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WHILE ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO TURKEY, VACLAV HAVEL ARGUES IN FAVOUR OF "THE RIGHTS OF THE KURDISH MINORITY"

CZECH President Vaclav Havel's official visit from 10 to 12 October attracted a great deal of attention. In the course of this first visit of a Czech Head of State to the Turkish Republic, Mr. Havel met, in Ankara, the principal Turkish leaders, including President Sezer, and signed three trade and cooperation agreements before going on to Izmir and Istanbul. It was in the latter city, which

remains the cultural and industrial capital of the country, that the Czech President was due to meet Turkish businessmen to encourage them to take a greater interest on the Czech Republic.

However, he decided to invite for lunch at his Istanbul residence, the Çiragan Palace, a dozen Human Rights defenders, including Akin Birdal, and several Kurdish

public figures. According to the account given by the Czech News Agency CTK, President Havel, after questioning his guests on the situation of the Kurds in Turkey, expressed his support for the respect and recognition of their rights, as a distinct people, including their right to use their own language in all aspects of life.

During his meetings with the Turkish Prime Minister and President, the Czech President had also argued in favour of "the rights of the Kurdish minority" and the freeing of prisoners of opinion, including the lawyer-writer Esber Yagmurdereli.

Questioned by the press (including the daily *Milliyet*) on his use of the term: "*Kurdish minority*", the Czech President declared: "*In a general manner, I am in favour of the granting of certain rights to minorities. I did not want Czechs and Slovaks to be forbidden to use their own language in the Czechoslovak Federation. I do not think that the language difference between the two sectors of Cyprus is a problem. Which is why I ask for the Kurds to be authorised to use their language throughout Turkey*".

Vaclav Havel has been well known for his interest in the Kurdish people since the time of Charter 77. On coming to power as a result of the "velvet revolution", unlike many politicians he has not forgotten his principles "*so as to avoid offending the sensitivities*" of this or that State or compromise commercial interests. On several occasions he has defended the right of the Kurdish people to survive, to preserve its identity and master its own destiny. In this he was in the tradition of Nelson Mandela, who refused the "*Atatürk Human Rights Prize*" that the government wanted to award him and had asked Ankara to stop persecuting the Kurdish people before talking about Human Rights.

The Czech President's stand, as might have been expected, unleashed a well orchestrated campaign of hostility in the Turkish media, which, earlier had poured the most odious and racist abuse on Mandela ("*Dirty nigger*", "*Ungrateful nigger*" etc.). President Havel finally got off with a severe reprimand from the President of the

Turkish Journalists Union, Oktay Eksi, in a front page editorial in the daily *Hurriyet* headlined "**Havel has spoilt it all**". There follows a long diatribe on the theme of the ignorance of Turkish history, the Lausanne Treaty that only recognised the non-Moslem population as minorities, etc.

etc. to conclude "*Whereas, with his young and pretty wife, the Czech President, with the prestige of his past as a (anti-communist) resistant and his image as a man of culture*" had all the qualities to please the Turkish public "*he has spoilt it all by tackling, with a battle-axe the Turkey's most sensitive subject*".

MASSOUD BARZANI'S VISIT TO ANKARA AND LONDON

FOLLOWING the visit by Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) arrived in Turkey on 3 October for discussions with the Turkish Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit on the latest developments in his region. He also met with the Head of the Turkish Secret Service (MIT), Senkal Atasagun and with the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Faruk Logoglu.

Mr. Barzani indicated that Turkey had paid compensation to the Iraqi Kurdish families that has fallen victim to an air raid on the region by the Turkish Air Force in August. Turkey recognised, on 18 August, that it had carried out operations there three days earlier, adding that it was studying the allegations that the raid had killed over forty civilians.

The Iraqi Kurdish leader, after a few days in Vienna, then visited London on the invitation of Peter Hain, the British Foreign Secretary. The latter had also

invited Jalal Talabani in the hope of organising an Iraqi Kurdish Summit so as to push forward the application of the inter-Kurdish Washington agreement of 17 September 1988. However, Mr. Talabani did not appear.

According to a British spokesman, the Barzani-Hain meeting of 24 October was mainly concerned with ways of strengthening confidence. London, on this occasion, reiterated its commitment to defending Kurdish *de facto* autonomy and in ensuring that the Kurdish region receives the 13% of the revenues produced by the UN "Oil for Food" resolution. Mr. Hain also welcomed the fact that, thanks to better management and these oil revenues, the Kurdish region had been able to bind up its wounds and secure a certain degree of prosperity in a democratic climate. *There is an example for the whole of Iraq*' he stated. The British Foreign Minister will be host to Mr. Talabani at a later date in the context of his efforts at reconciliation and for peace between the two principle Iraqi Kurdish factions.

Mr. Barzani was also received at the British Department of International Development, where the Under-Secretary of State, George Foulken, assured him that *"the British Government will continue its humanitarian and development projects in the region of Kurdistan"*. He called for the drawing up of agricultural projects and draught prevention projects (see our Press Review further on).

In addition, the PUK, long accused by Ankara of supporting the PKK has recently reported violent clashes between its peshmergas and PKK guerrillas – about twenty peshmergas are said to have been killed in two weeks of fighting. The number of PKK losses is said to be 13. The PKK announces that it had declared a cease fire several days ago and the PUK denies any offensive against the PKK in the region.

The PKK accuses its former ally of collaborating with Ankara and considers the fact that fighting began following Jalal Talabani's visit to Turkey last July is suspicious. The TV Channel Medya TV, close to the PKK, showed a large lorry, involved in a road accident, carrying Turkish munitions to Iraqi Kurdistan. The PUK, for its part, is gambling its very existence, since it accuses the PKK, hitherto tolerated in its region, of wanting to seize villages for its own cause.

A delegation of "Kurdish mothers for peace", all mothers of PKK fighters who have been killed in action, went on a visit to both sides to persuade them to stop *"the fratricidal fighting"*.

THE TURKISH PRESIDENT GIVEN A LESSON IN LAW AND DEMOCRACY TO HIS GOVERNMENT

ON 1st October, Ahmet Necdet Sezer called for legislative reforms in the course of the ceremonial opening of the new parliamentary session. The top brass of the Turkish Army, including Hüseyin Kivrikoglu, Chief of Staff, were all present and correct at for the ceremony. The Turkish daily, Sabah, headlined its 2 October issue *"A cold shower for the government"*, emphasising that the President had given the government some lessons in Law. Observers could not fail to observe the tension between the government and the Head of State – none of the members of the government applauded the Head of State's entrance, nor any part of his speech:

"The concept of a State of Laws is a determining characteristic of present day democracy. Democracy and a State of Laws are basic ideas which cannot be conceived except together. (...) The fact of thinking that rules are laid down for the governed, while those who do the governing enjoy the freedom to either submit to them or not is the source of many problems. All told, democratic life becomes a sort of competition in which the prize is freedom from having to obey the rules. That is why it is important that the leadership, in the first place observe them, but also oversees the way they are applied. The State of Laws, or even a State bound by Laws, presupposes that those who govern, as well as those who are governed, be value the law. The first of all conditions to ensure that the

high State authorities submit to the law is that all organs of the State be subject to judicial control".

On the matter of the *"decree-laws"*, which have been the subjects of serious tension between the government and the President recently, Mr. Sezer stated that: *"Legislative powers are the prerogative of Parliament. The right to draw up "decree-laws" ceded to the Council of Ministers is a specific right, limited in its aim and object (...) There would be an unbalance between the legislative and executive powers, with the executive organs putting themselves above the legislative, if decree-laws, if decree-laws, which should be the exception were to become basic powers"*.

Regarding the death sentence: *"This subject requires an revision of the Constitution. Certain crimes, punishable by death in the Turkish Penal Code, could be made punishable by life imprisonment (...)"*.

"It is time to undertake improvements to our Constitution that answer to the Turkish nation's needs and to embody universal standards into our system of Law (...) These changes must be made, not to satisfy the European Union but, indeed, because our people deserve them (...) Certain problems of our state of law that are obstacles to the supremacy of Law and relative to constitutional control have, to date, not been overcome. Provisional Article 15 of the Constitution and its last clause are the principal point of these problems. The laws and regulations drawn up

between 12 September 1980 (Editor's Note: the date of the Army coup d'état) and 7 December 1983 are still not subject to constitutional control. To catch up with contemporary, democratic nations the Constitution must be revised and a new, liberal, pluralist, participative and confident Constitution drawn up that would guarantee an equitable balance between the tasks and functions of the different State organs

and not leave an empty area lacking in legal principle".

"International relations and cooperation do not mean the end of independence or the abandoning of national sovereignty. The essential point of independence and national sovereignty is the maintenance of balance, when foreign affairs are being treated, to safeguard the State's power of decision".

AN EXTREME RIGHT WING M.P. ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE TURKISH PARLIAMENT

IN the course of its 18 October session, the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM), the unicameral Turkish Parliament, elected the Extreme Right Member of Parliament Omer Izgi of the National Action Party (MHP) as its President. Of the 550 members, 533 took part in the vote, O. Izgi won 264 votes against his opponent Basesgioglu of Mr. Yilmaz's Motherland Party (ANAP).

The members of the Prime Minister's "Democratic Left" party and of Mrs. Çiller's True Path party (DYP) followed their leaders' instructions and voted for this extreme right candidate.

Omer Izgi thus becomes the second highest person of the Turkish State, after the President of the Republic. From the moment of his election he thus assumed office as interim President during President Sezer's journey abroad.

The MHP is a neo-fascist party, founded by Colonel Türkes,

sentenced for his pro-Nazi sympathies before becoming one of the authors of the bloody 1960 Army coup d'état. Advocate of a new Turkish Empire from the Adriatic to the Great Wall of China, militating in favour of an ethnic purification of Turkey from its non-Turkish populations (Kurds, Laz, Greeks and Armenians), his party is known for its virulent and murderous activity against the Kurds and Left wing movements. Its armed militia, the "Grey Wolves" have been implicated in the assassination of

thousands of Turkish and Kurdish democrats in Turkey (and even abroad), in the conflicts on the Caucasus, in the attempted assassination of the Pope and in a range of Mafia-type activities. During Mrs. Çiller's Premiership, a large part of this militia was enrolled into the sinister "special units" given the task of "Kurd hunting" and all the dirty work of the Turkish police in Kurdistan.

Entering the government under the protective wing of the "Left" nationalist Bülent Ecevit, this party, which any democracy worthy of the name would have banned because of its criminal activities, and its open apologia of racism and violence, is thus progressively taking over the key points of the Turkish State machine by a strategy the its President, D. Bahçeli himself describes as that of the iron hand in a velvet glove.

How much longer will the European Union and its Parliament remain silent about this intolerable situation in country that is a candidate for membership.

STRASBOURG: THE EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS COURT AGAIN CONDEMNS TURKEY

**– BUT THE TURKISH POLICE CONTINUES TO
TORTURE KURDS TO THE ACCOMPANIMENT OF
TURKISH MARTIAL MUSIC**

ON 10 October, the European Court for Human Rights again found Turkey guilty of "violating the right to life" of a Kurdish school teacher, Zubeyir Akkoç, killed in 1993 and of "torture" of his

wife, Nabahat, who had dared to bring the case before the Strasbourg court.

A member of the Teachers Union, Zubeyir Akkoç was gunned down in January 1993 by a death squad of the Turkish

Special Forces which, from 1993 to 1999 thus murdered with impunity over four thousand Kurdish intellectuals who were not involved in violent activity with the aim of decapitating and terrorising the Kurdish population. Since this was a policy decided at the highest levels of the Turkish State the Public prosecutors refused to allow any judicial enquiries that might implicate "the forces of order". Faced with this refusal, Mrs. Akkoç had filed a complaint to the European Court on 1 November 1993. Furious, the Turkish police arrested her in February 1994 and kept her in detention for ten days, during which time Mrs. Akkoç was savagely tortured. Stripped naked, beaten up, subjected to electric shocks, plunged into icy cold water then into boiling water. She was also exposed to blinding lights and deafening "music". Her torturers demanded that she withdraw her complaint against the Turkish government.

A woman of courage and conviction, she repeated the offence by filing a fresh complaint against Turkey for "torture by members of the state forces".

In its verdict, coming seven years after the events, the European Court recognised the reality of the torture and considered that the Turkish authorities had not carried out effective enquiries into the circumstances of Mr. Akkoç's murder. Without being able to establish formal proof that agents of the State had been implicated in this murder, the

Court noted "*the tendency of the Turkish authorities to impute the responsibility for political violence to the PKK*". It also noted that in similar cases that occurred at the same period in this Kurdish region, the Turkish Public Prosecutor omitted "*to enquire into complaints by people who affirmed the implication of police or security forces in illegal acts and had attributed responsibility for incidents on the PKK in the bases of the flimsiest of evidence*".

The European Court awarded the plaintiff the sum of £35,000 (59,049 euros) material damages, £40,000 moral damages and £13,648.80 costs.

On the same day, in a second case, Ankara was also found guilty of torture.

Following enquiries carried out in the Kurdish city of Badman and neighbouring towns between 1998 and 2000, the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Parliament has just made public a report packed with unbearable testimonies by victims of torture. According to this report, people placed in detention were subjected, as a matter of routine, to the same tortures. The routine consisted of "making them visit historic and tourist sites of the country" with the type of music and torture adapted to each stage of this peculiar form of tourism. The torturers seemed to have a particular predilection for a march of Ottoman Janissaries about to leave to fight the European infidels. *Mehter Marsi!* since all the Kurdish victims stated to the Commission that they had have been to the Commission that their tortures

had taken place accompanied by this tune played full blast, their torturers renewing their efforts with renewed vigour at each recurrence of the well known chorus "*March on – the Turkish soldier never retreats*".

Presided by Mrs. Pikinsut, an M.P. for Mr. Ecevit's DSP party, which can hardly be suspected of pro-Kurdish sympathies, the Commission has recorded a body of evidence that shows that the police are assured of immunity, that the courts, fully aware of the torture has nevertheless sentenced the accused on the sole basis of depositions extracted under torture.

Referring to this report in its 14 October issue, the daily *Milliyet* quotes the testimony of one of the victims appearing before the Court in Badman. When he rejected all the charges brought against him, the judge told him: "*but you have in fact admitted then in your deposition to the police*", "*I was forced to sign the statement under torture*" the accused said. And the judge reproached him: "*couldn't you stand a couple more days torture?*"

Other torture victims speak about torture methods nicknamed "a voyage in space, the valley of death" etc. That a few of the thousands of victims of torture apply to the European Court for Human Rights and secure a symbolic verdict against Turkey after 7 or 8 years of procedures obviously doesn't worry in the least police in their daily practice of torturing Kurds.

Mrs. Sema Piskinsüt's stand has

displeased the authorities so much that she has been stripped of office. She will be replaced by an extreme right-wing (neo-fascist) member of Parliament.

Here are the reactions of Fatih Altaylı in his editorial of 26 October in the daily paper *Hürriyet*:

"They have found another President for the Commission by publishing an advertisement in the press. The qualifications required are the following: He must be deaf, so as to be unable to hear the cries of the victims of torture; he must have enough savoir-faire to warn police stations that are to be visited in advance. He must be stupid enough to believe that if, despite the warning of his visit, a policeman is found

using the falaka he is merely carding cotton. He must be immune to electric shocks so as not to be electrocuted when shaking hands with victims. He must himself be a retired policeman so as to first submit his reports not to Parliament or the press but to his "boss" Tantan " (Editor's Note: Minister of the Interior). In this way Turkey will be freed from the shame of torture. We will thus have taken a further step towards conforming to the E.U. Sema (Mrs. Piskinsüt) will go away and accusations of torture will cease. As for those incidents provoked by the evil eye after interrogations or being held in detention, a fresh Parliamentary Commission for protection against the evil eye will be formed. They will probably put a Fazilet (Islamic) member of Parliament at its head".

AS WELL AS...

• THREE KURDISH VILLAGERS KILLED BY TURKISH SOLDIERS IN HAKKARI: THEIR BODIES HAVE DISAPPEARED AND THE SOLE SURVIVOR HAS BEEN ARRESTED. Three Kurdish villagers, permitted by the Hakkari gendarmerie to go back to their village, forcibly evacuated some years ago, in order to harvest nuts, were killed on 22 October by Turkish soldiers from the neighbouring province of Sirnak. (**Editor's Note:** According to official statistics, over 3,400 Kurdish villages have been forcibly evacuated by the Turkish Army). A fourth, wounded, victim, the sole survivor of the operation, was

arrested and the bodies of the three killed have not been returned to their families. Macit Pirusbeyoglu, Motherland Party Member of Parliament for Hakkari, has consequently approached the Minister of the Interior to ask that the victims at least be given a decent burial – but the bodies have disappeared and their families accuse the soldiers of hiding them deliberately.

Mehmet Kurt, Cevher Orhan, Salih Orhan and Kemal Tekin, formerly living in the village of Marunis (Yoncali in Turkish) in Hakkari Province, had been 'displaced' in 1993 to Xacort, in Van Province by the Turkish Army. Having secured authorisation from the Central

Gendarmerie of Hakkari, the four villagers had arrived at their native village on 19 October to harvest nuts from their orchards. Some soldiers, stationed in the region, then opened fire, in broad daylight, and killed three of the villagers on the spot – M. Kurt, C. Orhan and S. Orhan. K. Tekin, wounded, sought refuge with some "village protectors" of the Beytushebat Pirusi tribe who handed him over to the Sirnak squads. Their M.P., Mr. Pituzbeuoglu, denounced the fact that Kemal Tekin, was forced by the Sirnak soldiery to state that the massacre had been perpetrated by the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK).

The Human Rights defence organisations sharply criticised this massacre and Sabahattin Savagci, People's Democratic Party (HADEP) official in Hakkari stated : *"We think that initiatives like the Istanbul-Hakkari artistic bridge (Editor's Note: this was a cultural initiative take by Kurdish artists, originally from Hakkari, with the additional aim of making the region better known and so more dynamic and peaceful) contribute to achieving democracy and peace. But just after this initiative, that spoke out for peace, such a massacre shows us that there are still powerful forces in Turkey working against peace. This kind of provocative action will not succeed in shaking our faith in peace. Moreover, we have no news about the victim who escaped wounded from this operation. Why is he being kept so long in detention when the legal maximum period is long past? I don't think that he can emerge easy from there – nor quite unscathed".*

• 101 MEMBERS OF THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF THE KURDISH M.P.s AND THE LIFTING OF INTERDICTIONS ON THE KURDISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE. On 20 October, 101 US Congressmen supported Resolution 461 of the House of Representatives, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Leyla Zana, Orhan Dogan, Hatip Dicle and Selim Sadak, four imprisoned Kurdish Members of Parliament and also demanded the lifting of all interdictions on the Kurdish language and culture.

In 1999, 153 US Congressmen had signed a letter to President Clinton asking him to work for the release of the Kurdish Representatives. The Turkish authorities had not given way to the request but had offered Leyla Zana the possibility of being released if she applied on medical grounds. Leyla Zana refused to be used for in this manipulative way and had preferred to share the fate of her colleagues. The four M.P.s are thus still in Ankara's Ulucanlar Prison.

• 345 IRAQI KURDS SEEK REFUGE IN ITALY, 6 OTHERS FOUND DEAD BY THE ROADSIDE. On 11 October, 462 illegal immigrants, including 345 Iraqi Kurds, abandoned in the middle of the sea by a Turkish cargo boat, were able to land in the Italian port of Otranto. The crew of this old Turkish cargo boat, the *Diler*, had abandoned its passengers to their fate some 20

miles of the Italian coast. Spotted by the Italian coast guards, the boat was steered to Otranto by an Italian crew. Its exhausted passengers were led to a reception centre to be identified and treated.

The Italian Minister of the Interior, Enzo Bianco, stated that the unfortunate passengers, nearly half of whom were women and children "*were doomed to a certain death*". According to him, the smugglers belonged to "*one of the most dangerous criminal organisations and are unbelievably violent*".

They had been embarked at Izmir, in Turkey, and had paid \$2,500 per adult and half that per child, for the journey. The embarkation at Izmir took place in the full sight and knowledge of the Turkish Police and Port Authorities and, doubtless, with their complicity. One of the strongest aims of Turkish policy in the region is to have as few Kurds there as possible. Moreover, this large scale racket brings in a great deal on money to the various Turkish official bodies. Hence the wish formulated by Mr. Bianco, for "*better cooperation with the Turkish police*" to dam this flood of refugees is likely to remain a pious wish, on a par with the lack of haste shown by the Turkish authorities for police cooperation against the drug trade which, in good years or bad, earns the Turkish "grey" economy between \$ 35 and 40 billion.

Elsewhere, the Italian police found, beside a road near the Albanian border, the bodies of 6 asphyxiated Iraqi Kurds who,

most probably had arrived from Greece in a heavy goods vehicle. After crossing the border, the driver had just thrown the corpses of his illegal passengers onto the roadside.

• THE DIYARBEKIR STATE SECURITY COURT IS ACCUSING A HADEP MAYOR OF HAVING PRONOUNCED THE WORD "KURDISTAN" IN AN INTERVIEW. The trial of Cihan Sincar, HADEP mayor of the town of Kiziltepe, accused of endangering the territorial integrity of Turkey, under Article 8 of the Turkish Anti-Terrorist Act, began on 24 October before the Diyarbakir State Security Court (DGM). She is accused of having pronounced the word "Kurdistan" in the course of an interview given on 12 April to the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter*, but also of having stated that villagers had fled after Turkish troops had devastated their villages.

The interest of the trial was two fold since not only is it another case of a woman, directly elected by the people, being accused for spoken remarks, but also by the fact that the Swedish journalist of the paper involved, Per Jonsson, was cited as a defence witness. When questioned, he stated that he could not really recall whether Mrs. Sincar had actually used the word "Kurdistan" in the course of a two and a half hour interview which took place through an interpreter, but that, for him, it was as natural to call that region of Turkey "Kurdistan" as it was to call the North of Sweden "Lapland"

and the west of Turkey "Thrace". The President of the Court then asked him "Did Cihan Sincar state that the State had destroyed 3,000 Kurdish villages?" Whereupon the journalist retorted that he was alone responsible for that piece of information and that only those remarks in quotation marks were attributable to Mrs. Sincar. The verdict will be announced on 21 November.

• **AKIN BIRDAL IS AGAIN ACCUSED OF A "CRIME OF OPINION"**. On 23 October, the Istanbul State Security Court initiated proceedings against Akin Birdal, Vice-President of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) and former President of the Turkish Association for Human Rights (IHD) for "incitement to hatred" under Article 112 of the Turkish Penal Code. The Istanbul Public Prosecutor's office accuses Mr. Birdal because of remarks he made in the course of a discussion panel in Bremerhaven (Germany) on the subject: "Human Rights in Europe – is Turkey the E.U.'s new partner?"

The 'damning' remarks were the following: "*Sezer did not want to open a debate on the Armenian question by declaring the one must leave it to "historians and to history". No one is unaware of what was done to the Armenians. Turkey should apologise for the Armenian genocide and harm done to other minorities in the course of Turkish history. Ismail Cem (Editor's Note: Turkish Foreign Minister) is Jewish – he should (be able to) say so*". Akin Birdal risks another three years in prison..."

• **DISSATISFIED, THE TURKISH ARMED FORCES CHIEF OF STAFF POSTPONES HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES**. On 4 October, Turkish anger and frustration increased its pressure on the United States, its closest ally, after a Congress Commission had adopted a Bill recognising the Armenian genocide.

The Chief of Staff of the all-powerful Turkish Army, General Huseyin Kivrikoglu, canceled a bilateral visit, planned for mid-October, following the adoption of this Bill which describes as genocide the massacres of Armenians perpetrated Under the Ottoman Empire between 1915 and 1923m indicated the General Staff's spokesman.

In a communiqué, the Turkish Foreign Ministry regretted that the "messages" sent out by Turkey, after the adoption of the proposal in sub-commission, had "not been sufficiently understood". Ankara warned that the passing of the Bill by the House of Representatives would have the most serious repercussions on their relations, would aggravate tension in the Caucasus as well as between Ankara and Erevan, that have no diplomatic relations.

The Turkish press was icy: "*Our worst fear has been confirmed*" headlined the popular daily *Sabah*. "*The expected scandal had broken out*" stressed *Milliyet*, while *Yenibinyil* headlined "*The Armenian trap*".

The big circulation daily *Hurriyet* highlighted the

"common sense" of the French Senate, which, on the same day, rejected the placing of a similar Bill on its agenda: "*Electoral calculations in the United States, common sense in France*".

The Armenians affirm that a million and a half Armenians were killed between 1915 and 1917 in a genocide under the Young Turk regime. Turkey talks of 300 to 500 thousands of deaths during the massacres and deportations but refutes the thesis of genocide. It claims that Turks also fell victim to Armenians, some of whom collaborated with the Russian enemy. The Armenian question is a taboo subject that cannot be discussed in Turkey, where any attempt in France or the United States to recognise a genocide is blamed on Erevan.

Thus the Director of the Research Centre on Turco-Armenian relations and genocide, which has just come into existence at Erzurum (just on 4 October) has indicated that he was going to work "*on the genocide that the Armenians tried to perpetrate against the Turks*".

The US State Department, for its part, is doing all it can to stop the resolution going before Congress, stressing the geostrategic importance of Turkey, faithful ally of NATO in a troubled region, neighboring the Caucasus, Iraq and Iran. Whatever might be the tensions between the two countries, it must not put at risk their strategic partnership: the Turkish Foreign Ministry has warned that any riposte to the adoption of the genocide Bill by the House must "*not endanger*

Turkish national interests, nor play the game of Armenia and Armenian circles but must take into account the special relations between Ankara and Washington".

• **TANSU ÇILLER CALLS FOR THE EXPULSION OF ALL ARMENIANS FROM TURKEY.** The Turkish political establishment and media continue their crusade against the proposed resolution on the Armenian genocide before the US House of Representatives.

The Turkish government has let it be understood that, in the event of this resolution being passed there would be retaliatory measures, such as repudiating fuel and power contracts signed with American companies, amounting to \$11 billion, forbidding the use of the Incirlik air base by US and British Air Forces for their operations over Iraqi territory, the normalising their relations with Saddam Hussein and the excluding American firms from bidding for helicopter gunships. Washington must be trembling in its shoes!...

The opposition leader. Mrs. Çiller, has gone even further. She is demanding that, in the event of the resolution being passed, Turkey expel all its Armenian citizens to Armenia and that it make the latter country pay dearly by more effective economic measures – and, no doubt, military ones as well,

The 30,000 Armenian survivors of the genocide whose presence is still tolerated in Istanbul are particularly exposed to being

used as hostages. Out of sheer magnanimity, Mrs. Çiller is prepared to give them an opportunity of proving their loyalty to Turkey by each personally signing a letter to the US Congress which denounces the intrigues of anti-Turkish circles which, as the instigation of Armenia, *"want to destroy the climate of peace, stability and fraternity that reigns in our country"*.

This letter was published *in extenso* in the 18 October issue of the daily paper *Hürriyet*.

This racist and war mongering stand by Mrs. Çiller has, of course, led to no legal proceedings in the country that, nevertheless, sentenced former Prime Minister N. Erbakan to a years jail for *"incitement to race hatred"* for a simple sentence in a speech: *"If the official ideology affirms 'Happy is he who can say he is a Turk', how can we prevent our Kurdish brothers saying that they are proud to be Kurds?"*

Similarly, the daily calls by newspapers, politicians, "mothers of martyrs" calling on those Kurds who refuse to be assimilated, *"who do not adore Atatürk, who do not love our flag, to go away, to leave the country, including the South East (i.e. Kurdistan) which we Turks have conquered by force of arms"* which are broadcast by state and privately owned TV stations are not considered to be "incitements to race hatred" and so give rise to no prosecutions.

• **EVEN THE TURKISH POPULATION CENSUS FIGURES ARE FAKED.** Fraud or swindling affect all

areas of Turkish political and economic life. A few weeks ago a pillar of the establishment, Kamuran Inan, former Foreign Minister and at present President of the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Commission denounced Turkish official statistics. And now fraud is seen to affect even an area as fundamental as the Turkish population census. Indeed, on 28 October, the Turkish daily *Hürriyet* denounced, on its front page, the fraudulent character of the 22 October census with the headline "A shock: the Turkish population is 71,9 million – 5 million extra people have been registered". The daily describes the census as a "historic swindle" and states that Tunca Toskay, Minister of State responsible for the case, has summoned the demographic experts and asked them to redo their homework.

Ertugrul Ozkök, Editor in Chief of the paper continued thus: *"The population of Turkey was 56,473,000 in 1990, seven years later the figure was said to be 62,865,000. Which means that the Turkish population had increased by 6 million in seven years (...). Today, three years later is supposed to have increased by 9 million ± which is impossible!"* The paper states bluntly that there has been organised fraud – state municipal subsidies are granted in proportion to the localities population, 35 million per head – and stresses that the final results will only be published after checking. Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit has been informed of the matter.

• **AN INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN FOR THE FREEING OF ESBER YAGMURDERELI.** The

condition of the blind Turkish writer-lawyer, who has already spent 17 of his 55 years in Turkish dungeons for crimes of opinion is arousing increasing concern in international public opinion.

On 29 September, the Bordeaux Bar Association, in the course of a moving ceremony at the National School of Magistrates, in the presence of a number of public figures, awarded its prestigious Ludovic Tardieux Human Rights Prize to Mr. Yagmurdereli's son.

On 13 October, 11 Western NGOs, including the International Federation of Journalists, Human Rights Watch, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, PEN International, the US and Canadian PENs sent a joint letter to the Turkish Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, asking him "*most forcibly to decree, on the occasion of the Turkish National Holiday of 29 October, a vast amnesty to show the Turkish Government's determination to conform to international standards of Human Rights and to the principles of free expression and to immediately and*

unconditionally release Esber Yagmurdereli from prison".

The signatories remind him that E. Yagmurdereli "*blind since the age of ten, continued his campaign to make known the fate of the Kurds and other Human Rights violations in Turkey, all through his trial and imprisonment, despite the personal dangers to himself, and has won respect and admiration both in Turkey and abroad. So long as Yagmurdereli's imprisonment continues, so long will the outrage grow in the world community of Human Rights and of artists*". Over 250 writers, from a dozen countries have signed an international appeal for the release of Mr. Yagmurdereli. Amongst the signatories of this appeal to the Turkish Prime Minister are strong contingents of American, British, Scandinavian and Czech writers.

