

INSTITUT
KURDE
DE PARIS

Information and liaison bulletin

N° 180

MARCH 2000

This bulletin is issued in French and English

Price per issue : France: 30 FF — Elsewhere : 35 FF

Annual subscription (12 issues) France : 300 FF — Elsewhere : 350 FF

Monthly review

Directeur de la publication : Mohamad HASSAN

Numéro de la Commission Paritaire : 659 15 A.S.

ISBN 0761 1285

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NEWROZ, THE KURDISH NEW YEAR, WAS CELEBRATED IN RELATIVE CALM, THIS YEAR

THE Newroz celebrations, marking the beginning of spring on March 21, the day of the equinox, and considered by the Kurds as the beginning of a new year, took place in relative calm, even though strictly controlled by the police in those towns where the local governors had authorised celebrations. President Demirel and Prime Minister Minster

Bülent Ecevit sent messages to the population stressing that " Newroz was the occasion for expressing feelings of brotherhood, friendship and peace ". Unlike previous years, there were no bloody clashes between the police and the population. However, at least 147 people were arrested in Istanbul and an undetermined number in other towns where the celebrations had

been banned. In the case of Istanbul, the governor, Erol Çakir, refused to allow the pro-Kurdish party, HADEP to organise celebrations on a quibble over spelling. According to the governor, authorisation was refused because the application referred to " Newroz ", the Kurdish spelling of the word, which means 'new day' instead of "Newruz ", the Turkish spelling which was borrowed from Persian in Ottoman times. " Written in this way, Newroz is not a Turkish

word (...) the laws on political parties lays down that parties cannot use any other language than Turkish ” argued Osman Demir, Deputy Governor of Istanbul in a letter to HADEP (Editor's Note : In fact the letter W, present in both spellings, doesn't exist in the Turkish alphabet!) A celebration was organised by the Governor himself. 27,000 police were mobilised and a special crisis command post set up for the event. Police College cadets and the gendarmerie of the Etiler and Florya districts also brought in as reinforcements.

Serdar Turgut, editorial writer on the Turkish daily Hurriyet, wrote an ironical article entitled “ Down with the letter W ” as follows : “ The operation consists of effacing the WC on all public toilets and replacing it by VC(...) Beware ! If you're from the East and buy a BMW try to get rid of it quick (...) Dear parents, grand parents or other people responsible for children! Be careful — leave nothing to chance ! Don't allow the young to walk in the street with a walkman ! Once under way there is no knowing how far the State machine will go (...) In any case I've had my doubts about these walkmen for some time (...) Now the truth has broken out in full daylight. These Enemies of the State are walking silently amongst us with their walkmen conducting separatist propaganda by displaying their letter W (...) We are trying to join the European Union (...) The

day that happens, all the other member countries of the Union will leave the EU... ”

In Ankara, 3,000 people took part in the celebrations with went off calmly. In Izmir, torrential rain prevented the celebrations. Over 10,000 people took part in the celebrations in Mardin and Adana.

This year, for the first time, HADEP was authorised to organise Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakir and in Batman Province. A thousand busses, trucks and minibuses transported the inhabitants to over 8 Km out of Diyarbakir. On the banners carried were slogans such as “ Newroz = Brotherhood ” and “ Long live Peace”. HADEP's President, Turan Demir, in a communiqué considered the Newroz represented “ a fresh stage in the process of peace and democratisation (...) Newroz is our people's symbol for peace, unity and brotherhood ”. An immense crowd, estimated at 300,000 people took part in the Diyarbakir celebrations.

On the other hand, Turkey expressed its “ unease ” at the way Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party organised a reception in Ankara to celebrate Newroz. During the reception, held at a Major Ankara hotel, the KDP had presented a number of its members, who had come from Northern Iraq to take part, as “ Ministers ”, according to the media. No Turkish official attended the reception though, on the contrary, the ambassadors of several European countries, in particular Germany and Italy, did attend. Turkey is always irritated by any action of the Iraqi Kurdish parties, freed from Baghdad's control since the Gulf War, that might be interpreted as the sign of the creation of an independent Kurdish State in the region, a firmly supports the territorial integrity of Iraq. Safin Diyayee, the KDP's representative in Ankara, was summoned to the Turkish Foreign Ministry on 22 March.

THE TURKISH COURT OF APPEALS AUTHORISES THE USE OF KURDISH FIRST NAMES

AFTER a long legal battle, the civil division of the Court of Appeals has decided, for the first time in the history of the Turkish Republic, to authorise the use of Kurdish first names. A petition had been presented by Nezir Durak, who wanted to change his daughter's

first name from Hatice, an Arabo-Moslem name imposed on him by the official registrar, to Mizgin (Editor's Note: the name means 'Good News' in Kurdish) basing himself on Article 26 of the Turkish Civil Code and arguing that she was known by this name in family circles. The first court had rejected

Mr. Durak's petition, but a decision invalidating this reinforced his request and the case was placed before the Court of Appeals. Rejected the first time, the appeal was accepted on the basis of freedom of choice of first names. The ruling stipulates: "(...) first names which have been laid down by government authorities must be used. However, this may be seen to be a restriction in the way of living of individuals. We all know of first names meaning 'brave', 'agile', 'rare' or 'prosperous' commonly used in Turkish culture. This name cannot be considered to be in contradiction with tradition, because it conforms to the plaintiff's traditions and with first names used by his ancestors. (...) The plaintiff has the right to chose a life style in conformity with his surroundings. If all first names had to have a Turkish origin, let us remember that names like Hatice and Mustafa are of Arab or Persian origin. Many others are of Western origin. It would be inconsistent to consider Persian or Kurdish names inappropriate at a time when other names of Western origin are not considered contrary to our national culture".

The popular daily *Hurriyet* devoted the whole of its front page of 5 March 2000 to "this little cultural revolution". Its Editor in Chief, Oktay Eksi, who is also President of the High Council of the Turkish Press, in a long article welcomed the gesture of these "realistic judges" and derided the politicians who

were incapable of promoting essential reforms for taking Kurdish identity into account.

On the other hand, in a declaration on 3 March, Tansu Çiller, former Prime Minister and leader of the True Path Party (DYP), stated that the TRT-INT television network (Editor's Note: the Turkish State network) ought to broadcast programmes for neigh-

bouring countries in the languages spoken there. In the same context, Kurdish language programmes should also be considered. This is a fresh example of the political wheeler-dealing of which Mrs. Çiller so adept. It was during her term as Premier that the most intense repression took place in Turkish Kurdistan and that the wholesale destruction of Kurdish villages was undertaken.

EUROPE CALLS FOR "PROGRESS" ON THE KURDISH QUESTION EVEN AS ANKARA CALLS FOR 7 YEARS IMPRISONMENT OF THE HADEP MAYORS

ON 3 March, the Diyarbakir Public Prosecutor's Office demanded sentences of 7 years imprisonment against three HADEP mayors, charged with "supporting the PKK". The Prosecution maintains that Feridun Çelik, Mayor of Diyarbakir, Selim Özalp, Mayor of Siirt, and Feyzullah Karaslan, Mayor of Bingöl, took advantage of a recent visit to Germany to meet members of the PKK, including one of the guerrilla chiefs, Murat Karayilan, who has applied for political asylum in the Netherlands. The three mayors were taken in for questioning on 19 February, charged on 24 February then released on bail and allowed to take up their offices on the 28th. Seven years imprisonment were also called for against 11 other people on the same grounds, while eight others also charged risk 15 years imprisonment for PKK membership.

The date of the trial has not yet been set.

In Brussels, the European Commissioner for broadening the Union, Guenter Verheugen, made "progress" on the Kurdish question a precondition for Turkey's membership of the European Union in an interview with the German economic daily, *Financial Times Deutschland* on 6 March. "Progress in the settlement of this question is absolutely necessary before beginning negotiations for membership (...) The status on candidate presupposes a series of obligations starting from now" Mr. Vereugen stressed.

Ismail Cem, Turkish Foreign Minister, declared on 3 March that Ankara is "disturber" by the "special" importance that the European leaders attach, when visiting Turkey, to their contacts with pro-Kurdish

and Human Rights defence organisations. He added, on the Turkish NTV channel: "the officials who visit Turkey can meet all the legal organisations and associations, but to do so while giving them a special significance is, of course, disturbing". These remarks follow recent visits to Ankara by the Swedish, Swiss and Luxembourg Foreign Ministers, who all met the leaders of Human Rights associations.

A spokesman for the military circles, the influential journalist Emin Çölasan, in a long editorial published by the daily paper *Hurriet* of 6 March, bluntly evokes "the return to the era of the capitulations" and describes as "traitors" and "enemies of Turkey" the leaders of the Turkish Human Rights organisations that the European leaders so openly meet and who profit from these meetings to "denigrate their country like informers". According to him, these "enemies within" of Turkey have a better image abroad.

Mr. İlder Türkmen, former Turkish Foreign Minister and an editorialist on the Turkish daily *Hurriet*, states that the Kurdish question needs more democratisation. Here are some large extracts from his article which appeared on 7 March.

"In my article entitled "Lawful State," dated 29 February, I said that Minister of Internal Affairs Sadettin Tanttan's decision to quickly remove the HADEP

[People's Democracy Party] mayors from their posts after they were arrested conflicted with the parameters of innocence. The Ministry of Internal Affairs was kind enough to send me a memorandum on the matter. It said that the removal of the mayors from their posts were in accordance with Article 127 of the Constitution and Article 93 of the Law on Municipal Administrations. No one doubted Sadettin Tanttan's compliance with the laws (...) The developments related to the mayors of Diyarbakir, Bingol, and Siirt have again brought to light our inconsistent policies. On the one hand, we want to obstruct the politicization of the Kurdish problem. In fact, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit has drawn attention to the danger of such a development. And, on the other hand, we facilitate that process through our own activities. We create the impression that we yield to foreign pressure. Furthermore, we oppress a group of people and create a favorable situation for the politicization of the problem".

"The dreams about independence or the establishment of a federation or the recognition of an autonomous

status for the Kurds were abandoned (...) Another point that should be considered is: The HADEP is an ethnic party, regardless of what its program calls for. Some of its voters are those who supported the PKK in the past and who still sympathize with the organization (...) In fact, it would have been useful if moderate parties such as the DKP [Democratic Masses Party] were not closed in southeastern Turkey. Obviously, that would have prevented any party from establishing monopoly over the votes in the region"

"(...) Politicization can be achieved if Turkey agrees to recognize a party or an organization or a group that claims to represent our citizens of Kurdish origin en masse (...) What the State should do is to unilaterally decide to fulfill some of the expectations on an individual basis. The Supreme Court of Appeals' decision that Kurdish names can be used can be an example. Undoubtedly, the feared threat of politicization will be avoided as the State adopts the measures that are required for democratization on a timely basis. The officials fearing words and behaving erratically will get us nowhere".

SEVERAL TURKISH M.P.s BLAME THE AUTHORITIES FOR THE MASSACRE IN ANKARA PRISON

ON 13 March 2000, the Parliamentary sub-Commission on Human Rights made public its report regarding the riots in

September 1999 on the Ulucanlar Prison, in which 10 political prisoners lost their lives. Because of differences between the M.P.s, two separate reports have been drawn

up : by M.P.s of the Motherland Party (ANAP), of Fazilet (FP – Islamist) and the True Path Party (DYP) who firmly put the blame on the prison authorities and the other by the M.P.s of the government coalition, the ultra-nationalist “Democratic Left” Party (DYP) and the neo-fascist National Action Party (MHP), who were much more lenient towards the authorities” role.

In the first report, the Members Sebgetullah Seydaoglu (ANAP), Mehmet Bakaroglu (FP) and Musatafa Eren declare that, on the basis of the enquiry carried out and the evidence heard, they have come to the conclusion that “the operation had been planned”. The Members of Parliament cast serious doubt on the existence of arms said to have been discovered (a Kalashnikov, 7 pistols, one shot gun) in the prison. They declare, in this respect, that during the first search not one automatic weapon had been found and that it only made its appearance when one of the prisoners maintained that “the first shots came from an automatic weapon”. The Members continued by asking “if these weapons really existed, why were they not used against the security forces instead of only against the detainees?”. Furthermore, doubt was also cast on the existence of any tunnel.

The report also denounces the fact that the Public Prosecutor of the Ankara Court had not deigned to reply to the M.P.s questions, and that the recording made during the

riot were not handed over to the Commission. The M.P.s also ask why other, more appropriate methods (tear gas etc.) were not used. However, the darkest point remains the signs of torture, but also of acid burns found on the victims bodies. The report also stresses the late arrival of any medical assistance which, except for two cases, only arrived one to three hours after their deaths.

On 2 March, the Torture Investigation Committee of the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD) in Istanbul published its report for 1999. According to the IHD, 334 people called at its Istanbul branch to denounce the torture to which they had been subjected while in detention. The majority complained of “hanging, bastinado (beating on the soles of the feet), electric shocks, sexual abuse and rape”. The committee reported that amongst the 334 victims there were 27 children and 72 women, and that 63 people had produced medical reports that confirmed the violence suffered. The report stressed the fact that 146 people suffered physical damage and 104 others moral damage as a result of the ill-treatment suffered.

The Human Rights defence organisations in Turkey and abroad had regularly denounced the systematic use of torture in Turkish police stations. Indeed, recently the political authorities no longer dare deny the facts, but obstinately refuse to admit that the violence was

systematic. Thus the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission, Presided by Mrs. Sema Piskinsüt, of Prime Minister Ecevit’s “Democratic Left” Party, in the course of its inspection of the little police station of Kükükköy (Istanbul) confiscated the equipment used for the “Palestinian hanging” very popular with the Turkish police officers for interrogation. Mrs. stated that “we encountered no opposition, but the key to the interrogation room could not be found”,

Mrs. Piskinsüt sharply reacted to the declarations of Erol Çakir, governor of Istanbul, who had simply denied the facts, saying that “certain persons had found an old stick” and accused the commission of being under foreign influence. As for the Minister of the Interior, Saadettin Tanttan, he stated “I am totally against torture, but I have to work with the human material at my disposal”. Seref Turgut, of IHD stated that “if similar searches were carried out, instruments of torture would be found in all police stations”.

In 1998, the same Commission had been able to lay hands on several instruments of torture, such as sticks used for falaka and a device for applying electric shocks at the Mugla police station. But, so far, no proceedings have taken place as all the items of evidence have mysteriously disappeared. This time, the Parliamentary Commission decided to immediately confiscate the instrument. Although torture is

forbidden by law in Turkey, it is extremely rare for police torturers to be sentenced. According to the American State Department (Bulletin N° 162), out of 245 cases before the Istanbul Public Prosecutor's Office between 1996 and 1998, there were only 15 sentences, the longest being 3 years jail.

Moreover, on 3 March, the Islamic Human Rights association, Mazlum-Der, denounced the arrest of 68 children aged between 6 and 14, in a mosque in Urfa by the anti-terrorist section of the general directorate of the police. The authorities maintained that the lessons were being given illegally by the Hizbullah. The children all under 15 years of age, had to be freed subsequently

• **AHMET KAYA SENTENCED TO 3 YEARS AND 9 MONTHS IN PRISON.** On 10 March 2000, the Istanbul State Security Court sentenced the Kurdish singer, Ahmet Kaya, to three years and nine months jail in his absence, for 'separatist propaganda in favour of the PKK'. The authorities accuse him of having sung in a Berlin concert in 1993 where a map of Kurdistan and a picture of Ocalan were on the wall. The singer's lawyers argued that this was the result of a piece of photographic faking carried out by the daily paper *Hurriyet*. The paper had never written anything on the subject at the time. Better still, in 1994 it had

awarded a prize to Kaya. It was only when the singer, elected best musician of the year in February 1999, mentioned, in the course of the presentation ceremony, his Kurdish origins and his intention of making a video clip in Kurdish, that the Turkish authorities and their media turned against him. And, during this media lynching campaign, *Hurriyet* published the famous photo which the Public Prosecutor and the Istanbul State Security Court chose to consider proof of the crime of separatism.

Realising how ridiculous it was to sentence a popular singer just for expressing his intention of composing a song in his own language, the State Security Court, determined in any case to silence the dissident artist fell back on this faked photo to sentence Kaya to 3 years 9 months jail for "separatist

propaganda". Kaya's lawyers revealed that this same court, at the time of the *Susurluk* scandal which revealed the links between the Turkish mafia, police and part of the political caste, had not found grounds to start proceedings "in the absence of proof". But all it had needed as "proof" was a faked newspaper photo to sentence the dissident singer, who is also facing three other charges of "separatism". "In these circumstances, how can we talk of justice or a State of Laws in this country?" he declared. Ahmet Kaya, who lives in France, was not present at the trial. The media gave a great deal of space to the case. On 21st March the FIDF (French based international Federation for Human Rights) organised a Press Conference, in which Ahmet Kaya took part, to explain the case and the Human Rights situation in Turkey.

EUROPCOPTER AND BOEING EXCLUDED BY TURKEY FROM THE \$ 4.5 BILLION HELICOPTER CONTRACT — VEXED, JACQUES CHIRAC ADJOURNED HIS VISIT TO ANKARA

THE Turkish Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, announced, on 6 March, the elimination of the American Boeing Company and the Franco-German Eurocopter consortium from the very lucrative contract for 145 helicopter gunships put out by Ankara, and worth 44.5 billion. There remain in the running, the Italian company, Agusta, the

American Bell-Textron and the Russian Kamov-A (the latter in partnership with the Israeli company IAI).

According to the experts, helicopters are the most effective weapons to use against fighters in isolated mountains, but the Defence Minister stated last month that they were also needed to protect the country

from foreign threats to national security. The American Congress had vetoed previous attempts to increase its fleet of nine Bell Super Cobra helicopter gunships, arguing that they would be used for repression within the country's borders.

Turkey wants to co-produce the selected helicopter in a factory near Ankara which, until recently built F-16 fighters. This aspect of the transfer of production is one of the principal factors being considered for awarding the contract. The contract is to operate in three stages, 45 helicopters being built in the first stage, 50 more in each of the next two. Turkey also wants to buy a thousand tanks by 2013 — a contract worth another \$8 billion. The Minister of Defence declared last month that a first phase of 250 tanks, worth \$ 1.5 billion would be allocated before the end of July 2000.

Berlin, France's Eurocopter partner, embarrassed by Turkey's human rights violations, had hesitated and was late in sending the Tiger helicopter to Antalya for demonstrations. The Greens, members of the German coalition government, had repeatedly stated that they would leave the coalition in the event of arms being sold to Turkey. But Eurocopter cannot sell its helicopters without the joint

approval of Berlin and Paris. It is, no doubt this uncertainty that has led Ankara to acting first by excluding the Franco-German firm from its "contract of the century". As for Boeing, competing with its Apache, it is said to be too expensive. However, Prime Minister Ecevit's announcement is seen as a tactic to sharpen competition between the three remaining companies. Italy is being rewarded for its cooperation over the Öcalan affair, whereas Ankara's traditional allies, the Israelis (partners of the Russians) and the Americans could have their share of the cake. However, some people think that there is a connection between the Turkish project of building nuclear power stations, postponed for the moment, and the helicopter contract, the winner of the second having no chance of winning the nuclear contract as well.

The French response was not long in coming, since on 24 March the Turkish daily *Hurriyet* announced that President Jacques Chirac had suspended his planned official visit to Ankara as a response to the Turkish decision. The Turkish daily *Hurriyet* put the headline "It's not done Monsieur" on its front page and stated that the Turkish Ambassador to Paris, Sönmez Köksal, was recently summoned to the Elysée Palace for a meeting,

together with his chief advisor. According to the paper, the President expressed himself in these terms : " Mr. Chirac has personally made every effort and done everything in his power to prevent the law on the Armenian genocide being passed by the French Senate. He has also worked like a real Turk throughout Europe in support of Turkey's application for membership of the European Union and played a key role in its acceptance at Helsinki. (...) Mr. Chirac was greatly saddened and disappointed to see Ankara exclude France, a friendly country, from its helicopter contract. In consequence Mr. Chirac is adjourning his visit, planned for this spring, until 'relations between the two countries be improved' ".

The Turkish authorities reacted sharply to this, stating " apparently Paris only had mercantile interests at heart in its relations with Turkey. Ankara is very disappointed that a helicopter contract should make them react so strongly ". The paper continued by saying : " he has soon forgotten the past " recalling that, over the last three years, France has sold over a billion dollars worth of medium range rockets, helicopters and military equipment and that in 1993 Turkey even canceled its contract with the American Sikorsky Company to buy 20 Cougar helicopters.

A DEBATE ON THE REVISION OF ARTICLE 312 OF THE TURKISH PENAL CODE AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE SENTENCING OF NECMETTIN ERBAKAN TO A YEARS' IMPRISONMENT

NECMETTIN Erbakan, the Turkish Islamist leader, has been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for incitement to hatred on the basis of a speech he made six years ago. Observers note that the Diyarbakir State Security Court's verdict constitutes a further obstacle to his return on the political scene from which he had been pushed by the Turkish Army. The Turkish authorities accuse him of making the following remarks: "With God's help, the period of harsh trials is ended. Like the fall of Communism in Russia, so subordination to foreigners and to the godless is finished in Turkey (...) There are not 12 political parties in this country but only 2 (...) This country's children start school by reciting the first verses of the Coran. And you have come to replace that by 'I am Turkish, straight and hard working' (...) Now the child of a Moslem of Kurdish origin has won the right to say 'And I am Kurdish, straighter and even more hard working'".

The Islamic Virtue Party (FP) which was created following the banning, in 1998, of its predecessor the Prosperity Party (RP) is greatly influenced by Erbakan. With almost a hundred members of Parliament,

the Islamists are trying to clear the path for their leader by demanding revision of Article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code. A debate has been launched in Turkish politico-legal circles on the future of this Article which punished "incitement to race hatred" but is in fact used by the authorities to limit the area of freedom of expression. The President of the Turkish Court of Appeals, Sami Selçuk has declared himself in favour of suppressing it, stating "We are faced with an Article that threatens freedom of expression in our country and Turkey's entry into the European Union (...) The State should not interfere with the cultural market. It should not intervene to protect a culture — neither to encourage it or to hinder it". (Milliyet 16/3/2000) In this field he is in conflict with the Court of Appeals' Public Prosecutor.

AS WELL AS...

• **10,856 CASES OF "UNSOLVED" MURDERS.** On 6 March, the Turkish daily, *Hurriyet*, under the headline: "Hizbullah has cleared up 400 unsolved murders — there remain 10,856 others" maintained that since 1999 and the

operations against the Hizbullah, 400 murders have been cleared up through ballistic tests on weapons seized by the Turkish police in the 11 Kurdish regions. Gökhan Aydinler, Governor of the State of Emergency Region (OHAL) moreover states that, in the course of a month and a half of operations, 650 Hizbullah members have been arrested and that the struggle is identical to that waged against the PKK. According to him, there still remain 600 armed PKK fighters in the region.

Questioned by the same newspaper, Arif Altunkalem, member of the Diyarbakir bar, recalled that at the beginning of the year 2000 the number of cases of unsolved murders in the provinces of Diyarbakir, Mardin, Batman, Bingöl, and Siirt stood at 11,256. There is still a long way to go to reach the truth about these crimes.

• TURKEY TWICE FOUND GUILTY FOR MURDERS COMMITTED IN KURDISTAN.

The European Human Rights Court has found Turkey guilty of having failed to take any measures to prevent the assassination, in 1993, of a Kurdish journalist and a doctor and for having made no serious attempt to investigate the two cases.

In both cases, the judges considered that Ankara had violated Article 2 of the European Convention for Human Rights, which guarantees

the Right to Live. The verdict was reached unanimously regarding the failures to investigate and by six against one (the Turkish Judge) regarding the assassinations themselves. The Court considered by six votes to one that Turkey had also violated Article 13 of the Convention, guaranteeing the effective right to appeal to a Court.

The first case concerned the assassination, at Urfa, of Kemal Kiliç, journalist on the pro-Kurdish daily paper *Özgür Günem*, shot down on 18 February 1993 by four men who were waiting for him as he came home from work. Two months earlier, Kemal Kiliç had asked the Governor of Urfa, in vain, for protection, for himself and other of the papers correspondents, because of threats and physical attacks to which many of them had been subjected.

On 16 March last, the European Court had already found Turkey guilty of attacks on freedom of expression with respect to *Özgür Gündem*, taking note of the many acts of censorship, condemnations and acts of physical aggression to which the paper had been subjected during its brief existence from 1992 to 1994.

The second case concerned Hasan Kaya, a doctor who disappeared on 21 February 1993 in the company of a lawyer friend, Metin Can, President of the Elazığ Human Rights Association. The two men

were found, shot dead, six days later. "Hasan Kaya, as a doctor suspected of links with the PKK, ran an especial danger of being victim of illegal aggression at the time" the judges considered.

In both these verdicts, the European Court for Human Rights, considered that the Turkish authorities "did not take the measures to which they could reasonably have had recourse" to prevent the assassinations. It also condemns Turkey for having refused to bring before the court "an important witness, an officer of the State" thus failing in its obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights. Ankara is, furthermore, condemned for "inhuman and degrading treatment" under Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights in the case of Dr. Kaya, whose corpse showed that he had been subjected to physical ill-treatment.

In both cases, the heirs of the victims received £ 17,500 damages and £ 20,000 and £22,000 costs respectively — an insignificant financial reparation to which the Turkish government can easily adapt itself.

• AKIN BIRDAL BACK IN JAIL

Akin Birdal, former President of the Turkish Human Rights Association and Vice-President of the International Human Rights Federation (FIDH) returned to prison on 28 March to serve the

balance of his one year sentence for "racial provocation". The Turkish courts rejected a medical report, handed in to it last week by an Ankara hospital, certifying that he was "unfit" to return to prison because of the after effects of the 1998 attempt on his life, in which he was seriously wounded. He has been incarcerated in the Ulucanlar prison in Ankara.

This imprisonment has aroused many reactions, as much in Turkey as abroad.

Thus James Foley, US State Department spokesman described Akin Birdal on 28 March as "a responsible voice for peaceful change and reconciliation in Turkey" and added that "all citizens of Turkey should be able to fully exercise their right to peaceful expression of opinion, as recognised by the international laws on Human Rights (...). Putting Mr. Birdal back in jail is incompatible with this principal..."

Furthermore, Human Rights Watch has also called for the immediate freeing of A. Birdal and for the repeal of Article 312 of the Turkish Penal Code, which penalises freedom of expression.

• ANKARA DOES NOT WANT TO SEE MAX VAN DER STOEL.

On 22 March, the Turkish daily, *Hurriyet* announced, under the by line of Mehmed Ali Birand, that Turkey refused to make an appointment for Max van der Stoel,

OSCE High Commissioner for Minorities. Former Dutch Foreign Minister, Mr. Van der Stoel had also been UNO special rapporteur on Iraq, is due to take part in a seminar on minorities in Antalya on 11 April 2000. On that occasion a request was made for a meeting with Turkish Foreign Minister, Ismail Cem and Minister for Human Rights, Mr. Ali İrtemçelik, so that the High Commissioner could form an opinion on the Ecevit Government's policy regarding "the protection of the cultural rights of minorities". According to sources close to the government, Ismail Cem is said to be completely opposed to any meeting with Mr. Van der Stoel and considered such an appointment "harmful", whereas Mr. İrtemçelik would be perfectly ready to meet him but his colleague's attitude puts him in a difficult position. According to Mr. Ali Birand, Ankara has still not replied to the request of the OSCE senior official. "To date, the only member country that has refused an appointment requested by Mr. Van der Stoel was Mr. Milosevic's Yugoslavia" wrote the journalist. According to OSCE regulations, any member country that refuses to see the High Commissioner must explain itself to the Council. People close to the Foreign Minister are said to have stated that: "We know who are the minorities in Turkey and they have obtained all their rights. To grant an appointment to the High Commissioner could lead some people to launch a campaign to grant

the Kurds that status". Mehmed Ali Birand concluded by saying that: "we want to apply the Conventions and Regulations to which we have subscribed in our own way".

• WALID JUMBLAT PLEADS IN FAVOUR OF KURDISH CULTURAL RIGHTS.

In an interview given to the Turkish paper Sabah on 21 March, Walid Jumblat, Lebanese business man and leader of the Druze and Socialist groups in the Lebanese parliament, pleaded in favour of cultural rights for the Kurdish people. "We are of Kurdish origin. I have relations with Kurds all over the world. Everyone agrees that cultural rights and identity must be granted to the Kurdish people within the borders of Turkey. I am aware that I am not popular in Turkish political circles because of my opinions. And yet Turkey is the country that Nora (his wife) and I would most like to visit".

• MURAT KARAYILAN'S APPLICATION FOR POLITICAL ASYLUM IS REJECTED, SEVERAL PKK EUROPEAN OFFICIALS SENTENCED TO IMPRISONMENT.

The application for political asylum filed in the Netherlands on 18 November 1999 by Murat Karayilan, one of the principal PKK military chiefs, was rejected by the first level court. Turkey had asked for his extradition in February but the examination of this request would probably take six months. Mr. Karayilan can appeal against this decision. In an interview

granted to the Dutch News Agency ANP at the beginning of March, Mr. Karayilan had declared: "I am here to present our new peaceful strategy to all our members (...) The PKK is ready to do anything for peace(...) We want peace, but if our leader is hanged we will feel that like the death of all the Kurds. It would then see the beginning of another war(...) We are asking for very little — just legal recognition of Kurdish identity", and regretted that "there has been no positive sign of response from Ankara".

In addition, the alleged PKK coordinator in Germany was arrested on 30 March at the Elten border post. On the 29th the Federal Public Prosecutor's Office had announced that two alleged PKK leaders would be brought before the Courts for "membership of a criminal organisation", "forged papers in an organised gang" and "violation of the law on carrying arms".

Moreover, the 14th Chamber of the Paris Criminal Court sentenced İrfan Balsak, considered to be a leading PKK official, to 4 years imprisonment and 10 years banning from French territory. Four other people were condemned, in the same context, to prison sentences varying from three years immediate to 18 months suspended, and banned from French territory.

• IMMUNITY AND PARDON FOR 20 TURKISH POLICEMEN CHARGED IN THE GAZI AFFAIR. On 3 March 2000, the

Trebizond State Security Court decided to free the 20 Policemen accused of having opened fire on demonstrators in March 1995 in the Gazi quarter of Istanbul. 21 people died in the course of four days of rioting in the quarter. After long drawn out procedures and several postponements, the Turkish judges have acquitted 18 police and sentenced two others. Adem Albayrak, charged with four murders, was sentenced to 24 years imprisonment for each crime and Mehmet Günogan was also sentenced for the murder of two demonstrators. However, they benefited from the clemency of the Turkish judges, who reduced A. Albayrak's sentence to 6 years and Gündogan's to 3 years. Since the Court also took into account their period of detention, the only two to be sentenced left the court as free men...

• **THE RECOGNITION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE AGAIN POSTPONED BY THE FRENCH SENATE.** The conference of senate chairmen has, for the second time, refused to allow time to debate the recognition of the Armenian genocide of 1915, which caused the death of 1.5 million Armenians of the Ottoman Empire. This decision seems to have been taken at the personal request of President Chirac, an ardent advocate of Turkey in Europe. The Left parties, who are in the minority in the Senate, voted in favour of debating the Bill. Turkey has never

recognised what was to be the first genocide of the 20th Century, limiting itself to talking of some limited deportations and massacres in the confusion of the first World War. The French National Assembly had, on 29 May 1998, unanimously passed a Bill recognising the Armenian genocide, but pressures exerted by the Turkish authorities and negotiations over juicy arms sales have once again prevented a vote being taken in the Senate.

The Armenian community expressed its indignation and anger, and various radio stations and publications published a special joint four page edition with a 100,000 distribution. It organised a national demonstration in front of the Senate, on Saturday 11 March which rallied many thousands of people and received wide media coverage..

• **ACCORDING TO THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES, PHONE TAPPING IS NOT AN ATTACK ON PRIVACY.** The phone tapping scandal continues. The Minister of the Interior has declared that the demand for 25 billion TL damages by Naci Ünver, President of the 8th Criminal Division of the Turkish Court of Appeals, who had been phone tapped, was "inconceivable". The Minister rejected the idea that these tappings could be attacks on privacy. In a memo. Sent to the 10th Division of the Ankara Administrative Tribunal, the Minister stressed : "phone taps have not only been

carried out on the plaintiff but also on other organisations and senior officials. If damages were awarded to him, they would set a bad example for other interested parties, and would create a needless source of enrichment".

• **A TURKISH REPORT ON THE KURDISH QUESTION IS BEING PREPARED.** The English language Turkish daily, Turkish Daily News, announced, in its 15 March 2000 issue, that "Turkey is drafting a global report" on the "Kurdish problem". According to the paper, the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is at the moment preparing a "complete report regarding Turks of Kurdish origin and Turkish policy regarding minorities in Turkey" so as to conform with the Copenhagen criteria as required for its membership of the European Union.

The report has set itself the aim of examining the Turkish Constitution and the 1925 Lausanne Treaty. The Kurdish question, but also the subordination of the Minister of Defence were two of the principal sensitive issues removed from the report drawn up last February by the secretariat of the Prime Minister's Council for Co-ordination on Human Rights. That report had been included in the 8th five year development plan of the DPT, the State planning organisation.

The new report examines the situation in other European

countries, with particular attention to France. It also reveals that Article 26 of the Turkish Constitution is in contradiction with Article 39 of the Treaty of Lausanne. This latter lays down that "there should be no restriction imposed on the free use by Turkish nationals of any languages, in private, in trade, religion, the press or in publications and all public meetings". Turkey only recognises as minorities the non-Moslem communities.

• **TURCO-AMERICAN MILITARY CO-OPERATION.** Turkey will take part in the American programme to develop the ISF (Joint Strike Fighter) fighter, the American Secretary for Defence, William Cohen confirmed. The programme, which will have an overall cost of 200 billion dollars, is aimed at designing an ultra-modern fighter and associated equipment. Over 3000 may be built.

Several other countries, including Great Britain (up to 10%) and the Netherlands and Norway are already involved in this project. Lockheed Martin and Boeing are competing for the design and building of the jet.

• **SUSURLIK: THE SAGA CONTINUES — YET ANOTHER KEY FIGURE VICTIM OF AN 'ACCIDENT'!** Ibrahim Sahin, former Deputy Director of the Special Operations Bureau, and one of those charged in the Susurluk scandal which brought to light the links between the Mafia and the State, had a road accident on 29 March on the

Gemlik highway. Driving the latest model of jeep, those close to him found it "disturbing" that the vehicles wheels, of double thickness, should suddenly burst, without any apparent reason, or that a servo-assisted steering system should suddenly swing it to the right. Ibrahim Sahin was taken to an Emergency Ward and is under intensive care. Many journalists, sent there, relate that all the leading figures involved in the Susurluk case have turned up at the hospital, with a horde of bodyguards but that journalists and even people visiting other patients are forbidden access.

• **EXTENSION OF THE STATE OF EMERGENCY.** On 28 March 2000, the Turkish Parliament decided to extend the State of Emergency in five Kurdish Provinces for a further four months. The Provinces concerned were Tunceli, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Sirnak and Van. These five provinces were placed under the rule of the State of Emergency Governor's office in Diyarbakir in 1987 — prior to that they had been under a State of Siege since 1979.

In November 1999, Parliament — acting as usual as a mere rubber stamp for the decisions of the National Security Council — lifted the State of Emergency in the Kurdish Province of Siirt.

• **THE YEAR 2000 LODOVIC-TRARIEUX PRIZE AWARDED TO ESBER YAGMURDERELI.** The jury of the "Prix International des droits

de l'homme Ludovic-Trarieux" (The International Ludovic-Trarieux Human Rights Prize) awarded the year 2000 Prize to the Turkish lawyer, writer and Human Rights activist Esber" who is serving a prison sentence for proposing a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem. The prize, which is worth FF 30,000, is awarded every two years jointly by the Bordeaux Bar's Human Rights Institute and the European Lawyers' Union to a lawyer, without any limitation of nationality or membership of the Bar, who has illustrated, by his life, his work or his sufferings, the Defence of Human Rights, the rights of the defence, the supremacy of the state of law, the struggle against racism and intolerance in all their forms. The first winner, in the summer of 1995, was Nelson Mandela.

Furthermore, Christian Charrière-Bournazel, Vice-President of CILDEKT, sent a letter to Turkish Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, asking him to work for the freeing of E. Yagmurdereli. While calling for the abrogation of the laws that allow the charging, trial and imprisonment of Human Rights defenders, Mr. Charrière-Bournazel added "I myself recall the time, in 1981, when I was present at the trial of members of your party; who were simply accused of having held opinions, and who were only called to account for their opinions at the extraordinary trial which I attended as a representative of the International Federation for Human Rights.

Trial Over Police Raid Opens in Iran

By Geneive Abdo

Special to the International Herald Tribune

TEHRAN — Policemen accused of beating pro-democracy student demonstrators faced their alleged victims in a military court Tuesday in a rare prosecution of Iran's powerful security forces.

In the unprecedented open trial, the students accused police officers of illegally entering Tehran University dormitories on July 8. Students had staged a peaceful demonstration earlier that day over the closure by a conservative-dominated court of the pro-reform newspaper Salam, once a leading symbol of free expression in Iran.

The police tried to halt the demonstration and then broke into the dormitories later that night, allegedly smashing windows and furniture and clubbing students.

In response to the melee, student protests were held for the following six days at Tehran University and other universities across the country.

Demonstrations also spilled into the streets of Tehran in the worst social unrest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The former Tehran police chief, Brigadier General Farhad Nazari, the commander of special riot squads, 7 other officers and 12 conscripts are facing charges of illegally entering the Tehran University dormitories, beating students and destroying their property. Lawyers say that if the defendants are convicted they could each face up to 10 years in prison.

The outcome of the trial will be an indication of whether President Mohammad Khatami's call for a society based on the rule of law prevails in Iran.

But students and their supporters in the reform movement, who gained a solid victory in parliamentary elections Feb. 18, say the prosecutions do not go far enough. They are demanding legal action against hard-line vigilantes accused by the students of leading the assault.

Reformers have vowed to make the judicial system, now under the control of the conservative establishment, less politicized. They have also promised to pass legislation restricting the powers of law enforcement agencies.

Such moves will be met with much resistance. The conservative clerical establishment is reluctant to give citizens rights similar to those in Western democracies, and they believe that violent repression by the security forces is justified if the Islamic system is under threat.

Standing in a packed courtroom, the students told of the events the night of July 8-9, when at least one person was killed and at more than 200 injured. Their lawyer accused the police of conspiring with gangs of Islamic extremists in a plot to get revenge on the students for staging the peaceful protest over the closure of Salam.

"There were some people coordinating between the police and those in plainclothes," Mohsen Rohami, a pro-reform cleric representing the students, told the court. "The prosecutor must pay attention to this fact."

One student testified that he had lost an eye when a tear-gas canister hit him and police refused to allow an ambulance to take him to the hospital.

"A tear gas canister hit my eye. It was like a bullet," said Mohsen Jamali, who stood before the judge with a white bandage over his missing right eye.

The family of Ezzat Ebrahim-Nejad, killed while staying with friends, sat in the front rows of the court, holding a photograph of their son. They asked to speak, but the judge refused.

Iran's Supreme Court last week reiterated that it was upholding a lower court's death sentence against Akbar Mohammadi, a student demonstrator. His brother, Manucher, is charged with treason for his political activity while a student.

One night this week, the father of the two boys visited a lawyer to seek help. Weary and shaken over the family's ordeal, Mohammad Mohammadi said he was doing everything he could to save Akbar Mohammadi's life.

"I have asked the leader and other officials to pardon my son," he said, referring to Iran's religious leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. "God willing, they will."



Kamran Jebreili/The Associated Press

Brigadier General Farhad Nazari, former Tehran police chief, left, listening to a student's testimony at his trial Tuesday in the Iranian capital.

01 March 2000, Copyright © Turkish Daily News

Foreign interest in liberal Kurdish party

- Foreign countries with diplomatic missions in Turkey are showing great interest in preparations by Kurdish intellectuals striving to form a liberal party
- **Elci:** 'According to foreign diplomats, the motivation provided by establishing a Kurdish party would play a very significant role in solving the Kurdish problem'

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

Foreign, and especially European, countries with diplomatic missions in Turkey are showing great interest in the preparations being made by Kurdish intellectuals striving to form a liberal Kurdish party in Turkey.

Chairman of the Democratic Mass Party (DKP) lawyer Serafettin Elci, who initiated preparations to form a political party with Kurdish intellectuals Abdulmelik Firat, Mehmet Emin Seven, Mehmet Ali Eren and Nazif Kaleli, stated that members of foreign diplomatic missions had displayed great pleasure in their ongoing efforts to form the party.

In response to a question about foreign interest in the party, Elci said: "Foreign diplomats from some very influential countries in the world, particularly from Europe, who have been assigned as ambassadors or departmental heads at their respective missions in Turkey have contacted our group and received detailed information on our endeavors. When we gave information about the framework of the political party we are trying to establish, they told us that this is what was expected, they were very happy to see the progress and that such motivation would play a very significant role in solving the Kurdish problem."

Elci went on to say that Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh, who recently visited Turkey, had also shown interest in the political party they are trying to establish and received information during their meeting.

"Mrs. Lindh was extremely happy about our efforts to form a party. Europe wants Kurds to take part in a political structure that is civilized and in line with legal procedures accepted in Europe. This would also help Turkey's accession to Europe and enhance Europe's confidence in Turkey. Formation of a liberal Kurdish party is something that has always been encouraged by Europeans.

"Now efforts by Kurds trying to establish a political structure with a liberal and democratic approach that complies with European norms is considered a very positive development by Europeans, who say that such a political structure will receive moral support from them," Elci said.

Turkey creates unnecessary problems for itself

In his evaluation of the Justice Ministry's refusal to allow Cohn Bendit, a member of the European Parliament, to visit former Democratic Labor Party (DEP) Deputy Leyla Zana in prison, Elci stressed that Turkey was creating unnecessary problems for itself, and added: "What could be more natural than Mr. Bendit requesting to visit Zana in prison, and what kind of harm could such a visit cause for the state? Leyla Zana is a person with a political identity and is serving time in jail. Moreover, there is an assumption in Europe that she was imprisoned because of a speech she delivered in the European Parliament.

"For Turkey to prevent this visit is unbelievable nonsense. Trying to use a valid regulation as an excuse for this action would not justify Turkey's action. If there is such a regulation, Turkey should take immediate action to change it and make sure the provisions remain within reasonable criteria. I believe Turkey has unnecessarily placed itself in a predicament. We hope that this type of absurdity will never be displayed again."

Elci also criticized the state for not allowing Lindh to visit Diyarbakir, saying: "This behavior will inevitably create some questions in Mrs. Lindh's head. Turkey makes great mistakes which are totally needless. There is nothing out of the ordinary in Mrs. Lindh wanting to see Diyarbakir, but our foreign minister thought that this was inappropriate and prevented her from taking the trip. Now Mrs. Lindh will naturally be suspicious and think there are some activities taking place in the region which they don't want her to witness. Had she been allowed to go, nothing would have happened. Baring in mind her busy schedule, Mrs. Lindh would only have had time to visit the municipality, the governor and some nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and would have returned back to Ankara with a clear picture.

"Through this behavior, Turkey causes more harm than good for itself and continues to demonstrate the type of conduct that will not be accepted in the civilized world. Since Turkey wants accession to the European Union it had better realize that the period following the Helsinki summit has to be different from the period that preceded it. Turkey is required to adjust itself to the requirements. Turkey was given a great opportunity with the Helsinki summit, and if its efforts for accession to the EU are genuine, it has to accomplish what is being requested of it. It has to abandon this unreasonable conduct, thus trying to recognize and subsequently digest the mentality shared by the civilized world.

"There are a list of requirements Turkey has to accomplish. First of all, the mentality has to change and the image displayed by Turkey indicates that Turkey is just not ready for such progress. Turkey simply alienates itself from the EU through its own mistakes. Accession to the EU presents numerous advantages for Turkey. It is necessary for those who are responsible for state administration in Turkey to realize that if Turkey fails to enter the EU, its place will be in the 'dictators league' in the Middle East and this has the potential of dragging Turkey into a horrible and an endless swamp."

"Voyage vers le soleil", histoire d'un tabou kurde difficile à montrer en salle



ISTANBUL, 2 mars (AFP) - 8h54 - "Le plus dur n'a pas été le tournage, mais les problèmes de distribution". Plus d'un an après la réalisation de "Voyage vers le soleil", Yesim Ustaoglu touche au but: la projection en salle dans son pays de sa fiction sur les discriminations envers les Kurdes de Turquie.

A partir de vendredi, le deuxième long métrage de cette réalisatrice de 38 ans sortira dans 8 salles de Turquie, à Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir (ouest) et même Diyarbakir, principale ville du sud-est à majorité kurde:

Une diffusion limitée. Tous les distributeurs du pays ont fait valoir que le film était "trop dur" à montrer "pour le moment", raconte à l'AFP Yesim Ustaoglu, à la soirée de première lundi soir dans une université privée d'Istanbul.

"Voyage vers le soleil", récompensé l'an dernier à Berlin du Prix Ange Bleu du meilleur film européen et du Prix de la paix, évoque ce qui reste un tabou en Turquie: le peu de considération dont jouit la population kurde dans la société turque, où elle est associée aux menées séparatistes - "terroristes" selon la terminologie officielle - du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK).

Après la condamnation à mort de son chef Abdullah Ocalan en juin, pour trahison et séparatisme, le PKK a mis fin en septembre à quinze ans de lutte armée, et les affrontements ont quasiment cessé dans le sud-est.

Mme Ustaoglu a dû louer elle-même à des amis gérants de cinéma les quelques salles où son film sortira, "l'essentiel étant qu'il touche son public, même sans les grands distributeurs", estime-t-elle.

Déjà projeté trois fois en Turquie, auparavant lors des festivals d'Ankara et d'Istanbul, le film a toujours suscité le même genre de réactions. "Partout, les spectateurs ont eu le souffle coupé jusqu'à la dernière image", explique Yesim.

"C'est normal, et intéressant", raconte-t-elle, "parce que les gens ne veulent pas voir une réalité de leur pays, ou parfois la découvrent".

"Voyage vers le soleil" raconte à travers l'amitié entre deux jeunes Turcs dont l'un, Berzan, est d'origine kurde, les vicissitudes et les humiliations dont les Kurdes sont souvent victimes en Turquie.

Sur fond de violences meurtrières entre la police et des militants pro-kurdes, Mehmet, parce qu'il est pris pour un Kurde, subit ce que Yesim Ustaoglu qualifie de "racisme", y compris la torture, clairement montrée dans le film.

Ramenant la dépouille mortelle de son ami dans son village d'origine, dans le sud-est --d'où le titre de voyage vers le soleil-- Mehmet découvre une région entière en état de guerre, où de nombreux villages ont été abandonnés voire détruits au cours de la lutte anti-guérilla.

"Ceux qui ont réagi à ces images sont blessés quelque part, ils ont peut-être honte de ce qu'ils voient", estime Mme Ustaoglu. "Je pense qu'en Turquie, il y a beaucoup de gens qui pensent ainsi, c'est eux que je veux toucher, pour leur ouvrir les yeux. Les personnages du film sont à chaque coin de rue, mais personne ne veut les voir".

Son film, dont une partie des dialogues est en kurde (le turc est la seule langue officielle en Turquie) sans que le mot "kurde" soit jamais prononcé, se veut une parabole sur les discriminations entre êtres humains, un thème "universel et politique", explique sa réalisatrice.

Avec la quasi-disparition des affrontements armés dans le sud-est, Mme Ustaoglu craint que même si "l'atmosphère s'est apaisée, le respect des droits de l'Homme et de la démocratie soit encore long à venir pour la population kurde".

Raison pour laquelle elle a décidé d'assister à la sortie de "Voyage vers le soleil" à Diyarbakir. "Je veux partager ce moment avec eux", dit Yesim, "car il ne faut pas oublier les gens qui vivent là-bas, et leurs problèmes. J'ai fait ce film pour eux".

Six rebelles du PKK et trois agents de sécurité tués dans des combats



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 2 mars (AFP) - 10h12 - Six rebelles kurdes du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) et trois agents de sécurité ont été tués dans des affrontements dans le sud-est anatolien à majorité kurde, a-t-on indiqué vendredi de source officielle.

Il s'agit des premiers combats dans la région depuis début janvier entre les rebelles du PKK et les forces de l'ordre.

Les affrontements se sont déroulés à Sirnak et Mardin, selon un communiqué de la super-préfecture de Diyarbakir, chargée de coordonner la lutte contre le

Le communiqué ne précise pas la date des affrontements.

Après la condamnation à mort de son chef Abdullah Ocalan en juin 1999, pour trahison et séparatisme, le PKK avait annoncé fin septembre qu'il mettait fin aux quinze ans de lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est. Depuis, les affrontements ont quasiment cessé dans la région.

Un Français, sympathisant de la cause kurde, refoulé de Turquie



ANKARA, 2 mars (AFP) - 19h00 - Un Français, accompagnant une délégation de maires qui se rendait dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde, a été refoulé jeudi matin à son arrivée à l'aéroport d'Istanbul, a-t-on appris de source diplomatique.

André Métayer est membre de la Fédération mondiale des Cités unies, qui a pour but de nouer des liens entre municipalités du sud-est et villes européennes. Il est connu pour être un sympathisant de la cause kurde, a-t-on précisé de même source.

Les autres membres de la délégation composée de 15 personnes, dont des maires français et italiens, ont poursuivi leur voyage et sont arrivés jeudi à Van (est). Ils devaient ensuite se rendre à Diyarbakir vendredi.

L'ambassade de France à Ankara a demandé une explication au ministère turc des Affaires étrangères sur les raisons de ce refoulement, a-t-on précisé de source diplomatique française.

Ankara irritée par les entretiens d'Européens avec des associations pro-kurdes



ANKARA, 3 mars (AFP) - 16h41 - Ankara est "dérangée" par l'importance "spéciale" qu'attachent les responsables européens en visite en Turquie à leurs contacts avec des associations pro-kurdes et de défense des droits de l'Homme, a dit vendredi le chef de la diplomatie turque Ismail Cem.

"Les officiels qui visitent la Turquie peuvent rencontrer toutes les organisations ou associations légales, mais le faire en y attribuant une espèce de signification spéciale nous a, bien sûr, dérangé", a déclaré M. Cem à la chaîne de télévision privée d'information en continu NTV.

Ces remarques suivent les récentes visites à Ankara des ministres des affaires étrangères de Suède, de Suisse et du Luxembourg, qui ont rencontré les dirigeants d'associations des droits de l'Homme qui défendent notamment les droits des Kurdes.

La Suédoise Anna Lindh, connue pour sa fermeté de langage concernant le bilan critique de la Turquie en matière de respect des droits de l'Homme, avait également rencontré le maire de Diyarbakir (sud-est) Feridun Celik, membre du parti pro-kurde de la Démocratie du peuple (HADEP), et un ancien député kurde lors de sa visite à Ankara en février.

"Nous leur avons expliqué (notre sentiment) et je pense qu'ils le comprennent", a ajouté M. Cem.

Il a accusé les pays européens d'appliquer "deux poids deux mesures" en critiquant les procédures légales lancées contre trois maires kurdes --dont M. Celik-- accusés de soutien à la rébellion du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui a mené pendant quinze ans une lutte armée dans le sud-est à majorité kurde.

"Un acte qui est un crime dans les pays européens ne peut pas ne plus être un crime lorsqu'il est commis en Turquie. Cela (NDLR: les critiques européennes) est erroné, totalement illogique", a-t-il dit, ajoutant que la décision dépendait de la justice turque.

Le bilan de la Turquie en matière de droits de l'Homme est surveillé de près par l'Union européenne (UE), qui a désigné la Turquie candidate à l'UE au sommet d'Helsinki en décembre.

Sept ans de prison requis à l'encontre de trois maires kurdes



ANKARA, 3 mars (AFP) - 21h10 - Le ministère public turc de la ville de Diyarbakir (sud-est de la Turquie) a requis vendredi sept ans de prison à l'encontre des trois maires kurdes inculpés pour soutien à la rébellion kurde, a rapporté l'agence Anatolie.

Les trois maires, tous membres du parti pro-kurde de la Démocratie du Peuple (HADEP), sont accusés d'avoir aidé et financé le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie et interdit par Ankara).

L'accusation est essentiellement fondée sur les présumés contacts entre Feridun Celik, maire de Diyarbakir, et un rebelle du PKK.

Le Parquet soutient aussi que M. Celik, ainsi que Selim Ozalp, maire de Siirt et Feyzullah Karaslan, maire de Bingol, ont profité d'un récent voyage en Allemagne pour rencontrer des membres du PKK, dont un des chefs de la rébellion, Murat Karayilan, qui a demandé l'asile politique aux Pays-Bas.

Sept années de prison ont également été demandées pour 11 autres personnes pour les mêmes accusations, alors que 8 autres inculpés risquent jusqu'à 15 ans d'emprisonnement pour appartenance au PKK.

La date du procès n'a pas encore été fixée.

Les trois maires kurdes avaient été interpellés le 19 février, inculpés le 24, remis en liberté provisoire et réintégrés dans leurs fonctions le 28.

Une troïka européenne, composée du Portugal et de la France --respectivement, actuel et prochain présidents en exercice de l'UE-- ainsi que du représentant en Turquie de la Commission européenne, avait exprimé à Ankara son "étonnement" devant ces actes de répression, arguant que cela ne faciliterait pas l'entrée de la Turquie dans l'Union européenne.

Les maires et l'HADEP, qui encourt une interdiction pour ses liens présumés avec le PKK, ont rejeté les accusations portées à leur encontre.

TURQUIE

Il est temps de régler le problème kurde par le dialogue

Kurde et ancien ministre, Serafettin Elçi est également le fondateur du Parti démocratique des masses*. Il se prépare à former un nouveau parti kurde qui se dissocie de la violence. Interview.

MILLİYET
Istanbul

Le Hizbullah [organisation islamiste] fait l'objet de toutes les chroniques en Turquie depuis deux mois, alors que ses activités avaient été dénoncées depuis le début des années 90. Aujourd'hui, où l'on déterre partout les cadavres des victimes torturées à mort par le Hizbullah, on se demande pourquoi les gouvernements successifs ont attendu si longtemps avant d'agir. On soupçonne les autorités de lui avoir laissé le champ libre pour contrer le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK). L'organisation est soupçonnée d'avoir liquidé de nombreux intellectuels de gauche turcs, des hommes d'affaires kurdes, qu'elle prétendait protéger du racket du PKK, et même d'avoir assassiné des islamistes modérés, telle la féministe Konca Kuris, séquestrée et atrocement torturée avant d'être exécutée. Au début de 1999, le Hizbullah et le PKK s'étaient réconciliés pour combattre l'Etat turc. C'est ce qui a peut-être sonné le glas pour l'organisation qui profitait jusque-là de la complaisance des autorités.

Le Hizbullah est-il toujours une menace ?

SERAFETTIN ELÇI Le Hizbullah a été très actif dans le sud-est de la Turquie [Kurdistan turc]. Surtout dans les années 90, il est devenu un mouvement terrifiant. Certaines opérations ont été menées à l'époque contre cette organisation, mais elles ne visaient pas vraiment à la supprimer. On avait l'impression que les autorités fermaient les yeux sur ses activités pour mieux l'opposer au PKK. Il y a d'ailleurs un rapport du Parlement sur les assassinats non élucidés qui attire l'attention sur ce point. La légitimité de l'Etat est affectée si elle donne l'impression qu'il tolère, ne serait-ce que temporairement, des activités contraires au droit. En l'occurrence, c'est ce qui s'est passé. Le PKK dérangeait les gens très religieux [du Kurdistan] qui voyaient en lui une organisation marxiste, athée. Donc, le Hizbullah a pu se trouver une certaine base. Mais il n'aurait jamais pu

► Dessin d'Erhan Turgut, Paris.

■ Déception

En 1999, la Turquie est apparue en Europe comme un pays qui s'est fermement engagé sur le chemin des réformes économiques et sociales. Son bilan en matière de droits de l'homme s'était nettement amélioré, et la prise en compte de sa candidature pour l'entrée dans l'Union européenne était un signe de cette reconnaissance. Aujourd'hui, l'euphorie cède la place au désenchantement, souligne *The Turkish Daily News*. La fermeture de la station CNN en langue turque et l'arrestation de trois maires kurdes au sud-est de la Turquie renvoient les images négatives d'un passé récent.



atteindre l'ampleur qu'il a eue s'il n'avait pas été protégé. Le Hizbullah n'est pas un mouvement politique. Et une telle organisation, avec des méthodes aussi barbares, ne peut avoir aucun objectif justifiable.

Peut-on complètement dissoudre le Hizbullah ?

C'est une organisation qui agit dans le plus grand secret. Je ne sais pas s'il va être possible d'atteindre toutes ses ramifications. Puisqu'on vient de l'attaquer si durement, au point d'obtenir des aveux de ses dirigeants de haut niveau, on peut présumer que l'Etat peut venir à bout de ce mouvement. Mais j'ai une inquiétude depuis longtemps à ce sujet : j'ai l'impression que l'Etat préfère ajourner les problèmes au lieu de les résoudre, afin de les ressortir quand cela l'arrange.

Où en est la question kurde et que faut-il faire maintenant ?

