas à l'origine de combats sporadiques", précise le communiqué.

Il a été diffusé le jour même où les autorités turque ont annoncé que 10 rebelles avaient été tués dans des combats survenus dans les provinces de Hakkari, extrême sud-est, et de Van (est).

Le communiqué du PKK indique que des renseignements "détaillés" seront fournis le 1er septembre par le conseil de commandement sur le "processus de retrait".

Il affirme par ailleurs que le violent séisme en Turquie a "montré comment l'Etat turc est orienté vers une guerre envers les Kurdes depuis 15 ans, qui a laissé la société turque désorganisée face à une telle catastrophe".

Le PKK a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde. Les violences liées à cette rébellion ont fait quelque 31.000 morts.

Ocalan, 50 ans, a été condamné le 29 juin à mort pour trahison et séparatisme par la justice turque sur l'île-prison d'Imrali (ouest).

Le PKK, en particulier son aile militaire, avait répondu qu'il se plierait à l'appel de son chef, tout en soulignant qu'il userait de son droit de réponse si l'armée turque l'attaquait.

Le PKK, qui se sert du nord de l'Irak comme base arrière, a aussi offert un cessez-le-feu au parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) de Massoud Barzani à partir du 1er septembre.

L'armée turque mène de fréquentes incursions dans le nord de l'Irak, contrôlé par le PDK et l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK) de Jalal Talabani, pour en déloger le PKK.

Le PDK est allié depuis mai 1997 au gouvernement turc dans sa lutte contre le PKK dans le nord de l'Irak.

L'UPK s'est également engagée à ne pas offrir refuge aux militants du PKK.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE DAILY PRESS BRIEFING
AUGUST 24, 1999

Briefer: James B. Foley

QUESTION: *Two subjects, also for a slow news day. Iraq. Jim, have the French recently renewed their concerns to the US Government over the continued US-led bombing raids over Iraq?*

MR. FOLEY: I'm not aware that we've been in diplomatic contact with France on this particular matter involving the no-fly zone and no-fly zone enforcement. I think that on the part of Paris, there has historically been a concern that the no-fly zone enforcement, or the whole entire issue of Iraq, be treated in such a way as to preserve the territorial integrity of Iraq.

Let me say for the record that we completely agree with our French allies that that is a very important principle that we thoroughly support the continued territorial integrity of Iraq. So on that question, I think there's no daylight between us.

In terms of our enforcement of the no-fly zone, however, we believe that our enforcement is something that flows out of Security Council resolutions from the time of the Gulf War; that it's intended to protect the people of Northern and Southern Iraq from depredations by Saddam Hussein; and that the actual use of force that has occurred with some regularity since December in enforcing the no-fly zone is wholly the responsibility of Saddam Hussein, who is clearly attempting to shoot down an allied aircraft and, therefore, is challenging the aircraft, endangering pilots, illuminating aircraft, and our pilots are responding in self-defense.

QUESTION: *Just on that note, if I could just follow up, in terms of - this is not new, either, obviously. Some people who are sort of with the Iraqis stepping up their attempts to hit an allied aircraft in the no-fly zone, it seems to be happening more and more lately. More and more people are coming forward - critics, analysts and the op-ed pages - sort of questioning the whole sort of US approach to Iraq; saying it's at a stalemate, it's not working, inspectors haven't been in there since December. There are reports that the sanctions are causing some damage in some areas of the country. What do you say to those critics, who really say that this policy is not working and it's time for a full review of the approach to Iraq?*

MR. FOLEY: Well, I certainly don't agree with the basic premise that the policy is not working, and I've said this before. If you asked Saddam Hussein does he think American policy is one that he likes or doesn't, I'm sure he doesn't like it one bit because he's still very much contained, unable to threaten his neighbors, constrained in his ability to threaten his own people - at least in the north and south of Iraq - still subject to sanctions and, therefore, very much a contained threat in the region.

We would share the concern of critics over the fact that we have not had weapons inspectors on the ground in Iraq since the end of last year; that is a significant concern. Therefore, we are pushing strongly in the Security Council for a resolution which protects the integrity of the inspection regime, which continues to ensure that Saddam Hussein's imports are monitored, scrutinized and approved carefully by the international community so that he's unable to import elements that can bolster his weapons programs.

But we very much want to see progress in this area because we believe that the best way of ensuring that the international community has a handle on his programs to develop weapons of mass destruction and is, indeed, in a position to disarm those weapons and programs is to have inspectors on the ground in Iraq. We are striving to achieve that in the Security Council, but we're not willing to sacrifice the integrity of the program. We're not willing to see "Potemkin" inspectors or inspection regime. We don't trust Saddam Hussein and, therefore, we are moving forward with those concerns very much in mind.

QUESTION: Will the sanctions have caused the doubling of the infant mortality since ten years ago? And people even in Great Britain, like George Galloway, are intending to send a tour bus to protest against the sanctions. Now the sanctions the United States has installed another regime in Iraq, but so far we didn't see any results. Is there any other way to deal with the regime of Saddam Hussein; and are there any efforts to escalate these strikes since we have seen 110 strikes this year alone?

MR. FOLEY: Well, as you know, in terms of your question about the humanitarian situation, we have a very clear view of this, which is that the problem of malnutrition and the humanitarian crisis in Iraq is the responsibility of Saddam Hussein. We enabled the oil-for-food program to go forward. It took a long time to persuade Saddam Hussein to allow that to go forward. The problem is that if the United Nations is authorized to feed and care for the people of Iraq, then he loses his best argument, his best propaganda tool for arguing in favor of lifting the sanctions.

In this regard, if you're looking for something that can improve the situation, I think that Saddam Hussein ought to heed the report issued by Secretary General Annan last week, in which he called for Iraq to do more to help mothers and children under the oil-for-food program. For over a year, the UN has urged Iraq to use oil-for-food revenues to purchase special nutritional supplements targeted at vulnerable groups. But despite its promises, Iraq ordered only one of these items in the last 15 months.

In light of the recent UNICEF report on the child mortality rates in the regions controlled by Saddam Hussein, Iraq should, indeed, redouble its efforts to provide nutrition and humanitarian assistance to the innocent victims of his regime.

But again, the UNICEF report underscores the success and efficiency of the oil-for-food program in the northern regions of Iraq, where the child mortality rates have fallen to below pre-Gulf War levels. In the south and central regions, where Saddam Hussein controls the territory, medicine and humanitarian assistance sits in warehouses while child mortality rates have doubled.

QUESTION: The INC was supposed to have its general assembly to get a new umbrella organization launched by mid-July. It hasn't happened. Can you tell us what's going on there; and are you trying to persuade them to speed 'his process up? Because it doesn't look too good.

MR. FOLEY: Well, here, because, to be perfectly honest with you, I'm just back after having been absent for quite a number of weeks. I am not up to speed on our contacts with the Iraqi opposition and the efforts to get that assembly underway. So I'd like to take the question and come back to you if not this afternoon then tomorrow on it.

TURKISH FM WARNS AGAINST DIVIDING IRAQ

AFP - Aug 25, 1999

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 25 (AFP) - Turkey's Foreign Minister Ismail Cem on Wednesday warned against dividing Iraq, saying it would pose a serious threat to the region, a Kuwaiti newspaper reported.

"A division of Iraq would be a danger for everyone, and would create many problems in relations between the Arab world and the West, as well as problems inside Iraq," said the minister told Al-Qabas.

Cem, who gave the interview on the eve of his visit to the emirate, was responding to a question on the possible creation of an independent Kurdish area in the north of Iraq.

"We are against judging the situation in Iraq along religious or ethnic lines. We cannot imagine an independent entity in southern Iraq based on religion, or in the north based on ethnicity and that the centre of the country stays only Arab has no logical justification," he said.

"It is dangerous to threaten the political and geographic unity of countries in the region, as the experience of the Balkans showed," Cem added.

Meanwhile, he said Turkey had a "positive policy" towards Iraq and hoped to "develop its relationship with Iraq within the framework of UN resolutions just as it wants to develop its ties with Kuwait and other Arab states."

Ankara has been engaged for 15 years in a war with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) to stop it forming a separate Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey.

More than 31,000 people have died in the conflict, and Turkey has launched a number of incursions into northern Iraq against PKK rear bases.

Asked about relations with Tehran, Cem said he was "convinced" that his Iranian counterpart Kamal Kharazi is sincere in his desire to solve problems in the ties between the two countries.

"He proved it during the crisis of the Turkish soldiers held by Iran." Iran held two Turkish soldiers for several days this month after Tehran said they were part of a group of soldiers attempting to invade the country.

"But there are still problems and we must come to a practical formula to solve them, as we did with Syria," the minister said.

"Today, Syrian-Turkish ties suggest a positive future even if there are still some unresolved problems, (although) they will not be difficult to solve," he said.

Turkey and Iran signed an agreement on August 13 to cooperate against "terrorist groups" along their joint border, notably the (PKK).

Under pressure from Ankara, Syria agreed last October to end its support for the Turkish Kurd separatists.

24 Août 1999 - INTERNATIONAL

LE WEB DE
l'Humanité

Du hit parade au boxe des accusés

Entretien. Le chanteur Ahmet Kaya explique son combat pour la reconnaissance de l'identité kurde.

Ses disques se vendent à plus d'un million d'exemplaires. Soumis à une surveillance policière depuis quinze ans, il vient de commettre au yeux des dirigeants d'Ankara le crime d'écrire une chanson en langue kurde.

L'un des chanteurs les plus populaires de Turquie, Ahmet Kaya, - il a été consacré " meilleur chanteur de l'année " en février dernier - comparaît le 25 août devant la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat pour " incitation à la haine raciale, séparatisme et soutien à mouvement armée ". Son crime : défendre la reconnaissance de l'identité kurde. Kaya, dont les disques se vendent à plus d'un million d'exemplaires, pense simplement que les deux peuples peuvent vivre ensemble et se prononce contre la violence. La presse de son pays, qui lui a attribué des propos qu'il n'a jamais tenus, est particulièrement en pointe au milieu de la meute qui tente de faire taire le chanteur. Celui-ci, fort de son bon droit, vient d'écrire une chanson en kurde. Nous l'avons rencontré de passage à Paris avant une tournée en Allemagne.

Que répondez-vous à la justice turque ?