During his official visit to Turkey, the Czech President made himself spokesman for this international mobilisation, by asking the Turkish President for the rapid release of the jailed writer-lawyer.

• **A SPANISH DOCUMENTARY ON LEYLA ZANA BLASTED BY THE**

TURKISH PRESS. A documentary film entitled *La Espalda del Mundo* (The worlds back) made by a Peruvian film director living in Spain with the help of Spanish television company TVE and of a number of Human Rights NGOs including CILDEKT and the Kurdish Institute, has just won the Critics' Prize at the San Sebastian International Film Festival.

This documentary, which outlines the life of Leyla Zana, of her husband, Mehdi Zana, former mayor of Diyarbakir who, after spending 17 years in Turkish prisons, now lives in exile in Sweden, has attracted the wrath of the Turkish press. Sounding the alarm, the daily *Hurriyet*, in its 16 October issue, describes the documentary as "*hostile to Turkey*" and as "*a second Midnight Express*" (after the well known Hollywood film on life in Turkish prisons). Being unable to apply Turkish censorship so far into Western Europe, the Turkish press is playing the old tune of "*the country is in danger*" to mobilise its readers to send letters of protest to the Spanish representatives.

Vol Paris-Bagdad: tout le monde descend

Les pressions américaines auraient empêché le décollage.

Décollera ou décollera pas? Le suspense a duré, vendredi à l'aéroport de Roissy, toute la matinée et le début de l'après-midi. Finalement, la longue attente a été vaine. L'avion privé affrété par trois organisations humanitaires françaises pour embarquer à son bord une centaine de personnalités françaises et européennes dans le but de briser l'embargo aérien, imposé de facto depuis dix ans à l'Irak, n'a pas pu partir pour Bagdad.

«La main dans le sac». Cet échec a suscité la colère des organisateurs et des hommes politiques qui comptaient être du voyage. Tous ont accusé Washington d'avoir exercé des pressions pour obtenir l'annulation du vol. *«Cette fois, l'impérialisme américain a été pris la main dans le sac et nous allons pouvoir expliquer aux opinions publiques comment se déploie l'influence de l'impérialisme américain sur des gouvernements européens réputés libres et indépendants»*, lance la députée RPR Roselyne Bachelot. Le père Yves Buannic, président de l'ONG Enfants du monde-Droits de l'homme, va plus loin en dénonçant *«la lâcheté du gouvernement français et la responsabilité des autorités belges dans l'échec de notre opération de solidarité avec le peuple irakien»*,



Roselyne Bachelot et l'un des organisateurs du vol, Subhi Toma.

victime d'une des plus grandes injustices de ce siècle».

C'est un avion de la compagnie belge Brussels International Airline qui aurait dû assurer le vol. *«Je suis formel. Un accord avait été conclu avec elle. Or elle l'a dénoncé jeudi soir vers minuit»*, affirme un des organisateurs. *«Les autorités belges lui ont refusé l'autorisation de décoller»*, ajoute le père Buannic. Contact est aussitôt repris avec une compagnie russe, Noulkovski Avialini, qui avait déjà été sollicitée. Mais celle-ci va prétendre que la France lui refuse un couloir aérien pour se poser à Paris. *«Mensonges»*, réplique-t-on au Quai d'Orsay. Il y aura encore deux autres compagnies, belge et italienne, sur les rangs. En vain. Les parlementaires européens se seront

déplacés pour rien.

Pour l'ensemble des participants, aucun doute que les pressions de Washington ont effrayé les compagnies aériennes. *«Le monde entier est aux ordres des Etats-Unis et se plie à ce qu'il décide»*, accuse le père Jean-Marie Benjamin, un des responsables de l'opération. Pour l'ancien ministre des Affaires étrangères Claude Cheysson, qui devait être du vol, *«on peut penser que le gouvernement américain a fait savoir à ces compagnies que leurs droits de trafic seraient remis en cause»*. C'est sans doute vrai. On sait que la Grèce et la Turquie ont refusé le survol de leur territoire à l'avion pour Bagdad.

Pagaille. Reste que l'opération donne l'impression d'une singulière pagaille qui n'a pu

que profiter à ceux qui, au sein du gouvernement français, sont hostiles à l'initiative. *«En matière d'organisation, la compétence de ces ONG n'a pas été brillante. Pour notre part, nous n'avons pas cherché à empêcher ce vol. Nous avons laissé la semaine dernière un avion français s'envoler pour Bagdad [lire Libération du 22-23 septembre]. Ce serait nous déjuger que de nous opposer à celui-là. Nous sommes prêts à tout moment à procéder à une notification de ce vol au Comité des sanctions de l'ONU dès lors que les organisateurs nous auront donné les documents requis»*, indique-t-on au Quai d'Orsay. Faute de pouvoir décoller, les participants ont pu se servir de Roissy comme tribune pour dénoncer cette *«monstruosité américaine»* qu'est l'embargo. Les parlementaires français impliqués dans l'opération s'honoreraient cependant à être moins bornés dans leur appréciation de l'Irak. On a vu Roselyne Bachelot apostropher des opposants kurdes, venus timidement distribuer des tracts, leur promettant la démocratie en Irak après la fin de l'embargo. Le gazage par Saddam Hussein du village kurde d'Hallabja, qui a fait 5000 morts, c'était le 16 mars 1988. Douze ans avant l'embargo. **JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN**

Military in Turkey Shows Its Weight

Generals Openly Promote Agenda

By Douglas Frantz
New York Times Service

ANKARA — For four centuries the imperial council of the Ottoman Empire met in the divan at Topkapi Palace in Istanbul to debate the affairs of

the far-flung realm. Shielded behind a grilled window above the tiled chamber, the sultan observed the proceedings and dictated his instructions by summoning the grand vizier.

The modern Turkish Parliament meets in a contem-

porary stone-and-wood office building in Ankara and no sultan oversees its deliberations. In the capital of the Turkish republic, the ruler's role is occupied by the generals, who wield their power from behind the scenes.

When Parliament convened Sunday amid pomp and speeches, the influence of the military was evident on two of the most significant items on the legislative agenda: one authorizing the dismissal of civil servants suspected of Islamic sympathies and the other easing restrictions on freedom of speech.

Turkey's generals regard themselves as guardians of the 77-year-old secular state and a bastion against Islamic fundamentalism. Though the military engineered three coups in the last four decades, its leaders prefer to exercise their authority quietly.

But the cloak fell away in late August when the senior commander, General Huseyin Kivrikoglu, demanded at a public ceremony that thousands of Islamic government employees be sacked. The general warned that the military would "monitor" Parliament's actions.

Western diplomats were

not as surprised by the general's sentiments as they were by his decision to announce them in public. In recent interviews, diplomats cautioned that Turkey's application for membership in the European Union will founder unless the military's influence is checked.

While the power of the armed forces in public affairs may disturb Westerners accustomed to a politically neutral military, it is no surprise to Turks. The country's military has a high degree of authority over civil matters and autonomy over military affairs under the constitution, which was written in 1982 by the generals who had seized power two years earlier.

The generals have interpreted their mandate as authority to set parameters of

acceptable government behavior and remain in the barracks as long as the civilian leaders observe the boundaries.

"The state is a bus, the people are the passengers and the politicians are the driver," said Dogu Ergil, a political science professor at Ankara University. "When the reckless driver starts weaving, the army acts as the road barrier. Instead of rolling over the cliff, the bus hits the barrier."

From the military's vantage point, the inroads by Islamic-oriented civil servants constitute a dangerous weaving. When President Ahmet Necdet Sezer twice refused to sign a decree authorizing the mass dismissal of government employees this summer, General Kivrikoglu stepped in with the thinly veiled de-

mand that Parliament pass a law allowing the purge.

Human rights advocates argue that the authority will result in a witch hunt because thousands of employees will be dismissed without a hearing. Similar legislation has so far failed to pass the fractious Parliament.

On a quieter level, Turkish politicians said the generals have also warned the governing coalition not to go too far in softening laws that make it a crime to make speeches and write articles that can be interpreted as inflaming ethnic or religious differences, advocating an Islamic regime or insulting the military. Here again the interests of the military will collide with legislators who favor more democracy and are concerned about winning EU membership.

When the legislators return in 10 days after electing their parliamentary leaders, they will face other tough issues, particularly on the economic side. Under prodding from the International Monetary Fund, Turkey has been fighting to reduce inflation and sell more state-owned businesses to the private sector. Parliament must approve a stringent new budget and a law to sell three state-owned banks.

In addition, hundreds of laws and regulations must be changed to conform with European Union standards to stay on the membership path. For the same reason, an effort is expected to abolish the death penalty, a proposal that has already generated dissension within the three-party governing coalition.

IRAN

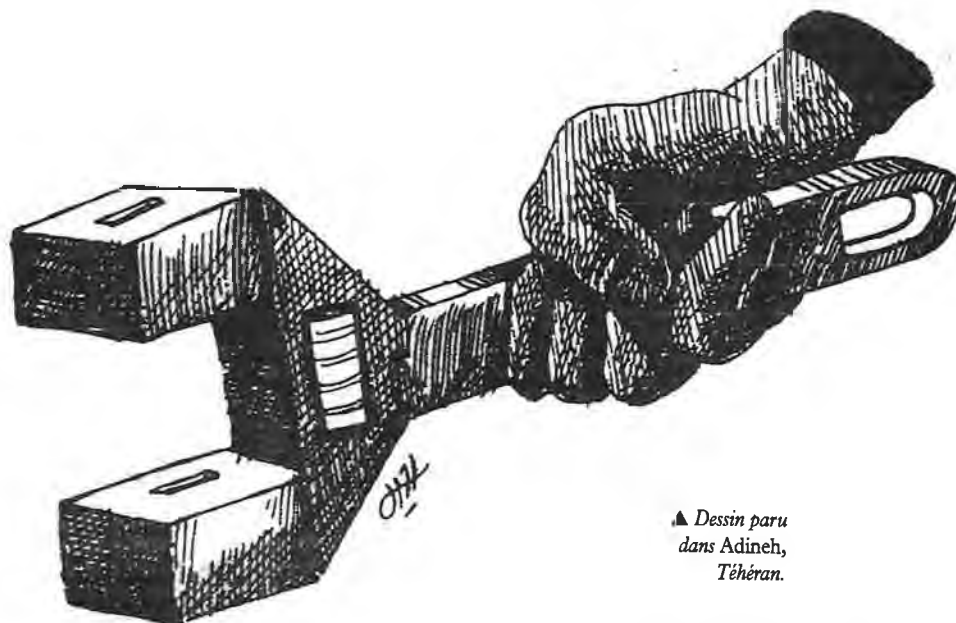
Une économie en peau de chagrin

Des exportations de tapis en chute libre, un revenu par habitant en régression..., l'Iran est de plus en plus pauvre. Seule la rente pétrolière permet de masquer la réalité – en attendant des réformes qui redonneront confiance aux investisseurs étrangers.

KAYHAN
Londres

Le 2 Khordad [23 mai], date de l'arrivée de Mohammad Khatami à la présidence, n'a pas été porteur d'un changement significatif dans la politique économique de l'Iran. Au-delà des propos généraux sur la justice sociale et la nécessité de réduire la dépendance pétrolière, sa politique économique est restée plutôt ambiguë. Certes, son projet de "mise en ordre économique", proposé en 1998, a exposé clairement les difficultés qui minent depuis toujours l'économie, à savoir l'enjeu de la nationalisation et de la dépendance pétrolière. Néanmoins, il est resté inefficace sur le plan des solutions concrètes.

Les réformes incontournables – qui sont à l'ordre du jour depuis quinze ans – rencontrent aujourd'hui de plus en plus d'obstacles. Ainsi, l'expérience iranienne montre à quel point toute réforme du champ économique demeure tributaire du cadre politique et social. Le climat politique iranien n'inspire guère confiance : il n'offre pas la sécurité nécessaire à la mobilisation



▲ Dessin paru
dans Adineh,
Téhéran.

des capitaux et à l'accroissement de la production ; la diplomatie iranienne ne parvient que difficilement à attirer les acteurs internationaux nécessaires au développement du pays.

Les statistiques officielles dévoilent le déclin spectaculaire de l'économie en vingt ans. L'industrie, l'agriculture et les secteurs traditionnels de l'activité économique en souffrent,

à tel point que Issa Kalentari, le ministre de l'Agriculture, évoque ouvertement la menace d'une disparition pure et simple de l'agriculture iranienne et dénonce les politiques incohérentes des diverses administrations. Quant aux experts du Conseil international des céréales, ils prévoyaient déjà en 1999 que l'Iran serait, avec 8,5 millions tonnes, à la

tête des pays importateurs de blé.

PAS DE RENOUVEAU ÉCONOMIQUE SANS RÉFORME POLITIQUE

En outre, depuis deux décennies, le pays a perdu une partie non négligeable des parts de marché à l'exportation de tapis (principal produit exporté après le pétrole). Shariatmadari, le ministre du Commerce, a déclaré en 1999 que "la part iranienne dans le commerce mondial du tapis, qui, en 1974, représentait 41 % du marché, n'était plus que de 31 % en 1996, tandis que des pays comme l'Inde, la Chine et la Turquie ont vu leurs exportations augmenter durant cette période". Ainsi, les recettes d'exportations, évaluées à 1,6 milliard de dollars en 1994, ont chuté à 566 millions de dollars en cinq ans : cette baisse trouve son origine dans un système de production et une stratégie commerciale dépassés et inadaptés aux marchés modernes.

Selon l'avertissement lancé par le vice-ministre de l'Economie, Massoud Nili, "les prévisions et les statistiques montrent qu'à ce rythme économique le revenu annuel par habitant en Iran continuera à baisser et sera équivalent à 1/7 de celui de la Malaisie, à 1/20 de celui

de la Corée du Sud et à 1/4 de celui de la Turquie dans dix ans". Que faire face à ce déclin ? Nili répond ainsi : "La seule chose qui pourrait freiner ce processus serait un développement économique accéléré permettant d'attirer les investissements étrangers, une consolidation de la production et des lois adaptées aux investissements."

Certains économistes considèrent que ces prévisions sont malheureusement d'ores et déjà une réalité. L'étude du mensuel *Eghtessad-e Iran* ["L'Economie de l'Iran"] publiée en hiver 2000 montre que le revenu annuel par habitant (évalué en dollars courants) est passé de 1 705 dollars en 1976 à 683 dollars en 1998. Nul ne peut douter que l'économie iranienne a perdu des occasions déterminantes depuis vingt ans et s'est appauvrie d'une manière significative.

Malgré ces échecs, la naissance d'une nouvelle pensée économique dans le pays représente un facteur encourageant. L'expérience de notre économie fermée et nationalisée ainsi que l'effondrement du socialisme ont servi de leçons : ils ont fait découvrir à l'élite de la société la nécessité d'une production de richesses matérielles et de la continuité d'un développement

durable. La diffusion générale des débats économiques et l'ouverture des experts aux idées innovatrices pourront contribuer aux réformes structurelles de l'économie nationale. Il est toutefois évident que le renouveau économique structurel n'est possible que s'il est accompagné d'une réforme générale des structures politiques.

Fereydoun Khavandi*

* Economiste.

■ Grand Satan

En Iran, le rétablissement des relations diplomatiques avec le Grand Satan américain semble bénéficier du soutien de la majorité de la population. Un sondage récent publié par *Al Hayat*, effectué sur un échantillon de 1 389 personnes, montre que 55,7 % des Iraniens

sont en faveur de relations normales avec les Etats-Unis, 29,7 % sont contre et seulement 14,6 % n'ont pas d'opinion. Les conservateurs, tout en étant sur le fond plutôt favorables à cette perspective, critiquent en public la validité de ces chiffres.

IRAK

Des avions civils contre l'embargo

Les sanctions imposées depuis dix ans à l'Irak sont en train de vaciller. Et leur abandon ressemblerait fort à une défaite pour les Etats-Unis, estime *Al Hayat*.

AL HAYAT
Londres

Jusqu'à présent, les capitales concernées n'avaient tout simplement pas prêté attention au fait que les résolutions de l'ONU n'interdisaient pas explicitement les vols civils non commerciaux. Mais les circonstances sont devenues favorables pour une "violation" de ce qui n'était qu'implicitement prohibé. Et, puis, rien dans les textes n'interdit spécifiquement ces vols, le Conseil de sécurité ne trouvera pas de justifications pour empêcher les pays qui le souhaitent de renouer des relations avec l'Irak. La seule chose prévisible, c'est que les Etats-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne exprimeront leur condamnation et leur colère. Mais cela ne suffira pas à obtenir que le Conseil vote une nouvelle résolution interdisant ce type d'ouverture vers Bagdad.

La vérité est que cette "violation" n'aurait pu se produire si Washington avait su définir clairement ses objectifs et la finalité de l'embargo. Son maintien indéfini et sans

but précis ne pouvait mener qu'à un échec. Londres et Washington ont voulu ignorer, tout au long de ces années, les répercussions de leur politique, particulièrement dans les sociétés occidentales. Leur entêtement hautain les a empêchés de reconnaître que la tragédie vécue par le peuple irakien a ému l'opinion publique internationale. Il n'a pas toujours été très rentable de souligner que le régime irakien "grossissait" cette tragédie, qu'il l'exploitait en en faisant son fond de commerce ou encore qu'il transformait son peuple en bouclier humain derrière lequel il se réfugiait.

Tout cela est vrai, mais insuffisant pour convaincre l'opinion de ne pas chercher à savoir ce qui se passe vraiment en Irak. Une fois la vérité connue, elle a alors compris que cette tragédie pesait sur les épaules et la conscience de l'humanité tout entière. C'est cette même opinion publique occidentale qui avait appuyé la coalition multinationale formée pour libérer le Koweït, qui avait condamné les pratiques de Saddam Hussein et qui ne cesse de dire depuis des années que l'embargo a perdu sa raison d'être. S'il y avait des raisons d'en espérer des résultats, ils seraient apparus depuis longtemps. Il aurait fallu admettre les réalités et ne pas se contenter de ran-

ger le diable Saddam Hussein dans sa boîte jusqu'à la fin des temps. Ce type de raisonnement fait long feu en politique. Au point que certains aujourd'hui osent dire, comme le sénateur Edward Kennedy, que "c'est nous qui sommes dans la boîte".

Les Etats-Unis ne savent plus ce qu'ils sont censés faire. Mais maintenir les sanctions alors qu'une rébellion internationale se dessine pourrait mener à une situation pire qu'une défaite.

La logique des sanctions se fondait originellement sur un but politique : un changement de régime à Bagdad. Or il est devenu patent qu'aucun changement n'advient du fait des sanctions ou même comme conséquence indirecte de ces sanctions. Voir des avions se poser à Bagdad suscite chez les Irakiens des sentiments contradictoires : d'une part l'espoir d'une évolution, quelle qu'elle soit, et d'autre part une profonde amertume face à ce qu'ils considèrent comme des victoires pour le régime. Mais on ne leur demande que d'attendre encore, avant que ces "triomphes" ne se reflètent positivement dans leur quotidien.

Abd al-Wahhab Badrakhan

L'Europa guarda

LA DIASPORA CURDA DALLA TURCHIA E DALL'IRAQ

di CARLO BOLDRINI*

Da più di due anni ormai l'Europa conosce direttamente la nuova diaspora dei curdi. Il ritmo costante degli arrivi dall'Iraq e dalla Turchia testimonia la fuga dalla repressione e dalla miseria che da tempo documento su queste pagine. Fonti ufficiali curde (IMK) denunciano che nelle province curde di Turchia il reddito pro capite è metà di quello nazionale turco. Milioni di curdi (in Turchia ne risiedono fra i 12 e i 15) che sono stati forzatamente evacuati dall'esercito turco sarebbero desiderosi di ritornare alle loro case ma le loro attività agricole e d'allevamento sono state distrutte in larga parte dalla politica di "terra bruciata" condotta per anni dallo Stato turco nella sua attività d'antiguerriglia contro i gruppi armati del PKK. Nel corso degli ultimi quindici anni "più di seimila insediamenti sarebbero stati distrutti e circa un milione di persone è adesso nelle maggiori città dell'area" (fonte IMK) con conseguenti enormi problemi urbani e sociali per le medesime (Diyarbakir, per esempio, ha triplicato la popolazione residente). Nessuna delle nu-

merose promesse del governo turco di rilanciare l'economia è stata mantenuta; la causa ufficiale sarebbe "per insufficiente numero di pubblici ufficiali di guardia ai villaggi". L'esercito turco ha cominciato ad ostentare un "progetto di villaggi centralizzati" nei quali più villaggi limitrofi dovrebbero venire raggruppati e ricostruiti sotto la supervisione della polizia, con chiari intenti segregazionisti, ma nessuno sforzo è stato fatto per ricondurre i rifugiati nei loro originari insediamenti e per ridare loro bestiame e sementi per ricominciare le loro attività di base. Dei nove "pacchetti per lo sviluppo" presentati dal governo turco nessuno è stato realizzato né è stato indicato alcun finanziamento. I sindaci delle province a forte popolazione curda denunciano che Ankara ha allocato finora poco più dell'1% delle necessità finanziarie delle aree orientali (7,5 trilioni di lire turche contro i necessari 700 trilioni). Chiaramente, per ragioni strutturali (sicurezza, carenze energetiche, lontananza di materie base, alti costi, ecc.) gli eventuali investitori privati sono disincentivati ad inter-

venire. Essi lamentano che gli incentivi governativi per queste aree hanno aiutato solo i mercanti di tappeti turchi. Uno dei più importanti impieghi nella regione è l'apparato di sicurezza imposto a carico finanziario delle comunità con grandi problemi di reimpiego delle oltre 90 mila guardie alle originarie attività, stante il crollo delle attività guerrigliere del PKK.

Per la trentasettesima volta l'Assemblea nazionale turca ha rinnovato lo "stato d'emergenza" nelle province abitate dai curdi il che permette di fatto l'uso della tortura, gli arresti arbitrari, l'esecuzione senza prove certe, il "desaparecidismo" ed ogni attacco ai diritti umani poiché le forze di sicurezza e di polizia hanno ampi poteri (ufficialmente contro i "separatisti") contro ogni "sospettato" come è accaduto finora. Tutto ciò confermerebbe un'azione prevaricatrice verso la popolazione curda da sempre oggetto di persecuzione etnica, culturale, linguistica e d'emarginazione socio-economica fondate sul disconoscimento della sua esistenza come tale.

I curdi esisterebbero cioè in quanto individui singoli di nazionalità turca ma mai in quanto minoranza etnica. Tali vicende ribadirebbero inoltre la vecchia impostazione dell'establishment turco di considerare le province orientali solo per lo sfruttamento d'alcune materie prime come il petrolio e di mantenere nelle province centro-occidentali l'asse della struttura produttiva del Paese.

La condizione umana dei curdi resta difficile anche nella regione irachena a nord del 35° parallelo protetta dall'ONU dal 1991. Qui i residenti continuano a subire gli effetti dell'embargo internazionale contro l'Iraq e quelli del regime di



Bimbe curde orfane dopo la strage di Halabja.

Baghdad in un contesto caratterizzato dalle note enormi distruzioni e dai grandi lutti portati dalla politica genocida di Saddam Hussein e dei suoi accoliti. Tale atteggiamento dell'ONU non è mai stato giustificato. Questi ha istituito la "no-fly zone" per impedire il genocidio dei curdi lasciandoli poi in serie difficoltà socio-economico-sanitarie. Le Nazioni Unite non sono andate oltre l'emergenza. La rimozione dell'embargo internazionale all'enclave curda – ripetutamente sollecitata – poteva e potrebbe essere interpretata come un velato riconoscimento ad un embrione di Stato nazionale e ciò è inammissibile per la Turchia – così importante per la politica statunitense verso lo scacchiere caucasico – ed anche per l'Iran oltre che per Baghdad e Damasco.

A ciò si affiancano altre due gravi questioni. Una è data dai drammatici effetti dei bombardamenti chimici attuati fino al 1991 che, nel tempo, risultano aver irreversibilmente segnato la popolazione anche nelle generazioni future (nascono bambini con gravi deformazioni e malattie che s'aggiungono alle vittime presenti in quegli anni). Un'altra è data dagli ormai famosissimi venti milioni di mine, largamente fabbricate in Italia, dislocate in campi nelle aree di frontiera e lungo le rotabili, che continuano a produrre lutti ed amputazioni a persone d'ogni età (moltissimi i bambini) e rendono molto problematiche le attività agricole e d'allevamento nonché un minimo d'insediamenti produttivi. S'aggiunga la costante, "manovrata", aggressività di Saddam che ha espulso molte decine di migliaia di curdi residenti fuori dalla "no-fly zone" che vi si sono poi riversati aumentando le difficoltà.

A questo punto è bene evidenziare che "l'armamento chimico-biologico iracheno è ancora molto pericoloso" (H. Sharestani, il più noto fisico iracheno in esilio). Dal 1992 l'ONU avrebbe ottenuto la distruzione di 600 tonnellate d'iprite (so-



Patrioti curdi d'Iraq con Carlo Boldrini.

lo il 19% del totale prodotto), di 30 tonnellate di tabun (solo il 12% del totale), di 70 tonnellate di sarin (solo l'8% del totale). Il resto della produzione non sarebbe stato trovato dagli ispettori.

Oggi in Iraq "esisterebbero ben 41 centri idonei a riprodurre armi chimiche e sarebbero riattivabili in 15 giorni". Nulla si sa di ciò che sta accadendo in 35 di questi siti. La produzione biologica è stata di batulinum (paralizzante e letale), di anthrax (letale in pochi giorni), d'aflatoxin (cancerogeno), di ricin (paralizzante), di muffe distruttrici dei cereali.

Fra i centri di produzione ci sono Abu Greb, dove secondo l'ONU furono fatti esperimenti su detenuti politici (tra la fine degli anni '80 e il '95) e su prigionieri di guerra iracheni, e Al Haditha dove si sperimenterebbe ancora dal 1995. L'Iraq ha dichiarato la distruzione di tutte le bombe biologiche e chimiche ma non ha mai provato dove e quando.

Orbene, l'Europa e l'Italia non possono trascurare quanto è avvenuto ed accade in Turchia. Non si può pensare di fermare la diaspora curda verso l'Europa contrattando bilateralmente solo misure di polizia senza confrontarsi con la complessa crisi della Turchia. Visto che "gli

Stati Uniti desiderano la Turchia nell'Unione europea" (Giscard d'Estaing), è troppo ardito proporre un piano per lo sviluppo economico delle regioni orientali sostenuto dall'Unione e contrattato col governo turco ottenendo l'abolizione della pena di morte, il riconoscimento dei diritti delle minoranze, il rispetto dei diritti umani in cambio dell'accesso all'Unione?

L'Europa e l'Italia non possono neppure trascurare la situazione irachena. È così improponibile l'eliminazione dell'embargo almeno sui prodotti sanitari e per l'agricoltura, nonché il sostegno finanziario alla bonifica dei territori dalle mine? Fino ad oggi sono stati rimossi, per carenza di mezzi, solo 100 mila ordigni (così procedendo occorreranno secoli per la bonifica). Cosa aspetta la Camera dei Deputati ad approvare la legge istitutiva del Fondo per lo sminamento umanitario (approvata a gennaio dal Senato) e a sostenere una destinazione parziale per questa realtà?

La diaspora curda è divenuta un problema europeo; di questo passo lo sarà sempre più. Occorre intervenire con efficacia sulle cause più che sugli effetti del fenomeno. ■

* Presidente Associazione Culturale Italia Kurdistan.

Efforts to end PKK/PUK conflict move ahead

- The Kurdistan National Assembly may send a delegation to KDP leader Mesut Barzani
-

Mert Gozde

Ankara - Turkish Daily News

Efforts to call a cease fire to the constant armed clashes between the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) separatist terrorist organization and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) are continuing. Letters have been sent to both factions calling for an end to the fighting, and a delegation of women from Turkey who call themselves the "Kurdish Mothers for Peace" have begun establishing contacts in northern Iraq.

The women, all mothers of deceased PKK separatist terrorists, are reportedly seeking talks in northern Iraq with both Cemil Bayik of the PKK and with PUK leader Dr. Talebani. At the same time, it has been learned that Kurdish circles in Europe together with Kurdish associations and the Kurdistan National Assembly have also been spurred into action to bring this fratricidal conflict to an end.

Should the efforts being shown by the "Kurdish Mothers for Peace" prove futile, then a delegation whose numbers include Kurdistan National Assembly member Musa Kaval and Democracy Party (DEP) Van Deputy Remzi Kartal will go to northern Iraq and reportedly ask Kurdistan Democrat Party (KDP) leader Mesut Barzani for assistance. The delegation, which will travel from Europe to northern Iraq, will ask Barzani to take on the role of negotiator between the two warring sides.

Talebani accused of being Turkey's catspaw

Furthermore, supporters of the PKK and the Peoples' Democracy Party (HADEP) in Turkey are accusing PUK leader Talebani of acting to further Turkey's own interests. These circles maintain that the PUK Peshmerga started attacking the PKK immediately after their leader Talebani returned from having talks with Turkish government officials. They say that Turkey could have offered Talebani a share in the income gathered from Habur customs. As evidence to back up their claims, the PKK and HADEP cite images on Medya TV of a long-haul truck carrying arms and munitions from Turkey to northern Iraq that was involved in an accident at the Habur border crossing.

PKK and HADEP circles, pointing to the weapons and munitions littering the ground around the truck after the accident, assert that the arms in question could well have been provided by the Turkish government for use by Talebani's Peshmerga.

Another reason cited for the PKK/PUK clashes is that the PKK have started trying to win over PUK supporters in northern Iraq. The PUK, fearful their supporters will be won over by the PKK, have demanded the PKK leave the area. However, when they became unable to force the PKK out of the area, the PUK began an armed struggle against the PKK in order to preserve their own existence in northern Iraq.

PKK and HADEP sources maintain that the PKK has never staged any counterattacks and is fighting in self-defense only against the PUK Peshmerga. They say that to date the PKK has lost 13 of its members in clashes with the PUK.

02 October 2000, Copyright © Turkish Daily News

Plus de 20 tués dans des accrochages entre kurdes irakiens et turcs



DUBAI, 2 oct (AFP) - 16h51 - Des accrochages opposaient lundi des combattants de l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK) et des rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) dans le nord de l'Irak, a-t-on appris auprès de l'UPK qui a déploré 22 tués en plus de deux semaines.