Il existe actuellement une opportunité pour régler la question kurde par le dialogue et des méthodes démocratiques. Car cela reste encore le problème le plus important de la Turquie. On ne peut pas dire : *"Nous avons capturé Öcalan, démantelé le PKK ; nous n'avons donc plus à nous occuper de ce problème."* La question kurde continuera à donner du fil à retordre tant qu'on ne parviendra pas à un règlement satisfaisant pour les Kurdes. Une partie de la société ne peut pas

chercher son bonheur au prix du malheur d'une autre. Il faut remplacer le slogan de "la Turquie pour les Turcs" par celui d'une "Turquie de tous les citoyens". Il faut abandonner la vision qui nie les Kurdes, qui cherche à les assimiler. Et les Kurdes, de leur côté, lorsqu'ils expriment leurs revendications justes et légitimes, doivent faire comprendre clairement que leur but n'est pas de diviser ou de détruire l'Etat.

Aujourd'hui, que reste-t-il du PKK ?

A l'heure actuelle, les choses ne sont pas très claires. Les Kurdes ont l'impression qu'un accord a été conclu entre Öcalan et l'Etat pour régler cette question. Une partie importante de la base du PKK semble toujours être fidèle à son leader. Mais plusieurs d'entre eux avaient pris le maquis pour fonder un Kurdistan indépendant, uni et socialiste, et beaucoup y ont laissé leur vie. Maintenant, c'est difficile pour eux d'accepter la ligne qu'Öcalan a brusquement adoptée. L'organisation peut donc à tout moment éclater. Toutefois, ils [les militants du PKK] n'ont nullement abandonné les armes ! Ils ont tout simplement arrêté la lutte armée. Aussi longtemps que les armes restent dans leurs mains, il y a toujours un risque que la violence reprenne.

Naki Özkan

* Parti modéré kurde dissous en 1999.

Ce sont la société, la politique et les femmes qui ont gagné

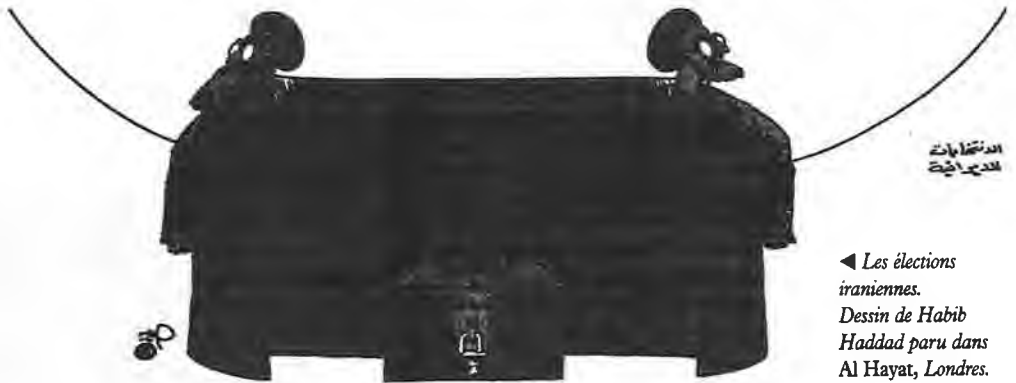
L'apparition des partis politiques est un signe de vitalité démocratique.
L'engagement des femmes dans le débat renforce ce mouvement.

ASSR-E AZADEGAN
Téhéran

Les élections du sixième Majlis [Parlement] sont terminées et les résultats montrent que les citoyens ont voté pour le processus de réforme et de développement politique, et contre la ligne de droite des conservateurs. Quelles leçons pouvons-nous tirer de cette expérience ?

L'apparition des partis politiques est un phénomène remarquable. Presque toutes les forces politiques ont participé aux élections en créant des organisations affichant une identité claire. Comment expliquer ce changement ? Si nous acceptons que le 2 Khordad [nom du courant rénovateur en référence à la date de l'élection du président Khatami] incarne un phénomène politico-social nouveau, il faut en conclure que notre peuple ressent aujourd'hui la nécessité d'un travail politique collectif. C'est une belle évolution. Le camp conservateur et de droite est le principal ennemi de l'existence des partis. Certains considèrent même que l'activité des partis politiques est en contradiction avec la pensée politique du *velayat-e faqih* [principe de la République islamique qui octroie l'autorité politique aux oulémas, notamment au Guide spirituel, actuellement l'ayatollah Khamenei, considéré comme infaillible].

Bien que certains de ces nouveaux partis politiques puissent être éphémères, la plupart sont de véritables porte-parole des couches sociales et des idées politiques et économiques du pays. Tous les partis, qu'ils soient de droite ou de gauche, réformateurs ou conservateurs, ont en commun le mérite d'avoir incité les citoyens à travailler en groupe. Ainsi, durant ces élections, les gens s'intéressaient davantage aux programmes qu'aux



◀ Les élections iraniennes.
Dessin de Habib Haddad paru dans Al Hayat, Londres.

personnalités. Les slogans électoraux sont également importants. Ils ont mis l'accent sur l'iranité et le nationalisme. La culture nationale des Iraniens repose sur deux piliers : la nationalité (l'iranité) et la religion (l'islam). Privilégier l'un au détriment de l'autre suscite une réaction spontanée du peuple. Ne perdons pas de vue ce grand message venant du peuple.

LA POPULATION NE VEUT PAS D'UNE AUTRE RÉVOLUTION

La participation populaire a été sans commune mesure avec ce qui se passe dans d'autres pays du monde et également avec celle des élections législatives antérieures en Iran. Il faut accepter que la révolution islamique ait fortement politisé notre population, et surtout les femmes iraniennes. Les jeunes femmes qui, il y a vingt ans, ont participé activement à la révolution, devenues aujourd'hui mères de famille, sont le moteur principal de l'actuel mouvement civique. Malgré le lavage de cerveau pratiqué dans les écoles, dans les lycées et par les médias sous contrôle gouvernemental, et en dépit de l'action des prosélytes de la violence, ce sont ces femmes qui ont su éduquer et transmettre à la nouvelle génération les véritables buts de la

révolution, rendant irréversible ce processus politique.

La pression de l'opinion publique pour la défense des droits et des libertés et pour l'instauration d'un gouvernement du peuple par le peuple est toujours vivante. La population ne cherche pas à faire une autre révolution ; elle souhaite, avec les moyens disponibles, revenir sur le bon chemin après des déviations. Ce que je trouve séduisant, c'est le courage et l'enthousiasme manifestés par les électeurs malgré les dérives illégales du Conseil des gardiens, qui avait décrété l'inéligibilité d'un grand nombre de candidats. Nous ne sommes pas irréalistes. Nous existons avec nos défauts. On dit à notre époque que le choix dans les démocraties est entre le pire et le mauvais. Je ne veux pas dire que nos réformateurs sont "mauvais", mais je souligne le réalisme manifesté par les électeurs.

Ces élections soulignent l'échec cuisant de la droite. Il faut que les réformateurs réfléchissent sérieusement aux raisons et aux dynamiques sociales qui les ont conduits à la victoire. La révolution islamique iranienne n'a pas encore dit son dernier mot. Il faut encore attendre le commencement d'un nouveau chapitre.

Ebrahim Yazdi

■ Khatami

Pour le quotidien Al Hayat, si le président iranien Mohammad Khatami décide de ne plus reculer devant les pressions des conservateurs et si les réformateurs arrivent à maîtriser leurs différends, le rêve d'une démocratie islamique en Iran est à portée de main. Le nouveau modèle iranien, construit un peu à la manière d'une démocratie chrétienne européenne, aura alors des répercussions énormes sur tous les pays musulmans. Le khatamisme a au moins compris que l'ouverture sur l'Occident est une porte d'entrée dans le monde moderne.

JUSTICE

Réquisitoire contre Rafsandjani

■ Akbar Ganji, journaliste très présent dans la presse réformatrice, est menacé de mort par des inconnus depuis qu'il s'acharne à dévoiler la responsabilité des hautes instances du pays dans les assassinats d'intellectuels. Il est considéré aujourd'hui par certains amis plus prudents comme trop radical dans ses dénonciations des conservateurs et dans ses cri-

tiques envers l'ancien président Hashemi Rafsandjani (aujourd'hui élu en dernière position sur la liste des candidats parlementaires de Téhéran, non sans quelques intrigues).

Il réplique, dans *Aftab-e Emrouz*, à ceux qui présentent Rafsandjani comme "victime d'une injustice" à propos de son bilan et des contraintes qu'il avait subies pour choisir son ministre de l'Information (ministère directement impliqué dans les meurtres d'opposants et d'intellectuels). Ganji demande si "Rafsandjani, en tant que chef du 'Conseil du discernement de l'intérêt supérieur du régime', deuxième homme le plus

puissant du pays après le Guide durant les deux dernières décennies et qui, par son influence, a utilisé toutes les ruses afin d'entrer au Parlement, peut vraiment être considéré comme victime d'une injustice ?"

"Sont victimes d'injustice les citoyens qui ont été sauvagement assassinés et dont les meurtres sont niés par M. Rafsandjani, ceux qui, durant son règne, sont tombés dans les prisons du ministère de l'Information sans que personne ne les entende", écrit Ganji, qui propose la création d'un Comité national de vérité indépendant pour désigner enfin les coupables.

Turkey to reactivate ties with PUK

- Kosrad Rasul Ali, the prime minister in Jalal Talabani's PUK-led regional government, arrived in Diyarbakir in a Turkish helicopter from northern Iraq and will have talks in Ankara on Thursday

Saadet Oruc

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

02 March 2000, Copyright © Turkish Daily News

Turkey is set to re-establish ties with the Jalal Talabani-led Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

Kosrad Rasul Ali, the prime minister in the PUK-led regional government, arrived in Diyarbakir in a Turkish helicopter from northern Iraq and will have talks in Ankara on Thursday.

Turkekul Kurttekin, the head of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East department, will receive Rasul Ali and the delegation accompanying him. Ministry sources said that the PUK wanted to have talks with Ankara, adding "...and we wanted to listen to them."

For months, there has been no contact between Turkey and the PUK.

Concerns still remain

"Ankara still has concerns about Kurdistan Workers' Party [PKK] activities in the PUK region," diplomatic sources told the Turkish Daily News.

Ankara had accused the PUK of not fighting the PKK in its region. However, there has been a broad cooperation between Turkey and Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

The recent announcement of a regional government in the KDP area has been the latest event to draw attention to the region.

Balanced policy

Ankara has always followed a policy of balance towards the region. But as a result of Ankara's belief that the KDP is putting more distance between itself and the PKK, Barzani has enjoyed closer ties with the Turkish government.

Six Kurdish rebels, three Turkish soldiers killed in clashes

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey, March 2 (AFP) - 1 Six Kurdish rebels and three Turkish soldiers were killed in clashes in the southeastern provinces of Mardin and Sirnak, officials in the Diyarbakir-based headquarters of the emergency rule region said Thursday.

The three troops were killed as "terrorists" opened fire on them in a mountainous area in Sirnak, and five rebels died in the ensuing battle, the statement said.

A sixth rebel was killed in an operation launched by security forces against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) near Mardin's district of Omerli, the statement said.

It did not specify when the fighting occurred.

Clashes between security forces and the PKK, which took place nearly on a daily basis in the past, have significantly scaled down in recent months following the rebels' declaration in September that they would lay down their arms and pursue a peaceful solution to the Kurdish conflict.

The PKK decision came after peace calls from its leader Abdullah Ocalan, on a death row in a Turkish jail.

More than 36,500 soldiers, rebels and civilians have died in the conflict in southeastern Turkey since 1984, when the PKK took up arms for Kurdish self-rule in the region.

Une nouvelle fois, la question du génocide arménien a été enterrée. Leçon de lâcheté politique au Sénat

par JEAN KEHAYAN

On savait notre Sénat sénile, vaguement inutile. Mais s'il ne faisait pas de bien au moins ne produisait-il pas de mal. Or, le voilà qui vient de montrer sa capacité de nuisance et du coup, la sénilité se transforme en maladie d'Alzheimer. C'est que nous sommes dans un contexte où la prise de conscience du génocide comme catégorie de l'histoire s'impose de toutes parts. L'Autriche réactualise la tragédie brune du siècle, la Tchétchénie rappelle que la politique grand-russienne d'extermination de ce peuple n'a jamais cessé, le Timor et l'Afrique des autres bouts du monde, sans parler des Balkans où l'idée génocidaire se cache derrière chaque repli de carte. De ce fait, les colonnes des journaux ne cessent de se nourrir de l'actualité des génocides passés, présents et à venir. C'est ce moment que choisissent nos sénateurs pour enterrer une nouvelle fois la question du génocide des Arméniens par le pouvoir jeune turc du début du siècle (1). A en croire les sénateurs, ni le président de la Répu-

blique, ni le gouvernement ne souhaitent la discussion d'une proposition de loi «*qui risque de contrarier le processus de réconciliation en œuvre dans les Etats du Caucase du Sud*». Outre que la reconnaissance d'un fait historique peut aider à mettre au clair des problèmes d'actualité, les sénateurs se parent de l'habit du révisionniste, histoire de tenir leur rôle de commis voyageur au service de cette fraction de France dont la raison d'être est de vendre ses armes à Ankara. Hypocrisie pour hypocrisie, n'aurait-il pas été plus honorable de simplement dénier au Parlement la capacité de se prononcer sur l'histoire? Pour la génération de Français d'origine arménienne dont je fais partie, la reconnaissance du génocide de nos grands-parents est une affaire entendue: nous n'avons besoin ni des politiques ni des historiens douteux à la solde d'une puissance étrangère pour rendre justice à nos aïeux martyrisés au nom d'une intelligence avec la stratégie tsariste. Aujourd'hui, lorsqu'on prononce le mot *arménien*, nos concitoyens pensent

«génocide». Je ne réclame à la Turquie aucune réparation matérielle mais je revendique le droit de la plaindre car l'Histoire a prouvé qu'un pays aux placards remplis de cadavres n'a pas d'espoir de progresser. Ce n'est ni l'entrée dans l'Europe ni de bien douteuses victoires diplomatiques qui l'empêcheront de perpétuer son image de barbarie, exempte d'élites intellectuelles ou scientifiques. Un pays qui a cru résoudre son problème de minorité kurde en rasant les villages d'Anatolie au bulldozer et en massacrant la population à l'arme lourde. C'est bien à se demander si les nations civilisées ont encore besoin d'écouter les criaileries d'une nation sans avenir ni grande utilité géopolitique depuis la fin de la guerre froide. A écouter les arguments des sénateurs, on devine que les murmures indignés devant l'arrivée des populistes au pouvoir en Autriche ne sont que de façade. En effet, constater que l'Autriche est, elle aussi, victime de son amnésie et le proclamer haut et fort ne risquerait-il pas de contrarier le processus de ré-

conciliation en œuvre dans les Etats, etc? De fait, l'absence de courage disqualifie tout le personnel politique et ouvre les portes aux Haider de toutes sortes: le silence face au génocide des Tchétchènes renforce l'idée que la politique ne sert plus à rien. Et banaliser Poutine au nom du réalisme, c'est creuser la tombe de nos propres libertés. Il y a des voyages qu'il faut savoir ne pas faire, des déclarations qu'il faut savoir taire. Comme l'histoire sait aussi retenir le ridicule, elle n'oubliera pas que, pour évacuer le problème du premier génocide du siècle, le Sénat d'une nation moderne a eu le courage au début du troisième millénaire de prendre fait et cause pour «*la réconciliation des Etats du Caucase du Sud*» ●

(1) Le 22 février, pour la troisième fois, la conférence des présidents du Sénat a refusé d'inscrire à l'ordre du jour la proposition de loi reconnaissant l'existence du génocide arménien de 1915, votée le 29 mai 1998 par les députés.

Jean Kehayan est journaliste et essayiste. A paraître aux éditions Parenthèses : «*L'Apatrie*».

Le prix d'un clandestin

Karzan ramènera-t-il à Londres ses frères kurdes? Doc dur.

«**Karzan et ses frères**», documentaire de Claudio von Planta, Arte, 21 h 50. Il dit: «*Je me sens responsable de mes frères. Mais je ne fais pas ça par devoir. C'est de l'amour. Ils ont besoin de moi. Moi aussi j'ai besoin d'eux.*» En le regardant, on se dit bêtement: ces yeux sombres ont dû voir quelques belles horreurs. Un jour de 1996, Karzan quitte Londres, embrasse sa femme, Taro, son fils. Il a décidé d'aller chercher ses trois frères à Erbil, zone de protection créée par les Nations unies. S'ils essayent d'en sortir seuls, il leur arrivera la même mésaventure qu'à un autre de ses frères, Kameran: un passeur l'a escroqué, depuis il vit dans un centre de détention pour réfugiés en Allemagne. Une histoire presque banale que Claudio von Planta a filmée avec une discrétion proprement incroyable. Jamais sa caméra ne caresse notre petite pulsion voyeuriste. Il se contente d'être là. Pour voir ce que veut dire exactement le mot réfugié. Karzan arrive à Erbil, seul. L'équipe de tournage a été refoulée. «*Bienvenue au*



«*Karzan et ses frères*», une histoire vraie.

Kurdistan», dit un panneau. C'est imbécile. Comme si les 30 millions de Kurdes répartis dans quatre pays pouvaient se sentir chez eux dans cette zone neutre, vaine. Il retrouve Mohammed, ses neveux, sa nièce qu'il n'a pas vus depuis trois ans, sa mère et Khader, Kawa, ses autres frères. Après la fête, dans l'obscurité d'une chambre minuscule, Karzan parle à son frère: «*Je vais être franc et direct. J'ai assez d'argent pour toi et deux de nos frères, mais pas pour ta famille.*» Passer clandestinement

d'Erbil en Europe coûte 10000 dollars par personne. Si ça marche. A quoi il faut ajouter les 3000 dollars par faux passeport acheté dans un marché des passeports d'Erbil. Et les 200 dollars aux douaniers de la frontière turque. Et les 100 dollars par semaine pour une chambre pourrie de Kiev. Evidence que l'on aimerait oublier: les réfugiés sont un *business*. Et pas que pour la mafia ukrainienne. La police contrôle systématiquement les trains à la frontière, histoire de vérifier qu'aucun clandestin ne quitte le pays sans avoir payé son dû. Aux passeurs, certains convois peuvent rapporter jusqu'à un million de dollars. Chez le spectateur, le dégoût croît au fil des kilomètres de ce *business*, de l'hypocrisie européenne. Pas chez les frères qui commencent une vie d'exil. «*On pensera toujours à notre terre (...) et je suis sûr qu'on aura un jour un pays qui s'appellera le Kurdistan. Quel que soit notre sort en Europe, on sera toujours des étrangers. Pire, des réfugiés.*» Le dégoût, oui ●

SOPHIE ROSTAIN

As Clinton Withdraws, Saddam Survives Unchallenged

By Jim Hoagland

WASHINGTON — Saddam Hussein counts the days that remain before he can crow about having outlasted a second U.S. president. Each inauguration day in Washington represents a huge psychological victory and an important political boost for the Iraqi dictator.

It may be too late for President Bill Clinton to achieve his reluctantly adopted and unpersuasively stated goal of regime change in Iraq. But he does still have the time to lay the foundation for a broad political and military strategy for the Gulf.

That strategy must be built around active U.S. support for representative democracy not only in Iraq and Iran but also in the conservative Arab monarchies of the region. The two rogue states cannot be isolated as the only candidates for change through free elections, free speech and civic and religious tolerance.

U.S. support for democratic change across the Gulf must be consistent and broad for reasons of power politics as well as morality. Saddam's hold on power has everything to do with the separate but strong fears harbored by Iraq's power elite and by neighboring Arab regimes of Iran and of democracy. Isolated, fragmented campaigns to deal with Saddam as a security problem that ignore the

political and economic framework in which his tyranny exists are doomed to fail.

The Clinton administration has proved this in spades. Its repeated but limited military strikes are slowly gaining Saddam support in world opinion and leading to a loosening of economic sanctions on Iraq. International inspections for weapons of mass destruction have been halted for more than a year. And the U.S. covert action program to topple Saddam has ground to a halt.

Little remains in Amman of the CIA's multimillion-dollar effort to find a colonel or a general who would put a bullet in Saddam's brain. The Iraqi National Accord, the shadowy group that the CIA banked on, is essentially out of the coup business. Instead it produces radio programs and picks up small-bore tactical intelligence.

CIA briefers told congressional committees recently that the agency has adopted a new "multiyear" covert program that has only a "10 to 15 percent chance of success" against Saddam's countermeasures. No wonder Saddam is limbering up his vocal chords for a January send-off to President Clinton.

CIA leaders are skeptical about the Iraqi exile groups that Congress has ordered the ad-

ministration to support. They seem to doubt the effectiveness of any covert operations against the Middle East's most accomplished survivalist. The CIA has essentially bowed out of a program that its Arabists never believed in.

That leaves Mr. Clinton dependent on diplomacy and political action to support those willing to fight Saddam. But here, too, the administration is failing, and may even be trying to fail.

Money appropriated by Congress to train and equip Iraqi exile opposition groups has been lavished on expensive offices and conferences in Washington, New York and London, while next to nothing is being spent on military and civilian training for the opposition.

State Department memoranda signed by Kathleen Alegrone, the deputy director for the Northern Gulf Affairs bureau, show that almost all of \$3.5 million spent in 1999 to support the Iraqi National Congress went to fund luxury travel, rent offices and pay salaries for employees of U.S. contractors and public relations firms.

The Pentagon spent \$20,000 to train four members of the Iraqi National Congress in civilian-military relations.

The Iraqi National Congress has received almost nothing in

direct financial support from the State Department, despite two years of multimillion-dollar congressional appropriations to implement the Iraq Liberation Act.

A pattern emerges from these memoranda and other documents of an administration effort to spend money on inconsequential projects while avoiding spending that would put the Iraqi National Congress or other groups in a position to challenge Saddam seriously. The exile groups will ultimately no doubt be blamed by the Clintonites for being too divided, weak or corrupt to use money that they never controlled.

This pattern fits a strategy of keeping U.S. failures in Iraq out of the headlines in Mr. Clinton's last year and in this presidential campaign season. But the failures become more apparent as battles erupt at the United Nations over restoring effective arms inspections and maintaining sanctions.

U.S. policy on Iraq is a subject fit for campaign debate, not to mention possible congressional investigation. The candidate who can outline an integrated political and military strategy to deal with the multiple challenges of the Gulf deserves serious consideration.

The Washington Post.

New UN Chief Arms Inspector Insists on Full Access in Iraq

By Barbara Crossette
New York Times Service

UNITED NATIONS, New York — The United Nations' new chief arms inspector for Iraq has given the government of Saddam Hussein no hope of getting a better deal on the monitoring of its weapons programs, saying it will have to accept inspections.

The arms chief, Hans Blix, said at a news conference Wednesday, a few hours after he took office, that he would expect Iraq to give inspectors unimpeded access. He also pledged that standards for the inspections would not be lowered.

But he did say that he was not leading a commando force and would not seek to humiliate the Iraqis.

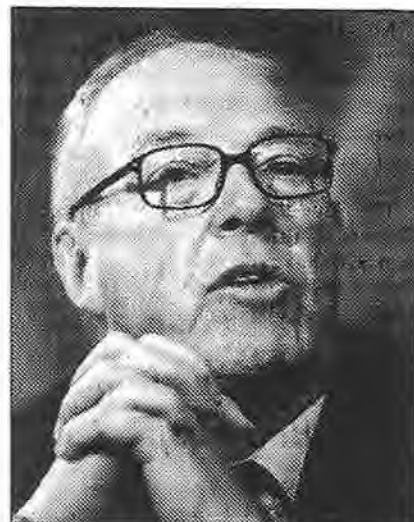
Mr. Blix, 71, a former foreign minister of Sweden and the director-general

of the International Atomic Energy Agency from 1981 to 1997, said he had no plans to go to Iraq to smooth the way for his new commission or to make any other overtures, as some of Iraq's supporters have proposed.

"I don't think I should have to tempt them to cooperate," he said. "The first step would be for Iraq to accept the resolution."

He said Iraq, which has publicly dismissed the new inspection system, should instead see the benefits in cooperating, including an improvement in Iraqi living standards. In theory, at least, the system could lead within a year to the suspension of sanctions that were imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Mr. Blix spoke on the same day that Hans von Sponeck, the relief coordi-



Hans Blix pledged that inspection standards would not be lowered.

nator in Iraq who has resigned as of March 31, held a news conference to lament how badly the Iraqi population

was suffering under sanctions.

Mr. von Sponeck, who said the Iraqis were living in unacceptable physical and intellectual deprivation, said that what he called "internal and external factors" had contributed to the situation. But he declined to discuss how much responsibility for the situation, if any, fell on Mr. Saddam's government.

Also on Wednesday, the Security Council sanctions committee dealing with Iraq began to approve a list of

educational, agricultural, food and medical goods that Iraq will be allowed to import without extensive scrutiny by UN officials.

Mr. Blix sought to allay fears that he would make the search for illegal biological, chemical and missile systems easier for Iraq. He continues to be criticized by some independent arms control experts, who said he failed to detect a nascent Iraqi nuclear program when he was director of the atomic energy

agency.

■ Northern Iraq Bombed

U.S. planes bombed northern Iraq on Thursday after coming under fire, Agence France-Presse reported from Ankara.

All aircraft returned safely to their base at Incirlik in southeastern Turkey, the U.S. European Command based in Stuttgart said.

Tehran Lifts a Corner of the Veil on Western Culture

By Howard Schneider

Washington Post Service

TEHRAN — The four Andy Warhol silkscreens of Mick Jagger, scraggly-haired and slightly ghoulish, stared at 23-year-old Fatimah Noorbasch like cave paintings from a lost world, and made about as much sense to her.

He was a British rock-and-roll singer, a fellow visitor to Tehran's Museum of Contemporary Art informed her. He was associated with wild sex and drugs and all sorts of misbehavior.

"I'm sorry," she responded as she processed this new information about Western culture. "I'm really surprised such a person has been put here."

Surprises are popping up all over this city, as Iran's cultural and social environment continues its shift from the near-medieval restrictions of the Islamic revolution's first years, to what is perhaps its more natural state as a curious and intellectually engaged metropolis.

Iranians love to talk and think and read, and the same tendencies that have pushed the country's politics toward more democracy and openness in recent elections are finding expression in art museums, music halls and other venues as well.

The best-selling book here recently was a translation into Farsi of Pink Floyd lyrics. Bootleg videos and music tapes are widespread, and what is not hawked on the black market can be found on the Internet. There are Internet links that do not censor American radio stations or other sources of cultural content whose retail import is banned.

Once-banned nationalist songs — songs that stirred Iranian pride before the 1979 revolution — are sung once again, with gusto, at political rallies and other public gatherings.

And at this year's Fajr Music Festival, one of the featured performers was Khateri Parvaneh, a 69-year-old diva who was among Iran's

most popular singers before the fall of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, but has only been allowed to start singing again since the 1997 election of President Mohammed Khatemi, a reformist.

Rules against solo females performing in front of men still limit her performances to women, but concertgoers say the concerts have become highly emotional affairs in which she makes evident her joy at reclaiming her voice.

"If you close the doors of the places where you drink, you will open the door to hypocrisy," she sang at one recent show, quoting Hafez, a beloved Persian poet.

The Tehran Museum is a prominent example of the changes underway, displaying a collection of art that was stowed in the basement because of political and religious sensitivities, out of sight and away from those who might have destroyed such artifacts of the West.

It is a world-class collection, assembled by the Pahlavi dynasty in the late 1970s. They went on a two-year buying binge that reflected both the extravagance that helped bring the monarchy down and the intellectual tastes that Iranians still privately acknowledge were high-caliber.

The shah's wife handed one of her cousins, an architect, a wad of money, and he proceeded to acquire 400 works — from Picasso to the pop artists — that are now being assessed and displayed.

A show last year included the distortions of Francis Bacon, and even a nude by Picasso — a work that the museum's director, Sami Azar, said he felt

comfortable showing because one had to look so hard to detect the anatomy.

Most remarkable, Mr. Azar said, is that the shows he is mounting, including the works by Warhol in a pop art retrospective, have met no opposition or protest, even in the hard-line press, but on the contrary have inspired lots of writing about the content of the paintings.

"The idea is to show leading artists of the West. No matter that they are Americans," Mr. Azar said. "We've received no objections."

He added, "The society has greatly changed."

The crowds are by no means large most afternoons, and on a recent day included mostly young couples who seemed to use the museum as a venue for courting, away from prying eyes and morality cops. Local artists, however, feel a direct impact. They say the museum's new efforts are intellectually liberating for them.

"It is a very good collection, but nobody knows," said a young painter. "Pollock. Miro."

He added, "I feel like I'm in Paris."

It all seems part of a society becoming comfortable with the world once again.

Miss Noorbasch may not know Mick Jagger. But after her tour of the museum's pop art collection — the cartoonish panels of Roy Lichtenstein, James Rosenquist's dissected head of Marilyn Monroe — she knows what she likes.

A friend "told us, 'Don't look at the picture, concentrate on the different colors,'" she said. "We asked, why?"

'Pollock. Miro. I feel like I'm in Paris,' said a young painter.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE.

FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2000

Gunships Against Human Rights

Foreign policy: Until Turkey stops abusing the Kurds, Washington should ban a deal on U.S.-made helicopters.

By KEVIN MCKIERNAN

Los Angeles Times 4-3-00

Monday may be a record payday for one of two U.S. weapons makers, either Boeing Aircraft or Bell Helicopter Textron. On that day, Turkey is scheduled to award a \$4-billion contract for 145 attack helicopters, one of the largest single arms deals in history.

International competition for the lucrative project has been fierce, with five companies submitting bids, but Boeing's Apache Longbow and Bell's Super Cobra are considered the odds-on favorites to win the award.

About 80% of the Turkish arsenal is U.S.-made, and the Turkish army has relied on Sikorsky Blackhawks and both Apache and Cobra gunships to win the long war with Kurdish rebels in the country's southeast.

In 1997, the Clinton administration granted Boeing and Bell market licenses to build the attack helicopters, brushing aside human rights objections from Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch about Turkey's abuse of its ethnic population.

If one of the American companies receives the new contract, the administration may again override human rights concerns and, in effect, broker the sale to Turkey by granting the necessary export licenses. American-made helicopters are well known to the Kurds.

I have often encountered refugees from destroyed villages in southeast Turkey whose only English--delivered in a thick Kurdish accent--were the words "Sikorsky" and "Cobra." Villagers know that the soldiers who burn their houses land in Blackhawk helicopters, the troop transports that are made by the Connecticut-based Sikorsky Co. And they easily recognize the rocket-equipped Cobras, which are manufactured at the Bell Textron plant in Fort Worth, Texas.

Turkish Kurdistan is a rugged, mountainous region, and helicopters have proved essential in the army's scorched-earth campaign. So far, more than 3,000 Kurdish villages have been burned, depriving the guerrillas of vital logistical support; estimates of civilian Kurds displaced by the war range from 500,000 to 2 million.

It has been a dirty war, and both sides have been guilty of atrocities.

Last year, after Turkey captured rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, tried him for treason and sentenced him to death, it looked as if the 15-year-old uprising might fade away. Ocalan sent out word from prison for his fighters to quit, and they eventually issued a formal declaration to end the armed struggle and to work for Kurdish rights "within the framework of peace and democratization."

Last December, the European Union, after years of rejection, voted to consider Turkey for EU admission, but only on the condition that it clean up its human rights record. Among other things, Europe wants Turkey to negotiate legitimate and long-standing Kurdish grievances in education, language and cultural expression.

Now the EU may be having second thoughts. Last month, Turkey blocked an EU delegation from visiting Leyla Zana, the imprisoned Kurdish member of parliament who has received the EU's peace prize. Then a Kurdish educational foundation was indicted on criminal charges of "inciting separatist propaganda" because it advertised a scholarship in an Istanbul newspaper for students who could "read and write in Kurdish."

Two weeks ago, the government ordered a CNN television affiliate off the air for 24 hours because a reporter asked a guest whether history might one day regard Ocalan as a Turkish version of South African revolutionary Nelson Mandela.

A few days later, Turkey arrested the Kurdish mayors of three cities on vague charges of separatism. Subsequently, authorities arrested hundreds of supporters who were peacefully protesting the detention of the mayors.

There are 37 elected Kurdish mayors, and many observers had hoped that their political leadership would provide a nonviolent alternative to the bloody civil war in Turkey that since 1984 has taken 37,000 lives, most of them Kurds.

The timing of the \$4-billion helicopter deal is wrong. If either Boeing or Bell Textron gets the green light from Turkey, the Clinton administration should hold up the arms sales until Ankara shows a willingness to deal democratically with its ethnic population.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA

March 3, 2000

\$4 Billion Attack Helicopter Sale to Turkey Administration Must Honor Pledge And Refuse Export License

(WASHINGTON, DC) Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) is calling on the Clinton Administration to refuse an export license for \$4 billion of attack helicopters for the Turkish army because of clear evidence that Turkey has failed to make concrete and significant progress on the Administration's human rights benchmarks.

The Turkish government is expected to award the contract for the advanced attack helicopters on Monday. Two U.S. companies under consideration, Bell-Textron and Boeing, are mounting a major effort to have an export license approved despite continuing severe human rights violations in Turkey.

In 1998, the State Department formulated a series of eight human rights benchmarks based on priorities articulated by Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz to President Clinton in a December 1997 meeting, and made approval of an export license contingent on Turkey meeting the benchmarks.

In the Turkey chapter of its annual human rights report last week, the State Department stated, "The security forces continue to torture, beat, and otherwise abuse persons regularly... Torture, beatings, and other abuses by security forces remained widespread, at times resulting in deaths... Security forces at times beat journalists." The State Department and Amnesty International have reported the use of helicopters to both attack Kurdish villages in Turkey and to transport troops to regions where they have tortured and killed civilians.

"Based on the State Department's own annual human rights report, Turkey fails to meet the human rights benchmarks," said Dr. William F. Schulz, Executive Director of AIUSA. "Despite minor improvements, the Turkish government has failed to make significant and concrete progress on human rights, and therefore the Clinton Administration should deny the export license."

This week, Turkish parliamentarians found torture equipment at a police station that had reportedly tortured children. Last month Turkey detained three mayors from the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HADEP) for nine days after they met with a European delegation.

The State Department's human rights benchmarks for Turkey include: decriminalizing freedom of expression; releasing imprisoned parliamentarians and journalists; prosecuting police who commit torture; ending harassment of human rights defenders and re-opening non-governmental organizations; returning internally displaced people to villages; ceasing harassment and banning of political parties; ending the state of emergency; and adopting clear rules of engagement and end-use monitoring for U.S.-supplied weapons.

Le Monde VENDREDI 3 MARS 2000

Le nouveau chef de la commission de désarmement de l'Irak ne veut pas « humilier » Bagdad

NEW YORK (Nations unies)
de notre correspondante

Hans Blix, ancien directeur de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique, a pris ses fonctions de nouveau chef de la commission d'inspection de l'armement irakien mercredi 1^{er} mars. Lors d'une conférence de presse, M. Blix, candidat de « compromis », a adroitement présenté la « philosophie » de la mission qui lui a été confiée par le Conseil de sécurité. Il y avait, dans ses propos, de quoi satisfaire tous les pays membres d'un Conseil désespérément divisé sur le dossier irakien.

Tout en affirmant n'avoir aucune intention de renoncer aux inspections, « ni d'abaisser les normes », M. Blix a souligné que le rôle de la commission de désarmement, l'Unmovik, n'est pas d'« humilier » l'Irak. Les inspecteurs doivent « impérativement » avoir un accès « libre et inconditionnel » aux sites et aux informations, mais ils ne sont pas « une armée d'occupation, autorisée à forcer les portes ». Certes, a-t-il ajouté, il y a « des lacunes » dans le dossier du désarmement, mais « dans un pays aussi vaste que l'Irak il n'y aura jamais de certitude sur le désarmement, il y aura toujours des incertitudes rési-

duelles ». Au Conseil de sécurité « de décider du niveau d'incertitude tolérable ».

Interrogé sur les accusations d'espionnage pour le compte des Etats-Unis, qui ont visé des inspecteurs de la commission précédente, l'Unscm, M. Blix a expliqué ne pas pouvoir se passer des renseignements que lui fournissent des pays membres. Néanmoins, « si je constate qu'un de mes collaborateurs n'est pas absolument loyal à l'ONU, il sera limogé », a-t-il dit. Chargé par le Conseil de sécurité de nommer un « collège de commissaires » – une vingtaine d'experts –, M. Blix entend mettre fin à la pratique de rémunération par les pays membres, et recruter des personnes sous contrat à l'ONU, payées par elle « et qui ne doivent allégeance qu'aux Nations unies ». D'après lui, les « conseils » que lui ont prodigués plusieurs pays, sur le choix des commissaires et des inspecteurs, n'ont « pas toujours [été] cohérents ».

« OPPORTUNITÉ À SAISIR »

Son mandat a été fixé par la résolution 1248 du Conseil de sécurité du 17 décembre 1999, qui prévoit la « suspension » des sanctions économiques, en vigueur depuis dix ans,

en échange du retour des inspecteurs et de l'achèvement du désarmement. L'Irak n'a toujours pas accepté cette résolution, mais M. Blix s'est dit « assez optimiste » à ce sujet. L'Irak, a-t-il dit, « considère les inspections comme une punition ». « A mon avis dit-il, c'est plutôt une opportunité à saisir. » Le 10 avril, il présentera son rapport sur la commission au Conseil de sécurité.

S'adressant à son tour à la presse, mercredi, l'ancien coordonnateur du programme humanitaire de l'Irak, le diplomate allemand Hans von Sponeck, qui a démissionné en janvier, s'est dit pessimiste quant à la situation humanitaire en Irak, qui n'a « aucune chance » de s'améliorer en l'état actuel du programme de l'ONU. Contraint, à la demande du secrétaire général, Kofi Annan, de s'exprimer en tant que simple « employé » de l'ONU, M. von Sponeck, sévèrement critiqué par Washington pour avoir affirmé que la politique internationale en Irak entraînait « une tragédie humaine », s'est contenté de « rapporter des faits ».

Le programme humanitaire de l'ONU en Irak, « Pétrole contre nourriture », est « totalement inadéquat », a estimé le diplomate allemand, pour qui « la première vic-

time » de cette insuffisance est le secteur de l'éducation, soumis « à un embargo intellectuel », alors qu'il est « censé préparer toute une génération d'Irakiens pour l'avenir ». Montrant des photos des écoles délabrées et des enfants assis par terre, M. von Sponeck a dit : « Je ne fais pas de la propagande, je vous dis la vérité sur ce qui se prépare en Irak. Voici les jeunes gens qui doivent diriger le pays, je vous laisse le soin d'en tirer les conclusions... »

Refusant de répondre à des questions directes sur sa position quant aux sanctions, il s'est contenté d'énumérer leurs conséquences sur les différents secteurs de la vie en Irak (lire *Le Monde* du 19 février). « Je suis un être humain avec un esprit et un cœur et je ne pouvais plus tolérer ce que je voyais en Irak », a-t-il indiqué, pour justifier sa démission. A son successeur, qui n'a pas encore été nommé, il donne un seul conseil : « Soyez honnête avec vous-même. »

« BOUTEILLES DE WHISKY »

Anticipant la conférence de presse de M. von Sponeck, Washington a lancé mercredi sa propre offensive, accusant le régime irakien d'avoir « gaspillé » l'argent destiné aux produits humanitaires pour bâtir de nouveaux palais. Parlant du président irakien, Saddam Hussein, le porte-parole du département d'Etat, James Rubin l'a qualifié de « dictateur fou », qui « se saoule alors que le peuple irakien n'a, paraît-il, pas assez à manger ». Selon lui, ce sont « 10 000 bouteilles de whisky, 350 000 bouteilles de bière et 700 bouteilles de vin » que les membres du régime consomment toutes les semaines.

Se gardant de parler explicitement du dossier irakien, sur lequel il est extrêmement prudent, Kofi Annan a fait allusion, lui, aux « mérites » des sanctions « ciblées », qui sanctionnent les responsables d'un régime plutôt que la population civile. Il a, une nouvelle fois, exhorté le pouvoir irakien à coopérer avec le nouvel organisme chargé du désarmement. Les Irakiens « ont désormais quelqu'un de très bien avec qui coopérer », a-t-il constaté à propos de M. Blix, rappelant que l'ONU a mis en place des dispositifs qui faciliteront l'approbation de contrats d'achats conclus par Bagdad. Perturbant le marché pétrolier, l'Irak avait averti, la semaine dernière, qu'il réduirait sa production pétrolière de 300 000 barils si l'ONU ne débloquent pas les contrats destinés à son industrie pétrolière.

Le jour où Washington lâchera la bombe A sur Bagdad

NEW YORK (Nations unies)
de notre correspondante

Le président américain est mort. Installé à la Maison Blanche depuis quelques mois, l'ex-vice-président est en pleine campagne électorale. Libéral, sympathique et intelligent, il est, malgré ses origines juives, extrêmement populaire. Les sondages lui sont très favorables. Seulement, voilà : au pouvoir à Bagdad depuis quelques années, Oudai Hussein, fils de Saddam Hussein, envahit lui aussi le Koweït. Ses gardes républicains avancent déjà vers l'Arabie saoudite. Le Pentagone informe le président, bloqué par une tempête de neige dans un bled de l'Ohio, que les troupes américaines, déployées en Corée du Sud, ne peuvent pas se rendre dans la région avant dix jours. Une décision urgente s'impose. Le président la prend. Dans une intervention télévisée, il s'adresse aussitôt à la nation et lance un ultimatum à Oudai Hussein : si, dans les deux prochaines heures, les troupes irakiennes ne se retirent pas du Koweït, Bagdad sera détruite par une bombe nucléaire.

« C'EST À VOUS DE DÉCIDER »...

S'opposant à cette décision, les chefs militaires au Pentagone démissionnent. Bagdad refuse. Oudai ne négociera pas avec « un juif qui n'a même pas été élu ». Parlant à son tour à la télévision, l'ambassadeur irakien à l'ONU annonce que l'arrivée des avions américains dans l'espace aérien irakien serait considérée comme un acte hostile auquel l'Irak se réserve le droit de répondre par le

lancement de missiles nucléaires sur dix villes américaines et des capitales européennes et asiatiques. Le Pentagone et le président confirment la possession par Bagdad d'armes nucléaires, qui auraient été vendues à l'Irak par la France.

Le président ne cède pas. Il ordonne aux pilotes des B-2 de franchir l'espace aérien irakien. Bagdad lance aussitôt ses missiles nucléaires. Aucun n'explose. Le président reprend la parole à la télévision et explique aux Américains qu'à la demande de Washington, la France avait en effet vendu... de fausses têtes de missiles à Bagdad ! Ce afin de l'empêcher de développer son propre programme nucléaire. Il donne alors l'ordre aux pilotes de lâcher la bombe sur Bagdad. Les satellites de télévision retransmettent les images de l'explosion.

La capitale irakienne est réduite à néant. Les corps calcinés des enfants jonchent le sol. Retirant sa candidature, le vice-président lance un dernier avertissement : « Les Etats-Unis possèdent des armes nucléaires et n'hésiteront pas à les utiliser. » Tel est le scénario de *Dissuasion*, un nouveau film qui devrait être sur les écrans américains le 10 mars. Mis en scène par Rod Lurie, le film est une coproduction avec la chaîne de télévision française TF1. A la suite d'une projection pour la presse, mardi 29 février, *Le Monde* a interrogé le metteur en scène sur la morale de son film. Le vice-président est-il un héros ou un fou ? « C'est à vous de décider »...

A. B. P.

Afsané Bassir Pour

Iranians Should Set Out Quickly on the Long Road to Reform

By Philip Bowring

TEHHRAN — Euphoria over the reformist landslide in last month's legislative elections must soon make way for some harsher realities. That is not to diminish the importance of Iran's effort to combine democracy and a market economy with its Islamic identity. The momentum is so strong that optimism is justifiable. But the political and economic challenges ahead are formidable.

The first unknown is the real character of the newly elected Parliament. The "reformist" coalition of factions covers a wide spectrum of demands for change ranging from liberal clerics to young technocrats, old quasi-secular leftists and assorted intellectuals.

In the broadest terms, they have been elected to help President Mohammed Khatami push through his reform agenda, frustrated by the previous Parliament, of advancing a law-based civil society in which individuals gain power at the expense of both church and state. But it remains to be seen how cohesive they are and whether on specific issues they frustrate the executive.

The old left is suspicious of economic reforms such as privatization, reduction of subsidies and a welcome to foreign investment, which are generally favored by the moderate conservatives led by former President Hashemi Rafsanjani. He

fares badly in the election because of association with more conservative clerics, but he remains a powerful force.

He continues to head the Expediency Council, which performs a key role in balancing the views of Parliament and of the Guardian Council, the cleric-dominated body which determines whether laws are constitutional and Islamic, and vets candidates for elected office.

Parliament is likely to focus first on social and political issues, on which it may prove more radical in its demands for change than Mr. Khatami, who seeks gradual, consensus-driven change, wants. If it tries to force the pace, it could provoke a rightist backlash, or at least prevent the emergence of a consensus on economic issues. More use of clergy courts to jail reformers is quite possible.

Conservatives, behind Supreme Leader Sayed Ali Khamenei, will be sure to use the levers of power that they control — the Guardian Council, the judiciary, the military, special courts etc. Iran's convoluted constitution gives entrenched interests (economic as well as clerical) plenty of opportunities to frustrate change.

They cannot do so indefinitely. Conservative domination of the Guardian Council will be diluted by this election. Next

year Mr. Khatami will be up for re-election, and the following year will come the turn of the mostly clerical Assembly of Experts, which is supposed to supervise the supreme leader.

The constitution can be changed by referendum. So constitutional means are available to shift Iran from clerical domination to a more liberal as well as democratic Islamic republic in which religious observances are a matter of free will, not state imposition, and the supreme leader is more a symbol than a wielder of power. But it will take time and patience.

Time, however, is not entirely on the side of an Iran in which 55 percent of the population is under 21 and the labor force is growing at nearly 4 percent a year. Social freedoms may satisfy the middle classes, but lower-income youths need jobs if drug abuse and urban crime are not to keep growing.

The economy has been growing more slowly than the population, inflation is at 20 to 30 percent, industry is mostly government-owned and inefficient, the currency bounces in a confusion of exchange rates. A large chunk of the economy is in the hands of religious foundations that have become a gravy train for the new elite.

Official policy is to privatize, allow foreign investment, cut

subsidies that cause government deficits and inflation, reform the price structure and unify the exchange rate. But implementation has been painfully slow and it remains to be seen whether, with Parliament at its back, the executive can make these things happen.

There are plenty of parallels, including China and India, to suggest that changing these structures is a long haul.

Iran has the advantage for now of a recovery in the oil price and a surge of foreign interest in investing in a country of 60 million people with good infrastructure, good educational standards and a strategic geographical position.

It has overseas an educated, well-off expatriate community 3 million or so strong, tens of thousands of whom would return if social conditions were relaxed and private sector economic opportunities were greater. Money and people are trickling back, but Iran needs a flood of it, plus domestic economic reform, if it is to make the economic progress it needs to underpin its political advance.

For now, Mr. Khatami probably has the prestige to define the course of reform, overruling socialists and nationalists in the reform camp, but he will need to move fast.

International Herald Tribune.

Islam Needs Models of Homegrown Democracy

By Bengt Save-Soderbergh

STOCKHOLM — The victory of reformists in the elections in Iran has focused attention on an important trend: the slow but steady spread of democracy in the Islamic world. Alongside Iran we see democratic evolution of differing kinds in a number of predominantly Muslim countries, including Turkey, Morocco and Indonesia.

Important challenges lie ahead, however:

Modernity. The need is for a balance between core democratic practices and respect for the basic tenets of Islam. This applies from anchoring the rule of law and political institution building to constitutional development and the definition of citizenship. There is growing understanding in Muslim states that modernization is best pursued along the path of evolution rather than of revolution.

Freedom of expression. In

most Muslim countries, poet's voices can still be silenced when they write poems deemed to have contradicted the Koran. Newspapers are censored. The challenge is to engender acceptance of the principle that artists,

intellectuals and political opponents of the authorities have the right to express themselves freely, legally and without fear.

The role of women. In many Muslim countries there is a pressing need to reform legal frameworks that deny women full and equal rights, in the workplace as much as in the political and civic spheres.

Underlying these challenges is perhaps the most fundamental one for states with majority Muslim populations. That is to develop political and social systems in which religion plays a

spiritual and ethical rather than a legislative role in determining the course of development. For believers, this means accepting that the social and political aspects of the Koran's teaching can and should be interpreted according to contemporary social needs and imperatives.

It would not be the first time in history that Islamic countries have adopted this approach to the role of religion in politics. During the Middle Ages, the Islamic world experienced a scientific and cultural flowering that left a permanent imprint on the development of, for example, modern medicine and mathematics.

History suggests that Muslim countries which respect and value their religious heritage, while interpreting holy texts in

a way that responds to contemporary social realities, are the ones most likely to be strong, dynamic forces.

The extremism that has characterized some recent forms of political Islam can be seen as a response to the failure of other available political models.

Two decades on from Iran's Islamic revolution, many ordinary Muslims have come full circle. Increasingly they see that a fundamentalist approach to politics simply does not work, and they use the ballot box to express support for the option of modernization.

What form that modernization is to take, in particular its political dimension, is now the big question. It should be understood that there is no single model of democracy valid for all countries and contexts. A healthy democracy is homegrown, not imported.

There are basic, commonly accepted principles — respect for human rights, free and fair elections, a free press, the right to form political parties. And some values — transparency, accountability, participation — are essential to any democratic system of governance. What the Muslim world needs is models of democracy that are authentically Muslim and respect core democratic principles.

For too long the West has lived with a propaganda ste-

reotype that portrays Islam as an evil phantom lurking in the corner. It is this that explains the appeal of Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" thesis, with its determined search for a new overarching enemy to fill the void left by the demise of Soviet communism.

In reality, anyone wanting to confront the contemporary enemies of democracy needs to address the real and pressing challenges of poverty and corruption.

No doubt we need to counter extremists, wherever they threaten democratic values — Jörg Haider in Austria no less than Afghanistan's Taleban.

Just as Iranians have voted for modernization and against extremism in their parliamentary elections, however, so now it is time for the international community to give home-grown Muslim democracy a chance. Practical measures designed to support and encourage its evolution, instead of

ideological dismissal, would make a good start.

This will take patience and engagement. Building democracy is after all a long-term process. It will also need understanding, and the rooting out of clichés and stereotypes.

The writer, secretary-general of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune MARCH 4-5, 2000

PUBLISHED WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WASHINGTON POST

Turkey Tells EU It's on Track to Join

Lower Inflation Cited With Growth Prospects

By Barry James
International Herald Tribune

BRUSSELS — Turkey's three top economic officials came to Brussels this week for talks aimed at readying the nation for entry into the European Union, and mounted a campaign to prove that Turkey is better placed to join than many of the other 12 countries awaiting entry.

The economy minister, Recep Onal, said that Turkey was on track to be "a low-inflation high-growth country" within three years. Combating inflation, which ran at about a 70 percent annualized rate January, is the nation's top economic priority, said the governor of the central bank, Gazy Ercel.

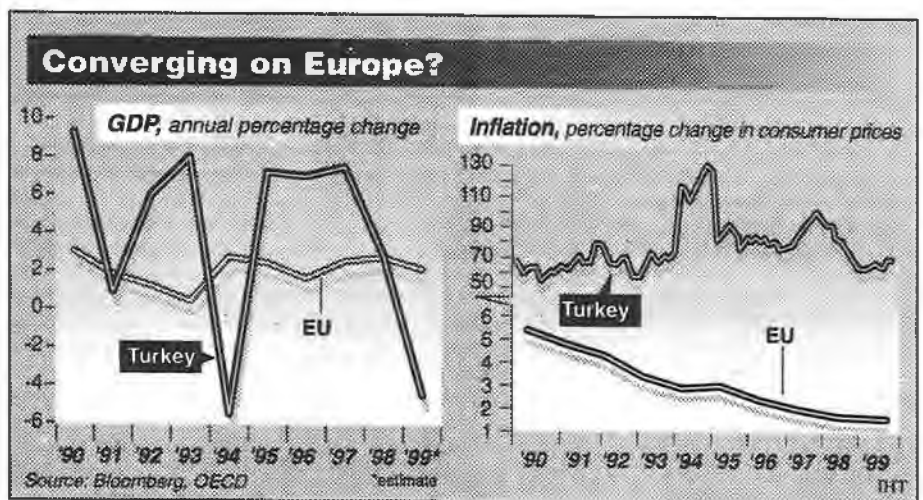
Independent analysts tended to agree with the assessment, and said that the obstacles to Turkish membership were more political than economic. Turkey has to convince the EU that its democratic credentials are solid and that it has resolved all border conflicts before accession talks can begin.

The government brought inflation down from about 100 percent in 1998 to less than 70 percent last year, and is aiming for single-digit inflation within two years.

"The problems are the high public deficit and inflation," said Nathalie Tocci, a research fellow at the Center for European Policy Studies. "Inflation has plummeted incredibly. This has a lot to do with the decision to accept Turkey as a candidate-member last year," which improved investors confidence in the country.

Other factors, she said, were a \$4 billion stabilization package from the International Monetary Fund and the fact that the coalition government is the strongest and most effective the nation has had for decades.

With an annual growth rate approaching 8 percent and an official unemployment rate



below the 10 percent average in the EU, Turkey is "the fastest growing economy in Europe," she said, and was on track to turn a vicious circle of high inflation and high public debt into a virtuous circle of solid growth and controllable debt.

The IMF's mission to Turkey determined this week that the country had made enough progress on its anti-inflation program to warrant releasing the second \$300 million portion of the \$4 billion loan pledged by the fund.

This was an encouraging sign, officials said, because the country had failed to fulfill the promises it made in 16 previous IMF-backed loan programs. Last month, the IMF predicted that Turkish prices would increase 25 percent this year, down from a projected 65.4 percent in 1999.

Despite the encouraging news on the anti-inflation front, Mr. Onal said Turkey had suffered a severe setback because of last year's earthquakes, losing up to 3.5 percent of its gross national product growth. It also was adversely affected by the economic crisis in Russia, its second largest trade partner after the EU.

Selcuk Demiralp, undersecretary at the Turkish Treasury, said in Brussels that Turkey hoped to meet the "Copenhagen criteria" for joining the EU within "a very short time," although exactly how long would depend on the government's privatization program, which he said was expected to raise \$18 billion in three years.

The Copenhagen criteria require "the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressures and market forces within the Union."

The criteria also expect applicants to be able to assume the obligations of economic and monetary union. Under a customs union, Turkey already made big steps to adapt its trade regime and related legislation to that of the EU.

The EU's statistical office, Eurostat, said this week that about half of Turkey's trade was carried out with the EU, about the same as many members of the Union. It said Turkish export growth had been strong, increasing by 15 percent between 1997 and 1998, the last year for which complete figures were available.

PUK Leader Appeals to KDP Leader For Unity

KurdSat Television 6 Mar 00

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [PUK leader Talabani] The 1991 uprising had many gains, such as the elections in 1992. For the first time people of Kurdistan went to polling stations and cast their votes freely. [Passage omitted: Talking about other gains like, cultural freedoms; recent municipal elections and denial of violations that took place in the elections]

Another gain of the uprising is the Kurdistan National Assembly, which unfortunately passed its date. It has been there for nine years. Initially, it was supposed to last for three years and it was renewed for a further period of three years. It should be re-elected. It should not be set for three years and last for nine. This will become dictatorship and a joke. [Passage omitted: Further comments on the necessity of renewing the existing KDP-held assembly]

Let us hold new elections with the presence of foreign supervision. Let us normalize the situation in the cities of Kurdistan and give freedom to everyone. Let us elect a free Assembly for all Kurdistan. It is a gain of the uprising and we should safeguard it. The Kurdistan regional government is an achievement. But there must not be two governments. We should have one government. As you remember, when our Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] brothers appointed Nechirvan Barzani as the new head of government, I openly said that we accept Nechirvan to be the head of a joint government. Let us normalize the situation in the cities, and then setup a government under the leadership of Nechervan with the condition of setting a date for general elections. We are ready for the unification of government.

Regarding the issue of who is the first party and who is the second, we thing that we are the first party, another party might thing that they are the first party and consider us as the third party. The Islamists might thing that they are the first or the second party. Let this issue be decided by the ballot box. Let us safeguard the uprising's gain of being able to go to the ballot box.

Let us safeguard the other gains of the uprising like resources of Kurdistan, let it be spent for the whole of Kurdistan. Withholding the country's wealth from people has never worked for anyone. [Passage omitted: giving examples of corruption cases from European countries]

The PUK should be ready at anytime to account to the assembly for all the monies that have been collected and spent over the past years. The government should be able to account for every dinar spent. The same should apply to the KDP brothers. Let us unify the divided gains of the uprising and learn lessons from the past.

I wrote a letter to my respected brother Mas'ud Barzani. I told him that we should buckle down to the job and revive the old brotherhood and cooperation; and to implement the Washington agreement together and safeguard the gains of the uprising. I talk the opportunity of this month, the month of March and uprising, to urge our KDP brothers to tear off the dark pages of our past and open a new page of brotherhood and cooperation. For this reason, and in order to normalize the situation in the cities and towns of Kurdistan and unify the administrations, the PUK is ready for all concessions and softness.

[Passage omitted: saying that the Kurds inside Kurdistan should not forget their duties and that the Kurds abroad should carry out diplomatic campaigns to gain support for the Kurds in western countries.]