Ahmet Kaya. La Turquie considère chaque kurde comme un terroriste potentiel. Depuis des années, je mène un combat pour la reconnaissance de l'identité kurde. Je le mène à ma manière, avec mes armes, celles d'un artiste, en l'occurrence la musique. Mais l'Etat, dans la mesure où je revendique cette identité kurde, m'identifie à un combattant armé qui mène la guérilla dans la montagne.

De quelle manière, précisément, portez-vous cette identité kurde dans votre art ?

Ahmet Kaya. Mes chansons s'inspirent des réalités sociales et géographiques du Kurdistan mais aussi des douleurs et des souffrances du peuple. Même si je chante en turc pour des questions de lois, le message donne une expression de cette identité qui est interdite, étouffée en Turquie.

Vous chantez depuis des années. Comment expliquez-vous ces attaques à ce moment précis ?

Ahmet Kaya. Je fais de la musique professionnellement depuis quinze ans. En raison de mes orientations marxistes, socialistes, j'ai souvent été inquiété : on m'a arrêté, placé en garde à vue, mes cassettes ont été saisies. J'ai l'impression de vivre depuis quinze ans sous haute surveillance. Cet épisode est le plus récent et le plus retentissant car j'arrive au sommet de mon art et de ma popularité. Mais ce n'est pas vraiment nouveau pour moi.

Comment réagit la communauté artistique en Turquie ?

Ahmet Kaya. Je suis le chanteur le plus en dissidence avec le régime. Tous les autres essaient de composer avec le système pour faire du fric. Il y a évidemment d'autres chanteurs en opposition mais ils ne touchent qu'un public restreint. Le tirage de mes disques et cassettes dépasse ceux de l'ensemble de mes confrères en désaccord avec le régime. C'est cette popularité qui dérange énormément l'Etat turc. C'est la raison pour laquelle je suis l'objet de cette surveillance constante et de ces persécutions. Ceux qui font des chansons inodores et incolores ne veulent pas avoir de problèmes avec l'Etat et donc il n'y a pas de relations et encore moins de solidarité.

Vous vous prononcez pour la reconnaissance de l'identité kurde mais vous êtes contre le séparatisme. De quelle manière entendez-vous porter cette idée ?

Ahmet Kaya. Je ne considère pas le problème de l'identité kurde uniquement dans le cadre de la Turquie. C'est une question qui se pose pour l'ensemble des Kurdes du monde et particulièrement ceux des pays voisins: Iran, Irak, Syrie mais aussi ceux d'Europe. On arrivera à obtenir la reconnaissance pleine et entière de cette identité s'il y a une coopération entre tous les mouvements politiques issus de la population kurde, entre les artistes et les intellectuels, et si nous arrivons tous ensemble à lier des liens avec nos voisins et avec les pays occidentaux. La

reconnaissance de notre identité est un droit. Mais c'est un combat qui prendra du temps.

Votre procès doit se dérouler le 25 août. Vous avez fait part de votre volonté d'être à l'audience. Que voulez-vous signifier par cette présence ?

Ahmet Kaya. Les grands médias au service du régime mènent une campagne pour me discréditer aux yeux de mes amis turcs. Ils veulent accréditer l'idée que je me suis enfui. Au contraire, je voudrais leur dire que je ne déserte pas le combat. Mon cœur me dit d'y aller, tout en sachant ce qui peut m'arriver. Ma raison me commande de réfléchir un peu plus. Mon intention est, de toute manière, de continuer par les moyens de l'art. Je vais suivre les événements d'ici le 25 août. Mais je souhaite de tout cœur être présent à l'audience pour montrer à ceux qui m'aiment et me suivent en Turquie que je poursuis mon combat.

Entretien réalisé par Pierre Barbancey

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Le PKK, un mouvement de guérilla armée qui rêvait d'un Etat kurde

AFP

ANKARA, 25 août (AFP) - 11h53 - Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui a annoncé mercredi que ses forces armées avaient entamé leur retrait du territoire turc, mène depuis 15 ans une rébellion armée, lancée dans le but de créer un Etat kurde indépendant à partir du sud-est de la Turquie.

L'organisation s'est lancée en août 1984 dans la lutte armée contre l'Etat turc, se présentant comme un mouvement marxiste, mais avec pour but le "socialisme dans un seul pays": le Kurdistan, un Etat qu'il comptait tailler sur la Turquie, l'Irak, l'Iran et la Syrie, pour regrouper quelque 20 millions de Kurdes.

La rébellion a fait de la question kurde le principal problème de la Turquie, et causé la mort de quelque 31.000 personnes.

Le PKK est dirigé depuis sa création en novembre 1978 par Abdullah Ocalan, dit "Apo", 50 ans, condamné à mort fin juin par la justice turque pour trahison et séparatisme.

Ocalan a longtemps résidé en Syrie ou dans la plaine libanaise de la Bekaa sous contrôle syrien, avant d'en être expulsé en octobre 1998 au terme d'un accord conclu entre Damas et Ankara qui a privé le PKK d'un précieux soutien.

L'arrestation le 15 février au Kenya de son chef charismatique lui a porté un coup décisif.

L'organisation avait déjà subi sur le terrain d'importants revers depuis le déclenchement, en 1993, de vastes offensives des forces de sécurité turques sous le gouvernement de Mme Tansu Ciller.

Ses effectifs sont estimés à quelque 6.000 combattants, dont quelques milliers stationnés dans le sud-est de la Turquie, et la plupart dans le nord de l'Irak qui échappe depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991 au contrôle de Bagdad et se trouve sous le contrôle de mouvements kurdes rivaux.

Le 13 août, la Turquie a annoncé la signature avec l'Iran d'un accord de coopération pour lutter contre les activités du PKK à la frontière.

Le PKK est composé d'une branche politique, l'ERNK (Front de libération du Kurdistan), surtout active en Europe, et d'une branche militaire, l'ARGK. Depuis la capture d'Ocalan, il est dirigé par un "Conseil de commandement provisoire" regroupant les deux branches.

Le PKK est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie, les Etats-Unis, la France et la Grande-Bretagne.

Son leader a au fil des ans réduit ses objectifs: après un Etat kurde, Ocalan a évoqué une "autonomie" pour les Kurdes de Turquie --catégoriquement exclue par Ankara qui y voit une menace à terme pour son intégrité territoriale-- ou une fédération.

Lors de son procès, il s'est borné à réclamer des droits culturels limités pour les Kurdes au sein d'un Etat turc unifié.

Le programme du PKK exclut pourtant formellement toute concession sur son objectif initial. Mais le parti a fidèlement soutenu les appels successifs à la paix de son chef, menacé de pendaison.

Le 13 août, dans un communiqué diffusé par ses avocats, Ocalan assurait que son parti était prêt à rendre les armes en échange d'une amnistie générale et de réformes légales.

BBC NEWS

August 26, 1999

World: Europe

PKK 'starts Turkey withdrawal'



South eastern Turkey has been scarred by years of violence

Kurdish guerrillas who have spent 15 years fighting for autonomy say they have begun their promised withdrawal from Turkey.

The BBC's Chris Morris: Highly unlikely the PKK will be allowed to leave unchallenged

Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party or PKK, ordered an end to the armed struggle after he was sentenced to death for treason in July.

The withdrawal, scheduled for 1 September has been brought forward because of last week's devastating earthquake, according to a

PKK statement carried by the German-based DEM news agency "To unilaterally stop the war at this time of heavy disaster is the greatest support to the state and people of Turkey," said the PKK statement.

The PKK said earlier this month that it would transform from a guerrilla group into a political organisation. It promised a unilateral ceasefire and a withdrawal.



It did not say where the forces would go, but the Turkish Government says they have bases in northern Iraq, Iran and Syria.

The PKK also announced a unilateral ceasefire with a rival Iraqi Kurdish group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party. In the past, the Iraqi group has helped Turkish troops fight the PKK in northern Iraq.

In its statement, the PKK attacked the government for its slow response to the earthquake, saying that Turkey had lavished resources on fighting the Kurdish rebellion, to the detriment of its ability to cope with a natural disaster.

Goodwill gesture



Abdullah Ocalan made a courtroom call for a PKK withdrawal

The PKK asked the Turkish Government to reciprocate for the withdrawal with a goodwill gesture. "In order to attain the desired goal of peace, Turkey must also contribute to efforts," it said.

Turkey has refused throughout the 15-year-old war to negotiate with the rebels, whom it considers terrorists. The conflict has killed 37,000 people, most of them Kurds.

Turkish emergency rule authorities in the mainly Kurdish southeast said on Wednesday that their troops had killed 10 PKK guerrillas overnight in fighting in the southeast.

Wednesday August 25 9:06 AM ET

Kurd Rebels Say They're Leaving Turkey

REUTERS

Full Coverage
Kurdish Issues

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkey's Kurdish guerrillas said Wednesday they had begun withdrawing from Turkey a week ahead of a schedule set by their condemned leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Ocalan was sentenced to death for treason in July and held responsible for the deaths of more than 30,000 people in the 15-year Kurdish armed struggle for autonomy -- mostly Kurdish fighters, as well as soldiers and civilians. From his cell on an island prison, he ordered his rebels this month to end their armed struggle and pull out of Turkey from September 1.

The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) said it had already begun.

"Without even waiting for September 1, our armed forces have started the withdrawal process in line with earlier statements," its presidential council said in a statement carried by the German-based Kurdish DEM news agency.

The statement said the rebels had decreased their activities to the "lowest level possible" and that the responsibility for any clashes that broke out lay with the Turkish army.

Turkish emergency rule authorities in the mainly Kurdish southeast said Wednesday their troops had killed 10 PKK guerrillas overnight.

Turkey refuses any negotiations with the PKK, which it labels a terrorist organization.

The rebels are most likely to try to rebase themselves in the breakaway Kurdish enclave of northern Iraq.

The PKK has announced a unilateral cease-fire in its sporadic conflict with a Kurdish faction partly ruling the region -- outside Baghdad's control since after the 1991 Gulf War.

The rebels said they would make a more comprehensive statement on September 1.

TURKISH PARLIAMENT BACKS PARDON LAW

APAug 26, 1999

By SELCAN HACAOGLU

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) - Turkey's parliament on Thursday passed a law that could pardon a large number of Kurdish guerrillas fighting for autonomy in southeastern Turkey.

It could also be a first step towards ending 15 years of bitter fighting that has left about 37,000 people dead, mostly Kurds.