Selon un porte-parole de l'UPK, Fouad Maasoum, sa formation a perdu 10 combattants dans de violents échanges de tirs samedi soir avec les rebelles du PKK qui "cherchent à occuper des zones" sous le contrôle de l'UPK, près de la frontière avec l'Iran.

"Dix autres combattants ont été tués le 15 septembre. Deux jours plus tard, 2 autres combattants ont trouvé la mort en essayant de contrer une offensive du PKK dans la région de Kardakh," à des dizaines de km du triangle de la frontière irako-irano-turque, a ajouté à l'AFP M. Maasoum depuis Londres où il est basé.

Une offre de cessez-le-feu annoncée samedi par le chef de l'UPK, Jalal Talabani, à la demande d'une délégation d'une organisation non gouvernementale turque, "Les Mères de la Paix", en visite au Kurdistan irakien, n'a pas été acceptée par le PKK, a-t-il affirmé.

"Cette formation n'a jamais respecté un accord passé en juin dernier, en vertu duquel ses combattants devaient se cantonner dans la région de Jebel Qandil, qui s'étend sur plusieurs centaines de km², sur la frontière avec l'Iran", a dit M. Maasoum.

"Depuis, ils ont occupé plusieurs villages" sous contrôle de l'UPK, a-t-il ajouté sans donner plus de précision.

Le Kurdistan irakien échappe au contrôle du régime de Bagdad depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991. L'UPK contrôle la partie est de ce territoire, frontalier de l'Iran, alors que son rival, le Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK), tient le secteur proche de la Turquie.

Depuis l'arrestation en février 1999 de son chef, Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort pour trahison, le PKK prône une solution pacifique du problème kurde et a proclamé l'abandon de la lutte armée lancée en 1984. Mais ses combattants retranchés dans le nord de l'Irak sont également la cible de l'armée turque qui mène de fréquentes incursions en territoire irakien.

En juillet, le Premier ministre turc Bülent Ecevit avait rencontré M. Jalal Talabani et l'a remercié pour sa lutte contre le PKK, marquant un rapprochement avec l'UPK qu'Ankara accusait auparavant d'aider les séparatistes turcs.

Onze membres du parti pro-kurde HADEP arrêtés pour soutien au PKK



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 2 oct (AFP) - 16h25 - Onze membres du parti pro-kurde de la démocratie du peuple (HADEP) ont été placés en état d'arrestation dimanche pour soutien aux rebelles kurdes de Turquie, a-t-on appris lundi de source de sécurité locale à Diyarbakir (sud-est).

Le président provincial du HADEP à Sirnak (sud-est), Resul Sadak, et d'autres dirigeants locaux, interpellés le 23 septembre, ont été officiellement arrêtés pour soutien au Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) et incarcérés après avoir comparu devant un tribunal de cette ville, a-t-on précisé de même source.

Une source des services de sécurité à Diyarbakir, plus importante ville du Sud-est anatolien, avait alors expliqué les interpellations par la saisie de trois grenades et d'un fusil automatique dans l'une des voitures d'un convoi du HADEP qui rentrait à Sirnak d'une province voisine.

"Ces allégations sont dénuées de tout fondement", a affirmé le HADEP dans un communiqué lundi, en dénonçant un complot politique et en demandant la libération "immédiate" de ses membres.

Selon le HADEP, ces arrestations font partie des efforts des autorités pour empêcher l'implantation du HADEP à Sirnak.

Le HADEP n'est pas représenté au parlement faute d'avoir obtenu les 10% de voix nécessaires au niveau national, mais a obtenu la direction de toute une série de municipalités dans le sud-est à majorité kurde lors des élections de 1999.

Il fait l'objet d'une procédure d'interdiction en justice pour "liens organiques" avec le PKK.

Le PKK a mis fin en septembre 1999 à sa rébellion armée à la demande de son chef, Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort en juin de la même année pour séparatisme et trahison. Depuis, les affrontements entre armée et PKK dans le sud-est ont quasiment cessé, à l'exception de quelques combats sporadiques.

Despite US opposition, Hussein in 'GREAT SHAPE'

October 2, 2000 By John Diamond Washington Bureau

Chicago Tribune

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. strategy of containment against Iraq is unraveling amid rising oil prices, bickering among allies and concern about the suffering of the Iraqi people.

President Saddam Hussein's hold on power is as strong as ever. Using money diverted from the UN-sanctioned oil-for-food program, his military has begun to rebuild from the damage sustained in the Persian Gulf war. The surge in fuel prices suddenly places the West in the awkward posture of beseeching Iraq not to cut crude oil production.

"Make no mistake about it. Iraq is awash with money," said Richard Butler, the former UN weapons inspector whose team was turned out of Iraq two years ago. "The regime is in great shape," he told lawmakers last week. Mild protestations from Washington have done nothing to stop an increasing flow of commercial flights into Iraq from France, Russia, Jordan and Yemen. Iraq has avoided international arms inspections for two years, leaving the Pentagon in the dark as to Baghdad's arsenal.

The economic sanctions kept in place at Washington's urging are coming under increasing attack not only from countries such as Russia and France that hope to do a booming business with Iraq but also from U.S. lawmakers of both parties concerned about the effect on nutrition and infant mortality in Iraq.

No one seems happy with the U.S. containment strategy. But after months of intensive internal review by the Clinton administration, no workable alternative has emerged. Admitting frustration, the administration counsels patience while Hussein gives every indication that time is on his side.

"We would like to see Saddam gone," Undersecretary of State Thomas Pickering told Arab journalists recently. "But I can't tell you that there is a magic formula to see this done. Our magic formula, in reality, is patience. ... It is not a perfect policy."

One of the participants in Capitol Hill's policy review was retired Marine Gen. Anthony Zinni, until recently the head of the U.S. military command in charge of the Persian Gulf region. Zinni has briefed senior administration officials on a secret war plan that details how the U.S. military, with limited allied help, would seek to topple Hussein. The effort would be massive, involving possibly as many as half a million troops, according to one knowledgeable official.

Although he has confidence in U.S. forces, Zinni has no illusions that such a scheme could win public support, considering the cost in lives and dollars it would almost certainly involve. Nor, he said, would any gulf nation allow such an offensive to spring from its territory without a major provocation by Iraq.

"I wracked my brain for over four years to come up with a strategy other than containment that might work," Zinni told the Senate Armed Services Committee. "I have to be honest with you: I didn't come up with a better one. Containment is what you do when you can't come up with the popular will to take decisive military action." The gulf war almost a decade ago left Hussein with a shaky hold on power. Armchair generals complained that the Bush administration ended the war too soon and blew a chance to drive Hussein from power.

Bush allies such as retired Gen. Colin Powell, then the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and now an active supporter of Texas Gov. George W. Bush's run for the presidency, call those criticisms preposterous. They say the coalition of nations, including many Arab countries, would have fallen apart had the United States marched on Baghdad. Nevertheless, the notion that Hussein somehow survived because of U.S. weakness has persisted, and the Iraqi leader's ability to tweak Washington has remained a major foreign policy irritant to the Clinton administration for the past eight years.

Since the gulf war, the United States has spent \$8 billion building up an arsenal in the gulf, deploying thousands of troops to the region, conducting occasional "pinprick" strikes, and flying hundreds of combat sorties over northern and southern Iraq. Under U.S. and allied scrutiny, Iraq has refrained from threatening military moves against its neighbors, and for this reason U.S. allies in the gulf such as Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman continue to allow a U.S. military presence.

But the 30-nation coalition that fought Iraq in 1991 has nearly evaporated. Only U.S. and British warplanes participate in keeping Iraqi planes from entering the northern and southern Iraq no-fly zones.

"Why is the United States virtually alone?" Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, asked at a recent hearing. Frustrated by Iraq's ability to defy international sanctions and to throw out U.S. arms inspectors, Congress passed legislation two years ago to funnel \$97 million to opposition groups seeking to topple Hussein. Yet so far, the money has gone to fax machines and copiers, and not a single bullet has been purchased with the aid, according to Clinton administration reports.

Opponents of Hussein inside Iraq are far too weak to challenge his regime. Arab-language newspapers have reported that he has cancer and that the recent flights from France carried medical specialists to treat him. But U.S. intelligence dismisses this as wishful thinking, saying there's no evidence to support rumors that Hussein is ailing. Richard Perle, a senior Reagan administration official and close adviser to Gov. Bush, advocates a more active U.S. military role, including arming and training indigenous Iraqi opposition groups.

"It is increasingly clear that the only solution to the danger posed by Saddam Hussein is a sustained, determined plan to remove him from power," Perle said. "Saddam has emerged from each new bombing stronger than before. Support for sanctions, whose most visible effect is the impoverishment of the Iraqi people, is sinking fast."

The technical term used by the Pentagon to explain the current military posture toward Iraq is "keeping Saddam in his box."

Increasingly it appears Washington is boxed in by its own Iraq policy. The United States got involved in the gulf war for economic reasons. "Jobs, jobs, jobs," was how then-Secretary of State James Baker explained it. The idea was that aggression by one nation in the heart of the world's richest oil region would upset energy markets, with potentially enormous repercussions in the United States, perhaps leading to recession and unemployment.

To win public support for waging the gulf war, however, Washington had to demonize Hussein, and the Iraqi leader gave the Bush administration plenty of material.

There were his Scud missile attacks on Israel and poison gas attacks on his own Kurdish population in the north in the late 1980s. There was the brutal treatment of Kuwait during Iraq's occupation. Immediately after the war, there was the iron-fisted repression of an uprising by the so-called marsh Arabs in southern Iraq.

Subsequent UN inspections revealed a huge Iraqi chemical and biological weapons program and the beginnings of a nuclear weapons effort.

Today, the rest of the world appears to see Iraq in economic terms, as a possible trading partner, as holder of the world's second-largest oil reserves whose production capacity could ease the latest fuel price spike.

The State Department acknowledges that even if Hussein observed all the requirements imposed by the UN, the containment policy would remain until he was out of power. With no arms inspectors inside Iraq, it is difficult to tell whether Hussein has reconstituted his programs to build weapons of mass destruction. But there is some evidence to indicate that he is. Despite the suspicions of an arms buildup by Baghdad, the administration, pressured by France and Russia in the UN Security Council, has acquiesced repeatedly on Iraq.

Just last week, the U.S. lifted its earlier objections and voted to allow Iraq to lower the percentage of its oil revenue that must go into a fund to compensate victims of Iraq's invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Meanwhile, U.S. intelligence suspects that some of the food and drugs Iraq is buying with oil money are being exported for cash the regime can use for weapons.

Stephen Solarz, a former Democratic congressman from New York known for his foreign policy expertise, told Congress last week that the United States has declared its intention of toppling Hussein without a plan that offers a realistic hope of achieving that objective. "We're paying a very heavy price in terms of our credibility in the region," Solarz said.

Iran Reportedly Agrees To Host US Financed Iraqi Opposition Office in Tehran

Al-Hayat 02 Oct 00 pp 1,6 by Zuhayr Qusaybati

Information received from northern Iraq reported that the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] and the Kurdish Workers Party [PKK] resumed their fierce battles in the region on Saturday night.

Meanwhile, sources in the opposition Iraqi National Congress [INC] have confirmed that Tehran has agreed to let the INC open an office in the Iranian capital, even though this will be done with US financing as part of a pledge by President Bill Clinton's administration to spend \$4 million by the end of this year on the INC's media and political activities.

Other sources in the Iraqi opposition said that Tehran's agreement to host the office "is part of a US-Iranian courtship" and pointed out that coordination between Washington and Tehran would be in the opposition's interest.

A leading official in the INC told Al-Hayyah that the US administration's pledge to spend \$4 million is not conditional, such as operations inside Iraq by groups affiliated to the INC. He stressed that the talks held in London few days ago with Frank Ricciardone, the US Coordinator of the Iraqi Opposition's Activities, did not touch at all on the issue of any military activities by the opposition inside Iraq. He denied charges that some organizations have opened channels of communications to normalize relations with President Saddam Husayn's regime.

The Sunday Times reported yesterday that Washington has agreed to give the INC \$4 million within the framework of an agreement reached after five days of negotiations in London. It said: This will allow the oppositionists to resume their operations inside Iraq for the first time in six years and will also be able to open offices in Washington, Tehran, and Iraq's Kurdistan. It asserted that the Americans undertook to finance the opening of the INC office in Tehran and pointed out that the opposition coalition "hopes to use Iran as a base for infiltrating southern Iraq and operating inside Kurdistan.

The British newspaper cited INC sources as saying that there is an intention "to carry out operations inside Iraq aimed at building support for democracy, helping internal opposition, and providing humanitarian aid." Regarding the situation in northern Iraq, Kurdish sources have confirmed that [PUK Leader Jalal] Talabani has decided to evict all the PKK fighters from the areas under his Party's control "at any price." A leading official in the PUK told Al-Hayyah, "The two sides have resumed their fighting with ferocity", adding that the PUK has lost 30 fighters. He accused the PKK of sending 1,500 fighters "in

a new attack near the border with Iran that targeted villages in the Qal'at Dazah area." He reiterated the accusations that Baghdad has "instigated" the PKK and passed troops on the contact lines with the areas under Talabani's control. He also admitted that Ankara has sent "warnings" to the PUK and hinted that it would intervene militarily if Talabani does not evict the PKK from northern Iraq.

Medical equipment delivered to hospital in Kurdish region

Kurdistan Satellite TV 2 Oct 00

Alongside the improvement of rehabilitation, science, education, agriculture and economic situation, the health situation is also improving by the year and the rate of birth to death exceeds 95 per cent [as heard]. This improvement in the citizen's situation is referred to a number of factors; first of all is the provision of medicines and new equipment by the health ministry of the [Kurdistan Democratic Party-led] regional government. In this respect, a number of modern medical equipment were delivered to Azady Hospital in Dohuk. These equipment are being installed and used for the first time in Kurdistan.

The most important one is the laparoscope, used for abdominal and kidney surgeries and other general surgeries. This special equipment operates on the abdomen of the patient without leaving a wound. The surgery is conducted in a very short time and the patient is able to resume normal life in a few days.

Other special equipment for abdominal diseases are also available for patients. The equipment are gastro-scope, colonoscope and sigmoidoscope. The three equipment diagnose illnesses and treats them according to the findings. In addition to that, physiotherapy equipment, some of which use Laser, were delivered to the physiotherapy department at Azady Hospital.

The official in charge of the department said: Previously, there was a huge gap in our work as a result of shortage in physiotherapy equipment. Today, a wide-ranging service is available in our department and our workers are continuously working to provide the treatment.

According to the hospital's plans, a wide range of new equipment are expected to be delivered to the staff. [Voice - recording] Other equipment are still to be delivered to us. We asked equipment for breaking Kidney stones. A prostate-treatment equipment, mentulascope, is expected to be delivered to us in the near future

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Columnist Views General's Remarks, Suggests Kurd Policy Change

Milliyet 2 Oct 00 p 19 by Hasan Cemal

When Turkey's full membership in the European Union [EU] is discussed...When one says democracy and a state of law...When the "Copenhagen criteria" are mentioned within this framework...the following subject comes to the forefront every time:

The Southeast and the Kurds...

Or a question is asked: Could Turkey be divided?

For example, General Yasar Buyukanit, the Second Chief of General Staff, made an interesting speech the other day. He stated that for Turkey the "path to Europe is the path of Ataturk" and explained as follows:

"Joining the EU is a geostrategic and geopolitical necessity for the realization of the objective of modernization that was shown to Turkey by the great leader Ataturk. No one should have any doubts about this." After that, General Buyukanit, brought up the subject I mentioned at the beginning of my article:

"However, it is the most natural right of Turkey to attain this goal by preserving its unitary and secular structure and by taking the necessary measures for this."

It is a justified observation.

I am also against the division of Turkey. I am in favor of a unitary, that is, a single state. I also defend the preservation of secularism as the inalienable infrastructure of modernization and democracy.

But how? That is the critical question, because when we start talking about the subjects of fine adjustment, then the question leads to hot debates.

An example related to separatism:

Let us take up the HADEP [People's Democracy Party]. This party is mostly the party of the citizens of the Republic of Turkey of Kurdish origin. In the last elections they received around 1.5 million votes throughout Turkey. Since this corresponds to a little over 4 percent of the total votes, it was under the minimum 10 percent limit required for any party to be elected, and they could not enter the parliament.

In contrast, the HADEP won 39 municipalities in the southeast, including the Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality, because the HADEP's total votes in the southeast were over 40 percent and it was close to 60 percent in Diyarbakir.

The following is a reality:

If there was no pressure by the state in the rural areas in the southeast, in some counties, or even in some provinces, the HADEP could have increased its ratio of votes even more. It means that in the southeast the parties other than the HADEP are insignificant. Well, why and how does the HADEP manage to get so many votes in the southeast? Is it because the HADEP's views related to foreign policy, economy, art, and culture are very popular in the southeast? Of course, it is not for that. When you ask, the response you get is generally the same:

"Because the HADEP is our party."

The people in the southeast, because they believe that the other parties and the state itself exclude them, vote for "their own party" each time. This party was previously called the HEP [People's Labor Party], it was closed. Later it became the DEP [Democracy Party]. That was also closed. If the HADEP is closed tomorrow, then another party will be founded. The Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin will go and vote for their own party each time.

What is their "own" party? The Kurdish party! Even if the HADEP claims that this is not so, this is a fact, because the majority of the people voting for the HADEP are Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin.

These citizens of ours are giving their votes to the HADEP because they find it to be close to them.

Here, like it or not, another subject comes out in the forefront:

The Kurdish identity...

If there are Kurds, then they also have their identity. They have their language and their culture. If there are Kurds, and if they also have their language and culture and if both of them are denied, then it means that there is a Kurdish problem.

You can call this the southeast problem, but it does not change the substance of the problem very much, and you cannot solve this problem by only providing them with food and work.

Here two points are important:

1. If you would allow the HADEP to engage in political activities and pull this party into the political system, instead of banning it--of course, provided that the HADEP excludes violence and terrorism...

2. If you would pave the way for our citizens of Kurdish origin to use, learn, and teach their own language and do not prevent them from preserving and developing their cultural traditions...

Thus, if you would realize these two points, then the HADEP can be drawn into the legal platform and become politically "tamed or matured." At the same time, other parties can broaden their vote bases in the southeast, that is, they can compete with the HADEP and it may be possible for them to get a share of the "Kurdish votes." It will also help to prevent the probable effects of separatist aspirations stemming from "Kurdish nationalism" and "Kurdishness."

The Wrong and the Right

For these reasons, I think that only giving emphasis to the economic and social development but ignoring the identity dimension of the southeast will be insufficient, because the educated people who have a livelihood would search even more for an identity and I believe that they will embrace their origins. There are so many examples of this in the world.

For these reasons:

It will be correct to moderate the harsh attitude on subjects such as Kurdish radio-television and education--now that terrorism has been crippled. I do not think that Turkey's unitary structure will be negatively affected from this.

Also, the changing of [Article] 312 will not constitute a threat to the secular structure of Turkey.

The speech of General Buyukanit, with which I agree in general, gave me the opportunity to bring some of the fine adjustment dimensions of the subject onto the agenda. To make these fine adjustments without further delay is mainly up to the government and the political institution.

* * * * *

Le chef kurde Massoud Barzani à Ankara pour des entretiens sur l'Irak

ANKARA, 3 oct (AFP) - 15h38 - Massoud Barzani, chef du Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK), faction kurde du nord de l'Irak, s'entretiendra mercredi à Ankara avec le Premier ministre turc Bulent Ecevit des derniers développements dans sa région, a-t-on appris mardi de source proche du PDK.

"M. Barzani évoquera de nombreux sujets avec les responsables turcs, y compris les récentes initiatives destinées à briser l'embargo aérien imposé à l'Irak", a-t-on indiqué de même source.

M. Barzani doit également rencontrer des responsables du ministère des Affaires étrangères lors de sa visite de quelques jours, avant de faire une tournée dans plusieurs pays européens, a-t-on ajouté.

A ce jour, trois avions arabes--marocain, jordanien et yéménite--ont atterri à Bagdad, pour la première fois depuis plus de dix ans d'embargo aérien, faisant suite à des vols russes et français organisés vers l'Irak.

Le Kurdistan irakien échappe au contrôle du régime de Bagdad depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991. L'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK de Jalal Talabani) contrôle la partie est de ce territoire, frontalière de l'Iran, alors que son rival, le PDK, tient le secteur proche de la Turquie.

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 lance fréquemment des opérations contre les sanctuaires du PKK dans le nord de l'Irak.

Le PKK a mis fin à sa rébellion armée contre l'Etat turc en 1999 et s'est retranché dans le nord de l'Irak.

L'UPK, longtemps accusée par Ankara de soutenir le PKK, a fait état ces derniers temps de violents accrochages entre ses peshmergas et des maquisards du PKK dans la région.

* * * * *

PUK peshmergas kill five PKK militants in northern Iraq

- Turkish military officials announced that members of the PUK, which controls a strip of territory in Iraq near the Iranian border, have killed five PKK militants

Tunceli - Reuters

Fighting between rival Kurdish factions continued for a fourth day in northern Iraq on Monday after an Iraqi Kurdish militia killed five PKK terrorists overnight, a Turkish military official said.

Turkish military officials told Reuters that members of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which controls a strip of territory bordering Iran, killed five militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK has used northern Iraq as a base for its armed struggle for autonomy in southeastern Turkey, and many of its forces retreated to the mountainous region after the 1999 capture of its chief, Abdullah Ocalan.

But two rival Iraqi Kurdish factions have controlled much of northern Iraq since seizing the region, which is protected by U.S. and British air patrols, from Baghdad after the 1991 Gulf War.

A PUK representative said the latest fighting was started by the PKK.

"The PUK doesn't allow them to infiltrate the region [it controls]," he said. "There is no campaign by us against them -- it's a campaign by them against us."

Iraqi Kurds and PKK groups say fighting between the PKK and the PUK has killed dozens of people in the last few weeks.

A PUK representative in Ankara said fighting had ended with seven of its militiamen dead.

Turkey stops journalists visiting northern Iraq, making independent confirmation of reports difficult.

Turkey frequently sends thousands of troops into northern Iraq during offensives against PKK militants and has fought them alongside the other principal Iraqi Kurdish faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

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La propagande turque se déchaîne contre la reconnaissance du génocide arménien

Encouragé par le report jeudi dernier par le Comité des Relations internationales de la Chambre des Représentants des États-Unis, du vote d'une résolution appelant la Maison Blanche à reconnaître le génocide des Arméniens, le pouvoir turc accentue ses pressions sur les parlementaires américains. Multipliant les mises en garde, alternant la menace et les exposés récurrents de la version turque des événements de 1915, l'ensemble de la classe politique turque, relayée par les media et par le lobby turc aux États-Unis s'est engagé dans cette campagne de propagande visant à empêcher le texte controversé d'aller au-delà de la Sous-commission des droits de l'homme où son vote avait déclenché une véritable tempête dans les relations turco-américaines. Le 28 septembre dernier, le Représentant démocrate de Californie Tom Lantos, et son collègue républicain de l'Indiana Dan Burton, avaient provoqué une manœuvre dilatoire pour reporter le vote du Comité des Relations internationales, dont l'issue est décisive pour le passage du texte devant l'ensemble de la Chambre des Représentants. Tom Lantos avait accompagné cette manœuvre d'un discours qui pèsera lourd dans le débat et qui sera considéré comme une trahison par les responsables communautaires arméniens engagés dans cette nouvelle bataille pour la reconnaissance du génocide de 1915 : immigré juif originaire de Hongrie, M. Lantos est lui-même un rescapé de l'holocauste, et c'est à ce titre qu'il s'est exprimé pour récuser la réalité du génocide des Arméniens et dénoncer l'opportunité de ce texte législatif qu'il considère comme un instrument politique entre les mains d'un lobby. Fort du soutien de tels avocats et plus généralement de l'administration américaine qui n'a cessé de manifester son opposition à la résolution, l'État turc a réitéré ses allégations désignant le génocide des Arméniens comme un "simple" épisode de la première guerre mondiale et un instrument de propagande du lobby arménien, tout en agitant la menace d'une détérioration des relations turco-américaines et d'un changement de cap de la diplomatie turque en direction de l'Irak ou encore de l'Iran. Revenant à la charge lors d'une conférence à Antalya la semaine dernière, le ministre turc de la justice, M. Turk, déclarait ainsi que la Turquie devait redoubler d'efforts pour faire connaître au monde les atrocités qu'auraient fait subir les Arméniens aux Turcs. C'est dans cette direction également que va travailler le département sur les relations arméno-turques et sur le génocide arménien (comprendre le génocide perpétré par les Arméniens contre les Turcs) récemment ouvert au sein de l'université Atatürk d'Erzurum, une ville de l'Anatolie orientale considérée comme le centre nerveux du nationalisme turc. Le professeur Enver Konukcu, qui dirige le département d'histoire des sciences et de littérature de cette université, indiquait ainsi que le génocide avait laissé dans l'Est de la Turquie des séquelles qui ne pourront être effacées. "Il n'y a pas un seul village dans cette région qui n'ait été le théâtre d'un massacre" a-t-il indi-

qué, en précisant que "les bandes arméniennes avaient massacré 11.000 personnes" à Erzurum et 80.000 dans la seule région d'Igdir au nom du "rêve d'une grande Arménie". M. Konukcu affirme qu'une vingtaine de fosses communes attestent dans la région des massacres qu'auraient perpétrés les Arméniens à l'encontre des Turcs, en ajoutant que les Arméniens avaient quant à eux quitté volontairement Erzurum pour la Russie à la suite de l'accord d'Edirne de 1829. Par ailleurs, un député du Parti de la Vertu (islamiste) allait soumettre à l'examen du président du Parlement turc une proposition d'enquête sur le génocide perpétré par les États-Unis contre les Indiens d'Amérique ainsi que sur les actes de racisme contre la communauté afro-américaine. Dans une intervention très remarquée contre les États-Unis, habituellement ménagés par les militaires turcs, le chef d'état-major turc avait lui-même invité les Américains à se pencher sur leur propre histoire et sur les atrocités qu'elle renferme avant de juger celle des autres nations. Dans le même temps, la presse turque cherche à agiter l'épouvantail du "terrorisme arménien", régulièrement associé à celui du PKK, dont un responsable turc demandait solennellement aux autorités bulgares qu'elles le condamnent officiellement. Ainsi, l'agence de presse turque Anatolie faisait état récemment d'un prétendu appel du PKK aux autorités d'Arménie pour qu'elles renouvellent leur assistance logistique à l'organisation séparatiste kurde, au moment où elle rencontre de grandes difficultés organisationnelles. L'agence de presse turque précisait que Erévan n'aurait pas encore répondu à cette demande, mais que des efforts seraient d'ores et déjà entrepris "en vue de développer les deux bases du PKK en activité sur le territoire arménien".

En dépit de ces pressions formidables sur leurs collègues américains, les législateurs italiens seraient décidés à engager eux aussi une procédure en vue de la reconnaissance du génocide des Arméniens, après la France, dont le Sénat tarde à ratifier le vote d'un texte en ce sens par l'Assemblée nationale le 29 mai 1998. C'est ce qu'a annoncé, dans un entretien accordé au journal turc Hurriyet, le député italien Giancarlo Paliari, selon lequel le texte visant à désigner le 24 avril comme la journée du génocide serait débattu au Parlement italien le 24 octobre prochain. "Mon épouse est arménienne et sa famille est originaire de Kayséri. Sa famille a été décimée lors des massacres perpétrés par les Turcs ottomans en 1915, et a partagé le sort d'un million et demi d'Arméniens. C'est un génocide" aurait indiqué M. Paliari au quotidien turc, qui attribue l'engagement du député italien en faveur de la reconnaissance du génocide de 1915 au seul fait que son épouse est d'origine arménienne. Hurriyet cite néanmoins les propos de M. Paliari, qui appelle la Turquie à reconnaître elle aussi le génocide, pour se ménager un "avenir brillant" dans la famille européenne.

Turkish police arrest 6 for sending Kurdish-language invitations

Reuters - October 4, 2000

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (Reuters) -- Turkish police have arrested six teachers for sending out Kurdish-language invitations to a meeting in the country's mainly Kurdish southeast, a police official said on Wednesday. Turkey is under pressure to ease its tight restrictions on Kurdish linguistic and cultural rights after being accepted as a candidate for European Union membership late last year.

But many here oppose such moves, fearing they could fuel nationalism and pave the way for a separate Kurdish state. Some 12 million of Turkey's population are Kurds.

Police in the regional capital Diyarbakir arrested the teachers, senior members of a teaching union, on Tuesday, and found documents praising the activities of Kurdish separatist guerrillas at the house of one, the police official said.

The teachers were arrested because they had sent out invitations for a celebration of World Teachers Day on October 5 written in both Turkish and Kurdish, he said.

"Publishing and distributing invitations in Kurdish is a crime under the law," he said.

Turkey declared victory last year in its 15-year fight against Kurdish rebels after capturing their leader, Abdullah Ocalan. Ocalan was sentenced to hang for leading an armed campaign for Kurdish self-rule that claimed over 30,000 lives and is now appealing the verdict.

He later ordered his followers to withdraw from Turkey and transform themselves into a political force in order to win cultural rights for the country's 12 million Kurds.

Turkey rejects the new rebel policy as a cynical ploy designed to save Ocalan from the gallows and has vowed never to negotiate with the guerrillas.

* * * * *

Saddam says he has ability to 'limit' Israel

Associated Press October 5, 2000

BAGHDAD: Despite crippling U.N. trade sanctions, Iraq has the potential to quickly restrain Israel if its Arab neighbors give it territory from which to mount operations against the Jewish state, President Saddam Hussein said in remarks published Wednesday.

"Let them (Israel's neighbors) give us a small piece of land adjacent to (Israel) ... and they will see how we will quickly shut down Zionism," Baghdad's newspapers quoted the Iraqi leader as saying.

Saddam was reacting to the latest violence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip where Israeli forces have clashed with Palestinian civilians and gunmen over the past week.

The fighting, which has left scores dead and more than 1,000 wounded, broke out after an Israeli hard-line leader, Ariel Sharon, visited one of Jerusalem's most hotly contested sites, which is revered by Muslims and Jews. The vast majority of casualties have been Palestinian.

Arab leaders, Saddam said, should be ashamed of themselves for standing back as Israeli "vagabonds" butcher "our children and humiliate our women." The Arabs, he added, have had enough and it is time for their leaders to "put an end to Zionism and if they cannot, Iraq has the capability to do it alone."