KDP Leader Urges Elections To Settle PUK Dispute

Kurdistan TV 6 Mar 00

[FBIS Translated Excerpt]

Kurdistan National Assembly resumed its work for the ninth year today. Under the auspices of [Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP] leader Barzani and the chairmanship of the Kurdistan regional government, the Kurdistan National Assembly held its first session for the ninth year of its work today. At the opening ceremony, leader Barzani addressed the assembly. He gave his greetings on the anniversary of the uprising [March 1991] and spoke about the current issues of Kurdistan. He also spoke about the latest terrorist attacks. Leader Barzani talked about the role of the assembly and the peace process and reaffirmed the KDP's support of the Washington peace agreement. The Speaker of the assembly, Dr Rozh Nuri Shawes and the head of government, Nechervan Barzani, also addressed the assembly.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] Under the auspices of leader Mas'ud Barzani, the opening ceremony of the first session for the ninth year of the Kurdistan National Assembly was convened today, 6th March 2000. At the beginning of the ceremony the Speaker of the assembly, Dr Roz Nuri Shawes, addressed the assembly and stressed the importance of brotherhood and strengthening ties between the people, the country, the assembly and the Kurdistan government.

[Passage omitted: Speaker praising the past achievements of the assembly]

Later, and upon the request of the assembly leader Mas'ud Barzani addressed the Assembly. He greeted the people of Kurdistan on the ninth anniversary of the uprising. He said: "We struggled for 70 years and did not achieve our aims because we were not united. In the 1991 uprising we made a historic achievement in seven days and won victory because we were unified." Leader Barzani took the chance to give his thanks to the Kurdish people inside and outside Kurdistan, the assembly, the parties and the government for commemorating the 21st anniversary of the death of [his father] Mustafa Barzani who dedicated his life for the nation.

Leader Mas'ud Barzani spoke about the current issues of Kurdistan and started with the recent terrorist attacks in Kurdistan.

[Barzani] Alas, some terrorist activities were recently carried out in Arbil. Many people shed crocodiles tears for Arbil and gave the impression that Arbil has become hell and nobody could live in it. Arbil defeated Hulagu [Mongolian leader who ransacked Baghdad] and it will defeat many more Hulagus and terrorists.

The most important thing for us is to be aware of this plan. The aim of these attacks is not only to show that the fourth cabinet [of the KDP-led regional government] can not secure the rule of law and provide security. The aim is to create sedition among us, especially between the KDP and other allied parties. Some newspapers abroad immediately said that another Algeria is created in Kurdistan. Kurdistan will never become another Algeria, because neither the Islamic nor the other parties have the grounds to make Kurdistan another Algeria. This will be the dream that the enemy will take to the grave.

[Correspondent] Leader Barzani assured the people of Kurdistan that a number of terrorists have been arrested by concerned departments of the Kurdistan regional government and are being interrogated. He hoped that the courts take judicial diligence in their ruling and give all rights of defence to the perpetrators. He said that he will not allow to have an Islamist label on these crimes just because the

terrorists hide behind certain parties and organizations and this is why we have to be unified against terrorism. He urged Kurdistan parties and organizations to be unified and to support concerned departments of the Kurdistan regional government, because terrorism should not exist in Kurdistan.

He then spoke about the rights and freedoms available for the people of Kurdistan which is a source of satisfaction. He said that we have our own traditions and we will not allow alien and inappropriate things to be brought to Kurdistan. He then spoke about the duties and tasks of the Kurdistan regional government and assembly.

The peace process was another part of leader Barzani's speech. He reaffirmed the KDP's commitment to the Washington agreement and the implementation of all its clauses.

[Barzani] I reiterate that we have an agreement, it is the Washington agreement. I say again that we are committed to the agreement. We are ready to implement the agreement exactly as it was signed without adding or omitting anything. If there are other interpretations - and they do exist - that are contrary to the original text of the agreement, we are ready for other ways of making peace. Nothing can become an alternative for peace. We are ready and thinking seriously about that, but it must stay within the framework of the Washington agreement. For us Kurds, the most important document is the Washington agreement, and hence, we should not look for alternatives to the Washington agreement. If we can not reach an agreement on existing interpretations, let us begin normalization and start elections. In this way, we do not have to get into details like having a joint administration or not. We seem to have different interpretations [for the Washington agreement] and we might not reach an agreement. To put an end to all this, we should begin with normalization and set a date for elections, be it six or three months, and allow election results to finalize the issue.

[Passage omitted: The head of government Nechirvan Barzani talking about the role of parliament in running countries and his governments readiness to cooperate with the assembly. His governments support to the speech of Mas'ud Barzani]

REUTERS

6 mars 2000

Eurocopter, Boeing écartés d'un marché d'hélicoptères turc

ANKARA (Reuters) - Le consortium franco-allemand Eurocopter et Boeing Co ont été éliminés d'un marché de 145 hélicoptères de combat, a annoncé le Premier ministre turc Bulent Ecevit.

Leurs informations fournies ont été considérées comme étant insuffisantes, a déclaré Ecevit à des journalistes, ajoutant qu'il ne décelait aucun problème de financement pour ce marché, de la part du sous-secrétariat à la Défense.

Trois consortiums menés par l'italien Augusta, l'américain Bell Helicopter Textron et le russe Kamov-A restent en course pour ce contrat de \$4,5 milliards.

Eurocopter est une coentreprise entre Aerospatiale Matra et Daimler-Chrysler Aerospace (Dasa). Avec l'espagnol CASA, ils doivent fusionner pour donner naissance à l'European Aeronautic, Defense and Space Company (EADS).

Des analystes disent que les hélicoptères sont les armes les plus efficaces contre les rebelles kurdes combattant dans les montagnes retirées du sud-est de la Turquie, mais le ministre de la Défense avait déclaré le mois dernier que les appareils étaient également nécessaires pour se protéger de menaces étrangères contre la sécurité nationale.

Le Congrès américain a opposé son veto à de précédentes tentatives de la Turquie pour augmenter sa flotte de neuf hélicoptères de combat Bell Super Cobra, arguant qu'ils seraient utilisés pour mener une répression à l'intérieur des frontières du pays.

La Turquie veut co-produire l'hélicoptère choisi dans une usine près de la capitale Ankara, qui fabriquait jusqu'à récemment des avions de combat F-16. Cet aspect du transfert de production est l'un des principaux facteurs pris en compte dans l'octroi du marché.

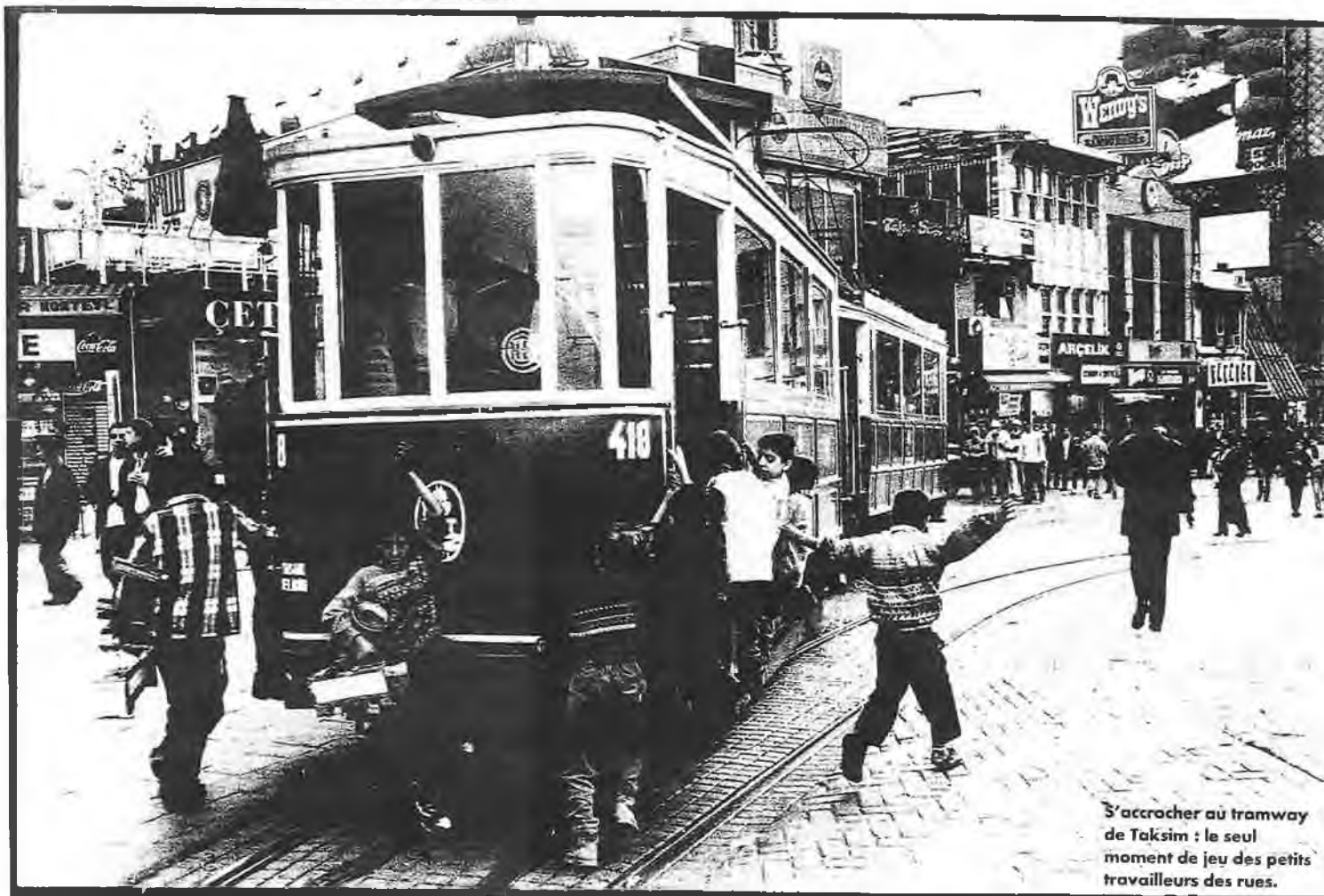
Ce marché se déroulera en trois étapes, 45 hélicoptères étant construits dans une première phase, puis 50 dans chacune des deux phases suivantes.

La Turquie est aussi intéressée par l'achat d'un millier de chars d'assaut d'ici 2013, un marché représentant quelque \$8 milliards. Le ministre de la Défense a dit le mois dernier qu'une première tranche de 250 chars d'assaut - représentant une valeur de \$1,5 milliard - sera allouée d'ici la fin juillet.

L'offre italienne fut un moment menacée par l'affaire Abdullah Ocalan, Ankara reprochant à Rome, voici deux ans, de refuser de lui remettre le chef kurde. Ce dernier a fait appel d'une sentence de peine capitale pour trahison.

ELLE

HEBDOMADAIRE. 6 MARS 2000



S'accrocher au tramway de Taksim : le seul moment de jeu des petits travailleurs des rues.



À 8 ans, elle passe ses journées à vendre des mouchoirs en papier. Les filles apprendissent les passants.

Istanbul **LA TRISTE ERRANCE DES ENFANTS KURDES**

Ils sont peut-être 10 000. Ils ont de 6 à 14 ans. Chassés de leurs villages du Kurdistan, ils passent leur vie dans les rues de la capitale turque, vendant des mouchoirs en papier ou des briquets. Ces enfants doublement victimes de l'exclusion sont condamnés à la misère.

Reportage photos Marie Dorigny.

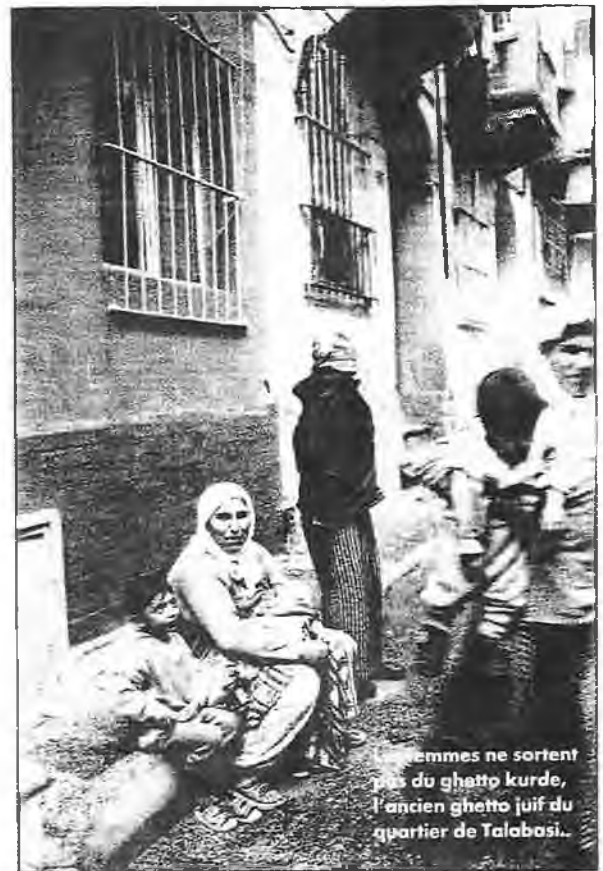
Elle ravale ses larmes. Son balluchon sous le bras, Rezal tente de garder un visage fier. Mais, à peine arrivée dans l'appartement insalubre qui abrite sa famille, elle éclate en sanglots. « Pourquoi me traite-t-on de tous les noms ? Je ne fais rien de mal. Je ne fais que travailler. » Rezal, 8 ans, vend des mouchoirs en papier dans la rue. Elle est l'une des 10 000 enfants qui passent une grande partie de leurs journées à errer dans Istanbul. Pour y gagner un peu d'argent, indispensable à la survie de leur famille.



On appelle « tinerci » ces garçons qui sniffent un solvant bon marché pour oublier la réalité.

Les habitants d'Istanbul n'aiment pas ces enfants, des Kurdes dans leur grande majorité, qui emplissent les trottoirs des beaux quartiers. Des enfants qui demandent aux passants de leur acheter une rose, un briquet, un ballon ou une carte postale. « Des graines de terroristes, sifflent les bien-pensants turcs. Des futurs Öcalan. » Ils insultent ces gosses qui jouent parfois dans la rue et se montrent turbulents. Öcalan, Rezal ne sait pas très bien qui c'est. Ce qu'elle sait, c'est que son nom à elle veut dire gazelle en kurde. Elle en est très fière.

Il y a deux ans, la famille de Rezal vivait encore au Kurdistan, dans un village de la montagne. « J'avais des arbres qui donnaient de beaux fruits, j'avais des poules magnifiques et une maison », raconte la mère de Rezal. Un matin, l'armée arrive. Occupe le village. « On nous a donné deux heures pour rassembler nos affaires et partir. » Le soir, le village n'existait plus : toutes les maisons avaient été incendiées. D'abord installée dans un bidonville de Diyarbakir, la capitale du Kurdistan, parmi des milliers d'autres réfugiés, la famille de Rezal ne peut y survivre. Travailleur agricole, le père ne trouve pas d'emploi. Il part alors pour Istanbul, où sa femme et ses dix enfants le rejoignent. Le père fait des petits boulots, décharge des camions, aide pour des déménagements. Mais, trop souvent, il ne trouve pas à louer ses bras. A la fin du mois, il n'y a pas assez d'argent pour payer l'électricité et le loyer de leur taudis. Alors, suivant l'exemple de tant de familles de réfugiés du Kurdistan, les grands frères de Rezal, 13 et 11 ans, partent travailler dans la rue. Chargés de vendre des mouchoirs ou des briquets. Mais les garçons



Les femmes ne sortent pas du ghetto kurde, l'ancien ghetto juif du quartier de Talabasi.

LA TRISTE ERRANCE DES ENFANTS KURDES

ne rapportent pas toujours tout l'argent gagné à la maison. Alors, à son tour, Rezal descend dans la rue. « Les filles sont plus sérieuses », affirme sa mère. Surtout, elles vendent plus : les bouts de chou aux longs cheveux parfois emmêlés attendrissent les passants. Cela explique que, en 1998, 75 % des enfants des rues d'Istanbul étaient des garçons, mais, à présent, plus de la moitié sont des filles.

Victimes de toutes les répressions

Au cours des dix dernières années, 3 500 villages du Kurdistan turc ont été évacués, incendiés, rasés. 3 millions de personnes ont été déplacées de force. Ce sont des chiffres officiels. Sans doute sous-évalués. En fait, 5 à 6 millions de personnes auraient été chassées de chez elles. La raison ? La lutte contre le terrorisme. L'armée turque rase tout village soupçonné d'apporter de l'aide aux militants du PKK. Des centaines de milliers de familles paysannes sont ainsi arrivées dans les grandes villes de Turquie. Et notamment à Istanbul, devenue, en quelques années, la ville au monde qui abrite le plus de Kurdes. Un mot que l'État turc refuse d'entendre. Pour lui, le Kurdistan n'existe pas. Il s'agit de la « région du Sud-Est ». Engoncé dans un nationalisme étroit, l'État turc refuse de reconnaître la langue kurde, similaire au persan, proche du dari parlé en Afghanistan. Une langue sur laquelle repose une culture très ancienne. Intransigeant, l'État turc refuse toute chaîne de télé, toute radio, toute école kurdes. Et condamne à la prison toute personne qui parle de la différence kurde. Leyla Zana, députée au Parlement turc, est emprisonnée depuis mars 1994. Elle demandait un

Les enfants des rues d'Istanbul habitent, pour beaucoup, le quartier de Talabasi, l'ancien ghetto juif devenu ghetto kurde. Un quartier lépreux, délabré, avec du linge qui sèche à toutes les fenêtres. Un quartier tout proche de Taksim, l'endroit où logent les touristes, où se trouvent les meilleurs restaurants, les bars et les boîtes à la mode. Taksim, ses rues piétonnes, ses grands magasins ; et la foule, compacte



Coups, insultes,
brutalités : la rue
est insupportable
pour les enfants

statut d'autonomie au sein de la Turquie pour sa région. Elle purge une peine de 15 ans d'emprisonnement. Tout récemment, Daniel Cohn-Bendit demandait aux autorités turques l'autorisation de lui rendre visite, en tant que président de la commission mixte, chargée de faire la liaison entre le Parlement européen et l'Assemblée nationale turque. Ankara le lui a refusé. Leyla Zana qui, un temps, avait bénéficié d'une cellule pour elle seule, a été transférée dans une cellule qu'elle doit partager avec trois autres femmes. Une femme démocratiquement élue est emprisonnée pour un seul délit : ses idées. A.L.F.

jusque tard dans la nuit. A qui vendre suffisamment de mouchoirs, de roses, de briquets ou de cartes postales. Les enfants travaillent souvent de 2 heures de l'après-midi à 2 heures du matin. La moitié d'entre eux vont à l'école le matin. Mais ils sont si fatigués qu'ils sont condamnés à l'échec. L'autre moitié ne sait même plus ce que signifie l'école. Ils ont entre 6 et 14 ans.

Dans la rue, ils vivent en bandes. Des bandes formées de gamins originaires du même village du Kurdistan. Des bandes mixtes où les garçons ont pour tâche de surveiller les filles. Des bandes qui courent dans les rues piétonnes, s'accrochent aux tramways, éclatent de rire. Ou se bagarrent. Les grands arrachent aux plus petits les gâteaux qu'ils se sont fait offrir. Les garçons frappent les filles. Qui apprennent vite à répliquer aux coups et à résister à la douleur. Dans la rue, les enfants connaissent une seule loi : celle du plus fort. Pour survivre, ils savent qu'il leur faut s'endurcir. Ces petits durs, ces petites filles devenues des garçons manqués sont pourtant avides de tendresse et de câlins. Une tendresse qu'ils ne peuvent recevoir à la maison. Leurs mères, épuisées par la misère et l'exil, enceintes souvent d'un neuvième ou dixième bébé, ne peuvent leur consacrer du temps. Mais, dès qu'un adulte

LA TRISTE ERRANCE DES ENFANTS KURDES



Fatima, la martyre

Un soir, Marie Dorigny, la photographe qui signe ce reportage, croise, dans la rue, une fillette au nez enflé et bleui. « J'ai été frappée », murmure Fatima, 12 ans. Marie la convainc de la suivre à l'hôpital. Une radio est prise : le nez de Fatima est fracturé. Elle sort de l'hôpital avec un gros pansement au milieu du visage, et explique que son frère aîné la bat. Le lendemain, quand Marie Dorigny la croise de

nouveau, elle s'enfuit, pieds nus. Marie cherche à comprendre auprès des autres gosses de la bande, mais ils filent à toutes jambes dès qu'elle leur adresse la parole. Peu après, le frère arrive et apostrophe Marie : « Tu t'occupes de ce qui ne te regarde pas. Tu n'as pas à entrer dans nos histoires. » Il ne supportait pas l'idée qu'elle ait pu emmener Fatima à l'hôpital. Et, pour punir sa sœur, il lui avait confisqué ses chaussures. Les enfants des rues, des enfants martyrs ? A.L.F.

s'intéresse à eux, les enfants des rues s'accrochent à ses vêtements, se blottissent contre lui et ne le lâchent plus. Sur les 10 000 enfants perdus d'Istanbul, 2 000 vivent entièrement dans la rue. On les appelle les « tinerçi », du nom du solvant local, le tiner, qu'ils inhalent pour tenir le coup. On les voit, accroupis sur les trottoirs, un chiffon sur la bouche en permanence : le morceau de tissu est imbibé de ce produit pas cher qui leur fait oublier la réalité.

Le solvant, qui n'est vendu qu'aux adultes, est acheté dans les drogueries par des femmes tsiganes. Elles le revendent à des ados de 16 ou 17 ans. Qui le revendent ensuite aux petits.

Les 2 000 tinerçi sont des garçons ; les filles ne sont pas encore tombées dans cet enfer. Mais pour combien de temps ? Les tinerçi sont victimes de la désagrégation du milieu familial. Le père, qui était agriculteur et représentait l'autorité au Kurdistan, n'est plus qu'un chômeur. Il tente d'oublier sa tragédie dans les cafés. Puis part avec une autre femme. A la maison, ce ne sont plus que larmes et désarroi.

Endurcis dans la rue, les gamins préfèrent fuir le drame de leur famille. Ou encore échapper aux coups d'un beau-père venu remplacer leur père absent. Ils gagnent de l'argent et veulent s'amuser. Grisés par la liberté dont ils jouissent, ils commencent par passer une nuit dehors. Puis deux. Ils finissent par ne plus jamais rentrer. Dans la rue, il y a la bande, et le copain qui leur tend un bout de chiffon humide. Au début, l'odeur forte du solvant est un peu écœurante. Mais, très vite, les garçons rebelles ne peuvent plus s'en passer. Pour l'acheter, ils fauchent dans les magasins, arrachent des paquets de cigarettes aux passants. Deviennent des petits délinquants. Le solvant, qui n'est vendu qu'aux adultes, est acheté dans les drogueries par des femmes tsiganes. Elles le revendent à des ados de 16 ou 17 ans. Qui le revendent ensuite aux petits. A Salih, par exemple, qui a 11 ans. Cela fait trois ans qu'il vit dans la rue. Il a le regard hagard. Le solvant a peu à peu détruit son cerveau, et Salih a tout oublié : il lui reste seulement sa mémoire immédiate. Deux centres d'urgence cherchent à aider ces enfants drogués. La nuit, des travailleurs sociaux tournent dans les rues d'Istanbul et tentent d'emmener les enfants pour les nourrir et les aider. Sept ou huit acceptent chaque nuit. Mais la plupart s'enfuient des centres au bout de deux ou trois jours, quand le manque de solvant devient trop difficile à supporter. La nuit, dans les rues d'Istanbul, les garçons perdus s'allongent sur les

LA TRISTE ERRANCE DES ENFANTS KURDES

Pendant les sommets internationaux
qui se tiennent dans la capitale,
les policiers turcs embarquent garçons
et filles dans leurs fourgons en
même temps que les chiens errants.

la vue des chefs d'Etat et des fonctionnaires internationaux. Des associations tentent de rescolariser ces enfants. En faisant du porte-à-porte, elles vont trouver les mères. Et leur proposent une allocation mensuelle si leurs enfants cessent de travailler et suivent régulièrement l'école. Cette allocation mensuelle est de 30 millions de livres turques (375 F). Le problème, c'est qu'un enfant gagne au moins trois fois cette somme chaque mois (près de 1 000 F). Et cet argent est absolument nécessaire à la survie d'une famille qui doit payer 40 millions de livres (500 F) pour le loyer, 20 millions de livres (250 F) pour l'électricité. Et nourrir au moins dix enfants. Alors, parce qu'elles ne peuvent pas faire autrement, de nombreuses mères refusent d'arracher leurs enfants à la

rue. Pourtant, quand on demande à ces enfants ce qu'ils souhaitent, la plupart répondent d'emblée : étudier. D'autres rêvent seulement de « jouer ». Comme Gulay, 7 ans. Elle a commencé à travailler dans la rue à 5 ans. Elle ignore ce que signifie jouer une journée entière, sans se préoccuper de gagner de l'argent. Un songe qu'elle sait inaccessible.

Annick Le Floc'Hmoan

Les rebelles, le lapin et le vieux chien

Un petit groupe de gamins drogués et délinquants vole un lapin noir dans une animalerie du centre d'Istanbul. Ils le câlinent, chipent des légumes à un étalage pour le nourrir. Puis ils essaient de le vendre à des passants. En vain. Deux jours passent. « Ce lapin va mourir si vous le gardez », leur dit Marie Dorigny. Le plus petit de la bande, un enfant en manque d'affection, pâlit. Prend l'animal dans ses bras. Et va le rendre à la boutique où il avait été volé. S'ils jouent aux durs, crachent, fument et profèrent des gros mots, les plus rebelles des gosses des rues restent des enfants à la sensibilité à fleur de peau. Rejetés par les adultes, mis en marge du monde des humains, ils reportent leur affectivité sur les animaux. Un vieux chien abandonné est ainsi devenu le compagnon d'une petite bande de gamins. Violents entre eux, sans pitié avec le monde qui les entoure, les enfants d'Istanbul ne sont pourtant pas des enfants perdus.

A.L.F.



Seul bien des tinerci,
le chiffon qu'ils
imbibent de solvant.

trottoirs, abrutis par la drogue. Les petites filles somnolent, assises sur le macadam, devant quelques cartes postales à vendre. D'autres gamines, les yeux embrumés de sommeil, font la tournée des restaurants pour y vendre des fleurs. Des garçons de 10 ans lavent les vitres des voitures. D'autres cirent les chaussures. Certains proposent aux passants, moyennant un franc ou deux, de se peser sur le vieux pèse-personne qu'ils trimbalent d'un trottoir à l'autre.

Ces enfants dérangent. Le contrôleur du tramway frappe à coups de gourdin les mains des petites filles qui s'accrochent aux wagons. Elles tombent sur les rails, les doigts bleuis et enflés. Puis c'est au tour des commerçants de les chasser violemment du seuil des magasins où ils essaient de s'installer. Des passants leur crachent leur mépris. Et, lorsque de grandes réunions internationales se tiennent à Istanbul, comme celle de l'OSCE récemment, les policiers les embarquent dans leurs fourgons en même temps que les chiens errants. Pas question de polluer

diario

ANNO V NUMERO 10. Da mercoledì 8 a martedì 14 marzo 2020.

IL NOSTRO INVIATO NEL NUOVO GIRO DI VITE DI ANKARA

Moderati, eletti a schiacciante maggioranza dopo il tardivo riconoscimento del loro partito, i tre primi cittadini sono stati arrestati dalla polizia turca e rilasciati per le pressioni dall'estero

Se il sindaco è curdo va in galera

DI *Alessandro Gori*

DIYARBAKIR.

L'intervista era fissata per le 13 di domenica 20 febbraio, nella sede del comune di Diyarbakir, il capoluogo del Kurdistan, nel Sudest della Turchia. Avrebbe dovuto rilasciare l'intervista Faridun Çelik, il politico trentatreenne che nelle ultime elezioni turche era riuscito a diventare sindaco per il partito pro-curdo Hadep.

«Çelik non darà nessuna intervista oggi», comunica uno degli ufficiali di polizia che in massa presidiano la zona, senza voler aggiungere altre spiegazioni e invitando i cronisti ad andarcene con la consueta «simpatia» dei poliziotti turchi. La risposta è nella sede dell'Hadep. Sabato pomeriggio Çelik, di ritorno da una serie di incontri in Germania, insieme a Selim Özalp, sindaco di Siirt, e

Feyzullah Karaaslan, primo cittadino di Bingöl, tutti dello stesso partito, sono stati fermati in città dalla polizia turca, fatti scendere dall'auto e arrestati con l'accusa di avere legami con il Pkk. La storia, grazie anche alle pressioni internazionali esercitate su Ankara da Unione Europea e Stati Uniti, è per il momento andata a finire bene: i tre sono stati liberati lunedì 28 febbraio. Ma anche il loro rilascio ha costituito un'occasione per nuovi scontri: la folla giubilante che li attendeva al di fuori del carcere di massima sicurezza di Diyarbakir è stata dispersa dalla polizia a manganellate. C'erano circa 4 mila persone, lungo la strada che collega il carcere al centro cittadino. «Giustizia è stata fatta», ha commentato Faridun Çelik.



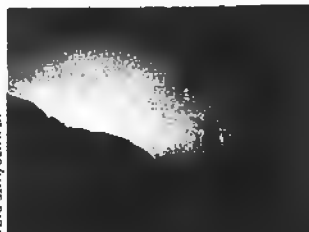
FOTO STPA/OLYMPIA

Armi. Non c'è per il momento alcuna prospettiva di accordo tra Ankara e i guerriglieri curdi che possa consentire di deporle una volta per tutte.

Al di là della conclusione della vicenda dei tre sindacati, ci si potrebbe chiedere se l'arresto di un leader curdo costituisca una novità. In questo momento lo è, considerando che tra mille difficoltà era lentamente iniziato un processo di normalizzazione della questione curda che i nuovi avvenimenti sembrano aver bloccato. La cattura di Abdullah Öcalan, poco più di un anno fa, e la conseguente decisione del Pkk di abbandonare le armi, avevano permesso di avviare una sorta di percorso politico. In aprile le elezioni locali e parlamentari avevano in qualche modo segnato una svolta. Per la prima volta dopo anni, la Turchia riusciva ad avere un governo stabile retto da una maggioranza parlamentare, a priori impensabile: il Partito

socialdemocratico (Dsp) del premier Bülent Ecevit, insieme al Partito d'azione nazionalista (Mhp) di Devlet Bahçeli, erede diretto della formazione di estrema destra dei «Lupi Grigi», completati dal Partito per la patria (Anap) di centrodestra. Grazie a questa coalizione e alla volontà di Ecevit e del ministro degli Esteri, İsmail Çem, è stato intrapreso un processo di riforme, sia a livello economico sia sul fronte delle relazioni internazionali.

L'esempio più importante è costituito dall'incredibile avvicinamento con la Grecia, avvenuto prima dei terremoti estivi nei due Paesi che hanno dimostrato la reciproca solidarietà tra popoli fino a poco tempo prima nemici storici. Le elezioni hanno fatto però registrare conseguen-



Sono 300 mila i militari e i poliziotti di Ankara nel Kurdistan, una regione dove la disoccupazione raggiunge il 70 per cento

ze soprattutto a livello locale: in tutta la regione sudorientale, abitata prevalentemente da curdi, ha trionfato l'Hadeş. «Con il piccolo particolare che solo all'immediata vigilia delle elezioni il nostro partito ha ricevuto il nulla osta della Corte costituzionale turca, impedendoci così di svolgere una normale campagna elettorale», precisa Mefahir Altindag, vicepresidente del partito a Diyarbakir. «Non abbiamo potuto neanche esporre una nostra bandiera», continua Altindag; «nonostante questo problema, gli arresti e le continue intimidazioni, l'Hadeş è riuscito a ottenere risultati importanti».

NIENTE SEGGI NEL PARLAMENTO DI ANKARA. Il 62 per cento dei voti a Diyarbakir gli sono valsi il governo del capoluogo, insieme ad altre sette città e una quarantina di villaggi. Nell'insieme del Paese, ha raggiunto però solo il 4,7 per cento dei suffragi: non avendo superato la barriera del 10 per cento, non ha potuto eleggere dei rappresentanti al parlamento di Ankara. «Lo stato turco ha fatto di tutto per impedirlo», protesta. Poi, a dicembre, si è registrato il grande evento: nel summit di Helsinki, l'Unione Europea ha deciso di concedere alla Turchia lo status di candidato, portando così a compimento un processo iniziato nel lontano 1963, ma arenatosi quasi definitivamente nella riunione Ue di Lussemburgo del dicembre 1997. Nel frattempo, la questione curda ha trovato sempre meno spazio nei media.

Diyarbakir rimane una città estremamente complicata; con una situazione sociale disastrosa: arriva ormai al milione di abitanti, molti dei quali profughi dai circa 4 mila villaggi bruciati dai militari in questi 14 anni di guerra e a cui l'accesso è ancora precluso. Secondo cifre ufficiali la disoccupazione tocca vette del 70 per cento, anche se poi tutti cercano di arrangiarsi in qualche modo. Sotto un tiepido sole invernale, non manca mai la solita folla di persone nei mercati improvvisati, mentre le *çay bahçesi*, locali sale da tè, sono gremite di uomini con i folti baffi «d'ordinanza» a qualsiasi ora del giorno. Le donne portano perlopiù il tipico foulard musulmano sul capo. Tra profumi di spezie e aromi di carne alla griglia dei kebab, nel dedalo di stradine della città vecchia in cui è estremamente facile perdersi, numero-

se famiglie vivono in condizioni particolarmente difficili, mentre frotte di bambini scorrazzano cercando di arrabattarsi. Molti popoli hanno partecipato alla storia di queste terre, ma ora anche il Tigri, la cui portata d'acqua è sempre più ridotta, scorre tristemente e non sembra più avere lo smalto di un tempo, quando era stato la culla delle civiltà mesopotamiche. Appena fuori la possente muraglia iniziata dai romani, ecco ulteriori catapecchie. Anche qui, l'unica cosa che non manca sono le antenne paraboliche. È possibile così captare i programmi della Med-Tv, la televisione che trasmette nei dialetti curdi dal Belgio sul satellite Eutelsat per aggirare le proibizioni dei governi turco e irakeno.

«In questa regione abbiamo un tasso di due militari per ogni curdo», si lamenta Ahmet, un tassista della città. Le proporzioni non sono esattamente queste, ma tra esercito, polizia e guardia speciale, i militari armati nella regione sono ben oltre 300 mila. Fin dall'aeroporto, con la loro presenza in ogni angolo di strada trasmettono una costante sensazione di stato d'assedio. In definitiva, ciò che la popolazione cerca dopo anni di guerra non dichiarata sono pace e possibilità di sviluppo. Oltre che un riconoscimento della propria identità.

UN ANNO DI TREGUA. «È vero. Nel 1999 non ci sono stati villaggi distrutti da parte dell'esercito o dai paramilitari turchi», racconta Yavuz Binbay che, dopo aver passato sei anni e mezzo nelle carceri turche, nel 1997 è rientrato dall'esilio in Svizzera per fondare un'associazione per l'assistenza umanitaria e i diritti umani. «Tuttavia, ogni giorno che passa la speranza si affievolisce. Molte persone sono state ammazzate, o solo fermate, interrogate, imprigionate senza motivo. Soprattutto manca qualsiasi tipo di volontà da parte del governo di presentare un progetto reale per il popolo curdo e di riconoscerne l'identità». Qualche giorno prima, Selim Kunalalp, direttore generale per le relazioni con l'Ue del ministero degli Esteri turco, si rifiutava di usare la parola «minoranza» per i curdi. «I curdi sono considerati cittadini come tutti gli altri in questo Paese. La regione sudorientale da tempo attraversa un difficile periodo, con conseguenze importanti sull'economia della zona. Noi non parliamo di maggioranze o minoranze, comunque affrontare la questione

della diversità rientra nei nostri programmi», spiegava in un'intervista ad Ankara. «L'attesa affinché la decisione di Helsinki porti a un miglioramento sostanziale anche qui è grande, ma la Turchia ha firmato molte convenzioni sui diritti umani e spesso e volentieri non le ha applicate», aggiunge Hanefi Isik, rappresentante dell'Associazione per i diritti umani nella regione del Sudest, la cui sezione locale è stata chiusa d'autorità nel 1997 con l'accusa di svolgere attività separatiste. «Abbiamo un estremo bisogno del vostro aiuto, perché questo Paese è estremamente refrattario ai cambiamenti».

Mustafa Özer, presidente della locale associazione degli avvocati, espone gli innumerevoli problemi di democratizzazione nella zona. «La libertà di espressione e di stampa non esistono; lo status speciale dell'emergenza permette arresti indiscriminati con il primo e unico contatto con un avvocato dopo quattro giorni, dopodiché il fermo si può protrarre senza spiegazioni per altri sei. A tutt'oggi ci sono 10 mila persone in prigione per motivi legati alla questione curda». Il legale prosegue: «A livello di tutto lo Stato, poi, troviamo una Costituzione che risale all'epoca dei militari (al 1980, ndr), una speciale Corte costituzionale riservata ad associazioni e partiti e inoltre lo strapotente Consiglio per la sicurezza nazionale. Tale organismo è formato dal presidente della Repubblica, da alcuni ministri e soprattutto dagli alti ranghi militari e rappresenta l'organo supremo dello Stato che deve supervisionare tutte le decisioni importanti».

La settimana precedente gli arresti eccellenti, il premier turco Ecevit aveva lanciato, attraverso la stampa, un forte segnale all'Hadeb affinché lavorasse negli interessi dello stato e non dei separatisti. Il quotidiano *Aksam* aveva pubblicato il titolo «Avvertimento all'Hadeb», aggiungendo che il partito



Sale da tè. Costituiscono l'abituale ritrovo della popolazione maschile curda che trascorre le ore fumando e chiacchierando.

usava «i sindaci per frantumare il Paese». Dopo gli ultimi avvenimenti e gli arresti, al primo piano di un'anonima e grigia palazzina del centro, le poche stanze della sede dell'Hadeb, invase dal fumo, brulicavano di persone, molte delle quali accorse dalla capitale. La tensione e la preoccupazione si potevano tagliare a fette.

Dicle Anter, figlio dello scrittore Mussa Anter, ammazzato per strada a Diyarbakir una sera del 1992, spiega: «Era successo lo stesso nel 1994 con Leyla Zana, eletta al parlamento di Ankara

per il partito Dep. Proprio come in questo caso, venne prelevata per strada e in seguito condannata a 18 anni di carcere per attività separatista. Proprio la scorsa settimana una delegazione del Parlamento Europeo aveva cercato di ottenere il permesso di incontrarla, ma il governo non gliel'ha concesso».

L'HADep EQUIPARATO AL PKK. Ecevit si è affrettato a dichiarare che l'arresto di Çelik e degli altri non rientra nella sfera di competenza politica e che l'intera questione si trova in mano ai giudici. Tuttavia, secondo Eyup Karakaci, vicepresidente nazionale dell'Hsdep, «nel Paese esistono due governi, quello normale e un altro, di tipo mafioso, che per i suoi interessi vuole mantenere una situazione di guerra». Il più colpito è però Altindag, che investe i cronisti stranieri con un torrente di parole in curdo: «Dovete scriverlo! La Turchia è uno Stato terrorista! Questo governo ha deciso che tutti i curdi sono suoi nemici. Lo abbiamo ripetuto molte volte: non abbiamo nessun legame con il Pkk! Non dobbiamo dimenticare che l'Hadeb ha dovuto sottostare al lungo processo di costituzionalità e che un milione e mezzo di persone ci hanno votato». Cosa potrà succedere domani? «Chi lo sa? In questo Paese la legge non esiste, per lo meno nel senso dei Paesi democratici». ■

U.S. May Soon Ease Sanctions on Iran

Gesture to Back Khatami Reformers Would Free 3 Key Tehran Exports

By Robin Wright
Los Angeles Times Service

WASHINGTON — In what would be a groundbreaking initiative to spur reconciliation with Iran, the Clinton administration is close to a decision to lift economic sanctions on Iranian carpets, caviar and pistachio nuts, according to U.S. officials.

The gesture, one of several being considered, follows a sweeping election victory last month by Iranian reformers, ending two decades of domination by conservatives in the Iranian Parliament.

"We clearly view the parliamentary elections as an important step, and we want to make clear our attitude — that we think it would be very desirable to have better channels of communication," said a senior administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Lifting sanctions on the three key exports would be the broadest U.S. public overture to Iran since relations between the two countries deteriorated in 1979 as Washington admitted the overthrown shah of Iran to the United States. Iranian students responded by seizing the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and holding 52 Americans hostage for 444 days.

After oil and gas, which account for most of Iran's foreign income, carpets, pistachios and caviar are its most important exports. But U.S. officials say that potential sales of the three products to U.S. buyers would not be significant enough to enable Iran to finance development of weapons of mass destruction, a key concern of critics.

President Bill Clinton's administration has made no secret of its interest in finding ways to end two decades of bitter relations between the two countries. The hostility has been fueled by such issues as Iran's support for extremist groups linked to bombings of U.S. facilities in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Navy's mistake in shooting down an Iranian passenger jet in 1988, killing all 290 on board, including 66 children.

Last weekend in Los Angeles, Mr. Clinton called Iran "one of the most wonderful places in all human history" during an appearance at a Democratic Party fund-raiser held at the home of a

prominent Iranian-American.

"I hope and pray that what we've seen in three elections there means there is movement toward openness and freedom there, too," he said. "I've done my best to support that process in the limited way an American president can."

U.S. officials feel comfortable with the sanctions initiative, in part because of a shift in public opinion in both countries since the election in 1997 of President Mohammed Khatami, Iran's leading reformer. Within months, he opened the door to better relations by publicly calling for people-to-people exchanges to "bring down the wall of mistrust."

A survey in 1998 by the nonpartisan Foreign Policy Association found that 91 percent of Americans supported opening a dialogue with Iran. A new survey by the association late last year indicated that 72 percent of Americans favored ending sanctions against Iran and 80 percent supported U.S. concessions to strengthen Mr. Khatami's government and permit a renewal of relations.

The public mood has shifted in Iran, too, and not only among reformers. At Friday prayers last week, Ayatollah Ahmed Jannati, a member of the Council of Guardians and one of Iran's leading conservatives, hinted at a new flexibility on relations with the United States and Israel.

After criticizing both countries for past meddling in Iran and Lebanon, he said: "If they did not infringe on our lives, resources, honor and prestige, then we would not bother them. We could treat them like the rest of the people in the world. We extend our hand of friendship to all nations in the world."

On the eve of the parliamentary elections in Iran, Ali Reza Nouri, a reformer who went on to win a seat in the elections, proposed a referendum on opening a direct dialogue with the United States. He said the early revolutionaries had decided policy for 20 years and said it was time to allow a new generation to make its own choices.

The Clinton administration is intent on testing the potential for rapprochement.

"This is an obvious moment to take another look," a U.S. source said.

"We've had several signs from Iran

that they're looking for a signal. And we want to make clear we want to explore another kind of relationship."

The administration's greatest opposition may come from Congress. As the White House debates a range of possibilities to improve the prospects of dialogue, key members of Congress are attempting to increase pressure on Iran.

Senator Frank Lautenberg, Democrat of New Jersey, and Senator Connie Mack, Republican of Florida, are promoting legislation that would allow victims of terrorism who prevail in court to recover financial awards from the frozen assets of countries on the U.S. government's list of those that support terrorism. Iran is still on that list.

■ Anti-German Protest

A visit to Iran by the German foreign minister was met by protests Tuesday as hundreds of veterans of Iran's war with Iraq in the 1980s converged on the German Embassy in Tehran to demand compensation from Berlin for its alleged support of Baghdad in the conflict, The Associated Press reported from Tehran.

One demonstrator threw himself in front of Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer's car as the official entourage drove to the embassy. Armed security guards and police dragged the protester away.

A dozen demonstrators in anti-chemical-warfare suits lay down outside the embassy gate after the motorcade of German Embassy vehicles and Iranian Foreign Ministry cars entered.

Iranian officials have accused Germany of having provided Iraq with chemical weapons during the war. Mr. Fischer, whose visit is aimed at strengthening ties, said after arriving Monday that Iran and Germany "should look forward and not to the past" in their relations.

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune

MARCH 8, 2000

Parcours du combattant pour le « Voyage... »

La question kurde investit avec difficulté les écrans turcs

ISTAMBUL

correspondance

La sortie de *Voyage vers le soleil* dans les salles de cinéma turques, le vendredi 3 mars, marque l'épilogue d'un véritable parcours du combattant. Après avoir effectué le tour du monde, auréolé de plus de vingt prix récoltés dans les festivals turcs et internationaux, le film de Yesim Ustaoglu (*Le Monde* du 7 juillet 1999) est enfin présenté dans son propre pays, selon les vœux exprimés par la réalisatrice, après plus d'une année d'atermoiements. En dépit de cette reconnaissance internationale plutôt flatteuse – et profitable – et d'une autorisation d'exploitation délivrée par le ministère de la culture turc, qui n'a pas exigé de coupes, aucune des grandes sociétés de distribution présentes en Turquie, tant nationales (Özen Film) qu'américaines (UIP, Warner), n'a accepté de prendre en charge la destinée d'un film rendu sulfureux par son évocation sans complaisance du racisme anti-kurde et de la répression subie par cette communauté.

C'est donc dans un circuit restreint de huit salles indépendantes, dont l'une soutenue par Eurimages – fonds du Conseil de l'Europe qui a aussi contribué au financement du film –, que ce

dernier a été distribué. Il est vrai que l'approche retenue par la réalisatrice ne plaide guère en sa faveur face aux grosses machines hollywoodiennes et n'invite pas au consensus au sein de son propre pays. En relatant l'amitié tragique entre deux jeunes, l'un Turc et l'autre Kurde, le film s'attache au monde des déshérités, kurdes en majorité, qui ont fui la misère et la violence du sud-est anatolien pour venir grossir les bidonvilles de la métropole en quête d'un avenir meilleur. L'évocation de cette « Autre Turquie », dont personne généralement ne veut entendre parler, se double d'un tableau sans concessions de la situation militaire dans le sud-est anatolien marquée par la répression et l'exode.

UNE APPROCHE OCCIDENTALE

Longtemps passé sous silence par les médias turcs, le film a suscité à l'occasion de sa sortie des commentaires élogieux, mais aussi des attaques. Si la presse salue avec force le « courage » de la réalisatrice, qui délivre un message d'amitié et de paix entre les peuples à la lumière d'une actualité toujours vive, ainsi que les vertus pédagogiques du film, appelé à jouer un rôle dans le « processus d'apprentissage démocratique » du pays, les appréciations

divergent cependant sur deux points essentiels. La vision du conflit kurde par celle que l'on qualifie déjà de « Ken Loach de la Turquie » et qu'on situe dans le sillage du grand réalisateur politisé Yilmaz Güney (l'auteur du *Mur*) est jugée « déséquilibrée » en insistant surtout sur la répression militaire.

Le racisme à l'encontre de l'identité kurde, dont témoignent en particulier les fameuses croix apposées sur les portes des victimes de cet ostracisme, suscitent les réactions indignées de ceux qui préfèrent percevoir le film comme une œuvre visant avant tout le public étranger en épousant une approche occidentale de son sujet. Même retardée, la sortie de *Voyage vers le soleil* en Turquie témoigne cependant d'une évolution récente sur la question du pluralisme culturel. Si ce film est la plus abouti des œuvres traitant de l'identité kurde au cinéma, il en va de même pour d'autres, comme récemment *La Frontière*, de Yasar Güner et Gürsel Ates, sorti lui aussi dans un réseau de salles « alternatif », ou *La Terre*, de Kazim Öz, toujours en attente d'une autorisation qui confirmerait que la Turquie a choisi la liberté d'expression.

Nicolas Monceau

Pour nous ouvrir les yeux

LE FIGARO MERCREDI 8 MARS 2000

CINÉMA

« Passeur de rêves »
de Hiner Saleem

Il faut avoir vu ce film pour mesurer des drames qui se vivent presque sous notre regard et sur lesquels nous fermons les yeux, impuissants. Mais est-ce une excuse ? Il s'agit certes d'une fiction mais inspirée pas à pas par les souffrances physiques et mentales que son auteur a dû surmonter pour survivre. Hiner Saleem est kurde. Il a fui la terre de ses ancêtres occupée par des ennemis

héréditaires et impitoyables selon lesquels un bon Kurde est un Kurde mort. Il nous raconte son errance clandestine à travers des pays d'Europe qui ne voulaient pas de lui et qui le rançonnaient d'autant plus que l'exaction restait forcément impunie. À pied, il a traversé les montagnes du Caucase. La neige, le vent, la fatigue viennent à bout des plus jeunes et des plus vieux qui l'escortent. Arrivé en Ukraine, il faut graisser la patte du douanier qui réclame visa et passeport, mais ce n'est jamais assez.

Grâce à mille ruses et quelques petits boulots notre évadé trouve les moyens de se cacher à fond de cale d'un bateau qui vogue vers Venise. Là encore la police veille ; il se glisse entre ses mailles pour finalement gagner Paris. Car Paris c'est pour lui la fraternité et la liberté. Mais ce sera la déception finale. Là encore, il sera de trop avec la fiancée qui a pu le rejoindre. Alors ils partiront ensemble pour nulle part, à travers la Beauce, à pied, avec le rêve d'avoir un jour un enfant qui sera chez lui, ici ou ailleurs.

Banal, dira-t-on. Oui. Hélas ! Saleem nous raconte des péripéties qu'au fond personne n'ignore. Mais ce que nul n'a su aussi fortement exprimer avant lui, c'est l'angoisse. Une angoisse latente avec des pics de crise chaque fois qu'un risque se profile et qu'il faut pourtant paraître indifférent pour ne pas se faire prendre. Cette panique, Saleem l'a vécue jusqu'au fond de ses entrailles ; elle s'inscrit à l'état vif sur l'écran, elle nous saute à la conscience. Même si nous pensons n'y être pour rien.

C. B.



Politics dictate Turkish attack helicopter decision

- Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit announced yesterday that German-French consortium Eurocopter and the United States' Boeing were eliminated as candidates in the multibillion dollar attack helicopter project on grounds that they did not meet technical qualifications. Ecevit further stated that US candidate Bell, Italy's Agusta and Russia's Kamov competing jointly with Israel's IAI have been shortlisted. Boeing voiced its shock and frustration on this decision
- Meant as a tactic to further stir up the competition amid increased speculations over a possible postponement of a decision on Turkey's multi-billion dollar attack helicopter project, Ecevit's statement, under which no final decision was made, fell short of making a concrete decision on this highly politicized project

Lale Sariibrahimoglu

Ankara-Turkish Daily News

Subjected to pressure from all fronts on its multibillion dollar attack helicopter project, Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit announced yesterday that German-French consortium Eurocopter and the United States' Boeing, competing with their Tiger and Apache models respectively, were eliminated as candidates from the project over grounds that both companies failed to meet technical specifications. Ecevit said that the United states' Bell, Italy's Agusta and Russia's Kamov competing jointly with Israel's IAI have been shortlisted, and that additional technical specifications from these companies would be required.

The models of the remaining three companies to compete in the project are as follows; U.S.'s Bell Helicopter-Textron (AH-IZ King Cobra), Italy's Agusta (A129-I) and Russia's Kamov competing jointly with Israel's IAI (KA-50/52-Erdogan). Selection of one European and a U.S. company in addition to a Russian one has been seen as a strong indication of Turkey's attempts to stir up the competition further in order to reduce the cost of the scheme. It has also viewed as an attempt to force the governments whose countries' companies are involved in the project to bring more high technology to enable Turkey to establish its own attack helicopter infrastructure.

Ecevit's short announcement came following a two-and-a-half-hour meeting held by the Undersecretariat for the Defense Industry (SSM) Executive Board which included Chief of General Staff Gen. Huseyin Kivrikoglu, Minister of National Defense Sabahattin Cakmakoglu and the SSM Undersecretary Professor Dursun Ali Yalcin. Ecevit stated that the shortlisted three companies' technical documents, which he described as lacking in certain points, will be re-examined, and he voiced his hope that a final decision will be made soon. He fell short of giving any timetable for a final announcement on the project while ruling out any suggestion that political considerations were affecting it.

SSM is at the point of re-evaluating the technical specifications, Ecevit said, adding that "we have not come to a point of making a decision." On speculations concerning the financial sources required to go ahead with the project, Ecevit said, "SSM will to a great extent be able to finance the project from its own sources. Thus there will not be a big problem on financing." Under the first phase of the project, 50 helicopters out of a planned 145 will be co-produced. The whole project is valued at about \$4 billion.

The SSM Executive Board's decision to eliminate Eurocopter's Tiger from the running stemmed from the fact that it failed to make a full performance during trials in October in the southern coast town of Antalya. Eurocopter's German partners' delay in sending Tiger for a demonstration due to Bonn's linkage of the trials with Turkey's bad human rights record is cited among other reasons for its elimination.

Boeing, competing with its Apache, was found expensive but favored by many land aviation school pilots. Company officials speaking to the Turkish Daily News voiced their frustration and shock about the decision announced by Ecevit. It remains to be seen whether Boeing will lodge a protest with the Turkish government over its elimination from the project.

Again for political reasons, Turkey made a surprise move early last year and shortlisted all five competing companies in the helicopter project, which was launched in 1997. Yesterday's announcement came as a second short list of three companies, further delaying the project under which the first delivery of a helicopter was earlier scheduled to be delivered in November 2002.

Both companies were also unable to meet Turkey's urgent requirement for about 10 attack helicopters before the beginning of the production. Previously, Turkey was expected to announce two or three bidders as preferred customers, starting negotiations with the first one immediately. But Ecevit's announcement fell short of meeting these expectations; instead,

yesterday's decision was more seen as a tactic to further stir up the competition among the remaining three. There are also speculations that a linkage has been established between Turkey's delayed nuclear energy plant project and the helicopter project. According to this theory, a winner in the decision to be made on which country's company is selected in the attack helicopter project will not have much chance of winning the nuclear energy plant scheme. A final winner on this scheme has also been delayed several times.

Another reason cited for yesterday's announcement failing to make a concrete decision was linked to Ecevit's desire to guarantee President Suleyman Demirel's re-election for the second time. According to sources close to Ecevit, if Demirel's election is not guaranteed, Ecevit believes that the government may resign. In such a case Ecevit would prefer a new government to decide on this highly politicized project. It is expected that a final winner of the project may be decided after Turkey's religious feast on March 24 or April at the latest, according to defense industry sources.

PKK Reportedly Worried by Turkey-PUK Rapprochement

Al-Zaman
10 Mar 00
by Saman Nuh

Translated Text

A source close to the Kurdish Workers Party [PKK] yesterday asserted that the meetings held by the Turkish Government and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] between 2 and 5 March 2000 in Ankara basically dealt with the PKK issue and its presence and activities in northern Iraq.

The source said that the security situation in the Kurdistan region, the Turkomans' conditions, and the relations of both Turkey and the PUK with the Kurdistan Democratic Party were also discussed. Both sides have had differences over these issues in the past.

The source added that the PUK made several attempts recently to improve its relations with Turkey. It pointed out that it has tried to get close to the Turkoman parties acting under the (Turkey-backed) Turkoman Front. It has given them the necessary help for their operations in the areas under its control and allowed the Front to open a public relations office in Kafri and a cultural center and a radio station in al-Sulaymaniyah during the past few months. The PUK also closed a number of PKK centers in the area, its cultural center, and its newspaper. These steps were taken after the PKK's decision to abandon armed struggle and turn to political action.

The source went on to say that officials from Turkey's security and military organs and the Foreign Ministry took part in the talks that revolved around the PKK's activities. From its current stands on the PKK, which are a continuation of its hard-line policy toward Turkey's Kurds, the Turkish side appears ready to give the PUK financial and political help to a certain degree in return for the latter changing its stand on the PKK.

The source said that the Turkish Government is continuing its past policy and is trying to liquidate or arrest a number of PKK leaders and figures in Iraq's Kurdistan. It noted that Ankara is also willing to cooperate with any party that will help it achieve this objective, which it regards as necessary for destroying the PKK's remaining strength. The attention and care accorded the visiting PUK delegation and the series of meetings held in Ankara underline this policy.

The source, which asked to remain anonymous, commented on reports that economic and trade issues were the main issues of discussions. He said this is illogical because Turkey does not have borders with the areas under the PUK's control.

A large delegation from the PUK led by Kawthar Rasul visited Ankara at the official invitation of the Turkish Government to discuss security and trade issues. The visit was preceded by an improvement in relations between the two sides following a Turkish delegation's visit to al-Sulaymaniyah last month.

Turkey's Generals Face New Kind of Challenger: The EU

By Richard Boudreaux
Los Angeles Times Service

ANKARA — At home and in their troubled neighborhood, which includes the Balkans, the Caucasus mountain range and the Middle East, the generals of Turkey are accustomed to getting their way.

In the past three years, they have rid their nation of an Islamist-led government, crushed a Kurdish separatist insurgency, dissuaded Greek Cypriots from deploying Russian-made missiles against Turkish planes, forged a defense pact with Israel and begun a shopping spree for tanks and attack helicopters.

Threats to Turkey's security, by their own assessment, are at the lowest point in decades.

Now the commanders of NATO's second-largest conventional military force are staring uneasily at a most unconventional challenger: the European Union. Europe's leaders have accepted Turkey as a candidate for membership in the EU and now expect Turkey's military to give up the powerful role it has played for 76 years as self-appointed guardian of the republic's internal order.