The law came just one day after rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, announced they had started pulling out of the region. PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, sentenced to death by a Turkish court in June, had asked his followers to put down their arms.

The law will give amnesty to rebels who are not known to have engaged in fighting, have no criminal record, or who surrender and provide information on the PKK. It also encompasses known PKK members who are not under investigation, but it was unclear how many would be affected by the law. It will expire in six months.

The law also foresees the possibility of lower sentences for any imprisoned guerrillas who provide reliable information against the PKK. There are about 5,000 PKK members in jail.

"Of course we as the Kurdish side see this repentance law as a step that will serve the peace process," said Mehmet Dogan, a spokesman for the ERNK, the PKK's political wing.

Dogan added by telephone from Germany, that "there is no meaning to deepen this 15-year-old blind war anymore."

Ocalan and senior leaders of the PKK, considered a terrorist group, will not benefit from the law.

It was approved by 214 of 256 representatives present, the Anatolian news agency reported.

But Ali Gungor, a member of the ultra-national party that has fought against any concessions to the PKK, said there should be no pardon for any guerrillas.

"The PKK terrorist organization and its members have committed every crime and they should serve for their crimes," said Gungor, who voted against the legislation.

There have been previous repentance decrees issued by the government, but this is the first time one has been passed by parliament.

The law has to be signed by Turkish President Suleyman Demirel and printed in the official gazette to become official, which could come as early as Friday.

The identities of many of the 3,500 rebels fighting in the mountains around southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq are not known.

Dogan said that rebels fighting in the mountains "will be the first ones to salute this," and that the law's exclusion of senior members would not create any problems.

DROUGHT CAUSES IRAQI MIGRATION

AP - Aug 28, 04:48 EDT 1999

By LEON BARKHO Associated Press Writer

JAZIRA, Iraq (AP) - Ahmad Ali has sold half his flock of 300 sheep. The other half, weakened by drought and disease, may not survive until rain starts falling again in November. "Every month I sell eight and use the money to feed the rest. Fodder is so dear at a time animal prices are at a record low," said Ali, whose village of al-Massaid is in the heart of Jazira, the plateau once known as Iraq's breadbasket.

Iraq is experiencing its lowest rate of rainfall since the country began keeping records some 50 years ago. The government, crippled by U.N. trade sanctions imposed for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, can do little to help. The United States and its allies forbid Iraqi warplanes from flying over the country's north shortly after the 1991 Gulf War to protect the rebelling Kurdish. The area quickly slipped out of the government's control, and Iraqis fleeing the drought have found international help in the north.

"With no way to alleviate the impact of scorched fields, shepherds decided to head to the mountains in northern Iraq by tens of thousands, taking millions of sheep with them," said Izzidin Sheet, head of Nineveh's agricultural department, which administers Jazira.

Those left behind are finding it hard to cope. In addition to the drought, a recent outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease has killed 500,000 head of cattle and sheep and could affect up to 2.5 million more in south and central Iraq.

The parched villages in Jazira, some 250 miles north of Baghdad, are now surrounded by scorched fields with no trace of vegetation. Occasionally, clouds of dust rise in the distance, indicating movement by shepherds in their desperate search for water and pasture.

Farmers hang fresh carcasses of sheep for sale on wooden hangars. Mutton is about 68 cents a pound, less than half last year's price. Water levels in some wells have dropped so much that many villagers now find it difficult to get enough for the flocks to drink. "The underground water is now at least 23 feet below last year in our well," said Mohammed Uwaid from Sahaji, a village of about 50 farmers.

Last year, Uwaid sowed his extensive fields with wheat and barley. "I harvested nothing. The plants did not even grow enough for the sheep to graze," he said.

Half of Uwaid's 500 sheep have either perished or been sold. Sheet said over one-fourth of Iraq's nearly 6 million sheep used to graze in Jazira, and the region once provided up to 60 percent of the country's agricultural produce, particularly wheat and barley.

"This year, we gathered less than 2 percent," he said. More than 70 percent of new cattle births were lost this year and the price of fodder has more than doubled. The government has responded by selling concentrated feed and barley, but has little money to subsidize the grain. Farmers in Jazira said government prices were almost equivalent to those on the private market.

The United Nations in Baghdad also says it can do little to help farmers in the central or southern parts of Iraq. But it has mobilized its resources to aid shepherds and sheep that have emigrated to the Kurdish north in the past few months, according to Amir Khalil of the U.N. Agriculture and Food Organization.

Most animals, Khalil said, have concentrated in the northern Kurdish provinces of Dahouk and Arbil, whose area of 13,000 miles ``is now flooded with sheep and goats wherever one goes." U.N. statistics show that the animal population in Iraq's Kurdish region has increased by more than one-third, owing to the exodus from other parts of the country.

The organization has hired more than 1,500 tankers to truck water to the new arrivals. Hundreds of new wells are being dug and old ones dredged to increase their potential. Sheet and Khalil both said Arab nomads in the Kurdish region are facing no problem coexisting with Kurds.

Khalil said the impact of the drought would have been worse but for the U.N. oil-for-food program. Under the oil deal, which skirts U.N. sanctions on Iraq, each Iraqi now gets a monthly ration of rice, sugar, flour and legumes. The monthly food basket costs each person 12 cents.

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TURKEY SPEEDS REBUILDING PROCESS

AP - AUGUST 28, 05:34 EDT

By PATRICK QUINN Associated Press Writer

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) - Responding to widespread anger at shoddily constructed buildings that collapsed during last week's earthquake, the Turkish parliament passed a bill today giving amnesty to thousands of prisoners - excluding builders.

The bill frees juveniles and some prisoners who received sentences of up to 12 years and would have included builders convicted of negligence. Their exclusion was mainly a symbolic gesture, since few have been prosecuted in the past for haphazard building practices. Builders drew nationwide ire after the Aug. 17 quake flattened thousands of poorly constructed buildings, killing 13,479 people and injuring tens of thousands. Several thousand bodies are believed to be still buried under the rubble.

The government has promised to crack down on contractors. Three were detained last week on negligence charges in the western city of Eskisehir. In Bolu, where 262 people have died, police were questioning five contractors, Milliyet newspaper reported today.

Many others have reportedly fled Turkey since the quake, but authorities have pledged to find and prosecute them. Meanwhile, a team from the World Bank was to tour the quake zone today to assess the damage. Turkey's treasury said the visit would help clarify the amount of foreign aid that Turkey will need for reconstruction. The damage estimate so far from the quake stands at \$10 billion.

Marines aboard three American warships floating off the flattened port of Golcuk planned today to begin ferrying 1,300 tents capable of housing 20 people each. The shelters belong to the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit aboard the USS Kearsarge, USS Ponce and USS Guston Hall.

Two U.S. ships are also producing potable water for the quake-stricken area, while a third is on standby. The U.S. Embassy said three additional ships sent to the region would be returning to port after U.S. and Turkish authorities decided they were not needed.

The government sped up efforts to house what could be more than 500,000 homeless after parliament on Friday passed legislation giving it more authority to deal with the quake's aftermath, including the issue

of construction tenders and designation of new residential areas. The decision could also give the government the power to reassert itself as the main clearinghouse for relief efforts.

The development came against the backdrop of escalating tensions between Turkey's authorities and Islamic groups, which are challenging the secular nature of the state.

The government froze the bank accounts of two Muslim organizations that have been active in quake-relief efforts, saying they had not gotten written permission for their financial transactions. The two groups said they were being targeted because of their religious faith. A top military commander was quoted in the *Hurriyet* newspaper today comparing the deadly earthquake to the threat of the rise of pro-Islamic groups.

"Secularism is the cement of this structure and is of vital value. If you get rid of the cement, the state becomes like the quake-hit towns. It would mean disaster," said Gen. Dogu Aktulga. Both the government and powerful military are highly suspicious of Islamic groups - especially radical ones that want to replace the secular regime with an Islamic government. The military pressured Turkey's first pro-Islamic government into resigning in June 1997.

But in the quake's aftermath, private groups - including the Islamists - were publicly praised for providing speedy, efficient help to quake victims, while the government was criticized for its seeming inability to organize its own relief efforts in the first days of the disaster.

Although Turkey wants foreign aid, State Minister Tunca Toskay said if the European Union tries to pressure Turkey to improve its human rights record as a condition for assistance, the help would be refused. More than a week after the temblor, Turkey's needs were becoming clearer. The government projected it would need to build about 100,000 to 120,000 new homes for quake victims.

In its decision to give the government more power to deal with the disaster, parliament ordered it to ensure that any new buildings were earthquake-proof. Much of the destruction has been blamed on sub-standard construction that led to the collapse of tens of thousands of buildings.

Concern also grew over existing poorly constructed buildings that could collapse in another strong quake. The *Turkish Daily News*, a nationally circulated English-language newspaper, reported that three-quarters of Istanbul's buildings, most of them in shantytowns ringing the city, are unlicensed and illegal.

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RED TAPE BLOCKING U.S. FOOD SALES TO IRAN - SENATOR

Reuters - 04:28 a.m. Aug 27, 1999 Eastern

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - For the second time in two days, a senator has called on the Clinton administration to ease its new rules for making food sales to Iran. The requests follow Iran's decision to bypass the U.S. market this week and purchase more than 1 million tons of wheat from Canada.

In a statement Thursday, Sen. Byron Dorgan, a North Dakota Democrat, urged President Clinton to tell the Treasury Department to revise its new regulations. "The president needs to intervene," Dorgan said. "He needs to insist that the Treasury Department come up with regulations that allow his policy to work."

The new rules, issued earlier this month, stem from a U.S. policy change in April to exempt food, medicine and medical equipment from economic sanctions on Iran, Sudan and Libya.

But grain firms complain the Treasury Department rules still make sales difficult because of a prohibition on U.S. exporters dealing directly with banks in the three countries. Dorgan blamed the bank ban for the Government Trading Corp. of Iran's failure to follow-through on an order it placed with Niki Trading Co. last fall for 3.55 million tons of U.S. food products, including 2 million tons of wheat.

"This is a huge potential sale, sorely needed by U.S. producers who are fighting to survive collapsed prices," Dorgan said. "The president's policy is that such sales should be made. Government red tape shouldn't block it." Sen. Pat Roberts, a Kansas Republican, blasted the Clinton administration Wednesday for banning the use of U.S. export credit guarantees to help finance food sales to Iran.