My (Arab) brothers, you will see what terrible cowards the (Israelis) are."

Throughout history, Saddam added, the Jews have never shown valor or courage. "They have spent their life in dark corners, bent on collecting money." If the Israelis seem brave, he said, it is because "the Arab swords have rusted in their sheaths." During the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait, Saddam hit Israel with ballistic missiles. Iraq is formally in a state of war with Israel and has sent troops to fight along Arab armies in wars against the Jewish state over the past 50 years.

Iraq's military capabilities, however, have been significantly curtailed by sweeping U.N. sanctions imposed to punish the country for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Who started the PKK-PUK war?

Kurdish Media - 5 Oct 2000

By Ahmad Bamarani

This article gives an account of the roots of PKK-PUK war and is a reply to the article by Cerdo Bimekir which was published on a previous issue.

Since at least 1997 PKK forces were stationed in the KDP regions and the Qandil mountain on the Iranian border. From the end of this spring the PKK started to bring their forces to the PUK areas. The PUK said from almost the beginning of this year that my situation does not allow me for the PKK troops to stay in the PUK region. Suddenly and within two days the PKK brought its forces in three directions:

- 1) from Qandil mountain. Those who know this region can tell you that if the Iranians did not shut there eyes, this force could not attack the PUK peshmargas.
- 2) the second group comes from Qasre which is under the control of KDP.
- 3) The third group comes from Kirkuk and by Iraqi military trucks till Qadir Kerem.

For your informations the PKK has three military bases in Iraq : In Shekhan; in Ayen Zala and the third one near Makhmor. These bases are inside the Iraqi military bases and one member of the PKK presidential council is responsible for all these PKK forces in Iraq. The PKK commander and other PKK men meet regularly with Iraqi Intelligence services.

This force of 40 guerrilla come to Gar-dakh region which is 100 Km on the south of Sulamania and about 300 Km from Turkish borders. PUK said and is still saying that if PKK forces go back and stay in their places as before I will never go and attack them. But their presence in our region is bringing us big problems. So it is not a conspiracy and not the demand of Clinton as Cerdo argues nor the Turkish demand for the simple reason that the presence of PKK forces in Iraqi Kurdistan serves the Turkish aims and goals today.

The truth is that they don't want PKK forces to be eliminated or to leave there, they use that as a pretext to let their military forces to stay in Kurdistan in other hand to use the PKK forces as a chantage against the political class and democratic development inside Turkey. The war between the different Kurdish fractions is harming the Kurdish people and we are the victims and our enemy is watching it with pleasure. What Cerdo wrote is putting oil on fire and not the opposite. Kurdish Intellectuals should play their role to put an end to the war in which only the Kurds are killed. The role of Kurdish intellectuals is mediation in war and not encouraging war. (Edited by KM)

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Iraqi Kurdish leader allays Ankara's fears on Kurd independence

AFP - 5 Oct 2000

ANKARA, Oct 5 (AFP) - 14h06 - The leader of a northern Iraqi Kurdish faction on Thursday tried to allay Turkey's fears over an independent Kurdish state in the western-protected enclave that remains outside Baghdad's control.

"We underlined the unity and integrity of Iraq and that the Kurdish issue should be resolved within a united Iraq," Massoud Barzani, the head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), told reporters here after meeting Turkish diplomats.

"We also underlined that all minorities in Iraq should reach their aims and rights within a united Iraq," Barzani said through an interpreter. Turkey has previously expressed concern that US efforts to unite KDP and its arch-rival in the region, Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein could lead to the establishment of an independent Kurdish state neighbouring its border.

Ankara fears that such a state could spur its own separatist Kurds, namely the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which took up arms against Turkey in 1984 for Kurdish self-rule in southeastern Anatolia.

Much to the criticism of Baghdad, Turkey's military frequently mounts operations against PKK rebel camps inside northern Iraq, which has been outside Iraqi control since the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

Barzani's fighters often lend support to Turkish troops in their pursuit of PKK rebels inside northern Iraq.

The undersecretary of the Turkish foreign ministry, Faruk Logoglu, told reporters after the meeting that both sides were "unanimous" on continuing the struggle against the PKK. "The struggle against the PKK will continue until the PKK problem has been eliminated," Logoglu said.

He also confirmed that Turkey paid compensation to the victims of a Turkish air strike against the PKK in northern Iraq in August, which local Kurdish factions said claimed dozens of civilian lives.

The PKK said in September 1999 that it would stop fighting against Ankara and withdraw outside Turkey to seek a peaceful resolution to the conflict which has claimed some 36,500 lives according to official figures. But the powerful Turkish army has brushed aside the peace pledges as a "ploy" and has vowed to hunt down the "terrorists", the majority of whom it says are sheltering in northern Iraq.

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Ankara's Decision To Improve Turkey's Relations With Iraq Reported

Milliyet 07 Oct 00 p 12 by Barcin Yinanç

Ankara--Considering that the embargo on Iraq has been violated by many countries, particularly Russia and France, Turkey has decided to improve its relations with Baghdad. The first step it plans to take is to open another border gate for railway services between the two countries. However, the most important project Ankara has in mind is the construction of a natural gas pipeline between Turkey and Iraq.

A meeting attended by high-ranking officials at the Foreign Ministry last week discussed Turkey's policy toward Iraq, which has been on the Foreign Ministry's agenda during the past six months and which gained importance in the light of the Armenian draft resolution in the United States. Amb. Selim Karaosmanoglu, Turkey's charge d'Affaires in Baghdad, participated in the convocation, which was chaired by Foreign Minister Ismail Cem. The participants agreed that Ankara's policy of establishing closer relations with Baghdad should be stepped up but it should not be linked to the Armenian draft resolution. Attention was drawn to the possibility that the Saddam Administration might try to exploit Turkey's approach if it is linked to the draft resolution.

Meanwhile, the visit of many businessmen to Baghdad in November will be a sign of Turkey's decision to change its policy towards Iraq. Turkey will participate in the Baghdad International Fair with a large group of businessmen for the first time in many years. Minister of State Tunca Toskay, who is responsible for the economy, and Under Secretary of Foreign Trade Kursat Tuzmen will visit the international fair in which 100 Turkish firms will participate.

One of the two most important projects between Ankara and Baghdad is related to the improvement of transportation between the two countries. Turkey proposed in 1996 that a second border gate should be opened between the two sides. The Iraqi Government agreed to the proposal last summer. It has been ascertained that work is underway to establish the infrastructure that is required for the second border gate, which will be 17 km to the west of the Habur border gate.

The second project is related to the exploitation of Iraq's untouched natural gas resources and the transfer of the extracted gas to Turkey. The two sides signed a protocol early in 2000 for the joint extraction and shipment of natural gas by a Turkish and Iraqi consortium. According to the protocol, the two countries will transfer natural gas to Europe in the future.

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Syrian plane lands in Baghdad for first time in 20 years

8 Oct 2000 Agence France-Presse

BAGHDAD, Oct 8 (AFP) - A Syrian flew into the Iraqi capital on Sunday for the first time in 20 years, as part of a campaign of solidarity flights against a decade-old UN air embargo, the official news agency INA reported. A 34-member delegation led by Mohammed Mufdi Saifo, the Syrian minister of state for cabinet affairs, touched down at Saddam International Airport carrying food, medicine and team of doctors. The flight "shows the total support of the Syrian people for the Iraqi people to ease their sufferings caused by the embargo," said Saifo. The delegation also visited Saddam central children's

hospital and observed "the suffering hospitalized children endure because of the unjust embargo imposed on the Iraqi people," Saifo said. Iraqi Commerce Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh, at the head of a welcoming party, said it was "another positive step (in the rapprochement) between the two countries ... and for the strengthening of bilateral relations."

The delegation left for Damascus later Sunday on the Syrian Airlines Airbus. The initiative followed a call by President Bashar al-Assad on October 2 for Arab countries to work for a lifting of UN sanctions on Iraq, imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Despite a break in diplomatic relations in 1980 over Syria's backing for Iran in its war with Iraq, Damascus and Baghdad have been slowly normalizing ties since 1997, focusing on trade.

Six other Arab countries – Algeria, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen -- have sent planes into Iraq since September 27 and Lebanon plans to follow suit, following flights from Russia and France. Paris and Moscow say the air embargo on Iraq as part of the sanctions regime does not cover private non-commercial flights, while Washington and London insist all flights must be approved by the UN sanctions committee. Also challenging the air embargo, two Turkish planes were expected in Baghdad on Monday, information ministry sources in Baghdad said.

A Turkish airline, Arkas Air, has said a Turkish humanitarian flight was scheduled on Monday and the chamber of commerce in the southeastern Turkish town of Gaziantep has requested permission for a flight of its own. The Turkish foreign ministry said last week that it was also likely to give the go-ahead for a businessman to charter a flight to the Iraqi capital.

Turkey, meanwhile, has threatened not to renew a mandate for US planes using a Turkish base to patrol northern Iraq if the US Congress passes a bill declaring the Ottoman Empire committed genocide against the Armenians.

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Turkoman Leader Seeks Ankara Support for Inclusion Into N Iraq Solution

Anatolia 09 Oct 00

Ankara (AA) -- Riyaz Sarikahya, member of the administrative council of the Iraqi Turkoman Front and leader of the Turkmeneli Party, has said that a solution that does not include the Turkomans in north Iraq cannot be accepted, adding that Ankara should extend more support to the Turkomans.

Speaking at a news conference at the Turkish representation of the Turkoman Front, Sarikahya explained the Turkomans' assessment of the recent situation and the developments in the region.

Pointing out that he felt the need to stop over in Ankara on his way back from his contacts in the United States, Sarikahya said that the Iraqi opposition is in the process of getting reorganized and that they have observed that the US support to the opposition has increased. He continued: "The Turkomans should take their place within this new structuring and Ankara should exert efforts to that end." Sarikahya said that he requested a meeting from the Foreign Ministry and that he will be meeting with Turkish officials when he receives a reply.

Support for Flights to Iraq

Criticizing the Baghdad administration because of its "oppressive policies," Sarikahya added that, on the other hand, he supports the humanitarian flights being organized to Iraq.

Pointing out that the Iraqi regime and the people should be viewed separately, Sarikahya further rapped the Baghdad administration for canceling the Turkoman programs that were being broadcast by the Iraqi television via satellite. Sarikahya said: "The administration is resorting to insidious methods to pit the Turkomans against the Kurds who have, for years, been coexisting in brotherhood in north Iraq." He concluded by saying that the Turkoman people are being subjected to inhuman treatment.

Turkish Plane Lands in Baghdad

Associated Press 9 Oct 2000

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — Turkey on Monday became the ninth country to send a token humanitarian flight to Baghdad, the latest in what has become an almost daily show of support for Iraq.

The flight, which received clearance from the United Nations, came three weeks after France and Russia first challenged 10 years of U.N. sanctions on Iraq, flying planes to Baghdad without authorization from the U.N. sanctions committee.

The Turkish aircraft landed at Baghdad's Saddam International Airport on Monday morning. It carried former Turkish member of parliament Lutfi Akdogan and four doctors as well as medical and humanitarian supplies. "Sanctions are illegal and the Turkish people support the lifting of sanctions," Akdogan said upon arrival. "Turkey has no problems with Iraq. They have strong historical ties. ... Iraq's problems are with the United Nations."

The plane was met by Iraqi government officials and representatives of the Turkish Embassy in Baghdad. U.N. officials inspected the cargo, a routine procedure applied to every flight to Iraq, U.N. spokesman George Somerwill told The Associated Press.

A Turkish official said a second Turkish plane will fly to Iraq on Tuesday carrying five doctors and medical supplies. In the past few weeks, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Yemen, the United Arab Emirates and Algeria all have sent flights to Iraq, each with U.N. approval. Egyptian and Lebanese groups also have announced plans to send planes to Baghdad in coming days.

Iraq and Turkey have had their differences: Turkey plays host to U.S. and British warplanes that patrol a no-fly zone over northern Iraq. Baghdad also criticizes Turkey for restricting the flow of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers into Iraq and for mounting military pursuits of Turkish Kurd secessionists in northern Iraq. But the two countries signed an agreement in February meant to help them enlarge the scope of bilateral trade. They want to reach and even surpass the annual \$2.5 billion in bilateral trade they enjoyed prior to U.N. sanctions.

The sanctions against Iraq were imposed in 1990 to punish the country for its invasion of Kuwait, and they can only be lifted after Iraq proves that it has destroyed all of its weapons of mass destruction and the capability to manufacture them. Baghdad says it has complied, but it refuses to cooperate with U.N. arms inspectors.

Iraq considers the recent flights a sign that the era of sanctions is crumbling. But the U.N. sanctions committee chairman, Dutch U.N. ambassador Peter van Walsum, has said Baghdad would be making a "tragic mistake" if it thinks sanctions will disappear without Iraqi officials allowing weapons inspections to resume.

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Soccer Violence Along Iraq Border

AP 9 October 2000

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) - Soccer fans burned cars and looted shops and offices near the Turkish border in Iraq after being attacked by fans of a rival team, an official said Monday.

No serious injuries were reported. But the riots prompted Turkey to temporarily bar Turkish trucks from crossing into the Kurdish-controlled enclave. Scores of Turkish trucks cross the border daily to carry back diesel fuel, a trade that is illegal but overlooked by officials.

Zakhu fans, apparently not satisfied with a local official's promise to take action against rival Duhok fans, went on a rampage near the border crossing with Turkey on Sunday, setting cars ablaze, firing automatic rifles and looting several stores and offices.

Safeen Dizayee, representative of one of the two Kurdish factions that run the autonomous enclave, said the riots erupted after Dahuk fans beat up several Zakhu fans Friday following a brawl between players from the two teams.

At least 15 people were injured in that fighting and police arrested 20 people. "It was pure (soccer) hooliganism," Dizayee said, adding that calm had been restored.

Northern Iraq has been plagued by clashes between two Kurdish factions jockeying for control of the zone since it was set up by the Western allies in 1991 after Iraqi troops put down a Kurdish revolt.

Northern Iraq has become oil rich

Turkish Daily News October 11, 2000

by Mehmet Ali Birand

You don't have to go back too far, just four or five years, to see that relations between Turkey and Iraq have always been strained. The Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) separatist terrorist training camps led to frequent incursions by the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) and the actions of agents belonging to the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) and the Rapid Reaction Force as well, as their presence in the region inevitably led to mutual friction. The PKK lay at the bottom of all these issues.

Whenever the two northern Iraqi leaders, Jalal Talabani (of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK]) and Massoud Barzani (of the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP]), came to Ankara, they would always give tension-filled speeches, make accusations at each other and then go home again.

This situation has changed completely over the last two years.

On the one hand, Turkey has learned how to control the situation; it has increased its self-confidence and recognized the northern Iraqi Kurdish leaders. It understood the problems.

This was followed by the capture of Abdullah Ocalan, a very significant event, and his subsequent call for disarmament. This had the effect of altering the topics to be discussed whenever the two leaders talked with Turkey. Thus the latest talks held by Talabani and Barzani in Ankara have taken place in an atmosphere that is just so relaxed and so different.

Even though Talabani's talks have nevertheless turned to the subject of the PKK, (like the clashes between the 2,000 or so members of the PKK and the PUK, which have ended in a ceasefire), the principle debate was always over how to develop relations.

Almost all of Talabani's visit last week was devoted to non-PKK issues.

Gulf War helped America and Kurds

The situation today no longer gives rise to problems since the principle causes of tension have been dealt with. For example, the presence of the TSK and other security forces in northern Iraq has been limited to manning observation towers the entire length of the border. Apart from liaison offices in the major urban centers, there is no sign of any personnel. No operations have been conducted along the border for a long time now. This being the situation, emphasis is being put on economic relations and preserving the existence of the Turkmen.

Those who are familiar with the northern Iraq of 10 years ago and the situation today are biting their tongues. You could not have imagined such a change in situation, such a change in fortune or the restructuring.

You can say that relatively speaking northern Iraq is "oil rich."

If you compare the situation today with that of five or six years ago, the truth of this statement becomes readily apparent. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, northern Iraq was in ruin. Misery was rife. Baghdad had cut off the taps and there was no longer any source of income. They only managed to get by living off the protection money (in modern parlance -- taxes) extorted out of the drivers crossing the Habur border with Turkey.

Also, look around you now.

The northern Iraq region (home of the PUK and KDP) has a population of 4 million and receives \$1.5 billion every year from the United Nations. In fact, the United Nations doesn't give the money directly. Some 13 percent of the oil exported by Iraq is siphoned off and given to the Kurdish leadership. When this practice was put into effect, the Kurds began pulling in \$500 million as the price of oil was \$10 a barrel.

If you add the income from border crossings at Habur and into Iran, you can come to a figure showing the Kurdish leadership (PUK and KDP) receiving approximately \$3 billion a year. This amounts to an income of about \$1,000 per person, give or take.

It was in this relaxed atmosphere that Barzani pursued his contacts in Ankara. In returning the favor, Barzani invited Turkey to take a piece of the pie. There is still \$700 million to be spent from U.N. funds. This money can only be put aside for essential investment projects like electricity, water, roads and communications.

Barzani pointed this out.

"Why should European firms win all this?" he said. "You should come along and take control of these investment projects. Then, you will get that money." This is a great development. The region is seeing stability and tranquility move in as well as the start of an economic enlivenment. And Turkey is starting to play an important economic role in a region it had once viewed through military operations only.

Where to now?

You see, it's not always bad news...

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DEVLET BAHÇELİ, TURKEY'S LATEST POLITICAL PIVOT

Oct 12th 2000 The Economist by Amberin Zaman

THE Turks are going through one of their bouts of feeling lonely and unloved, despite their government's proclaimed enthusiasm for doing everything it can to modernise the country and tug it westwards, with a view to joining, one day, the European Union. It is bad enough, most Turks feel, to be constantly nagged by high-minded Europeans into being soft on disaffected Kurds and on Islamists seeking to overthrow Turkey's secular order. And it is ghastly to be harangued by lobby groups around the world for massacring rebellious Armenians some 85 years ago in the last days of the Ottoman empire. At least the Americans have usually been understanding allies. But now even they have succumbed to Turkophobia, or so it seems, by letting the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee pass a resolution condemning Turkey for genocide against the Armenians.

Turkish leaders have howled with rage. The left-of-centre prime minister, Bülent Ecevit, has fumed. The head of the army has cancelled a trip to Washington after excoriating the Americans for their own dirty past. The Americans, it is widely said, should be frozen out of future arms deals. Tansu Çiller, a former prime minister and now leader of the conservative opposition, has suggested that the Incirlik air base, from which American aircraft monitor northern Iraq, should be shut down for repairs. For good measure, some 30,000 Armenians working in Turkey should, she adds, be kicked out.

But the one Turkish politician who would once have led a chorus of xenophobic fury has kept almost silent: Devlet Bahçeli. What is the leader of Turkey's far-right National Action Party, who is a deputy prime minister in the ruling coalition, up to?

The short answer is that he is trying to reinvent himself, in style at any rate, in the hope that he will one day be Turkey's prime minister. And at the present rate that idea, preposterous not so many years ago, can no longer be laughed out of court.

His main tactic, plainly, is to shift his party towards the middle ground and make himself more acceptable to middle-class Turks, while continuing to curry favour with the generals, who still have the last word on many big matters. Only three years ago, they squeezed the country's first Islamist government out of power because they thought it threatened to overturn the legacy of Kemal Atatürk, the founder of Turkey's secular state. Playing his new moderate hand, Mr Bahçeli has happily broken old promises by agreeing, among other things, that the death sentence against the rebel Kurds' captured leader, Abdullah Öcalan, should be suspended. But to please the generals, he reversed his Islamic-vote-seeking opinion on the controversial ban on Islamic headscarves in government schools and state offices by saying it should be kept. The result of Mr Bahçeli's recent flexibility is that the odd-looking coalition of centre-left and far right, which took office two years ago, has been much more stable than expected.

It is an extraordinary turnaround. For the party Mr Bahçeli took over three years ago had been best known for its record of thuggery and violence. In the 1970s its vigilantes, known as the Grey Wolves, waged street battles, in which thousands died, against left-wing students. This led to the generals' last

actual coup, in 1980. Before Mr Bahçeli took over, many people in his party were suspected of killing Kurdish dissidents and of extortion rackets.

Today, Mr Bahçeli's Nationalists have become, in many eyes, almost respectable. In the old days, the generals saw them as unsavoury rivals. Now they may look to Mr Bahçeli as a potential ally through whom to air their disapproval, especially of the measures the EU keeps pressing a modicum of respect for human rights, no soldiers in politics before membership negotiations can begin.

But can Mr Bahçeli please everyone at once the generals, the Islamists, the old nationalist right, businessmen, the young, economic liberals? That is what he is trying to do so far, with notable success.

Now 52, he was born into a prosperous farming clan in the south, and honoured by his patriotic parents with a first name that means 'State'. He was educated at a smart boarding school for boys in Istanbul before studying economics at a university in Ankara. Contemporaries found him studious and stony-faced. He was rarely seen out of a suit.

It was then that he fell under the spell of an arch-nationalist colonel and failed coup-plotter, Alparslan Türkeş, who founded the Nationalist Action Party to 'save Turkey from filthy communists'. Mr Bahçeli's one recorded link to violence was in 1978, when he lent his car to some Grey Wolves who were then caught with a cache of guns hidden under some tangerines; Mr Bahçeli said he knew nothing of their plans. Two of those arrested now represent his party in parliament.

Since taking over the party after Mr Türkeş died three years ago, Mr Bahçeli has got rid of many of its seedier elements. Its racist and pan-Turkic slogans have been toned down. But, however mild Mr Bahçeli's style, the party's electoral success has been due to its fierce nationalism, especially towards the Kurds. It has also benefited from the sympathy it gained from Islamists. Corruption in the mainstream parties has helped the Nationalists too: Mr Bahçeli is an ascetic.

He still sounds a nationalist note on such issues as the divided island of Cyprus, vehemently resisting concessions to the Greeks. But then Mr Ecevit, and most other Turks, are obdurate on that score too. Diplomats from EU countries grumble that Turkey has done little, of late, to improve its human-rights behaviour, but few blame Mr Bahçeli. Indeed, several think that, by muting the far right, he has stopped the expected hostility to interference by Brussels (as many Turks see it) from being much uglier.

Mr Bahçeli's makeover has certainly, in the short run, helped keep Turkey calm. Still, his political antecedents are indubitably nasty. He is famously a very private man. He rarely, for instance, talks to the press. But what he really thinks about such things as democracy or torturing Turkey's enemies is still an almighty guess.

* * * * *

Kurdish Assembly Sends Message to Palestinian Leader

Brayati (Arbil) 12 Oct 00

To the President of the Palestinian National Authority, Yasir Arafat; the Speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council:

Warm greetings from Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly. We would like to convey the feelings of the Iraqi Kurdistan people regarding the persistent pain, injustice, oppression, division and separation caused to the Palestinian people. They are deprived of their right to live freely on their land. Palestinians and Kurds are similar as regards religion, humanity and just cause. They, also, suffer the same pain and have the stance, and they need each other. The situation of Palestinian people affects the situation of Kurdish people and opens old and new wounds. For the reasons mentioned above, the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly allocated a part of its eighth sessions of the second term on 10th October 2000 for discussing the circumstances, the struggle and the just cause of the Palestinian people. At this session, the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly announced its support to the just struggle of the Palestinian people and recognized their rights in regaining their homeland and establishing their independent state on their land. We hope that they would achieve a peaceful and just solution. We strongly condemn all oppressive acts against Palestinians and pray to God to help them achieve the aims of their struggle and make them victorious.

[Signed] Dr Roz Nuri Shawes, Speaker of the Iraqi Kurdistan National Assembly, Arbil, 10th October 2000

La Cour des droits de l'Homme condamne Ankara pour tortures



STRASBOURG (Conseil Europe), 10 oct (AFP) - 18h02 - La Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme a condamné mardi la Turquie pour "violation du droit à la vie" d'un enseignant d'origine kurde, tué en 1993, et "torture" à l'encontre de son épouse qui avait porté l'affaire devant la juridiction de Strasbourg.

La requérante, Nebahat Akkoc, dénonçait le meurtre de son mari, Zubeyir Akkoc, un professeur d'origine kurde, engagé dans des activités syndicales, abattu le 13 janvier 1993 par un ou des auteurs inconnus. Elle déplorait aussi l'absence d'enquête effective sur les circonstances de cette mort.

Mme Akkoc, arrêtée en février 1994, se plaignait également d'actes de tortures commis pendant les dix jours de sa détention et des intimidations subies lorsqu'elle avait déposé sa requête devant la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme, le 1er novembre 1993.

Les juges européens ont alloué à la requérante la somme de 35.000 livres sterling (59.049 euros) pour dommage matériel, de 40.000 livres (67.485 euros) pour préjudice moral ainsi que 13.648,80 livres (23.027 euros) au titre des frais et dépens.

La requérante, résidant à Adana, a assuré avoir été dévêtue, frappée, soumise à des chocs électriques, plongée dans de l'eau glacée puis dans de l'eau bouillante, et avoir été exposée à une forte musique ainsi qu'à de violentes lumières.

La Cour européenne, qui a reconnu les actes de torture, a également jugé que les autorités n'avaient pas mené d'enquête efficace sur les circonstances du meurtre de M. Akkoc, lequel n'avait pas bénéficié d'une protection suffisante compte-tenu des risques inhérents à ses activités syndicales.

Dans son jugement, la Cour, tout en soulignant qu'il n'avait pas été établi qu'un agent de l'Etat ait été impliqué dans le meurtre de M. Akkoc, relève toutefois la tendance des autorités turques à imputer la responsabilité de la violence politique au Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK).

Les juges notent ainsi "certaines caractéristiques dans l'application du droit pénal aux actes illégaux prétendument commis avec la participation des forces de l'ordre au cours de la période considérée dans le sud-est de la Turquie".

Les juges européens ont ainsi souligné que les conseils administratifs, chargés d'ouvrir des poursuites pénales lorsqu'une infraction est commise par un agent de l'Etat dans certaines circonstances, ne "garantissaient pas une procédure indépendante et efficace d'enquête sur des décès impliquant des agents de force de l'ordre".

Dans le cadre d'affaires concernant des événements similaires survenus dans la même région à cette époque, les juges relèvent que le procureur omettait "d'instruire les plaintes de personnes affirmant l'implication des forces de l'ordre dans des actes illégaux et avait attribué la responsabilité des incidents au Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) sur la base de preuves minimales".

Dans une seconde affaire, Ankara a également été condamné mardi pour torture. Dix requérants, des prisonniers turcs, se plaignaient d'avoir été frappés par des gendarmes, pour avoir refusé une fouille avant d'être conduits au tribunal.

Une délégation de trois juges de la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme s'est d'autre part rendue en Turquie lundi pour procéder à l'audition, jusqu'à jeudi, de témoins dans le cadre de deux affaires similaires à l'affaire Akkoc.

Sept rebelles du PKK tués par l'armée dans le sud-est, selon les autorités



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 11 oct (AFP) - 9h56 - Sept rebelles kurdes du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) ont été tués et trois soldats turcs blessés lors d'un affrontement dans la province de Sirnak frontalière avec l'Irak et la Syrie, a annoncé l'autorité chargée de l'état d'urgence à Diyarbakir.

Le communiqué ne précise pas quand l'affrontement a eu lieu.

Les affrontements dans l'est et le sud-est ont considérablement diminué depuis que le PKK a annoncé en septembre 1999 qu'il mettait fin à ses quinze ans de lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant, répondant à l'appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort en juin de la même année pour trahison et séparatisme.

Mais l'armée turque a promis de lutter contre les rebelles jusqu'à ce qu'ils se rendent, estimant que leur annonce d'un arrêt des combats était une manœuvre.

Quelque 36.500 personnes ont été tuées en quinze ans dans les violences entourant la rébellion du PKK, selon un bilan officiel.

Des artistes turcs établissent un "pont culturel" avec le sud-est kurde



ISTANBUL, 11 oct (AFP) - 13h17 - Soixante dix artistes turcs vont établir durant quatre jours à partir de samedi un "pont culturel" inédit entre Istanbul, capitale culturelle du pays, et Hakkari, une ville kurde déshéritée vivant encore sous état d'urgence dans l'extrême sud-est.

Cette idée revient à un journaliste et directeur de programmation de festivals, Vecdi Sayar, envoyé l'an dernier en mission dans cette province reculée par le ministère de la Culture.

"En dix jours sur place, j'ai pu constater que cette ville n'avait rien, mais aussi que le gouvernement était incapable d'y faire quoi que ce soit", a-t-il expliqué à l'AFP.

M. Sayar s'est alors promis d'y organiser la plus importante manifestation culturelle jamais vue dans la région, dont le revenu annuel par habitant est quatre fois moindre que dans l'ouest du pays, et dont plusieurs provinces, comme Hakkari, vivent sous état d'urgence depuis 1987.

Cette initiative est entièrement financée par les artistes eux-mêmes, en représentation actuellement à Istanbul pour payer leur séjour et le matériel qu'ils y laisseront.

70 comédiens, écrivains, photographes, peintres, chanteurs et journalistes se produiront ainsi gratuitement du 13 au 17 octobre dans cette ville proche des frontières irakienne et irakienne, et tiendront plusieurs ateliers avec des artistes locaux.

Une bibliothèque de quelque 3.000 ouvrages sera offerte à la population locale, et des bourses seront proposées par des fondations et universités stambouliotes.

Cette manifestation sera l'occasion pour certains chanteurs de s'exprimer en langue kurde, car "la liberté d'expression est encore loin d'être totale" dans le sud-est du pays, a estimé M. Sayar.

La pratique du kurde, tolérée depuis quelques années en Turquie, est l'une des revendications des partis pro-kurdes, qui réclament l'autorisation de médias audio-visuels et l'enseignement dans cette langue non officielle.

La Turquie sort de quinze ans de rébellion séparatiste du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan, qui a annoncé la fin de la lutte armée en septembre 1999. Le conflit a fait quelques 36.500 morts.

Réouverture d'un bureau de défense des droits de l'Homme à Diyarbakir



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 11 oct (AFP) - 12h49 - Le bureau de la principale organisation turque de défense des droits de l'Homme (IHD) à Diyarbakir, capitale du sud-est à majorité kurde, a été rouvert mercredi sur décision des autorités après deux mois de fermeture, a-t-on appris auprès de l'IHD.