That is a demotion the commanders are clearly reluctant to accept.

Arguing that Turkey's elected civilian leaders are often lax in dealing with Kurdish separatists and Islamic fundamentalists, the military exercises broad constitutional authority to intrude in the governance of this mostly Muslim nation. In view of Turkey's strategic value, its strongest ally, the United States, has tolerated much of this meddling. Europeans, however, want it stopped.

Negotiations over Turkey's entry to the EU are expected to last for years and cover thousands of laws and regulations on issues ranging from child labor to the size of bananas. But of all the changes the EU is seeking, none would transform Turkey as deeply as the generals' submission to civilian control.

That prospect has energized Turkey's beleaguered advocates of democracy and human rights, who contend that the military must surrender its Big Brother role to join the EU.

"There should be a revision of the entire security doctrine, the deployment and the structure of the armed forces of Turkey, whose territorial integrity can be placed under European guarantee," Cengiz Candar, a columnist persecuted in the past for challenging the military, wrote recently in the mass-circulation Istanbul newspaper Sabah.

Publicly, the generals say they support EU membership because it would fulfill the secular, European-oriented vision of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the gen-

eral who founded the army and the Turkish republic on the Ottoman Empire's ruins. More practically, they do not want to be excluded as Europe forms defense organizations independent of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

But only in recent weeks have the generals begun a detailed study of how they might be affected by the EU imperative that aspiring members achieve "stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for minorities."

Signs of irritation and resistance have surfaced in comments by senior officers and in a memo by the general staff to rank-and-file units just before the EU voted in December to make Turkey a candidate.

The memo focused on two membership conditions often spelled out by European leaders: that Turkey abolish its military-dominated National Security Council and that it subordinate the general staff to the civilian Defense Ministry.

"These efforts to change the administrative structure of Turkey," the memo said, "result either from an ignorance of history or, worse, a desire to unjustly attack and weaken the Turkish armed forces."

Turkey has been under direct military rule three times since 1960. Before withdrawing for the third time, in 1983, the generals wrote a constitution enhancing their power to govern from behind the scenes.

In the military's view, "practically everything in public life is related to national security," said a civilian who works in the National Security Council's policy planning center and likens it to a parallel government. "Everything must be secure."

Control of the planning operation gives the armed forces the upper hand in decision-making by the Security Council itself, which is made up of the president, four senior cabinet ministers and the five top military commanders. "The military always comes better prepared than the civilians and takes the initiative," said a retired army general, Dogan Gures, who is a former council member.

Some of the military's initiatives are ultimatums.

In 1997, the commanders used the Security Council's monthly meetings to badger Necmettin Erbakan, the nation's first Islamist prime minister, into agreeing to curb Muslim religious schools and foundations. When the government balked at complying, the commanders orchestrated a campaign by pro-secular business, labor and women's groups — backed with threats of armed intervention — that forced Mr. Erbakan to resign.

The armed forces have powers, privileges and obsessions that would be un-



Kemal Ataturk, the officer who founded modern Turkey after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

thinkable in the democracies of Europe.

They report to the prime minister, not the defense minister — and they once attacked Kurdish rebel bases in Iraq without telling either minister. They take 9 percent of the national budget without a word of debate in Parliament and spend without civilian oversight. They control arms procurement, much of it from defense companies they own, and have extensive holdings in Turkey's automotive, cement, food and chemical industries.

Senior officers lobby quietly to maintain laws curbing free expression and encourage prosecutors to open criminal cases against those who challenge the military's views.

A general once demanded that an Istanbul soccer club take disciplinary action against its British coach, who had protested the army's conscription of a star player. The club and the coach made a public apology.

A Turkish officer's swagger comes with his training and is sustained by genuine respect from most of this society. From age 14, military school cadets are taught that they are superior to civilians, especially in understanding the national interest.

"They teach you to obey the rules of democracy as long as there is stability in the country," said a retired air force lieutenant colonel, Metehan Demir. "But they also teach that if there is instability, you have a special duty to intervene."

The anti-militarist sentiment prevalent in much of Western Europe is weak in Turkey, where politicians are held in low esteem. But the military was widely criticized for a sluggish search-and-rescue effort after a magnitude 7.4 earthquake last August.

INTERVIEW

« La Turquie fait partie de l'Europe »

L'EXPRESS

● L'EXPRESS 9/3/2000

Ismail Cem, ministre turc des Affaires étrangères, a joué un rôle décisif pour faire accepter que son pays soit candidat à l'Union européenne



Ismail Cem.
« Aucune
exécution
capitale n'a eu
lieu en Turquie
depuis 1984. »

Le statut de candidat, reconnu à votre pays en décembre, lors du sommet européen d'Helsinki, implique pour lui une mise à niveau, notamment dans le domaine de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme. Est-il envisageable que la Turquie – déjà montrée du doigt sur ce point par le Conseil de l'Europe – puisse devenir membre de l'UE sans avoir aboli la peine de mort ?

► Il est exact que l'Union européenne, comme le Conseil de l'Europe dont elle s'inspire sur ce point, prône l'abolition de la peine de mort, et que notre législation actuelle, sur cette question, est un obstacle à notre adhésion. Nous en sommes tout à fait conscients. Un projet abolissant la peine de mort avait même été déposé au Parlement peu avant

les élections du printemps 1999. Mais après l'arrestation du chef terroriste (1), la question est devenue sensible, tant dans l'opinion qu'au sein de la majorité gouvernementale. Je suis cependant convaincu que nous franchirons le pas, même si je ne peux pas vous dire quand. J'ajoute qu'aucune exécution capitale n'a eu lieu en Turquie depuis 1984. **Toujours dans le domaine des libertés, votre gouvernement est-il prêt à réviser le statut de la minorité kurde pour, notamment, lui permettre d'exprimer son identité et sa culture, comme, là encore, le demandent les Européens ?**

► Nous ne considérons pas les Kurdes comme une minorité, car l'origine raciale ou ethnique de nos concitoyens n'est pas pour nous un facteur pertinent. En Turquie, le terme de « minorité » ne peut s'appliquer qu'aux non-musulmans, comme le stipule d'ailleurs le traité de Lausanne de 1923. C'est l'héritage de l'Empire ottoman, qui ne fait aucune distinction entre ses sujets musulmans et qui montre une grande tolérance envers les non-musulmans. La république laïque a repris cette tradition en termes modernes. Nous ne sommes pas pour autant opposés à la liberté d'expression, culturelle et démocratique. Déjà, nos citoyens d'origine kurde peuvent librement parler leur langue, diffuser des programmes de radio, publier des livres et des journaux. Notre intention est d'élargir ces droits, afin de nous mettre au niveau des pays de l'Europe occidentale. Des progrès ont été faits. J'aurais aimé que l'on aille un peu plus vite. Mais c'est un processus qui se poursuit.

Dans quels domaines ? L'école ? La télévision ?

► L'école, non, parce que nous considérons que l'enseignement doit se faire dans la langue de la République. La question de la télévision est en revanche, effectivement, discutée. Des chaînes en langue kurde existent d'ailleurs de facto depuis quelques mois, même si elles n'ont pas actuellement de base juridique.

Récemment trois maires appartenant au Parti de la démocratie du peuple (Hadep, prokurde) ont été interpellés, et inculpés. Ils venaient de rencontrer la ministre suédoise des Affaires étrangères. Certains y ont vu un avertissement à l'UE pour qu'elle cesse ses pressions...

► Il est vrai que l'opinion publique n'a pas apprécié que le chef de la diplomatie suédoise prenne contact avec ces trois maires, avant même de s'entretenir avec le gouvernement. Leur inculpation n'a cependant rien à voir avec cette rencontre. Il est normal que la justice turque puisse inculper des personnes soupçonnées d'aider une organisation terroriste, même s'il s'agit d'élus. Comme dans n'importe quel autre pays européen, il va y avoir une enquête, et il reviendra aux tribunaux de se prononcer. Si, en Corse, un maire ou un député était soupçonné de financer le terrorisme, ne ferait-il pas également l'objet de poursuites judiciaires ?

On vous reproche aussi les procès intentés à ceux qui expriment un point de vue différent sur la question kurde, et une législation sur ce point très restrictive...

► Il y a encore dans notre arsenal législatif des mesures qui s'expliquent par les ●●●

●●● nécessités de la lutte contre le terrorisme auquel nous avons été confrontés toutes ces dernières années. Ce sont des reliquats qui devraient disparaître, s'il se confirme que ces épreuves sont derrière nous.

Toujours selon les « critères de Copenhague », qui fixent les conditions de l'adhésion à l'UE, il semble que le rôle politique que joue l'armée en Turquie

— notamment à travers le Conseil national de sécurité — soit un autre obstacle difficile à contourner...

► Même si elles sont parfois exagérées, je trouve que les critiques qui nous sont adressées par les Européens sont souvent fondées. Sauf sur le rôle de l'armée. Là, je ne suis absolument pas d'accord. Historiquement, l'armée, en Tur-

quie, a été un agent de modernité. Aujourd'hui, on ne peut pas dire qu'elle ait un rôle politique. Le Conseil national de sécurité, où siègent des représentants des autorités civiles et militaires, traite de questions qui concernent la sécurité générale du pays. *Même quand ses avis aboutissent, comme en 1997, à empêcher un parti de gouverner ?*

► Nous étions confrontés à une montée du radicalisme religieux qui risquait de déboucher sur des violences. Il y avait bien un problème de sécurité, d'ailleurs ressenti comme tel dans la société.

Vous vous êtes entretenu à deux reprises depuis le début de l'année avec votre homologue grec. Ces rencontres vous ont-elles permis d'avancer sur les dossiers les plus difficiles, comme celui de Chypre

ou celui des frontières en mer Egée ?

► Le problème de Chypre concerne la République turque de Chypre du Nord et l'administration chypriote grecque au sud, et c'est à eux de négocier. Sur les autres questions, notamment celle des frontières en mer Egée, je pense que nous allons pouvoir progresser. Incontestablement, l'atmosphère a changé. *Certains Européens craignent que l'Europe ne perde sa cohérence géographique, voire son identité, en reculant ses frontières pour intégrer la Turquie. Que leur répondez-vous ?*

► La décision du sommet d'Helsinki modifie effectivement les frontières de l'Union européenne. Tant que celles-ci passaient par les Balkans et la mer Egée, elles se confondaient avec celles de

la Grèce et de la Turquie. Nos deux pays se retrouvaient sur la ligne de fracture, et ils étaient, de ce fait, presque condamnés à la confrontation. Avec l'admission de la candidature turque, le problème gréco-turc change de nature. La Turquie fait désormais partie de la géographie de l'Union européenne. Est-ce que cela modifie l'identité de cette Europe ? Je suis de ceux qui pensent que oui. Et je m'en réjouis. La décision d'Helsinki, que je trouve très courageuse, signifie que l'Union européenne est devenue laïque. ●

**Propos recueillis à Ankara
par Nükte Bouvard et
Dominique Lagarde**

(1) Abdullah Öcalan, le chef rebelle kurde arrêté le 15 février 1999 et condamné à mort le 29 juin 1999.

Why Iranians Will Take Their Time

TEHRAN — The recent elections in Iran have advanced prospects that the United States will soon make a gesture toward improving relations. But Iran's move to a more democratic and less ideological system could enhance, not dilute, its pursuit of its own national interest in ways that upset some U.S. assumptions.

Meanwhile, the futility of sanctions is daily being demonstrated by Washington's inability to influence Iran in favor either of increasing OPEC oil output or easing up on support for Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Certainly there is here an overwhelming desire for improvement in relations with the former "Great Satan." Demonization of the Islamic Republic is still alive in some quarters in the United States, but the reverse is no longer the case. Iranians know plenty to admire about America from their media and their relatives in California.

They know, too, that isolation in general is contrary to national interests. Iran badly needs U.S. and other foreign capital and export market access if its economy is to grow fast on the back of anything except oil prices.

Many Iranians fail to be ex-

By Philip Bowring

cited by official rhetoric about the injustices being meted out by Israelis to Palestinians and Lebanese. Real these may be, but need Iran be more Palestinian than Yasser Arafat? they ask.

However, while President Mohammed Khatami exudes politeness toward Americans, there are reasons why Iran does not feel in much of a hurry to change its policies and speed normalization with an America that may soon recognize where its own national interest lies.

Clerical influence (and money) will ensure that the issues of Jerusalem and the Shiite community of Lebanon are not abandoned. Iran's reformers would prefer to tangle with conservatives on domestic issues. Iran will not stand in the way of a deal between Israel and Syria, but neither will it unilaterally drop support for Hezbollah without a major gain elsewhere.

The notable success of Tehran's efforts to improve relations with Arab nations, notably Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, has reduced its isolation. Helped by mutual oil interests and Arab frustration at perceived Israeli intransigence,

this détente has undermined American influence.

Iran has been normalizing relations with Europe. Ministerial exchanges are accompanied by an upsurge of investor interest in a middle-income country of 65 million in a key strategic situation and politically more stable than most in the region.

Most Iranians are angered by (successful) U.S. attempts to prevent Central Asian countries from using Iran as conduit for oil and gas exports. Washington has promoted noneconomic alternatives, even preferring to deal with the murderous, drug-financed Taleban in Afghanistan rather than talk to Tehran.

There is resentment of the intensity of U.S. efforts to deny arms to Iran, despite Iran's recent history of being invaded by a (Western-armed) Iraq, and the proximity of a Pakistan with Chinese-supplied missile and nuclear weapon technology. Iranian diplomats hope that President Bill Clinton will learn in New Delhi, not from Muslims but from Hindu nationalists, how bizarre U.S. policy in the region often appears.

None of this is to deny that the United States has its own grievances. Nor is it to forget the crimes against humanity

committed in Iran in the name of revolution and Islam.

Nor is it to fall into the nationalist trap of being carried away by 3,000 years of history and Iran's strategic geography and believing that it is more important than it really is in the contemporary world.

But before assuming that a somewhat more democratic, liberal and open Iran will become a friend of the West, it is as well to examine how Iranians perceive their interests.

For the United States to allow, as expected, the import of Iranian pistachio nuts and end its opposition to World Bank loans will be steps forward. But a big breakthrough is unlikely until the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act expires next year, and America has a new president who can forget past executive orders and admit past policy failures.

International Herald Tribune.

Herald Tribune

PUBLISHED WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WASHINGTON POST

MARCH 10, 2000

Le chanteur Ahmet Kaya condamné par contumace à plus de trois ans de prison



ISTANBUL, 10 mars (AFP) - 13h11 - Un tribunal turc a condamné vendredi le chanteur turc d'origine kurde Ahmet Kaya à trois ans et neuf mois de prison, par contumace, pour "propagande séparatiste" en faveur du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, rebelles kurdes de Turquie), a rapporté l'agence Anatolie.

Le musicien, âgé de 42 ans, était jugé depuis l'année dernière par une Cour de sûreté de l'Etat (DGM) d'Istanbul pour des propos tenus en 1993 lors d'un concert à Berlin, en Allemagne.

M. Kaya a été acquitté en revanche dans un autre procès pour les mêmes chefs d'accusation pour une déclaration en février 1999.

Il avait annoncé à cette date, après avoir reçu à Istanbul le prix de "musicien de l'année" par l'Association de la presse magazine de Turquie, qu'il voulait composer une chanson kurde pour son prochain album.

Il avait par la suite quitté la Turquie et n'est pas rentré depuis. Son épouse, Gulden Kaya, citée par l'agence, a indiqué que "dans ces conditions, il était impossible" pour son mari de revenir en Turquie.

Lors d'une conférence de presse en juillet dernier à Paris, dans le cadre d'une tournée en Europe, il s'était défini comme un "artiste dissident et socialiste"

"J'ai dit qu'il faudrait accepter la réalité de l'existence des Kurdes dans le pays et que je ne lâcherai pas ceux qui refusent de reconnaître cette réalité", avait-il dit en soulignant qu'il n'avait jamais eu l'intention d'être injurieux envers son pays.

L'Irak invite les Kurdes à reprendre le dialogue avec Bagdad



BAGDAD, 10 mars (AFP) - 10h35 - Un journal irakien a invité vendredi les partis kurdes rivaux à reprendre le dialogue avec le pouvoir central pour préserver l'intérêt national.

"L'intérêt de la patrie et du peuple nous fait dire qu'il n'est pas encore trop tard (pour reprendre le dialogue) et que le Conseil de Commandement de la révolution est toujours favorable à ceux qui souhaitent servir (l'Irak) et se repentir", écrit As-Saoura, organe du parti Baas au pouvoir.

"Il est temps (pour les kurdes d'Irak) d'en tirer la leçon et de constater la (dégradation) de la situation des Kurdes en Turquie et en Iran".

Les deux partis rivaux, l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK de Jalal Talabani) et le Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK de Massoud Barzani), se disputent le contrôle du nord de l'Irak, qui échappe totalement à Bagdad depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991.

Les deux formations sont tiraillées 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

Neuf rebelles du PKK et deux soldats tués dans des combats



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 10 mars (AFP) - 14h10 - Neuf rebelles kurdes du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) et deux soldats ont été tués dans des affrontements dans le sud-est anatolien à majorité kurde, a-t-on indiqué vendredi de source officielle.

Les affrontements se sont déroulés à Bingol (est), selon un communiqué de la super-préfecture de Diyarbakir, chargée de coordonner la lutte contre le

Un autre "terroriste", dénomination officielle pour désigner les rebelles du PKK, a été capturé, selon le document.

Le communiqué ne précise pas la date des affrontements.

Après la condamnation à mort de son chef Abdullah Ocalan en juin 1999, pour trahison et séparatisme, le PKK avait annoncé fin septembre qu'il mettait fin aux quinze ans de lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est.

Depuis, les affrontements ont quasiment cessé dans la région.

Le 6 mars toutefois, des sources de sécurité à Diyarbakir avaient annoncé que six militants d'une organisation clandestine maoïste, l'Armée de libération des travailleurs et paysans de Turquie (TIKKO), avaient été tués dans des affrontements avec l'armée dans la province de Tunceli (sud-est). Les autorités turques pensent que TIKKO coopère avec le PKK.

GÉNOCIDÉ

LA LETTRE DE L'UGAB Vendredi 10 mars 2000

Une alliance stratégique franco-turque conclue dans l'ombre du Sénat

Manifestation nationale samedi 11 mars devant le Sénat

Après l'agitation soulevée par le vote du 22 février au Sénat, l'actualité économique a repris ses droits, avec l'annonce de la probable visite officielle du président Jacques Chirac en Turquie, du 4 au 6 juin prochains, pour inaugurer l'exposition Fransa-2000 (la deuxième du genre, la première ayant eu lieu fin mai 1996, cf. *La Lettre de l'UGAB* n° 131), destinée à promouvoir les produits français en Turquie.

D'ici là, les autorités françaises auront eu tout le loisir de méditer sur la déconvenue enregistrée cette semaine par le groupe franco-allemand Eurocopter. Après avoir obtenu du Sénat français, sous la pression du chantage, le refus d'inscrire la question de la reconnaissance du génocide arménien à l'ordre du jour des travaux de la Haute Assemblée, la Turquie a rejeté lundi 6 mars l'offre du consortium franco-allemand Eurocopter, écarté en compagnie de l'américain Boeing, en raison d'«insuffisances», selon le premier ministre turc Bülent Ecevit. Trois constructeurs ont été retenus par Ankara pour un appel d'offres portant sur l'achat de 145 hélicoptères de combat, d'un montant de 4,5 milliards de dollars (environ 30 milliards de francs) : Kamov (russo-israélien), Bell Helicopter-Textron (américain) et Agusta (italien), qui présentent pourtant eux aussi des «insuffisances».

La Turquie se joue littéralement de la France, et de l'Europe en général, à la faveur de cette affaire du Sénat. On notera, non sans un certain trouble, que les trois maires kurdes de la région de Diyarbakir, arrê-

tés le samedi 19 février par les autorités turques, ont été libérés sous caution lundi 28 février, soit quelques jours à peine après la reculade du Sénat.

Toutes ces turqueries n'ont pourtant rien d'incompatible avec la conclusion d'une alliance stratégique. Le quotidien turc de langue anglaise *Turkish Daily News* écrivait cette semaine, non sans un certain cynisme, que la Turquie et la France ont signé à la mi-janvier dernier à Paris, «dans l'ombre de l'affaire du Sénat», un accord de coopération en matière de défense, portant sur une durée de dix ans, et qui renforcera les liens militaro-stratégiques entre les deux pays. Cet accord prévoit notamment la création d'un Haut Comité de Coopération sur les questions de Défense, qui sera chargé de la coordination de la coopération militaire franco-turque.

Les précédents accords destinés à améliorer les relations militaires bilatérales remontent tout d'abord au 13 décembre 1991, quand les deux pays ont signé un accord de coopération en matière d'équipements militaires, au moment même où les Etats-Unis créaient des obstacles au transfert de ces équipements vers la Turquie. Cet accord a été suivi d'un autre sur la sécurité, signé le 18 septembre 1992 et complété le 14 juillet 1995, par un volet consacré à la coopération dans le domaine de l'échange d'informations sur les armements. Mais l'accord de la mi-janvier dernier est le premier à caractère global touchant aux relations militaro-stratégiques entre les deux pays.

Voici les principales dispositions contenues dans l'accord de coopération militaire franco-turc signé en

janvier dernier :

- visites réciproques en France et en Turquie, une fois l'an, des chefs d'état-major des armées des deux pays ou de leurs adjoints, pour superviser l'application de l'accord, qui sera automatiquement renouvelé tous les ans;

- coopération entre les forces terrestres, aériennes, navales et de gendarmerie des deux pays;

- coopération en matière de logistique entre les forces armées des deux pays;

- coopération sur les questions juridiques concernant la guerre et l'histoire militaire;

- coopération dans le domaine de la recherche et du développement dans l'armement, l'équipement et la technologie militaires;

- échange d'unités et de représentants de quartiers généraux, pour discuter du programme et de l'exécution des manœuvres militaires;

- Ankara et Paris confronteront régulièrement leurs analyses stratégiques, pour contribuer à préserver la stabilité et la sécurité dans le monde et dans la région

Le renforcement des relations entre la Turquie et la France devrait faciliter, selon le *Turkish Daily News*, l'intégration de la Turquie dans les programmes européens d'armement. Le commandant en chef des forces terrestres turques, le général Atilla Ates, était en France en décembre dernier, pour rallier le soutien de Paris au projet d'Ankara de prendre part à un programme européen de production de missiles multinationaux baptisé Trigat, qui prévoit la fabrication de missiles à moyenne portée. Le programme européen a déjà annulé la production d'un missile à longue portée, indique le *Turkish Daily News*.

Une alliance stratégique franco-turque conclue «dans l'ombre du Sénat», et qui sera sans doute présente à l'esprit de tous les Arméniens qui participeront à la manifestation du samedi 11 mars, entre 15 heures et 19 heures, devant la Haute Assemblée. ●

17 Appointed To UN Panel On Iraq Arms

By Barbara Crossette
New York Times Service

UNITED NATIONS, New York — Seventeen international arms experts have been chosen for a new commission charged with completing the disarmament of Iraq.

Hans Blix, a Swedish lawyer and the former head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, will lead the panel.

The new panel, the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, is replacing the UN Special Commission, or Unscm, which began the process of disarming Iraq in 1991 after the Gulf War. Iraq, which has to be certified free of prohibited weapons

before international sanctions imposed in 1990 are lifted, stopped cooperating with Unscm almost two years ago and has not signaled that it will allow a successor organization to operate there.

Among the new commissioners are three — from Britain, Canada and Finland — who were also Unscm commissioners.

The U.S. commissioner on Unscm, Charles Duelfer, who was also its deputy chairman, resigned last week. The United States apparently decided not to renominate him.

The list of commissioners, forwarded to the Security Council by Jayantha Dhanapala, the undersecretary-general for disarmament who participated in the selection, has fewer strictly technical experts or scientists than did Unscm and more political appointees drawn from government arms-control offices.

Together, they will serve as an advisory board to Mr. Blix, who became the new chief arms inspector for Iraq on March 1. He is a full-

time chairman while the commissioners are part-time consultants.

The panel is considered more broadly representative of the UN membership than was Unscm, which was dominated by experts from industrial nations with advanced weapons systems. The new body has members from Argentina, Brazil, India, Nigeria, Senegal and Ukraine, as well as from Canada, Finland, Germany and Japan. All five permanent members of the Security Council — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — are represented, as is the UN department of disarmament affairs.

Mr. Blix, who said last week that he intended to use the commission as a sounding board, is establishing a work plan and an organizational chart, which are not expected to be completed until early next month. At that point, Mr. Blix, the United Nations and the commission's full-time staff will be faced with the challenge of selling the plan to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Le changement de gouvernement éveille des espoirs de réformes en Syrie

Le président Hafez El Assad, dont l'état de santé suscite des interrogations à Damas, a nommé un nouveau premier ministre, Mohammad Miro, dont la mission devrait être de moderniser l'économie. Dans ce contexte, le fils du chef de l'Etat pourrait conforter son statut de dauphin présumé

DAMAS

de notre envoyé spécial

La Syrie va-t-elle sortir de l'immobilisme ? En chargeant Mohammad Mustapha Miro, gouverneur d'Alep, de former un nouveau gouvernement, le 7 mars, le président Hafez El Assad a pris une décision attendue depuis sa reconduction à la tête de l'Etat pour un nouveau septennat à la suite d'un référendum de pure forme, en février 1999. Ce faisant, le président a choisi de déconnecter ce sujet de la question de l'éventuelle reprise des pourparlers de paix avec Israël, suspendus depuis le 10 janvier.

M. Miro, sunnite, remplace Mahmoud El Zohbi, au terme de treize ans d'exercice. L'ancien

gouverneur d'Alep, deuxième ville de Syrie et métropole économique, arrive au pouvoir précédé d'une bonne réputation. Il est en effet tenu pour un « homme de terrain, doublé d'un réformateur » par des diplomates occidentaux en poste à Damas. Au cours de son exercice, M. Miro a notamment favorisé le jumelage d'Alep avec Lyon. Cette réputation ne lui sera pas de trop. Le nouveau premier ministre va être confronté à une tâche très rude, compte tenu de la situation économique délicate dans laquelle se trouve un régime usé, recroquevillé sur lui-même, et en panne de réformes depuis une bonne décennie. La composition de son équipe, décidée par la présidence, sera un nouvel indice de

la volonté de M. El Assad d'ouvrir son pays vers un peu plus de modernité.

Presque annoncé, le même jour, dans un entretien donné par le fils du président, Bachar El Assad, à l'écrivain et journaliste britannique Patrick Seale, familier du pouvoir syrien, et publié par le quotidien arabe édité à Londres, *Al Hayat*, le remaniement ne sera certainement pas l'occasion d'une table rase parmi les responsables du pays. Le nouveau premier ministre, âgé de cinquante-neuf ans, était d'ailleurs le doyen des gouverneurs, en poste à Alep depuis 1993. Dans son entretien, Bachar El Assad évoquait l'entrée d'« éléments jeunes » dans le futur gouvernement, avant d'insister aussi-

tôt sur l'importance des « hommes expérimentés » pour mener à bien les tâches de « réduction de la corruption et de modernisation de l'administration » assignées à la future équipe. Deux mots d'ordre qu'il s'efforce d'incarner.

DES UNIVERSITAIRES MINISTRES ?

Une longue liste de ministres potentiels court Damas depuis plusieurs semaines. Des techniciens de l'économie et des professeurs d'université pourraient ainsi faire leur entrée en lieu et place de responsables discrédités ou jugés notoirement incompetents. Ce changement ne touchera cependant pas le portefeuille des affaires étrangères, qui resteront le secteur dévolu à Farouk El Chareh, dépositaire de la confiance du président dans la perspective d'une reprise des négociations israélo-syriennes. Le poste de ministre de la défense, somme toute symbolique, devrait rester la propriété de l'immuable Mustapha Tlass.

Si la liste de la nouvelle équipe permettra de lever une première hypothèque, une seconde risque de rester entière. Le président va-t-il profiter de la circonstance pour faciliter l'accession de son fils, présenté avec insistance comme son dauphin présumé, à un poste officiel ? Reçu obligamment par le président de la République Jacques Chirac à l'Elysée, à l'automne 1999, Bachar El Assad n'est pour l'instant que le président de la Société syrienne d'informatique, accessoirement colonel de l'armée. Depuis le décès accidentel de son frère aîné Bassel, en 1994, Bachar n'a pourtant cessé de gravir les marches du pouvoir, dans la perspective de la succession de son père, une affaire complexe, délicate et encore bien incertaine.

Au cours de ces dernières années, le président Assad a progressivement écarté du pouvoir certains de ses compagnons d'armes jugés susceptibles de faire ombrage à un jeune responsable qui, à la différence de son frère, n'avait pas été « programmé » pour exercer les plus hautes fonctions de l'Etat. A la

es questions de sécurité dans les négociations avec les Israéliens. Faute de fonctions officielles, la position de Bachar El Assad reste encore fragile. La preuve en a été apportée cet automne après la prise

Une économie en récession depuis au moins deux ans

DAMAS

de notre envoyé spécial

Depuis un mois, les belles Syriennes peuvent faire leur entrée dans les restaurants chics de Damas ou d'Alep, sûres d'elles-mêmes, téléphone mobile en main. La profusion soudaine de publicités pour les portables sur les murs de la capitale syrienne ne doit cependant pas abuser : les 60 000 lignes mises à l'essai, à des coûts prohibitifs pour l'écrasante majorité de la population, resteront un privilège de happy few. La situation de l'économie n'est pas reluisante. La presse officielle, contrôlée étroitement, dénonce d'une façon quasi masochiste ses carences. Les députés syriens auront ainsi adopté le budget de l'Etat (environ 4 milliards d'euros) pour 1999 dans les premières semaines de l'année 2000... Les partenaires des Syriens, notamment l'Union européenne, s'impatientent.

En l'absence de données fiables, il est difficile de dresser un état des lieux exhaustif, mais l'économie syrienne, déjà pénalisée par une lourde dette (environ 22 milliards d'euros) contractée principalement au-

près des pays de l'ancien bloc de l'Est, est en récession depuis au moins deux ans. Structuellement, le pays est gêné par un corset de lois désuètes et parfois contradictoires, panachage entre les préceptes de l'économie administrée et quelques tentatives d'inspiration libérale. Concrètement, l'économie reste l'apanage de groupes assis sur de confortables monopoles en bonne intelligence avec certains cercles du pouvoir.

Les perspectives ne sont guère encourageantes. Faute de nouvelles découvertes, la production pétrolière syrienne, déjà modeste, va baisser. Des centaines de milliers de demandeurs d'emploi doivent arriver annuellement sur un marché du travail déjà saturé (près d'un million de Syriens travaillent au Liban). Paradoxalement, c'est de la démographie que pourrait venir une bonne nouvelle : selon une récente estimation d'une agence de l'ONU, la croissance de la population ne serait pas actuellement de 3,2 %, selon le credo nataliste en vigueur, mais de 2,2 %.

G. P.

La lancinante question des détenus politiques

En visite officielle en Syrie, mercredi 1^{er} mars, le ministre suisse des affaires étrangères Joseph Deiss, a indiqué au cours d'une conférence de presse avoir évoqué avec ses interlocuteurs syriens la question des « prisonniers ». Présent à Damas, le Comité international de la Croix-Rouge (CICR) n'est en effet pas autorisé par les autorités à visiter les prisons où sont détenus plusieurs milliers de prisonniers politiques, dont quelque trois cents Libanais, une situation dénoncée par toutes les organisations de défense des droits de l'homme. En France, le Comité international contre la répression vient de lancer un recueil de dessins et de poèmes (dont un de Mahmoud Darwich), intitulé *Pour Faraj Bayrakdar*, afin d'attirer l'attention sur le cas de ce poète syrien militant des droits de l'homme, gravement malade et détenu depuis onze ans.

d'assaut par les services de sécurité syriens du complexe résidentiel de Rifaat El Assad à Lattaquié, sur la côte méditerranéenne, jugé décidément trop remuant malgré son exil. Une violente algarade a ainsi opposé de l'armée et des services de renseignement sur lesquels repose le pouvoir, une purge a été entre-

prise. L'oncle de Bachar, Rifaat El Assad, « âme damnée » du régime, en a fait les frais, il y a deux ans, en perdant définitivement un titre de vice-président vidé de sa substance depuis longtemps. La dernière victime en date est le responsable du principal service de sécurité, les renseignements militaires, Ali Douba, dont l'étoile

pâlissait depuis plusieurs mois et qui a été remplacé par son numéro deux, Hassan Khalil, responsable du bras droit de Bachar pour les affaires de sécurité, Assef Chaouat, beau-frère de Bachar, au frère cadet de ce dernier, Maher, également responsable dans l'armée. Un titre de vice-président ou l'entrée dans le commandement régional

du parti Baas, le parti du président, permettraient sans doute de consolider ce statut inconfortable de dauphin. Reste à savoir si le président El Assad, dont l'état de santé serait chancelant, juge ce moment enfin venu.

Gilles Paris

« On a perdu cinquante ans, on est en retard dans tout... »

DAMAS

de notre envoyé spécial

Début février, un commentateur arabe vivant à Damas, Hicham Dajani, s'est étonné dans les colonnes de *Al-Hayat*, le prestigieux quotidien saoudien édité à Londres, du « silence assourdissant des intellectuels syriens » sur les négociations de paix entre la Syrie et Israël. Depuis la reprise contrariée des discussions entre les deux pays, la presse officielle syrienne s'est globalement contentée de reproduire la position des autorités. Seul Ali Okla Orsan, le président syrien de l'Union des écrivains arabes, s'est prononcé publiquement contre les négociations. L'Union avait exclu de ses rangs en 1995 le grand poète syrien contemporain Adonis, accusé d'être favorable à une normalisation culturelle avec Israël. Rencontré à Damas, le 2 mars, M. Orsan a confirmé cette opposition. Interrogés dans des conditions strictes d'anonymat, trois observateurs syriens nous confient leurs sentiments personnels et leurs réflexions. Trois attitudes face à une paix longue à venir.

● Le sceptique

« Qu'est-ce que je pense d'une paix avec Israël, franchement, je ne sais pas quoi dire ? Je suis pour. J'ai des amis israéliens. Mais le régime va présenter comme une victoire le fait de récupérer quelque chose qu'il a perdu, il y a plus de trente ans, et pour laquelle il porte une responsabilité. Et ça, ça me gêne. Je trouve aussi que le Golan, en Syrie, est devenu depuis vingt ans un dossier politique et non quelque chose de populaire. Il n'y a pas d'attachement affectif au Golan. A la limite, on se sent plus concerné et plus proche de ce qui se passe au Liban

sud, entre le Hezbollah et l'armée israélienne.

» Pour nous, le Golan ne représente rien de particulier sauf, bien sûr, pour les personnes qui ont été chassées par les Israéliens mais qui sont de toute façon des Syriens. Ce ne sont pas des réfugiés comme les réfugiés palestiniens. Cela fait tellement longtemps que l'on vit sans le Golan que l'on a pris l'habitude de s'en passer. »

● L'optimiste

« Il y a en Syrie un désir incroyable de changement. Le système est complètement bloqué. Après trente ans de loi martiale et de dépolitisation, on ne peut plus espérer qu'un changement vienne de l'intérieur. La conclusion d'un accord de paix, en revanche, peut être la clef du problème. De fait, je salue à l'avance cette paix parce qu'elle voudra dire pour la Syrie un changement radical. Depuis 1948, les militaires justifient leur présence à la tête de l'Etat par la guerre avec Israël. On voit combien leur projet a échoué puisque aujourd'hui on négocie seulement pour retrouver ce qu'ils ont perdu en 1967. Mais cette perspective de paix provoque plusieurs réactions. Il y a ceux qui sont pour, soit de leur propre jugement, soit parce qu'ils voient que le régime négocie cette paix, puis il y a ceux qui ne changent pas et qui considèrent qu'Israël va obtenir par la paix ce qu'il n'a pas obtenu par la guerre.

» Quand je vois que les Israéliens vont être consultés par référendum, qu'ils vont se prononcer sur la paix, je les envie, je trouve très beau qu'un gouvernement prenne ce risque, alors même que sur le Golan, les avis sont très partagés. Moi j'aimerais bien voter, même si cela reviendrait à voter pour ce régime, paradoxalement. Car on lui re-

connait au moins une chose, c'est sa capacité de négocier dans de bonnes conditions. Sur ce point, il fait un bon travail. C'est vrai que sur ce chapitre il vaut mieux être un Syrien avec un président comme le nôtre qu'un Palestinien avec Yasser Arafat. Je regrette vraiment que le régime ne sollicite pas le peuple à cette occasion. Mais il est incapable de le faire.

» Si je suis très impatient de voir la paix, je ne peux pas ne pas constater qu'elle va créer aussi un traumatisme très profond. C'est moins douloureux d'avoir été communiste et d'avoir vu la chute du mur de Berlin et l'effondrement de l'URSS. On a pu avoir été communiste par idéal, puis après découvrir qu'il y avait un énorme mensonge derrière de belles formules, que tout ce en quoi on pouvait croire n'était qu'une illusion. Avec la paix avec Israël, avec la normalisation, la réalité d'Israël ne va pas changer. On va découvrir non pas une illusion, un Etat que l'on refuse et qui n'est qu'une parenthèse, mais l'incapacité d'entretenir cette illusion. Ce qui fait que cette normalisation sera lente.

» Je crois vraiment que la balle est dans le camp des Israéliens. Il faut que la classe dirigeante change de mentalité pour que la paix puisse réussir. La normalisation, de toute façon, ce ne sera pas pour nous, Israël nous a pris une partie de notre vie. La nouvelle génération ne connaît pas Israël. Il en faudra sans doute trois pour que la normalisation devienne une réalité. »

● Le pessimiste

« On a tellement tout justifié au nom de l'état de guerre avec Israël que je suis pessimiste. Pour nous, la paix, c'est la clef de tout. S'il y a la paix, il y aura de meilleurs salaires, des réformes, une autre vie. Mais les intellectuels voient bien que le ré-

gime ne va pas changer de nature avec la paix, alors qu'il va se poser très vite pour nous un énorme problème économique. On va se rendre compte que si on a très bien négocié, et il faut le mettre au crédit du régime, on n'a absolument pas préparé la paix. On en parle depuis plus de dix ans, mais on n'a rien fait du tout et j'ai peur de la puissance économique israélienne. On a perdu cinquante ans, on est en retard dans tout, l'industrie, les communications... On a attendu le fax pendant des années et on est très en retard avec Internet et la mondialisation. On a bien vu en décembre 1999, lorsque les discussions ont repris. En Israël, la Bourse a flambé. En Syrie, personne n'a bougé. Les commerçants et les hommes d'affaires se sont dit : attendons. Ce que je redoute, c'est que les Israéliens se mettront d'accord avec ceux qui tiennent toutes les affaires en Syrie et nous, nous n'aurons aucune retombée.

» Si j'ai peur pour l'économie, je n'ai pas peur, en revanche, pour la culture, il y a une culture ici qui est syrienne, arabe. La normalisation, cependant, je n'y suis pas prêt. Il faut attendre. Je ne pense pas qu'on va avoir une situation comme en Egypte où l'écrasante majorité des intellectuels est hostile à la paix avec Israël parce que lorsque la Syrie signera, et avec elle le Liban, il n'y aura plus de pays arabes en guerre. Mais jusqu'à maintenant, Israël reste un ennemi qui occupe des territoires qui ne sont pas les siens. Il faut que les responsables israéliens changent, qu'ils arrêtent de mentir. On voit bien qu'ils ne parlent de la paix que pendant les campagnes électorales. Si on me demande maintenant si je suis prêt à aller en Israël, je ne saurais pas quoi répondre, je ne dis pas non, mais je ne dis pas oui. »

G. P.

EU Again Tells Turkey It Must Be More Democratic

By Stephen Kinzer
New York Times Service

ISTANBUL — As European officials renewed their calls on Turkey to become more democratic, a court sentenced former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan on Friday to one year in prison for a speech he gave in 1994.

The sentence seemed likely to bring a new round of criticism from European leaders. Several have visited in recent weeks to warn that Turkey has no hope of entering the European Union unless it repeals laws like the one under which Mr. Erbakan was convicted.

Mr. Erbakan, 74, has headed three religious-based political parties, all of which have been banned. He served as prime minister for one year, but resigned in 1997 under intense pressure from military commanders and others who accused him of plotting to overthrow the secular order.

In the speech for which he was convicted Friday, Mr. Erbakan asserted that Turkey had drifted away from its Islamic roots, and that secular politicians had driven a wedge between ethnic Kurds and other citizens.

He was found guilty of "provoking hatred." His lawyers said he would appeal.

Mr. Erbakan's conviction was announced a day after a senior European Union official described Turkey as the only country among the 13 official candidates for EU membership that was not yet democratic enough to join.

Günter Verheugen, the EU commissioner for enlargement, called Turkey "historically, economically and culturally part of Europe," but said it needed "fundamental political change" before it could qualify for EU membership.

"Is Turkey a country that doesn't meet the criteria?" Mr. Verheugen asked during a speech at Bosphorus University in Istanbul. "The answer is a simple 'yes.' Turkey does not yet meet the political criteria, and we can start political negotiations

only on the basis that Turkey does."

Asked to estimate how long it would take for Turkey to become an EU member, Mr. Verheugen told his Turkish hosts: "It depends completely on you."

"There will not be very much pressure from my side, but I think it is in Turkey's interest not to be sluggish," he said. "If you start the process now and determine to continue in a major way, it's only a couple of years and then we're in a completely different situation."

Mr. Verheugen said that before Turkey could be admitted to the union, it must address "sensitive issues like freedom of expression" and become "a stable democracy that respects the rule of law and human rights."

"If Turkey wants it," he said, "if Turkey wants it really, the EU is prepared to accept Turkey as a full member in the family of democratic European nations."

By phrasing his challenge that way, Mr. Verheugen seemed to be recognizing that Turkish leaders have lately appeared undecided about whether they were prepared to make the profound political changes necessary for EU membership.

In public, all senior political and military leaders in Turkey agree that joining the union should be a transcendent national goal. Over the last few weeks, however, there have been signs that powerful forces in Turkish society disagree.

European diplomats interpreted the arrest of three ethnic Kurdish mayors last month as one such sign. Some will probably view the verdict Friday against Mr. Erbakan as another.

Senior prosecutors, security officers and others have begun suggesting that the Turkish state would be in danger if laws that restrict free speech are repealed, if limits on religious political parties are lifted, or if ethnic Kurds are granted new cultural rights. Yet Turkey will probably not be able to join the European Union unless it takes such steps.

Khatami Ally Is Shot and Wounded in Tehran Attack

By Geneive Abdo
Special to the International Herald Tribune

TEHRAN — The political strategist behind the reformers' victories in parliamentary voting in Iran last month was shot at close range and seriously wounded in Tehran on Sunday.

Saeed Hajjarian, an adviser to President Mohammed Khatami and

the editor of an outspoken progressive daily newspaper, was hit in the left cheek from less than three meters (10 feet) away as he approached the Tehran city council building early in the morning.

A gunman with an accomplice on a high-powered motorcycle fired the shots, witnesses said.

"The gunman aimed his gun at Hajjarian's temple but because his hand was shaking, the first bullet struck him in the face," Mahmoud Alizadeh-Tabatabaei, a city council member, told the official news agency IRNA. A second bullet appeared to have missed.

Both assailants then fled on the 1000-cc motorcycle, which only police and security personnel are permitted to own.

The motorcycle has led investigators to speculate that the attackers were from the Intelligence and Security Ministry or the Is-

lamic Revolutionary Guards. Both institutions are dominated by conservatives who are waging a national struggle with the reformist movement.

Another indication that the shooting may have been part of a wider plot was that police guarding the city council building, who are armed with submachine guns, showed no reaction, witnesses and members of the city council said.

IRNA said witnesses had given the police descriptions of the attackers and the motorcycle.

Mr. Hajjarian, 46, was in critical condition Sunday night, suffering from swelling in his brain and respiratory problems, doctors said.

"One bullet entered through his left cheek and remains lodged at the back of his neck," said Dr. Mohammed Reza Zafarqandi, head of the Sina Hospital emergency team that treated Mr. Haj-

jarian.

The gangland-style shooting prompted the government to go on high alert. The Supreme National Security Council was scheduled to meet Sunday night in emergency session.

Mr. Khatami, who owes much of his political success to Mr. Hajarian's campaign skills, which handed the dark horse candidate an unexpected landslide victory for the presidency in May 1997, condemned the attack.

"Because the terrorists know they are hated by the people and have no place among the people, they carry out such actions," Mr. Khatami said while on a visit to his native Yazd Province.

"The enemies of freedom wrongly believe that they can attain their goals by assassinating a pious intellectual who was serving the nation," the president added.

Mr. Hajarian, a former deputy minister of the intelligence service, had received numerous written death threats in recent months, according to his friends. Sobh-e Emrouz, the newspaper he edits, has led a campaign to expose rogue agents in the intelligence service who carried out

the murders of intellectuals in 1998.

Mr. Hajarian was also blamed by conservatives for the reformers' solid victory in parliamentary voting Feb. 18. Since then, reformers have feared reprisals by their conservative rivals.

"Those who chose Hajarian to be their assassination target knew they would create a crisis in the country by doing so," said Ali Rabiei, who heads the secretariat of the Supreme National Security Council.

Even if Mr. Hajarian survives, the attack could spark a political crisis. Mr. Khatami will likely come under pressure to crack down on extremists opposed to his government. Such extremists, who belong to groups such as the Basij, an Islamic militia, and the Ansar-e Hezbollah, have partisans in the police and intelligence service.

The extremists have been at the center of two national crises in the last two years, yet Mr. Khatami's government has failed to implement an official policy bringing them to heel.

When the police attacked students at the Tehran University dormitories on

July 8-9, they were backed by Islamic vigilante squads. The raid, in which one person was killed and at least 200 were injured, sparked six days of the worst social unrest since the aftermath of the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

The trial of the Tehran police chief and 19 other police personnel, who are charged with illegally entering the dormitories and beating the students, began on Feb. 29. But students and their lawyers claim that the Islamic vigilantes, the real culprits, have been allowed to go free.

Meanwhile, hundreds of pro-democracy student demonstrators who participated in six days of unrest after the attack have been detained. One student charged in the demonstrations has had his death sentence confirmed by Iran's Supreme Court.

The second crisis involving extremists concerns the killing of four intellectuals in 1998. Rogue agents in the Intelligence and Security Ministry have reportedly confessed to the murders, but no action has been taken to cleanse the ministry, which is believed to be riddled with such extremists.

Iran: attentat contre l'homme qui en savait trop

Saïd Hajarian, proche du président Khatami, est dans le coma.

Jusqu'à présent, les attentats commis en Iran visaient les opposants et les intellectuels en délicatesse avec le régime. Hier matin, c'est un dirigeant réformateur, très proche du président Mohammed Khatami, qui a été victime à Téhéran d'une tentative d'assassinat, commise moins d'un mois après l'écrasante victoire aux législatives des partisans du changement. Saïd Hajarian, 47 ans, membre dirigeant du Front de la participation (FP, gauche islamiste), est à la fois le théoricien de la faction réformatrice et l'un des artisans de son triomphe électoral aux législatives de février. Il a été atteint de deux balles tirées par un tueur juché sur une moto de grosse cylindrée pilotée par un inconnu. Selon la police, le tireur a utilisé un colt muni d'un silencieux et visé la nuque. Saïd Hajarian se trouvait hier soir toujours dans le coma.

La faction réformatrice, à commencer par le président Khatami, a évidemment condamné l'attentat. A la fois ému et en colère, il a souligné, dans un discours tenu à Meybad (centre), la «ferme détermination du gouvernement à lutter sans merci contre la terreur, la violence et le meurtre». «Les ennemis ont déjà commis des meurtres et provoqué une vague terroriste dans le pays, sans toutefois atteindre leur objectif», a-t-il ajouté, dans une allusion aux meurtres commis fin 1998 contre trois intellectuels et un couple d'opposants. L'enquête ayant établi que ces cinq assassinats étaient imputables aux services secrets iraniens, c'est donc ceux-ci que le président iranien semble désigner. Avec une solennité qu'il n'avait pas utilisée lors des précédents assassinats, il a donné l'ordre aux services

«L'attentat, quels que soient ses auteurs, a été organisé par ceux qui ne sont pas contents des élections législatives.» Le directeur du journal «Iran News»

de sécurité d'identifier au plus vite les auteurs de ce crime».

En fait, tout le régime, y compris la faction conservatrice, s'est retrouvé uni pour dénoncer l'attentat. Le Conseil suprême de sécurité nationale, la plus haute instance de sécurité du pays, a décidé de se réunir d'urgence. Dans la journée, un représentant de l'ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Guide suprême de la République islamique, ainsi que tous les hauts responsables du gouvernement et de plusieurs instances du régime se sont rendus au chevet de Hajarian. Toutefois, personne n'est vraiment dupe de cette unanimité de façade, que la presse réformatrice a fait voler en éclats. Ainsi, le directeur d'Iran News (réformateur), Mohammed Soltanifar, a estimé que l'«attentat, quels que soient ses auteurs, a été organisé par ceux qui ne sont pas contents des élections législatives». Yadollah Es-lami, responsable du

Fath (réformateur), a ajouté qu'il existait «actuellement un courant politique en Iran, qui cherche à attiser les tensions par des attentats». Dès lors, c'est bel et bien la faction conservatrice que la presse, à mots couverts, a mis en cause.

Hajarian, directeur du quotidien Sobh-e Emrouz, faisait l'objet de huit plaintes déposées par la justice (elle-même aux mains des conservateurs), à la suite des révélations de son journal sur les «meurtres en série» d'opposants. Ancien vice-ministre des services secrets et créateur du terrible service de renseignements des Gardiens de la révolution, Hadjarian en sait beaucoup trop. A l'heure où la lutte entre les clans se radicalise, n'est-ce pas aussi pour cela qu'il a été visé ?

JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN



Hier, le chef des services secrets s'est rendu au chevet d'Hajarian.



LUNDI 13 MARS 2000

Alors que le régime d'Ankara continue à persécuter les Kurdes, les Quinze acceptent sa candidature à l'Union. Au risque de brouiller le projet politique européen.

Peut-on européaniser la Turquie?

Par KENDAL NEZAN



A Diyarbakir, le 28 février. Manifestation des partisans du PKK pour la libération du maire de la « capitale kurde » et de ses adjoints.

En décembre dernier, le sommet des Quinze, réuni à Helsinki, est convenu d'accorder à la Turquie le statut de candidat à l'Union. La sympathie suscitée par le terrible tremblement de terre d'août 1999 a été mise à contribution pour justifier aux yeux du public cette décision due, pour une large part, aux fortes pres-

sions américaines. Washington a voulu faire d'une pierre deux coups: récompenser une alliée fidèle et dévouée en en faisant payer la facture à l'Europe et brouiller le projet européen pour que l'Union ne reste qu'une zone de libre-échange sans identité politique, donc incapable de s'affirmer un jour face à la domination américaine. Cette

décision, lourde de conséquences pour l'avenir européen, n'a suscité de véritable débat ni dans l'opinion ni au Parlement français. A peine a-t-on entendu quelques libéraux comme Valéry Giscard d'Estaing contester ce choix au nom de la géographie, tandis qu'à gauche, Jack Lang invoquait la situation déplorable des droits de l'homme en Turquie, qui avait d'ailleurs valu à celle-ci d'être écartée

de la liste officielle des candidats arrêtée au sommet européen de Luxembourg, en 1997.

A cette occasion, certains leaders européens avaient déclaré qu'un Etat tortionnaire n'aurait pas de place à la table européenne. Le régime turc n'a guère changé depuis. Bien au contraire, avec l'arrivée au pouvoir, en avril 1999, d'une coalition ultranationaliste comprenant une forte composante d'extrême droite, il s'est nettement endurci. Force est donc de constater que ce sont les Européens qui ont dû faire machine arrière en affirmant, cette fois-ci, qu'une stratégie de rapprochement et d'inclusion serait plus efficace pour la démocratisation de la Turquie. Certains Européens, cyniques, se disent «pas mécontents» car la balle est désormais dans le camp turc, et comme Ankara sera incapable de se réformer pour remplir les fameux critères de Copenhague sur les droits de l'homme et de la démocratie, l'Union européenne sera tranquille pour longtemps.

D'autres, plus confiants, avancent que la perspective d'intégration européenne provoquera une dynamique de changement à Ankara. La décision d'Helsinki a eu un impact psychologique considérable dans l'opinion turque. Pendant quelques semaines, Turcs et Kurdes se sont cru déjà dans l'antichambre de l'Eldorado européen, plus riches et surtout plus libres. Surfant sur ces espérances, certains hommes politiques turcs ont promis des réformes et cela a suscité bien des espoirs. De son côté, à l'appel de son chef captif, le PKK s'est engagé à arrêter sa lutte armée afin de ne plus fournir d'alibi aux durs du régime opposés à une démocratisation qui finirait par mettre en cause leurs privilèges et prébendes. Les événements des dernières semaines rappellent, hélas, qu'il n'y a vraiment rien de nouveau sous le ciel turc.

Le vieux système nationaliste et autoritaire, étroitement contrôlé par l'armée, détient toujours les principaux leviers de commande et les médias. Il refuse à une délégation d'eurodéputés le droit de rendre visite à l'ex-députée kurde Leyla Zana, lauréate du prix Sakharov pour la liberté de l'esprit, embastillée depuis mars 1994 et condamnée à quinze ans de réclusion pour délit d'opinion. Pourtant, quelques mois plus tôt, le sous-secrétaire d'Etat américain chargé des droits de l'homme, Harold Koh, de passage à Ankara, avait pu s'entretenir avec elle. Face à un tel affront, Daniel Cohn-Bendit et ses collègues ont

annulé leur visite en Turquie. Juste après, voilà que Feridun Çelik, maire de la capitale kurde, Diyarbakir, et ses collègues de Siirt et Bingöl sont arrêtés pour «liens avec le PKK». La veille, M. Çelik avait dîné avec Mme Anna Lindh, ministre suédoise des Affaires étrangères à qui il avait fait

part des revendications culturelles kurdes.

Face au tollé provoqué en Europe par ces arrestations, Ankara a dû relâcher les élus kurdes, qui sont cependant toujours poursuivis par une Cour de sûreté de l'Etat et passibles de sept ans de prison. Dix-huit hauts dirigeants de leur parti, le Hadep, ont été condamnés à de lourdes peines de prison. Le très populaire chanteur Ahmet Kaya vient, à son tour, d'écopé de trois ans et neuf mois de prison ferme pour avoir déclaré vouloir faire une chanson en kurde.

Le message est donc clair et brutal: le régime turc, qui estime avoir vaincu la guérilla du PKK et maté le «terrorisme», ne veut pas entendre parler du problème kurde. Tous ceux qui contestent cette vision officielle, fussent-ils élus ou artistes de renom, doivent être réduits au silence. Depuis 1992, plus de 4 500 intellectuels

et militants osant témoigner du drame kurde ou susceptibles de constituer une solution démocratique ont été assassinés par les forces paramilitaires turques dans les fameux «meurtres non élucidés». L'un des instruments de cette barbarie, le Hizbullah, a récemment défrayé la chronique turque. Malgré des milliers de témoignages prouvant que les tueurs de cette organisation ont été entraînés dans les camps de la gendarmerie et de la police turques, qu'ils ont commis leurs crimes en toute impunité avec des armes fournies par les services de l'Etat, aucun responsable politique ou militaire n'est inquiété. Ce scandale est en train d'être étouffé, tout comme celui de Susurluk, qui, en 1996, avait révélé les liens entre la mafia, la police et une partie de la classe politique, fut enterré

alors qu'en l'Espagne, Etat de droit, de hauts responsables ministériels ont payé pour 28 meurtres attribués aux commandos du GAL.

Avec quelques gestes symboliques comme l'amnistie générale permettant aux militants du PKK de déposer les armes et la reconnaissance de certains droits linguistiques et culturels pour les Kurdes, qui forment entre le quart et le tiers de la population du pays, la Turquie aurait pu établir la paix civile et redorer son blason auprès de l'opinion européenne. Elle est en train de gâcher cette occasion historique. S'agit-il d'un combat de l'arrière-garde conservatrice et nationaliste contre l'aile réformatrice de la société qui comprend même le patronat turc? Peut-être. Il faut cependant se poser la question de savoir si le régime turc peut survivre sans crises et sans ennemis intérieurs (séparatistes kurdes, islamistes et militants des droits de l'homme) et extérieurs (Grèce, Syrie, Iran, etc.), si ce régime héritier de six siècles d'autoritarisme massif est réformable.

L'Europe, qui se montre, à juste titre, préoccupée par les événements d'Autriche, reste excessivement tolérante vis-à-vis d'Ankara qui revendique un Etat pour les quelques dizaines de milliers de Chypriotes turcs tout en refusant avec aplomb le moindre droit culturel à ses 15 à 20 millions de Kurdes. A ce train, faute d'européaniser leurs alliés turcs, les dirigeants européens ne courent-ils pas le risque de se turquiser moralement? ■

Kendal Nezan est directeur de l'Institut kurde de Paris.

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Turk PM Ecevit Says Europe "Racist" on Kurd Issue

ANKARA, March 12 (Reuters) - Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said on Sunday that European Union countries were guilty of racism for blaming Turkey's 15-year war with Kurdish rebels on ethnic division.