U.S. wheat can't compete with wheat from Canada or Europe without financing assistance, Roberts said. Banning the use of export credits on sales to Iran makes the administration's policy change a "sham," Roberts said.

Despite the shortcomings cited by Dorgan and Roberts, U.S. exporters have managed to sell 50,000 tons of corn to Iran since the new regulations were issued, according to the Agriculture Department. However, some Iranian officials have denied the purchase.

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ISRAEL'S FRIENDSHIP WITH TURKEY MUDDIES HOPES OF PEACE WITH SYRIA

Financial Times - Aug 27, 1999

Jerusalem's close military ties with Ankara could complicate efforts to rekindle peace talks with Damascus, reports Judy Dempsey

After a week of working with sniffer dogs, cutting equipment and listening gear, part of Israel's 500-member rescue team returned home from Turkey this week, having saved 12 lives and earned praise from its closest ally in the region.

The team was the largest sent by Israel to any disaster area. "We had no preconditions when we went to Turkey. We only wanted to save lives," said Oded Ben-Ami, spokesman for the Israeli Defence Forces. He added that a medical team, which has already set up a field hospital in Adapaza, east of Istanbul, would remain for another month.

The speed with which Israel reacted to the earthquake demonstrated its experience and flexibility - having learned much from bomb attacks and accidents at home. But it also highlighted the depth of the relationship between Israel and Turkey, which developed quietly during the 1950s but has surged ahead over the past decade. That relationship is anchored on growing military ties, and increasingly economic ones.

Although both countries have played down the relationship, claiming it to be a purely bilateral, as opposed to a strategic defensive one, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister until last month, was the first senior official to speak candidly about the goal of such ties. "The central axis between Israel and

Turkey," he said, "is the basis, though not the exclusive basis, to form a regional framework here." Though he did not specifically refer to a defensive axis, military ties between both countries have grown closer. Israel is upgrading Turkey's F-4 fighter aircraft in a contract estimated at \$650m. There are joint naval manoeuvres, military training programmes, regular high-level defence visits, and Israeli pilots can train in Turkish air space, which also gives them valuable intelligence data. Bilateral trade could reach \$1bn this year.

Yet this growing relationship, encouraged by the military establishment in both countries, could have some drawbacks as Ehud Barak, the new Israeli prime minister, considers reopening peace talks with Syria - which has less than lukewarm relations with Turkey. Turkey and Syria are at loggerheads over several issues. Ankara has repeatedly accused Syria of harbouring Kurdish separatists - which Syria has denied. Last year, Damascus expelled Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers' party (PKK), who was eventually put on trial in Turkey after being kidnapped by Turkish security agents in Nairobi.

Syria has accused Turkey of depriving it of water after Ankara's damming of the headwaters of the Euphrates, while Turkey demands that Syria give up its historic claims to the Turkish province of Hatay, given to Turkey by the French 51 years ago. And there is the Israeli-Turkish relationship, which Syria - and indeed many of its Arab neighbours - regards as a military threat.

Despite all these tensions, successive Israeli governments have supported closer ties with Turkey and Mr Barak shows little intention of changing course. Yet there is concern among foreign policy experts that the depth of the relationship could complicate matters for Israel if it wants to forge a peace treaty with Syria.

Former Israeli diplomats have suggested slowing down relations with Ankara precisely because of how it is perceived by its neighbours. Ankara, too, has concerns about the relationship - with some officials believing an Israeli-Syrian rapprochement would be to its disadvantage.

"Turkey is nervous about it," said Efraim Inbar, political science professor at the Bar Ilan University near Tel Aviv. He explained that one of Turkey's main concerns is that if any peace is reached, it will be "an armed peace". Since Mr Barak will insist that any peace agreement would require Syria to move its troops well back from the Israeli border as well as a substantial demilitarised zone, some Turkish officials believe Syria will relocate troops to its border with Turkey.

In addition, since a peace agreement would lead to improved relations between Washington and Damascus, there is the possibility that the US would provide Syria with more advanced military equipment. Ironically, Israel does not relish such a prospect either - recently it lobbied Moscow to stop plans to renew arms sales to Syria. But if, in the context of Israeli-Syria peace negotiations, there was one area where Israel could use its relationship with Turkey to its advantage, it could be over water.

More than a third of Israel's water comes from the Golan Heights, the narrow plateau captured from Syria during the 1967 Six Day War which Syria will insist on having fully returned as part of any peace agreement with Israel. That will mean tough negotiations over water, which Syria needs as much as Israel, especially since Turkey's damming of the Euphrates. But when a senior Israeli official suggested to Ankara that it could help resolve the water issue by perhaps diverting more to Syria, he was quickly rebuffed, a poignant reminder of the complexity of making peace - and regional interests.

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SUICIDE BOMBER DIES IN ATTACK IN TURKEY

Reuters - 05:48 p.m Aug 27, 1999 Eastern

TUNCELI, Turkey, Aug 28 (Reuters) - A man was killed in an attempted suicide bomb attack on a police station in eastern Turkey early on Saturday, security officials said.

They said the man, carrying plastic explosives around his waist, got within 100 metres (yards) of the police station in the town of Tunceli, when he detonated the explosives. He was identified as Veli Sen, in his mid 20s and a known member of the Turkish Workers and Peasants Liberation Army (TIKKO).

No-one else was killed or injured in the attack. The Maoist revolutionary group was held responsible for a number of car bomb attacks this year in Istanbul and on a provincial governor in the central Turkish town of Cankiri.

TIKKO was allied with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) of Abdullah Ocalan but broke their alliance after he called for peace and dialogue during his trial at which he was condemned to death. Ocalan, who founded the PKK in 1984, has called on his guerrillas to stop their armed struggle for Kurdish self-rule and withdraw from Turkey from September 1.

The mountainous province of Tunceli is a stronghold for both the PKK and TIKKO.

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BARZANI DISCUSSES KURDISH-ARAB RELATIONS

Radio Free Europe/RL - Aug 27, 1999

The London-based "Al-Majallah" weekly featured in its latest issue an extensive interview with Masud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), on the history and development of Kurdish relations with the Arab regimes.

According to Barzani, Jamal Abdu'l-Nasir of Egypt was the first Arab leader to establish a relationship to the Kurdish movement. It began in 1958 when Molla Mustafa Barzani stopped over in Cairo on his return from Moscow and met the Egyptian president. In the aftermath of their meeting, positive articles appeared in the Egyptian press on the Kurdish movement. But Barzani noted, there was no military or financial assistance for the Kurdish movement forthcoming from Cairo.

Relations with Syria began after the 1975 Algiers Agreement between Iraq and the Shah of Iran, which was a serious blow to the Kurdish movement. At that time, President Al-Asad opened the doors of Syria before us when we were facing a deadly crisis." Barzani says that this relationship continues. Kurdish relations with King Hussein of Jordan and his successor, King Abdullah II, have followed a similar pattern.

Relations with Saudi Arabia are of long duration. At present, due to Saudi Arabia's weight and influential role in the region, Barzani said that "we are extremely eager for the continuation of relations with it and informing it of everything that pertains to the future of Iraq and the solution to the Kurdish issue."

Relations with the countries of the Maghreb are either nonexistent or negative. With regard to Morocco, Barzani claims that the Kurds "have not found the channel through which to launch this relationship." Algeria played a negative role in modern Kurdish history: it was the site of the 1975 Algiers agreement, and Algerian President Boumedienne was the "godfather" of that agreement. In connection with Boumedienne, Barzani points out that Bouteflika, who was foreign minister of Algeria at the time of the Algiers agreement, was "the architect of this agreement." There are no relations between the Kurds and Tunisia.

And concerning the others, Barzani said that ties with Palestinian President Yasir Arafat have always been close but there are no ties with Yemen or any mention of ties with Libya. (David Nissman)

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DUTCH COURT SENTENCES OCALAN PROTESTERS TO JAIL

Reuters - 11:57 a.m. Aug 27, 1999 Eastern

AMSTERDAM, Aug 27 (Reuters) - Six Kurdish demonstrators who laid siege to the Greek ambassador's residence in The Hague and held his wife and son hostage were sentenced to jail terms of one to two years by a Dutch court on Friday.

About 150 Kurds stormed the building in February, occupying it for just over a day in protest against the capture of Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan, who was snatched by Turkish agents while leaving his refuge in the Greek embassy in Kenya.

In late June, a Turkish court sentenced Ocalan to death for leading a separatist struggle in which more than 30,000 people have died in 15 years.

"The court can understand that the accused found it necessary to stage a protest after the arrest of Ocalan in Kenya and his transfer to Turkey," the judge said in a statement.

"But forcing their way into the ambassador's residence cannot be justified."

The man identified as the ringleader was sentenced to two years in prison, of which six months were suspended.

The five fellow-accused were given a year-long sentence, with six months suspended. But because the five had already spent six months in jail on remand, they were immediately freed.

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The speed with which Israel reacted to the earthquake demonstrated its experience and flexibility - having learned much from bomb attacks and accidents at home.

But it also highlighted the depth of the relationship between Israel and Turkey, which developed quietly during the 1950s but has surged ahead over the past decade. That relationship is anchored on growing military ties, and increasingly economic ones.

Although both countries have played down the relationship, claiming it to be a purely bilateral, as opposed to a strategic defensive one, Benjamin Netanyahu, Israel's prime minister until last month, was the first senior official to speak candidly about the goal of such ties. "The central axis between Israel and Turkey," he said, "is the basis, though not the exclusive basis, to form a regional framework here."

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it is perceived by its neighbours. Ankara, too, has concerns about the relationship - with some officials believing an Israeli-Syrian rapprochement would be to its disadvantage.

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But if, in the context of Israeli-Syria peace negotiations, there was one area where Israel could use its relationship with Turkey to its advantage, it could be over water. More than a third of Israel's water comes from the Golan Heights, the narrow plateau captured from Syria during the 1967 Six Day War which Syria will insist on having fully returned as part of any peace agreement with Israel.

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QUAKE RELIEF SOLIDIFIES BOND BETWEEN TURKEY, ISRAEL

August 29, 1999
by Stephen Kinzer
New York Times

Amid the scenes of horror and death that have afflicted the Turkish town of Adapazarı since the earthquake Aug. 17, the brightest sign of life is a field hospital operated by doctors and nurses from the Israeli army. Eight babies have been born there since the quake. One boy was named Israel, and one girl is called Ziona. Their names are symbols of how firmly the earthquake has sealed the alliance between Israel and Turkey.