"Notre bureau fermé pendant trois mois par les autorités a été rouvert ce jour, un mois avant la date initiale prévue, sur autorisation du gouvernorat de Diyarbakir", précise un communiqué du représentant de l'IHD à Diyarbakir, Osman Baydemir.

Ce bureau avait été fermé en août en raison d'un "danger pour la sécurité publique", selon les autorités de la région de l'état d'urgence.

M. Baydemir s'est félicité de la décision des autorités locales.

L'IHD avait ouvert un bureau à Diyarbakir en 1987, trois ans après le début de la lutte armée du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) pour obtenir la création d'un Etat kurde, et a fait depuis l'objet de plusieurs décisions de fermeture.

La Turquie a déclaré l'état d'urgence dans la plupart des provinces du sud-est en 1987 et a adopté une loi spéciale conférant de larges pouvoirs aux autorités chargées de l'appliquer, y compris le droit de fermer des associations.

Ce régime existe toujours dans quatre provinces sous la tutelle de la superpréfecture de Diyarbakir.

Les combats ont pratiquement cessé dans le sud-est depuis que le PKK a annoncé en septembre 1999 l'abandon de la lutte armée.

La « question kurde », entre réforme et statu quo

Un an et demi après l'arrestation du chef du PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, la revue « Confluences Méditerranée » constate que le pouvoir turc « multiplie des signaux contradictoires » envers les Kurdes

DIX-HUIT MOIS après l'arrestation d'Abdullah Öcalan, le chef du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), où en est la « question kurde » en Turquie ? C'est le thème abordé par la revue trimestrielle *Confluences Méditerranée* dans son numéro de l'été 2000.

« Rien n'a substantiellement changé » depuis la capture du chef de la rébellion armée, constate l'universitaire Gülistan Gurbey, dans un article intitulé « Le pouvoir turc multiplie les signaux contradictoires ». Le gouvernement de la Turquie, déplore l'auteur, coince « entre une politique d'annonce de réformes et le maintien du statu quo » n'a pas réussi « à définir une nouvelle politique kurde ».

Surtout, explique-t-il, la perspective de voir le PKK se transformer en une force politique légale est jugée « encore plus dangereuse » que la stratégie de la violence longtemps prônée par cette organisation. Le renoncement à la lutte armée et les appels à la paix du chef kurde un peu avant sa condamnation à mort, en juin 1999, ne semblent guère avoir été entendus. Il faut dire que « le système Öcalan » tel qu'il est décrit par un autre auteur, Chris Kutschera, jette le doute sur la capacité du PKK à se muer en une force politique ordinaire.

Le journaliste, qui a approché de près les structures internes de ce parti, donne à voir « une longue histoire de dissidences et d'exclusion » au sein d'une organisation « que l'on croyait monolithique ». Mais les révélations de Salahattin Celik, ex-proche d'Öcalan, font froid dans le dos : « Il y a eu plus de cin-



quante à soixante exécutions juste avant le congrès de 1986 (...). Il n'y avait plus de place pour les enterrement ! Certains étaient de simples militants, des Kurdes du Liban accusés d'être des "agents", coupables "de ne pas exécuter les ordres" (...). L'objectif d'Öcalan était de montrer sa force, de faire peur. »

UN FILM CONTROVERSÉ

Loin d'Öcalan et de sa revendication d'un Etat kurde, Kendal Nezan retrace, dans une excellente étude, l'histoire de la constitution du nationalisme identitaire chez ce peuple de près de trente millions d'âmes, écartelé entre quatre pays du Proche-Orient et porteur d'une culture très ancienne, héritée de celle des Mèdes, peuple qui définit la puissante Assyrie en l'an 612 avant notre ère. L'auteur, directeur de l'Institut kurde de Paris, explique comment l'empire ottoman, qui « se voulait avant tout l'Etat universel des musulmans », accorda, entre

le XVI^e et le début du XIX^e, une grande autonomie aux provinces kurdes. Particulièrement éclairante, l'analyse de Nicolas Monceau, consacrée au traitement de la « question kurde » à travers le cinéma en dit long sur les contradictions dont est pétrie la société turque d'aujourd'hui. Ainsi le film *Voyage vers le soleil* de la réalisatrice Yesim Ustaoglu – qui narre l'amitié tragique de deux jeunes hommes, l'un Turc, l'autre Kurde – va connaître un accueil mitigé à sa sortie dans le pays, en 1999 : « Présenté en avril 1999 aux festivals internationaux d'Istanbul et d'Ankara, le film obtient tous les prix et reçoit l'ovation du public, mais ne trouve pas de distributeurs en Turquie », où il faudra attendre le 3 mars 2000 pour voir sa sortie en salle.

Salué parce qu'il osait montrer certaines des « réalités turques » (violence policière, exode des populations kurdes), le film fut aussi violemment critiqué pour avoir induit l'idée d'une discrimination envers les Kurdes : le jeune héros turc, mat de peau et détenteur d'une arme, va connaître un sort peu enviable parce qu'il est pris par erreur pour un « terroriste » kurde. Mais, même « passé sous silence par les médias turcs », le film est finalement montré – y compris dans les provinces kurdes et sans qu'aucune coupe n'ait été exigée – et connaît un certain succès, preuve que le problème de la redéfinition de l'identité nationale en Turquie est tout de même d'actualité.

Marie Jégo

Mystères de l'errance

Le Tableau noir. Dans les montagnes du Kurdistan iranien, une vision de la misère de la guerre

Film iranien de Samira Makhmalbaf. Avec Bahman Gohbadi, Sâid Mohamadi, Behnaz Jafari (1 h 25).

Comme une colonne d'insectes, des hommes portent sur leur dos un tableau noir dans la montagne. Il y a, dans les premières images du film de Samira Makhmalbaf, un degré

d'abstraction graphique qui captive : les silhouettes de ces instituteurs sont corrigées par le grand rectangle des tableaux ; les montagnes nues forment un arrière-plan magnifique, indéchiffrable. En contrepoint à ces images qui ne disent rien d'immédiat, qui ouvrent un champ infini de possibilités, les répliques qu'échangent les porteurs de tableaux bombardent d'informations sans grâce (à

moins que les sous-titres n'appauvrissent les dialogues). Ces hommes sont des instituteurs à la recherche d'élèves. Ils errent au nord de l'Iran, près de la frontière avec l'Irak, dans une contrée où les séquelles de la guerre entre les deux pays comme la persistance de la revendication nationale kurde ont installé durablement la guerre et la misère.

Il y avait donc une explication à

ces mystères, et tout le film sera construit de cette manière, posant des énigmes à coups d'images absurdes et hypnotisantes, tentant de les résoudre par l'information, par la pédagogie, exactement comme ces instituteurs qui tentent d'insuffler un peu de savoir dans ces terres sans raison. Très vite, le groupe initial se disperse, et le film s'attache aux pas de deux hommes qui à leur tour se

séparent à la fourche de deux chemins. C'est que la jeune Samira Makhmalbaf (vingt-quatre ans) est parfois prise dans son système de mise en scène. La beauté des figures qu'elle trace à l'écran et l'originalité de ses idées de cadrage ne suffisent pas toujours à donner chair et grâce à sa frénésie symbolique.

LE POUVOIR DE MONTRER

C'est le cas pour cette scène de séparation. Cet agacement va croissant pendant un long moment, celui que la cinéaste consacre à Reeboor (joué par le réalisateur Bahman Ghobadi), qui a rejoint un groupe

d'enfants contrebandiers. Malgré la spontanéité brute des enfants comédiens, malgré le tragique de situation (ces gamins sont coincés entre les exigences des caïds de la contrebande et des douaniers à la gâchette facile), on finit par avoir envie de les laisser sur place. Le tableau noir devient l'accessoire d'une salle de classe cinématographique dont la réalisatrice-institutrice ne laissera sortir aucun élève-spectateur avant qu'il n'ait assimilé la leçon.

On parle ici d'un petit quart du film. Heureusement - miracle du montage alterné -, Saïd, l'autre instituteur (joué par un comédien non

professionnel, Saïd Mohamadi, au jeu d'une simplicité irréprochable), a croisé l'errance d'une troupe de vieillards qui cherche à regagner son village en Irak. Ils sont accompagnés d'une jeune veuve et de son enfant. Le système de Samira Makhmalbaf s'épanouit alors. Entre la réalité, cent fois montrée à la télévision, du malheur des réfugiés et l'inventivité de la cinéaste s'établit une harmonie terrible. La volonté de démontrer devient pouvoir de montrer. Ce qui était rabâchage devient, par la grâce d'une inspiration sans faille, l'évocation lumineuse de la misère de vies consacrées à échapper à la mort.

Il faut faire la part de la contrainte dans cette manière de faire du cinéma. Des interdits encore en vigueur en Iran, Samira Makhmalbaf a fait la matière (le drame kurde, jamais explicitement nommé) et la manière (la disposition dans l'espace de l'homme et de la femme à l'écran) de son film. Elle affronte ces difficultés avec une rage et un brio qui font penser que, demain, quand il sera possible d'appeler les gens et les choses par leur nom, Samira Makhmalbaf continuera de faire des films indispensables.

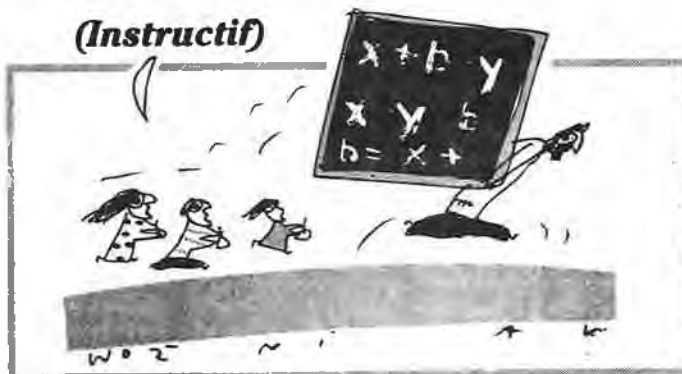
Thomas Sotinel

« Le Canard enchaîné » - Mercredi 11 octobre 2000

Le Cinéma

Le tableau noir

(Instructif)



PARTAGÉ entre plusieurs pays, le Kurdistan n'évite ni la domination ni la cruauté. Ici, c'est un bombardement qui vient de frapper le Kurdistan iranien.

Problème pour les enseignants kurdes : faire malgré tout la classe. C'est ainsi que des instituteurs, tableau noir accroché au dos, parcourent des villages pour y trouver des élèves. Mais beaucoup de jeunes et aussi de moins jeunes arpentent les montagnes pour gagner clandestinement l'Irak. Exode périlleux en raison des mines jalonnant les chemins et des tirs de soldats frontaliers.

La plupart des interprètes de cette aventure ont été recrutés sur place. Réalisatrice du film, Samira Makhmalbaf, 20 ans, a écrit le scénario avec son père, l'intelligent et sensible cinéaste iranien Mohsen

Makhmalbaf. Pour les séquences réussies du « Tableau noir » (d'autres le sont moins), la jeune Samira ne pouvait être à meilleure école.

Jean-Paul Grousset

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2000

Turkey to Pump More Oil From Iraq

ANKARA — Turkey is preparing to resume full pumping from an Iraqi oil pipeline — a move seen as retaliation against a proposed U.S. resolution recognizing the Turkish killings of Armenians as genocide.

Under UN sanctions stemming from Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, Iraq's ability to trade is severely limited. The pipeline, which runs from the Iraqi oil fields in Kirkuk to Turkey's Mediterranean port of Yumurtalik, has been pumping limited oil to let Iraq make enough money to buy food and medicine. Turkey now wants to increase the pumping.

The twin pipeline is now working at available capacity of nearly 1 million barrels a day — some 600,000 barrels short of its maximum capacity. (AP)

Legislators Seek Tough Iran Policy

WASHINGTON — A majority of members of the House of Representatives and more than 20 senators Wednesday called for tougher U.S. policies toward Iran, saying Tehran continues to violate human rights and President Mohammed Khatami has failed to bring about any improvement.

Some 225 House members and 28 senators said executions, torture, attacks on dissidents abroad and the recent trial by an Islamic court of 13 Iranian Jews behind closed doors "lead us to conclude that any talk of political openness or moderation is ill advised." (Reuters)

BRÈVE RENCONTRE AVEC...

Samira Makhmalbaf

20 ans à Téhéran

Elle a l'énergie imprudente de ses 20 ans. Elle parle vite, très vite. Toujours avec passion. Fille de son père, le grand cinéaste Mohsen Makhmalbaf, elle est aujourd'hui mère de deux films, « la Pomme » et « le Tableau noir ». Samira n'est pas une enfant prodige mais une jeune fille iranienne avide de liberté et impatiente de prouver que la vraie foi, celle que l'on place dans les autres et dans la création, peut déplacer des montagnes. Couverte d'honneurs dans les festivals du monde entier, y compris à Cannes où elle a obtenu le prix du jury, elle refuse de se laisser étourdir. Elle sait qu'elle a encore tant de choses à dire, à vivre et à filmer.

Le Nouvel Observateur.— Vous avez de la chance : votre père, le grand cinéaste Mohsen Makhmalbaf, est sans doute l'homme le plus féministe d'Iran.

Samira Makhmalbaf.— C'est vrai, il m'a inculqué la belle idée d'égalité des sexes et donné le courage de créer. Son éducation a été un vrai cadeau. Une école de liberté. Je suis fière de pouvoir prouver aux jeunes Iraniennes que le monde de la création ne leur est pas interdit. Quel bonheur après le tournage du « Tableau noir » dans les montagnes du Kurdistan iranien d'entendre des jeunes filles kurdes dire qu'elles aussi souhaitaient « diriger » des films. Mon exemple leur montre qu'il ne faut jamais renoncer.

N.O.— Une jeune fille dirigeant une centaine de villageois kurdes qui ne connaissent rien au cinéma, c'est une expérience inédite.

S. Makhmalbaf.— Etrangement, ce fut beaucoup plus facile

que lors du tournage de « la Pomme » à Téhéran. En ville, une femme a toujours tort. Elle est en permanence exposée aux regards agressifs ou concupiscent des hommes. Au Kurdistan, les gens sont beaucoup plus ouverts. Plus simples. Plus respectueux de votre personne. Les conditions de tournage, en raison soit de l'extrême chaleur soit du grand froid, ont été très dures. Pour la scène où les vieillards se jettent dans l'eau glacée de la rivière, j'y suis allée la première et j'ai dirigé la scène complètement trempée. Ils ont tous apprécié.

N.O.— « Le Tableau noir » raconte la vie errante et périlleuse de trois générations, ballottées entre l'Iran et l'Irak par la guerre. Enfants, contrebandiers, instituteurs itinérants, vieillards à la recherche de leur village natal, tous portent un fardeau sur leurs épaules.

S. Makhmalbaf.— C'est une métaphore. A la fois de leur courage physique – le film veut créer chez le spectateur des sensations physiques – et de leur force morale. Tout le monde, dans cet univers de survie, porte sa croix avec une dignité admirable. Mon film leur rend hommage.

N.O.— N'est-il pas difficile, à 20 ans, d'être déjà un symbole pour la jeunesse iranienne ? Quelle responsabilité !

S. Makhmalbaf.— Cette responsabilité ne me pèse pas. Elle me pousse au contraire à aller plus loin. Le rôle des artistes est de faire bouger les frontières mentales. Il faut pour cela déployer beaucoup d'énergie. Mais le jeu en vaut la chandelle. Je sais que je ne suis pas seule, que l'Iran est un pays jeune – 60% de la population a moins de 20 ans – et que c'est à nous de transformer les choses. Il y a déjà en Iran une dizaine de réalisatrices femmes. Ce n'est pas assez. Notre exemple doit donner aux autres le courage de se lancer dans l'aventure. Ma force, aujourd'hui, c'est peut-être mon inconscience. Je fais du cinéma par amour.

C'est pour cela que j'ai la folie de croire que rien ne pourra m'arrêter.

GILLES ANQUETIL



Plus de 450 clandestins débarquent à Otrante



ROME, 11 oct (AFP) - 16h28 - Abandonnés en pleine mer sur un cargo turc, 462 clandestins, dont une majorité de Kurdes originaires d'Irak, ont pu débarquer mercredi dans le port italien d'Otrante (sud-est), a-t-on appris auprès des gardes-côtes.

Repéré par les gardes-côtes italiens mardi soir à plus de 20 miles des côtes italiennes, le navire "Diler" a été conduit jusqu'à Otrante par un équipage italien monté à bord au cours de la nuit. Le vieux cargo turc a été escorté par des vedettes de la Marine italienne.

Trois immigrés dont deux femmes enceintes ont dû être hospitalisés.

Les clandestins, dont près de la moitié sont des femmes et des enfants, avaient été abandonnés en pleine mer par l'équipage du navire qui a réussi à échapper aux recherches.

Parmi ces immigrés figurent également des Turcs, des Pakistanais, des Afghans, cinq Indiens, trois Syriens, un Sénégalais et deux Palestiniens, a-t-on précisé de source policière.

"Les malheureux allaient vers une mort certaine", a commenté le ministre de l'Intérieur Enzo Bianco au cours d'une conférence de presse à Rome. Selon M. Bianco les passeurs appartiennent à "une organisation criminelle des plus dangereuses, et sont d'une violence inouïe".

Les immigrés ont été conduits dans un centre d'accueil d'Otrante pour y être identifiés. Seuls les 345 Kurdes irakiens peuvent prétendre au statut de réfugiés, a indiqué le ministre de l'Intérieur.

Selon les premiers témoignages recueillis, les immigrés ont embarqué à Izmir en Turquie et payé 2.500 dollars par adulte et la moitié par enfant pour le voyage.

Afin d'éviter de nouveaux débarquements, M. Bianco a souhaité une meilleure collaboration des autorités turques avec la police italienne. "On peut et on doit faire plus", a-t-il dit.

Le ministre de l'Intérieur a précisé qu'au cours des neuf premiers mois de l'année, la police a appréhendé 21.000 clandestins qui venaient de débarquer contre 43.000 lors de la même période de 1999. Selon M. Bianco, 50.000 immigrés en situation irrégulière ont été expulsés entre le 1er janvier et le 30 septembre.

Hozat aspire à une vie "normale" après 15 ans de guerre (REPORTAGE)



HOZAT (Turquie), 15 oct (AFP) - 3h40 - Sous une musique assourdissante provenant des haut-parleurs installés devant un mini-terrain de football, les habitants de Hozat (est), auparavant théâtre de violents combats entre l'armée et les rebelles kurdes, aspirent à un retour à une vie normale.

Dans cette ville de 7.000 habitants, chef-lieu de la province de Tunceli, les militaires sont encore omniprésents bien que les combats y aient pratiquement cessé depuis que le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) a annoncé qu'il mettait fin à quinze ans de lutte armée pour un Etat kurde indépendant en septembre 1999.

"Maintenant que le PKK est terminé, il faut que l'activité économique normale reprenne", dit à l'AFP Ali Yilmaz, un grossiste de 26 ans, près du petit stade construit et inauguré par l'armée, qui a organisé dans la région un voyage de deux jours pour la presse.

Contrastant avec l'un des derniers tubes américains qui jaillit des enceintes installées devant le terrain, l'atmosphère est morose dans la ville, malgré la récente levée d'un "embargo" sur la nourriture imposé en 1994 par les autorités sur Tunceli.

Les habitants n'avaient droit qu'à une quantité limitée de farine, huile, thé et produits légumineux de crainte qu'un surplus ne tombe entre les mains de maquisards kurdes.

"Nous respirons un peu, maintenant. L'armée a fait ce qu'elle avait à faire, maintenant c'est aux civils de faire en sorte que cette ville prospère", estime M. Yilmaz. Il souhaite que les habitants de la région qui ont fui la guerre en émigrant vers les grandes villes reviennent à Hozat et y investissent.

Faute de fonds du gouvernement à Ankara, c'est l'armée qui a restauré le "Cemevi", centre religieux de la communauté Alévie (secte musulmane progressiste), fortement implantée dans la région, souligne-t-il.

A cause de la guerre, l'élevage pratiqué par de dizaines de villages aux alentours est "mort", affirme Kadir Yildirim, 60 ans, du village proche de Beselma. Il souligne que l'armée a fourni à des villageois le matériel nécessaire pour se lancer dans l'apiculture, achetant aussi une partie de leur miel.

Mais cela ne suffit pas pour faire redécoller l'activité dans la région.

Tunceli est l'une des quatre provinces de l'est et du sud-est à majorité kurde où l'état d'urgence, proclamé en 1987, est encore en vigueur. Le terrain très accidenté est particulièrement propice aux activités des maquisards, expliquent les militaires.

Selon le général Dursun Bak, commandant en chef de la région, environ 70 membres du PKK sont encore présents à Tunceli, ainsi qu'une vingtaine de membres de l'Armée de libération des travailleurs et paysans de Turquie (TIKKO, maoïste), qui coopère selon l'armée avec le PKK.

"Des affrontements ont toujours lieu, il s'agit d'être vigilants contre ces militants qui reçoivent directement des ordres du PKK", dit-il à la presse. "Nous sommes déterminés à mener le combat jusqu'à ce que la région soit nettoyée du dernier de ces terroristes".

Le PKK, répondant à l'appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort pour trahison et séparatisme en juin 1999, a annoncé en septembre qu'il arrêterait les combats et se retirait de Turquie.

Mais l'armée a rejeté cet appel, mettant en doute sa sincérité, et a demandé aux militants de se rendre faute de quoi elle les poursuivrait jusqu'au bout. Sept rebelles ont ainsi été tués récemment encore dans la province de Sirnak, frontalière avec l'Irak et la Syrie.

L'armée tente de lancer le mariage civil dans le sud-est (REPORTAGE)



YUKARI CICEKDERE (Turquie), 15 oct (AFP) - 3h39 - "Acceptez-vous de vous prendre pour époux et épouse et de vous respecter mutuellement?": l'officier de l'état civil s'adresse à dix couples qui s'unissent par un mariage collectif en plein air organisé par l'armée dans le hameau déshérité de Yukari Cicekdere (sud-est), sous les regards effarés des enfants.

La cérémonie civile fait partie d'une campagne de l'armée intitulée "Que ton témoin soit un militaire", qui vise à éradiquer le mariage religieux, interdit par les lois du régime laïque de la Turquie, pays musulman, mais toléré dans l'est et le sud-est à majorité kurde où le mariage civil reste rare.

Des regards timides et parfois gênés s'échangent entre les mariés, assis côte à côte au bout d'une table. Une scène similaire se déroule autour de neuf autres tables installées devant la petite école de Yukari Cicekdere, dans la province de Bingol.

Le marié, en costume, a pour témoin en uniforme le capitaine Turgas Aras, et la mariée, habillée d'une tunique pourpre, sa femme Yesim.

"Nous avons été mariés il y a un an par l'imam", indique à l'AFP en souriant Abdulsamet Cetkin, 18 ans. Sa femme Nahide, 16 ans, a du mal à s'exprimer en turc et ses propos sont traduits du Kurde par son mari. "Je suis contente de me marier comme ça. C'est officiel", dit-elle.

L'armée est très présente dans la vie sociale de cette région ravagée par 15 ans de conflit avec le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui a mis fin l'an dernier à sa rébellion. Outre les mariages, elle organise aussi la circoncision des garçons dans les villages pauvres.

Le gouverneur de Bingol Mustafa Ozmen fait un discours et appelle les villageois à ne plus pratiquer le mariage religieux qui "réduit à néant" les droits des femmes.

Les couples scellent leur alliance sous les applaudissements et certains sous les regards de leurs propres enfants, qui profitent ensuite des cadeaux et sucreries distribués par les soldats.

Le marié a droit à une montre, l'épouse à un bracelet en or.

"C'est plus difficile que d'être soldat", confie le capitaine Aras soulagé au terme de la cérémonie.

Un peu plus loin, la mariée pose fièrement avec son livret de famille pour les photographes avec son mari "officiel".

Summum des festivités, des danses folkloriques. Mais si l'heure est au mariage civil, elle n'est pas encore à la mixité: deux rondes, une pour les hommes, l'autre pour les femmes, sont immédiatement formées à quelques mètres de distance.

Le Monde

VENDREDI 13 OCTOBRE 2000

Un romancier victime de sa parole publique

Alors que les lecteurs français découvrent enfin Ahmet Altan, l'écrivain turc est traduit en justice pour avoir écrit il y a un an un article dénonçant la mainmise des militaires sur l'Etat

COMME UNE BLESSURE DE SABRE

d'Ahmet Altan.
Traduit du turc
par Alfred Depeyrat,
Actes Sud, 382 p.,
149 F (22,71 €).

On connaît assez mal la littérature turque en France, et l'éditeur a raison de la promouvoir dans une nouvelle collection. Le choix du premier auteur paraissait s'imposer. Altan devrait séduire, au moins intéresser la critique occidentale. Ecrivain, fils d'écrivain, c'est aussi un journaliste courageux qui ne mâche pas ses mots et que les militaires, si influents dans son pays, ont toutes les raisons de détester. Auteur à succès, il est pour la première fois traduit en France avec ce roman, son cinquième. Les personnages y fourmillent un peu trop, leurs noms et leurs titres déconcerteront les non-spécialistes, mais l'auteur a réussi sa tentative ambitieuse de peindre la Turquie d'aujourd'hui à travers une sorte d'allégorie historique.

L'action se déroule à un moment crucial de l'histoire du pays, les années de feu qui amenèrent un groupe d'officiers à renverser en 1909 le dernier sultan : Abdulhamid. Altan décrit la déliquescence de l'empire. Le souverain règne en manipulant des pachas corrompus qui ne cessent de conspirer les uns contre les autres pour améliorer leur position, ou le luxe de leurs palais, ou les parures de leurs favorites. Ces intrigues de sérail enchantent l'auteur. Il en multiplie les exemples avec une certaine complaisance, est-ce parce que les choses n'ont pas tellement changé ? En tout cas, il les raconte bien.

Mais on s'intéresse davantage aux origines et aux progrès de la rébellion des militaires. C'est l'aspect politique du livre, qui rappelle le Sartre des *Mains sales* par l'ur-

gence et la complexité des questions posées. Pour les jeunes officiers qui souhaitent renouveler l'Etat, faut-il agir comme les maquisards bulgares qu'ils combattent ? Faut-il même les combattre puisqu'ils luttent eux aussi pour la liberté ? Déposer les armes : serait-ce trahir la patrie ? Mais qu'est-ce au juste que la patrie pour un Ottoman ? Peut-on se cantonner dans une identité turque (le mot réapparaît à cette époque) ? On sait que ce choix racial fut finalement accepté contre le cosmopolitisme plus ou moins bienveillant de la Porte, et qu'il mènera entre autres au génocide des Arméniens.

Le personnage le plus intéressant du livre, le cheikh Effendi, incarne la religion, son pouvoir immense, ses doutes devant la désagrégation du système. Il s'agit d'un ascète qui dirige de son monastère une secte musulmane dont les adeptes se multiplient sans cesse, attirés par les vertus du saint homme. Or, sous son extrême bonté, sa patience infinie, ses silences légendaires, le cheikh souffre d'une culpabilité atroce. Il est en effet la proie d'une, puis de deux femmes délébiles. C'est là un autre thème du livre, assez artificiellement inséré dans l'action. La belle Mehparé rivalise en beauté avec sa belle-mère. L'une, échauffée par le triolisme, se livre aux plaisirs en compagnie de son époux, qu'elle finira par quitter pour d'autres débordements ; l'autre plus avide de pouvoir, se réjouit au contraire d'inspirer le désir des hommes sans jamais l'assouvir. Tous les personnages principaux appartiennent au même groupe familial ou y entreront par alliance. Un de leurs descendants, sorte de témoin moderne qui interroge leurs spectres, sert d'appui au narrateur. Le procédé est original mais trop laborieusement exploité pour donner l'unité à ce texte complexe, fort élégamment traduit.

Jean Soublin

Le romancier turc Ahmet Altan est menacé de sept ans d'emprisonnement après avoir critiqué le poids de l'armée dans son pays dans un article paru un an plus tôt dans l'hebdomadaire *Aktuel*. Son procès a commencé jeudi 5 octobre, à Istanbul, en l'absence du romancier, qui était en France pour la sortie de son nouveau livre, *Comme une blessure de sabre*, qui paraît chez Actes Sud (lire ci-contre).

La décision est intervenue près d'un an après la parution de l'article.

« En Turquie les auteurs ressemblent à des gibiers qui courent, mais on ne sait jamais quand les chasseurs vont tirer. Cette incertitude est créée pour exercer une vraie pression sur les écrivains », explique Ahmed Altan.

Dans cet article, Ahmet Altan s'interrogeait : « Qui donc gouverne ce pays ? Est-ce que ce sont les généraux qui gouvernent ce pays ? » Il dénonçait ensuite l'impuissance des hommes politiques : « L'état-major des armées non seulement n'a ouvert aucune enquête contre un officier sur lequel porte la lourde accusation de responsabilité de la mort de citoyens de ce pays, mais il s'est mis à faire peur aux députés auteurs de ce rapport, demandant au parquet de les poursuivre. L'état-major des armées peut donc engager des poursuites contre des députés, mais le Parlement peut-il engager des poursuites contre un général ou un quelconque officier ? » L'écrivain est rentré en Turquie pour assister à son procès et se défendre. « En tant que romancier je ne devrais peut-être m'occuper que de mes livres, explique-t-il, mais je suis obligé de me prononcer sur le terrain politique. C'est mon devoir de citoyen. » Son père, Çetin Altan, était également romancier, journaliste et député socialiste. Il a été condamné à plu-

sieurs peines d'emprisonnement pour ses prises de position.

Né en 1950, Ahmet Altan lutte depuis près de trente ans en faveur de la démocratie. Journaliste, il a été notamment rédacteur en chef du quotidien de centre-gauche *Milliyet*, dans lequel il a écrit en 1995 un article satirique contre la politique à l'égard des Kurdes, intitulé « Atakurde », qui lui valut d'être licencié et condamné par la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat à vingt mois de prison avec sursis.

Il a publié plusieurs romans, qui ont dépassé les 100 000 exemplaires en Turquie. Son deuxième livre, *La Trace sur l'eau*, publié en 1985, a été condamné pour « atteinte aux bonnes mœurs » et a été brûlé, en raison de passages jugés « obscènes ». Ahmet Altan a écrit, avec Orhan Pamuk et Yachar Kemal, « une déclaration pour les droits de l'homme (et des droits culturels des Kurdes) et de la démocratie en Turquie ». Soutenue par Elie Wiesel, Günter Grass, Umberto Eco, José Saramago, Arthur Miller, Ingmar Bergman, etc., Ahmet Altan regrette le peu d'écho qu'elle a suscité dans les médias de son pays.