Asked on state TRT television whether European ministers and officials who have visited Turkey recently had difficulty understanding Turkey's relationship with the Kurds, he replied:

"Yes, they do have difficulty. In western Europe and partly in eastern Europe, there is a serious tradition of racism."

He denied there was any discrimination against 12 million Kurds in Turkey, a country of 65 million.

"There has never been any racism in Turkish society," said Ecevit. "There is no racial discrimination, it is not possible."

Turkey forbids education and broadcasting in Kurdish, bans that EU officials have demanded that Turkey lift if it wants to enter the 15-nation bloc. Until 1991, speaking Kurdish was also officially banned.

Ecevit said the Kurdish conflict arose from the structure of society in the southeast and was fanned by foreign interference.

"We are up against a separatist terror movement encouraged, provoked and supported both by some countries in the region and by certain circles of countries allied to us," he said.

Ecevit complained about the EU Commissioner for Enlargement Guenter Verheugen's use of the phrase "Kurdish problem" during a visit last week.

The foreign ministers of Sweden, Luxembourg and Denmark have voiced concern about the treatment of Kurds and human rights abuses in Turkey. The foreign minister of EU presidency holder Portugal is due to visit on Tuesday, the latest top official to beat a trail to Ankara since it was granted EU candidate status in December.

Al-Hayah
14 Mar 00
by 'Ali 'Abd-al-Amir

Iraq Dialogue Appeal 'Concealed Threat'

[FBIS Translated Text]

Amman -- Iraqi Kurdish sources have said that Baghdad's call for resuming the dialogue with the two main Kurdish parties -- the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP], led by Mas'ud Barzani, and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], led by Jalal Talabani -- is not a call for dialogue, but a "concealed threat." The sources said that the media in Baghdad described Kurdish forces as "agent cliques" and threatened Iraqi Kurds "a fate similar to that of the Kurds in Turkey and Iran."

The sources, which were speaking to Al-Hayah from al-Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq, added that "the Kurdish issue cannot be resolved in isolation from a comprehensive solution under which Iraq would be ruled by a democratic regime."

The sources emphasized that "Kurdistan cannot go back to Baghdad's security hegemony or to the days in which the security services ruled Kurdish areas with iron and fire."

The sources, which are close to the PUK, said that "the Kurdish people's forces will not allow a reoccurrence of the circumstances that (President) Saddam Husayn exploited to return his forces to Kurdistan" -- a reference to the infighting with the KDP in August 1996 when the Republican Guard entered Irbil.

The sources said that the Kurdish people in the province, which has not been under central state control since 1991, "has freedoms and refuses to return to the times of repression."

On the escalation in the Iraqi Government's rhetoric and threats against the Kurds, the sources said: "We have for years been hearing from the Baghdad government at the highest levels that they are going to end the strange situation in Kurdistan." The sources added that "an international and regional situation like the one that the Iraqi issue is experiencing at present makes it difficult for Saddam and his forces to hit the Kurds again." The sources pointed to "the international community's promises to protect the Kurds and regard the Iraqi forces' advance toward Kurdistan a line that the Saddam regime cannot cross."

However, the Kurdish sources considered the presence of deployments on the Kurdistan border a "routine matter", pointing out that the Iraqi Army "has for over two years been conducting maneuvers with live ammunition" in those areas.

US State Dept. on Halabja Anniversary

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
Office of the Spokesman
March 16, 2000
STATEMENT BY JAMES P. RUBIN, SPOKESMAN

Anniversary of the Halabja Massacre

Today we extend greetings to Muslims around the world on the beginning of Eid al-Adha. As we note this joyous occasion, we also recall that this day marks the twelfth anniversary of Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons attack on Halabja, a Kurdish city in northeastern Iraq. We understand that many Muslims in the Kurdish region have taken the extraordinary step of suspending the observance of the feast in order to commemorate the Halabja attack with fitting solemnity.

On March 16, 1998, an estimated 5,000 civilians were killed and 10,000 injured when Iraqi air forces bombarded Halabja with mustard and other poison gases. Twelve years after the massacre, the people of Halabja still suffer from very high rates of serious diseases such as cancer and birth defects.

The victims of Halabja deserve justice and the support of the international community. The attack on Halabja, which was a crime against humanity, is emblematic of a long history of criminal conduct by Saddam Hussein's regime. The United States has long called for an international tribunal to investigate, indict and, if possible, prosecute Saddam Hussein and his top lieutenants for their crimes, which continue to this day in the south and central parts of the country. We support international efforts to document Iraqi crimes against humanity and to establish a lasting record of Saddam Hussein's criminal culpability. The investigation and prosecution of Saddam Hussein for violations of international humanitarian law is long overdue.

The United States has a history of providing support for the prosecution of those responsible for genocide and crimes against humanity. We are doing the same to support the eventual prosecution of those responsible for Halabja. We are working towards the day when those ultimately responsible for the decision to order the poison gas bombardment of Halabja can be brought to justice before an international tribunal, in a free and democratic Iraq, or wherever they may be found. There is no statute of limitations for Iraqi crimes against humanity such as Halabja, and these crimes will not be forgotten.

Saddam Hussein's chemical weapons attack on Halabja was not an isolated incident. It was part of a systematic campaign ordered by Saddam Hussein and led by his lieutenant, Ali Hassan al-Majid, the infamous "Chemical Ali," against Iraqi Kurdish civilians. International observers estimate Iraqi forces killed 50,000 to 100,000 people during the 1988 campaign known as "Anfal." The Iraqi regime also killed at least 5,000 Iranians with chemical weapons during the Iran-Iraq War. The use of chemical weapons was outlawed in 1925 by a treaty to which Iraq is a party.

Iran : un attentat au mortier a fait quatre blessés dans le nord de Téhéran

Cette attaque, revendiquée par les Moudjahidines du peuple contre le quartier général du commandant des gardiens de la révolution, est la deuxième agression en un mois

LES IRANIENS n'ont décidément pas eu le temps de savourer la victoire des réformateurs, acquise dès le premier tour des élections législatives du 18 février. Alors que le pays se remettait à peine de la tentative de meurtre, dimanche, d'une des figures de proue des partisans du changement, Saïd Hajjarian, un attentat au mortier a fait quatre blessés dans le nord de la capitale, lundi 13 mars.

Le principal groupe de l'opposition armée iranienne, les Moudjahidines du peuple, a revendiqué cette attaque, affirmant qu'elle avait visé le quartier général de Rahim Safavi, le commandant des gardiens de la révolution islamique (*pasdarans*), la garde prétorienne du régime. D'après un porte-parole de cette organisation basée en Irak, cette attaque au mortier visait un « lieu uniquement fréquenté par des membres et officiers des gardiens de la révolution ». Mais, d'après la télévision iranienne, quatre civils ont été blessés.

Un journaliste de l'AFP, qui s'est rendu sur place, a pu constater que deux personnes au moins, dont une jeune fille, avaient été blessées. Des témoins ont indiqué à Reuters qu'un gardien de la révolution avait perdu les deux jambes dans une des explosions, et qu'une adolescente avait été touchée au visage par des éclats. Une dizaine de voitures en stationnement ont été endommagées ainsi que les façades de plusieurs appartements d'un immeuble résidentiel jouxtant la base.

Les Moudjahidines, qui avaient déjà revendiqué un attentat au mortier au cœur de Téhéran, quelques jours avant le premier tour

des législatives, affirment en outre avoir attaqué trois bases militaires dans la province du Khouzistan (sud), tuant le chef de l'unité de renseignements de la 92^e division. Ils font également état de la mort du colonel Zeinal Zadeh, un haut responsable du service des renseignements des gardiens de la révolution, dans une embuscade dans la ville d'Oroumieh (nord).

Par ailleurs, l'enquête sur la tentative de meurtre de M. Hajjarian (*Le Monde* du 14 mars) se focalise sur la recherche d'une moto de grosse cylindrée, normalement réservée au personnel de sécurité. Les inspecteurs ont fouillé de nombreux magasins et entrepôts, pour tenter de découvrir l'engin rouge sombre de 1 000 cc sur le-

quel se sont enfuis les agresseurs, a déclaré à l'agence officielle IRNA le responsable des recherches. « Les enquêteurs chargés de l'affaire établissent la liste des individus ou des organisations autorisées à utiliser ce type de motocyclette », a déclaré le colonel Hossein Mostofi. La législation iranienne restreint l'usage de motos de plus de 250 cc aux policiers, aux membres des services de sécurité et de renseignements, à ceux de la milice des Bassidj et aux gardiens de la révolution.

Le président iranien Mohammad Khatami s'est rendu lundi soir à son chevet. M. Khatami, très ému, qui rentrerait d'une tournée en province, a été conduit immédiatement dans la chambre de M. Hajjarian, qui est dans un état très grave et se trouvait toujours dans une unité de soins intensifs de l'hôpital Sina, à Téhéran. Dans une déclaration rapportée mardi par Radio-Téhéran, M. Khatami a rendu hommage à la « personnalité » de Saïd Hajjarian, indiquant qu'il « a toujours contribué au renforcement de la république islamique ».

Selon un neurologue iranien, venu spécialement de New York, le docteur Ghah Ramani Ghadjar, « le cerveau de M. Hajjarian fonctionne, et il n'y a pas de risque que ses vaisseaux soient bouchés ». Mais, a ajouté le médecin, cité par le docteur Mohammad Ghodsi, porte-parole de l'équipe médicale qui soigne M. Hajjarian, « un risque de gonflement du cerveau menace le malade, quatre ou cinq jours après un tel accident », ce qui signifie que cela pourrait se produire jeudi ou vendredi. - (AFP, Reuters.)

Washington maintient les sanctions

Les Etats-Unis ont annoncé, lundi 13 mars, qu'ils maintenaient les sanctions économiques imposées en 1995 à l'Iran. Justifiant cette prorogation, le président Bill Clinton a dénoncé le « soutien (iranien) au terrorisme international » et les « efforts (de Téhéran) pour miner le processus de paix au Proche-Orient ». Il a aussi accusé l'Iran de vouloir acquérir des armes de destruction massive. Un représentant du département d'Etat a toutefois indiqué, sous le couvert de l'anonymat, que Washington étudiait toujours « la réponse appropriée » que les Etats-Unis apporteront à la victoire des réformateurs aux élections législatives. - (AFP)

MERCREDI 15 MARS 2000

Le Monde

JEUDI 16 MARS 2000

Une délégation américaine dénonce les effets des sanctions contre l'Irak

WASHINGTON. Une délégation de cinq conseillers de membres démocrates et indépendants de la Chambre des représentants dénonce, dans un rapport publié mardi 14 mars, les effets sur la population des sanctions imposées par les Nations unies à l'Irak depuis 1990. Le rapport est le compte-rendu d'un voyage, le premier du genre, effectué en

Irak en août 1999. Il vise à convaincre le Congrès de voter un texte en faveur de la levée des sanctions appliquées après l'invasion du Koweït par l'Irak. « Le programme pétrole contre nourriture suffit à peine aux besoins physiques urgents des Irakiens, rien n'étant fait pour les besoins intellectuels », dit le texte. Il en résulte un isolement qui, selon le rapport, a rendu la classe politique émergente plus radicale encore que le président Saddam Hussein. Lundi, le secrétaire général de l'ONU, Kofi Annan, avait recommandé le doublement par le Conseil de sécurité des fonds consacrés au matériel pétrolier et aux équipements médicaux destinés à l'Irak. - (Reuters.)

Les Iraniens célèbrent les poètes mystiques et sensuels

THE WASHINGTON POST

Dans l'un des principaux lieux de pèlerinage d'Iran, les fidèles sont rassemblés autour d'une tombe abritée sous un toit de tuiles aux motifs délicats. Des femmes en longues robes noires s'agenouillent et posent le front sur le cercueil de pierre. Les hommes le caressent avec respect du bout des doigts. Une rose solitaire y est posée. En cette froide soirée d'automne, les habitants de la ville de Chiraz ne sont pas venus rendre hommage à un imam, ni à un ayatollah, ni à un martyr de la guerre, mais à un poète depuis longtemps disparu, Hafez, un écrivain du ^{xiv}^e siècle dont les vers sensuels, qui se présentent comme louant Dieu, font en réalité les délices des couples d'amoureux et constituent une source de ravissement inépuisable pour les Iraniens.

Les gens ne viennent pas ici seulement pour honorer son génie, mais aussi pour lui demander son avis en suivant un rituel selon lequel, debout devant sa tombe, ils présentent un volume de poèmes d'Hafez contre leur cœur, posent une question au poète, puis ouvrent au hasard le recueil pour obtenir une réponse.

"Voici ce que répond Hafez à ce tu as demandé : 'Où que tu souhaites aller, vas-y... Tu ne connaîtras plus la tristesse'", récite à haute voix Jalal Azizi, 24 ans, en lisant quelques vers tandis que son ami Nehdi Mahdimosleh l'écoute, découvrant ce que pense Hafez de son projet de se rendre à l'étranger dans le cadre de son commerce de tapis. Il semble qu'Hafez, en tout cas, ait été favorable à la mondialisation. Dans un pays où le Coran est censé apporter toutes les réponses et Dieu guider la moindre entreprise humaine, la scène est plutôt surprenante.

L'islam est une religion qui désapprouve la vénération d'hommes ou de femmes, toute adoration étant exclusivement réservée à Dieu. Le prophète Mahomet a été très clair sur ce point, ne cessant de répéter à ses compagnons qu'il n'était lui-même qu'un messenger. Ce qui compte, disait-il, ce sont les idées que l'on transmet, pas celui qui les transmet. Cette notion - à l'opposé, par exemple, de la pléthore de saints créés par le christianisme - a été quelque peu modifiée par les musulmans chiites, majoritaires en Iran. Ceux-ci, entre autres, révèrent comme une sorte de figure sainte le neveu du Prophète, Ali, et attendent avec espoir le retour d'un imam mort depuis des siècles.

Pourtant, le statut d'Hafez en Iran, comme d'ailleurs celui de toute une galerie de poètes iraniens, est très spécial : il s'agit de quelque chose qui frise la béatification culturelle. Même

ENQUÊTE . Le regain d'intérêt pour la poésie persane est une réponse à l'étouffoir religieux imposé par les ayatollahs. C'est aussi une affirmation du caractère national iranien après deux décennies d'islamisme.

► Sur la tombe du grand poète Hafez, à Chiraz.

■ **Hafez**
Shams al-Din Muhammad, surnommé Hafez ("Celui qui connaît le Coran par cœur"), est le plus grand poète lyrique persan du ^{xiv}^e siècle. Né en 1320 dans la ville de Chiraz, il mena de brillantes études de théologie et de littérature arabe et acquit la notoriété avec la publication, en 1368, du *Divan*, son premier recueil de poésies. Les poèmes d'Hafez chantent souvent l'amour et le vin, côtoyant non sans ambiguïté une poésie d'inspiration mystique.

■ **Bibliographie**
Deux recueils du poète persan ont été traduits et publiés en France : *Le Livre d'or du divan* (Seghers, 1991) et *L'Amour, l'amant, l'aimé* (Sindbad, 1998).



si les écrivains ont souvent cultivé les thèmes religieux et que certains, comme Hafez lui-même, sont considérés comme des religieux et des sortes de mystiques, ils font néanmoins de l'Iran un pays doté d'une profonde culture littéraire et d'une identité nationale, qui, par bien des aspects, se distingue du mouvement religieux qui a façonné la politique contemporaine du pays.

Le peuple iranien forme une population éduquée et encline aux débats. On trouve fréquemment des ouvrages d'Hafez et d'autres poètes à côté du Coran, même dans les foyers les plus pauvres. Les idées et la discussion ont ici une grande importance, ce qui explique peut-être pourquoi les aspects les plus extrémistes des premiers jours de la révolution sont aujourd'hui

d'hui peu à peu tempérés. Si, au cours de la première décennie qui s'écoula après la chute du shah, le pays, préoccupé par la guerre contre l'Irak, fut saisi d'une sorte de ferveur religieuse, il semblerait qu'ensuite, et aujourd'hui encore, on assiste à une réaffirmation du sentiment national.

De fait, durant les premières années de la révolution, les conservateurs religieux de Téhéran firent démonter une statue du poète Ferdowsi*, dont le poème épique *Shah Nameh*, ou *le livre des rois* [éd. J. Maisonneuve, 1976] avait tenté de redonner sa fierté à l'ancienne culture persane. Et ce à une époque où les Iraniens se sentaient quelque peu dévalorisés par les conquérants arabes qui introduisirent l'islam en Iran, au VII^e siècle. Aujourd'hui, la statue de Ferdowsi a été réinstallée et des lectures publiques du *Livre des rois* peuvent être organisées sans incident. Par ailleurs, le ministre de la Culture iranien a présidé au début de l'année une cérémonie exceptionnelle à Persépolis, où est situé le château en ruines de l'ancien roi perse Darios I^{er}, afin d'y célébrer le No Ruz, le nouvel an persan. Cet événement a coïncidé avec un décret du gouvernement informant qu'il ne voyait pas d'objection à ce que la population commémore la nouvelle année autour du grand feu de joie traditionnel, une coutume critiquée par les religieux conservateurs parce qu'elle s'enracine dans le zoroastrisme de l'Iran préislamique.

Aux yeux de certains de ceux qui se rassemblent autour de la tombe d'Hafez, la culture profonde et ancienne de leur pays ne peut que renforcer la tendance politique actuelle en faveur de la réforme et de la modération. "Cette tombe prouve que nous avons une grande et ancienne civilisation", remarque Nehdi Mahdimosleh, une civilisation qui, comme l'a encouragée le président Khatami, est avide de nouer avec le reste du monde un vrai "dialogue de civilisation" et non de s'isoler et de tenter d'exporter sa révolution. "Comme l'a dit Khatami, l'heure est aujourd'hui au dialogue. Nous avons une très ancienne culture et nous en sommes fiers." Quoique Hafez soit pour une part une figure

religieuse, l'ambiance qui règne autour de sa tombe n'est ni pieuse ni austère. Respectueuse, oui. Mais il ne faut pas insister beaucoup auprès des Iraniens pour qu'ils ouvrent leur exemplaire de ses œuvres poétiques, son *Divan*, et se mettent à le lire à haute voix pour le seul plaisir de jouir de ses sonorités.

"UNE RIVIÈRE, DE LA MUSIQUE, DU VIN, UNE AMIE. UNE SORTE DE PARADIS..."

A l'occasion d'une de ses visites quasi hebdomadaires à la tombe du poète, Reza Bordbar, 22 ans, lit un de ses textes favoris. "Une nuit, malgré mon grand âge, serre-moi fort entre tes bras pour qu'au matin de ton étreinte je sorte rajeuni", récite-t-il sous le regard de ses amis. "Attention, m'avertit-il, en Iran, les gens aiment parler de ce qu'ils ne peuvent pas voir de leurs propres yeux... Une rivière, de la musique, du vin, une amie. Une sorte de paradis... Je parle de Dieu." Soit. Mais nombreux sont en Iran les amateurs d'Hafez qui prennent au pied de la lettre ses évocations du vin et des femmes, et soutiennent qu'il était un homme d'une sensibilité si élevée qu'il percevait le divin dans les plaisirs quotidiens, un aspect de la poésie et de la culture persanes bien connu en Occident à travers l'œuvre d'Omar Khayyam**, mais qui se trouve un peu en porte-à-faux avec le puritanisme des vingt dernières années...

"J'adore Hafez", déclare Massoud Karam, un étudiant de 18 ans qui, avant de se rendre sur la tombe du poète, s'est arrêté pour manger une glace au salon de thé installé à proximité du mémorial, l'un des trois sites de Chiraz consacrés à des poètes mystiques. "Il dit que l'amour est une bonne chose... Qu'il est important dans la vie. Qu'il est nécessaire. Il dit cela de tous les peuples de la terre, souligne-t-il. Si tu veux consulter Hafez, il faut faire un vœu, dire : 'Hafez, aide-moi à savoir', puis ouvrir le livre." C'est ce que fit Karam, qui lut : "Viens, que nous puissions effeuiller la rose et verser le vin dans la coupe."

Howard Schneider

* Poète épique persan du X^e siècle.

** Savant et poète persan du XI^e siècle. Son œuvre fut traduite en Angleterre au XIX^e siècle par E. Fitzgerald.

IRAN

Le casse-tête Saddam Hussein

■ Presque dix ans après la fin de la guerre du Golfe, Saddam Hussein est en train de gagner la bataille, écrit *The Guardian*. Pour le quotidien britannique, le bilan d'une décennie de sanctions onusiennes contre Bagdad est loin de constituer une victoire pour le camp occidental. Jamais les Etats-Unis et le Royaume-Uni, fers de lance de cette politique, n'ont été autant isolés sur la scène internationale. Leurs accusations contre Saddam, stigmatisé comme le seul responsable de l'agonie de son peuple, ne convainquent plus personne. Au Conseil de sécurité, la France a même rejoint la Chine et la Russie pour critiquer les positions anglo-américaines.

A travers le monde, le dictateur irakien a su habilement exploiter les malheurs de sa population, qui survit sous l'embargo : épidémies, mortalité infantile, malformations génétiques,

famines... Ces images ont fait le tour de la planète. Au Moyen-Orient, l'Irak n'est plus un pays pestiféré. Il vient de signer un accord commercial avec la Turquie et a renoué des relations avec son ennemi héréditaire, la Syrie. Même la Ligue arabe lui fait un bon accueil et l'invite à ses réunions.

L'embargo a bel et bien échoué, et le dictateur irakien est toujours en place. Mais céder aujourd'hui aux exigences de Saddam Hussein et lever les sanctions sans conditions n'en est pas moins une politique à risques.

Elle aura un effet dévastateur sur la crédibilité de l'ONU dans le monde et risque de surcroît de se retourner contre le peuple irakien. Fort de cette nouvelle "victoire", le bourreau de Bagdad pourrait se sentir les mains libres pour frapper à nouveau ses opposants kurdes au nord de l'Irak et chiites au sud.

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Turkey writes comprehensive report to address Kurdish problem

- The Foreign Ministry is currently preparing a comprehensive report on the issue of the Kurds and current practices concerning minorities in Turkey. In addressing the Kurdish problem, the report takes France as a model. The report first examines European Union approaches to the minority issue and then elaborates on the situation in Turkey. It tackles in depth the delicate issue of Turks of Kurdish origin and whether they should have the right to run TV broadcasts and other publications in Kurdish
- The report argues that the relevant articles of the Constitution should initially be amended to recognize the right of equal citizenship, leaving no room for the EU to impose unacceptable concepts such as minority rights for the Kurds on Turkey. In a related development a pending bill will pave the way for the establishment of a Human Rights Directorate affiliated with the Prime Minister's Office under which all the ministries will be required to give an accounting of human rights violations

Lale Sariibrahimoglu

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

The Foreign Ministry is currently preparing a comprehensive report on the issue of Turks of Kurdish origin and Turkey's current practices towards minorities. This report represents an attempt to readjust its current laws and regulations to fit those of the European Union and to meet the Copenhagen criteria which Turkey is seeking to abide by before its pre-accession talks on full membership can start. The report will address the thorny issue of Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin, examining the current Constitution and the relevant articles of the Lausanne Peace Treaty of 1925. The issue of Turks of Kurdish origin and of the military's subordination to the civilian Ministry of Defense are two delicate points that to the contrary were not addressed in a comprehensive report released in February written by the Prime Ministry's Human Rights High Coordination Board Secretariat. That report was included in the eighth development plan of the State Planning Organization (DPT) and covers the next five years.

In an attempt to address the controversial issue of whether the Kurds should be allowed to produce TV broadcasts and print publications in Kurdish, the report will explore in depth the practices of EU member countries on such issues and how the problem in Turkey could be addressed. The already-completed first part of the report examines current EU practices in about 20 pages. The policies of EU member France, which recognize equal citizenship regardless of ethnicity or language, appear to be a good model for Turkey to follow in addressing its own problems. The report's second part, currently under preparation, will examine the Constitution of 1982 and the Lausanne Peace Treaty. The report argues that Article 2 of the Constitution should initially be amended in order to recognize rights for equal citizenship, replacing the current policy of discrimination among its citizens.

The essence of an amended Constitution should be to accept all the citizens of Turkey equally regardless of their ethnic roots and religion, argues the report, adding that if the necessary amendments are made to the Constitution, there would be no room left for the EU to impose concepts such as minority rights for the Kurds on Turkey. For example, in France, the report notes, French is recognized as the only official language to be taught in state schools, but its Constitution allows citizens from various groups to run private schools where other languages are taught. The Foreign Ministry report stresses that although Article 26 of the Turkish Constitution violates Article 39 of Lausanne Treaty in its current form, it still does not forbid the essential right of Turks of Kurdish origin from producing TV broadcasts or print publications in Kurdish.

Article 39 of the Lausanne Treaty says, "No restrictions shall be imposed on the free use by any Turkish national of any language in private intercourse, in commerce, religion, in the press, or in publications of any kind or at public meetings." The report argues that despite the necessity for changes in the Constitution to recognize rights of equal citizenship in place of its current exclusivist approach, there are still no legal obstacles for the Kurds to produce publications in Kurdish.

Under the Lausanne Treaty, non-Muslim communities of Greeks, Jews and Armenians are recognized as minorities. Seeking to institutionalize the current thinking on issues related to human rights, the government is also expected to pass a bill to turn the existing Human Rights Coordination High Board into a Human Rights Directorate, which is to be affiliated with the Prime Minister's Office. This will make binding on all ministries and related institutions a requirement to abide by human rights practices and to give an accounting of any misconduct in those areas. Under the bill, a Human Rights Consultation Board composed of representatives of all the ministries as well as nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) monitoring human rights practices will be established. Under this law, delegates would be appointed to monitor instances of torture and violations of human rights.

Le PKK reprendra la guerre si Ocalan est exécuté, selon un de ses chefs



LA HAYE, 11 mars (AFP) - 18h45 - Un des principaux chefs militaires du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), Murat Karayilan, réfugié aux Pays-Bas depuis novembre, a affirmé samedi que le PKK reprendrait la lutte armée en Turquie si son leader Abdullah Ocalan était exécuté.

"Nous voulons la paix mais si notre leader est pendu nous ressentirons cela comme la mort de tous les Kurdes. Ce sera alors le début d'une nouvelle guerre", a déclaré à l'agence de presse néerlandaise ANP M. Karayilan qui attend une réponse à sa demande d'asile politique aux Pays-Bas.

Depuis la condamnation à mort d'Abdullah Ocalan par la justice turque en juin 1999, les séparatistes kurdes du PKK prônent une solution pacifique du problème kurde et le parti a proclamé l'abandon de la lutte armée lancée en

M. Karayilan qui était l'un des principaux chefs militaires du PKK, avec Cemil Bayik et Osman Ocalan, frère d'Abdullah, a cependant affirmé que "le PKK est prêt à tout pour la paix".

"Nous demandons très peu, juste la reconnaissance légale de l'identité kurde", a-t-il précisé.

Il a regretté "qu'aucun signe positif ne soit venu d'Ankara" depuis l'abandon de la lutte armée par son parti.

M. Karayilan a affirmé être venu aux Pays-Bas afin de "poursuivre par la voie démocratique notre lutte pour la paix et la démocratie".

"Je suis là pour présenter notre nouvelle stratégie pacifique à l'ensemble de nos membres", a-t-il ajouté.

La Turquie a demandé l'extradition de Murat Karayilan en février.

Turkish Police Detain 350 in Demonstration

12-3-00-AP

ISTANBUL, Turkey (AP) -- Police swept a predominantly leftist and Kurdish neighborhood Sunday, detaining some 350 people as hundreds gathered for a protest march commemorating a deadly 1995 clash with police.

Several thousand police officers, including anti-riot police and special units with face masks and assault-style weapons, filled the Gazi neighborhood as the protesters gathered for Sunday's march. Police searched demonstrators, apartment buildings and tea houses. Some 350 people were detained, the Anatolia news agency reported.

Despite the police presence, more than 200 people walked through Gazi neighborhood, chanting "Down with the police state!" and "Justice for Gazi's martyrs!" Twenty-one people were killed there during four days of rioting in March 1995, when police clashed with thousands of people protesting a coffeehouse slaying by unidentified gunmen.

This year's demonstration comes 10 days after 18 policemen were acquitted and two were convicted of murder for shooting into the crowd. The two policemen, who had served 20 months pending trial, were freed.

During Sunday's demonstration, many protesters carried pictures of those who died in the police attack.

"We, the relatives of the martyrs and the people of Gazi, will not give up fighting this injustice," community leader Huseyin Polat said in front of the coffeehouse, where a black sheet and red carnations covered the door.

Relatives of the victims plan to appeal the verdict in Turkish courts and in the Strasbourg based European Court of Human Rights.

Une réunion du parti pro-kurde Hadep pour le Nevroz interdite à Istanbul

ISTANBUL, 19 mars (AFP) - 17h39 - Le Parti de la Démocratie du Peuplepro-kurde) s'est vu interdire dimanche une réception en l'honneur du Nevroz, le nouvel an kurde, prévue dans un hôtel d'Istanbul, a constaté l'AFP.

La réunion a été interdite parce que la demande d'autorisation déposée par le parti, Nevroz était écrit en kurde, "Newroz", alors que la lettre "w" n'existe pas dans l'alphabet turc, ont expliqué les dirigeants locaux du Hadep.

"Ecrit ainsi. Newroz n'est pas un mot turc", explique la lettre du gouverneur d'Istanbul envoyée au Hadep, dont l'AFP a obtenu une copie.

Or "les partis politiques ne peuvent utiliser une autre langue que le turc", stipule le texte signé du gouverneur adjoint Osman Demir, en conséquence de quoi la demande n'a pu être prise en considération.

Le Nevroz, célébré tous les 21 mars par la population kurde, "ne peut en outre pas être considéré comme une fête nationale", précise le texte officiel.

Cette réception, à laquelle devaient participer le président du Hadep et divers artistes et intellectuels, devait remplacer les autres festivités prévues pour le Nevroz, également interdites, a indiqué à l'AFP le secrétaire adjoint de la branche régionale du parti. Mehmet Torus.

"Nos demandes de meetings à ciel ouvert, ainsi que les affiches prévues pour le Nevroz, ont été frappées d'interdiction sans aucune raison", a expliqué Mehmet Torus.

La mesure vaut pour Istanbul, où vit la plus grande concentration de la population kurde, ainsi que pour un grand nombre de provinces du pays, a-t-il précisé.

Cette manifestation populaire devrait en revanche se tenir normalement à Diyarbakir, principale ville du sud-est à majorité kurde.

Le président du Hadep, Ahmet Turan Demir a été condamné le 24 février à 3 ans et neuf mois de prison pour soutien au Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, ancienne rébellion kurde), et le parti est lui-même menacé d'interdiction pour les mêmes raisons.

Efforts underway to establish a liberal Kurdish party

On the issue of setting up a liberal Kurdish party DKP leader Serafettin Elci says that they are pleased to see the Kurdish interest in the party but that they also recognize that it is hard for different groups who have so far acted independently to dissolve their legal identities by uniting under a common name

Mar 23, 2000
Ankara - Turkish Daily News

"It is pleasing to see the Kurdish interest in the establishment of a Kurdish liberal party but it is also hard for political groups or parties who have acted independently to unite under a common umbrella by giving up their legal identities," explained Democratic Mass Party (DKP) leader Serafettin Elci, one of the Kurdish intellectuals working for the establishment of a liberal Kurdish party.

Explaining the new Kurdish party project to the TDN yesterday, Elci said that a commission has been formed to implement the project and that successive meetings by Kurdish intellectuals and politicians in Ankara on January 16 and 17 yielded a decision on the establishment of a new party.

According to Elci, the commission, headed by New Democracy Movement (YDF) former Deputy Mehmet Emin Sever, will operate for approximately three months before a comprehensive meeting will be held to accelerate the establishment of the party.

Difficulty of bringing Kurds together

Responding to a question by the TDN as to whether it is difficult to bring Kurds together under a common party, Elci said that this is one of the most difficult tasks in the world.

"It seems that it will be hard for Kurds who have so far acted independently to come together into a common party by dissolving their own legal identities. But I believe that common sense will rule in the end and Kurds will see the necessity of acting together. Yet it is still not compulsory for Kurds to be united under a common party flag because they are a large society comprised of groups with different political views," Elci said.

Arguing that it is normal to have different political parties formed around different political causes and on the basis of different party programs, Elci said: "Different political parties exist as long as there are different political views. But in the future we may have a common viewpoint. We need time to ensure true political unity. By no means am I insisting that there should be a single party under which all Kurds are united, there may well be different political parties."

Kurds not familiar with liberal democracy

Elci stated that the efforts to form a liberal Kurdish democratic party elicited a positive reaction even from circles who are not known to be the proponents of liberal political ideals, and that the outlook for the party seems to be promising.

"We do not expect a boom in liberal ideals. Kurds have always pursued policies based on Marxist ideals. The liberal democratic understanding we are currently pursuing is a somewhat unfamiliar to the Kurds," Elci concluded.

Sensitivities over 312

Turkish Daily News

Editorial by Ilnur Cevik

March 16, 2000

The Turkish government is once again under pressure, both from outside and from within the country, to change Article 312 of the penal code and lift the serious limitations on freedom of speech.

Recently we commented that Turkey did not have the luxury of keeping an article such as 312 in its penal code and thus restricting freedom of expression. Just as we were making this comment Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Turk was telling journalists "Turkey does not have the luxury of completely scarping Acticle 312..."

Minister Turk called us on Wednesday, as he was travelling out of the city to the Black Sea township of Bafra, and explained in detail that Article 312 is not simply a piece of legislation to silence people but is an anti-sedition law designed to protect the country. He said: "I am just passing through Corum, which was the scene of sectarian riots before the 1980 coup which left scores of people dead. This Article 312 was legislated to prevent such incidents and preserve the unity of the country."

The minister also explained that some circles in Turkey felt lifting Article 312 would harm the struggle against Islamic fundamentalism. Of course it did not need great talent to understand that the military leads these "circles."

Minister

Turk had a meeting with Chief of General Staff Gen. Huseyin Kivrikoglu only recently, and it is obvious the military leader conveyed his reservations about lifting Article 132. It is also well known that the conservative establishment in

Turkey feels Article 312 is a safety valve against Kurdish separatism.

All this is fine. People have sensitivities and fears. That is understandable. But we see very clearly that Article 312 is being used to silence people, rather than protect the country from sedation.

No one took to the streets and tried to riot after Necmettin Erbakan made his fiery speech which got him a one year prison sentence. Hasan Celal Guzel, a former prominent minister who is serving a prison term after being convicted on article 312, did not call the people to stage an uprising. All he did was to criticize the system and he found himself behind bars. Many of the prominent criters and personalities convicted from article 312 had nopthing to do with sedation buit they were silenced because this law was being exploited by those who have very little regard for freedom of expression.

Now Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit has realized this as well as feels the law should be amended so that it cannot be used as a weapon to silence free speech. We feel the government has to act fast to wipe out this shame. But while doing so we also feel the government should see to that that the opponents of free speech in Turkey do not use other articles in our laws to silence people. Some Turkish authorities have used other articles in the past like article 8 of the anti-terrorism law to silence people and had to stop only after pressures from the West. When that happened they started using article 312 of the penal code.

Let us protect the state and the unity of the country with all our means but let us do this in a democratic environment and not through trying to silence people.

Rights Issues Hover Over Helicopters to Turkey

Washington Post
By Nora Boustany
March 17, 2000

Amnesty International is concerned that the U.S. government may approve an export license to Bell-Textron for what may be the largest sale in history of attack helicopters to Turkey. Fears stem from past use of such helicopters to strafe Kurdish regions and deliver troops there, the human rights group said, and from what it said is Turkey's failure to meet human rights standards set earlier by the U.S. government.

Negotiations for a \$4 billion purchase of 145 helicopters are in the final stages with three bidders. State Department officials are split on whether to grant an export license if Turkey chooses Bell-Textron, which is Turkey's expressed preference, according to human rights activists who have been following up on the case with U.S. officials.

Turkish Ambassador Baki Ilkin said his country prefers to purchase American planes because its aging fleet is mostly from Bell-Textron. When asked why so many choppers were needed, Ilkin said the order "may seem huge, but we have over half a million men in our armed forces. We are replacing old helicopters and buying more."

Turkey's board of military industrialization will make a decision between March 25 and April 8 from three offers from Bell-Textron, Agusta of Italy and a venture between Israeli Aircraft Industries and Russia's Kamov.

In 1998, the State Department formulated eight human rights benchmarks, based on priorities articulated by then-Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz to President Clinton in a December 1997 meeting, and approved an export license contingent on Turkey's meeting those benchmarks. They include: expanding freedom of expression, releasing imprisoned politicians and journalists, prosecuting police who commit torture, ending harassment of human rights defenders and nongovernmental organizations, returning internally displaced people to villages, ceasing harassment of and bans on political parties, ending a state of emergency, and adopting clear rules of engagement and monitors on the use of U.S.-supplied weapons.

In public statements in the past two weeks at a hearing on Capitol Hill and at a news conference on the State Department's latest human rights report, Harold Koh, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights and labor, said several of the criteria have not been met. He cited the detention of three elected mayors of Kurdish origin, disruption of freedom of assembly, excessive use of force and the suspension of certain television programs. He said on Feb. 25 that Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and President Suleyman Demirel "have taken steps forward" but that Turkey must comply with international human rights standards, acknowledge cultural and linguistic rights for the Kurds, allow free speech and respect freedom of assembly.

"Because of pressure concerning Turkey's sought membership in the European Union, this is a sensitive time for Turkey," Amnesty International's executive director, William F. Schultz, said in an interview yesterday. "The European Union has been strict and firm on human rights criteria. For the United States not to take those kinds of criteria seriously for particularly economic reasons really places the U.S. in an embarrassing position."

Turkish laws that ban free speech are still on the books; prominent blind playwright Esber Yagmurdereli is still in jail; the former president of Turkey's Human Rights Association, Akin Birdal, was released only temporarily for health reasons and is expected to return to prison on March 23, said Amnesty's Maureen Greenwood. Leila Zena, a Kurdish politician, is also still in jail.

Ilkin said Turkish troops are involved in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Kosovo and argued that his country's armed forces need a "strong defense capability" so they can contribute to peace and stability in the region. Told about the concerns of human rights groups, he said: "I think we decide on what we need and we acquire what we need. . . . We are restructuring the army so it has more mobility and rapid action units. We are surrounded by a lot of crises, in the Balkans, Kosovo, internal troubles in Georgia, the Caucasus, and we are following developments in Iraq."

He added, "Turkey is in a delicate part of the world. This purchase is not for the declaration of wars but so that peace can prevail. . . . Assault helicopters are part of our inventory of arms."

Turkey to Allow Limited Kurd New Year Celebrations

ISTANBUL, March 18 (Reuters) - Turkish officials have relaxed restrictions on Kurds publicly celebrating their annual spring festival, the main legal Kurdish party said on Saturday.

Festivities for Newroz, or Kurdish New Year, on March 21 are to be allowed in Diyarbakir, the southeastern regional capital, as well as in some southern and western cities, a spokesman for the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) told Reuters.

But petitions for similar celebrations were rejected in all other mainly Kurdish cities as well as Istanbul, home to a large Kurdish population swelled by years of migration from the embattled southeast.

"I think this discrepancy basically reflects the attitude of local authorities in those places," HADEP'S Mahmut Esiyok said.

"They should not stop the people from celebrating Newroz," a HADEP statement said. "We believe the people will lay claim to their festival, celebrating it in a peaceful way."

Newroz is traditionally a time of protest for Turkey's restive Kurds and a rallying day for Kurdish nationalists. Youths leap over bonfires in an ancient rite linked to similar March 21 festivities in Iran and Central Asia.

Organised celebrations have been banned in Diyarbakir for years. Hundreds of people were arrested at illegal Newroz festivities in Istanbul last year which threatened to turn violent when riot police opened fire into the air.

Fighting between jailed Abdullah Ocalan's Kurdish rebels and Turkish troops in the southeast has all but ended since Ocalan was sentenced to death last June and ordered his PKK to seek peace with Turkey.

Hopes have been rife that Turkey's policy towards its 12 million Kurds might change after Ankara was made a European Union member candidate last year.

But the government has so far shown no signs of allowing Kurdish cultural rights, such as broadcast and education, or lifting a state of quasi-martial rule in the southeast.

Ocalan is on a Turkish prison island, awaiting a European right court ruling on his appeal on the grounds that the death penalty violates European law. He was sentenced for leading his PKK's 15-year campaign for self-rule in which more than 30,000 people have died.

Le PDK annonce le prochain jugement de "terroristes" islamistes

DUBAI, 17 mars (AFP) - 18h09 - Le Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) de Massoud Barzani a annoncé vendredi le prochain jugement de "terroristes" islamistes accusés d'avoir perpétré des attentats dans le Kurdistan irakien.

Dans un communiqué reçu à Dubaï, un porte-parole du PDK précise que "des personnes accusées de crimes terroristes à Erbil seront déférées prochainement devant un tribunal équitable pour être jugées publiquement".

Selon le communiqué, "ces accusés ont fait des aveux détaillés à la télévision staltitaire Ktv, appartenant au PDK, selon lesquels ils avaient commis des assassinats, des explosions et d'autres actes terroristes, notamment à Erbil".

Le communiqué reproduit les aveux présumés de quatre accusés: Abdel Moneem Abderrahman Mohammed, Hussein Kamal Aziza, Ali Hussein al-Mokhtar et Moussa Rassoul Hédi.

Le communiqué déplore que "le Mouvement de l'Unité Islamique, une organisation politique reconnue (dans le Kurdistan irakien qui échappe au contrôle de Bagdad), ait accusé le gouvernement local de chercher à tenter un procès à ces personnes, d'une manière irréfléchie".

Le PDK et l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK, de Jalal Talabani) se partagent le contrôle du nord de l'Irak depuis que cette région a échappé à l'autorité de Bagdad, après la guerre du Golfe (1991). Ils avaient formé un gouvernement non reconnu internationalement, à l'issue des élections législatives de 1992.

Turkish Minister Denies Ocalan Lives in Luxury

ANKARA (March 17) XINHUA - Turkish Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Turk said on Friday that Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), did not live in luxury as it was assumed, but he had a radio and could read newspapers every day.

"Today, punishment aims at not exterminating criminals, but training them to be useful for the society in future," the Anatolia News Agency quoted Turk as saying at Salpazari town of Trabzon province in the Black Sea Region.

Turk seems to support life imprisonment for Ocalan. "While taking the decision (on Ocalan), Turkey's high interests will be taken into consideration by the Parliament. It is very easy to exterminate a person but life imprisonment is a very heavy sentence and punishment."

Turk said that his country, which has been accepted a European Union candidacy, has set up a commission to scrutinize the Turkish Penal Code (TCK).

Capital punishment has been annulled in Europe while there is death sentence only in Turkey which sees itself a European country.

"Turkey has not carried out any capital punishment since 1984. A total of 57 people have been sentenced to capital punishment since 1991. Ocalan is among them," the minister said.

Ocalan had been leading the PKK in an armed struggle for an independent Kurdish state in southeast Turkey since 1984. The long- time conflict has claimed thousands of lives.

The PKK chieftain was captured last year by Turkish security forces and was later sentenced to death by a court.

Turkey is waiting for a decision by the European Court of Human Rights' (ECHR) about Ocalan. Only after the ECHR makes such a decision, the country will decide whether or not to carry out the death sentence for Ocalan.

THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 18 March 2000



■ **DIPLOMATIC THAW** The nation once branded a 'terrorist state' is suddenly embraced by Washington to bolster Khatami's democratic reforms

America ends half a century of hostility to Iran

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

THE UNITED States took a major step towards normalising relations with Iran yesterday, announcing the easing of economic sanctions and coming close to apologising for past interventions in Iranian affairs.

The policy shift, which entailed a comprehensive revision of the US approach to Iran over the past half-century, was set out by the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright.

In a speech laced with calls for "a new beginning" to coincide with the Iranian New Year next week, Ms Albright announced an end to the ban on imports of Iranian luxury goods into the US, including carpets, pistachio nuts, dried fruit and caviar – of limited significance in US economic terms but key to the Iranian economy. The



Albright: 'Easy to see why Iranians resent US'

gesture could open the way for Iran to import US wheat.

Ms Albright, speaking in Washington at a conference arranged by a pro-business group, the Iranian-American Council, also said the US was ready to negotiate "a global settlement" of Iran's outstanding

legal claims against the US, to include the return of Iranian assets frozen since 1979.

The tone of Ms Albright's speech was conciliatory towards Iran as an Islamic state. "We recognise that Islam is central to Iran's cultural heritage," she said. She spoke of "a growing number of areas of common interest", including stability in the Persian Gulf region.

In a clear overture to Iran's intellectual community, Ms Albright offered a critical survey of US policy towards Iran over 50 years, which included references to US involvement in the coup against Mohammad Mossadegh in 1953, and support for Iraq in the 1980s Gulf conflict. While US backing for Iraq was "shortsighted", she said the anti-Mossadegh coup "was clearly a setback for Iran's political development and it is easy to see now why many

Iranians resent US intervention in their affairs".

The US broke off relations with Iran in 1979 after the overthrow of the Shah and the seizure of its embassy in Tehran by Revolutionary Guards. The election of Mohammad Khatami as President in 1997 led to a very cautious *rapprochement*. In 1998, Washington announced it would ease travel for academics and sports teams and would lift sanctions on some exports of food and medicine to Iran.

Ms Albright conceded yesterday that "after the election of President Khatami we had to adjust the lens through which we viewed Iran". The landslide election of reformers to parliament last month sealed the change of mood in Washington.

But Washington is still holding the biggest prize. Earlier this week, President Clinton renewed the ban on US investment in Iranian oil for another year. It will be lifted, according to US officials, when Washington is satisfied that Iran is committed to nuclear non-proliferation and will not obstruct the Middle East peace process.

A TROUBLED HISTORY OF SPIES, REVOLUTION AND FATWA

1953: Britain and US help army officers to depose Mohammad Mossadegh, premier who wanted to nationalise the oil industry.
1979: Shah flees after demonstrations and strikes. Ayatollah Khomeini (above) returns from exile and takes power. Students seize 63 hostages at US embassy.
1980: US bid to rescue



hostages ends disastrously, humiliating president Carter (right). Shah dies.
Iraq-Iran war (ends 1988).
1981: Last US hostages freed after 444 days.
1985-6: US-Iran talks lead to arms shipments, allegedly for Iranian help in releasing US hostages in Lebanon. But profits went to Nicaraguan rebels, in what became Iran-Contra crisis.
1989: Khomeini dies; Rafsanjani elected president.
1990-91: Rapprochement

with West hindered by Khomeini's 1989 fatwa on Salman Rushdie.
1993: Bill Clinton takes office then tries to isolate Iran, accusing it of terrorism.
1995: US sanctions on Iran.
1997: Muhammad Khatami elected President of Iran; later calls for a "dialogue with the American people".
Source: BBC World Service



KDP Holds First Nevruz Reception in Ankara

Anatolia 20 Mar 00

[FBIS Translated Excerpt]

Ankara (AA) -- The Ankara representation of the Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party [IKDP] has held a Nevruz reception for the first time in Ankara.

IKDP Ankara representative Safin Diyazi and Huseyin Fincare, the tourism minister of the north Iraqi region, received the guests dressed as peshmergas.

In a statement at the reception, Diyazi expressed the wish that Nevruz will bring peace and stability to the region and thanked Turkey, the United States, and Britain for the efforts they exerted in 1988 and in 1991 to put an end to the tragedy in North Iraq. At the reception a written text in English on the history of Nevruz was distributed to the guests.

The reception was held at the Sheraton Hotel in Ankara. [passage omitted on who attended the reception]

No representatives from the Foreign Ministry or the government attended the reception.

Turkish Ministry on 'Sensitivity' Caused by KDP Reception

TRT 1 Television 22 Mar 00

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] The reception held by the IKDP [Iraqi Kurdish Democratic Party] on Nevruz night in Ankara caused unease. Foreign Ministry deputy spokesman Sermet Atacanli declared that the reception caused sensitivity and this will be brought to attention of the relevant persons.

Replying to reporters' questions during his weekly news conference, Atacanli pointed out that the IKDP office in Ankara is a liaison office. Pointing out that there is no requirement to obtain a permit from the Foreign Ministry to hold such a reception, Atacanli said that the necessary assessment is being conducted by the Foreign Ministry.

[Begin Atacanli recording] The KDP has a liaison office in Ankara, with a liaison official heading the office. It is understood that the KDP official extended the invitation in question in a personal capacity. However, it is also evident that this development has caused a certain amount of sensitivity. Our ministry is carefully assessing this sensitivity, and doing whatever is necessary. As a result of this assessment, the sensitivity created by this situation will be brought to the attention of the relevant persons. [end recording]

In reaction to remarks that many European embassy diplomats also attended the reception, Atacanli said: As far as we are concerned, this was a personal invitation. Therefore, it is up to them who should attend the reception.

Iraqi Kurds Reflect on Revolution

By Donna Bryson Associated Press March 21, 2000

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Sitting cross-legged Tuesday over a traditional meal of buttered rice and chicken, Bestun Moustafa related the Kurdish legend of blacksmith Kawa's defiance of a mad, evil king.

Kawa smote the king with his iron rod, and then set a fire to let oppressed villagers know a new day had dawned. And at that moment, spring came to Kurdistan. To this day, March 21 is known to Kurds as Nowruz, or "new day," celebrating both the end of the long mountain winter and the revolutionary streak among Iraq's ethnic Kurdish minority.

A national holiday in Iraq, Nowruz is celebrated by Arabs and Kurds, Muslims and Christians. Later at the picnic in a park northwest of Baghdad, Moustafa turned to modern politics. In the disarray following the Gulf War a decade ago, Iraqi Kurds in the north staged another revolution, this one against President Saddam Hussein. Moderate Kurds like Mustafa say they still feel the heat of those flames.

Saddam has been accused of oppressing his Kurdish minority, but Kurds in Baghdad insisted Tuesday they were being treated better under his government than Kurds elsewhere in the region.

"The Kurds here have their rights, while our brothers in Syria, Iran, Turkey can't even say they are Kurds," said Mohsin Barzinjy, head of the state-sponsored Kurdish Education Committee, as he surveyed hundreds of Kurdish families gathered in the park to ring in the spring. Teen-age Kurdish girls wore thick makeup and their dark hair streaked with gold. They danced to rap-inspired Arabic music at one end of the park, while across a field their elders linked arms and danced the traditional chobi, moving rhythmically in a circle of shifting shoulders and stamping feet.

Barzinjy — wearing traditional pleated pants of rough wool and a scarf wrapped neatly around his head — said it was Saddam who had ordered the establishment of the Kurdish cultural group in 1970. But as Barzinjy spoke, a uniformed police officer positioned himself nearby to make it clear he was listening. Expression is carefully controlled under the strongman Saddam. Since the Gulf war, Saddam has lost control over the Kurdish north. U.S. and British warplanes patrol the northern skies, defying Saddam to launch airstrikes against militant Kurdish groups.

Kurds make up about 20 percent of Iraq's population of 18 million, with about 1 million living in the Baghdad area and the rest in the north.

Moustafa said his father once had a flourishing business shipping fruits and nuts from the north to markets in Baghdad, where merchants gathered from Syria, Jordan and other countries. Gulf war trade sanctions have kept the foreign buyers away, and for years after the 1991 uprising, the road link was cut off between Baghdad and Moustafa's hometown of Suleimaniya, 225 miles north.

Moustafa revived the family's transport company after the government reopened the route in 1994, but business is not what it was before the war, he said. "I am a strong believer that things will go back to what they were before between the Arabs and the Kurds, because it is better for both the Arabs and the Kurds — we are one people," Moustafa said.

In the distance, ululation and ringing shouts competed with the pounding pop music, and barbecue smoke smudged the sky.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE,

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2000

ECONOMIC SCENE

Tehran Maps Path To a Free Market

By Philip Bowring
International Herald Tribune

TEHRAN — Iran started its new year this week, along with the third five-year social and economic development plan.

Such plans are usually forgettable documents redolent of an earlier era of economics. But this one matters because, although it has few detailed targets, the plan outlines the reformist principles of the government under President Mohammed Khatami.

The plan comes into force just after reformers won control of Parliament in elections they hope will speed Iran's transition from a tightly controlled, quasi-socialist economy into an open one where market forces and private ownership predominate. The economic strategy is also starting as the United States has begun to lift sanctions, which are likely to be gone altogether within 18 months.

The Iranian economy has been in dire straits, averaging growth of 2 percent over the past five years while the work force has been expanding at nearly 4 percent.

Inflation has been well over 20 percent a year. But social progress in health, education and other areas over the past decade has been impressive; now people want goods and jobs.

With oil accounting for 80 percent of Iran's exports, the economy has suffered in part from low oil prices, which only recently have turned around.

Other hindrances include government deficits funded by the central bank, an inefficient state industrial sector, multiple exchange rates, administered pricing for many commodities, negative real interest rates, indiscriminate consumer subsidies and a banking system that favors the state and the tax-exempt religious foundations that own many enterprises, including once-splendid but now-dismal hotels.

The goals of the plan include a unified floating-exchange rate, cur-

rent-account convertibility, positive rates of return for savers, large-scale privatization, attraction of foreign investment, tax reform, reducing oil dependence, encouraging labor intensive industries,

targeting of subsidies to needy groups, and the reduction of government deficits.

Goals for the financial sector include the creation of credit institutions — including private ones — to compete with state-owned banks, the issue of debt instruments to fund state deficits, and the further development of the Tehran Stock Exchange as a medium for privatization and new capital.

The five-year plan was mostly formulated a year ago when low oil prices were forcing Iran to radically rethink its economic system. There is a danger that higher prices will reduce the pressure for change, but political momentum is now strong.

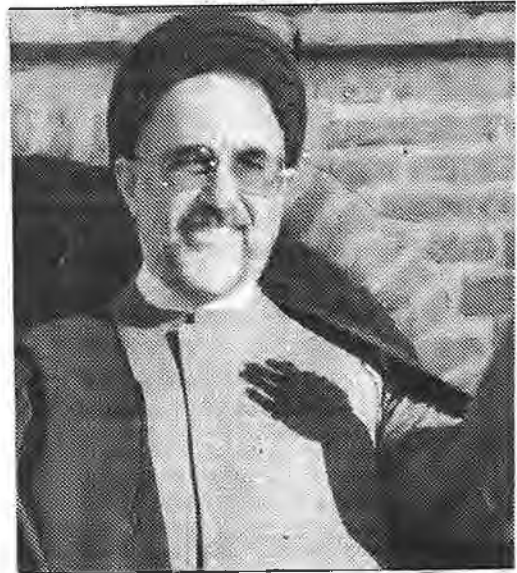
High export revenues will make it easier to unify the exchange rate. Under the current system, rates range from 1,750 rials to the dollar

for imports of some food and other essentials to a free market rate of about 8,500 rials.

Price reform will mean cutting the consumption subsidies, which are given either from the budget or through the exchange rate; both are the major cause of government deficits, inflation and the consequent low level of savings.

But it will not be easy because Iranians have become accustomed to bread and gasoline costing a fraction of international levels. With jobs hard to find and a rapidly growing work force, the government will have to find a way of protecting the poor while reducing the subsidy burden without relying on oil.

There is certainly now the theoretical will to open up the economy. But it will take time to overcome bureaucratic inertia, entrenched state enterprises and foundations and the socialist thinking that always formed part of the Is-



Iran's economic plan outlines the policies of President Mohammed Khatami, whose reformist allies now dominate Parliament.

Social progress in Iran has been impressive. But now, people want goods and jobs.

lamic revolution in 1979.

As in China, workers in old organized industries have job security and many benefits while the small scale, informal and rural workers have little.

Privatization has long been on the agenda in Iran. But until recently it had been bogged down in constitutional and political disputes. Now it is moving again, with the ministry of industry publishing a schedule of sales of enterprises.

With private capital in such short supply, privatization has often meant the sale of one state enterprise to another, or to a state bank investment company. But this process represents progress because the growing enterprises are more commercially minded.

A growing number companies are also listed on the stock exchange, which provides a tax advantage and requires the companies to be more profit conscious.

Some Iranian companies survive because of cheap credit, high tariffs and import bans. But many make good profits despite these obstacles and will very likely show remarkable growth as economic reform proceeds.

If the government moves quickly in carrying out the plan's good intentions, gross domestic product could easily grow 6 percent to 7 percent annually in the next five years as Iran makes up for lost time.

il manifesto 22 MARZO 2000

TURCHIA/FRANCIA

Akin Birdal di nuovo processato

ANNA MARIA MERLO
PARIGI

La Lega per i diritti dell'uomo ha denunciato a Parigi la situazione di Akin Birdal, presidente dell'Associazione dei diritti dell'uomo in Turchia: ieri si è aperto ad Adana, di fronte alla Corte di sicurezza, un tribunale speciale, un nuovo processo contro Birdal, accusato di reati di opinione per aver difeso l'ipotesi di una trattativa di pace nel sud-est del paese (regione a maggioranza kurda). Rischia fino a 5 anni di carcere. Il caso di Akin Birdal, sfuggito miracolosamente ad un attentato nel quale è rimasto ferito (i cui autori, arrestati,

si sono rivelati essere collegati alle forze di polizia) è emblematico della situazione della democrazia in Turchia: il potere reale, che resta in mano ai militari del Consiglio nazionale di sicurezza, non intende accettare le proposte di democratizzazione dell'assetto politico-istituzionale collegate all'ingresso nella Ue e intende chiudere la bocca a coloro che rivendicano una piena libertà di opinione e di parola anche sul problema kurdo.