"God bless the Israelis," said one new mother, Serap Balcioglu, whose child was born blue and seemingly lifeless but was revived by an emergency team at the hospital. "They're taking beautiful care of me. What would we do without them?" Over the last few years, Israel and Turkey have built a partnership that has altered the face of Mideast politics. Trade and tourism are booming in both directions. Israeli pilots practice maneuvers in Turkish airspace, and Israeli technicians are modernizing Turkish combat jets. There are plans for Israel to share its high-tech skills with Turkey, and for Turkey to send some of its plentiful fresh water to Israel.

Military commanders, Cabinet ministers and business leaders agree this new friendship makes good sense for both parties. But it took the quake to show that it has become more than political -- and has clear-

ly taken deep root among ordinary people. "There has been so much tourism and so many business and political contacts between the two countries in the last few years that almost everyone in Israel feels some kind of personal connection to Turkey," said Benjamin Krasna, an Israeli diplomat who has spent much of the last week working on earthquake relief projects. "You pick up a 16-page newspaper in Tel Aviv and six pages are about the quake. It shows what Turkey means to Israel today. Israel sees Turkey as a neighbor, a brother, a partner.

"We've sent relief teams to help after disasters in plenty of countries, and our people support that," Krasna said. "But those other disasters didn't provoke the same emotional response among our people."

First on the scene

Israel was one of the first countries to respond to news of the earthquake, which devastated Adapazari and much of the surrounding area. It sent 350 search-and-rescue specialists with teams of dogs. They were at work the morning after the quake, and in the days that followed they found and saved 12 buried people.

The hospital team followed quickly, and set up operations in the muddy front yard of a damaged official building. Doctors and nurses treated hundreds of earthquake victims, and now that the initial trauma is past they are dealing with infections, broken limbs and all the other medical problems that are normal in a community of 300,000 people.

Israeli officials are now discussing the possibility of sponsoring long-term earthquake relief projects in Turkey. They may build a town to replace one of those that were destroyed, or perhaps assume responsibility for rebuilding hospitals in the affected area. Top officials of the Foreign and Defense ministries, accompanied by the director general of Prime Minister Ehud Barak's office, have already visited to survey Turkey's needs.

"Israelis are absolutely obsessed with the earthquake," said Barry Rubin, an Israeli scholar who has written extensively about the Turkish-Israeli relationship.

"There's a psychological as well as a political reason for this," Rubin said. "Jews and Turks have historically been thought of as outsiders, especially in Europe. They are two peoples who are extremely conscious of who their friends are."

Not everyone in Turkey considers Israel an ideal partner. Some leaders of the Islamic political movement have suggested that Muslim countries, including traditional enemies of Israel such as Iran and Libya, would be more suitable.

Many Turks feel a solidarity with Palestinians, and are deeply disturbed when they see pictures of Israeli soldiers shooting at or beating Palestinian protesters in the West Bank. Others say Israel has not been vigorous enough in its condemnation of Kurdish rebels who have been fighting the Turkish army for years.

But in recent days, the relationship between Turkey and Israel has deepened. It is no longer the province only of generals, politicians and corporate executives, but of the peoples of both countries.

"After what has happened since the earthquake, it's going to be very hard for anyone to criticize the relationship," said Hasan Koni, a professor of international relations at Ankara University. Even people who have been suspicious of Israel must now see that after the United States, Israel has become the country we can trust most."

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune

FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 1999

A Ray of Hope in the Kurdish Conflict

Early Pullout From Turkey Is One in Series of Conciliatory Gestures

By Amberin Zaman
Washington Post Service

ISTANBUL — From the rubble of their devastating earthquake, Turks are seeing glimmers of hope that a much longer-running catastrophe — a bloody, 15-year insurgency by Kurdish separatist rebels that has cost more than 30,000 lives — could be nearing an end.

Moves toward resolving the conflict have gathered momentum over several weeks and seemed to accelerate Wednesday when the rebels announced that they had begun withdrawing from the country a week earlier than promised. They called the decision a goodwill gesture in the aftermath of the earthquake last week.

Although it was unclear where the rebels would go, the announcement by the Kurdistan Workers Party added to the growing pressure on the Turkish government to seize what many analysts say is the best chance in years to end the conflict and address long-standing demands by the Kurdish minority for greater cultural and political rights.

Since a Turkish court decided in June to sentence the Kurdish rebel leader, Abdullah Ocalan, to death by hanging after his conviction on treason charges, the rebels have made a series of overtures to Ankara. These include a call for an end to the insurgency, which has been aimed at winning Kurdish self-rule in southeastern Turkey, and a pledge that they would transform themselves into a political movement.

Analysts here say the rebels recognize that abandoning their fight and taking their cause to the political arena will increase popular pressure on the Turkish government both at home and from abroad to address the Kurdish issue.

Although Turkish officials have been dismissive of the Kurdish movement's peace offers so far, analysts say the government is beginning to recognize that it must change its approach in dealing with the country's 12 million Kurds.

"The Kurdish problem lies at the root of all the problems Turkey faces both at

home and abroad," said Sukru Elekdag, a former Turkish ambassador to Washington and a proponent of allowing broadcasting and education in the Kurdish language. "Yet Turkey does not have a consistent or all encompassing strategy or plan to solve it."

Feral Tinc, a commentator for the daily newspaper *Hurriyet*, said, "The equation we are faced with can be summed up as: 'Violence is coming to an end. Now it is Turkey's turn to make a move.'"

Pressure from Ankara's Western allies is mounting, too.

Turkey's desire for full membership in the European Union is "very much linked to progress on human rights and the Kurdish issue," said a senior European diplomat.

The country's chief Western ally, the United States is making it clear it would like to see better treatment of the Kurds.

Harold Hongju Koh, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, said at a news conference here this month that most Kurds in Turkey "want to remain Turkish citizens, while enjoying the basic human rights guaranteed to all people under international law, including freedom to express one's language and culture and freedom to organize political parties that represent their interests."

He added, "Far from hurting Turkey's territorial integrity, an inclusive policy that acknowledged these rights would strengthen the Turkish state by giving the Kurdish community a genuine stake in their country's future."

The Kurdish issue is expected to come up when Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit meets with President Bill Clinton in Washington next month.

During his trial, Mr. Ocalan offered to use his influence to end the insurgency if he was not sentenced to death. The initial response has been to brush aside the overture as a desperate bid to save his own skin, with Mr. Ecevit saying, "We do not negotiate with terrorists."

The Turkish Army has pursued its offensive against the rebels and says it has killed 24 rebels in sporadic clashes this week.

But Mr. Ecevit's uncompromising stance contrasts sharply with what analysts describe as government overtures toward the country's largest legal pro-Kurdish party and its efforts to push through democratic reforms.

"I am feeling hopeful for the first time," said Feridun Celik, who was elected mayor of Diyarbakir, the largest city in the southeast, on the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party ticket, "that things may be changing for the better."

Mr. Celik was among a group of Kurdish mayors who took part in a meeting with President Suleyman Demirel this month.

"Talks with our president has sent a very positive signal to our region and to those Turkish officials who shunned us all this time," Mr. Celik said. "He demonstrated that the Turkish state respects the will of all its citizens, including those who elected us."

The earthquake last week elicited an outpouring of support and sympathy to Turkish victims from Kurds. Kurds donated blood, clothing and food for victims and sent doctors and volunteers to the quake zone, just east of Istanbul. In what many are taking as an attempt to respond to Mr. Demirel's overture, the spontaneous relief effort was encouraged by mayors in cities and towns in the predominantly Kurdish southeast.

Mehmet Ali Irmekcelik, the minister in charge of human rights, says that national legislation enabling thousands of Kurds displaced by the fighting to return to their villages — together with laws to combat torture and to ease curbs on freedom of expression — is a priority

for the government. But the proposals are facing opposition from members of the ultrarightist Nationalist Action Party, which is the junior partner in Mr. Ecevit's governing coalition.

Analysts say the position embraced by Turkey's influential military leaders will prove crucial.

"Unless these laws are enacted," Mr. Celik said, "our hopes for a just and lasting peace will fade as rapidly as they came."

KHATAMI SAYS IRAN MUST GUARANTEE SAFETY OF FOREIGN INVESTMENTS

AFP - Aug 28, 1999

EHRAN, Aug 28 (AFP) - Iran must guarantee the security of investments in the Islamic republic in order to attract the foreign capital needed to help fix its shaky economy, President Mohammad Khatami said Saturday.

"Economic security is a prerequisite for solving our economic problems," Khatami said in a meeting with the new head of Iran's judiciary, Ayatollah Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi. "The further we advance toward making investments in Iran clear and transparent, the further we move toward solving our economic problems," he said, quoted by the official IRNA news agency.

Foreign firms have been wary of investing here since the 1979 Islamic revolution, when countless companies lost tens of millions of dollars as the new regime nationalised everything from hotels to banks to factories in major industrial sectors. Since then Iran has had no law to guarantee the safety of investments by foreign firms, which have also shied away because of the so-called "49 Percent Law" dating back to the days of the imperial regime.

The 1955 measure stipulates foreign companies can only operate here on a joint basis with Iranian firms and are limited to 49 percent of the holdings, leaving their local partners in majority control.

Khatami on Saturday called for "greater cooperation" between the government and the judiciary to help resolve such investment stumbling blocks as he comes under mounting pressure to address Iran's economic woes.

Deputy Industry Minister for Commerce Hossein Bahhdorani, cited in Saturday's Hamshahri newspaper, deplored Iran's paltry share of the worldwide foreign investment market. "Foreign investment around the world was around 260 billion dollars last year. Iran received only 100 million dollars of that," he said.

"To increase foreign investment we must work to guarantee the security of foreign investments as well as the satisfaction of both local and foreign investors," he said. Hashemi-Shahrudi supported the president's remarks, calling for the establishment of a committee of experts to oversee investor security and the success of Khatami's new five-year economic plan.

Due to be presented to the legislature in the coming weeks, the plan is intended to address the nation's chronic unemployment, spiralling inflation and an economy largely dependent on oil revenues. Two weeks ago Khatami announced the broad outlines of the plan, which covers the years 2000-2005 and foresees 112 billion dollars in state revenue, 58 billion of that from the oil sector.

It also budgets for some 12 billion dollars in money from abroad in the form of loans and credits.