De nombreux écrivains et journalistes sont régulièrement condamnés en Turquie, notamment après des prises de position sur la question kurde.

Fin 1999, il y avait près de quatre-vingts journalistes en prison, malgré une amnistie votée en août. Ces dernières années, les écrivains Ismail Besikci, Yilmaz Odabas et l'auteur turc le plus connu, Yachar Kemal, ont eu affaire à la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat. Le dramaturge Esber Yagmurdereli avait été arrêté pendant le Festival international de théâtre d'Istanbul (*Le Monde* du 6 juin 1998). Ahmet Altan constate : « Etre jugé et peut-être condamné fait partie du métier d'écrivain en Turquie. »

Alain Salles

KNK's Vanli Writes to Sezer Proposing Solution to Kurdish Problem

Ozgun Politika 13 Oct 00

In a letter to Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, Kurdish National Congress [KNK] Chairman Ismet Serif Vanli demanded that the Kurdish problem be resolved. Stressing that within the KNK, there are 28 Kurdish political parties and organizations, including the PKK [Workers Party of Kurdistan], the nine-page letter emphasized that the KNK represents the Kurdish people. Reportedly, the KNK sent this letter on 16 June in order to congratulate Sezer on his presidency. Vanli wished Sezer success on behalf of "the Kurdish people and the KNK."

Recalling that prior to his election, Sezer issued statements that aroused hope with regard to Turkey's democratization, the letter continued as follows: "We sincerely hope that the 10th president will lay the constitutional foundations of a new and democratic Turkey. We also hope that he will carry Turkey into the third millenium in a manner that is in line with the spirit of the age by resolving the Kurdish problem through peaceful means."

We Are in Favor of a Solution

Drawing attention to the fact that the Kurdish people do not have the right to present their views about Turkey's future, the letter continued as follows: "Honorable president, our sole aim is the happiness and progress of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples. We are in favor of a free unity that is guaranteed by a new and democratic constitution, which is based on respect for human rights as well as equal and democratic rights and duties. We only want to assist in solving the problems through dialogue." Emphasizing that despite the fact that the PKK has ended war and has withdrawn its forces outside Turkey's border, the Turkish Army continues to launch operations, KNK Chairman Vanli demanded that such military operations be ended immediately.

A General Amnesty that Includes Ocalan

Noting that a general amnesty is primarily necessary for the solution of the problems, Vanli demanded the following: "We believe that it will be best to pass a general amnesty that includes the PKK guerrillas and members, as well as PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. The general amnesty should also include honorable Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, and many other thought criminals who are incarcerated despite the fact that they have never participated in armed struggle." Noting that he wants to visit Sezer in the Cankaya Mansion, Vanli stressed that the KNK is ready to fulfill all its duties in order to contribute to solving the Kurdish problem.

A Long List of Problems

The following is KNK Chairman Prof. Vanli's proposals regarding the solution of the problem:

1. OHAL [State of Emergency], which has been in effect in a great number of Kurdish provinces since 1987, as well as all other emergency measures should be lifted. All village guards, special teams, and paramilitary forces should be disbanded.
2. Efforts should be made to ensure the return of Kurds who have been evacuated from their villages and districts. Their damages should be compensated by the state.
3. Political executions, torture, and "murders committed by anonymous people" should be stopped. Those who encourage such murders should be captured and punished by law.
4. All bans with regard to freedom of thought and organization should be removed. All political parties that do not use arms, including parties whose names include the words 'Kurd' and 'Kurdistan,' should be granted the authority to act freely.
5. All constraints and injustices with regard to religious and sect differences should be ended. Freedom of faith and awareness should be applied.
6. All bans on the Kurdish language and culture should be removed. The Kurdish language should be freely used in all fields of life -- the media, mass communications organs, radio and television, public and private schools, education, colleges, and universities.
7. Turkey should develop special programs and plans to revive the economic infrastructure in Kurdistan.

How Many Lives for Kurdish Cats? German group claims Turks are eradicating endangered species

Los Angeles Times - 14 Oct 2000

Amberin Zaman, Los Angeles Times

Van, Turkey -- This nation's powerful army has long been accused by Western rights groups of gross abuses in its 15-year battle against separatist Kurdish rebels. Since the rebels' defeat last year, however, the allegations have diminished along with the Kurds' demands for independence.

But now an obscure German group is charging that Turkish soldiers have begun a campaign to exterminate an endangered species of cat that lives in and around the remote eastern province of Van, bordering Iran.

Based in Dusseldorf and calling itself the SOS Van Cats Rescue Action, the newly formed group claims that during the past month alone, the Turkish military has "poisoned" as many as 200 of the cats named after their native province.

"The Turkish state wants to wipe out everything that symbolizes Kurdish culture," Florian Cremer, a spokeswoman for the group, charged in a recent interview with the Turkish weekly *Aydinlik*. "The cats are Kurdish, and the Turkish authorities are unable to digest this."

Experts remain divided on the origins of this exotic breed, which has snow-white fur and usually one blue and one green eye. It loves to swim in Van's huge lake and is said to behave more like a dog than a cat. Local legend has it that the felines were part of Noah's cargo and left the ark when the flood waters receded and the vessel came to rest on the peak of Mount Ararat, about 100 miles northeast of the city of Van. Others say the breed evolved from an Egyptian strain brought into Van more than 3,000 years ago.

Now, apparently in response to the Germans, Turkish nationalists have been quoted in recent news reports as insisting that Van cats, like the latter-day Turks, came from Central Asia.

Denying the Kurds' existence as a distinct ethnic group and repressing their culture has been state policy since the founding of the Turkish republic more than 70 years ago. Up until 1991, Turkey's estimated 12 million Kurds were forbidden to use their own language in public.

Today, as Turkey readies itself for membership in the European Union, leading Turkish politicians have been taking turns acknowledging what a former president, Suleyman Demirel, described as "the Kurdish reality." Claims that the Turkish army is slaughtering the cats because they are Kurdish are ridiculed even by the army's harshest critics here.

Nowhere do they provoke more scorn than at a recently established center at the local state university that is seeking to rescue the breed from extinction. According to Zahit Agaoglu, the professor running the project, the local governor and military officials contributed generously toward the construction last year of a large cat shelter on campus.

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Changes to running mine-removal operations in Kurdish region

Kurdistan TV 15 Oct 00

In order to increase the efficiency of mine-removal work in Kurdistan, the Mine-Removal Directorate at the Ministry of Humanitarian Aid and Cooperation implemented substantial changes in its programme. This was done to supervise the work of all foreign and local NGOs directly in the mine-removal work.

In [Iraqi] Kurdistan region, UNOPS is the only NGO that benefits from Resolution 986's oil revenue. The other NGO is MAG [Mines Advisory Group], receives financial aid from Britain. Apart from those, newly-formed Kurdistan Mine-Removal organization is another one. Its work at present is mainly concentrated on the protection aspect and it will expand it to mine removal. Sirat Jihad, director of the Mine-Removal Directorate at the Ministry of Humanitarian Aid and Cooperation, said to our television: According to Kurdistan regional government's guidelines, the directorate has adopted new programmes in order to bring expertise in mine-removal fields into the Kurdish NGOs. Apart from the reason that

the process will be a lengthy one [should the current system continue]. Most of the mine-removal staff are Kurds and there should be a Kurdish executive board to run their affairs.

In this respect, Dr Shafiq Qazzaz, Minister of Humanitarian Aid and Cooperation, said: The large number of mine fields is a source of great concern. Over the years Kurdistan's land sustained many mine accidents. According to Resolution 986, UNOPS is carrying out the mine-removal work. But the work done by the aforementioned NGO has not been proportional to the number of mine fields.

The minister for Humanitarian Aid and Cooperation yesterday in UNOPS office in Ayn Kawa [Arbil] chaired a meeting on reviewing the progress of mine-removal work over the seven phases of Resolution 986 and improving performance.

Following the meeting they visited some of the mine-fields.

It is worth mentioning that 911 sq.km. of Kurdistan's land is planted with mines that sums up to 10m mines. According to other reports they are more than 20m, anti-personnel and anti-tank mines.

According to its data since the start of its work, UNOPS removed less than 200 anti-tank and 300 anti-personnel mines. These figures are much less than the actual number of mines in Kurdistan.

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PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE: Office of the Spokesman

Worldwide Caution October 17, 2000

The American Embassy in Ankara made the following announcement to the local American community in Turkey. It is being repeated here for the broader American community: For approximately the last two weeks, the U.S. Embassy in Ankara has been the scene of peaceful, daily demonstrations related to the Armenian Genocide Resolution now pending in the U. S. House of Representatives. The U.S. Consulate General in Istanbul has also been the focus of several peaceful demonstrations.

The House of Representatives is expected to vote on the resolution shortly. Depending on the outcome, Turkish groups may stage wider protests. American citizens should be alert to the possibility of demonstrations in cities with large expatriate Turkish populations. All American citizens should remain vigilant with regard to their personal security. They should exercise caution, avoid large crowds and gatherings, keep a low profile, and vary routes and times of all required travel.

This Public Announcement will expire on November 3, 2000.

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Turk police arrest Kurd party official in southeast

Reuters 17 Oct 2000

ANKARA, Oct 17 (Reuters) - Turkey's main legal Kurdish party said on Tuesday police had arrested a local party official in the mainly Kurdish southeast after finding "illegal documents" at his house.

The People's Democracy Party (HADEP), which faces a possible legal ban on charges of collaborating with Kurdish separatist guerrillas, said the arrest was part of an official crackdown intended to prevent the party establishing itself in the region.

HADEP won control of many local administrations in the southeast in 1999 elections but failed to achieve a 10 percent national threshold needed to win seats in parliament. In a statement faxed to Reuters, HADEP said its chief in the southeast town of Cizre, Mehmet Dilsiz, was detained on Sunday after receiving threats telling him to resign. The party called for his immediate release. Police were not immediately available for comment. The detention followed the arrest of another HADEP official in the province of Simak last month after security officials found "weaponry and illegal documents" in his car.

HADEP advocates a negotiated solution to 16 years of armed struggle between security forces and the Kurdish rebels that has claimed over 30,000 lives. It also seeks cultural rights for the country's estimated 12 million Kurds. Fighting between security forces and the rebels is at a low ebb since the guerrillas withdrew from Turkey on the orders of their jailed leader, Abdullah Ocalan. Ocalan is appealing against a death penalty handed down last year for treason.

EU's Kurdish stipulation

Milliyet Oct. 17, 2000

Milliyet is disclosing the top secret Accession Partnership Accord, a draft prepared by Guenter Verheugen, European commissioner responsible for enlargement, to specify the tasks Turkey must complete in the course of its process of adjustment to the European Union. The draft sets two kinds of homework for Turkey, short-term and medium-term. The draft demands with priority that Turkey lift all the legal restrictions on Turkish nationals using their 'mother tongue' in radio-TV broadcasting, obviously meaning Kurdish. It said that to reduce the regional differences, conditions should be improved for all citizens with a view to creating wider economic, social and cultural opportunities especially in the Southeast.

The draft also said that in the medium term, the National Security Council's (MGK) role should be reviewed, the death penalty abolished and those provisions which hinder cultural development, for example in the field of education, should be weeded out of the law. It calls for measures aimed at expanding the scope of the freedom of expression and at encouraging the development of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the country. It also said that more effective measures should be taken to prevent the practice of torture.

Work on the draft is in its final stages, and the document will be made public on Nov. 8. Verheugen has prepared the draft through consultations with Ankara. The draft must be endorsed by the individual EU members to become final. The draft can be altered at any time before the Nov. 8 deadline."

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Cem gives green light to EU expectations on Kurdish language

Turkish Daily News October 18, 2000

Foreign Minister Ismail Cem said that if Turkey wants to start negotiations with the European Union as soon as possible, it should be aware of the EU's expectations on basic freedom. Speaking to the Turkish Daily News in an exclusive interview in Istanbul on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Cem said that the EU does not place any "conditions" on Turkey regarding any language, when asked whether the EU had asked Turkey to take steps regarding the Kurdish language.

"However, the EU has its approach to basic freedom. The EU asks all candidate countries to implement these understandings of human rights. Turkey is the only candidate which has not started negotiations with the EU yet. This is a very shameful situation for us," Cem said. The foreign minister drew attention to the fact that it was up to Turkey to speed up its process of accession to the EU. According to Cem, the EU's Accession Partnership Document which will be announced on Nov. 8, does not carry a negative message on the issue of minorities.

"We persuaded the European Commission not to 'create any new minorities' but of course we still have to make our position clear to the European Parliament," he said.

Ismail Cem is the first official to state that Turkey should take action regarding broadcasting in Kurdish. During the interview with the TDN Cem said that he had made realistic analysis to show the way to speed up the accession process with the EU.

"If we want to start talks with the EU in 2001, in Turkey's strategic interests, we should take certain political steps," Cem continued.

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Human rights, environmental groups appeal to US to shun Turkish dam project

AFP 18 October 2000

WASHINGTON, Oct 17 (AFP) - An alliance of human rights and environmental groups has called on the US Export-Import Bank to shun a Turkish hydroelectric dam project, which they say will force the re-settlement of thousands of people, damage public health, and endanger a Medieval architectural treasure.

A letter signed by 14 groups urged Ex-Im Bank chairman James Harmon and US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to halt any further discussion of plans to back the Ilisu Dam project in southeastern

Turkey, which they said was "ill conceived and a misuse of US taxpayer dollars."

An Ex-Im bank official speaking on condition of anonymity confirmed that the agency had received "a preliminary request for a commitment" to support construction of the 1,200 megawatt dam on the Tigris River, about 60 kilometers (40 miles) from the Syrian border.

The official said the bank has had the request for most of the year, and was still waiting for additional information before beginning an evaluation. The official would not disclose who had sought the funding, or in what amount.

The US Export-Import Bank is a government agency that guarantees loans for US companies that want to compete abroad and makes loans to foreign purchasers of US goods and services.

The British government last December signaled its willingness to underwrite some of the construction costs in response to a request from the British firm Balfour Beatty for export credits worth 220 million dollars. The entire project has been estimated to cost 1.9 billion dollars.

But the proposal has ignited a storm of protest from environmental and human rights activists as well as from Iraq and Syria, who accuse Turkey of monopolizing the waters of the Tigris to their detriment.

In their recent letter, groups such as Friends of the Earth, the International Rivers Network, the Center for International Environmental Law, and the Washington Kurdish Institute have charged that the dam is planned for an area of armed conflict where the Turkish government is oppressing the ethnic Kurdish minority. The project would require the forced re-settlement of up to 34,000 local people and could negatively impact the lives of up to 78,000, according to the letter.

"It is hard to imagine how the involuntary resettlement of up to 34,000 local people and up to 78,000 potentially impacted, mainly Kurds, will not exacerbate the human rights situation in the area," the letter said. The letter charged that the Turkish government, with a "dismal resettlement record for other dam projects," lacks the resources and the political will to honor international resettlement standards.

In addition, the organizations predicted that the Ilisu Dam would inundate and destroy Hasankeyf, the only town in Anatolia that has survived since the Middle Ages and considered to be an archeological "treasure."

They in addition argued that the dam, which will flood some of the most fertile land in the region, could increase the incidence of malaria and schistosomiasis.

"Peace Mothers" Delegation Members Tortured in Detention

Kurdish Observer 17 October 2000

Arrested on the grounds that they went to South Kurdistan in order to put an end to the clashes between Kurdistan Patriotic Unity (YNK) and PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party), members of "Mothers of Peace Initiative" stated that they were exposed to torture. Advocate of the mothers Muharrem Erbey said that such efforts were unfortunately penalized in Turkey while they were awarded in the world.

Fahriye Bikkin (65), Rahime Ince (65), Azize Yıldız (39), Muyesser Gunes (48) and Sekernaz Cakar (56) along with their interpreter Murat Batgi made a statement through their advocates, saying they were subjected to intense torture under detention. Talking with the mothers in prison, Advocate Muharrem Erbey narrated his client's explanations as such:

"After we came through Habur Frontier Gate, we were put under detention and interrogated until 9.00 p.m. Afterwards we were taken to Silopi Battalion Command Headquarters. We were interrogated by one military and three civilian-cloth men, standing on our feet all day long as we were exposed to heavy insults and curses. Our throats were throttled and we could not breathe. Our hairs were drawn. We were hit at the backs of our heads and necks."

Throttled with a muslim scarf

Reminding that they gave a white scarf representing the "peace" at the meeting with Celal Talabani, leader of YNK, the Mothers of Peace narrated the horror they experienced: "They tried to strangle us by throttling with the white muslin scarf on our heads during the interrogation. After they sprayed a mate-

rial unknown by us we had nausea, vomiting and bleeding at our noses. Even we said that we had been through operations and our blood pressures were low, the pressure continued. We were made stand on our feet, we were deprived of sleep. We were put into two separate cells and we were interrogated for 5 or 6 hours at intervals. We were forced to give statement especially for our interpreter Murat Batgi. The interrogators insisted that Batgi was a journalist. We said "we took him along with us only as an interpreter?". They made us sign a lot of statement as we were blindfolded. As we explained what we were through, judges and prosecutors said "Don't talk about it, talk about other things". But we denied all the charges brought to us at the prosecutors' office."

The Advocate Muharrem Erbey said that the interpreter Murat Batgi who was in Silopi Prison was through physical torture while under detention, his testis were squeezed.

"Peace is a global concept:"

Erbey emphasized that his clients did not committed the alleged crime under article 169 of the Turkish Constitution which consisted of crimes intending to "separate a part of land from the country". Erbey said, "Demanding peace is a global concept. It would be wrong to tie the peace demand with an illegal organization or group. If the mothers held a meeting with not Kurdish groups, they would not be arrested. Unfortunately these initiatives were punished in Turkey while they were awarded in the world. Erbey added, "In a period in which Turkey tried to be a member of European Union and torture devices in prisons were cleared, torturing old mothers, putting them into prison only for demanding peace would cause adverse effects on the efforts of Turkey to attain its aim."

Erbey requested that his clients, most of them having operations and some of them having platinum on their feets, must be released to be treated.

A lot of advocates will defend them

Adv. Muharrem Erbey said that a lot of defense lawyers from Diyarbakir Bar Association would defend the members of "the Mothers of Peace Initiative" on the first hearing at Diyarbakir State Security Court. Lawyers Muharrem Erbey, Firat Anli, Metin Kilavuz and Cihan Aydin from Diyarbakir Bar Association filed an objection to the arrest but it was rejected the last week.

* * * * *

Under-fire culture minister withdraws his resignation: MP

AFP - 18 October 2000

TEHRAN, Oct 18 (AFP) - An Iranian MP said under-fire Culture Minister Ataollah Mohajerani has withdrawn his resignation, press reports said Wednesday, adding to the swirl of speculation around one of President Mohammad Khatami's closest allies.

Mohammad Dadfar said Mohajerani, a hero to the reform movement and a regular target of conservative anger, had taken back a letter to Khatami stepping down from office, newspapers said.

Reports of Mohajerani's resignation have seen-sawed back and forth in recent weeks, including rumours that Khatami asked his ally to tone down an angry 50-page letter explaining his reasons for leaving the government. Mohajerani, whose ministry issues newspaper licenses, has been blasted by conservatives and hardliners over his handling of the press, much of which has been shut down by the right-wing courts since April. But his role in helping to create a flourishing and vocal press after Khatami's 1997 election, and his support for Iran's celebrated film industry, have made him a political hero to the pro-reform movement.

Mohajerani survived an impeachment battle in parliament last year, when the legislature was still dominated by conservatives. The conservative courts launched a stinging crackdown on the press in April, closing every major pro-Khatami paper just weeks after reformists won a majority in February's parliamentary elections.

Mohajerani's reported resignation has been the source of intense speculation in recent weeks, with what remains of the reform press reporting his continuing attendance at official government meetings.

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Sirnak: A separate republic

Kurdish Observer - 19 October 2000

Detentions and arrests of HADEP administrators continue in Sirnak. Cizre District Chairman Mehmet Dilsiz has been detained on allegations that there was a PKK flag and wireless present in his home. Dilsiz had been threatened previously by the Gendarmerie in an attempt to intimidate him into closing the HADEP branch and resigning his position.

SIRNAK

Cizre District Chairman of the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) Mehmet Dilsiz was detained by

Gendarmerie forces who had raided his home the other afternoon at about 3:00. Records were written up stating that a PKK flag and photographs of PKK members had been found in his home, and there were attempts to force Dilsiz's family to sign these statements. Dilsiz's family members, however, stated that such objects had not been found in their home and refused to sign. Making a statement concerning the incident, Dilsiz's wife Behiye said that they had been shut up in another room during the search, and explained what occurred as follows: "What they did had no relation to a search. While we were in the other rooms, they messed up everything. Later, saying that they had found some things like a wireless, a PKK flag, and magazines, they tried to get us to sign a statement. We told them that such objects absolutely were not in our home. We didn't sign the statement, but they brought my husband away with them anyway."

Gendarmerie had made threats

Meanwhile, it has been learned that Dilsiz had been previously threatened to resign from HADEP. Party administrator Muhsin Gasor said that Dilsiz was among a group of administrators that had been detained on September 18, and continued: "We were threatened while under detention. They told us, 'Resign and close the district headquarters. We will not let HADEP stay open here.' For our part, we said that we would continue the activities of our legal party. The detention of our chairman is a conspiracy. We were waiting for something like this to happen." HADEP Cizre delegate Cemal Guven, who had been detained on the same date, confirmed that they had been threatened and said, "They want to intimidate us by conspiring against our chairman. But HADEP will continue its activities."

HADEP Simak Provincial Chairman Resul Saddak and party administrators Rustem Bayar, Mehmet Cakar, Nihat Usal, Cengiz Balik, Rezzak Inan, Nezir Ayan, Yakup Kur, Temel Kurar, Izzet Belge, and Tahir Kutlu, who were detained on September 24 while on their way from Batman to Simak, were arrested and sent to prison on October 1, after days of interrogation. The event, accompanied by pressure against the HADEP members families and assertions that weapons and bombs had been found in their vehicles, led to views that it was a conspiracy.

More HADEP members arrested

Omer Celebi, member of the Board of Directors of the HADEP Islahiye District Organization in the province of [Gazi]Antep, and HADEP members Idris Ertugrul, Ismail Uzun, and Aydin Caliskan were brought before the court. The four had been detained after raids on their homes were carried out on October 12 and they were brought to the Islahiye District Gendarmerie Command for interrogation. Appearing before the judge, Celebi, Uzun, and Ertugrul were arrested on charges of aiding and abetting the PKK, while Caliskan was released.

Meanwhile, it has been learned that Antep's Araban District Chairman Huseyin Yagci and 6 other HADEP members were detained on October 14. The seven were interrogated at the Araban Security Director for two days on the grounds of possession of forbidden publications, and were then released on Tuesday.

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Iran president denounces "sick" campaign against reform movement

AFP - 18 October 2000

TEHRAN, Oct 18 (AFP) - Iranian President Mohammad Khatami denounced the "sick" campaign against his embattled reform movement and warned of an explosion of popular anger if his conservative rivals continue to ignore the will of the people, reports said Wednesday.

In an emotional defence of his presidency just months ahead of the next elections, Khatami insisted he was no hero and that the people would have to fight for their rights themselves if reforms were to succeed in Iran. The anti-reform campaign is "a sign of historic sickness and the domination of despotism in Iran," Khatami told a gathering Tuesday of the nation's top students, who have been among his most ardent supporters.

He condemned the political maneuvering that has seen the conservative courts close down every major pro-reform newspaper since April and put leading journalists and critics of the clerical regime in jail or on trial.

"Suppose we silence the critics, and their questions, for a while," the state news agency IRNA quoted him as saying. "These people will remain dissatisfied, and no one will be able to prevent the resulting

damage."

He added: "Why do we have to forbid one way of thinking in order to defend another, and believe that with the removal of one person an entire way of thinking has been destroyed?" Reformists have been battered by political setbacks and outbursts of violence since ousting conservatives in February elections and giving Khatami his long-sought pro-reform majority in parliament.

Said Hajarian, a close Khatami ally credited with helping mastermind the reform victory, survived an assassination attempt in a Tehran street in the weeks after the election.

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei barred the new parliament from repealing press curbs used to close down the reformist papers, costing Khatami one of his most effective political weapons.

The conservative-led courts, which like the police, armed forces and state media are outside Khatami's control, have kept up the pressure on key reformist figures. The closed-door trial of an outspoken pro-reform cleric, who could be facing the death sentence, concluded on Saturday.

Meanwhile, a pro-reform student conference in August was marred by days of rioting that left one dead and dozens wounded, after a mob blocked two popular critics of the religious regime from addressing the gathering.

Students said they were brutally beaten by government troops and militiamen under the direct control of Khamenei. Khatami offered hearty praise for students, acknowledging that they had been "ill-treated" and hailing them for their calm in the face of the pressure and violence.

But despite winning nearly 70 percent of the vote in 1997 amid enthusiastic support from students and women, he said he should not be regarded as a "hero" and said the people were the true heroes of Iran.

"Until the day when the idea of heroism is taken up by the people themselves, there will be no fundamental changes in our society," he said.

Allies say the stiff opposition has been taking its toll on Khatami, a moderate cleric and former newspaper boss. Deputy parliament speaker Behzad Nabavi said Tuesday he believed that Khatami was losing his taste for a bitter political fight for re-election next year.

"We are hopeful, but the president has not shown much enthusiasm" for a second term, Nabavi said.

* * * * *

Barzani expresses distrust of PKK

Ankara - Turkish Daily News October 19, 2000

Massoud Barzani, the leader of the northern Iraqi Kurdish Democrat Party (KDP), was recently entertained at dinner by several Turkish intellectuals with Kurdish origins, reports say. Among those intellectuals present at the dinner were Motherland Party (ANAP) Diyarbakir Deputy Seyit Hasim Hasimi, former leader of the defunct Democratic Masses Party (DKP) Serafettin Elci, former leader of the defunct Democracy Party (DEP) Feridun Yazar, former Mardin Deputy Ahmet Turk and former Mus Deputy

Mehmet Emin Sever.

Federated state a fact

According to those at the dinner, Barzani gave a speech in which he said that after a great struggle his group had managed to create a federal Kurdish state in northern Iraq, and that this represented a great opportunity for all Kurds. "No matter what our differences are, if one person finds an opportunity, all have the right to benefit from that," said Barzani. "This is a good thing. If we can be supported on this matter, we will be pleased. It would be good if those that cannot support us do nothing to increase our already heavy burden, at least."

Touching on relations with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, Barzani remarked that Saddam had already given them "autonomy" and that he was more disturbed by Turkey than by any federal Kurdish state. Barzani said that in his correspondence with Turkey, he had addressed himself as the leader of the Federated Kurdish State but had been reprimanded by the Foreign Ministry because of this. Barzani said he had reminded the Turkish authorities, "We've held elections in our country and formed a

Parliament. This Parliament formed a government. I am the prime minister of that government. These are the steps we've taken."

'Talabani not to be trusted'

Those who had attended the meal said that they put the issue of Jalal Talabani and his Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) to Barzani, to which he replied that relations between Talabani and the PUK were not good and that there was a crisis of confidence between himself and Talabani. He added they were doing their best to get along with each other.

One Kurdish intellectual said that Barzani had not wanted to discuss the current clashes between the PUK and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) since he has "no trust in either the PKK or the PUK, let alone their leaders.

Barzani said they had offered the PKK two chances but each time it became understood that the PKK were not to be trusted. "The only good relations to be had with the PKK is to not have relations with them at all," said Barzani. In the end Barzani did talk a little about the PKK-PUK clashes saying, "There was a time when they had united against us. Talabani had wanted to use the PKK against us. However, when his grass roots began deserting him and the rug got pulled from under his feet, only then did he realize the trouble he had taken on. He is now trying to rectify the situation." Barzani believes that Talabani is fighting the PKK in order to win Turkey's favor.

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Kurdish Observer

October 20, 2000

Letter to Talabani from the PKK

The PKK Council of Leaders released a statement on Wednesday saying that it had sent a letter to leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) Jalal Talabani. The letter was sent via a wounded peshmerga from Ranya named Ahmet Muhammet Hasan when he was released by the PKK. The letter expresses the PKK's desire to develop political relations and negotiations in order to secure national peace and democracy.

The PKK Council of Leaders stated that the unilateral cease fire it had declared on October 4 was being observed fully on all fronts and that the PKK was continuing its self-denying efforts to secure a lasting Kurdish peace on the basis of national democracy.

'No concrete step from the PUK'

The statement stressed that there has been no military assault or activity on the part of the PUK other than repositioning of forces and threats since October 5, and continued: "Despite the unilateral practical steps and calls made by our party, the PUK side has taken no concrete steps. The tense atmosphere created by the continued possibility of clashes, therefore, has not been completely overcome."

'Let's work together for a solution'

The PKK Council of Leaders stressed that it would continue its efforts to create peace and democracy amongst the Kurds and made the following call: "Our party wants for this to be the last clash between Kurds. We are calling all the Kurdish parties and organizations, foremost the PUK and KDP, to work jointly to create a lasting national peace and a democratic lifestyle and to reach solutions to all the existing problems on this basis."