Secondo il presidente della Federazione internazionale delle Leghe dei diritti dell'uomo, Patrick Badouin, «Birdal disturba, nel momento in cui c'è sul tappeto la candidatura della Turchia all'Unione europea, visto che continua a denunciare la tortura e i tribunali speciali. Avevamo sperato che con la candidatura all'Ue le cose sarebbero cambiate» ha spiegato Kendal Nezan, presidente dell'Istituto kurdo di Parigi. «Ma non è stato così». Gli esempi di repressione sono numerosi: solo dall'inizio dell'anno, quindi da dopo l'accettazione da parte dell'Ue al Consiglio europeo

di Helsinki della legittimità della candidatura turca, ben 18 membri del partito Hadep (kurdo) sono stati condannati, con l'accusa di aver fatto uno sciopero della fame per Abdullah Ocalan. Ma per Badouin, la candidatura deve diventare una leva per chiedere dei conti alla Turchia: «I tre sindaci kurdi arrestati recentemente sono stati liberati proprio su pressione dell'opinione pubblica europea. Il cantante Ahmet Kaya ha raccontato la sua triste storia: «Ancora un anno fa ero un musicista che componevo canzoni», tra l'altro tra le più vendute in Turchia. Adesso l'alternativa per Kaya è tra «l'esilio o la prigione»: è stato condannato a 3 anni e nove mesi di carcere per aver affermato di voler cantare una canzone in kurdo, sua lingua d'origine. La sentenza, emessa da un tribunale dove c'è un giudice militare, si è basata sulla «prova» di un fotomontaggio di un palco di un concerto che ha avuto luogo a Berlino ...nel '93, a cui Kaya aveva partecipato, dove sullo sfondo c'era una carta del Kurdistan e una foto di Ocalan.

TURCHIA

PER LA PRIMA VOLTA

In migliaia a Diyarbakir per celebrare il Newroz

O.C.

Le popolazioni kurde della Turchia, anche se non sono mancati fermi e momenti di tensione, hanno festeggiato ieri intorno a grandi falò il Newroz, il capodanno kurdo, alla periferia di Diyarbakir. Alle celebrazioni di quest'anno, parzialmente permesse dalle autorità turche per la prima volta da molti anni, hanno partecipato migliaia di kurdi che a bordo di oltre 1.000 tra autobus e camion si sono dati appuntamento in un largo spazio a circa 8 chilometri dal centro della città. L'area è stata illuminata a giorno da un grande fuoco acceso da funzionari locali dell'Hadep, il partito kurdo, la cui richiesta di tenere la festa al centro della città era stata precedentemente respinta dalle autorità. Tra i protagonisti della serata è stato il sindaco della città, Feridun Celik, arrestato per legami con il Pkk e recentemente rilasciato. «Speriamo che il Newroz porterà la pace» ha sostenuto Celik introducendo i festeggiamen-

ti - la fratellanza e la libertà». A Diyarbakir e in altre città del Kurdistan una cinquantina di persone sono state fermate e arrestate: secondo gli avvocati che stanno seguendo i vari casi, alcune di esse sono state rilasciate poche ore dopo, altre verranno rilasciate già oggi o al più tardi domani.

Non ci sono stati gli arresti di massa degli anni scorsi, anche se il governo turco e soprattutto la polizia non ha risparmiato l'usuale repressione. Il governo aveva limitato le celebrazioni in programma in Kurdistan e nelle città turche, decidendo all'ultimo minuto di vietare la grande manifestazione organizzata dal partito di sinistra kurdo Hadep a Istanbul. Alla periferia della città sul Bosforo alcune centinaia di persone si sono riunite per osservare un minuto di silenzio per i caduti del Pkk e hanno gridato slogan a favore di Abdullah Ocalan. Ad Ankara il capodanno kurdo è stato celebrato in un parco della città nel quale si sono radunate circa tremila persone. Un appello perché le celebrazioni del New-

roz si svolgessero pacificamente è giunto ieri da Abdullah Ocalan, il leader del Pkk rinchiuso nel carcere di Imrali dopo essere stato condannato a morte: «Occorre capire che il linguaggio di una soluzione politica è il compromesso e la pace. Un linguaggio che deve evitare di ispirare alla violenza e al separatismo. Su questa base auguro al nostro popolo, al nostro popolo fratello e a tutti i nostri amici buon Newroz». A Diyarbakir, vi sono stati alcuni fermi e tra questi anche quello di due italiani, Giovanni Grandi e Daniele Tremonti, volontari presso la comunità Giovanni XXIII di Rimini, che erano riusciti a raggiungere la capitale di fatto del Kurdistan turco assieme ad una nutrita delegazione guidata dal sindacalista di Alessandria Antonio Olivieri.

I due volontari sono stati fermati dalla polizia turca mentre si trovavano ad una fermata dell'autobus in compagnia di quattro giovani kurdi che facevano loro da guida in giro per la città. I sei sono stati portati alla caserma di polizia di Diyarbakir. I due italiani sono stati rilasciati poco dopo i loro accompagnatori kurdi: alcune ore dopo. La Turchia è stata intanto condannata dalla Corte europea per i diritti umani per non aver garantito incolumità e libertà di stampa al quodiano Özgür Gundem, chiuso da qualche tempo.

afriche e orienti

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n4

inverno 1999

Collana di Aiep Editore



Un poema epico
in prosa dà voce a
un popolo troppo a
lungo dimenticato.

Ereb Shamilov

**Il castello
di Dimdim**

Introduzione di M. Ludovica Lenzi
Traduzione di Shorsh A. Surme
1999, 16°, pp.240, L.25.000
[ISBN 88-86051-68-9]

Sono racconti epici capaci di spiegare anche le ragioni profonde dei tragici avvenimenti di oggi. (S. Marzocchi - Afriche e Orienti)

L'amore di un intero popolo per la propria patria, per la propria religione, per i luoghi splendidi e selvaggi in cui ha sempre vissuto e che difende a costo della morte contro l'invasore. (F. Parazzoli - Famiglia Cristiana)

Un grande racconto di amore e di guerra. (O. Paliotti - Città Nuova)

La vera anima della storia risiede altrove, nei mille quadri che ritraggono a colori vivaci la vita nel mercato, nelle botteghe e nei campi, nelle delicate descrizioni della natura e, soprattutto, nelle diverse storie che si intrecciano all'ombra del castello. (S. Zucca - Solidarietà Come)

La Turquie irritée par une réception d'un groupe kurde d'Irak du nord



ANKARA, 22 mars (AFP) - 16h00 - La Turquie a exprimé mercredi son "malaise" concernant la façon dont le Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK de Massoud Barzani) a organisé une réception pour célébrer la fête du Newroz à Ankara, a-t-on indiqué mercredi de source diplomatique turque.

Le représentant à Ankara de cette formation kurde du nord de l'Irak, Safin Dizayee, a été convoqué "ce jour" au ministère turc des Affaires étrangères dans le cadre de l'affaire, a précisé cette source à l'AFP.

Lors d'une réception lundi dans un grand hôtel d'Ankara à l'occasion du Newroz, célébrée comme le nouvel an par les Kurdes le 21 mars, le PDK avait présenté plusieurs de ses membres, arrivés du nord de l'Irak, comme des "ministres", selon les médias.

Aucun officiel turc n'avait assisté à la réception où étaient présents en revanche les ambassadeurs de plusieurs pays européens, notamment l'Allemagne et l'Italie.

La Turquie est très irritée par toute action des groupes kurdes d'Irak du nord, qui échappe à Bagdad depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991, susceptible d'être interprétée comme le signe de la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans la région, et soutient fermement l'intégrité territoriale de l'Irak.

"Il est clair que cette organisation a créé une sensibilité", a indiqué plus tôt dans la journée un porte-parole du ministère turc des Affaires étrangères, Sermet Atacanli.

Deux partis rivaux, l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK de Jalal Talabani) et le PDK, se disputent la souveraineté du nord de l'Irak depuis 1991. Le PDK est l'allié d'Ankara depuis 1997 contre le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, rebelles kurdes de Turquie) et l'armée turque lançait fréquemment des opérations contre les sanctuaires du PKK dans le nord de l'Irak.

Au moins 147 arrestations lors du Nouvel An kurde en Turquie

ANKARA, 21 mars (AFP) - 22h45 - Au moins 147 personnes ont été arrêtées à Istanbul et un nombre indéterminé d'autres à Sanliurfa (sud-est de la Turquie) pour participation à des célébrations "illégales" du Newroz, le Nouvel An kurde, a rapporté l'agence turque Anatolie.

Les célébrations du Newroz, une fête d'origine zoroastrienne marquant le début du printemps à l'équinoxe du 21 mars, étaient interdites à Istanbul et Sanliurfa notamment en raison des feux qui sont allumés à cette occasion.

Dans le passé, cette fête a donné lieu à de sanglants affrontements quand le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes) avait appelé à transformer le Newroz en des manifestations de revendications indépendantistes dans le sud-est du pays à forte population kurde.

Cette année, la fête du Newroz s'est déroulée dans un calme relatif mais sous haute surveillance policière dans d'autres villes de Turquie, dont les maires avaient autorisé les célébrations, selon Anatolie.

Le PKK avait annoncé en septembre dernier qu'il abandonnait la lutte armée contre l'Etat turc, à la demande du chef du parti, Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort en juin.

Nouveau procès contre le chef du parti pro-kurde HADEP pour "séparatisme"



ANKARA, 21 mars (AFP) - 16h35 - Un nouveau procès s'est ouvert mardi devant la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat (DGM) d'Ankara contre Ahmet Turan Demir, le président du Parti de la Démocratie du Peuple (HADEP, pro-kurde) pour "propagande séparatiste", a indiqué l'agence Anatolie.

M. Demir, absent de cette première audience, est accusé d'avoir tenu des propos visant à une "propagande séparatiste" lors d'une réunion de son parti en octobre dernier à Ankara et risque jusqu'à trois ans de prison, précise l'agence.

Selon l'acte d'accusation, il aurait dit dans son discours qu'un règlement de la "question kurde est proche" et suggéré une "division" des peuples turc et kurde en Turquie à l'instar de la séparation "pacifique" de la Tchécoslovaquie en républiques tchèque et slovaque.

La Cour a ajourné le procès à une date ultérieure et exigé que l'accusé soit présent à la prochaine audience.

Ahmet Turan Demir, son prédécesseur Murat Bozlak et plusieurs autres responsables du parti ont été condamnés le 24 février à trois ans et neuf mois de prison chacun pour "soutien" au Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan rebelles kurdes de Turquie).

Le HADEP est menacé de fermeture par la justice turque pour "liens organiques" avec le PKK. Trois maires, membres de cette formation, ont été arrêtés le 19 février, accusés d'aide au PKK. Ils ont été entre-temps libérés mais doivent être jugés à une date encore indéterminée.

Les habitants de Diyarbakir célèbrent le Newroz dans le calme



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 21 mars (AFP) - Des milliers d'habitants de Diyarbakir, chef-lieu du Sud-Est anatolien (Turquie) à majorité kurde, célébraient dans le calme et sous haute surveillance mardi la fête du Newroz, organisée pour la première fois par un parti pro-kurde, a constaté l'AFP.

Fête païenne d'origine zoroastrienne, le Newroz (Norouz pour les Iraniens) annonce le réveil de la nature avec l'équinoxe de printemps, le 21 mars.

Tôt mardi, des milliers de personnes se sont rassemblées sur une place de la ville où pour la première fois cette année, le Parti de la Démocratie du Peuple (HADEP, pro-kurde) avait été autorisé à organiser des festivités pour célébrer le Newroz à Diyarbakir et dans la province voisine de Batman.

Le HADEP s'est toutefois vu interdire l'organisation d'une réception dans un hôtel d'Istanbul, qui regroupe une importante communauté kurde.

Pour les Kurdes, le Newroz commémore également la première révolte de l'histoire de leur peuple, soulevé, selon la légende, contre le tyran perse Dehaq, sous la direction du forgeron Kawa. Celui-ci appela ses compatriotes à la rébellion en allumant des feux dans les montagnes.

Suivant cet exemple, les participants aux festivités à Diyarbakir ont mis le feu à des pneus et ont dansé autour.

Sur des pancartes brandies par des participants on pouvait lire: "Newroz = fraternité" ou "Vive la paix".

Plusieurs centaines d'agents de la sécurité avaient été mobilisés pour la circonstance. Les permissions dans les rangs de la police et de l'armée, fortement présentes dans la région, avaient été levées pour faire face à "toute tentative de provocation", notamment de la part du PKK (Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan), selon les autorités locales.

Aucun incident majeur n'a été signalé dans les autres villes de la région.

Depuis que le PKK a annoncé fin septembre qu'il abandonnait les armes brandies en 1984 pour la création d'un Etat indépendant dans le Sud-Est anatolien, la région vit dans une atmosphère de détente. Les affrontements entre maquisards kurdes et soldats turcs y ont quasiment cessé.

En Turquie, le Newroz est disputé entre le PKK, qui en avait fait un symbole de sa rébellion et l'Etat turc qui le récupère depuis 1995 en le présentant comme un nouvel an traditionnel pour de nombreux peuples de la région, dont les Turcs.

En 1992, le Newroz a été marqué par des affrontements sanglants entre le PKK et les forces de l'ordre dans les villes du Sud-Est, faisant une cinquantaine de morts.

Des fêtes de Newroz étaient également organisées mardi par l'Etat à Istanbul, Izmir (ouest) et Ankara.

La plupart des dirigeants turcs ont publié des messages à l'occasion de journée soulignant que le Newroz représente l'"amitié et la fraternité".

Le président du HADEP, Ahmet Turan Demir, a estimé dans un communiqué que le Newroz représentait "une nouvelle étape dans le processus de paix et de démocratisation" en Turquie.

"Le Newroz est le symbole de notre peuple (kurde) pour l'unité, la paix et la fraternité", a-t-il dit.

Alors que le HADEP bénéficie du calme régnant dans la région depuis l'année dernière, il fait l'objet d'une procédure d'interdiction par la justice pour "liens organiques" avec le PKK et il est menacé de fermeture.

M. Demir lui-même a été condamné avec plusieurs autres responsables du parti le 24 février à trois ans et neuf mois de prison pour soutien au PKK.

Action disciplinaire du barreau d'Istanbul contre des avocats d'Ocalan



ANKARA, 24 mars (AFP) - 11h43 - Le barreau d'Istanbul a lancé une action disciplinaire pour "violation des règles professionnelles" contre huit avocats du chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan, a indiqué vendredi l'agence Anatolie, citant un responsable du barreau.

Le ministère turc de la Justice avait demandé en janvier au barreau l'adoption de telles mesures contre les défenseurs du chef du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, rebelles kurdes de Turquie), les accusant d'agir comme porte-parole de leur client et d'outrepasser les limites de leur métier.

Le gouvernement turc avait à plusieurs reprises exprimé son malaise concernant les déclarations écrites quasi-quotidiennes du chef rebelle diffusées par le biais du cabinet de ses défenseurs, dans lesquelles il appelait notamment à des réformes démocratiques en Turquie.

"Faire des déclarations de presse au nom d'un client pour un avocat est contraire aux lois, aux règles professionnelles et à la déontologie", a précisé

le vice-président du barreau, Osman Ergin, cité par l'agence.

Il a indiqué que le comité de discipline de son barreau devait décider de prendre ou non des sanctions contre les avocats d'Ocalan. Les sanctions peuvent aller jusqu'à l'expulsion.

Dogan Erbas, l'un des défenseurs d'Ocalan, a indiqué à l'AFP ne pas avoir été notifié de la décision du barreau.

Fin janvier, les autorités turques avaient réduit la fréquence et la durée des visites entre Ocalan et ses avocats.

Ceux-ci ne peuvent visiter leur client qu'une fois par semaine pour une durée d'une heure dans l'île-prison d'Imrali (nord-ouest), où il est incarcéré et a été condamné en juin 1999 à la peine capitale pour trahison et séparatisme pour les 15 ans de lutte du PKK contre l'Etat turc.

Les avocats s'abstiennent de diffuser des déclarations écrites d'Ocalan, les dirigeants turcs, dont le Premier ministre Bulent Ecevit, ayant averti que "Imrali n'est pas une tribune politique".

A la demande de son chef, le PKK a annoncé en septembre qu'il abandonnait la lutte armée.

LA LETTRE DE UGAB Samedi 25 mars 2000

TURQUIE

Contrainte d'harmoniser sa législation
avec les normes européennes

La Turquie stoppe la délivrance de ses "passeports verts"

La Turquie, candidate à l'adhésion à l'Union européenne, se trouve dans l'obligation d'harmoniser ses lois et règlements administratifs avec les normes européennes. Il est intéressant dans ce contexte de pointer certaines réalités, qui jettent une lumière crue sur les pratiques de l'Etat turc.

C'est ainsi que sur l'intervention des Etats européens, en particulier de la Grande-Bretagne, le ministre

turc de l'Intérieur Sadettin Tantan a déclaré que la Turquie allait stopper la mise en circulation des "passeports verts". Ce passeport permettait aux citoyens turcs d'éviter tout problème de visas lors de visites dans les pays étrangers. Il était délivré aux hauts fonctionnaires de l'Etat et aux membres de leurs familles. On notera ici qu'ils sont 1 500 000 (quotidien turc *Milliyet*, 14-03) aujourd'hui à jouir de ce privilège. Cette exploitation abusive de l'appareil d'Etat turc explique clairement le malaise exprimé par les pays européens et les Etats-Unis à l'égard de la Turquie.

Le plus caractéristique dans cette affaire, c'est que parmi les détenteurs de ce "passeport vert" figuraient les principaux chefs de la mafia turque, qui collaborent avec les forces de sécurité étatiques pour l'accomplissement des sales besognes (trafic de drogue, neutralisation des opposants politiques, espionnage, etc.). Ils avaient obtenu ce "passeport vert" en qualité de hauts fonctionnaires de différents ministères. ●

dimanche 26 mars 2000, 16h30

Un dirigeant kurde désavoue le "traître" Ocalan

REUTERS

ROME (Reuters) - Un ancien allié d'Abdullah Ocalan désavoue le leader kurde dans un entretien publié dimanche par le journal italien La Stampa, l'accusant d'avoir trahi son peuple pour sauver sa peau.

"Ocalan tu n'es plus un héros mais un misérable scélérat", déclare Kemal Kara, ancien porte-parole en Italie du PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan) d'Ocalan.

"Tu ne représentes plus les Kurdes qui se réorganisent en Europe et en Irak pour reprendre le combat pour le Kurdistan que tu as trahi".

"Beaucoup (de Kurdes) se sont distanciés d'Ocalan. Nous ne pouvons pas accepter ses ordres et déposer les armes", poursuit-il.

Selon le quotidien, Kara vit caché depuis un an après avoir été torturé par des rebelles kurdes fidèles à Ocalan.

Condamné à mort fin juin en Turquie pour haute trahison et séparatisme, Ocalan attend le verdict de la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme. Il a appelé le PKK depuis sa prison à la fin de la lutte armée et à une transformation en force politique.

In Turkey, an Argument Rages About EU Membership

By Stephen Kinzer
New York Times Service

ISTANBUL — Three months after Turkey was offered a chance to join the European Union, the country is caught up in a fervent debate over whether it should make the profound political changes necessary for membership.

The government, press and military command all seem consumed by this debate. Its vigor suggests that the battle for Turkey's soul that has been under way at least since the republic was founded in 1923 may be reaching a new level of intensity.

Some influential Turks, backed by European leaders, say their country must radically improve its human rights record, repeal laws that limit free expression and give more cultural rights to Kurds who live in the impoverished southeast. But others say they fear that making these changes would expose the country to separatist terror, religious fundamentalism and other dangers.

Hardly a week passes without some sign of this conflict. Every decision that touches on issues of concern to Europe is considered a test of the government's will.

The next such test may come Thursday, when the country's most prominent human rights advocate, Akin Birdal, is scheduled to be imprisoned. Mr. Birdal has been convicted of making subversive speeches, but he has many friends in Europe who would be angered by his imprisonment. His lawyers have asked that he be allowed to remain free as long as he needs medical care for the effects of a 1988 assassination attempt.

Turks have been trying to pry their way into the European Union for years, convinced that membership would guarantee them generations of prosperity and democracy. Their efforts have been repeatedly blocked by conservative Europeans who believe that Turkey

does not qualify to join their club geographically, culturally, economically or politically.

But in December, the union finally reversed itself and made Turkey an official candidate for membership. That decision set off a wave of ecstasy here. One Istanbul newspaper pronounced it "the most important event since the founding of our state."

Turkish leaders enthusiastically took up the task of proving themselves ready to join Europe. Officials pledged to repair ties with Greece, curb human rights abuses and launch ambitious privatization and inflation-fighting programs.

Suddenly, however, it has become clear that powerful forces in Turkish society consider the compromises they must make to join the European Union too high a price even for so great a prize.

"We Don't Want Your EU!" screamed a recent banner headline on the front page of one rightist Turkish newspaper. No prominent Turks have yet voiced such a sentiment, but some security officers, prosecutors and others apparently share it. Rather than openly express their opposition to Turkey's European dream, they have begun taking steps to undermine it.

"They seem to be everywhere," said a European diplomat posted in Ankara who has spent years trying to nudge Turkey and Europe closer together. "Within every leading personality in this country is a nationalist impulse that seems to be becoming stronger and more suspicious."

Perhaps the most vivid example of the government's conflicting impulses came last month, when the mayors of three mostly Kurdish cities were arrested on charges of supporting terror. The arrests were widely interpreted as a victory for hard-liners, and they seriously hurt Turkey's image in Europe. Yet a week later, after pro-European forces carried out a bureaucratic counterattack, the

mayors were not only released but allowed to resume their posts.

Soon afterward, former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan was sentenced to a one-year jail term on charges growing out of a speech he made in 1994. European leaders who believe the sentence violates Mr. Erbakan's right to free speech are closely watching the course of his appeal, as well as a separate case aimed at banning his Islamic-oriented political party.

In another confrontation that reflects Turkey's sharpening political divide, several members of Parliament recently made a surprise inspection of an Istanbul police station and found what they said were torture implements. The appointed governor of Istanbul dismissed them as meddling busybodies.

"So what if someone found a stick in the police station," said the governor, Erol Cakir. "People shouldn't exaggerate things."

Last week Mr. Cakir turned down requests by a Kurdish political party for permission to celebrate a traditional spring festival in Istanbul. He said he did so because the party called the holiday by its Kurdish name, Newroz, instead of using the Turkish word Nevruz.

Government officials are considering a variety of steps that would please the European Union, from abolishing the death penalty to reopening the long-closed land border with Armenia. But such proposals meet resistance from conservatives who fear they will endanger Turkey's security and stability.

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit says he strongly supports his country's drive for membership in the European Union, but he has also complained about what he says are unreasonable demands from its leaders.

"The EU countries have a plan to put us under harsher pressure than before," Mr. Ecevit said. "We won't be part of this game."

Iran Rejects U.S. Bid for Talks on Ties

By John Lancaster
and Helen Dewar
Washington Post Service

WASHINGTON — Iranian officials have welcomed a major U.S. initiative to warm up relations, outlined in a speech by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, but said Iran was not ready to accept Washington's call for official talks.

On Friday, Mrs. Albright told the American-Iranian Council, a private group promoting closer ties, that the United States would lift a ban on imports

of Iranian luxury goods and seek a legal settlement that could free Iranian assets frozen since the 1979 Islamic revolution. She also promised to reduce barriers to cultural exchanges, and she essentially apologized for past policy toward Iran, including a CIA-backed coup in 1953.

"I call upon Iran to join us in writing a new chapter in our shared history," Mrs. Albright said in the speech, aimed at encouraging reformist allies of President Mohammed Khatami who won parliamentary elections last month.

Appearing on Iranian television, a spokesman for the Foreign Ministry, Hamid Reza Asefi, said of the speech, "Iran thinks it is positive and welcomes it." He added that Iran would reciprocate by opening its borders to U.S. food and medicines.

But Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Mohammed Hadi Nejad-Hoseinian, rejected the Clinton administration's long-standing offer to open

talks with Tehran. "Presently, the U.S. offer of official talks is unrealistic," Mr. Nejad-Hoseinian said in a speech after Mrs. Albright's at the same conference. "Dialogue will be constructive and mutually beneficial when it is carried out under a normalized situation, devoid of pressure, allegations and grandstanding."

[On Saturday, Iran's hard-line Revolutionary Guards accused Washington of meddling in domestic affairs by lifting an import ban on luxury goods, The Associated Press reported from Tehran.

[The partial lifting of the sanction "intensified efforts of the White House to create a crisis in Iran," said a statement by the group quoted by Tehran radio.

[In another blast from conservative forces in Iran, the secretary of Iran's top security body, the Supreme National Security Council, called the U.S. moves "new interference in Iran's domestic affairs," the radio reported.]

L'ancien marxiste-léniniste Ocalan voue son temps à la religion (avocat)

ANKARA, 24 mars (AFP) - 12h55 - Abdullah Ocalan, le chef de ce qui fut un mouvement marxiste-léniniste, le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, rebelles kurdes de Turquie), dédie une grande partie de son temps en prison aux études théologiques, a indiqué vendredi à l'AFP l'un de ses avocats.

"Ocalan rédige un essai sur l'histoire des religions et la relation entre les kurdes et le foi musulmane", a dit Me Dogan Erbas. "Il étudie également l'ancienne religion zoroastrienne", a-t-il précisé.

Le PKK, qui a lancé en 1984 une rébellion armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est de la Turquie, s'est distancé de l'idéologie marxiste-léniniste au début des années 1990 après l'écclatement de l'URSS.

Ocalan a commencé à lire des ouvrages sur la religion après avoir été "choqué" des crimes commis par l'organisation intégriste musulmane Hizbullah en Turquie, a souligné M. Erbas.

La police turque a découvert depuis le début de l'année une soixantaine de cadavres de victimes supposées de cette organisation dans plusieurs fosses communes un peu partout en Turquie.

Elle considère le Hizbullah comme responsable d'environ 500 assassinats commis depuis sa création, au début des années 80.

"Ocalan pense que les formations politiques islamistes, notamment le parti de la Vertu (principal parti d'opposition au parlement turc), constituent un obstacle à la démocratisation en Turquie", a-t-il dit.

Le chef du PKK est en bonne condition physique et morale, a-t-il ajouté.

Ocalan est incarcéré dans l'île-prison d'Imrali (nord-ouest), où il a été condamné en juin 1999 à la peine capitale pour trahison et séparatisme.

Ankara a suspendu le processus d'exécution en janvier, suivant une demande de la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme, qui a réclamé un sursis en attendant d'avoir statué sur le fond.

A la demande de son chef, le PKK a annoncé en septembre qu'il abandonnait la lutte armée.

Talabani and Barzani Exchange Newruz Greetings Amid Reports of Improved Relations

March 24, 2000
Kurdistan Newslite

Suleimani- PUK General Secretary Jalal Talabani this week conveyed holiday greetings marking the combined occasions of the Islamic 'Id al-Adha and the Kurdish Newruz festival to Masoud Barzani, President of the Kurdistan Democratic Party. The following day, Talabani received a similar communication from Barzani, and observers in the region have pointed to a general improvement in relations between the two Kurdish parties.

In his telegram, Talabani expressed the hope that "we can make this year the year of lasting reconciliation, in which we will firmly establish peace and brotherhood in Kurdistan, and improve the relations between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, as previously. Let us make this the year of the full implementation of the Washington Accord. May joy and happiness be yours."

For his part, Masoud Barzani wrote to his PUK counterpart: "In the name of myself and all the members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party I wish you and all the brothers in the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan the warmest good wishes on the occasions of 'Id al-Adha and Newruz. I am in full agreement that we must make this year the year of permanent reconciliation and full implementation of the Washington Accord. This is the right thing to do in the interests of our people, and we must work together to achieve their wishes. With warm personal wishes."

In a related development, informed sources in Suleimani have recently reported the emergence of an air of cautious optimism with regard to hopes for improvement in PUK - KDP relations. Recent exchanges between the two leaders have yielded an agreement to resume the meetings of the Higher Coordination Committee (HCC) to discuss the substantive issues. It is hoped that the new round of talks will usher a serious discussion of modalities for the implementation of the Washington Accord of September 1998.

22 March 2000, Copyright © Turkish Daily News



Nevruz reflects changing climate

- Leaders praise Nevruz as an occasion when feelings of brotherhood, friendship and peace are expressed as Turkish people celebrate it with cultural events

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

Unlike the prohibited and often violent Nevruz celebrations in the past, Turkey marked the "New Day" this year with limited permission for celebrations in a peaceful atmosphere, reflecting the climate of change in the country.

President Suleyman Demirel and Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit united in declaring Nevruz an occasion when feelings of brotherhood, friendship and peace were expressed. Still, there were isolated cases of violence staged by activists who attempted to turn the occasion into a platform to demonstrate in favor of the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Police have detained scores of demonstrators, but there were no mass arrests or excessive force used by police that have marked the day in previous years. Compared to the recent past, Nevruz violence was at a negligible level.

In Istanbul, Turkey's largest metropolitan area, the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP) was denied permission by the Governor's Office to organize a Nevruz celebration because of a controversy over semantics. According to the Governor's Office, approval was not given to HADEP because in the application for permission the party referred to Nevruz as "Newroz."

"Written as it is, 'Newroz' is not a Turkish word," Deputy Governor Osman Demir said in a letter to HADEP, a copy of which was obtained by Reuters. The Turkish alphabet has no letter "W."

"The Law on Political Parties states parties cannot use any language other than Turkish," it said. A fresh application using the Turkish spellings Nevruz or Nevroz would be re-evaluated.

The city prepared for Nevruz with a meeting chaired by Governor Erol Cakir on Monday night. Third Army Corps Commander Atilla Kurtaran, Police Chief Hasan Ozdemir, Gendarmerie Commander Lance Colonel Halil Ibrahim Tuysuz and a number of security and military officials participated in the meeting held at Istanbul police headquarters.

Some 27,000 police were on state of alert, leaves were cancelled and a special crisis center was established. In addition to police and gendarmerie forces, cadets from the Etiler and Florya police schools were called on duty.

The extraordinary police measures paid off yesterday, and Istanbul had one of its most peaceful Nevruz celebrations since the separatist PKK and leftist urban terrorist groups started promoting the day as a Kurdish festivity in the early 1980s.

Police detained at least 10 people in Istanbul who turned up for one of the cancelled celebrations. In Ankara some 3,000 people gathered in Abdi Ipekci park for Nevruz festivities. Nevruz celebrations around Ankara were also peaceful.

Nevruz was not hampered by police in Izmir, but by torrential rain. Celebrations that started in a festive mood ended abruptly with the onset of heavy rain.

In Diyarbakir, the largest city of southeastern Anatolia gripped with separatist terrorism since 1984, thousands of people banged on drums and leapt over blazing bonfires to greet Nevruz, or the coming of spring.

Some 1,000 buses, trucks and minibuses ferried residents to an open concrete space eight kilometers (five miles) outside the city. It was dominated by a bonfire lit by officials from HADEP, whose request for the Nevruz festivities to be held downtown had been refused.

"We hope Newroz will bring peace, brotherhood and freedom," said HADEP Diyarbakir Mayor Feridun Celik, recently released from prison and still facing charges of links to the PKK, as he helped the blaze primed with gasoline.

Police and armored cars surrounded the area.

Inside the city, police and fire crews rushed through the poorer suburbs to extinguish unauthorized fires of burning tires lit by teenagers on street corners.

Young men leapt over and danced around the flames.

Nevruz is celebrated as the start of spring by nations of Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Middle East. In the old Turkish calendar where each of the 12 months are named after an animal, the day marks the start of the new year, and this year, according to Culture Minister İstemihan Talay, is the "Year of the Fish."

Talay's ministry organized "Turkish World Nevruz Celebrations" in almost all major Turkish cities this year. Guests from the Central Asian and Caucasian Turkic republics participated in the official Nevruz celebrations.

Al-Sharq al-Awsat
24 Mar 00
by 'Abbas al-Badri

Iraqi Forces Shell Kurdish Areas Near Kirkuk

[FBIS Translated Text]

Iraqi sources have confirmed that hours after the announcement in Baghdad of the mortar attack on al-Baladiyat quarter in the Iraqi capital by "Iranian agents," the Iraqi Government military forces stationed near the cities of Kifri and Klar (Kirkuk Governorate), which are under the control of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] launched shelling attacks using 120 mm [heavy] guns, DShK guns and mortars.

Al-Sharq al-Awsat has learned from the PUK official in charge of the Kirkuk center, Jettu Huwayzi [Name as transliterated], that the shelling began the night before last. It covered the villages of Tlishan and 12 Imams as well as the outskirts of Kifri and Klar and continued until midday yesterday local time. Huwayzi also said that exceptional flights of Iraqi military helicopters were seen over the area as well as over the cities of Chamchamal and Qadir Karam near Kirkuk.

Concerning the military movements on the ground, al-Sharq al-Awsat has learned that a large force of Iraqi infantry tried to approach the city of Kifri through its cemetery but was repelled, according to Kurdish sources, with no casualties, killed or wounded, reported.

The situation on the contact lines between the government forces and the Kurdish forces in Kirkuk areas were experiencing tension for the last two weeks amid rumors about the Iranian "Mujahedin-e Khalq" forces planning to attack the Kurdish areas with the support of Baghdad.

Ex-Ocalan Ally Says Kurd Chief "a Miserable Wretch"

ROME, March 26 (Reuters) - A former ally of Abdullah Ocalan described the Kurdish rebel leader in an Italian newspaper interview published on Sunday as a wretch who had betrayed his people to save his own life.

"Ocalan: you are no longer a hero but a miserable wretch," La Stampa newspaper quoted Kemal Kara, Ocalan's former Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) spokesman in Italy, as saying.

"You have backed down, You no longer represent the Kurds who are reorganising in Europe and Iraq to renew the fight for the Kurdistan which you have betrayed."

Ocalan is in a Turkish jail awaiting an appeal verdict from the European Court of Human Rights on a death sentence passed by a Turkish court. He has called on the PKK to stop fighting and prepare for a transformation into a political force.

Turkey has rejected his call for dialogue, which it says is a ploy by Ocalan to save his own neck.

La Stampa said Kara, code-named Hasan, had been in hiding for the past year after being tortured by rebels loyal to Ocalan and had been given up for dead by the PKK.

"I was part of a small group of people who were close to him but many people have distanced themselves from him. We can't accept his orders to lay down our arms and surrender."

Ocalan was arrested in Italy in 1998 and, after fleeing to Russia and then Kenya, was finally captured by Turkish forces and sentenced to death.

Some renegade Kurdish guerrillas have rejected Ocalan's call and vowed to fight on. More than 30,000 rebels, soldiers and civilians have been killed since the PKK, founded by Ocalan, began its armed campaign in 1984.

Kara said he and his followers would soon present themselves officially as a new party for Kurdish home rule.

Asked if his party would back an armed struggle against Ankara, he said he would decide after consulting other Kurds in Europe, particularly in Germany.

"However, it's well known that in the Middle East you can only gain respect by the use of force," he said.

Report: Turkish Troops along Iraqi Border for Anti-Kurdish Rebel Operation

25 Mar 2000

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) -- The Turkish military has been massing troops and tanks along the Iraqi border in recent weeks, apparently for a cross-border offensive on Kurdish rebels, a newspaper reported Sunday.

Turkey has ignored a recent announcement by Kurdish rebels that the 15-year-long armed struggle for autonomy for the southeast was over, and the army is determined to crush the guerrillas.

Turkish military officials were not immediately available to comment on the report in the daily Cumhuriyet.

According to Cumhuriyet, the troops -- aided by pro-Turkey Iraqi Kurdish fighters from the Kurdistan Democratic Party -- have already engaged in skirmishes with Kurdish rebels in the northeastern tip of Iraq. No casualty figure was given.

But the main operation, expected to take place in the coming days, would involve thousands of Turkish soldiers, the report said.

Army engineers were erecting portable bridges over the Hezil river, which run along the Iraqi-Turkish border, for possible use by tanks and trucks, the paper said.

Turkey often sends troops into northern Iraq in the spring after the snow clears to fight guerrillas who maintain bases in the area, which has been out of Baghdad's control since the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

The rebels, heeding a call by their imprisoned leader Abdullah Ocalan, announced an end to fighting in early February. The bulk of the rebels have retreated to Iraq and Iran under orders from Ocalan.

Turkish military was also reportedly getting ready to launch an operation against some 300 Kurdish rebels left on mountain tops inside Turkey, Cumhuriyet said.

Meanwhile, police on Sunday temporarily detained some 100 wedding guests in the southeastern Turkish city of Sanliurfa for riding in cars decorated with red, green and yellow ribbons -- the colors of Ocalan's Kurdish rebel banner, the Anatolia news agency said.

All were released after questioning at a police station.

The incident underlined authorities' sensitivities to the smallest hints of Kurdish nationalism. Kurds make up about one-fifth of Turkey's people.

Iran Tally: Conservatives Left Reeling

By Susan Sachs
New York Times Service

TEHRAN — Many of the conservative members of the Iranian Parliament who led the opposition to President Mohammed Khatami's reform program apparently were soundly defeated in their re-election bids in the election Friday, according to independent analysts who tallied up the hard-liners' losses Tuesday.

Vote-counting was nearly completed in the major cities, including the capital, Tehran, although no official results will be announced until the end of the week, officials said.

But preliminary results in Tehran, plus the decided races in provincial areas, already indicated that the conservatives had lost most of their most senior representatives in the Parliament, analysts for several foreign embassies and Iranian political parties said.

A runoff election will be needed to decide the winner of some 60 to 65 seats in the 290-member Parliament, they added. The runoff has tentatively been set for sometime in April.

In one of the most closely watched races, the former president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, was barely holding on to 30th — or last — place in Tehran, which has 30 seats in Parliament.

It was not clear whether he would even get the minimum number of votes — 25 percent of those cast in the capital — to claim a seat in the first round or whether he would be forced into a runoff.

The first 29 biggest vote-getters in the capital appear to be from the reform camp that supports Mr. Khatami and advocates liberating Iran's press from clerical censorship and other cultural freedoms.

Mr. Khatami's brother, Mohammad Reza Khatami, has held onto his lead as the top vote-getter in the capital since the counting started.

Most analysts, including those for the

reformers, give the pro-Khatami forces about 70 percent of the seats in the first round and the conservatives about 30 percent. The tallies differ according to the analyst, however, because some independent candidates are claimed by both sides.

For the first time since the elections, a spokesman for the defeated conservatives admitted publicly Tuesday that they had suffered a damaging blow. Mohammed Reza Bahonar, one of the most prominent ideologues of the conservative side, suggested in an interview with a Tehran newspaper that hard-liners had some soul-searching to do.

"We will not change our principles and positions, but it is natural that we should reconsider our policies and methods," he was quoted as saying in the newspaper Iran Vig. Mr. Bahonar also lost his parliamentary seat, according to unofficial Tehran results.

In a press conference Tuesday to proclaim victory in the vote, the reformers pledged to push for legalizing satellite dishes and allowing a free public debate of religious and social issues that hard-liners had tried to suppress.

The poor showing by Mr. Rafsanjani, a veteran political operator who has held high government positions since the Islamic revolution 21 years ago, surprised even his reformist critics. In the weeks leading up to the Feb. 18 elections, most commentators on the right and the left considered Mr. Rafsanjani a shoo-in not only for a Parliament seat but also for the post of speaker.

He was described as a man who could provide balance in the Parliament between the up-and-coming leftists and their adversaries on the right. Many analysts had assumed that most Tehran voters, who could choose 30 candidates, would include Mr. Rafsanjani as a stabilizing factor.

Although he ran as an independent, several conservative parties also listed

him as their lead candidate, apparently in hopes that his celebrity would rub off on their own candidates. A moderate group that is loosely allied with the reformers also supported Mr. Rafsanjani and claimed him as one of their own.

Some of the most liberal activists in the pro-Khatami circle said they took great satisfaction in seeing the former two-term president humbled.

"People have seen the results of what Rafsanjani has done to their daily lives," said Elaheh Koolaei, a Tehran University professor and one of several women who appear to have won seats in Parliament on the reformist platform.

"Corruption and discrimination — these are the results of Mr. Rafsanjani's policies," she said. "He believed in economic development without political development and, as a result, he marginalized the people from real decision-making."

Mr. Rafsanjani had long been considered outside Iran as a political moderate who allowed the publication of independent newspapers and took steps to liberalize the economy.

But in recent weeks, some of the pro-Khatami activists have openly accused him of steering government contracts to family members during his presidency and failing to support the cause of reformers jailed over the past two years for expressing their political views.

A Tehran-based diplomat said his analysis showed that from 140 to 150 incumbent Parliament members failed to gain the minimum number of votes to keep their seats.

Among them is a core group of senior right-wing lawmakers who formed a powerful directorate of deputies under the Parliament speaker, Ali Akbar Nateq Nouri. Mr. Nouri did not run for reelection. He lost in the presidential race two and a half years ago to Mr. Khatami.

Keep Sanctions on Iraq

Hans von Sponeck, coordinator of the United Nations' oil-for-food program inside Iraq, has resigned to protest economic sanctions against Saddam Hussein's country. Jutta Burghardt, the World Food Program's Iraq director, followed suit. To Mr. von Sponeck, the humanitarian program is inadequate and is also "perpetuating a welfare mentality" when what Iraqis really need is a comprehensive development program centered on vocational and teacher training.

The resignations lend force to an argument that has been gaining ground: The sanctions are counterproductive and should be abandoned. And it is true that the sanctions have not

brought Saddam down. While his people scrape by, he and his cronies live well despite the economic embargo. It is also true that delivery of needed supplies to Iraq's people is inefficient. Iraq needs hundreds of millions of dollars-worth of spare parts to repair the electric power grid heavily bombed during the 1991 Gulf War and to increase oil production to the levels now allowed by the United Nations, so that it can buy all the food and medicine it is entitled to under the program.

That said, the critics are basically wrong. To accept their argument, you have to believe that an impartial humanitarian relief operation could be carried out under a profoundly inhumane

dictatorship even if there were no sanctions — that Iraq could be both a tightly guarded prison and a comfortable one. According to the United Nations' own assessments, Iraqi incompetence accounts for many bottlenecks in the current aid program. Other failures are due to Saddam's vengeful political agenda.

Overall, the oil-for-food program has boosted Iraqi food rations by 64 percent since 1996, but progress is suspiciously uneven. Conditions are relatively good in the Kurdish north, where UN-supported private organizations administer aid; malnutrition lingers in the Shiite south, which Saddam controls. Benon Sevan, the oil-for-food program's New York-based

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2000

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune
PUBLISHED WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WASHINGTON POST

chief, said that except in a few cases Iraq's government will not even discuss humanitarian needs and how to address them. Is this the conduct of a regime that wants to eliminate its people's suffering?

Yes, the United States does block the imports of some oil and electric industry spares, but only to prevent such

shipments from being used as cover for the importation of military hardware. The sanctions would disappear if Saddam accounted for all his weapons of mass destruction, as promised. Instead he refuses to permit even a weaker UN weapons inspection team to replace the one he earlier kicked out.

The Iraqi people are suffering. But

the author of their misery is the man who uses them as pawns in a game of military and political aggrandizement, a game he would play even more aggressively, and at who knows what cost in human lives, if sanctions were lifted prematurely.

— THE WASHINGTON POST.

In 1970s, Iraqis in U.S. Gleaned Nuclear Secrets

Ex-Official of Baghdad Details Data Search

By Barbara Crossette

New York Times Service

UNITED NATIONS, New York — A former high-ranking official in the Iraqi secret nuclear weapons program says that before the 1991 Gulf war, Iraqi students in the United States combed university libraries for bomb-building information, and Iraqi agents and scientists collected valuable data at American scientific conferences.

Khidhir Hamza, who held several high-level jobs in Iraq before his defection in 1995, made his claims in a report prepared late last year for the Institute for Science and International Security, an independent research group in Washington. The Department of Energy had asked the institute to interview Mr. Hamza about how Iraq obtained scientific information.

Government officials were interested in knowing whether any critical American secrets had fallen into Iraqi hands and how those leaks could be plugged.

A few disarmament experts question whether some Iraqi exiles living in the United States may still be under pressure from Iraqi intelligence agents to continue sharing information. Iraqi exiles say that agents of Saddam Hussein's government still follow their activities.

Since 1990, however, Iraqi students have effectively been barred from traveling abroad to study, and Iraq has been isolated through international sanctions that have made it virtually impossible for its government to continue gathering information in the same way.

David Albright, an American scientist and nuclear arms expert who is president of the institute, said that on some important issues, Mr. Hamza's report was disappointing in its lack of detail and solid advice on how to counter foreign spying strategies.

But the report showed that the Iraqi effort in the United States allowed Mr. Saddam's government to build the foundations of a nuclear weapons program, though the scientific information gained in the United States was probably not

sufficient in itself to finish the work on a weapon.

The report nevertheless paints a picture of an exceptionally broad and well-financed Iraqi effort to build a nuclear weapon by scouring the world's scientific libraries, company databases and conference papers beginning in the 1970s and continuing until Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the war that followed.

The report was turned over to the Energy Department by Mr. Albright in November and recently released as an unclassified document.

After the war, UN inspectors found that Iraq's nuclear weapons program was more advanced than expected. It was dismantled, but questions remain about how easily Iraq would be able to restart it.

The report adds another dimension to official investigations in the United States and Britain that until now focused largely on Iraq's efforts to buy crucial equipment illegally from Western countries.

At the same time, Mr. Hamza has revealed, Iraq was using its students at U.S. universities and its arms experts at scientific or technical meetings to build a basic knowledge of highly sophisticated procedures and equipment, as well as to search for solutions to problems that Iraqi laboratories were having.

Crates of books were bought and shipped to Iraq, sometimes through Jordan to avoid undue interest, Mr. Hamza said.

Iraq was suspected of trying to develop nuclear weapons as early as the 1970s; in 1981, Israel bombed a crucial reactor where work was being done on plutonium.

In the 1980s, however, the United States opened many doors to Iraq, which was waging a long war with Iran, then an extremely hostile foe.

Some of the Iraqi students sent to the United States on scholarships by Iraq were told to focus on universities like Wisconsin and Arizona for their libraries and proximity to major American nuclear laboratories or test sites.

Mr. Albright said in an interview Wednesday that the Iraqi effort appeared to have paid off in the beginning, as hundreds of documents were photocopied and sent to Baghdad. But since then, he said, that information has become outdated. Moreover, much more information can now be found electronically from anywhere in the world.

The availability of the Internet has played into American reluctance to allow Iraq to import advanced computers, even though the Iraqis insist they are for secondary school use.

Iraq, like China and other nations looking for American secrets, also used the technique of "rubbing shoulders" at conferences with American experts, gathering tidbits of information in conversations.

One of the Iraqis' biggest breaks, according to Mr. Hamza's report, came in 1989 at a conference on detonation technology in Portland, Oregon. There, the Iraqis learned about the most up-to-date lenses, which are powerful chemical explosives that encircle nuclear material to compress it and focus an explosion inward, setting off a nuclear reaction.

"The Portland conference came at the right time," Mr. Hamza told the institute, adding that the Iraqi defense industries ministry had sent two agents. "They got everything in the field about how to get top-notch lenses," he said.

The agents also learned about the latest advances in shock-wave generation and other technologies. "They were introduced to experts and the labs they worked at," Mr. Hamza said.

The Iraqi student network turned out to produce mixed results, Mr. Hamza said. Many students refused to return to Iraq in the 1980s for fear of being drafted into the long war with Iran. Also, Mr. Hamza said, the students began to hear of the increasingly repressive nature of Mr. Saddam's rule, with purges, killings of political opponents and massacres of ethnic minorities.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD
TRIBUNE,

FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 2000

Le coordonnateur humanitaire de l'ONU en Irak a dû démissionner

Hans von Sponeck a eu le tort de critiquer l'embargo contre Bagdad

Le coordonnateur humanitaire de l'ONU en Irak, l'Allemand Hans von Sponeck, qui a démissionné de ses fonctions, proteste contre l'embargo qui frappe, à ses

yeux, la population civile. La Russie, soutenue par six pays membres du Conseil de sécurité, a demandé que M. von Sponeck soit entendu en séance publique.

NEW YORK (Nations unies)
de notre correspondant

C'est devenu la norme : tout responsable de l'ONU qui se prononce contre les sanctions économiques imposées à l'Irak est contraint de démissionner. La dernière victime de cette règle non écrite est le coordonnateur humanitaire de l'organisation à Bagdad. Présenté comme une « démission » volontaire, lundi 14 février, le départ du diplomate allemand Hans von Sponeck – qui sera effectif fin mars – aurait été « provoqué » par le secrétariat. Il a d'ores et déjà entraîné la démission du chef du Programme alimentaire mondial à Bagdad, Jutta Burghardt. Leur retrait traduit la dichotomie de plus en plus profonde, au sein du secrétariat de l'ONU, entre ceux qui dirigent le programme humanitaire sur le terrain et ceux qui en sont responsables à New York.

Comme tous ceux qui côtoient de près la situation en Irak, M. von Sponeck n'a pas pu s'empêcher,

dès novembre 1999, de protester publiquement contre le régime des sanctions et ses conséquences sur la population civile. Ses propos avaient alors suscité la colère des responsables américains, qui ont exigé son départ. Son contrat n'a donc été renouvelé que pour six mois. Il aurait, à son retour à Bagdad, reçu « par écrit » des « instructions précises » du siège, lui demandant de ne plus exprimer en public son opposition aux sanctions, sous peine de voir son contrat résilié.

Comme son prédécesseur irlandais, Dennis Halliday, le diplomate allemand ne s'est toutefois pas privé de dénoncer le « génocide » sanctionné par l'ONU depuis une décennie. Également désireux de se faire entendre sur tous les aspects de la politique internationale en Irak, il serait en train de préparer un rapport sur les effets des bombardements quasi quotidiens américano-britanniques dans les zones d'exclusion imposées à l'aviation ira-

kienne. « La tragédie des civils irakiens a atteint un point tel qu'il n'est plus possible de se taire », a-t-il dit dans des déclarations à la presse. La mortalité infantile a « plus que doublé » et le « désespoir » de la jeunesse incite à se demander s'« il est possible de s'associer à une telle réalité. Pour ma part, j'en suis incapable ».

« UN PROBLÈME DE CONSCIENCE »

La Russie, soutenue par six pays dont la France, a demandé que le Conseil de sécurité puisse l'entendre en séance publique. Les États-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne ont affirmé vouloir demander l'avis du secrétariat général. Jusqu'à maintenant, aucun chef de mission sur le terrain n'a pu être entendu par le Conseil à cause de l'opposition systématique de Benon Sevan, le responsable du programme humanitaire de l'ONU à New York. M. Sevan n'a jamais pu supporter qu'il puisse y avoir des voix discordantes au sein du programme Pétrole contre nourriture dont il a la charge. Il a voulu et obtenu le départ de M. Halliday et de M. von Sponeck. M. Sevan leur reproche d'avoir, en dénonçant publiquement les sanctions, « politisé » le programme humanitaire, dont le bon fonctionnement est, d'après lui, tributaire de la neutralité de ceux qui en sont chargés.

Certains, à l'ONU, accusent néanmoins M. Sevan d'être « sous influence anglo-saxonne ». Lors d'une rencontre avec *Le Monde* vendredi 18 février, M. Halliday a relevé une « anomalie » au sein du programme à New York. « Le conseiller le plus proche de Benon Sevan est un Anglais, Allen Fellows, qui vient du ministère de la défense britannique. C'est lui, ajoute-t-il, qui prend connaissance des rapports en provenance de Bagdad et les modifie avant leur remise au secrétaire général et au Conseil de sécurité. »

Pour ceux qui travaillent sur le terrain, les conséquences des sanctions deviennent « un problème de conscience », commente un haut responsable de l'ONU. Mais à New York, le secrétariat est obligé de se conformer aux déci-

sions du Conseil et « les employés l'ONU sont tenus de s'abstenir de formuler des opinions personnelles ». Les voix discordantes se multiplient malgré tout.

« La vérité est que le programme Pétrole contre nourriture ne fonctionne pas, explique un diplomate. Après dix ans de sanctions, toute l'infrastructure civile de l'Irak est en ruine. Il n'y a pas d'eau, pas d'électricité. A quoi cela sert-il d'avoir du lait en poudre pour les enfants si l'eau est contaminée ? Les médicaments dans un hôpital sans électricité ne servent à rien... » Or les États-Unis continuent de s'opposer à l'importation par l'Irak des équipements nécessaires à la réparation de ses infrastructures.

INTRANSIGENCE AMÉRICAINE

L'intransigence américaine met en difficulté le secrétaire général de l'ONU, Kofi Annan. Rudement critiqué à Washington pour sa renco- tre, en février 1998, avec le président irakien, Saddam Hussein, M. Annan s'efforce, depuis, de se tenir à l'écart du dossier irakien, mais il n'y réussit pas toujours. Ainsi, en juillet 1999, il a été forcé, sous la pression des Russes, de demander le départ du diplomate australien, Richard Butler, président de l'ancienne commission spéciale chargée du désarmement de Bagdad. Six mois plus tard, ce sont les Américains qui l'ont obligé à « inviter » M. von Sponeck à démissionner.

Les détracteurs de la politique des sanctions ne se taisent pas pour autant. Dans un récent rapport des parlementaires britanniques, travaillistes et conservateurs ont fait valoir que cette politique, non seulement n'a pas réussi à venir à bout du régime irakien, mais elle a « démesurément » pénalisé la population en entraînant une dégradation des infrastructures du pays. Même son de cloche à Washington où, dans une lettre au président Bill Clinton, un groupe de soixante-dix membres du Congrès conduit par le démocrate David Bonior a fait valoir que « le peuple irakien doit avoir le droit de réhabiliter son économie ».

Afsané Bassir Pour

Une pauvreté massive

L'Irak est « passé d'une relative prospérité à une pauvreté massive » depuis l'imposition des sanctions de l'ONU en 1990, indique le dernier rapport de l'ONU (1^{er} avril 1999) sur la situation humanitaire dans ce pays.

● **Mortalité infantile.** D'après l'Organisation de l'ONU pour l'enfance, le taux de mortalité infantile y est parmi « les plus élevés au monde ». De 56 pour 1 000, pour les moins de cinq ans, en 1991, il est passé à 131 pour 1 000 actuellement. L'insuffisance pondérale à la naissance concerne au moins 23 % des nouveau-nés. La malnutrition chronique affecte un enfant de moins de cinq ans sur quatre.

● **Mortalité maternelle.** Le taux de mortalité maternelle, selon le Fonds des Nations unies pour la population, est passé de 50 pour 100 000 naissances en 1991 à 117 en 1998.

● **Alimentation.** D'après le programme alimentaire mondial, la disponibilité énergétique alimentaire est tombée de 3 120 à

1 093 calories par habitant et par jour.

● **Eau et énergie.** Selon le Programme des Nations unies pour le développement, 41 % de la population seulement a accès à l'eau propre. Les coupures d'électricité peuvent durer jusqu'à dix heures par jour.

● **Maladies mentales.** D'après l'Organisation mondiale de la santé, le nombre de malades mentaux s'adressant aux services de santé a augmenté de 15 % entre 1991 et 1998.

● **Scolarisation.** D'après l'Unesco, le taux de scolarisation, tous âges confondus, est tombé à 53 %. 8 613 bâtiments scolaires, sur un total de 10 334, ont été gravement endommagés en Irak. La commission chargée de la rédaction du rapport est convaincue que « la situation humanitaire demeurera difficile en l'absence d'une reprise durable de l'économie irakienne, à laquelle les secours dans le cadre du programme Pétrole contre nourriture ne sauraient suffire ».



24 MARS 2000

A la veille de la rencontre Clinton-Assad, la difficile succession du président syrien

Bachar, le fils promis à Damas

Damas-Beyrouth envoyé spécial

A Damas, la vie politique semble entre les mains des colleurs d'affiches. Pas une rue, pas un bâtiment administratif, pas un magasin d'une certaine importance qui échappe à leur zèle. Bien sûr, la part du lion revient au président Hafez el-Assad, dont les portraits sont partout, même sur les tout nouveaux panneaux publicitaires électroniques qui donnent à la capitale syrienne un air de ville moderne. Après lui, vient Bassel, l'aîné des cinq enfants du Président, disparu en janvier 1994 dans un accident de voiture. Ensuite, on trouve Bachar, le puîné, dont les affiches commencent à ponctuer, avec une évidente discrétion, certaines artères. Personne d'autre n'a son portrait sur les murs, si ce n'est, ici et là, des portraits de feu le président égyptien Abdel Gamal Nasser. Les Damascènes n'ont pas à en savoir plus. Tout est dit sur les murs. En fait, presque tout.



A lire les murs de Damas, on comprend d'abord que le président Assad est toujours le maître absolu. On peut ensuite analyser que la mort de Bassel, dont il avait fait son dauphin, pèse encore lourd. Enfin, pour Bachar, appelé à le remplacer, sa présence même modeste indique qu'il est bien le nouveau dauphin, que les jeux sont faits en sa faveur mais que la partie a été difficile à gagner.