The plan aims to slash Iran's current 15 percent unemployment rate to 10 percent and is based on an annual growth rate of six percent and a yearly inflation rate of 15 percent. But inflation in the Islamic republic is currently racing at just under 20 percent according to official figures, while unofficial estimates put it at more than 40 percent in some sectors of the economy.

Meanwhile the plan remains heavily reliant on oil, which currently accounts for some 85 percent of Iran's hard currency revenues and roughly half the state budget.

Fluctuations on the worldwide crude market left Iran with a budget shortfall of around six billion dollars in the last Iranian year, which ended in mid-March, and further hampered efforts to pay off an estimated 13 billion dollars in foreign debt. Weaning the economy from over-dependence on oil will mean making foreign investment more attractive, and that inevitably means taking steps to guarantee the safety of overseas capital.

That in turn also means making investors forget the heavy losses foreign firms suffered after the revolution and projecting an image of a competent and confident Iran ready to welcome an influx of investments. Khatami underlined that message Saturday, stressing that "profit is not a bad thing in itself."

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U.S. CONCERNED ABOUT POPE'S POSSIBLE TRIP TO IRAQ

Reuters - 03:02 a.m. Aug 28, 1999 Eastern

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The State Department said Friday the Vatican should consider the political implications of a possible visit by Pope John Paul II to Iraq to celebrate the millennium.

"We have expressed our concerns in diplomatic channels because of the likelihood the regime in Iraq would attempt to manipulate the visit for political purposes," said State Department spokesman James Foley. "We have urged the Vatican to take this reality into account," the spokesman added.

Raphael Bidawid, Iraqi patriarch of the Eastern Chaldean church, told Reuters during a visit to Beirut the Vatican and the Iraqi government were discussing a proposed papal trip. "We believe the visit will occur in the first week of December but the exact date and time have yet to be set. This issue is currently under discussion but the visit will certainly take place before 2000," Bidawid said.

The pope said in a document in June that he wanted to visit Iraq, Egypt, Syria, Greece and Holy Land sites ruled by Israel and the Palestinian Authority for millennium celebrations.

Foley said the United States understood and sympathized with the pope's desire to make the pilgrimage. "At the same time Iraq remains a brutal dictatorship where torture and summary execution are commonplace and people are denied the most fundamental human rights," he said.

The United States led the alliance against Iraq in the Gulf War of 1991 and supports Iraqi opposition groups that want to overthrow President Saddam Hussein.

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SOME 50,000 KURDS RALLY IN GERMANY FOR OCALAN

Associated Press August 30, 1999

About 50,000 Kurds filled Dortmund's Westfalen Stadium in a show of solidarity with the leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Abdullah Ocalan, who is imprisoned in Turkey where he was sentenced to death for treason in June.

But it was also a demonstration of solidarity with their Turkish landsmen, as the crowd held a minute of silence in memory of the tens-of-thousands of victims of the recent earthquake in their homeland.

Nilufer Koc, an organizer of the 7th International Kurdistan Festival, said it was to demonstrate to the world a message of peace from Kurds.

After 15 years of war between Turkish troops and the Kurds, and Ocalan's offer to negotiate a settlement, "there is for the first time a chance for lasting peace in the region," she said.

Koc also appealed to German officials to take a more active role in getting a peace process started in Turkey. Ocalan's PKK has fought for autonomy in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeastern region in a conflict that cost some 37,000 lives, mostly Kurds. Since his capture in February, Ocalan has promised to seek peace if his life is spared.

Earlier this month Kurdish militants fighting against the Turks agreed to heed Ocalan's plea to lay down arms and withdraw to bases outside Turkey by Sept. 1, to pave the way for talks with the Turkish government. While Germany and some other European countries and human rights groups have condemned the death sentence against Ocalan, Turkish officials have insisted that he must pay for his crimes as leader of the PKK, a banned terrorist group.

But on Thursday the Turkish parliament passed a so-called repentance law that held out the possibility of pardon to a large number of Kurdish militants. The law came a day after the PKK announced it had begun pulling out of the region.

About 5,000 PKK members are jailed in Turkey, and about 3,500 rebels were believed hidden out in the mountains in the southeast and northern Iraq, which is where officials believe they are withdrawing to.

Of some 2.3 million Turks living in Germany, about a half million are Kurds.

TURKEY PASSES AMNESTY, EXCLUDES POLITICAL CRIMES

Reuters Aug 28, 1999

ISTANBUL, Aug 28 (Reuters) - Turkey's parliament on Saturday passed a sweeping amnesty to ease pressure on the country's overcrowded jails, but it will largely exclude political prisoners.

State-run Anatolian news agency said under the new law 26,538 prisoners would be freed, while nearly 32,000 would serve reduced sentences, leaving close to 11,000 mostly political prisoners behind bars. "The remainder are those who cannot take advantage of the amnesty. They are those guilty of terror crimes whom we cannot forgive under the constitution," Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Turk told the assembly. Those include the former head of Turkey's Human Rights Association Akin Birdal and blind human rights activist Esber Yagmurdereli, both serving terms for speeches about the country's bitter 15-year-old Kurdish conflict.

The majority of political prisoners are militant leftists or rebels from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

Turkish newspapers said one special article was added by the government's nationalist wing in order to free several far-right hitmen convicted for leftist murders. The amnesty excludes contractors imprisoned for shoddy building methods -- a key issue after last week's earthquake, which has killed more than 13,000. The high death toll was blamed on poor construction or scrimping on materials.

The law also allows students expelled from university or school to take up studies again. The article was keenly sought by conservative factions in parliament to allow hundreds of Islamist students barred for wearing Islamic-style dress, including headscarves, back into campuses. Parliament earlier this week passed a "repentance law" to encourage Kurdish rebels to lay down their arms. But the proposal, watered down under pressure from the Nationalist Action Party (MHP), only covers guerrillas who never participated in armed operations.

AMNESTY DESIGNED TO FREE MOBSTERS, SAVE POLITICIANS ANKARA

Turkish Daily News August 30, 1999

Political observers on Sunday were up in arms saying the latest amnesty bill approved by Parliament is designed to save politicians who are currently under investigation or on trial, mobsters and torturers. Once President Suleyman Demirel approves the law approved by Parliament on Saturday, half of Turkey's prison population will be freed within two weeks, Justice Ministry officials predict.

The law saves former Parliament Speaker Mustafa Kalemli, who is currently being tried for being involved in irregularities in the contract for the renovation of the Parliament chamber. Kalemli is accused of accepting kickbacks to turn a blind eye to the irregularities of the contractors. Kalemli's Motherland Party (ANAP) did not show him as a candidate in the April 18 parliamentary elections because party officials felt there was overwhelming evidence against Kalemli. The new amnesty bill saves Kalemli even if he is convicted.

Also benefiting from the amnesty are former Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz and former State Minister Gunes Taner who have been accused of interfering in state contracts and favoritism. Yilmaz is under investigation for his alleged role in dishing out state contracts but with the amnesty the charges will be dropped. Yilmaz will only be investigated for his role in the contract for the sale of the State Petroleum

Products Distribution Company (POAS), the Turkish Daily News was told by legal experts. Meanwhile, many contractors who face negligence charges will also benefit from the amnesty.

Former right-wing terrorists convicted for their role in the bloody events before the 1980 coup will also benefit from the amnesty. Former right-wing militant Haluk Kirci who was involved in the Bahcelievler massacre before the 1980 coup had his 70-year jail sentence reduced to ten years in a previous amnesty and will now be set free.

Also several personalities involved in the Susurluk scandal which highlighted the links between mobsters, politicians and state officials will also benefit from the amnesty. All charges against them will be dropped.

Daily Radikal said that upon the insistence of the right-wing Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), one of the senior partners of the coalition, officials and politicians like Sedat Bucak, Mehmet Agar and leading mobsters like Alaattin Çakıcı, Sedat Peker and Cengiz Ersever would now benefit from the amnesty while thousands of people who were forced to cooperate with the Kurdish separatists in rural areas against their will would remain in prison for aiding terrorists.

Daily Milliyet declared "Mobs are now free" in its banner headline on Sunday and added, "Murderers, torturers, cheaters, smugglers and drug peddlers are all free."

Many police officers convicted of torture will also be set free thanks to the amnesty. Critics of the amnesty bill said police officers who tortured left-wing journalist Metin Göktepe to death as well as police who tortured several youngsters in Manisa will benefit from the amnesty. Civil servants and officials who are accused of causing massive losses to the state will also be pardoned.

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Aug. 28, 1999

AMNESTY FOR CRIMINALS HURRIYET BY SEDAT ERGİN:

While tens of thousands of bodies are still buried under the rubble in the quake region, Parliament passed the amnesty bill, taking a direction totally different from the direction Turkey should take at this point. One again we see that some people are getting away with what they have done. Murderers, thieves, rapists, bribers, smugglers, gangsters and telephone tappers are all getting away with what they have done.

Meanwhile, the honorable, law-abiding citizens of this country are once again becoming the losers. The quake could have caused Turkey to make a fresh beginning. This possibility has been undermined from the first day.

PKK IN IRAN: VILLAGE GUARD OR LIBERATOR?

Kurdish Media - Aug 29, 1999
By Kurdish Media Research Unit

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of kidnapping of Ocalan, the news wires reported on massive demonstrations in eastern Kurdistan (in Iran) in protest to the kidnapping of the Kurdish leader. The honeymoon of Khatami the reformist president with Kurds in Iran ended and tens of demonstrators were killed and many arrested. The 23 February 1999 became another bloody day in the struggle of Kurds in Iran.

An associate of the Kurdish Media has travelled to Armenia and reports on Armenia and gives some shocking information behind the massacre. The identity of the people interviewed or used in the report will remain anonymous to ensure the security of those individuals.

ARMENIA THE SUBWAY OF IRANIAN INTELLIGENCE NETWORK

"Our golden age finished after collapse of Soviet Union" pointed out a doctor from Millennium Medical group in Yerevan the capital of Armenia. The Nagorno Karabakh mountains war, and the immigration of thousands of ethnic Armenians from Azerbaijan to Armenia, the historic hostility of Armenia and Turks, have surrounded the country from three side.

In addition, Armenia is the only Christian country left from USSR which has three neighbouring Muslim countries. The location of Armenia is one of the most important reasons that Russian government support the country. After the collapse of the USSR the economic structure of the Armenia have been damaged. The view of the cities, buildings and roads reminds one of a place which have been in war. Although as one of Armenian official in Telecommunication said that the freedom of the country is the best thing they have, but many of Armenian who sell their home stuff for having a dinner with their children don't think so.