PUK captives are being released

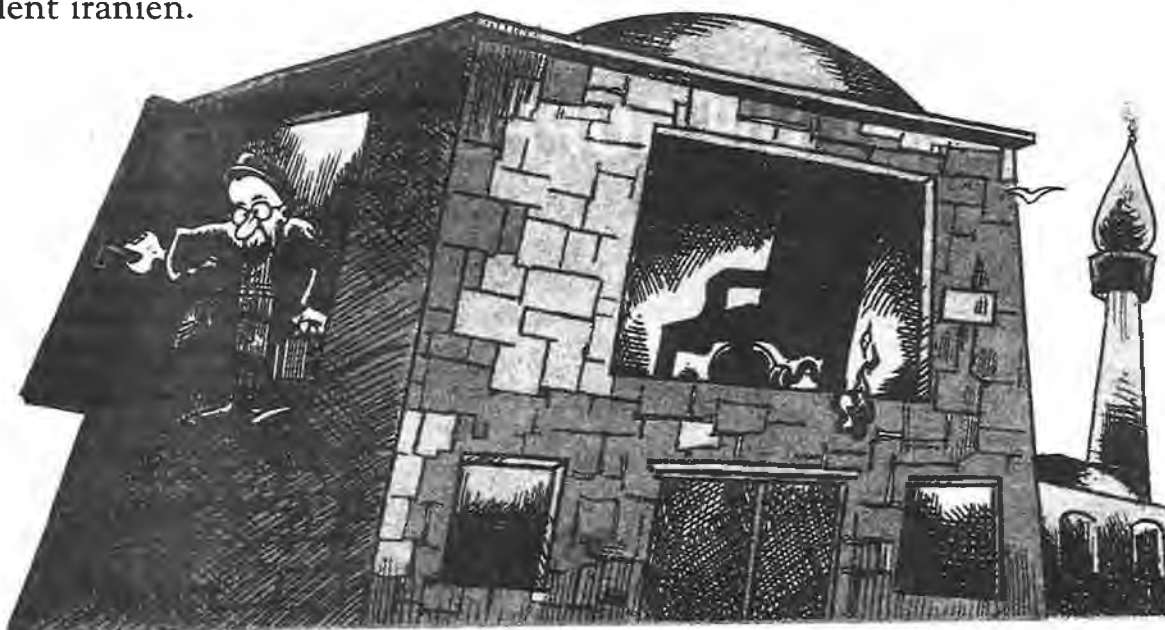
The statement said that the PKK had taken significant practical steps in order to make the cease fire permanent and to develop the foundation for negotiations to create a solution on the basis of national peace and democracy, and, taking the calls of friendly forces into consideration, has unilaterally withdrawn its forces from the fields of Asos, Mamend, and Karox, thus demonstrating that they had no approach such as a demand to take territory from the PUK. The statement also said that Ahmet Muhammet Hasan and wounded Omer Huseyin Cawsin, who had been taken captive by the guerrillas during clashes, had been released and sent to their homes. It also stated that they continued other efforts with the intention of releasing some other captives, as requested by local villages and clans. The statement announced that, barring any negative developments, some captives would be released within the next few days.

IRAN

Ceux qui veulent "dépasser Khatami" préparent la crise

Face aux "radicaux" qui réclament une accélération des réformes, l'auteur de l'article défend la stratégie prudente du président iranien.

▲ Dessin
de Mahmoud Kahl
paru dans Asharq
al-Awsat, Londres.



HAYAT-NO (extraits)

Téhéran

Depuis quelque temps, on entend, dans les milieux liés au Front du 2 Khorad [mouvement réformateur, baptisé en référence à la date de l'élection du président Khatami], des murmures à propos de l' "après-Khatami" ou sur la nécessité de "suivre une deuxième voie pour les réformes". Ces idées sont plus répandues parmi les étudiants et chez les jeunes du mouvement réformateur. Pour justifier leurs propos, ceux-ci soulignent "l'inefficacité des méthodes prudentes et lentes de la présidence", "l'incapacité de se donner les moyens nécessaires pour appliquer des réformes" et "la perte de vitesse de la machine des réformes de Khatami".

En outre, ils estiment que "l'écart entre les revendications du peuple et l'action de Khatami est tel que celui-ci a perdu de vue les réformes et se trouve dépassé par l'opinion publique". Selon eux, "il est grand temps que les mouvements novateurs aillent au-delà de Khatami et se mettent au diapason des revendications de la nation".

Personne ne peut prétendre que les dirigeants et les simples soldats du mouvement pour la démocratie en Iran ont l'expérience et les connais-

sances suffisantes pour conduire l'action de démocratisation dans le cadre de la loi. Si l'on accepte la démocratie comme une méthode précise pour atteindre des buts précis, on doit constater que tous les acteurs de ce jeu en Iran sont de simples amateurs. Le chemin sera encore long avant que l'on puisse comprendre les paroles de Voltaire sur la liberté.

L'opinion publique a voté pour le programme et les projets de M. Khatami, qui a quatre ans pour les mettre en pratique. Tant qu'il est à la tête de l'exécutif et fidèle aux idéaux nationaux qui dictaient ses slogans électoraux, on ne peut lui interdire de mener le bateau des réformes. Je suis profondément convaincu que "dépasser Khatami" signifie provoquer une crise. Que ceux qui sont pressés se préparent dès aujourd'hui pour les futures élections et nous proposent les solutions qui conviennent !

L'histoire politique iranienne de ce siècle est remplie d'épisodes où le mouvement de la société civile s'est développé et qui, à cause des radicalismes, ont débouché sur l'instabilité et le totalitarisme. Nous en avons été témoins lors de la révolution constitutionnelle [en 1905] et à

l'époque du gouvernement du Premier ministre Mohammad Mossadegh [chef du gouvernement de 1951 à 1953. Mossadegh a nationalisé le pétrole iranien, mais il fut renversé par un complot organisé par la CIA], quand une grande partie de l'activité du parti Tudeh [communiste prosoviétique] consistait à combattre ce gouvernement. De la même manière, nous avons vu comment les Fedayin du peuple [marxiste-léniniste] se sont comportés à l'égard du gouvernement de Mehdi Bazargan entre 1980

et 1982 [modéré, il fut le premier chef du gouvernement après la révolution de 1979 ; il avait fondé le Mouvement pour la liberté en Iran en 1964]. Il est intéressant de constater que, chaque fois que les réformes se sont heurtées à des réactions radicales, l'atmosphère politique du pays s'est rapidement dégradée, pour aboutir à l'obstruction et à l'anéantissement.

Il est certain que le président iranien est mieux informé que quiconque de l'atmosphère qui règne dans les milieux dirigeants et c'est pourquoi lui seul peut déterminer la vitesse des réformes. Il sait que toute réforme est un processus lent mais sûr et, pour cette raison, il ne pourra pas suivre le chemin des ultraradicaux.

Amir Shahla

Turkish press cries victory over aborted Armenian genocide bill

20 Oct 2000

by Agence France-Presse

ANKARA, Oct 20 (AFP) - The Turkish press rejoiced Friday over the withdrawal from the US Congress of a draft resolution accusing the Ottoman Empire for Armenian genocide early last century, describing the move as a victory for Ankara.

The resolution was pulled from the floor of the US House of Representatives early Friday after US President Bill Clinton asked the house not to pass the draft citing national security interests. "Clinton puts the brakes on the genocide bill," cried the liberal Radikal daily on its front page. The Islamist Zaman daily sufficed by saying: "Thank you Clinton". The mass-circulation Hurriyet daily underlined that Clinton's "rare" warning had persuaded House Speaker Dennis Hastert to withdraw the controversial bill, which it said was purely election-motivated.

"The last-minute letter scared the vote hunter (Hastert)," the daily said. In his letter, Clinton said that the draft resolution could harm Washington's "significant interests" in the Middle East, Central Asia, the Balkans and the Gulf, which require Ankara's cooperation.

Hurriyet said that Ankara's favourable moves to its southern neighbour Iraq, such as plans to open a second border gate and increase its diplomatic representation to ambassadorial level, had played a role in Washington's firm stance against the bill. The resolution, which says that 1.5 Armenians were killed and another 500,000 were driven from their homes between 1915 and 1923 in the Ottoman Empire, had unleashed warnings from Turkey that its adoption would seriously damage ties with the US. In the first official reaction to come from Turkey, Foreign Minister Ismail Cem said in a statement early Friday that Turkish-American relations had been "saved from a grave threat". The original draft resolution had been "full of injustices against Turkey," he said. Turkey categorically rejects claims of genocide and maintains that some 300,000 Armenians and thousands of Turks were killed in what was internal fighting during the dissolution years of the Ottoman Empire.

* * * * *

Ecevit Thanks Clinton, Says Withdrawal of Armenian Bill Shows Turkey's Strength

TRT 1 Television 20 Oct 00 [Statement
by Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit]

[Ecevit] The withdrawal of the unjust draft Armenian resolution from the agenda of the US House of Representatives is a very important event. It demonstrates Turkey's strength and the value the United States attaches to Turkey.

US President Bill Clinton, in particular, was very influential in bringing about this outcome. From the onset of the process, Mr. Clinton has been insisting on the withdrawal of this unjust bill, and he has now attained results. In addition, the US secretary of state, the secretary of defense, the former secretaries of state and defense, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, former chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as well as certain leading generals and politicians greatly contributed to this outcome. Moreover, former US Ambassador to Ankara Mr. Parriss and new US Ambassador to Ankara Mr. Pearson also made significant contributions. Armenian Patriarch in Turkey Mutafyan also made valuable contributions.

All the parties in the Turkish Grand National Assembly, our president, our government, our General Staff, our Foreign Ministry, our Ambassador to Washington Baki Ilkin and his colleagues, and our lobby firm in the United States contributed greatly to this effort. I thank them all on behalf of our government. However, the greatest achievement is our national solidarity. Our national solidarity in such national matters enables Turkey to overcome every obstacle. Today, I sent a letter of gratitude to US President William Jefferson Clinton. I am now reading it to you:

Mr. President, I convey to you the heartfelt gratitude of the Turkish people and our government for the efforts you exerted together with your colleagues with the aim of preventing the adoption of an unjust resolution at the House of Representatives. Your determined initiatives have effectively contributed to the withdrawal of the resolution. The Turkish-US strategic partnership, friendship, and solidarity will gain a new impetus as a result of this achievement. You will always be remembered as a real friend of Turkey. I extend my best wishes and sincere respect.

Turkey pays Iranians for botched 1999 air raid

Reuters - 18 Oct 2000

ANKARA (Reuters) - Turkey said Wednesday it had paid money to neighboring Iran to help the victims of a mistaken air strike by Turkish planes in a border zone last year.

Iran had demanded an apology and compensation for what it said was a bombing raid by Turkish planes that killed five people and wounded 11. Ankara at first denied involvement, and still refuses to use the word "compensation," but agreed to launch an investigation. Turkey often conducts air and ground operations against separatist Kurdish guerrillas in the area where its borders meet Iran and Kurdish-held northern Iraq.

"We have provided some amount of aid...in order to ease the pain of those who suffered from the incident," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said. "This subject is now history, in the framework of friendly, neighborly, trusting relations between the two countries." He declined to specify how much Turkey had paid or to make any further comment.

Ties between officially secular Turkey and Islamic Iran have long been soured by Turkish accusations of Iranian backing for Turkish Kurd separatist rebels and Islamic militants. Iran in return accuses Turkey of supporting Iranian opposition forces and condemns its close relations with Israel.

NEW IRANIAN DEFECTOR THREATENS

RFE/RL IRAN REPORT
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RELATIONS WITH TURKEY

The recent defection to Turkey by an Iranian military officer as well as testimony by Turkish Islamic militants threaten to harm bilateral relations between Tehran and Ankara.

The current problems in these ties arose when Iranian Lieutenant Qolam Ali Feleksiyei crossed the border on 2 October and requested asylum from Turkey. During his questioning by Turkish military intelligence, Istanbul's NTV reported on 16 October, he revealed a great deal about Iran's aid to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and about Iranian intelligence operations against Turkey. Feleksiyei said that the PKK has been given shelter near the Van-Hakkari line.

Iranian soldiers cannot enter their camps but the PKK cannot enter Iranian residential areas, either. Cross-border smuggling of drugs and other goods is tolerated, he added, because Iran's Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS) gets information about Turkey from the smugglers. PKK official Osman Ocalan, furthermore, met with a delegation of MOIS officials in Badinabad on 6 October to request increased funding, arms, and logistics support. He also asked Iran to release Murat Sapan, who had been detained for drug trafficking, "Hurriyet" reported.

There also have been developments in related cases of Turkish Islamic militants who received aid from Iran. The semi-official Anatolia news agency reported on 19 October that Oguz Demir, a suspect in the case involving the murder of journalist Ugur Mumcu and academics Ahmet Kisali and Bahriye Ucek, had escaped to Iran 20 days earlier. The Republican Prosecutor's Office, furthermore, filed a second lawsuit in the case, Anatolia reported on 17 October.

According to the indictment, suspect Rusta Aytufan testified that he and two comrades went to Tehran, then to Orumieh, where they received 15 days of military training. They also were trained in the use of demolitions and rocket-propelled grenades. In early-October, Murat Urgan of Turkish Hizballah admitted that MOIS officials with whom he interacted told him to gather information about the Incirlik airbase, the

"Milliyet" daily reported. Urgun added that "Tehran's objective is to harm Turkey."

A Turkish trial of Islamic militants that ended in late-August had reached the same conclusion. The 70-page decision said that the "role of Iran, even if indirect, in the establishment and activities of the terrorist [Islamic Movement] organization has been proven." It continued, "Milliyet" reported, that "these actions have been supported with arms and funds by the Iranians." One defendant in the case was sentenced to death and four others received life sentences for the assassination of journalist Cetin Emec and other actions.

Iran has rejected the allegations of any connection with Turkish terrorists -- PKK, Hizballah, or otherwise. Deputy Foreign Minister Mohsen Aminzadeh was given, however, the Turkish file about the Hizballah case with the expectation that some explanations would be forthcoming. According to "Hurriyet," documents, compact discs, and floppy discs provided details about Hizballah training in Iran; meetings with the MOIS in Qom, Tehran, Ankara, and Istanbul; and photographs of Hizballah personnel in Iran. Abdullah Ocalan's testimony and photographs also detailed Iran's support for the PKK.

Semih Idiz, a journalist with the Ankara "Star" and a noted expert on Turkish-Iranian relations, told RFE/RL in August that the differences between Turkey and Iran are to be expected. "Turkey as a state model was diametrically opposed to what Iran represented just as the system in Iran is opposed to what Turkey's secularism represents. Turkey is important because it is an Islamic country and so it is important to people who want a model of a liberal environment, an easier environment, with less pressure from the mullahs."

Ozdam Sanberk of the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) in Istanbul told RFE/RL that political tensions must be balanced: "Definitely, you may have some problems with your neighbors, you don't have only perfect relations and cooperation, but also conflicts and disagreements and what is diplomacy but contradiction management?"

Such observations were also reinforced by the fact that the defection and the trials coincide with meetings between Turkish and Iranian officials. A Turkish delegation led by Interior Ministry official Saim Chotur visited Iran to discuss security matters, such as terrorism and drug trafficking. The Turkish-Iranian security meetings began on 15 October, with Interior Ministry official Gholam Hussein Bolandian representing Iran. Also, Iran's Lieutenant-Colonel Yakup Rezazadeh called on Igdir Governor Mustafa Tamer to discuss border violations, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported on 7 October.

The Turkish delegation in Tehran met with Interior Minister Abdolvahed Musavi-Lari, Iranian state radio reported on 15 October and Anatolia reported on 16 October. At this meeting, Musavi-Lari told the Turks that Israeli is a "symbol of state terrorism. ... We hope that Turkey would attribute necessary importance to Iran's concern on the issue." Musavi-Lari added that Iran is concerned about Turkey's relations with Israel and Israeli experts' presence in Turkey.

The Turks also offered to aid those who suffered in their inadvertent aerial bombardment of a settlement in Piranshahr in July 1999. Turkey had denied bombing Iran, but it also said it would pursue terrorists (see "RFE/RL Iran Report," 26 July 1999). Turkey refuses to call this money "compensation," while Iran refuses to say how much money it received, but both sides seem happy to put the matter behind them. (Bill Samii)

Six corps de clandestins kurdes déversés au bord d'une route italienne

En route vers le nord de l'Europe, ils sont morts asphyxiés dans un camion.

Rome de notre correspondant

A côté de bouteilles en plastique, de cartons et de débris, les corps des six jeunes hommes ont été balancés, à l'aube, comme de vulgaires sacs-poubelle au bord d'une route nationale. Décédés une dizaine d'heures plus tôt dans la remorque du camion qui les transportait depuis la Grèce, ils ont été retrouvés mercredi matin à cinq kilomètres de Foggia, dans les Pouilles. «Ils sont morts par asphyxie dans un endroit confiné», a immédiatement conclu Antonio Pedone, le médecin légiste appelé sur les lieux. Selon les premières indications, il s'agirait de six clandestins kurdes, âgés de 18 à 30 ans, qui tentaient de rejoindre le nord de l'Europe via la Grèce et l'Italie. Le drame rappelle celui des 58 immigrés chinois retrouvés morts étouffés, en juin, dans un camion à Douvres, au sud de l'Angleterre. Mais, cette fois, le chauffeur, sans doute aidé par une ou plusieurs autres personnes, a eu le temps de se débarrasser de sa cargaison humaine.

Mafias. La police de Foggia, qui a commencé à reconstituer le déroulement du drame, estime que les six hommes sont vraisemblablement décédés alors que le véhicule se trouvait encore dans le ferry reliant Patras (en Grèce) et Brindisi ou Bari (ports italiens). «Ils sont sans doute morts d'abord emportés par une vague torpente, puis par un sommeil profond», a résumé Antonio Pedone. Selon le médecin légiste, les ongles cassés des clandestins montrent qu'ils ont cherché, en vain, à percer un trou dans la carrosserie pour faire passer un peu d'air.

Une fois débarqué sur les côtes italiennes, le chauffeur, qui s'est rendu compte du décès de ses passagers, parcourt quelques kilomètres sur l'autoroute Bari-

Bologne, puis la quitte au niveau de Foggia, à la recherche d'un endroit tranquille. A proximité d'un champ de vignes, le camionneur jette les six corps sur l'asphalte. Autour des cadavres, les enquêteurs ont retrouvé de nombreuses boules de coton qui fournissent de précieuses informations sur la nature du chargement. Au bout de quelques minutes, le camion repart, écrasant dans sa manœuvre le crâne de l'un des immigrés. «Nous avons quelques chances de l'attraper, à moins qu'il ne s'agisse d'un véhicule en route vers l'étranger», a fait savoir le commissaire de Foggia Antonio Caricato, qui a lancé des recherches sur la vingtaine de camions chargés de coton ayant débarqué entre lundi et mercredi matin dans les ports de Bari et Brindisi, en direction des industries textiles du centre et du nord-est de l'Italie. Entre-temps, l'identification des corps a débuté. Le médecin légiste a relevé les empreintes digitales de chacune des victimes. Seule l'une d'entre elles possédait, dans ses poches, des papiers: un permis de séjour grec, délivré le 25 septembre à un Kurde du nom de Mustafa Amir. Originaire d'Irak, le clandestin n'était âgé que de 22 ans. Hier, les enquêteurs sont parvenus à mettre un nom sur deux autres clandestins.

«Nous sommes confrontés à une formidable organisation criminelle internationale», ont rappelé les policiers à propos de ces passages organisés par les mafias locales à partir de la Grèce ou de l'Albanie. Mais, selon la brigade financière italienne, les clans turcs seraient également partie prenante de ce trafic, en

élaborant à partir d'Istanbul les voies d'immigration clandestine, soit par la mer, directement à destination de la Calabre, soit vers les Pouilles, en remontant d'abord, par la route, vers les ports des côtes orientales de l'Adriatique. Les passages coûteraient à chaque candidat à l'émigration entre 7000 et 20000 francs. Des voyages qui, de plus en plus souvent, se terminent en tragédie.

«Routine». En septembre 1999, quatre Pakistanais, eux aussi morts asphyxiés au fond d'un camion, avaient été retrouvés au bord d'une route dans les environs de Mantoue. Régulièrement, des clandestins morts sont récupérés sur les plages des Pouilles ou de Calabre, jetés à la mer par leurs passeurs ou à la suite du naufrage des vieux rafiots sur lesquels ils étaient embarqués. En décembre 1999, ce sont ainsi 59 personnes qui meurent noyées au large des côtes albanaises. Quelques semaines plus tôt, le 1^{er} novembre, quatorze Kurdes agonisent dans les cales d'un bateau qui prend feu. Le même jour, un Zodiac fait naufrage à Torre di Cavallo, dans les Pouilles. Bilan: quatre morts, dont deux jeunes femmes moldaves, et dix disparus. En mai, treize personnes décèdent dans le canal d'Otrante, après que leur embarcation en provenance d'Albanie eut heurté une vedette de la brigade financière partie à leur poursuite. En juillet, une collision similaire tue deux policiers italiens et trois clandestins. «Désormais, on ne compte plus les morts, s'est indigné l'archevêque de Lecce, Cosmo Francesco Ruppi; le plus déconcertant, c'est que c'est devenu une routine, une sorte d'incident de parcours d'une situation qui devient chaque jour plus sombre, chaque jour plus terrible. ■

ERIC JOZSEF

LIBÉRATION
20 OCTOBRE 2000



Les corps ont été retrouvés mercredi, à Foggia, dans le sud de l'Italie. Agés de 18 à 30 ans, les clandestins sont probablement morts durant la traversée en ferry.

Kurds battle daily for ethnic survival

Dallas Morning News October 20, 2000

By Tod Robberson

İsmet Aksu's tiny basement apartment seemed anything but a hotbed of terrorist activity the day the police entered his living room in April and took him away for questioning. At the time, Aksu, a Kurdish fruit vendor, was sitting on the floor beside his wife and six children, describing the difficulties of survival in the big city. The family arrived in Istanbul three years ago, he was explaining, after government troops set fire to their village in southeastern Turkey and forced all its inhabitants to flee. 'We were involved in the Kurdish political struggle,' Aksu said. 'For that, the soldiers burned our houses.'

Like the residents of an estimated 3,400 other Kurdish villages and hamlets forcibly evacuated since 1984, the Aksus found themselves homeless, stripped of their property and abandoned by the state ó all in the name of fighting terrorism. Such an experience is hardly exceptional in the Kurds' long battle for ethnic recognition.

Still, it is a story that Turkey's government apparently will go to great lengths to keep hidden from the outside world, even if it means sending police into Kurdish living rooms. Police justified Aksu's detention because he was speaking to foreigners in his apartment, an activity they labelled 'suspicious'.

Tanzer Ozkut, spokeswoman for the prime minister's office in Ankara, said the government would not comment or permit any interviews with officials regarding the Kurdish conflict. She said the government regards the entire subject as 'insulting and provocative'.

Dwarfs Kosovo

For the millions of Kurds who inhabit this region, it is often hard to understand how the nationalist aspirations of Palestinians, Kosovars or Chechens can dominate so much of the world's news coverage, while the Kurdish conflict receives so little attention.

'This is a situation that actually dwarfs what's going on in Kosovo,' said Mike Amitay, director of the Washington Kurdish Institute. About 25 million people, mostly Muslims, identify themselves as ethnic Kurds, with sizable populations straddling the borders of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Russia, Armenia and Azerbaijan.

The Kurds speak a distinct language that bears little resemblance to Turkish, the Farsi spoken by Iranians or the Arabic spoken by Iraqis and Syrians. 'No one disputes that they are the world's largest ethnic group without a state of their own,' writes Jonathan C. Randal, author of a 1999 book about the region known informally as Kurdistan.

The low-intensity war the Kurds have been waging in the Middle East tends to garner major headlines only when their conflict intersects with some other form of regional upheaval, such as the 1991 Persian Gulf War. After multinational forces ousted Iraq's army from Kuwait, the U.S. government spent millions of dollars in a campaign to persuade Kurds to revolt in northern Iraq, with an eye toward ousting President Saddam Hussein from power.

Hussein retaliated by sending tens of thousands of troops, tanks and artillery to northern Iraq. For months after the end of the Gulf War, the world watched as up to 2 million Kurds fled into southeastern Turkey and northern Iran. The refugee crisis recalled another mass exodus in 1988, after Hussein's forces attacked the northern Iraqi city of Halabja with poison gas, killing what are estimated to be thousands of Kurds.

Both spectacles were ironic considering that many of the same Kurdish refugees had fled into Iraq to escape attack by the Turkish military. Other campaigns have been waged against Kurds in Iran and Syria.

Turkey

The father of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, was adamant that unquestioning loyalty to the state, without regard for ethnic or cultural distinction, was the only way the new Turkish nation could

survive. Academics say the Turkish government has spent up to \$179 billion to fight the nation's largest rebel group, the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which the government blames for the deaths of thousands of soldiers and civilians.

Eleven southeastern provinces, inhabited overwhelmingly by Kurds, have been under various states of emergency martial law since 1987. Officially, though, Turkey does not regard itself as having been in a state of war during the 16-year effort to shut down the PKK.

Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK leader and military commander, was captured in Nairobi, Kenya, in February 1999 and has since been convicted of treason and terrorism. He faces death by hanging. Since his arrest, Ocalan has renounced the Kurdish armed struggle and called on the PKK to give up its weapons.

The 30,000 to 40,000 people, mostly Kurds, who have died in Turkey's Kurdish conflict are described by the government as victims of 'PKK terrorism'. The estimated 500,000 to 2 million Kurds who have been forced from their southeastern villages over the last decade are not war refugees, a government official in Ankara said, but 'economic migrants'.

'The government has always seen the issue as socioeconomic, rather than ethnic,' said Metin Heper, a Turkish political scientist at Bilkent University in Ankara. To suggest otherwise in public is a potential criminal offence punishable by imprisonment, as numerous politicians, journalists, human rights activists and Kurdish refugees have discovered.

'You pay a high price for your work,' said Zeynel Abidin Kizilyaprak, a Kurdish journalist who has spent six years in prison for articles he published about the Kurds. 'There are three things you never do: First, you can never say or write the word 'Kurdistan'. If you write, for example, 'North Kurdistan', you go straight to jail,' he said. 'Second, you never criticize Atatürk or the system he put in place. Third, you can criticize the government, but you cannot ever criticize the Turkish state.'

References to Kurdistan, Kizilyaprak said, suggest support for a Kurdish nation. Radio and television broadcasts in Kurdish also are banned. The Kurdish language is prohibited in government buildings, schools or official statements. The use of any red, green and yellow colour combination also is forbidden in public, because those are the colours of the Kurdish flag.

At least 24 government agents or policemen, most in plainclothes, were assigned to follow the two Dallas journalists during their three-week trip across Turkey. In the southeastern city of Mardin, seven plainclothes policemen accompanied the journalists to an interview with a monk in a monastery. The policemen insisted their presence was for the journalists' protection. Police demanded to know all interview questions in advance.

Photographs showing the heavy presence of military installations, police stations, arms, tanks and armored vehicles were forbidden. Also prohibited were photos or visits to rural homes burned by Turkish soldiers or Village Guards.

Since 1984, the PKK has planted bombs that maimed hundreds of civilians, earning the rebels a place on the U.S. State Department's list of international terrorist groups. The army has evacuated villages to reduce logistical support for the PKK. It has installed thousands of the pro-Turkish Village Guards to bolster the government military presence.

'This level of violence has separated the Kurds from the Turks, maybe permanently,' said Kani Xulam, director of the Washington-based American-Kurdish Information Network. 'I don't mean to say the Kurds are angels. They've made their mistakes too.'

Ocalan's rebels have been known to kill entire Kurdish families, including children, in retaliation for one family member's decision to join the Village Guards. The PKK also has attacked tourist sites and killed foreigners as part of its campaign to destabilize the country.

In Diyarbakir, Kurds must obtain a police permit to hold a wedding reception. To speak out publicly in support of Kurdish nationalism is to risk imprisonment. 'Let's say I give a speech next week. If I use the phrase 'Kurdish society' in this speech, I will be imprisoned for three years. I can say 'Kurds' but not 'Kurdish society,' said Kemal Pekoz, Istanbul chairman of the political party HADEP. 'If I say 'Kurdistan' to refer to the southeast, I can be imprisoned for 15 years.'

Another HADEP senator, Leyla Zana, is serving a 15-year sentence for speeches she made in support of Kurdish rights, an action that courts deemed as providing support for the PKK.

'You can plant bombs, set fires, shoot machine guns and kill lots of people,' said Zana's lawyer, Yusuf Alatas. 'Or, you can simply write an article. Either way, you can be convicted of being a terrorist.'

Memo Links Bir to Plan Against Pro-Kurd Journalists, Politicians

Yeni Safak 21 Oct 00

by Nazli Ilıcak

Do you remember how some of our colleagues were once exposed in the headlines of Hurriyet and Sabah? Cengiz Candar and Mehmet Ali Birand were labeled as PKK collaborators based on a testimony allegedly given by Semdin Sakik.

Later, we read confessions made by Can Atakli, a journalist, which were published in the magazine Okuz. Atakli said Cevik Bir, then the Second Chief of Staff, had forced the newspaper's editorial staff to publish the news accusing Candar and Birand. "A general, who had attached a text he had written to Semdin Sakik's testimony, accused Cengiz Candar and Mehmet Ali Birand. He threatened to ruin the newspaper if it refused to publish the text," he said.

The memorandum, which is published in today's edition of Yeni Safak, confirms Atakli's allegations. Cevik Bir issued instructions to discredit some journalists, such as Cengiz Candar and Mehmet Ali Birand. Bir also recommended that Yavuz Gokmen, the Altan brothers [Mehmet Altan, Ahmet Altan], and others be included in the same package if deemed necessary.

Psychological Warfare

This is the psychological warfare about which I was talking.

The most important elements of this psychological warfare are some reliable(!) columnists, editors, and owners of newspapers.

The method is always the same: Information gathered is formulated in a manner commensurate with the goal and then drafted as an aide-memoir to be distributed to the media. In this context, information gathered from existing testimonies is sometimes complemented by some other information.

Then, these information and aide-memoirs, together with additions made to them, are sent to one or more "influential columnists" selected for this purpose. The aim is to discredit "internal enemies."

This internal enemy was sometimes a political party (HADEP [People's Democracy Party] or Virtue Party [FP]), sometimes a politician (Selim Ensarioglu - DYP [True Path Party], Fethullah Erbas-Van/FP, Abdulmelik Firat-Erzurum/DYP, etc.) and sometimes a businessmen or a journalist (Cengiz Candar, Mehmet Ali Birand, Yalcin Kucuk, Mahir Kaynak, Yavuz Gokmen, Mehmet Altan and Ahmet Altan, etc.), or an association (Human Rights Association).

FP and Politicians

In fact, there was an opportunity to take all the credit for an achievement: Semdin Sakik was captured. Seizing this opportunity, Cevik Bir immediately prepared an action plan. He tried to discredit and defame "internal enemies" by linking them to the PKK.

Take a look at what was written about the Virtue Party:

"Purpose: To discredit the Virtue Party by proving that the Welfare Party was cooperating with the PKK. Preparation of an aide-memoir emphasizing the theme that the FP is going to cooperate with the PKK during the next election period. To convey information, derived from Semdin Sakik's testimony, related to the common goal pursued by the Welfare Party and the separatist organization to one of the influential columnists and to TV stations. To ensure the preparation of an aide-memoir by compiling information gathered in line with the specified objective..."