Succession monarchique

Malade, le président syrien, âgé de 69 ans, l'est depuis longtemps. Aussi, avait-il assez tôt organisé sa succession au profit de son fils Bassel. Déjà, l'affaire n'avait pas été simple à mener. Pourtant, le jeune homme était brillant et porteur d'un charisme certain. Il avait aussi fait de bonnes études d'ingénieur. Dans un pays qui compte très peu de sportifs de renom, il avait acquis une certaine popularité en obtenant en 1987 — nombre d'affiches rappellent l'événement en le représentant à cheval — la médaille d'or d'équitation aux Jeux méditerranéens de Lattaquieh. Son père l'avait également fait rejoindre assez tôt les rangs de l'armée pour que la quarantaine d'officiers supérieurs, qui constituent la colonne vertébrale du régime, ne prennent pas trop ombrage de son ascension. Mais, dans un Etat où toutes les bouches semblent cousues, rien n'a jamais témoigné que l'institution militaire ait accepté facilement cette succession de type monarchique.

Avec Bachar, aujourd'hui âgé de 34 ans, la succession apparaît beaucoup plus difficile. Lorsque son frère aîné

meurt, il est ophtalmologiste à Londres et n'a jamais montré de dispositions pour la chose politique. C'est un garçon assez effacé, sans charisme particulier, affublé de surcroît, dans un monde arabe où le verbe fait beaucoup, d'une petite gêne d'élocution.

Pourtant, c'est bien lui que son père rappelle en Syrie. Personne, alors, ne peut encore imaginer qu'il l'a choisi pour lui succéder.

D'ailleurs, on entend très peu parler de lui. « Pendant environ deux ans, le Président s'est attaché à ce qu'il reçoive un entraînement complet, tant sur le plan physique, sportif que psychologique », confie un journaliste syrien proche de Bachar.

Cela commence évidemment par une formation militaire. Après, comme il l'avait fait avec Bassel, il le fait travailler à ses côtés dans le palais présidentiel. Viendront les premières responsabilités. Assad lui demande de prendre en charge la campagne contre la corruption qui gangrène tout l'appareil du pouvoir. Puis, il le charge de l'épineux dossier libanais. Bien sûr, tout se passe dans l'ombre. Officiellement, Bachar n'est que le directeur de l'Institut informatique syrien.

En fait, chacune de ses missions a un but bien précis. En faisant intervenir son fils sur le Liban, Hafez el-Assad l'initie au combat politique tout en lui évitant de se faire des ennemis au sein du sérail de Damas. Son rôle de « Monsieur Propre » lui vaut de bénéficier d'une certaine popularité dans la population, même si bien peu de têtes ont été coupées jusqu'alors. Enfin, ses responsabilités dans l'informatique lui valent, dans un pays sclérosé, d'apparaître comme un homme d'ouverture. Là encore, les photos le disent. Dans l'une des rares boutiques de Damas où quelques heureux privilégiés peuvent se procurer le système Internet, le jeune gérant a épinglé une photo de Bachar. Une photo d'amateurl, pas un cliché officiel. Une façon de dire qu'il aime Bachar. Car, indéniablement, le fils du



La famille el-Assad au début des années 70. De droite à gauche,

Président bénéficie d'un courant de sympathie. « C'est vraiment un jeune homme comme il faut. Il est gentil, poli. Et il s'occupe des pauvres. Moi, je l'adore », s'enthousiasme Colette el-Khoury, membre de l'Union des écrivains et ex-députée « indépendante » (certains sièges du Parlement sont confiés à des personnalités proches du régime pour lui donner un vernis démocratique). « On peut le voir déféquer avec un copain, comme un client ordinaire, dans un restaurant à la mode du centre-ville. Il est très modeste », ajoute Mahab el-Khoury, autre membre de ce même « syndicat ».

Les massacres d'Alep et Homs

Mais ce « jeune homme si bien » est-il fait pour autant pour devenir le futur rais ? Au sein de la communauté



Affiche représentant le président syrien et ses deux fils Bassel et Bachar.

Le président syrien avait assez tôt organisé sa succession en faveur de son fils Bassel. Après la mort de celui-ci dans un accident, il y a six ans, c'est un autre fils, Bachar, que Hafez el-Assad initie au pouvoir. Non sans l'inquiétude du clan alaouite qui tient le pays d'une main de fer.



Bachar, Bouchra, la seule fille du président syrien, et, à gauche de son épouse, Bassel, le fils aîné décedé dans un accident de voiture en 1994.

alaouite (10 % de la population), qui accapare tout le pouvoir politique en Syrie, certains ne le pensent pas. Ils redoutent principalement qu'il n'ait pas la même poigne que son père. Car les Alaouites restent sur le qui-vive, craignant de se retrouver, à la mort d'Assad, marginalisés, persécutés, voire exterminés, comme ils l'ont souvent été au long de leur histoire. Les dernières graves tensions remontent à 1982. Cette année-là, poussée par les Frères musulmans, la communauté sunnite (75 % de la population) s'est soulevée dans les villes d'Alep, Homs et de Hama. Les Alaouites commencent à y être massacrés. La répression, que dirigea Rifaat el-Assad, le frère du Président, est terrible. On y exterminait des familles entières, jetant aux flammes femmes et enfants. On comptera entre 20000 et 30000 morts.

Aujourd'hui, il est difficile de savoir si les Frères musulmans ont pu reconstituer leur réseaux. «Ils sont désorganisés mais toujours là. Ils attendent leur heure. Le feu couve sous la terre. C'est une révolte du silence», indique un médecin d'Homs, proche des services secrets syriens. «C'est pour cela que, dans ces villes, les Alaouites habitent désormais à la périphérie, faisant comme un anneau autour du centre, pour pouvoir être épargnés, puis encercler la ville en cas de rébellion», ajoute-t-il. Dans un tel contexte, une partie du pouvoir alaouite craint que Bachar soit une mauvaise carte. Elle l'a fait savoir au président syrien, ce qui explique la prudence de loup de celui-ci. «En fait, Hafez el-Assad pouvait imposer fermement Bachar en le nommant vice-président. Mais il a préféré l'imposer en douceur, pour maintenir les

équilibres du régime et ne pas déchirer le tissu alaouite», explique une source diplomatique occidentale. C'est que Bachar n'appartient à aucune des trois institutions qui fondent le régime. Il ne fait pas partie des instances supérieures du parti Baas. Dans l'armée, il n'a qu'un grade subalterne même s'il est colonel depuis le 1^{er} janvier. Et il ne dirige aucun des puissants services secrets, véritable pierre angulaire du régime. Aussi, le Président a-t-il dû se lancer depuis 1994 dans un triple «nettoyage». A l'intérieur du parti et de l'administration, comme en

témoigne le nouveau gouvernement apparu la semaine dernière où les technocrates de Bachar entrent en force mais n'occupent que les postes subalternes (le précédent cabinet avait été formé en... 1987). Dans l'armée, où le puissant chef d'état-major Hikmet aç-Chahabi (un sunnite) a été contraint de prendre sa retraite et s'est vu remplacer par son adjoint alaouite, le général Ali Aslan. Dans les services secrets, où le général Bachir Najjar, directeur des renseignements généraux, a été limogé pour «malversations financières». Dans ces milieux, Bachar compte néanmoins un précieux allié: Assef Chawkat, le chef de la puissante sûreté militaire de l'armée de terre et son beau-frère. Pour une bonne raison: c'est lui, qui, selon plusieurs sources diplomatiques, a obtenu de la famille Assad que Chawkat puisse épouser Bouchra, la seule fille du Président syrien.

La concurrence de Rifaat el-Assad

Reste que le tissu alaouite apparaît bel et bien déchiré. Dès la mort de Bassel, Rifaat el-Assad s'est posé en successeur. Pour la communauté alaouite, il représente la force. Une force brutale mais efficace. Déjà, il avait tenté de prendre le pouvoir en 1983, profitant de ce que son frère Hafez était hospitalisé, ce qui avait entraîné sa disgrâce. Sentant monter la menace, le rais l'a limogé en février 1998 de son poste de vice-président avant de le faire chasser du parti Baas en l'accusant de trahison. Mais Rifaat n'a pas vraiment renoncé. Lui et son fils Soumar courent le Proche-Orient et le Maghreb, se faisant recevoir par l'Algérien Bouteflika ou Yasser Arafat. En septembre, des tracts ont été distribués dans la montagne alaouite et jusqu'à Damas. Ils mettent en cause les compétences de Bachar et interpellent le président: «Hafez, ce pays ne t'appartient pas. Pourquoi le brades-tu? Même s'ils semblent émaner de groupes islamistes, c'est bel et bien Rifaat qui est derrière. La réaction ne tarde pas. A Lattaquieh, selon une source syrienne proche de Bachar, les services de sécurité s'emparent en septembre du fichier des partisans de Rifaat dans les cercles du pouvoir. Des centaines d'arrestations s'ensuivent. Puis, en octobre, l'armée attaque son bastion portuaire. La bataille durera six heures et fera entre vingt et trente morts, selon des sources occidentales et arabes. Désormais, Rifaat ne peut plus mettre les pieds en Syrie sous peine d'y être arrêté. Sa marginalisation a commencé.

«Hafez el-Assad a préféré imposer Bachar en douceur, pour maintenir les équilibres du régime et ne pas déchirer le tissu alaouite.»

D'ores et déjà, Bachar a livré ses premières batailles. Au Liban, c'est lui qui, sous le contrôle de son père, apparaît derrière la démission du Premier ministre Rafic Hariri. Celle-ci était intervenue peu après que Damas eut imposé, en octobre 1988, comme président de la République le général Emile Lahoud. «Pas de doute qu'il lui fallait se débarrasser d'Hariri qu'il n'aime pas. Cela a commencé par la publication d'un livre, les Mains noires, dénonçant sa corruption, signé par un député mais avec des informations données par les services secrets. Ensuite, lors de la formation du nouveau gouvernement, les conditions qui ont été imposées à Hariri dans le choix de ses ministres étaient comme une insulte pour lui et il a préféré partir», explique un chercheur de Beyrouth qui préfère garder l'anonymat. Pourquoi cette hostilité déclarée? «Parce que Hariri était trop populaire, que son importance sur la scène régionale était trop grande et qu'il risquait donc de faire de l'ombre à Bachar. De plus, Lahoud, qui est intègre, correspond mieux à l'image de M. Propre que le fils d'Assad veut se donner», ajoute-t-il. A présent, les deux hommes semblent s'entendre au mieux pour gouverner le Liban. Sur la scène internationale, sa mise en orbite a aussi été réussie. Visites dans les émirats pétroliers du Golfe et en Arabie Saoudite. Puis, à Paris, où il a été invité par Jacques Chirac. Reste l'épineux dossier du Golan que son père voudrait voir régler avant que son fils règne. Désormais, les jeux sont faits mais tout ne sera jamais facile pour lui. En octobre, Maher el-Assad, un autre des fils du président syrien, a tiré pour des raisons mal connues sur son beau-frère et allié Assef Chawkat, entraînant son hospitalisation à Paris (Libération du 29 novembre). «Du temps de Bassel, un tel incident, pour limité qu'il soit, ne se serait jamais produit. D'une certaine façon, il témoigne de la faiblesse de Bachar», analyse un spécialiste de la politique syrienne.

JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN



Bachar el-Assad est colonel depuis l'année dernière.

Dimanche, sommet Assad-Clinton

Nouvelle tentative de sortir de l'impasse le volet syrien du processus de paix: Hafez el-Assad rencontre, dimanche, le président américain Bill Clinton. Les négociations directes israëlo-syriennes avaient repris à la fin de l'année dernière, aux États-Unis, mais avaient tourné court malgré le forçage personnel de Clinton. Ce dernier tient visiblement à accrocher un ultime succès proche-oriental à son palmarès, en parant d'un retrait israélien du plateau du Golan et d'une paix entre la Syrie et l'État hébreu. Mais une partie de l'issue dépend d'Assad, toujours énigmatique, et dont l'état de santé inquiète les chancelleries occidentales. Le président syrien souffre notamment de problèmes cardiaques et d'un cancer.

The Economist
March 25-31st 2000

by Amberin Zaman

Turkish Cinema: Casting a Light

For more than fifteen years one of the bloodiest ethnic rebellions in recent times has been raging on often largely unnoticed by the outside world in Turkey's mountainous Kurdish lands. Foreign journalists are barred from free travel in the war zone. Those of their Turkish colleagues, who seek to reveal atrocities committed by the Turkish security forces in their battle against separatist guerrillas from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) often find themselves behind bars.

Now, thousands of Turkish cinema-goers are being exposed for the first time to the full dimensions of their country's festering Kurdish problem in a courageous new film, written and directed by Yesim Ustaoglu, a 38 year old film director from Istanbul.

Journey to the Sun tells the story of three young idealists, whose paths cross in the tumult of Istanbul's commercial underbelly around the Golden Horn. Berzan (Nazmi Qirix), is a Kurd sympathetic to PKK. He strikes up a friendship with Mehmet (Nevruz Baz) an endearingly naïve, Turkish labourer, after rescuing him from a bunch of ultra-nationalist football hooligans. Mehmet's girlfriend, Arzu (Mizgin Kapazan) the daughter of a Turkish *gastarbeiter* in Germany, is initially hostile to Berzan, because she regards him as "trouble" but she is quickly won over by his warmth and sincerity.

"Their bond deepens after Mehmet is arbitrarily detained and brutally tortured by Turkish police. Mehmet's protestations that "I am not a terrorist" are met with derision by his tormentors, who believe he is Kurdish because of his dark hair and skin.

Soon after Berzan is picked up as well after taking part in a demonstration in support of Kurdish hunger strikers at Istanbul's notoriously violent Bayrampasa prison. He dies in police custody.

Shattered by friend's sudden and violent death, an increasingly resolute Mehmet places Berzan's corpse into a plain wooden coffin and vows to bury him in his native village, near the Iraqi border. With that, so begins Mehmet's own painful Journey to the Sun.

Although it was first shown in Amsterdam more than a year ago, the film did not open in Turkey until earlier this month. "No distributor here would touch it," said Miss Ustaoglu during an interview at her turn of the century flat, facing the Golden Horn. "They were too scared."

Many of the themes touched upon in the film have long been dismissed by the Turkish government as "terrorist propaganda." Take for instance graphic footage of thousands of Kurdish villages gutted by the Turkish army, triggering a mass exodus of Kurdish villagers whom Mehmet encounters along the way.

Miss Ustaoglu says she finally decided to approach cinema-hall owners directly at the beginning of this year. "I literally begged them to take the film," she recalls.

The decision late last September by the captured PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, to call off his rebellion and Turkey's anointment soon after as a candidate for full membership of the European Union may have helped. The film is now being shown to packed audiences at eight halls across the country including one in Diyarbakir, the provincial capital of the Kurdish region.

Perhaps the hardest part of all for Turkish viewers is coming to grips with a sort of racism that automatically sees all Kurds as terrorists and is powerfully projected throughout the film. When Mehmet seeks to make sense of his ordeal, Arzu says: "Maybe you are too dark." So Mehmet sprays his hair blond. One of the defining moments of Mehmet's journey is when he washes out the dye. Still, for all the abuses committed by both sides in the conflict, the near total absence of inter-communal violence between Turks and Kurds is a crucial point that Miss Ustaoglu fails to make.

Unsurprisingly many of the reviews in the Turkish media, though broadly favourably, manage to avoid raising the Kurdish issue. They focus instead on the 20 odd awards the film has picked up abroad, its stunningly beautiful images of Istanbul and the enormous talent of its obscure actors. "There are many people in this country who still want to cover their eyes, plug their ears to what's going on," said Miss Ustaoglu. "But if I succeed through my film in changing even one person's views, I will consider that a great success."

'Nevruz' is okay but 'Newroz' is not

- While the controversial Nevruz holiday was officially celebrated in Diyarbakir and Batman, the reason for it being banned in other cities were the letters 'W' and 'O'

Hakan Aslaneli

The Nevruz holiday on March 21, which marks the beginning of spring and when daytime and nighttime hours are equal, was celebrated again amid disputes this year. In the southeastern cities of Diyarbakir and Batman, about 20,000 people set tires on fire, danced the halay folk dance and sang songs over the 24-hour period.

Permission was first given for Nevruz celebrations in Istanbul and later cancelled by area governors citing the reason for their disapproval as the fact that the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) had spelled the word "Newroz." The Governor's Office stated that "Nevruz" means spring holiday, so spelling the word "newroz" would provoke hatred and hostility among people, thus the celebration should not be not permitted.

Police detained 147 people who wanted to celebrate Nevruz, but on Tuesday morning, Istanbul Governor Erol Cakir was among the people symbolically celebrating Nevruz in Sultanahmet Square. Cakir even jumped over a burning tire as a gesture symbolizing unity and brotherhood. In the same afternoon, however, Cakir ordered that those who wanted to participate in Nevruz celebrations be taken into custody.

Showy celebrations

Nevruz was fully celebrated only in Diyarbakir. The International Fair Center, designated as the site for celebrations by the Governor's Office, began filling up in the morning. More than 20,000 people got together in the Uckuyu district. The predominantly yellow, red and green HADEP flags were hung in some parts of the area and the celebrations started at about 10:00 a.m. with opening speeches from HADEP District Chairman Ali Urkut, Diyarbakir Mayor Feridun Celik and HADEP Chairman Ahmet Turan Demir. After the speeches, fires were lit in some parts of the area while people danced the halay, sang Kurdish songs and jumped over burning tires under the constant surveillance of F-16 aircraft flying over the crowds of people.

Diyarbakir police headquarters and the garrison command took tight security measures throughout the city. With reinforcements from other cities, about 4,000 police were on duty, and the entire city was under camera surveillance. One thing attracting attention were some groups participating in the celebrations who were giving red carnations to the police.

At the end of the Nevruz holiday, which passed without the unpleasant events that had been expected, the 147 people detained in Istanbul was the highest number, whereas 100 people in Sanliurfa and 20 people in Siirt were taken into custody.

The Kurdish Culture Research Association issued statements concerning the celebrations cancelled in Istanbul and accused the governor's office of being biased. The statement, signed by Kamber Soypak on behalf of the organizing committee, said, "The Governor's Office, which could not tolerate spelling the word Newroz, did not permit the celebrations because it found the date of March 21 objectionable from a security standpoint."

Politicians commemorate Nevruz in writing

President Suleyman Demirel: Nevruz, which is accepted as the first day of the new year and the beginning of spring, is a perfect ground on which unity and peace can be reflected as well as where such universal values as peace, friendship and brotherhood can be shared. There have been some changes in our region that will give direction to world history in the 21st century. Our wish is that this new world appearing in the region promotes friendship, love, peace and tolerance as is appropriate for Nevruz. Nevruz should be celebrated in this way, and we should not let it be made into an unpleasant event.

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit: Nevruz, which strengthens national unity and symbolizes brotherhood, has taken its place in our culture. I celebrate Nevruz with the wish that it will contribute to the development of love, solidarity and peace among the people of our country.

Deputy Prime Minister Devlet Bahçeli: Over the last few years, there was a desire to see Nevruz become a holiday when separatist and terrorist force would be used. Common sense in our country has not let these wishes become reality. The Turkish people's beliefs, cultural values and civilization are the strongest guarantees of Turkish national existence and unity, of which one celebration of these values is the Nevruz holiday.

PKK's Semdin Sakik Submits Repentance Petition

Anatolia Agency 24 Mar 00

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

DIYARBAKIR, March 24 (A.A) - Semdin Sakik, one of the leading names of the terrorist PKK organization, appeared at Diyarbakir State Security Court (DGM) on Friday due to the petition he submitted to benefit from the Repentance Law.

Semdin Sakik and his brother Arif were captured in an operation by a team of General Staff special forces in Northern Iraq on April 13, 1998 and brought to Turkey. Semdin Sakik was tried by the Diyarbakir DGM no:1 and sentenced to death. Sakik who was brought to DGM under tight security measures said that he wanted to benefit from the Repentance Law, and he would help security forces in every phase.

The Court adjourned the hearing till the response of the Interior Ministry for Sakik's petition.

Will a liberal Kurdish party in Turkey succeed?

Kurdish Media Mar 24, 2000 Hussein Tahiri, Kurdish Media Analyst

In 1997, Serafattin Elci, founded the Democratic Mass Party, DKP (Demokratik Kitle Partisi).[1]

Elci was a former Member of Parliament and the Construction Minister in Bulent Ecevit's government of 1977-78. When he was a minister, in an interview, he stated that there were Kurds in Turkey and he himself was a Kurd. This statement caused uproar in Turkey that had vigorously denied any Kurdish identity.

The DKP in a way was very unusual to Kurdish traditions. The traditional Kurdish movements mostly were nationalists. After the World War II, some Kurdish movements with socialist ideology appeared. In the 1960s and 1970s Kurdish political parties with communist ideology began to work. Kurdistan was underdeveloped so it was easier for the leftist parties to attract the Kurdish support, especially the educated Kurds. The DKP was unusual because it represented the Kurdish issue from a liberal point of view. Elci said the DKP was a liberal democratic party. It represented the Kurds of Turkey and worked for the Kurdish rights in a peaceful way. Liberalism for Elci meant freedom, freedom from government control.

Elci criticized Kurdish leftist parties for their paradoxical claims. He said, on one hand, they said the government should control everything, on the other, they opposed government. If there was government control there would always be problems. If the government controlled economy it would use it for its own advantages; it would use it to consolidate its organizations. This would not be in the interests of the Kurds. Elci elaborated a major Kurdish problem in the Middle East was the governments ruling the Kurds had been very strong and they controlled everything. The Kurds were to emphasize liberalism so the government size could be reduced and its organizations weakened. Therefore, individuals in the society would be free. In the absence of a strong government the Kurds could realize their demands.[2]

The DKP aimed at gaining Kurdish cultural rights within a liberal Turkey. The DKP wanted Kurdish language to be permitted in media, the Kurds were to be allowed to have their own administration, and the Kurds were to be able to determine their own fate. The central government's duty only were to control the army, justice system, and large projects. Everything else, would be controlled by the Kurds.[3] This looked like autonomy, but Elci did not want to give it any name fearing any label would go against the Turkish legal

system and would lead to the DKP closure. In fact, five months after the party was founded the Turkish State Court took action to close down the party and it was finally banned in 1999. Serafettin Elci and several other Kurdish elites decided to form another Kurdish liberal party on the model of DKP. The first step towards the formation of a new political party was taken with a letter of invitation drafted by a six-member commission that included Lawyer Serafettin Elci, the chairman of the now-defunct Democratic Mass Party (DKP), which was closed by order of the Constitutional Court, Abdülmelik Firat, Seyh Sait's grandson and former True Path Party (DYP) deputy and Dr. Mehmet Emin Sever, the former New Democracy Movement (YDH) deputy for Mus. The letter were sent to 900 people living in various parts of the country to attend a two-day meeting scheduled to take place on January 15 and 16. The meeting were held in the convention hall of the Confederation of Turkish Labor Unions (Turk-Is) in Ankara's Yenisehir district. [4]

After successive meetings by Kurdish intellectuals and politicians in Ankara on January 16 and 17 a decision was made to form a liberal Kurdish political party. A commission was formed to implement the project. The commission is headed by New Democracy Movement (YDF) of former Deputy Mehmet Emin Sever and is expected to operate for approximately three months before a comprehensive meeting will be held to accelerate the establishment of the party. The DKP was an elitist party. It seems that the new to be established Kurdish liberal party to be elitist as well. The members who are working to form the party are mainly formed of Kurdish intellectuals and politicians who can relate with liberal ideals. Also, the 900 people invited were selected elites. Liberal democratic ideals can be attractive in developed countries. However, in an underdeveloped and poverty stricken region like Kurdistan where majority of people are struggling just to survive it will be unlikely for a Kurdish liberal party to gather a mass following. Elci is conscious about this fact. He stated that the Kurds were not familiar with liberal democracy. Elci said, "We do not expect a boom in liberal ideals. Kurds have always pursued policies based on Marxist ideals. The liberal democratic understanding we are currently pursuing is a somewhat unfamiliar to the Kurds." [5]

Here are some questions: should the Kurdish elite form an abstract Kurdish political party distinct from the Kurdish masses? Should political parties be formed to incorporate masses or should they be formed to mould the masses? The Kurdish leaders and intellectuals in designing policies have always disregarded the situation of Kurds and their capacity. As a result, they have ended in failure. A new Kurdish liberal party without considering the status of the Kurds and their mentality will face the same fate.

Notes: 1. Interview with Serafettin Elci, the leader of the Democratic Mass Party, 15 November 1997, Ankara, Turkey. The author of this article interviewed Serafettin Elci on 15 November 1997. 2. Ibid. 3. Ibid. 4 Turkish Daily News, 5 January 2000. 5 Turkish Daily News, 23 March 2000.

This from Israel by way of FIBIS: Ha'aretz (Tel Aviv)

22 Mar 00

by Amnon Barzilai: "The Russian-Israeli Helicopter Sets Out on First Sortie"

[FIBIS Translated Text] Last summer, at an arms exposition in Ankara, Turkey, a new combat helicopter was presented, bearing the Turkish name Ardogan (Warrior). The Ardogan, however, is none other than the old Russian K50-2 gunship (Black Shark), which the Israel Aircraft Industry [IAI] had upgraded. Several months before that, in June 1999, the helicopter was revealed for the first time in the Russian pavilion at the Le Bourget air salon outside Paris, France. It was presented as a weapon system that is the result of an Israeli-Russian cooperation. Kamov, the Russian helicopter producer, presented the changes made to the helicopter, first produced in 1977, following the association with the IAI. The K50-2 was converted from a single- to a two-seater. This change sparked a professional debate -- should the two crew members sit side by side, like in the Black Hawk gunship, or one behind the other, like in the Cobra and the Apache.

The second option was eventually chosen. The Turkish defense establishment decided to make this change, along with several others. Over a year ago, the Turks published a \$4 billion tender for the purchase of 145 gunships for its ground forces -- one of the largest deals in the history of modern military avionics. Yet, contrary to all the earlier forecasts, when the interim results of the bidding were published earlier this month, it appeared that major contenders such as Boeing, the Apache Long-Bow producer, and Aerospecial, the French-German concern that produces the Tiger, were eliminated. Thus, the closing stage of the tender left, in fact, only three producers: the American Bell Textron, which offers the not yet operational King Cobra; the Italian Agusta, manufacturer of the Agusta A-129, and the Russian Kamov, maker of the K50-2.

The committee that is supposed to make the decision comprises the most senior decisionmakers of the Turkish defense establishment, headed by Prime Minister Bulant Ecevit. Still, that committee has political considerations to make, besides the security-related ones. It had to conduct careful negotiations with Russia and the United States while making sure that its process of joining the EU was not harmed. This is why the final stage of the tender has a balanced representation of the United States, Russia, and Europe.

What could perhaps tip the scale in favor of the Israeli-Russian helicopter is the fact that if it wins the tender, it stands to reason that the gunships would be built by the Turkish Aircraft Industries. The IAI stands a good chance of gaining from the bidding in any event: In addition to being involved in building the Russian helicopter, systems made by TAMAM, an IAI subsidiary specializing in night-vision equipment, have been installed on the Italian gunship as well. At the same time, the Russian helicopter involves many more Israeli companies: its modern shape is the product of Lahav, which also dealt with the integration of all the avionic systems -- all pure Israeli technology. Among the Israeli systems installed on the helicopter are the main computer, a digital map, an electronic warfare system, the internal and external communication systems, and night and day vision systems. Originally, the Russian helicopter was equipped with 12 supersonic antitank VIKHAR rockets and a 23mm gun. Now, although it had hesitated at first, the Israeli Defense Ministry agreed to provide the gunships with 12 TV-guided antitank NTD missiles made by RAFA'EL [Israel Armament Authority]. In addition, the helicopters will be armed with US-made air-to-air Stinger missiles.

The IAI-Kamov partnership was forged in the mid-1990's, when it turned out that the Russian Army could not purchase any more helicopters. IAI Director General Moshe Qeret held a meeting in Moscow with Sergey Mihiyev, Kamov president and chief planner, and the two examined a cooperative option by which the Russians would provide the platforms and engines, and the Israelis would provide Western avionics.

It is believed that Turkey will announce the winner of the tender in the coming weeks. The IAI executives believe that its chances of winning are fifty-fifty. The fact that the proposed American helicopter does not even exist yet, while the K50-2 prototype had already had a demonstration flight in Turkey, will help. Israeli-Turkish relations and the fact that the IAI is chief contractor in the upgrading of the Turkish Air Force's Phantoms and F-5's will help as well. The real question, however, is whether Turkey really and truly intends to purchase 145 gunships. The tender bidders were told that in the first stage, Turkey would only purchase 50. The next stage is not clear. It is believed that it all depends on domestic and political developments. The procurement of helicopters, which will last for many years, is the test case of the Turkish policy concerning the Kurds. The West has been pressuring the Turkish Government to make peace with the large Kurdish minority in its midst and to stop violating civil rights. This is one of the preconditions that Western Europe has made if Turkey wants to join the EU. Cutting down on helicopter procurement is a demand that Western European countries may present. This would be their sweet revenge, especially if after France and Germany it would turn out that Italy, and perhaps even the United States, would lose the tender.

(from Ministry of Foreign Affairs Daily Press Review, March 22, 2000)

IS ANKARA ASLEEP? BY DOGAN HEPER (MILLIYET) summary of column follows

As Turkey has turned her eyes to the West, she has forgotten the East. In the meantime, a Kurdish state has been established in Northern Iraq in a way where there is no return. Only an official declaration is needed. Ankara is not aware that she is faced with an accomplished fact with the reception given by Northern Iraq in Nevruz.

For a long time, Turkish experts have stated that it was impossible to establish a Kurdish State in Northern Iraq and this probably influenced Ankara. Today the army parades and security forces in Northern Iraq are aired on TV stations. Only a State can have such an army or a security force, not counting the Government, customs and tax collection organizations and courts.

Notwithstanding these developments Ankara carried on saying that she was in favour of the territorial integrity of Iraq. As Baghdad refrained from extending a helping hand to Northern Iraq, a state was formed in the power vacuum. This opportunity was provided by the United States.

Does not the arrogant acts of the Westerners coming to Turkey coincide with this formation? We have to be vigilant instead of viewing these statements as being overly suspicious. As Turkey has turned her eyes to the West, ignoring the question, the West is ready to snatch away the Southeastern problem from Turkey's hands. In order to view the question correctly, you just have to think who did the European Ministers visiting Ankara want to meet and whom did they defend. Their actions make it clear that Europe wants to impose a solution on Southeastern Anatolia. How close are the ties between these wishes and the formation in Northern Iraq? Are they the pieces of a puzzle? If the European Ministers coming to Ankara want to visit the People's Democracy Party and do not meet with the Virtue Party which is on the verge of being closed, or ask for an appointment to see Leyla Zana in prison, but do not remember Hasan Celal Guzel who is also in prison, this could only be defined as applying double standards.

The [Nevruz] reception in Ankara given by [KDP] Northern Iraq has aggravated the situation. This aggravation concerns the unawareness of Ankara. Is there a recognized State in Iraq, that they may hold a reception? The developments in Turkey should not reach standards where they could disrupt the unity and brotherhood among citizens. Ankara still holds the key to the situation. The Southeast development plan should be implemented immediately and effectively. The military victory won against terrorism should be used to enhance brotherhood among the people. The people in the Southeast should live in prosperity with what they earn. In the meantime, Ankara should be able to keep the situation in Northern Iraq under control.

PKK Has Serious Communication Problems

Anatolia Agency 24 Mar 00

[FBIS Transcribed Text]

KULP, March 24 (A.A) - General Yasar Cihansiz, a high ranking officer in Lice, said on Friday that terror organization PKK is suffering serious problems in communication and that there are many terrorists unaware of the latest developments.

General Cihansiz, who spoke to reporters during a health check in Ozbek village of Diyarbakir's Kulp township said that operations against the outlawed organization were continuing unabated despite bad weather conditions.

General Cihansiz pointed out that there had been no hot confrontation in the recent months with the terrorists, that the terrorists were unable to travel to settlement areas to get supplies due to continuing operations, and that they had spent the winter months by living on their stocks.

He added that the organization was still receiving, though little, logistic support, and that things would have come to a complete end if they had not.

The General said they estimated one third of the members of the organization as to have withdrawn from the region, and that the so-called top-level officials of the organization had banned all means, including transceivers, of communication in order not to reveal their locations and added, "we expect some sort of activity with the inset of spring, for they must be in need of at least food supplies; but we do not yet know if they would be in the form of violent activities or obedience with the repentance bill. So, we shall wait and see."

Former Marxist-Leninist Ocalan takes up religious studies: lawyer

24 Mar 2000 Agence France-Presse

ANKARA, March 24 (AFP) - Condemned Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the initially Marxist-Leninist Kurdistan Workers'

Party (PKK), has devoted his time in jail to theological studies, one of his lawyers told AFP Friday. "Ocalan is writing an essay on the history of religions and the relationship between Kurds and Islam," Dogan Erbas said.

"He is also studying Zoroastrianism," an ancient religion that sees the world divided into the forces of good and evil, the lawyer added. The PKK, which has waged a 15-year war against Ankara for self-rule in southeast Anatolia, distanced itself from Marxist-Leninist ideology in the early 1990s after the collapse of Communism in Europe.

Ocalan began reading books on religion and different cultures after the shocking discovery of a series of murders by a shadowy Islamist group, the Turkish Hizbullah, Erbas said.

Since mid-January, police have exhumed 61 victims -- kidnapped and killed by the Hizbullah as part of its campaign to overrun the secular system in the country -- in mass graves across Turkey. "Ocalan believes that some aspects of Islam and pro-Islamic political parties like (the main opposition) Virtue Party are an obstacle to Turkey's democratization," Erbas said.

"He also thinks that in the 21st century people should make a synthesis of the positive elements of Islam, Christianity and Judaism," he added. Erbas said the rebel leader was in good physical and mental condition. Ocalan, sentenced to death for treason and separatism in June, is being held on the island of Imrali, in the Marmara Sea in northwestern Turkey.

In January, the government put his sentence on hold after the European Court of Human Rights demanded a stay of execution until it rules on Ocalan's complaints against Ankara -- a process that could take up to two years. The Kurdish conflict in Turkey has claimed some 36,000 lives.

IRAN

COURRIER INTERNATIONAL N° 490

DU 23 AU 29 MARS 2000

La face cachée du président Rafsandjani

L'homme qui dirigea l'Iran de 1987 à 1997 était présenté en Occident comme un réformateur modéré. Il n'aurait été, selon *The Independent*, qu'un commanditaire de meurtres et un corrompu.

THE INDEPENDENT

Londres

On raconte que près d'une centaine d'hommes et de femmes auraient été assassinés entre 1987 et 1997, quand Hachemi Rafsandjani occupait la présidence de la République islamique d'Iran : des écrivains et des intellectuels empoisonnés par piqure de cyanure de potassium ou poignardés ; une femme mariée qui aurait eu une liaison avec un haut responsable des services secrets réduite au silence par peur de la rumeur ; un prêtre ; un homosexuel ; et des délinquants qui s'étaient aliéné le ministère des Renseignements iranien... Autant de cas bien connus à Téhéran, mais, malgré l'étonnant vent de liberté qui souffle sur la presse dans la capitale à la suite des dernières législatives, aucun journaliste iranien n'a encore révélé leur identité.

Le journaliste Akbar Gangi, l'un des plus courageux représentants de sa profession en Iran, a demandé à Faiza, l'influente fille de l'ancien président Rafsandjani, si son père était au courant de ces exécutions sommaires. Elle lui a affirmé que son père n'avait "aucun contrôle" sur le ministère des Renseignements et ne disposait d'"aucune information" sur les meurtres. Gangi sourit en se souvenant de leur conversation. "Je lui ai répondu que Rafsandjani me faisait penser au cardinal de Richelieu, raconte-t-il. Il



était difficile d'admettre qu'il n'ait eu aucun contrôle sur le ministère des Renseignements – sinon, comment aurait-il pu écarter un proche de Fallahian [le chef des renseignements iraniens de l'époque] qui enquêtait sur une affaire mettant en cause la famille Rafsandjani ?

En tant que chef des renseigne-

ments iraniens, Ali Fallahian disposait du pouvoir de vie ou de mort sur des milliers de personnes. Et, dans un régime qui avait fait pendre 20 000 (voire 30 000, selon certains) de ses jeunes opposants et opposantes peu après la fin de la guerre contre l'Irak, mieux valait ne pas contrarier Falla-

◀ Dessin de Cost paru dans *Le Soir*, Bruxelles.

■ **Le cholx des Américains**
Un Iran ouvert et démocratique fera-t-il vraiment le bonheur des Américains ? se demande Robert Fisk dans *The Independent*. En effet, dans un Moyen-Orient où la République Islamique n'est plus une menace pour la stabilité, les États-Unis auront du mal à justifier la présence de leurs troupes en Arabie Saoudite et dans les autres pays du Golfe. Par ailleurs, les marchands d'armes américains et occidentaux ne vont plus pouvoir écouler pour des milliards de dollars leurs stocks à des monarchies effrayées par l'expansionnisme iranien.

ATTENTAT

Une tentative d'assassinat qui fait couler beaucoup d'encre

L'attentat qui a visé le 12 mars dernier le journaliste et dirigeant réformateur iranien Saïd Hajjarian fait craindre un regain de violence dans le pays.

La machine de terreur avait été réduite à l'inactivité après la découverte du noyau organisé au sein du ministère de l'Intérieur et responsable des assassinats en série d'intellectuels et d'opposants. Voilà qu'elle se remet en branle. Il faut considérer la tentative d'assassinat contre Saïd Hajjarian comme un signal clair émis par certaines instances politiques de haut niveau. Le choix d'un pistolet à silencieux et la puissance de la moto utilisée par l'auteur de l'attentat, qui s'est montré à la victime à visage découvert, sont des signes révélateurs du statut des assassins. Après le choc initial, dû à l'échec cuisant de certains lors

des élections parlementaires du 18 février 2000, la machine de terreur a décidé de se faire entendre de nouveau. Il fallait se débarrasser des idéologues du mouvement réformateur. En visant Hajjarian, ils [les commanditaires de l'attentat] espéraient porter un coup au programme réformateur du président Khatami et enlever au quotidien *Sobh-e Emruz* son puissant directeur.

Reste à savoir qui sera la prochaine victime. Beaucoup de rumeurs circulent et des listes de noms de personnalités connues sont diffusées par les radios étrangères. Mais nous pensons que les personnes très en vue ne seront pas les premières visées, et cela pour éviter que les assassins ne soient découverts facilement. Les terroristes vont frapper là où l'on s'y attend le moins.

Nemat Ahmadi, *Assr-e Azadegan* (extraits), Téhéran

hian. Avec au moins six autres personnalités dont on connaît les noms – et dont certains occupent encore des fonctions dans le système judiciaire religieux du pays –, il aurait émis des fatwas secrètes, commanditant l'assassinat de journalistes, d'écrivains, de prêtres et d'escrocs.

Alors, Rafsandjani a-t-il été l'un de ces meurtriers pendant la décennie qu'il a passée à la présidence ? N'avait-il qu'à hocher son turban d'hodjatoleslam [dignitaire religieux, hiérarchiquement au-dessous de l'ayatollah] pour que la seringue s'emplisse de poison, qu'un accident de voiture soit mis en scène, que la lame du couteau soit affûtée ? Comme nous l'aimions, nous autres en Occident, pensant qu'il était un modéré, un "réformateur" avant la lettre ! Il voulait certes tous nous convaincre qu'il contrôlait la situation. N'est-ce pas lui qui, en 1988, déclara à l'ayatollah Khomeyni qu'il fallait mettre un terme à la guerre contre l'Irak, qui durait depuis huit ans ? N'est-il pas celui qui a tenté de libéraliser l'économie du pays ?

Je me souviens quant à moi d'un autre Rafsandjani, qui n'avait pas du tout apprécié la biographie pourtant inoffensive que j'avais rédigée sur lui en 1987. Je m'étais intéressé à ses origines. Son père cultivait des pistaches.

Lors de mon voyage suivant à Téhéran, on m'informa froidement que je ne pouvais pas rester longtemps. *"Certaines autorités de la République islamique préféreraient que vous partiez."* Quand ? ai-je demandé. Et un représentant du ministère de l'Orient islamique m'a rétorqué, tout aussi glacial : *"Il m'est impossible de vous protéger. Si j'étais vous, je partirais ce soir."*

PERSONNE N'OSE TOUCHER À LA FAMILLE DE RAFSANDJANI

En ce temps-là, quand Rafsandjani était l'enfant chéri de nos dirigeants occidentaux – on croyait qu'il luttait contre le clergé radical, et non qu'il collaborait avec lui –, toute mention de sa fortune personnelle était proscrite dans les gros titres. Aucun journaliste occidental ne s'est donné la peine de fouiller dans le passé de ses amis et de ses parents. Comment se fait-il que son fils Yasser ait travaillé au département du budget de la compagnie pétrolière nationale iranienne ? que son neveu Ali ait occupé les fonctions de vice-ministre du Pétrole ? que son fils Mehdi ait été employé par la principale compagnie gazière du pays ? Est-il vrai, s'interroge-t-on aujourd'hui à Téhéran, que Rafsandjani disposait d'intérêts commerciaux considérables en Allemagne et que les membres de sa famille bénéficiaient de cartes de séjour dans les pays de l'Ouest ?

Il y a six ans, à la suite de la négociation d'un contrat concernant le pétrole et le gaz, une enquête sur la corruption a abouti à l'arrestation de plusieurs proches de Mehdi Rafsandjani, qui se sont vus contraints de restituer près de 5 millions de dollars à l'Etat. Mais Mehdi, lui, n'a pas même été inquiété à propos de l'étendue de son implication. Personne n'osait donc toucher à la famille du cardinal de Richelieu ?

Les journalistes iraniens qui remettent en question le rôle présidentiel de Rafsandjani font régulièrement l'objet de menaces, par fax ou par téléphone. Et l'un d'entre eux au moins affirme que ses homologues occidentaux sont officiellement obligés de signer des documents par lesquels ils s'engagent à faire parvenir à Rafsandjani le texte de ses interviews pour approbation avant publication. De même, ce serait l'ancien président qui aurait lui-même établi le taux de change entre le dollar américain et le rial iranien quand il a prétendu mettre en place une économie de marché dans son pays.

Rien d'étonnant, par conséquent, à ce qu'Akbar Gangi ait peur. *"Des sources fiables m'ont dit que, lors d'une réunion, on a approuvé l'idée de m'assassiner à coups de couteau"*, me confie-t-il.

Robert Fisk

Entrée remarquée d'Oudaï Saddam Hussein dans la vie politique irakienne par Maher CHMAYTELLI

28 mars 2000, 17h09



BAGDAD, 28 mars (AFP) - Le fils du président irakien Saddam Hussein, Oudaï, a fait une entrée remarquée mardi au parlement, dominé par le parti Baas au pouvoir dont tous les candidats ont été élus dans un scrutin sans surprise.

Oudaï Saddam Hussein, 35 ans, a obtenu le plus grand nombre de voix, plus de 200.000, dans la cinquième circonscription de Bagdad, selon les résultats officiels des élections de lundi, annoncés par le ministre de la Justice, Chebib Lazem al-Malki.

Le journal al-Ittihad, avait indiqué, avant la proclamation officielle des résultats, qu'Oudaï avait remporté 100% des suffrages dans la plupart des 44 bureaux de sa circonscription.

Il a dépassé le vétéran Saadoun Hammadi, 70 ans, ancien Premier ministre, ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères et du Pétrole, et chef du parlement sortant, qui a également été élu dans la même circonscription.

Ce résultat donne du poids aux informations circulant dans les milieux diplomatiques, selon lesquelles le président est en train de préparer son fils aîné à prendre la relève à long terme.

M. Malki a assuré que la victoire d'Oudaï Saddam ne signifiait pas forcément qu'il allait présider la nouvelle chambre, dont le chef doit être élu lors de la session inaugurale, le 7 avril.

Il a simplement affirmé indiqué que le vote massif en faveur d'Oudaï "reflète le degré de popularité de ce candidat".

Le parlement est considéré comme une chambre d'enregistrement des décisions du pouvoir, et partage la prérogative de légiférer avec le Conseil de commandement de la révolution (CCR), la plus haute instance présidée par Saddam Hussein.

Oudaï, blessé grièvement dans un attentat en décembre 1996, boîtaï légèrement lorsqu'il a déposé son bulletin dans un bureau de vote à Bagdad lundi soir, entouré de gardes de corps armés de fusil d'assaut Kalashnikov.

Oudaï commande déjà la milice des Fedayin de Saddam, et préside le syndicat des journalistes, le comité olympique, la fédération de football, les associations de jeunesse et d'étudiants, ainsi que les conseils d'administration de sept journaux

hebdomadaires, du quotidien Babel et d'une chaîne de télévision.

Les 165 candidats du parti Baas ont tous été élus, et constitueront 66% de l'Assemblée nationale qui compte 250 sièges.

La chambre sortante, élue en 1996, était également dominée par le Baas.

La nouvelle Chambre comptera 85 non-baasistes, dont 55 élus durant le scrutin, et 30 nommés par le président Saddam Hussein pour représenter les régions kurdes du nord, qui échappent à son contrôle depuis 1991.

Sur les 9,2 millions de personnes du collège électoral, 88,6% ont participé au scrutin, selon M. Malki, vice-président de la Haute commission électorale.

Le nombre des candidats était de 512, dont 347 candidats qui se présentent comme indépendants, qui sont, comme les Baasistes, loyaux à M. Saddam Hussein.

L'opposition, clandestine ou en exil, n'a pas pris part au scrutin qui ne couvrait pas les régions kurdes.

(Dans un communiqué reçu à Dubai, le parti communiste irakien (opposition) a qualifié les élections "comédie grotesque" et affirmé que les autorités "tentent en vain de camoufler leur dictature et se montrer sous un visage démocratique".)

La nouvelle session du parlement, le cinquième depuis l'arrivée du Baas au pouvoir, en 1968, prendra le nom de la "session de la victoire éclatante", a affirmé Ezzat Ibrahim, numéro deux irakien. Le premier scrutin législatif organisé sous le régime du Baas a eu lieu en 1980, un an après l'accession de Saddam Hussein à la présidence.

Ankara condamné pour des assassinats au Kurdistan



28 mars 2000

STRASBOURG (Reuters) - La Cour européenne des droits de l'homme a condamné la Turquie pour n'avoir pris aucune mesure permettant de prévenir l'assassinat, en 1993, d'un journaliste et d'un médecin kurdes et pour n'avoir pas mené d'enquête sérieuse dans ces deux affaires.

Dans l'un et l'autre cas, les juges estiment qu'Ankara a violé l'article 2 de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme garantissant le droit à la vie.

L'arrêt a été rendu à l'unanimité en ce qui concerne les défaillances de l'enquête et par six voix contre une - celle du juge turc - en ce qui concerne les assassinats eux-mêmes.

La Cour estime également par six voix contre une que la Turquie a violé l'article 13 de la Convention qui garantit le droit à un recours effectif devant un tribunal.

Dans les deux affaires, les héritiers des victimes obtiennent 17.500 livres sterling (environ 175.000 francs) au titre du préjudice moral et respectivement 20.000 et 22.000 livres (200 et 220.000 francs) pour les frais et dépens.

La première affaire concerne l'assassinat à Sanliurfa (sud-est de la Turquie) de Kemal Kiliç, journaliste du quotidien pro-kurde *Özgür Gündem*, tué par balles le 18 février 1993 par quatre hommes qui l'attendaient au retour de son travail.

Deux mois auparavant, Kemal Kiliç avait demandé en vain au préfet de Sanliurfa une protection pour lui-même et d'autres collaborateurs du journal en raison des menaces et agressions dont avaient fait l'objet plusieurs d'entre eux.

Le 16 mars dernier, la Cour européenne avait déjà condamné la Turquie pour atteinte à la liberté d'expression à l'encontre d'*Özgür Gündem*, en prenant acte des multiples censures, condamnations et agressions physiques dont le journal avait été victime durant sa brève existence, entre 1992 et 1994.

La seconde affaire concerne Hasan Kaya, médecin, disparu le 21 février 1993 en compagnie d'un ami avocat, Metin Can, président de l'association des droits de l'homme d'Elazig. Les deux hommes avaient été retrouvés tués par balles six jours plus tard.

"Hasan Kaya, en tant que médecin soupçonné de complicité avec le PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, mouvement séparatiste - NDLR), courait à l'époque un risque particulier d'être victime d'une agression illégale", analysent les juges.

Dans ses deux arrêts, la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme estime que les autorités turques "n'ont pas pris les mesures auxquelles elles pouvaient avoir raisonnablement recours" pour prévenir ces deux assassinats.

Elle condamne également la Turquie pour n'avoir pas mené d'investigations suffisantes concernant des affaires dans lesquelles des agents de l'Etat étaient soupçonnés d'avoir été impliqués. Les juges regrettent au passage qu'Ankara ait refusé de faire comparaître devant leur juridiction "un témoin important, agent de l'Etat", manquant ainsi à ses obligations au regard de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme.

Ankara est par ailleurs condamné pour "traitements inhumains et dégradants" en vertu de l'article 3 de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme dans l'affaire Kaya dont le corps révélait qu'il avait été victime de sévices.

Feature-Spring Thaw Exposes Kurd Rebels to Attack

lundi 27 mars 2000, 20h42

REUTERS

TUNCELI, Turkey, March 27 (Reuters) - When the snows melt in Turkey's eastern province of Tunceli wild flowers carpet the mountainsides in a blaze of colour and Kurdish rebels crawl from their cave hideouts to attack Turkish forces.

At least that has been the pattern for the last 15 years. But this spring the rebels are trapped between a ceasefire order from their jailed chief Abdullah Ocalan and an uncompromising Turkish military determined to hit them at every opportunity.

The army is now preparing a series of spring offensives to crush the remaining rebels, both inside Turkey and across the border in the Kurdish-held enclave of northern Iraq.

"The PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) have reached a dead-end, they realise what they have been chasing is an unobtainable dream," a Turkish military official told Reuters.

Nearby U.S.-made strike helicopters brimming with weaponry took off to scour the forested slopes for the roughly 100 rebels thought to be still at large in the rugged region.

"The Turkish armed forces will continue to fight until there are no more terrorists in the mountains," he said.

Ocalan's PKK set out to fight for an independent Kurdistan in 1984. Faced with defeats in the field they later downgraded their demand to self-rule for the mainly Kurdish southeast.

Following his capture and death sentence for treason last year, Ocalan now says all he wants are cultural rights -- television and education in Kurdish.

Despite European Union pressure, Turkey shows little sign of granting these and refuses outright to talk peace with Ocalan.

"The army is winning, why should they negotiate?" said one observer. "The military has achieved what they call 'an acceptable level of violence', they calculate they can finish off the PKK and make concessions from a position of strength."

The military official said some two-thirds of the PKK's forces had complied with Ocalan's order to leave the country and had joined around 3,000 of their comrades in camps in northern Iraq and Iran, leaving around 1,000 fighters still in Turkey.

RENEGADES VOW TO FIGHT ON

The PKK's Tunceli brigade has so far been alone in defying an Ocalan order to abandon the armed struggle.

Calling themselves the "Fighters of the Revolutionary Line" they said Ocalan was capitulating and have vowed to fight on.

"The dense forests and mountains riddled with caves have always made this area a haven for bandits," said the official.

In a highly autocratic organisation, few PKK guerrillas outside such a stronghold would dare defy their leaders.

And the experience of Tunceli does not bode well for those who might have such a move in mind -- as soon as the renegades raised the banner of rebellion they were hit by the army.

Haydar Alparslan, the first local PKK chief to reject Ocalan's pleas for peace, was shot dead late last year as helicopter-borne troops swooped down on a meeting between him and PKK regional commander Hamili Yildirim.

Yildirim himself later sided with the dissidents but troops tracked him down this month, killing his deputy and eight others in an all-day firefight, though the commander escaped.

MILITARY ONSLAUGHT

Since taking over full responsibility for waging the war in the mid-1990s, the generals at the

head of the second largest army in NATO have taken the conflict to the rebels.

"They had to learn to fight and fly at night and put people up in the mountains day and night, just like the rebels are there day and night," said the observer.

"The most effective weapon against the PKK is soldiers who live the same, fight the same way they do," said the official.

It is a war where little quarter is given. Emergency rule authorities say troops have killed some 23,000 rebels since 1987, only 3,500 have been captured alive. The PKK has killed 5,000 troops and 4,000 civilians, wounding nearly 16,000.

The generals do not discriminate between those sticking to the ceasefire and those not. All must give themselves up or be "neutralised," they say. "If they all come and surrender the whole thing could end today," said the military official.

Nor are Ocalan's rebels safe in northern Iraq where local Kurdish parties have set up a de-facto autonomy since throwing off Baghdad rule at the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) controlling much of Iraqi border region closely cooperates with Turkish forces crossing the frontier to hunt PKK guerrillas.

With the military onslaught and outright failure to secure political concessions through its "peace" initiatives, the PKK is at its most critical point since Ocalan founded it in 1978.

Between them Turkey and the PKK have effectively silenced alternative Kurdish parties. The pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP), while formally eschewing violence, echoes the PKK party line and now faces possible closure by the courts.

Many Kurds, while vehemently opposed to seeing Ocalan hanged, feel he is betraying their interests by simplifying the Kurdish problem into a struggle between himself and the hangman.

"What did all these people die for?" said one Tunceli resident. "The guerrillas fought for independence, not for Ocalan to sell them out just to save himself."

Meanwhile disillusion reigns and rebel recruitment is down.

"No one wants to go to the mountains just to sit there and do nothing," said a Tunceli youth. "If you go, you go to fight."

Turkey has agreed to stay a decision on Ocalan's death penalty pending the outcome of an appeal at the European Court of Human Rights, likely in 18 months.

Until then, those rebels still loyal to Ocalan -- the large majority -- have little alternative but to sit tight while the army maintains its relentless attack.

jeudi 30 mars 2000, 7h43

Turquie: Ecevit s'interroge sur l'avenir de son gouvernement

ANKARA (Reuters) - Le Premier ministre turc, Bulent Ecevit, déclare jeudi dans la presse turque qu'il s'interroge sur l'avenir de son gouvernement après le revers essuyé la veille au parlement.

Cité par le quotidien Sabah, le chef du gouvernement précise qu'il n'exclut aucune possibilité.

"Lorsque je serai en Inde, je réfléchirai à tout cela, y compris le maintien du gouvernement", dit-il. "Que chacun y pense pendant quatre jours", ajoute Ecevit, qui doit s'envoler jeudi pour une visite en Inde.

Mercredi, Bulent Ecevit n'a pu réunir de majorité qualifiée autour de son projet d'amendement de la Constitution visant à permettre au président Suleyman Demirel de briguer un nouveau mandat.

Le vote a surtout mis en lumière des tiraillements internes au sein de la coalition gouvernementale entre le Parti de la gauche démocratique (DSP) d'Ecevit et le Parti d'action nationaliste (MHP).

Council of Europe MPs urge Turkey to cooperate on Kurdish question

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey, March 28 (AFP) Council of Europe deputies on Tuesday urged Turkey to cooperate with Europe to improve the situation of the Kurdish population.

"There is a real problem in this region. Turkish officials and Turkey's friends should come together and find a solution," Andreas Barsony of Hungary, the head of the council delegation, said in this southeastern city which has been at the heart of a 15-year Kurdish rebellion.

Barsony and his three colleagues are in the region on a mission to collect data for a report on developments in Turkey's much-criticized human rights record.

Turkey is a member of the Council of Europe and has also been told by the European Union to improve its rights record if it wants to become a member.

The delegation met local officials, Kurdish politicians and rights activists, including the local head of the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP), which faces a closure case for alleged links with the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Southeast Turkey has seen bitter clashes between government troops and the PKK -- considered a "terrorist" organization by Ankara -- since 1984, when the rebels took up arms for Kurdish self-rule in the region.

The conflict, which has claimed some 36,500 lives, has led to allegations of rights violations on both sides, stalled economic activity in the already poverty-hit region, and caused massive migration to Turkey's urban west.

"We know there are problems (that impede reforms) in Turkey's constitution... The Council of Europe could provide Turkey with legal assistance in this respect," Barsony said.

He added that they will travel on to Ankara and meet the Turkish ministers of foreign affairs, interior and justice as well as Turkish parliamentarians on Wednesday and Thursday.

Reuters Mar 28 2000

U.S. regrets Turkey put rights leader back in jail

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The United States said on Tuesday it deeply regretted that Turkey had put its top human rights activist back in jail and accused it of violating its international obligations. Akin Birdal was charged in 1997 with "inciting hatred and enmity" after he made a speech calling for a settlement to the Kurdish issue and linking rights violations to the problem.

In June 1999 he was jailed for 9-1/2 months, but was released in September for medical reasons arising from wounds he received in 1998 when two nationalist gunmen stormed the offices of his Human Rights Association and shot him six times in the chest and leg.

He returned to jail on Tuesday to serve the six remaining months of his sentence. "They did not accept my medical report," Birdal, who still walks with a limp and needs regular hospital care, told reporters before walking into an Ankara prison. State Department spokesman James Foley told a news briefing Birdal was well known as "a responsible voice for peaceful change and reconciliation in Turkey".

"All of Turkey's citizens should be able fully to exercise their right to peaceful freedom of expression, as recognized by international human rights instruments," Foley said.

"Putting Mr Birdal back in jail is inconsistent with this principle," he added.

Turkey says it has all but defeated the Kurdistan Workers' Party after capturing rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan last year. The European Union, which made Turkey a membership candidate in December, has urged Ankara to give its 12 million Kurds minority and cultural rights. Ankara says that to give them special status would undermine equality.