Among the Muslim neighbours to Armenia, Iran is the only Muslim country which has good ties with Armenia. Since the first day of the country's independence, the Iranian embassy, consultants, and Iranian centres have been growing in Yerevan like mushrooms. The Iranian "Haji Aghas" have many firms and agencies in the capital of the new independent state. Armenia is one of the few Iranian neighbouring countries where the Iranian opposition groups have no base. Unlike Turkey, Iraq and Pakistan it is difficult for Iranian refugees to get to Europe from Armenia.

Before the opposition groups, Iran has created a large intelligence network in the country. It has opened some Iranian restaurants whose workers come directly from Iran. It is very easy for Iranian intelligence to use Armenia as a base for sending assassins to kill opposition members. It is very easy to bribe an Armenian official in airport who earns only \$25 a month and make visas. As an evidence to this, we went to Armenia without any visa and when we came back we paid some small amount of money to the officer of the airport and avoided any trouble.

The Shiraz restaurant in the Komitas Street is one of most important places for Iranian intelligence and its embassy workers. According to one of Restaurant's workers who have just came from Iranian capital, many of the secure meetings are held in a special room in the restaurant. The room is built for about 12 persons, there are digital calling signals and video cameras installed in the room and only one of the staff has the right to serve the customers in the room. According to a Kurd who is Armenian citizen, before the collapse of the USSR, the number of the Kurds in Armenia was over 70000, but after independence the number has decreased to 15 - 20000. Many of the Kurds have left to exile to other European countries. There is not any more Kurdish institute to study Kurdish language or to promote Kurdish culture. The only thing left is 45 minutes Armenian Kurdish radio.

There is a pro PKK "Kurdish-Armenian" centre. The centre according to one of the PKK members has very close ties with Iranian officials in Armenia. Like other countries the Armenian government tries to assimilate the Kurds by dominating the Kurdish culture and identity, changing the Kurdish cultural events to Armenian events and Kurdish history to Armenian. The markets of Yerevan, there are sold many Kurdish historical and artistic items which are named in Armenia.

In Armenia, PKK enjoys a strong support form Armenian Kurds. Unfortunately the people's mind are full of biased propaganda and wrong information on Kurdish history. E.g. Many of Armenian Kurds think that there is not any Kurdish conflict in Iran or Iraq. Or the PKK is the only Kurdish party in all Kurdistan.

THE PKK AND IRAN

The PKK has also very close ties with Iran. The relation between Iran and PKK has been growing after PKK war with KDP party in Iraq. PKK has many lands in Urmia and its neighbouring region. One of the decisions in its 5th congress was to make closer relation with Iran and the Kurds of Eastern Kurdistan. The PKK in its manifesto has outlined that they want to enlarge the revolutionary base of its movement to create an "Independent, United and Socialist Kurdistan" (PKK, Kurdistan Devrimin Yolu, 1984 page 187). Because of lack of a strong political movement in Eastern Kurdistan, PKK has tried to win Kurdish people in Iran to its side. The Iranian regime is very happy with that as long as the Kurds don't fight with the Iranian government. PKK, according to people who came from Urmia, wants the young people specially those who have problem with their family to join. According to a member of PKK, the majority of them are between 13 - 16 years old who are student or in some cases illiterate.

After the kidnapping of Mr Abdullah Ocalan the leader of PKK, thousands of Kurds from Eastern Kurdistan protested his kidnapping. The Iranian government, according to a member of PKK, who we met in Armenia, forced PKK to shoot people, that is why PKK's leadership in an announcement which published in February this year called the Kurdish protesters in Iran as Kamalists and Zionists.

There is concern among the Kurds in Iran that the PKK might follow the same path as the KDP of Iraq followed in 1979 - 80 under the leadership of Idris Barzani. Helping Iranian regime to kill and suppress Kurdish people. Specially after the decision of withdrawing its forces from North Kurdistan to some where else.

CONCLUSION: A WHISTLE BLOWER

The major Kurdish parties in the South and East have more or less their roots in 53 years ago in Kurdistan republic in Mahabad. The introduction of Kurdish parties instead of strengthening the Kurdish struggle have fragmented this struggle.

The same destructive cycle has been repeating again and again since late 60s for 3 cursed decades. A party collaborating with an enemy state against the struggle of a Kurdish minority in that state, damaging the national interests of Kurds for its short term interests. The liberator in one region acting as a traitor or village guard of another region and one of the roots of this phenomenon lies in the Kurdish failure to develop an unbiased whistle-blower and arbitrator to avoid such disasters.

The Kurdish media instead of raising these atrocities by Kurdish parties would rather keep silent and does not endanger its popularity and damaging its own economic source from the parties. Justifying its silence on lack of evidence, crucial era for a party and many more excuses. The state of affairs is like a boiling heater which is reaching its maximum permitted temperature and there is no mechanism to reduce the temperature and the critical destructive point.

The Kurdish struggle with no unbiased media that points the wrongdoing of Kurdish parties will follow the same pattern. In reality this silence has further long term damages. In raising the wrong-doings of the Kurdish parties, the Kurdish media increases the bargaining power of those parties in their tactical alliance with enemy states. The parties can point to the Kurdish media reports that they cannot bargain on certain issues and by increasing the risk of such disastrous decisions the Kurdish media can reduce the possibility of such national disasters.

Last year, the collaboration of PKK with Iran in handing a number of Iranian Kurds to Iran was condemned by Kurdish parties such as Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (DPIK). But the condemnation was not properly reflected in the Kurdish media sources. The DPIK also did not maintain a proper information outlet on the Internet that can inform Kurds of its press releases. This has encouraged some elements in PKK to endanger the whole achievements of PKK and its organization. PKK presidential council should clarify to the Kurds what does it mean by labelling the bloody protests and demonstrations of Kurds in Iran in condemning the arrest of Ocalan as the work of "Kamalists and Zionists." PKK should clarify to the Kurds "Who are these Zionists?" and what is PKK's answer to the recent allegations by its members that some of its members have been forced by Iranian troops to suppress the Kurdish demonstrations in Eastern Kurdistan? Who is the commander and the brain responsible for these so called anti-Kamalist operations who cannot distinguish a friend from enemy?

The phenomenon of "bursting of the bubble" of Kurdish struggle is mainly due to the reliance of Kurdish parties on the outside powers to maintain their power base and a lack of understanding that the limited resources of the Kurds cannot afford indefinite wars with states which are supported by their allies in the world and can negotiate with their neighbours against the Kurds. Under this scenario, the Kurds will be only used as pawn or trump card of these states in their bargaining with each other and the end result will be the exhaustion of the human resources and infrastructure of Kurdistan. A party which fails to negotiate for more Kurdish rights when is in its highest strength should not expect that it can gain any right when it is in a weak position.

If the Kurds do not learn from their past mistakes and the diastorous miscalculation of Kurdish parties in bargaining the national interests of Kurdistan, Kurds will remain the largest minority in the world with no state. The responsibility is on the shoulders of the Kurds to strengthen their struggle. A step towards that is an unbiased Kurdish media, a whistle blower media.

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August 30, 1999 Christian Science Monitor

IS IRAQ BUILDING WEAPONS AGAIN? WHITE HOUSE REPORT EXPRESSES CONCERN THAT SADDAM IS RESUMING ARMS PROGRAMS

By Jonathan S. Landay (landa@csmonitor.com)
Christian Science Monitor

WASHINGTON The Clinton administration is expressing fresh worries that Iraq - after a year without United Nations weapons inspections - may have resumed its illicit arms-development programs.

A new White House report to Congress says American intelligence is monitoring with concern activities at Iraqi facilities "capable of producing WMD [weapons of mass destruction] and long-range ballistic missiles."

It is also watching possible Iraqi efforts to secretly buy "dual use" materials - substances and technologies that have both civilian and weapons applications.

The report stops short of concluding that Iraq has resumed its arms programs, saying "there are limits to what insights can be gained" without on-site monitors. Yet it contrasts sharply with recent assertions by US officials that they have "no evidence" Iraq is resuming WMD development.

The report could bolster the administration's case at the United Nations for reinstituting aggressive weapons inspections in Iraq. At the same time, however, it may bring new pressure from Capitol Hill to step up efforts to topple the Iraqi leader. "Saddam Hussein has shown no hesitation in developing WMD in the past, and it is prudent to assume that he is still intent on such development," says the report, a copy of which was obtained by the Monitor. The report was sent to Congress Aug. 25 as required by a 1999 spending bill.

Any attempt by Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein to "reconstitute" prohibited weapons programs would cross one of several "red lines" for US military action set by President Clinton following Anglo-American airstrikes on Iraq last December.

Operation Desert Fox followed a four-month Iraqi blockade of inspections by the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM), which pulled out of Baghdad Dec. 16, the day the airstrikes began. Washington says the airstrikes "degraded" Iraq's ability to restart its WMD program, but acknowledges that they were likely not destroyed.

Since then, almost unnoticed, a low-level air war has raged, with US and British aircraft hitting Iraqi air defenses that almost daily challenge their enforcement of no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq.

But the Clinton administration has refrained from large-scale military action. Such a move would ignite an international outcry. It would jeopardize already difficult US diplomatic efforts to win UN Security Council approval of a new inspection operation and maintenance of economic sanctions on Baghdad.

Iraq agreed to abandon its illicit arms programs under the settlement of the 1991 Gulf War, but UNSCOM says Iraq continues to hide components and documents. US military strikes would also further strain US

forces stretched by overseas deployments. And they would seriously damage already difficult relations with China, Russia, the European allies, and the Arab world as Washington seeks their cooperation on other key issues.

Yet the report may bring new criticism from lawmakers in Congress. Critics could use it to bolster charges that administration isn't doing enough to check Saddam's military ambitions.

"Since the beginning of this year, we have noted signs of a reduced priority in US policy toward Iraq," wrote three key Republicans, including Senate majority leader Trent Lott, and three Democrats in an Aug. 11 letter to Mr. Clinton.

Among the six were Sens. Richard Shelby (R) of Alabama, and Robert Kerrey (D) of Nebraska, chairman and lead Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee. "The last six months have been notable for what has not happened rather than for what has been achieved."

Without elaborating, the six asserted "there is considerable evidence that Iraq continues to seek and develop weapons of mass destruction."