Les avocats de l'Irak marquent des points au Conseil de sécurité

NEW YORK (Nations unies)
de notre correspondante

Supposée être la « première » réunion publique sur la situation humanitaire en Irak, le débat organisé, vendredi 24 mars au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, s'est révélé en fait éminemment politique. Les Américains se sont montrés pour la première fois sur la défensive.

Nettement moins confiants que d'habitude sur le bien-fondé de leur position intransigeante vis-à-vis de l'Irak - laquelle commence d'ailleurs à être contestée aux Etats-Unis -, ils ont fait des gestes concrets pour améliorer le lourd mécanisme d'approbation des contrats d'achats par l'Irak de produits alimentaires ou de première nécessité. Prévus par la résolution dite « Pétrole contre nourriture », ces contrats sont systématiquement mis en attente par Washington.

Les Etats-Unis ont aussi présenté un projet de résolution dou-

blant, comme le demande le secrétaire général Kofi Annan, les fonds alloués à l'Irak pour augmenter sa production pétrolière. Le projet recommande de porter de 300 à 600 millions de dollars par semestre les sommes destinées aux pièces détachées et équipements visant à réparer l'infrastructure pétrolière irakienne en très mauvais état. Ce geste pourrait en fait s'expliquer par la volonté d'augmenter la production pour faire baisser les prix du pétrole sur le marché mondial. Conscient de cette stratégie, l'Irak n'a pas tardé à rétorquer en menaçant vendredi de réduire ses exportations...

« GUERRE DE PROPAGANDE »

Le numéro deux de la délégation américaine, James Cunningham, (l'ambassadeur Richard Holbrooke ne se prononce jamais sur l'Irak), n'en a pas moins accusé Bagdad de contrebande de pétrole dans « des proportions historiques » (1 milliard de dollars par an, selon

lui), pour, entre autres, construire un quartier général destiné au groupe « terroriste » des Moudjahidines iraniens, dans la ville de Faluja.

Au cours du débat, M. Annan, pour qui les sanctions sur l'Irak posent « un véritable dilemme moral », a lancé une mise en garde. Face aux critiques de plus en plus nombreuses, y compris des ONG, M. Annan a admis que l'ONU risque « de perdre la guerre de propagande sur la question de savoir qui est le responsable de la souffrance de toute une population, le président Saddam Hussein ou les Nations unies ». Nouvelles ont été aussi les références, abondantes et désormais documentées, aux frappes aériennes quasi-quotidiennes des Américains et des Britanniques contre l'Irak. Elles auraient fait à ce jour, selon l'ambassadeur russe Sergueï Lavrov, plus de 140 morts et des centaines de blessés parmi les civils.

Le représentant russe, sur qui

l'on compte notamment pour persuader Bagdad de permettre le retour des inspecteurs en désarmement de l'ONU, absents du pays depuis décembre 1998, estime « inadmissible » que l'on demande à l'Irak de coopérer sur le désarmement « tout en bombardant systématiquement son territoire ».

Pour sa part, le nouvel ambassadeur français à l'ONU, Jean-David Levitte, pour qui « la génération de l'embargo est une génération perdue », a plaidé pour la reconstruction de l'Irak, soulignant que des contrats d'une valeur de 1,75 milliard de dollars (soit environ autant d'euros) destinés à l'électricité, l'eau et l'agriculture étaient toujours bloqués. L'ambassadeur de la Malaisie, Agam Hasmy, a enfin dénoncé les sanctions, qui ont ravagé « l'Irak moderne » et qui sont devenues d'ores et déjà « une véritable arme de destruction massive ».

Afsané Bassir Pour

U.S. Photo Shows Base For Iran Rebels in Iraq

By Elaine Sciolino
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — Iraq has spent tens of millions of dollars in recent months to build a military headquarters for an Iranian opposition group that President Bill Clinton's administration considers a terrorist organization, according to senior administration officials.

As evidence, the officials declassified a satellite photograph of the complex, which covers 6.2 square kilometers (2.4 square miles) and is in the Iraqi city of Faluja, about 64 kilometers (40 miles) west of Baghdad. The officials said the Iraqis had used profits from the illegal sale of oil to build the complex for the exclusive use of the Mujahidin Khalq, or People's Mujahidin, an Iranian military and political movement that seeks to overthrow the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The photo was to be made public by the State Department on Friday in an effort to counter critics who say the sanctions imposed after the Gulf War cause widespread suffering in Iraq. The administration will argue that President Saddam Hussein is illegally smuggling oil to support terrorism and does not

deserve relief from the sanctions.

"This is a propaganda campaign," a senior administration official said about issuing the photo. "There's no question this is what we are doing here. This is part of our effort to show the world the danger Saddam would pose if the controls on the access to his oil revenues were lifted."

Not coincidentally, at an open meeting of the UN Security Council on Friday on the humanitarian situation in Iraq, the United States was arguing in favor of keeping tough sanctions against Iraq, as well as finding ways to ease the Iraqi people's suffering.

Administration officials insist that the new evidence against Iraq is not related to a speech by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright last week in which she announced the easing of some sanctions against Iran to allow exports of Iranian carpets, caviar, pistachios and dried fruits to the United States.

The satellite photo is quite likely to be welcomed by at least some Iranian officials, who praised the United States when it designated the Mujahidin Khalq as a foreign terrorist organization in 1997.

The group was created in the 1960s as an armed Islamic opposition movement against Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and fought in guerrilla operations that forced his overthrow. But the Mujahidin Khalq was also avowedly socialist and was cut out of the power structure built by the ayatollahs.

The group turned against the new government and continues to wage an armed struggle against the Iranian state from Iraq, which provides the group with financial and logistical support and military equipment. The Mujahidin Khalq remains the most powerful opponent of the Islamic Republic, attacking targets in Iran and assassinating Iranian officials. It is generally believed to have 15 to 20 bases in Iraq.

The Mujahidin complex near Baghdad, which is not yet operating, was begun in late 1998 on the site of an Iraqi military area and is said to include lakes, farms, barracks and administrative buildings that can accommodate 3,000 to 5,000 people, administration officials said.

One official described the site as a "headquarters which will be used to coordinate Mujahidin activities

throughout Iraq and elsewhere."

The officials declined to say how they could be certain that the site was intended for Mujahidin use, citing the need to protect intelligence sources.

Washington has used declassified satellite imagery for years in its campaign against Iraq, showing photos that it says prove that Baghdad is rebuilding factories that could make chemical weapons or missiles.

■ Iraqi Oil Smuggling Said to Soar

Steeply rising oil prices have brought a

huge increase in the smuggling of Iraqi oil, the U.S. coordinator of the international fleet that patrols the waters off Iraq told a Security Council committee Thursday. The New York Times reported from the United Nations in New York.

The coordinator, Vice Admiral Charles Moore, told the committee on sanctions against Iraq that much of the oil passed through Iranian waters, diplomats said after the closed briefing. The admiral coordinates a small fleet from more than a dozen nations that polices

the Gulf, looking for ships that violate an international embargo on Iraq.

According to Western diplomats who heard the admiral's briefing, Iraq was able to illegally export 1,868,466 barrels of oil in 1996, 10,497,000 barrels the following year, 13,296,000 barrels in 1998 and 7,557,838 barrels in 1999. If current prices stay high, it is estimated that Iraq will sell about 4.8 tons of illegal gas oil, which is akin to diesel fuel, this year.

Les députés turcs négocient la réélection du président Demirel

ISTANBUL

de notre correspondante

Alors que le gouvernement et les islamistes de l'opposition sont engagés dans d'intenses négociations, l'Assemblée nationale turque examine actuellement un paquet de réformes constitutionnelles, dont le but essentiel est d'assurer la réélection du président Süleyman Demirel pour une période supplémentaire de cinq ans. La Constitution actuelle prévoit un mandat unique de sept ans pour le chef de l'Etat et celui de Demirel, qui fut premier ministre à sept reprises avant d'accéder au palais présidentiel de Çankaya, arrive à échéance en mai. Craignant l'impact de l'instabilité politique et des disputes interpartites que causerait le choix d'un nouveau candidat, notamment sur son programme de redressement économique, le premier ministre

Bülent Ecevit est déterminé à amender la Constitution, de façon que le chef de l'Etat turc puisse désormais effectuer deux mandats de cinq ans.

La réélection de Süleyman Demirel, vétéran de la politique turque âgé de 75 ans, est cependant loin de faire l'unanimité. Les dirigeants des trois partis au sein de la coalition se sont mis d'accord sur le principe, mais ils ont de la peine à contrôler les rangs de leurs formations politiques, où des voix dissonantes se font entendre. De plus, le gouvernement ne contrôle que 352 des 550 sièges à l'Assemblée, alors que 367 voix au moins sont nécessaires pour amender la Constitution.

Pour convaincre les récalcitrants, le gouvernement a prévu d'introduire dans la foulée deux autres amendements constitutionnels. Le premier, qui profiterait à tous les députés, donnerait à l'Assemblée

nationale un plus grand degré de contrôle sur les salaires et les retraites des parlementaires. Le second, perçu comme une concession aux islamistes dont le Parti de la vertu (FP) est actuellement menacé d'interdiction, rend la dissolution de partis politiques plus difficiles.

VUES DISSIDENTES

Le Parti de la vertu, qui détient 85 sièges à l'Assemblée nationale, veut cependant des garanties plus solides. Les islamistes ont en effet fait monter les enchères après la récente condamnation à un an de prison, pour un discours prononcé en 1994, de l'ancien premier ministre Necmettin Erbakan, qui était le chef de file du mouvement islamiste en Turquie jusqu'à la dissolution de son Parti de la prospérité en 1998. Condamné pour avoir « incité à la haine », selon l'article 312, Erbakan

pourrait être banni à vie de la scène politique si sa procédure d'appel est rejetée.

Le débat est désormais centré sur l'article 312, fréquemment utilisé pour condamner l'expression de vues dissidentes, qu'elles viennent des islamistes, des Kurdes ou de la gauche, et décrit par le président de la cour d'appel, Sami Selcuk, comme une « menace contre l'accession à l'Union européenne et la liberté d'expression dans ce pays ». Mais les nationalistes et les cercles étatiques demeurent farouchement opposés à l'abolition de l'article 312 qu'ils perçoivent comme un instrument légal indispensable pour maintenir l'intégrité territoriale et la laïcité de l'Etat turc. Le résultat final n'est attendu qu'au début du mois d'avril.

Nicole Pope

Bill Clinton échoue à relancer le dialogue entre Israël et la Syrie

Il a rencontré Hafez El Assad à Genève

GENÈVE

de notre correspondant

Près de quatre heures d'entretiens à huis clos, dimanche 26 mars, à Genève entre les présidents américain, Bill Clinton, et syrien, Hafez El Assad, n'ont pas suffi à relancer les négociations de paix syro-israéliennes, au point mort depuis janvier. Alors que, de part et d'autre, cette rencontre avait été présentée comme celle de la « dernière chance », les deux présidents se sont quittés en début de soirée sur un constat

d'échec.

A l'image de son succès, ce sommet de Genève n'a même pas donné lieu à la publication d'un communiqué conjoint, comme initialement prévu, et encore moins à une conférence de presse commune. Tout au plus les porte-parole des deux délégations se sont-ils contentés, chacun de leur côté, de quelques commentaires devant les journalistes.

PRIORITÉS DIVERGENTES

Constatant qu'il n'avait pas été

possible de réduire les « divergences sensibles » qui subsistent, le porte-parole de la Maison Blanche, Joe Lockart, a écarté l'éventualité d'une reprise des pourparlers à brève échéance. « Je ne pense pas que, du point de vue des Etats-Unis, il serait utile de reprendre maintenant les discussions », a-t-il déclaré. Selon lui, le président Clinton n'en avait pas moins jugé cette rencontre « utile », dans la mesure où elle a été l'occasion de préciser « les attentes d'Israël au président Assad, alors que celui-ci a pu exposer celles de la Syrie ». Réitérant la volonté des Etats-Unis de poursuivre leurs efforts, il a indiqué que l'envoyé spécial pour le Proche-Orient, Dennis Ross, se rendrait dès lundi en Israël pour informer le premier ministre Ehoud Barak de la teneur des échanges.

De son côté, le porte-parole du président syrien, Joubran Kourieh, s'est empressé de rejeter sur Israël la responsabilité de l'échec du sommet. « Israël continue de mettre des obstacles à la reprise des pourpar-

lers », a-t-il affirmé, avant de rappeler l'exigence syrienne d'un retrait israélien total du plateau du Golan. Il a également réaffirmé l'opposition de Damas à tout accord se limitant à la seule frontière libanaise. Israël a annoncé son intention de retirer ses troupes de la « zone de sécurité » occupée au Liban sud au plus tard le 7 juillet.

Depuis leur reprise inattendue, en décembre 1999, les discussions butent sur des priorités divergentes. La Syrie privilégie le tracé de la frontière, qui doit assurer un retour inté-

gral du plateau sous le contrôle syrien, alors qu'Israël met en avant les questions liées à la sécurité et à la normalisation politique.

Initialement prévus à midi, les entretiens entre les deux présidents avaient finalement débuté avec trois heures de retard dans un salon de l'Hôtel Intercontinental, placé pour l'occasion sous étroite surveillance. Les deux hommes s'étaient déjà rencontrés dans le même établissement en janvier 1994 et avaient alors lancé un appel à « la paix des

braves » au Proche-Orient, en souhaitant la reprise des négociations syro-israéliennes. Agé aujourd'hui de soixante-neuf ans, le président Assad, dont la santé suscite à nouveau les inquiétudes et qui ne voyage que très rarement, se trouvait depuis samedi après-midi à Genève, alors que le chef de la Maison Blanche arrivait dans la nuit, sur le chemin du retour après sa visite en Asie du Sud.

Contrastant avec l'optimisme relatif affiché par la presse syrienne à la veille du sommet, les respon-

sables américains s'étaient montrés plus prudents, le conseiller pour la sécurité nationale, Sandy Berger, mettant en garde contre l'illusion d'un aboutissement rapide.

Pour le président Clinton, l'aspect peut-être le plus positif de son escale genevoise aura été de pouvoir s'offrir une boîte de Cohibas, cigares cubains de prix, théoriquement introuvables aux Etats-Unis...

Jean-Claude Buhrer

Mideast Negotiating Ball Is Now in Assad's Court, Clinton Asserts

Reuters

WASHINGTON — With the clock ticking on Middle East peace, President Bill Clinton said Tuesday that the ball was in President Hafez Assad's court after his failed meeting with the Syrian leader in Geneva.

"I went to Switzerland to meet President Assad to clarify to him what I thought the options were and to hear from him what his needs are, and I asked him to come back to me with what he thought ought to be done," Mr. Clinton said. "So the ball's in his court now and I'm going to look forward to hearing from him."

Mr. Clinton spoke at a White House photo opportunity with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

Mr. Clinton and Mr. Mubarak, an important U.S. ally and intermediary in the Middle East, got together to brainstorm on ways to put peace efforts back on track and to discuss bilateral issues.

Mr. Mubarak said he might meet with Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel soon after he returned home to Cairo. "The situation concerning the Middle East problem cannot stay as it is now," Mr. Mubarak said. "Tremendous efforts are being done by the United States with the cooperation with us."

Several deadlines confront negotiators seeking to cement peace agreements between Israel and Syria, Israel and Lebanon and Israel and the Palestinians. They include an intended pullout by July of Israeli troops from south Lebanon — where guerrillas backed by Syria and Iran are fighting against Israeli occupation — and a Sept. 13 deadline for an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal.

Furthermore, Mr. Clinton's political influence ebbs with the approach of the end of his second term in January.

The White House has said the Clinton-Assad talks failed to narrow "significant differences" between Israel and Syria, making a resumption of talks unproductive at this point.

But Mr. Clinton sounded an optimistic note Tuesday, saying that Israel was serious about finding peace. "Prime Minister Barak would like to do this as quickly as he can," Mr. Clinton said. "And I can tell you they have made very, very serious efforts on all tracks."

"I think we will continue to see progress, at least on the Palestinian track. And of course I hope we'll have some progress on the Syrian one as well, as well as in Lebanon," he said.

Mr. Mubarak echoed the optimism. "I cannot say that it's a failure," he said. "No progress between the Israelis and the Syrians doesn't make us pessimistic."

In the Middle East, however, Mr. Clinton's failure to revive the Syrian-Israeli negotiations prompted war talk in the Syrian and Israeli media on Tuesday, and Israeli bombers pounded Lebanon for a second straight day.

Syria's official press accused Mr. Barak of deliberately blocking a resumption of peace talks and warned of a return to violence.

The Syrian newspaper Al Ba'ath said Mr. Barak "bears responsibility for the absence of peace opportunities and opening the region to dangerous possibilities, primarily the return to tension and escalation and re-entering the cycle of blood and bitter conflict for long decades."

In southern Lebanon, Israeli planes attacked targets associated with Syrian-backed guerrillas on the edge of Mansouri, a village southeast of Tyre.

Israel has pledged to withdraw its troops from Lebanon by July, with or without a peace agreement with Syria, a main backer of the Hezbollah guerrillas and other groups fighting to end the 22-year occupation of a zone north of the border.

But sources close to Mr. Assad said Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon, could not allow the Israelis to get out of Lebanon in peace while it remained on the occupied Golan Heights.

Diplomatic sources said Israel was insisting on keeping full sovereignty and control over the perimeter of the Sea of Galilee, source of 40

percent of its water, while Syria is demanding a return to the pre-1967 cease-fire line, when it held the northeastern corner of the lake.

The area involved is only a long stone's throw but it carries enormous political symbolism for both sides.

War worries also surfaced in the Israeli media. The daily Ha'aretz said that in the light of Mr. Assad's intransigence, the Clinton administration was under pressure to endorse a unilateral Israeli pullout and hold Syria responsible for any attempts to disrupt it through violence.

■ Israelis and Palestinians to Try Again

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators who ended a week of talks at Bolling Air Force Base in Washington on Tuesday will return there for more negotiations on April 6, Reuters reported Tuesday, quoting a State Department spokesman, James Foley.

He said that, having exchanged ideas, the two sides now better understood each other's needs.

Herald  Tribune

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 29, 2000

Necirvan Barzani meets Turkish officials in the Foreign Ministry

- A Kurdistan Democratic Party delegation led by Necirvan Barzani yesterday met with Turkish diplomats to discuss the latest developments in northern Iraq

Mar 28, 2000

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

Necirvan Barzani, the prime minister of the regional government in the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP)-controlled part of northern Iraq, and his envoy yesterday met with Turkish diplomats in a regular meeting to discuss regional issues. The KDP delegation met with Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Faruk Logoglu and Foreign Ministry Middle East General Director Turkekul Kurttekin.

Prior to the meeting with Turkish officials Barzani told reporters that good relations existed with Turkey, adding that they had been paying special importance to their relations with Turkey.

When asked what would be discussed with Turkish officials during the meeting, Barzani said that they would exchange views on bilateral and regional issues.

Replying to a question about a Nevruz celebration hosted by KDP representative Safeen Dizayee at the Sheraton Hotel in Ankara last Monday, Barzani replied that the situation was blown out of proportion by the media, adding that there was no such crisis between the KDP and the Turkish Foreign Ministry.

The Turkish media reported last week that a controversy had erupted between Ankara and the KDP on account of Dizayee's reception at the Sheraton Hotel last Monday to mark Nevruz. At first these reports were denied by the Foreign Ministry. Later, however, in the wake of further reports on the reception, the ministry issued a statement citing Ankara's concern and sensitivity about the celebration.

The Barzani-led KDP delegation is expected to meet Turkish military officials today at the Turkish General Staff headquarters before leaving Ankara.

Turkish military breaks silence on attack helicopter controversy

- Final decision on helicopters due in late June
- Greece violates CFE ceilings on attack helicopters
- **Dursun Ali Ercan:** Turkey has to win the chess game
- Turkey is not an island in the Pacific Ocean
- The Turkish military finally broke its silence at a press conference it held yesterday in an attempt to respond to criticisms directed against it over the handling of the \$4 billion attack helicopter project as well as over questions raised recently concerning the rationale behind Ankara's increased spending on arms. Turkey has further delayed the final selection of a winner in the attack helicopter project to late June. In a surprise announcement the military also described the \$150 billion announced as to be spent in the coming 30 years as not realistic.
- Unlike the ongoing warmer relations between Turkey and Greece on the political front the Turkish military has once more stressed its unease over Greece's increased armaments. Military officers revealed at the press conference that Greece has been violating the CFE ceilings on attack helicopters and has been spending more on arms. The undersecretary of the Defense Industries, Dursun Ali Ercan, has denied that Turkey has been trying to further arm itself. "But the conditions in our region oblige us to ensure our security. We have to win the chess game. Turkey is not an island in the Pacific Ocean", he said



Ankara-Turkish Daily News

Lale Sariibrahimoglu

The Turkish military has finally broken its months-long silence on critical press reports concerning the multi-billion-dollar attack helicopter project as well as the rising voices in Turkey questioning the rationale behind the country's increased spending on arms.

A press conference was held yesterday morning in Ankara at the Ministry of Defence building with the participation of senior generals from the Ministry of Defense as well as from the Land Forces Command (KKK) and the Turkish General Staff.

Professor Dursun Ali Ercan, a former retired officer who two months ago was appointed the new undersecretary of the Defense Industries claimed that there have been inaccurate news stories and speculations on both attack helicopter project and on Turkey's arms spending. He denied that Turkey has been involved in efforts to arm itself. "It is true that Turkey is faced with the problem of strengthening its economy. But the regional atmosphere obliges Turkey to ensure its security. We have been observing to what extent countries in the region are taking seriously Atatürk's famous call for "Peace at home, peace in the world," Ercan said. Recalling that Turkey was not an island in the Pacific Ocean, Ercan said that the existence of states in the region which give support to international terrorism forces the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) to be on the alert all the time. Turkey has not been involved in arming itself but has been seeking to bridge the gap with its neighbors, said Ercan.



According to the statistics given by Ercan Greece spends \$43 to arm an area of 1 square kilometer, whereas Turkey spends only \$10. Among Turkey's neighbors only Georgia and Bulgaria allocate less than Turkey to defense spending within gross national product (GNP), the SSM undersecretary recalled. He also added that the share of Turkey's military spending within GNP is 4 percent whereas Greece's ratio is about 4.7 percent compared to its small population and size. In a surprise statement the SSM undersecretary described that the \$150 billion allocated for the modernization and defense procurement of the TSK over the next 30 years was not realistic when it was realized that the major part of this does not go on arms supplies. Taking written questions after his presentation the SSM undersecretary fell short of clarifying this statement which contradicted with the General Staff announcement made in 1997.

Then the General Staff announced that \$150 billion was required for the TSK in the coming 30 years. Ercan went on to say that the economic successes of the former Soviet Union was purely based on its military power. He said: "In Turkey we do not follow such a defense concept. The 21st century is one during which the lands and oceans which were shared out among the nations in the 19th century should be preserved. This requires a much deeper chess game. And we have to win this chess game," he said.

Following Ercan's statement a presentation on Turkey's security environment, details on the TSK's operational requirements as well as methods pursued on the attack helicopter project were explained by retired general Celal Gurkan, who is responsible for the project at SSM. European countries such as Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, Holland and Spain have been increasing the number of attack helicopters in their inventories, despite the fact that they have been downsizing their armed forces, recalled Gurkan. Greece has increased its attack helicopter inventory, doubling its ceiling set under the Conventional Forces Treaty in Europe (CFE) and has been continuing its purchases, Gurkan said. Despite its size, big population, critical geography and international responsibilities, Turkey's spending on arms constituted 8.8 percent of its total budget, whereas other countries in the region spent 10 to 25 percent on defense, he stressed. He also recalled that Turkey's defense spending had decreased in the past 15 years.

Giving a detailed account of the process that the TSK has been pursuing on attack helicopter project since it was launched in 1996 Gurkan announced that the final selection of a winner in the attack helicopter project will be made at the end of June when the SSM executive board meets. From March 6, after which three companies were shortlisted while the other two were eliminated, until June the responses to be given by the shortlisted companies on further technical specifications will be evaluated. Once a bidder is selected in late June contract negotiations with the winner will last about three months. The first phase of the project is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year and the first delivery of attack helicopters will take place in mid-2003. An earlier date for first delivery was scheduled for November 2002. The whole project, involving the co-production of 145 helicopters is scheduled to be completed in the year 2011. Over questions on the elimination of U.S. company Boeing competing with Apache, and Eurocopter (A French-German consortium) with Tiger, Gurkan said that SSM had made a detailed analysis of technical performance and cost effectiveness, among other things. It was seen that those companies eliminated had failed to meet those criteria, he added.

U.S. Bell Helicopter-Textron (AH-IZ King Cobra), Italy's Agusta (AI29-I), as well as Russia's Kamov, competing jointly with Israel's IAI (KA-50/52- Erdogan) are shortlisted. Under the first phase 50 helicopters including two prototypes will be co-produced at an estimated \$2,5 billion. The remaining helicopters will be co-produced under two batches of 50 and 45 each. According to military sources Turkey has also abandoned its earlier plan of leasing 10 helicopters from the successful company for urgent requirements. SSM has also decided to ask the competing companies to come up with the costs for the remaining 90 helicopters in order to decrease the cost of the first 50 attack helicopters. The contract with the winning company will be made for 50 helicopters. But in order to prevent an increase in the cost of the remaining 90 helicopters in the future SSM asked the three shortlisted companies to come up with a cost for the rest of the attack helicopters.

Turkey seeks among other things to obtain a national software source code, third country sale as well as to gain system integration with the co-production of the attack helicopters. Over U.S. linkage between Turkey's human rights situation and the export license guarantee, Gurkan recalled that all the shortlisted companies had provided Turkey with goodwill letters and that in the future there would not be any problem on export licenses.

Terrorists warn Turkey against military operations

- The threat comes as the Turkish military has reportedly been massing troops and tanks along the Iraqi border in recent weeks, apparently in readiness for a cross-border offensive to pursue the terrorists

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

The separatist-terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) warned the government that its planned anti-terrorist offensive would lead to clashes and shatter months of peace in Turkey's Southeast, a report said on Tuesday.

The threat came as the Turkish military has reportedly been massing troops and tanks along the Iraqi border in recent weeks, apparently in readiness for a cross-border offensive to pursue the terrorists.

The PKK terrorists recently announced an end to their 15-year-long struggle for autonomy in the Southeast, but the government and military have ignored their peace offer, vowing to crush the terrorist group.

"Such operations, which will result in great loss of life, will lead to clashes not only in (northern Iraq) but inside Turkey's borders as well," said a statement from the PKK. The statement was carried by the pro-Kurdish newspaper Ozgur Bakis.

For many years Turkey has been sending troops into northern Iraq in the spring, after the snow clears, to fight terrorists who maintain bases in the area.

The terrorists, heeding a call by their imprisoned chieftain Abdullah Ocalan, announced an end to fighting in early February. The bulk of the terrorists have retreated to Iraq and Iran under orders from Ocalan.

About 300 PKK terrorists remain inside Turkey, Ozgur Bakis quoted Mustafa Karasu, a member of the PKK's leadership council, as saying.

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Birdal returns to prison

- The former IHD president's request for an additional six-month postponement of his sentence was rejected. Birdal is one of the victims of the controversial Article 312

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

Akin Birdal, human rights activist and former president of the Human Rights Association (IHD), returned to prison on Tuesday, after the Istanbul Forensic Department rejected his request for a six-month postponement of his sentence, reported the Anatolia news agency. Birdal was released from prison in September for health reasons after having served more than three months of his 10-month sentence.

The Istanbul Forensic Department ruled out the previous Numune Hospital report that Birdal's sentence should be postponed so that he could receive an additional six-months medical treatment to his arm, which was badly injured during an attempt on his life in May 1998, when he was shot by a group of far-rightist gunmen.

The Istanbul Forensic Department report said that Birdal was not in life-threatening danger and could serve the remaining six months of his 10-month prison sentence.

Birdal was sentenced to one-year's imprisonment by the Adana and Ankara State Security Courts (DGM) in 1995 and 1996 respectively, on the grounds that he had incited hatred and enmity among people on the basis of religious and racial discrimination as stipulated by Article 312 of the Turkish Criminal Code (TCK). But in line with the parole laws his sentence was reduced to 10 months. Birdal's sentence was suspended for six months in September on health grounds relating to the attempted assassination.



There are still more than 20 cases pending against Birdal for making similar speeches.

IHD calls for Birdal's release

The IHD released a press statement condemning Birdal's return to prison. "The IHD once more demands the removal of barriers to freedom of expression," said the statement and argued that prisoners of conscience should be released from prison forthwith.

The Contemporary Jurists' Association (CHD) also made a press statement saying that Birdal was imprisoned solely because of the thoughts and opinions he expressed.

The CHD statement argued that the existence of prisoners of conscience was a disgrace for Turkey and that the relevant articles of the TCK, namely articles 312, 155 and 159, should immediately be repealed.

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Turkey urges KDP to avoid behaving like a state

- It is reported that the Turkish and KDP delegations discussed lowering the taxes that KDP customs officials take from Turkish trucks engaged in cross-border trading
-

Kemal İter

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

The Turkish Foreign Ministry has reportedly conveyed Turkey's concern over the possible emergence of a Kurdish state in northern Iraq during meetings with a Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) delegation led by Necirvan Barzani, the prime minister of the regional government in the KDP-controlled part of northern Iraq.

Speaking to the Turkish Daily News a diplomatic source said that they had had very fruitful meetings with the KDP delegation, although both Turkish diplomats and KDP representatives had expressed their views to clarify some misunderstandings over certain matters.

Describing the meetings as "necessary and fruitful" the same sources said: "we have conveyed our mutual sensitivities on some subjects, such as a possible Kurdish state and fighting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). We mainly emphasized that the KDP should continue its efforts to keep Turkey's confidence. The meeting was important for clarifying various matters."

"We stressed the importance of Iraq's unity once more, and we also reiterated that the problems of the northern Iraqi Kurds should be solved within the territorial integrity of Iraq. They said they agreed with Turkey on the matter of Iraq's integrity," said the same sources.

Asked whether the Nevruz celebration hosted by KDP representative Safeen Dizayee at the Sheraton Hotel in Ankara last Monday, which led to a problem between the KDP and the Turkish Foreign Ministry, had come to table during the meeting, the same sources cited: "We discussed this subject, but I have to say that the situation was exaggerated by the media. We said that there were some mistakes in the way the reception was organized. They said they understood our position."

Last week the Turkish media reported that a controversy had erupted between Ankara and the KDP on account of Dizayee's reception at the Sheraton Hotel last Monday to mark Nevruz. At first these reports were denied by the Foreign Ministry. Later, however, in the wake of further reports on the reception, the ministry issued a statement citing Ankara's concern and sensitivity over the celebration.

Meanwhile the TDN has learned that on Monday the Turkish and KDP delegations discussed decreasing the taxes that KDP customs officials take from Turkish trucks engaging in cross-border trade.

The KDP delegation met on Monday with Turkish diplomats in the Foreign Ministry, including Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Faruk Logoglu and Foreign Ministry Middle East General Director Turkekul Kurttekin. The delegation yesterday met Turkish military officials at General Staff headquarters to discuss security issues in the region.

After the meeting with Turkish officials on Monday Barzani told reporters that they had had a very fruitful meeting, adding that they had dealt with economic issues as well as political ones.

When asked about the Turkomans, who have some disagreements with the KDP, Barzani said that there had been problems, but that the two sides had been trying to solve them through regular meetings.

Iraqi Parliamentary Election Results Announced

BAGHDAD (March 28) XINHUA - All 220 members of Iraq's new National Assembly (parliament) have been chosen through the elections on Monday, with President Saddam Hussein's eldest son Uday getting the majority of votes, announced a senior Iraqi official on Tuesday.

Among the 220 elected, 143 are from the ruling Socialist Arab Baath Party, 23 are its supporters, and the other 55 are independents, announced Justice Minister Shebib Lazim Al-Maliki.

Uday got more than 200,000 votes, the highest among the elected members, said the minister.

Among the 25 female candidates running for seats in the next parliament, 18 got elected, Maliki said.

There are altogether 250 seats in the National Assembly, 30 of which are allocated for the Kurds-populated areas in northern Iraq.

These 30 seats are directly decided by the president, said the minister.

Some 88.6 percent of the eligible voters took part in the voting on Monday.

The elected members of the new National Assembly will hold a meeting early next month to elect a speaker, the minister said.

The voting was held on Monday to choose from a total of 512 candidates.

The country was divided into 54 constituencies, with each consisting of a number of polling centers.

Elections were not held in the northern provinces where the Kurds live. The United States and its Western allies set up two no-fly zones in northern and southern Iraq allegedly to protect the Kurds in the north and the Shiite Muslims in the south from Baghdad's persecution.

Iraqi election laws require that all candidates must defend the constitution and believe in the principles of the July 17 Revolution of 1958 which established the republic.

Four parliamentary elections have been held in Iraq, with the last one in March, 1996.

Balsak condamné à 4 ans d'emprisonnement à Paris

PARIS, 30 mars (AFP) - 14h58 - Irfan Balsak, 35 ans, considéré comme un des responsables du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie) en France, a été condamné jeudi à 4 ans d'emprisonnement et 10 ans d'interdiction du territoire français par la 14e chambre du Tribunal correctionnel de Paris.

Le 2 mars, le Parquet avait requis 6 ans d'emprisonnement et l'interdiction définitive du territoire français.

Il était poursuivi, avec quatre autres Kurdes, pour participation à une association de malfaiteurs en relation avec une entreprise terroriste, pour avoir participé au racket de commerçants turcs afin de financer le PKK.

Iskender Kilan, 27 ans, a été condamné à 3 ans d'emprisonnement et à 10 ans d'interdiction du territoire français alors que le Parquet avait requis 5 ans d'emprisonnement et l'interdiction définitive du territoire.

Mehmet Bayram, 35 ans, a été condamné à 2 ans d'emprisonnement dont un an avec sursis, alors que Hasan Nogut, 35 ans et Hasan Genc, 34 ans, sont condamnés à 30 mois d'emprisonnement dont 15 mois avec sursis.

Contre ces trois derniers, le Parquet avait demandé 3 ans d'emprisonnement.

Enfin, Zulkuf Ayazgun, 40 ans, a été condamné à 18 mois d'emprisonnement avec sursis.

Netherlands Denies Asylum for Kurd Leader

AMSTERDAM, March 30 (Reuters) - The Netherlands have denied political asylum to senior Kurdish rebel leader Murat Karayilan, his lawyer said on Thursday.

"We have received a negative decision," LL M Gerda Later told Reuters, adding her client would appeal the ruling.

"It is a pity because the Kurds are striving for peace and democracy and this kind of decision does not contribute much."

Karayilan, who fled to the Netherlands last November, was a member of the central committee of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has fought a 15-year war in southeast Turkey for Kurdish self rule that has resulted in 30,000 deaths.

A spokeswoman for the Dutch Justice Ministry said Turkey's extradition request could take several months to process.

Turkey -- where courts began hearings in December against PKK guerrillas for crimes allegedly committed in the 1970s -- applied for Karayilan's extradition in February.

A Turkish court sentenced PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan to death for treason last June, but the Turkish government is awaiting a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights before a final decision is made by Turkey's parliament.

Ocalan has called on the PKK to stop fighting and prepare for a transformation into a political force.

Kurdish sources had said Karayilan, code-named Cemal, was said to be previously holed up with the group's other leaders in northern Iraq or Iran.

He was one of the fiercest advocates of the PKK's armed campaign against Turkish forces.

Reports have surfaced of splits in the leadership of the PKK, with a former Ocalan ally this week describing the rebel leader in an Italian newspaper interview as a wretch who had betrayed his people to save his own life.

The Turkish community is one of the largest migrant groups in the Netherlands, numbering around 300,000.

Karayilan has been accused by Turkish leaders, including Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, of meeting in the Netherlands with three Kurdish mayors of Turkish cities.

The three, who were arrested last month, had swept to power with large majorities alongside dozens of fellow People's Democracy Party (HADEP) mayors in the troubled and mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey.

Ecevit Leaves On State Visit Despite Crisis

By Stephen Kinzer
New York Times Service

ISTANBUL — When Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit boarded a plane Thursday to begin a state visit to India, he left behind a country that suddenly seemed to be at the brink of political upheaval.

"While I am in India I shall reflect on many things, including the continuation of the government," Mr. Ecevit said before departing. "Let everyone think about that for the next four days."

A turbulent session of Parliament that lasted into Thursday produced Mr. Ecevit's warning. The session had been called to consider a constitutional amendment to allow President Suleyman Demirel to serve another five years in office, but it dissolved into a partisan battle that seemed to bode ill for the country's stability.

It also opened up possibilities for change in a country where the political elite is widely viewed as highly conservative. Mr. Ecevit had argued that President Demirel should be re-elected because he is "a factor for stability," but Turks seem more anxious for change than stability. There was no public pressure on members of Parliament to support Mr. Demirel, and Thursday, with his prospects in doubt, there were no signs of regret.

"I think Demirel with withdraw," one of his oldest political allies, the former

speaker of Parliament, Husamettin Cindoruk, said in an interview. "He is an experienced statesman. Parliament has shown its will, and he will not resist it."

"There isn't a crisis of stability in Turkey, but there is a crisis of democracy," Mr. Cindoruk said.

Mr. Ecevit warned that the end of President Demirel's term could upset all that his government has achieved. He said that if a way is not found to keep Mr. Demirel in office, the scramble to succeed him may release passions that he has so far managed to keep under control.

Because the constitution requires Mr. Demirel to step down when his single seven-year term expires in May, an amendment must be passed if he is to stay in office. Mr. Ecevit proposed such an amendment in Parliament on Wednesday. But it failed by a wide margin. If it fails again next week, it will be dead and Mr. Demirel will have to give up his post.

Ankara remet en prison Akin Birdal, défenseur des droits de l'homme

Il avait demandé, il y a trois ans, une solution négociée au problème kurde

L'ancien président de l'Association turque des droits de l'homme, Akin Birdal, condamné à neuf mois de prison, s'est vu refuser sa demande de grâce médicale. Ce geste

reflète l'irritation croissante du gouvernement face aux pressions européennes sur la question kurde, depuis l'acceptation de la candidature turque à l'adhésion à l'Union.

ISTANBUL

de notre correspondante

Libéré pour raisons de santé en septembre 1999, après trois mois de détention, Akin Birdal, ancien président de l'Association turque des droits de l'homme, est retourné en prison purger le reste de sa peine. Le gouvernement a refusé sa grâce médicale motivée par ses blessures consécutives à une tentative d'assassinat en 1998.

Akin Birdal avait été condamné à neuf mois d'emprisonnement, selon le fameux article 312 du code pénal actuellement au centre des débats en Turquie, pour avoir demandé, il y a trois ans, une solution négociée au problème kurde. Son incarcération, qui intervient alors qu'une délégation du Parlement européen se trouve en Turquie pour enquêter sur la situation dans le Sud-Est anatolien, semble refléter l'irritation grandissante des autorités turques face à la pression accrue des Européens sur la question kurde et les droits de l'homme. Depuis le sommet d'Helsinki en décembre 1999, au cours duquel la Turquie avait été

officiellement acceptée comme candidate à l'Union européenne, ces problèmes sont constamment à l'ordre du jour des entretiens entre les autorités d'Ankara et leurs visiteurs étrangers.

ÉTAT D'URGENCE

Le premier ministre Bulent Ecevit ne cache pas son mécontentement. Il avait récemment offert une réplique acerbe à Günter Verheugen, le commissaire européen à l'élargissement, qui avait mentionné le problème kurde durant sa visite à Ankara. Accusant les Européens de racisme, le premier ministre turc avait affirmé que « la société turque n'a pas de tradition de discrimination ethnique » et attribué les problèmes du Sud-Est anatolien à la « structure féodale de la région » et aux efforts de divers Etats pour diviser la Turquie. « Nous sommes confrontés à un mouvement séparatiste encouragé, provoqué et soutenu à la fois par certains pays de la région et par certains cercles dans les pays qui sont nos alliés. »

A la délégation du Parlement

européen qui s'inquiétait de la situation de Leyla Zana, l'ancienne députée kurde emprisonnée depuis 1994 et dont la santé est défaillante, le premier ministre a déclaré que M^{me} Zana avait le droit, selon la loi, de demander sa libération pour raisons de santé, mais qu'elle faisait preuve de « mauvaise volonté » et préférerait « exploiter sa situation à des fins politiques ». Leyla Zana et trois collègues députés kurdes, accusés d'être membres du Parti des travailleurs kurdes (PKK), avaient été condamnée à quinze ans d'emprisonnement en décembre 1994.

Malgré une réduction marquée de la violence dans le Sud-Est anatolien, les autorités turques ne semblent pas prêtes au compromis. Les offres de paix du PKK, qui a officiellement abandonné la lutte armée, ne sont pas prises au sérieux à Ankara. Le Parlement turc a voté, mardi, en faveur d'une extension, pour quatre mois, de l'état d'urgence dans cinq provinces de la région.

Nicole Pope

Bid to Prolong Turkish President's Political Life Snag

Reuters

ANKARA — Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit suffered a severe blow Wednesday when what was apparently a rebellion in his own coalition threatened to kill legislation he sees as important to government stability.

But the chief opposition, the Virtue Party, offered to help save the bill if Mr. Ecevit backed stronger legislation protecting it from possible closure by the Constitutional Court.

Parliament voted, 303 to 202, to debate three key laws. The secret vote gave a good indication of resistance to Mr. Ecevit's key plan, which needed a two-thirds majority, to amend the constitution to let President Suleyman Demirel serve a second term.

Mr. Ecevit fears keeping Mr. Demirel out could stoke rivalry in his left-right coalition over a successor. Stocks dipped 2 percent on the vote, but horse-trading could yet save the legislation.

Ismail Kose, deputy group leader of the Nationalist Action Party, Mr. Ecevit's coalition partner, kept hopes alive by saying the



For some, Mr. Demirel symbolizes stability.

issue would go to a second vote next Wednesday.

Mr. Ecevit might hold talks with Virtue, though his hands may be tied by a powerful military already concerned about concessions to the Muslims. He may also act to improve frail discipline in his own coalition.

The 202 "no" votes in early polling sug-

gested resistance reached into the coalition itself. A senior deputy of Mr. Ecevit's Democratic Left Party said 100 Nationalist Action Party members, had voted "no."

"The naysayers were far more than we had expected," said the deputy.

■ Demirel's Role a Subject of Debate

Stephen Kinzer of The New York Times reported earlier from Istanbul:

The Parliament vote Wednesday, which followed months of intense political maneuvering, was the beginning of the delicate process of deciding whether to re-elect Mr. Demirel.

Mr. Demirel, 75, has been in public office nearly all his life. He served a record seven terms as prime minister before becoming president in 1993. Most Turks cannot remember a time when he was not a power broker.

That longevity is both Mr. Demirel's

greatest strength and his greatest weakness. His supporters say he is a guarantee of stability as Turkey enters a decade that is likely to bring wrenching domestic and international challenges.

But critics view him as a symbol of Turkey's political immobility. They say that a country of 65 million people must have more than one person qualified to be president.

The Turkish presidency has little formal authority, but in the past decade, as one government after another has succumbed to political paralysis, it has become a power center.

To win passage of the constitutional amendment, Mr. Demirel needs the votes of two-thirds of the 550 members of Parliament.

He and his supporters are using a combination of incentives and threats

to win them.

If Mr. Demirel wins approval of the amendment, he will almost certainly be re-elected. If he fails, a host of candidates will probably emerge.

This could threaten the stability of Mr. Ecevit's government, which is based on an uneasy coalition between his left-oriented party and another that is far-rightist.

If the presidency suddenly comes up for grabs, the two parties would almost certainly offer opposing candidates.

Some politicians have urged that voters, rather than Parliament, be given the power to choose their president, but a proposal to do that failed to win approval in a parliamentary committee this month.

Etyen Mahcupyan, a news commentator, said Western powers favored Mr. Demirel because they saw him as "the ideal solution to keep Turkey on the right track while bridling any process of change."

La Turquie autorise un parlementaire européen à voir une députée kurde en prison



ANKARA, 31 mars (AFP) - 13h52 - La Turquie a donné son accord pour qu'un parlementaire européen, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, puisse rendre visite lundi à une ex-députée kurde en prison, une visite refusée le mois dernier, a annoncé à l'AFP l'avocat de Leyla Zana.

"Daniel Cohn-Bendit a été autorisé à rendre visite à Mme Zana dans sa prison lundi matin", a dit Me Yusuf Alatas.

En février dernier, des députés européens appartenant à la Commission Parlementaire mixte turco-européenne avaient reporté une rencontre bilatérale prévue à Ankara après un différend au sujet de Leyla Zana, ancienne députée d'un parti pro-kurde dissous.

Trois membres de la délégation avaient exigé de pouvoir rencontrer dans sa prison d'Ankara Mme Zana, ce qui leur avait été refusé.

Mme Zana, lauréate en 1995 du Prix Sakharov des Droits de l'Homme décerné par le Parlement Européen, avait été condamnée en décembre 94 à 15 ans de prison pour "activités séparatistes".

Son parti, le Parti de la Démocratie, avait été interdit la même année pour les mêmes raisons.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit, co-président de cette commission mixte, rencontrera également son homologue Kursat Eser, a annoncé vendredi la représentation à Ankara de la Commission Européenne.

M. Eser avait auparavant déclaré que la rencontre bilatérale devrait avoir lieu en mai ou juin.

Arrestation du coordinateur du PKK en Allemagne



KARLSRUHE (Allemagne), 31 mars (AFP) - 11h15 - Le coordinateur présumé en Allemagne du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, interdit en Allemagne, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie), Hasso S. a été arrêté, a annoncé vendredi le Parquet général fédéral allemand à Karlsruhe (ouest).

Hasso S., un Turc d'origine kurde âgé de 35 ans, a été intercepté jeudi au poste-frontière d'Elten, en Rhénanie-du-Nord-Westphalie (ouest), alors qu'il revenait des Pays-Bas, selon le communiqué du Parquet.

Il est soupçonné d'appartenance à une organisation criminelle. La Cour fédérale allemande avait délivré un mandat d'arrêt à son encontre le 2 mars.

Hasso S. est "depuis des années un haut responsable" du parti, selon le Parquet. Il est soupçonné d'avoir dirigé de juin à décembre 1999 la région "centre" du PKK en Allemagne (Cologne, Bonn, Essen, Duisbourg, Duesseldorf, Dortmund), qui est "la plus importante d'Allemagne" selon le Parquet, et d'être depuis le "primus inter pares" parmi les responsables de régions en Allemagne.

En tant que coordinateur pour l'Allemagne, il serait aussi membre de la direction européenne du PKK, dite Front central européen, et chargé entre autres de fournir de faux papiers d'identité aux militants du PKK, selon le communiqué.

Il doit être présenté dans la journée de vendredi à un juge fédéral chargé de statuer sur sa détention provisoire. La police criminelle fédérale (BKA) a été chargée de l'enquête.

Mercredi, le Parquet fédéral avait annoncé le renvoi devant le tribunal de deux dirigeants présumés du PKK, Hasan B. et Zeynep H., pour "appartenance à une organisation criminelle", "faux en écriture en bande organisée" et "violation de la loi sur les armes".

Hasan B., 43 ans, serait un "membre éminent" de la direction européenne du PKK, selon des sources kurdes. Zeynep H., 28 ans, est la dirigeante présumée de l'organisation féminine du PKK en Europe (YAJK) depuis décembre 1995. Ils seront jugés à Berlin.

Le PKK est interdit en Allemagne depuis novembre 1992. L'interdiction avait été prononcée à la suite d'une vague d'attentats terroristes contre des intérêts turcs et allemands en Allemagne.

La demande d'asile d'un dirigeant du PKK rejetée en première instance

LA HAYE, 31 mars (AFP) - 11h12 - La demande d'asile aux Pays-Bas d'un des principaux chefs militaires du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (Parti des travailleurs kurdes de Turquie), Murat Karayilan, a été rejetée en première instance, a-t-on appris de source officielle vendredi à La Haye.

Sa demande, déposée en novembre dernier, peu après son arrivée aux Pays-bas, a été rejetée par le service néerlandais de l'immigration et des naturalisations (IND), a-t-on précisé de même source.

Murat Karayilan peut faire appel de cette décision.

La Turquie a demandé en février son extradition, mais l'examen de cette requête devrait prendre environ six mois. Cette dernière pourra également faire l'objet d'un recours devant le Conseil d'Etat néerlandais, avant la décision du ministre de la Justice Benk Korthals, elle-même susceptible d'un ultime appel, selon les spécialistes de son ministère.

Murat Karayilan, 46 ans, alias "Cuma", originaire du village de Suruc, dans la province de Sanliurfa (sud-est), a demandé l'asile politique aux Pays-Bas le 18 novembre 1999.

Il était l'un des principaux chefs militaires du PKK, avec Cemil Bayik et Osman Ocalan, frère du chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan. Depuis l'arrestation et la condamnation à mort de ce dernier, le PKK prône une solution pacifique du problème kurde et a proclamé l'abandon de la lutte armée lancée en 1984.

Dans une interview à l'agence néerlandaise ANP début mars, Murat Karayilan a affirmé être venu aux Pays-Bas afin de "poursuivre par la voie démocratique notre lutte pour la paix et la démocratie". "Je suis là pour présenter notre nouvelle stratégie pacifique à l'ensemble de nos membres", a-t-il dit.

Il a affirmé que "le PKK est prêt à tout pour la paix", mais qu'il reprendrait la guerre si Abdullah Ocalan était exécuté. "Nous voulons la paix mais si notre leader est pendu nous ressentirons cela comme la mort de tous les Kurdes. Ce sera alors le début d'une nouvelle guerre", a-t-il déclaré.

"Nous demandons très peu, juste la reconnaissance légale de l'identité kurde", a-t-il précisé dans cet entretien, regrettant "qu'aucun signe positif ne soit venu d'Ankara" depuis l'abandon de la lutte armée par son parti.

Controversial Article 312 on the agenda again

Ankara - Turkish Daily News March 31, 2000

A total of 201 cases relating to activities contravening Article 312/2 of the Turkish Penal Code (TCK) were filed in the Court of Cassation last year, of which 185 were heard and 16 were dismissed. The article is now back on the agenda following the imprisonment of now-defunct Welfare Party (RP) Chairman Necmettin Erbakan, reported the Anatolia news agency.

The Court of Cassation sentenced those involved in 98 of the 185 cases to prison, while the remaining cases were overruled. Ninety percent of the imprisonment decisions concerned separatist activities, while the remaining constituted religious activities.

Many politicians, writers and journalists were sentenced to jail due to their activities which contravened Article 312. Famous writer Yasar Kemal and journalist Ahmet Altan's sentences, which have been postponed, were passed by the court. Prison sentences of the former mayors of Istanbul and Kayseri, Tayyip Erdogan and Sukru Karatepe, and Deputy Huseyin Ceylan of the closed RP had been carried out, while former Rebirth Party (YDP) Chairman Hasan Celal Guzel is still serving a jail sentence he was given based on Article 312. International Human Rights Federation (FIDH) Deputy Chairman Akin Birdal has two condemnations due to this article. He was imprisoned on Tuesday to complete his sentence, which was suspended previously due to his health. Erbakan had also been sentenced to a year in jail, and the justification for imprisoning Erbakan has not been completed yet.

Meanwhile, 14 imprisonment and 17 release files were passed to the Court of Cassation relating to torture crimes. The court approved 12 of the imprisonment and 13 of the release cases while it cancelled two imprisonment and four release files. A trial involving police, known to the public as the Manisa trial, is among the cancelled release files. The court had decided to sentence the police due to torture crimes, and the trial is still continuing.

L'ayatollah Hakim, chef du Conseil supérieur de la révolution islamique en Irak

« Le régime de Bagdad détourne la formule "Pétrole contre nourriture" pour obtenir la levée de l'embargo »

TÉHÉRAN

de notre envoyée spéciale

L'ayatollah Mohamad Baker El Hakim est le chef du Conseil supérieur de la révolution islamique en Irak (CSRRI), principal mouvement de l'opposition chiite au régime de Bagdad.

« Que savez-vous sur la situation en Irak à l'heure actuelle ?

— Le régime traverse une période difficile : il est en rupture avec les Nations unies, notamment après l'adoption [par le Conseil de sécurité] de la résolution 1284. Ses tentatives de briser son isolement régional et intérieur ont échoué. Le terrorisme pas davantage que la séduction n'ont réussi à lui concilier la population. Il vit en état d'alerte maximale. Les forces armées perquisitionnent à tout va. Episodiquement, les gens sont soumis à un entraînement militaire. Sans oublier les divergences internes au régime. D'importantes personnalités ont été liquidées, tels le chef des services de renseignements généraux et le gouverneur de Bagdad ; le chef d'Etat major de l'armée a été destitué, il y a eu des exécutions au sein du corps des officiers ; des conflits déchirent la famille du président, et c'est très grave pour un régime dictatorial.

— Et les conditions de vie de la population ?

— Il y a eu une amélioration relative grâce à la résolution 986 [dite "Pétrole contre nourriture"]. Mais le régime entrave son application pour parvenir à son but ultime, qui est la levée de l'embargo international. Les autorités détournent de grandes quantités de produits alimentaires et pharmaceutiques, ou les exportent. Allez sur les marchés des pays voisins, vous y trouverez les denrées alimentaires et le lait pour enfants destinés à l'Irak. De l'aveu des Nations unies elles-mêmes, des produits pharmaceutiques pour un montant de 260 millions de dollars ont disparu des stocks. Des médicaments périmés

sont distribués aux hôpitaux irakiens. Les autorités ont en outre récemment adopté des mesures très pénalisantes pour la population. Les hôpitaux doivent désormais « s'autofinancer », ce qui les conduit à réclamer des honoraires que la plupart des Irakiens ne peuvent pas payer. Le même système va être appliqué aux écoles.

— Au plan politique, des affrontements entre la population et les forces du régime ont eu lieu en 1999 en quatre endroits : à la Cité de la révolution, à la périphérie de Bagdad, où en février il y a eu entre 400 et 500 tués ; à Bassorah, où quelque 300 personnes ont été tuées en mars ; à Samawa, en juillet, où 130 hommes des services de sécurité, dont des officiers, ont été tués ; à Kout, où les forces du régime n'ont pas laissé pierre sur pierre... Le découpage de l'Irak en quatre zones militaires, instauré fin 1998 lors de l'opération anglo-américaine « Renard du désert », est maintenu. Les gouverneurs militaires ont tous les pouvoirs, politiques, militaires et civils.

— Oui, mais cela fait dix ans que la crise perdure et le régime est toujours en place.

— C'est vrai. Il tient même depuis trente-deux ans, mais il doit sa pérennité non pas à sa force, mais à une conjoncture intérieure et régionale. La crise actuelle est néanmoins réelle. Le régime est sur une pente descendante.

De l'aveu des Nations unies, des produits pharmaceutiques pour un montant de 260 millions de dollars ont disparu des stocks

— Que pensez-vous de la résolution 1284, qui prévoit une suspension des sanctions si Bagdad coopère avec la nouvelle commission du désarmement ?

— Elle n'est pas très différente de la résolution 687 [instaurant le cessez-le-feu après la guerre du Golfe, en février 1991]. Son aspect positif tient au fait qu'elle met l'accent sur les questions humanitaires et dissocie la population du régime. Mais dans la mesure où la suspension des sanctions est tributaire de la coopération du régime, elle aboutira donc à une impasse. Quant aux lacunes de la résolution, elles sont de deux ordres : d'une part, elle passe sous silence un aspect humanitaire capital : la répression exercée contre la population, les violations des droits de l'homme et des conventions internationales. D'autre part, aucun mécanisme n'a été prévu pour empêcher les abus du régime : l'ONU pourrait mettre en place un mécanisme de contrôle de la distribution des produits, comme c'est le cas dans le nord de l'Irak [le Kurdistan] où les conditions de vie se sont nettement améliorées.

— Approuvez-vous la campagne Indict visant à faire traduire en justice le président irakien ?

— C'est nous qui avons été à l'origine de cette idée dès 1991. Nous en avons discuté avec le ministre allemand des affaires étrangères d'alors, puis nous l'avons poursuivie dans nos contacts diplomatiques. Nous avons en particulier demandé à la France d'avoir un rôle, parce c'est un pays connu pour la défense des droits de l'homme. A la suite de quoi un groupe de juristes avait organisé un procès populaire en France. Le comité Indict a été constitué il y a quatre ans, et nous en sommes membres. Le moindre de ses résultats devrait être d'isoler politiquement Saddam [Husseïne] et sa clique, de dénoncer ses tentatives

de tromper l'opinion publique, et de favoriser un changement sans violence en Irak.

— Où en sont les tentatives d'unifier les mouvements d'opposition, après le forum organisé à cette fin à New York par les Etats-Unis ?

— L'opposition en Irak va mieux. Elle rallie des secteurs de la population qui n'avaient pas agi jusqu'à maintenant, notamment au sein de la communauté sunnite [minoritaire, mais au pouvoir]. Quant à l'opposition en exil, elle multiplie les réunions et les rencontres bilatérales et multilatérales. Nous avons réussi à avoir une vision et un discours communs, mais nous devons encore élaborer un programme d'action. La réunion de New York [à laquelle le CSRRI n'a pas participé] visait surtout à montrer au grand public une opposition rassemblée et unie, alors que ce qu'il nous faut, c'est un programme d'action. Nous devons régler nos problèmes tout seuls. Si d'autres [allusion aux Etats-Unis] veulent nous aider, nous ne saurions refuser, à condition que cela soit utile. »

Propos recueillis par
Mouna Naïm