Responds an administration official: "The situation is viewed seriously, and it has definitely not fallen off anyone's radar scope." In its report, the White House recounts a range of measures the US is pursuing to protect against Iraq's resumption of WMD programs. These include working with UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency to improve controls over Baghdad's access to dual-use materials. It also cites efforts to provide information and expertise to UNSCOM, which remains in operation even though it is no longer in Iraq.

"We are concerned by activity at Iraqi sites known to be capable of producing WMD and long-range ballistic missiles, as well as by Iraq's long-established practice of covert procurement activity that could include dual-use items with WMD applications," the report says. The report did not elaborate on the activity detected by spy satellites and other covert surveillance systems. "In the absence of UN inspectors on the ground, our concerns about the potential meaning of these activities will persist," continues the report.

But it warns that keeping tabs on Iraq is not easy without inspections. And even with them, it would still be "difficult to detect" nuclear-weapons research.

The report comes amid an impasse in the UN Security Council over resuming inspections. Iraq insists that it has terminated its WMD programs, and its demand for an end to economic sanctions has found sympathy with China, Russia, and France.

They favor a gradual lifting of the measures and replacing UNSCOM with an "active monitoring" system that would ensure no future WMD development by Baghdad. The US supports a British-Dutch proposal to resume an aggressive inspection regime and require that Iraq disclose data and components of previous WMD programs. The proposal holds out the prospect of an end to sanctions once Iraq complies.

AS QUAKE BUNGLING CONTINUE, TURKEY GIVES AMNESTY TO MAFIA

Independent - Aug 31, 1999

OUTRAGE IS spreading among Turkey's people, still shocked and angered by slow government response to the earthquake disaster, after the ruling three-party coalition suddenly forced through a Bill granting full or partial amnesty to 60,000 criminals, including murderers, torturers, mobsters and politicians jailed on corruption charges.

"It was a [government] raid on parliament," said Yusuf Kanli, a commentator for the English-language Turkish Daily News. "They wanted to benefit from the quake."

Yildirim Koc, a spokesman for Turkey's biggest labour union, Turk-Is, said if it were not for the earthquake, there would have been "widespread and intense" protests about the amnesty. Turkish authorities have struggled to cope with the aftermath of the disaster and its estimated 40,000 dead.

Three US Navy ships with 600 hospital beds have yet to be sent a single patient, one week after arriving in Turkey to provide relief, a US embassy spokesman said yesterday. In the stricken naval base and town of Golcuk, from where the US ships are clearly visible, hundreds of injured victims are having operations in makeshift outdoor hospitals.

But the government defended the rushing through of the amnesty. The Justice Minister, Hikmet Sami Turk of the junior coalition member the Motherland Party (ANAP), said it was a bid to "regain the inmates for society". But few doubt the impetus for the Bill has come from two of the parties, the far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP), and the centre-right (ANAP), whose members and supporters stand to benefit most.

The ANAP leader and former prime minister Mesut Yilmaz, and a leading ANAP MP, Gunes Taner, also a former state minister for the economy, will be among those spared by the legislation, which will halt investigations into claims that they rigged privatisation of a state bank.

But most anger has been aroused by extending the amnesty to police and mafia members convicted of torture and murder. These include two groups of policemen jailed last year, one for the torture of teenagers accused of left-wing sympathies and another group jailed for beating to death a press photographer. All the officers will be freed.

Also likely to walk out of prison is Haluk Kirca, a member of a gang of right-wing thugs who tortured five left-wing students to death in 1979, for which he was sentenced to 70 years, later reduced to 10 in an earlier amnesty. The gang was closely affiliated to the MHP, which has a history of violence back to its founding in the 1960s.

The amnesty will also cover the Turkish mafia boss Alaatin Cakaci, awaiting extradition from France. Cakaci has warned he will make public his links with leading politicians if he is extradited.

The amnesty Bill prompted a minor revolt in the third coalition partner, the Democratic Left Party (DSP) of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, with five MPs walking out of parliament before the vote.

Mr Ecevit said the Bill raised "certain issues which I find difficult to digest", adding that it was "a requirement of democracy". His critics believe what he really meant was that it was a requirement of his party remaining in government, and of him remaining Prime Minister.

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Turkish Amnesty Provokes Uproar

By Stephen Kinzer
New York Times Service

ISTANBUL — A new amnesty law that is expected to benefit some of Turkey's most notorious criminals has produced an outpouring of public anger.

The emotional reaction to the law comes as many Turks are already furious with the state apparatus for its failures in rescuing victims and helping survivors of the devastating earthquake that shook the country two weeks ago.

Before the law can take effect, it must be signed by President Suleyman Demirel. Aides to Mr. Demirel said he would study it for several days before deciding whether to sign or veto it. If he decides on a veto, Parliament could pass it again, and it would become law.

Among those who would benefit from the amnesty are 18 contractors, engineers and municipal officials convicted of "causing death" after an earthquake in southern Turkey last year. Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said that because the law is limited to crimes committed before April this year, he did not believe that contractors whose negligence led to deaths in this month's earthquake would be covered.

Mr. Ecevit acknowledged that he was uncomfortable with some of its provisions but said that they were the results of

compromise with his coalition partners.

One provision in the law could lead to the release of some imprisoned journalists and intellectuals, but they would be placed on probation for three years and subject to stiff punishment if they again express views judged to be subversive.

In one of the law's most vivid anomalies, Akin Birdal, an imprisoned human rights advocate who was seriously wounded in an assassination attempt last year, would not be covered by the amnesty because the speech for which he was convicted is considered a crime against the state. Yet the men convicted of shooting him would have their sentences sharply reduced and probably be released within 18 months.

The amnesty law applies not only to those already convicted but also those under investigation. Under this provision, corruption charges against former Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, who is now a leading member of the governing coalition, would be dropped.

Another beneficiary would be Mustafa Kalemli, a former president of Parliament who is under investigation for accepting kickbacks on government contracts.

Leading figures in the country's most spectacular modern scandal, which erupted in 1996 and led to revelations that successive Turkish governments had sponsored death squads and worked

with drug smugglers and arms traffickers, would also be absolved. Most of them, including former Interior Minister Mehmet Agar and Sedat Bucak, a member of Parliament and Kurdish clan leader, have not yet been brought to trial.

Charges against police officers accused in Turkey's three highest-profile human rights cases would also be dropped. The cases involve the fatal beatings of Kurdish prisoners; the torture of a group of young people and the killing of a journalist in police custody in 1996.

The amnesty law is designed to address the concerns of the three parties in the governing coalition. Mr. Ecevit's party wants to free imprisoned writers and others convicted for expressing unpopular views. The rightist Nationalist Action party wants to free gunmen, police officers and others whose crimes they believe served the interests of the state in its fight against leftism and Kurdish nationalism. The Motherland Party appears principally interested in assuring that its leader, Mr. Yilmaz, is not prosecuted.

"We were hoping for an amnesty that would resolve the anger and social conflict in this country, and that would set us off in a pioneering new direction," said Yucel Sayman, chairman of the Istanbul Bar Association. "But the amnesty that was passed has nothing to do with reconciliation."

Iran's Newspapers Trade Insults in Reform Struggle

By Afshin Molavi
Washington Post Service

TEHRAN — At newsstands across Tehran, Iranians gather to read the latest salvos in the newspaper wars, a fight shaping up to be as critical to the future of Iran as it is entertaining. The highly partisan newspapers are taking center stage in the struggle between supporters of the reform-minded president, Mohammed Khatami, and his powerful opponents in the conservative Islamic hierarchy.

To the delight of readers, the newspapers trade insults like schoolchildren, debate ideas like college professors and embrace platforms like political parties. The reformist daily Neshat calls the conservative Kayhan "shameless." Conservative papers say Neshat is an American-sponsored tool intent on destroying Iran. Kayhan calls the three leading reformist dailies "the Zionist triad." The leftist daily Sobh-e-Emrooz and the conservative Ressalat tear each other apart in editorial columns.

Since the election of Mr. Khatami two years

ago, press licenses have been granted liberally, spawning a proliferation of new publications and raising the total of national daily newspapers to 26. A half dozen promote hard-line conservative views and another half dozen support Mr. Khatami, who has made press freedom one of his rallying cries. Others are nonpartisan.

Although circulation figures generally are secret here, the stridently political papers seem to be the ones drawing the attention of the reading public.

Most papers are affiliated with government agencies, but that does not guarantee they are on the same side. Kayhan and Ettelaat, for instance, were confiscated after the 1979 revolution and their directors are named by the conservative supreme leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei. Hamshahri is owned by the Tehran municipality and supports Mr. Khatami and his reforms.

Some papers are privately owned: Neshat, Kordad and Sobh-e-Emrooz all follow a reformist line, while Ressalat is conservative.

"We know that we are more than just passive observers of the current political debate," said Dariush Sajjadi, a reformist Iranian journalist. "We are active players."

A conservative journalist who asked not to be named agreed, saying, "We are all openly advocating our ideas. There is no objectivity here."

The conservative establishment often finds the public jousting disturbing. The conservative-dominated judiciary has closed some publications and jailed their management. Recently, editors of a few conservative publications also have faced questioning.

The recent student protests that rocked Iran were triggered by a violent encounter following demonstrations against the closing of the daily Salam, a powerful pro-Khatami newspaper. The closing of Salam, a venerable old leftist paper published by a powerful and well-connected clergyman, was seen by reformists as a serious blow to their cause.

"In the absence of political parties, newspapers have taken on that role, so the closing of Salam was seen as an attack on the reformists," said Amirali Nourbaksh, a Tehran political observer and editor of a weekly Iranian press review.

■ Iran Vows to Withdraw Elite Troops

Iran plans to pull back its elite Revolutionary Guards from the border with Afghanistan, where they were stationed after a dispute with the ruling Taliban movement last year. Reuters reported Monday from Tehran.

Major General Yahya Rahim Safavi, quoted by Iran's news agency IRNA, said the Revolutionary Guards' "presence in border areas in the south of Khorasan province will not be permanent." He did not give a date for the withdrawal of the forces.

Iran sent tens of thousands of Revolutionary Guards and army troops to the northeastern border for war games last year during a tense standoff with the Taliban over the killing of a group of Iranian diplomats in Afghanistan by the Afghan movement's men. The troops remained in the area helping police fight the flow of drugs from Afghanistan, the world's largest opium producer.