Politicians are also singled out as targets in Cevik Bir's "powerful action plan: "To launch a letter campaign to ensure that politicians are discredited within their own parties and that their political careers are tarnished by adding information to existing information gathered (Semdin Sakik's testimony)."

Are Courts Independent?

I hope that this memorandum is fabricated and not true.

Maintaining a psychological warfare that would demoralize the enemies of our country would be a

normal thing to do, but we could not approve of any unit of our army being involved in arbitrary defamation campaigns against political parties, politicians, journalists, and businessmen, who have been made the targets of such campaigns.

Even if the content of this memorandum is true, I hope that the action plan eventually did not go a step beyond Cevik Bir's designs.

It should not be the duty of the Turkish Armed Forces to expose journalists, to prevent political parties from taking part in elections, or to slander them by labeling them as PKK collaborators.

Let me remind you of a sentence on the third page of the memorandum: "To ensure that this political party is prevented from taking part in the general and local elections, anticipated to be held in 1999, by discussing this matter with the Chief Public Prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals." This

sentence describes one of the methods to be used against the HADEP. How could one now claim that the courts are independent? We recall that Vural Savas, the chief public prosecutor of the Supreme Court of Appeals, later applied to the Constitutional Court with a request for preventing the HADEP from taking part in the elections. Again, we heard during that period that a great pressure was put on members of the Constitutional Court to convince them to ban the HADEP from competing in the elections.

Unfortunately, some events (the exposure of Cengiz Candar and Mehmet Ali Birand, the stance taken against the HADEP and the FP) indicate that the action plan is not a fabricated document.

There are probably other "powerful action plans" leaked to "friendly journalists." I used to consider some unexpected attacks made by some columnists against me as a part of the psychological warfare. Now, I have the document proving this connection.

* * * * *

Turkish troops kill six PKK rebels suspected of murdering villagers

AFP 21 Oct 2000

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey, Oct 21 (AFP) - 18h05 - Turkish troops killed six Kurdish rebels in southeastern Turkey, during clashes with militants suspected of murdering three villagers earlier in the week, local authorities said Saturday.

The clashes occurred in a rural area near the city of Hakkari, during an operation against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) militants, held responsible for the death of three villagers Wednesday, the government's emergency rule headquarters in Diyarbakir, said in a statement.

PKK rebels on Wednesday captured four villagers picking walnuts near the village of Kavakli, and shot dead three of them, added the statement. The fourth man escaped and informed the security forces of the incident. The killings are the first known PKK attack against civilians since September 1999, when the organisation announced it was ending its 15-year-old armed campaign for self-rule in southeast Turkey, a senior local official told AFP. But in January the PKK said that two small splinter groups had refused to obey party orders to withdraw from Turkish territory, warning they may continue the fight.

The powerful Turkish military has sought to down-play the PKK's peace bid, describing it as a "ploy" and saying the rebels should either surrender or face the army.

However, clashes between government troops and PKK rebels have notably scaled down since the peace bid was made, following peace calls from condemned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, on death row in a Turkish jail. The three slain villagers were buried in a village in the neighboring province of Van on Saturday, reported the Anatolia news agency. The mayor of Van, a member of the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP), condemned the killings in a speech during the funeral. "Our country cannot tolerate more funerals. We condemn with hatred those responsible," Sahabettin Ozarslaner said.

HADEP, which backs a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish conflict and a recognition of the Turkish Kurds' cultural rights, still faces a possible ban for its alleged links to the PKK, outlawed by Ankara. The Kurdish conflict has claimed some 36,500 lives.

* * * * *

A call to peace from captured peshmergas

Kurdish Observer 24 October 2000
SULEYMANIYA

Peshmergas who are in the custody of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) issued a statement on Sunday calling on the Kurdish public to take action for peace. The captives said that the solution to the Kurdish problem lies in peace between the Kurdish organizations. The captive peshmergas said: "We hope that this request and our call will not be forgotten." In their statement, the captive peshmergas called out to the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) and to all parties and political movements, along with clan chiefs and religious leaders.

The statement said that, "Our desire and expectation from you is that you put all your strength and efforts into achieving peace and dialogue." The statement, saying that they wanted all circles to take action to assure that Kurdish blood would never again be spilt by the hand of another Kurd, also noted that the Kurdish organizations could never achieve success as long as they did not solve the problems between them through peaceful means. The captive peshmergas called on Kurdish institutions, political parties, recognized circles and the PKK and PUK to immediately take initiatives to resolve their existing problems.

The names of the peshmergas who released the statement are as follows:

Mehmet Sergo Huseyin, Ahmet Resul Muhammet, Muhammet Resul Muhammet Sex, Xidir Hasan Ibrahim, Ibrahim Ahmet Ali, Xidir Mina Xidir, Aram Muhammet, Heme Siwan, Mesut Heme Rustem, Osman Ismail Ali, Pistevan Resul Ahmet, Muhammet Resul Heme Resit, Adil Ali Mevlut, Abdullah Bebekir, Lokman Sexsa, Heme Halit Resul Allah, Suleyman Abdullah Nino, Asur Resit Mustafa, Aram Refik Mustafa, Mehdi Mina Heme, Cabbar Mustafa Bapir, Umit Mahmut Hamza, Azat Salih Rustem, Kadir Xidir Sexi, Suleyman Xidir Suleyman, Resul Rijo Sevdin, Rustem Aziz Ibrahim, Omer Xidir Huseyin, Isyar Ahmet Xidir, Pirost Huseyin Pirost, Hemin Melle Mire, Tahir Sahap Sadik, Faqir Kadir Sexedil and Fethi Xidir Abdullah.

* * * * *

PKK Group of 300 To Infiltrate Into Country

Anatolia 24 Oct 00

Ankara (AA) -- Information has been received that the terrorist PKK organization has decided to bring a group of 300 into the country and to enable these members to work in small groups in the rural regions of Diyarbakir, Erzurum, and Simak.

It is reported that the decision of the PKK, which has conveyed to the public the message that "the period of armed struggle is over" in a bid to politicize itself, to strengthen and reorganize its armed units is an indication that the terrorist organization has not renounced its armed actions.

It is reported that the PKK has adopted decisions such as "appointing Cemil Bayik to head the armed forces and Nizamettin Tas and Duran Kalkan as Bayik's deputies," "reorganizing its armed units in groups of no more than eight to ten people following the organization's heavy defeat," "ordering the units in Turkey to use light arms," "resolving the problems between the PKK and the Iraqi Kurdistan Patriotic Union and moving the armed units in this region to other areas," "making a plan to gain the people's support and implementing it in view of the fact that the success of armed units is impossible without the support of the people," and "infiltrating a group of 300 into Turkey to enable its members to take action in small groups in the rural regions of Erzurum, Simak, and Tunceli."

Experts on terrorism have stated that the PKK has been split into various groups that make different decisions simultaneously because "the central authority has lost its power during the last year."

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October 24, 2000
By SAJID RIZVI

Britain says Iraqi Kurdish area is an example to Saddam

LONDON, Oct. 24 (UPI) -- Iraq's Kurdish-administered northern region has set an example President Saddam Hussein should follow to ease the suffering of his people, Foreign Office Minister Peter Hain said Tuesday.

Hain spoke after meeting with Kurdistan Democratic Party leader Mas'ud Barzani, who is in London to drum up support for his group. Barzani is being urged by Western governments to reconcile differences with rival Jalal Talibani and his Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Hain said the United Nations oil-for-food program had worked to improve food supplies and attend to health care in Iraqi Kurdistan, an area inhabited primarily by Kurds but with Assyrian/Chaldean, Turcoman and Yazidi minorities and administered by a Kurdistan Regional Government.

"Health and nutritional indicators are much better in the Kurdish-controlled areas of Iraq (than in the rest of the country)," Hain said. There is no reason why similar improvements could not be achieved elsewhere in Iraq." But, Hain said, "the problem is Saddam."

The meeting between Hain and Barzani was part of a wider diplomatic effort to consolidate peaceful coexistence between the rival Kurdish factions since the conclusion of the Washington Agreement between the KDP and PUK on Sept. 17, 1998. A cease-fire between the two sides has largely held and enabled the Iraqi Kurds to restore some order to their lives. The KDP controls the northern area of Iraqi Kurdistan that borders on Turkey and has profited from a trade in Iraqi diesel oil sold in Turkey and Turkish goods brought into Iraq. The PUK controls the Kurdish area to the east that borders Iran which offers much less in the way of trade. Part of the dispute between Barzani and Talibani is over the division of revenues.

Foreign Office officials said the talks centered on confidence-building measures and would likely be followed by discussions with PUK leader Talibani, who was also invited to visit London.

Hain said Monday Hussein's government continued to hold back oil earnings meant for alleviating the plight of Iraq's people. "Iraq's oil exports are now running at about \$24 billion a year. There is more than \$16 billion a year available for food, medical supplies and other humanitarian relief programs, and yet some of it is being held back by Iraqi bureaucracy, preventing the Iraqi people from receiving the support which we in the international community, and Britain especially, want to give them," he said.

He cited U.N. evidence of Iraqi government funds lavished on luxury imports and amenities for Hussein's ruling circle. In the last six months, he said, "Saddam Hussein has imported over 300 million cigarettes, 38,000 bottles of whisky per month, 230,000 cans or 115,000 liters of beer per month, over 120,000 cans or 40,000 liters of vodka per month and almost 19,000 bottles of wine a month," Hain said.

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Barzani, UK Officials Discuss Aid

Kurdistan TV 25 Oct 00

In the course of his tour of Europe and his current visit to Britain, today leader Mas'ud Barzani met, George Foulkes, parliamentary undersecretary of state at the Department of International Development.

At a meeting attended by Ron White, the director of the West Asia Department and some officials of the ministry, leader Mas'ud Barzani gave an account of the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan and the development and reconstruction process in the region.

He stressed that for the process of development and reconstruction to continue in Kurdistan, it needs the continued support and attention of the British government, particularly in the spheres of technical expertise and economic planning. At the meeting, international humanitarian programmes in Kurdistan and the implementation of Resolution 986 were discussed. Leader Barzani stressed the importance of protecting Kurdistan's 13 per-cent share.

On his part, George Foulkes, the parliamentary undersecretary at the British Department of International Development, stressed that the British government would continue its humanitarian and development projects in the Iraqi Kurdistan region. He called for the planning of agricultural projects in the future and promoting ways of combating the effects of drought.

Part-Time Warriors /U.S. Softens Iraq Missions

Questions About a Forgotten War



Pilots in jets like this F-15C Eagle strike swiftly if the Iraqis open up with anti-aircraft weapons. 'Sometimes we flew in such a way that we provoked them to shoot at us,' one pilot said.

By Thomas E. Ricks
Washington Post Service

INCIRLIK, Turkey — Most of the year, Bernard Yosten flies Boeing 727s for American Airlines out of Miami. But in mid-September, he came here for two weeks of flying F-16 fighters in the "no-fly zone" over northern Iraq, where he came under fire from anti-aircraft guns and surface-to-air missiles.

The Iraqi fire "was pretty damned close," reported Mr. Yosten, who has since gone back to flying tourists around the Caribbean.

To a surprising degree, Operation Northern Watch, as the U.S. Air Force calls this mission, is conducted by part-timers. Other members of Mr. Yosten's Alabama Air National Guard unit on temporary duty here usually fly for Delta, United, Southwest, Northwest, Federal Express and United Parcel Service.

Northern Watch is characteristic of U.S. military missions in the post-Cold War era: It is small-scale, open-ended and largely ignored by Americans.

Even though U.S. warplanes are routinely dropping bombs and firing missiles, it has not been an issue in the presidential campaign and has hardly been mentioned by the candidates.

Partly because Turkey and Arab allies want to keep their assistance quiet, the Defense Department makes public little information about the joint U.S.-British effort to prohibit Iraqi aircraft from flying over northern and southern Iraq, thereby protecting Kurds in the North and Shiite Muslims in the South who oppose Saddam Hussein's rule.

But behind the official veil, the no-fly operation has undergone major changes and embarrassments that might have made headlines if it had a higher profile:

- After patrolling aggressively last year, in a manner that one pilot says was intended to draw anti-aircraft fire, the pilots have pulled back and are avoiding known anti-aircraft emplacements. Commanders recently approved a formal order for the de-escalation.

- The U.S. Air Force has also stopped dropping "cement bombs," emptied of explosives, on anti-aircraft batteries near mosques and other sensitive sites. For the most part, it now leaves those batteries alone.

- The Turkish government has interrupted the U.S. flying schedule several times, sometimes because it wants to bomb Kurdish villages in Iraq, sometimes as a way to protest Washington's refusal to sell Turkey certain precision-guided bombs.

- U.S. aircraft bombed and strafed a group of Iraqi shepherds last year because analysts misinterpreted satellite imagery and



Vincent A. Parker/Newsweek Photos

thought a water trough for sheep was a missile launcher.

Iraq says the U.S. air strikes have killed about 300 people, mostly civilians, since December 1998. U.S. officials admit there have been casualties but insist they do not know how many.

Ian Roxborough, a historian at State University of New York at Stony Brook, calls this "fire-and-forget foreign policy," after the modern munitions that make it possible.

But if Northern Watch is not particularly controversial, neither is it particularly popular. At a recent Senate Armed Services Committee hearing, Strom Thurmond, the conservative South Carolina Republican, and Edward Kennedy, the liberal Massachusetts Democrat, took turns questioning it, with Mr. Thurmond calling it "a failure."

As the United States enters its 10th year of confronting

Saddam Hussein, military strategists are frustrated, too. "I no longer have any sense of what the 'containment' of Iraq is all about," said a retired army colonel, Andrew Bacevich, now a military expert at Boston University. "We just fly missions and drop bombs from time to time because we've been doing it for 10 years and no one can stop us from doing so."

Even some of the pilots who have flown Northern Watch missions said they did not understand why it has continued. "I think almost everybody thinks it is a waste of time," said a National Guard pilot who has done four tours of duty.

There are some indications that the operation may end, but not soon and not because it has achieved any enduring success. Support for sanctions on Iraq appears to be waning both in the Arab world and in Europe. Only Britain continues to patrol the no-fly zones with the United States, operating reconnaissance aircraft that do not carry weapons.

A DAY of Operation Northern Watch, which is conducted from Incirlik Air Base, a few kilometers east of the Turkish city of Adana, begins with the roar of F-15C fighters emerging from a hardened shelter. The pilots have been briefed on intelligence, weather and the day's mission.

"Puggsley," a captain from Alexandria, Virginia, who asked that his real name not be used, climbs into his F-15, which bristles with weaponry: heat-seeking Sidewinder missiles near

his wingtips, bigger radar-guided Sparrows on pylons closer in and four even bigger AMRAAM missiles under his fuselage. He taxis to the arming area, where the missiles are activated, and screams down the runway.

But the Air Force approach to patrolling the skies of Iraq involves much more. The fighters are followed by an RC-135 "Rivet Joint" reconnaissance jet, a Boeing 707 laden with surveillance gear. Next come two U.S. Navy EA-6B electronic jammers, then some of the Alabama Air National Guard F-16s carrying missiles to home in on Iraqi radar. One of the Alabama pilots flies a jet borrowed from the Colorado Air National Guard that says "Mile-High Militia" on its tail. The final plane in the 25-aircraft "package" is a big KC-10 tanker.

As the pilots head east toward Iraq, the Syrian border is just 35 kilometers (20 miles) to their right. Some of the pilots

believe that the Syrians, who can see them on radar, report their movements to Baghdad, giving Iraqi gunners about an hour's warning. It takes that long for the American planes to travel to the ROZ, the "Restricted Operating Zone" over eastern Turkey, where the pilots get refueling and then turn south.

The pilots disagree about whether they are truly in combat. "If I can shoot, and if I'm getting shot at, yes, it's combat," argued "Sluggo," a lieutenant colonel from Charlevoix, Michigan, who also asked that his name not be used.

But Lieutenant Colonel Dave "Mega" Watt scoffed. Even though the Iraqis shoot to kill, said the sandy-haired veteran of 17 years in F-16s, "the threat isn't that high."

Mr. Yosten, the American Airlines pilot in Florida, comes

down in the middle. "It's not full-blown combat, but it is a certain level of combat," he said.

Most patrols last four to eight hours, with the fighters and jammers flying over Iraq and then darting back to the restricted zone to refuel two or three times. In 16,000 sorties since the beginning of 1997, Air Force pilots have launched more than 1,000 bombs and missiles against more than 250 targets in northern Iraq.

But they are much less likely to drop bombs and shoot missiles than they were a year ago.

Brigadier General Bob DuLaney, the American commander of Operation Northern Watch since October, has backed away from the confrontational tactics used for most of last year.

In early 1999, said Mike Horn, who flew F-15s in two tours of duty in Northern Watch, "sometimes we flew in such a way that we provoked them to shoot at us."

Under the operation's rules of engagement, they could not bomb unless the Iraqis fired upon them first.

One sure-fire way to get the Iraqis to start shooting, Mr. Horn recalled, was to buzz a heavily defended area north of the city of Mosul. "F-16 guys would pop flares over Saddam Dam, which makes a big smoke trail, and the Iraqis would open up," said Mr. Horn, who has left the Air Force and now flies for American Airlines.

"That's not my style," General DuLaney said in his office just a few steps from the runway at Incirlik.

Under his command, he added, there has been a "big de-emphasis on ordnance."

Turk-Greek Enmity Mars NATO Games

By John Ward Anderson
Washington Post Service

ISTANBUL — A 17-day NATO exercise designed to showcase the new era of friendship between rivals Turkey and Greece, but which instead underscored their continuing distrust of each other, ended Wednesday amid a collective sigh of relief that the two neighbors did not come to serious blows.

The seven-nation military exercise, dubbed Destined Glory 2000, began with high expectations for success amid the landing of Greek military planes in Turkey for the first time in 28 years. But the new warmth between the longtime rivals rapidly dissipated over traditional military and territorial disputes, leading to tense mock dogfights between their fighter jets and climaxing in Greece's angry withdrawal from the exercise three days before it officially ended.

"What began as a step forward in Greece-Turkey relations became a minidisaster and a step back," a Western diplomat in Ankara said. He said it was unclear whether the

fiasco had been the deliberate work of people opposed to rapprochement between the two adversaries or simply a chain of events that occurred because both countries feel the need to react when challenged by the other.

Analysts said that it was too early to tell whether the dispute between the neighbors, which have come close to war three times in the last 26 years, would seriously damage the general improvement in their relations over the last 18 months or so. That warming trend was nurtured by the Greek and Turkish foreign ministers, who have a genuine rapport, and received an enormous lift by the reciprocal outpouring of sympathy and aid after both were rocked by powerful earthquakes in August and September of 1999.

In the aftermath of the quakes, Greece dropped its long-standing opposition to Turkey's application for membership in the European Union, and the countries signed economic, education and tourism accords.

Western sources said the

latest dispute highlighted the thorny substantive differences that remain between Greece and Turkey, particularly over territorial claims in the Aegean Sea and over the divided island of Cyprus.

"It's a hiccup, not a crisis," said the Turkish author and political analyst Mehmet Ali Birand. "Each side wanted to remind the other that things are not as rosy as the press pictures them."

Some political analysts and news reports said the dispute might have been fueled by hard-liners in Greece, notably the defense minister, Akis Tsouhazopoulos. Grigoris Arzoglou, a spokesman for the Greek Embassy in Ankara, denied that his country had tried to provoke an incident.

Barzani Interview: PKK-PUK Fighting, PLO, Iraq, Islamists

26 Oct 00 p 3

by Sa'd al-Bazzaz **Al-Zaman**

[Al-Bazzaz] In view of the current circumstances in Palestine, do you still plan to meet Palestinian President Yasir Arafat? [Barzani] Yes, I will try to meet him as soon as possible, if circumstances permit. You know my strong relationship with brother President Yasir Arafat. I will never forget his honorable stand following the attempt on my life in Vienna in 1979. At the time, he secured my departure

from Austria and helped me obtain a passport under those difficult circumstances. We have maintained our ties, especially in light of the sensitive conditions the Palestinian people are experiencing. I am also in constant contact with the leaders of other Palestinian organizations. This is in addition to our known ties with the PLO. Many attempts were made to confuse these ties. Developments have shown that these ties are strong.

[Al-Bazzaz] What is your reaction to the intifadah in Palestine today?

[Barzani] There was correspondence with brother President Yasir Arafat. We adopted a strong, direct position in the statement of the political bureau. We feel the pains and suffering of the Palestinian people. We realize their great sacrifices. Our Kurdish people support their struggle. We will strongly support this struggle until the Palestinian state is declared.

As for Jerusalem, you know its special status for the Kurdish people, since it is a sacred symbol, which has a deep-rooted place in the minds and hearts of Kurds. This is attributed to a spiritual and religious relationship. It is also attributed to the honorable history of Saladin al-Ayyubi--the immortal Kurdish commander who liberated Palestine and laid down the foundations of a very deep relationship between the two peoples. Therefore, we stand by the Palestinian people, back them within our means, and support their struggle. We hope that there will be a political solution, which heeds their right to declare a state after they made huge sacrifices and endured many pains. They have the right to choose and decide in full and real freedom.

[Al-Bazzaz] Today, you are in London, which had invited you, along with the leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], to a new meeting about the future relationship between the two parties, and about Kurdistan in general. Have the British prepared an amended draft of the Washington agreement? Or are they inviting you to discuss the details?

[Barzani] More than one month ago, the British Government sent an invitation to me and Mr. Talabani to hold a meeting in London. I thanked it for this initiative. We welcomed any meeting, provided it is devoted to holding new negotiations, because the Washington agreement is still valid and there is no better alternative to it. Two other meetings were held in Washington between authorized and leading members from the two sides. All details, interpretations, and the different points of view were discussed at these two meetings. There was agreement on everything, save the issue of the speakership of the Kurdish Parliament. Our opinion was clear, which is that we should accept the 1992 elections and their results at the time, since the parliament exists and its speaker exists according to the results of those elections. Or, we should skip this issue and leave it to the parliament to determine the future of its speakership when it convenes. This means that we may not resolve the issue of the parliament speakership before it convenes. It also means that either its speaker should stay or new elections should be held.

Our opinion is clear and we explained it to the British; namely, that it is acceptable and required to meet and hold dialogue, but that we do not need a meeting in order to discuss new interpretations of the Washington agreement. The opinion of officials here was that there is a need to make more confidence-building attempts, and that this is the real objective of the invitation to this meeting. I can say that we demonstrated very high flexibility--in fact, this flexibility crossed the red line--in order to untie (the knot of the parliament speakership). The new offer is that the parliament should hold the first session in Arbil, chaired by its current speaker. Then, the second session will be held in Al-Sulaymaniyah, chaired by a PUK member. The British have appreciated this big step on our part.

[Al-Bazzaz] What about the new fighting between the PUK and the forces of the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party of Turkey)? You are now outside this military conflict, which is taking place in the PUK areas, but it seems that you are not far from it, politically. Is this true?

[Barzani] We had always been against shedding Kurdish blood. We had also sought to convince all of those who bear arms of the danger of their policies and the bad effects, which reflect on the Kurdish people. We have exerted relentless and continuous efforts to prevent the attempts to turn Kurdistan into an arena for settling conflicts at the expense of the public's security and the region's stability. We faced many challenges patiently, and also firmly. Today, fighting is taking place between the PKK and the PUK in areas, in which the PUK had always denied the presence of PKK forces. However, the outbreak of fighting has shown that PKK forces have an old and large presence in these areas, contrary to what had been said. I again call for not terrorizing the Kurdish individual, not disrupting the security of Kurdistan, and disallowing anyone to tamper with the experience, which we are building today for the sake of this people's future and welfare.

[Al-Bazzaz] Do you view the conflict between the PKK and the PUK as a settling of scores on the regional level, in which Turkey and Iran are apparently taking part?

[Barzani] There is no doubt that regional factors do exist. However, some roles are still not clear, especially with regard to Iran, because the fighting is taking place near its borders. In the final analysis, some parties have their known calculations and old alliances.

[Al-Bazzaz] You made a visit to Turkey early this month. Did Turkish officials raise the differences, which arose between the Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] and some members of the Turkoman Front?

[Barzani] The visit was completely successful. I am satisfied with the method of holding the talks with Turkish officials, who demonstrated a positive attitude and showed understanding. Some problems, which affected relations with the Turkoman Front, had no impact on the talks. Frankly speaking, I believe that Turkomans, Assyrians, and others who live with us in Kurdistan should enjoy their full rights. This position is not a favor from us. Nor is it the outcome of pressure by anyone. We safeguard these rights. I guarantee these rights and I will defend them. Yes, I will safeguard the rights of Turkomans and others under the umbrella of law and order, which includes everybody. There is no doubt that there was exaggeration and misunderstanding of the incidents that took place. We respect Turkomans and care about them. They know that we hold them in high esteem. This is a constant policy that will continue.

[Al-Bazzaz] Turkey plays a key role in the new security and regional order in the region. It maintains relations and commitments with the United States and Israel. Has Turkey asked you to take part in any security arrangements in the region?

[Barzani] No, not at all. Our position is declared. I reiterate it at this stage. We will not be part of any regional security or military arrangements with any party against any party. We only care about the interest of our people and safeguarding their security. We do not bargain with anyone against any side. This position is known to all regional and international sides, and there is understanding of it. This is why no one has asked us to take part in any regional commitments. We have proven practically that we are not a tool in the hands of anyone and will not be a bargaining chip to pressure anyone. We will not bargain over our political decision on fateful issues.

[Al-Bazzaz] What about the relationship with the central government in Baghdad? Is it declining or developing?

[Barzani] As long as we are living in Iraq, the solution in the end is within Iraq. Therefore, dialogue should continue. However, the important thing is that we should be able to reach a political solution that enhances national unity, just as it enhances the historical relations between the Arabs and Kurds.

[Al-Bazzaz] Some Islamists resorted to violence a few months ago in Kurdistan. Does this indicate the possibility of the emergence of a phenomenon of wider violence against the background of the position of the Islamists toward some aspects of social life and some new habits in Kurdish society?

[Barzani] Our Islamists are different from the Islamists you know in Algeria and elsewhere. The Kurdish people are religious by nature. I personally can never lead a party that has an anti-Islam orientation. Since the days of martyr Shaykh Abd-al-Salam Barzani, the historical leadership of this people has been careful to mix the national aspirations of the Kurdish people and their Islamic affiliation and sophist trend. Had Shaykh Abd-al-Salam remained alive (he was executed in 1914 when he was 38 years old), the history of the Kurds would have taken a different course. If you go back to the writings of the historians of that stage, you will find that he was trying to convince King George V in Britain to accept the idea of declaring a state, according to the British historian (Wiklarm), who visited Kurdistan in 1905.

The important thing is that the Kurds had made a choice at an early stage. They are practicing Muslims. We now have Islamic parties, which operate according to the law. These parties oppose the use of force and violence in advocating their ideas. If certain incidents had happened, these are isolated and individual incidents, which will not be repeated. Kurdistan will never be another Algeria.

[Al-Bazzaz] Talking about Shaykh Abd-al-Salam's vision, do you feel that the new generations of Kurds suffer from a problem of identity and that there are sensitivities between the Kurds, according to their areas and social roots?

[Barzani] I do not think so because the elements that determine the features of Kurdish identity are intertwined. They are national features that reflect the yearnings and ambitions of this people. These features are mixed with the Islamic dimension, which the Kurds have by nature. The party [KDP] is a united party that rises above differences and distinctions, whether these are social or regional. The party has contributed toward crystallizing the national identity of the Kurds. Therefore, the party is, in a way, looked at by others, who are observing its ability to prevent the emergence of differences and sensitivities of any kind. The party's political bureau includes members from all cities, areas, and social roots.

[Al-Bazzaz] Is it possible for fighting to restart between the KDP and the PUK?

[Barzani] There is nothing that justifies this fighting again. We do not expect it. There is a common conviction that collision does not serve anyone. It will greatly harm our people.

[Al-Bazzaz] You have a new young government, which provides basic services and is responsible for rebuilding Kurdistan. Are you satisfied with its performance so far?

[Barzani] As far as services go, there is no doubt that so far its performance is less than what we aspire for. However, to be fair, we have to observe with appreciation the continuing and rapid development. The government has a strong will to continue to meet the needs of the people, in spite of the meager resources. But do you expect destruction over 80 years to be reversed in two or three or ten years?

Destruction is faster than construction, as you know. However, the important thing is that we have a strong political and practical will to provide the people with a safe life and good services. Security and stability are in their best shape. Freedoms are safeguarded and the parties operate safely and have their forums--newspapers and television broadcasts. This is available for everybody, including Kurds, Turkomans, and Assyrians. This also applies to all trends--Islamist, communist, and nationalistic. This, in itself, is an achievement, which we are working to develop. The important thing is that the people enjoy peace of mind. This is the most important and precious thing.

[Al-Bazzaz] Turkey and Iran have often viewed Kurdistan as a crossing or passageway. Do you still face this attitude after you have set up your own model in running the area for a decade?

[Barzani] We are not a crossing, and we will not accept to be a passageway.

[Al-Bazzaz] Iran is looking for a land passage to link it with Syria. It also sought the same thing with the Iraqi Government. Has it sought this with you as well?

[Barzani] No one is talking to us now about this issue.

[Al-Bazzaz] But Kurdistan is likely to become a crossing of a different kind. It may not be a political or military passageway. I am referring here to another problem, which has to do with drug trafficking. Kurdistan is located amid countries, which suffer from this problem. Therefore, drug dealers may seek to infiltrate your area. Has this not happened so far?

[Barzani] We have asked for the help of the United Nations and the European Union to support our efforts and to prevent the use of Kurdistan as a route for drug trafficking from neighboring countries. We are close to the line of this trade, and we have taken precautions to face the dangers of this bane. We have adopted strict and harsh measures to safeguard society and keep Kurdistan clean. We will not hesitate in the future to take very tough measures to prevent drug trafficking through Kurdistan to protect ourselves and the entire region.

Filming in Iran's Rugged Corner, Hoping Prayer Works

Elaine Sciolino

When Bahman Ghobadi decided to make his first feature film and set it in his native Kurdistan in the north-west corner of Iran, he turned to his family for help. One brother became the production manager. Another became an assistant director. An older sister found suitable locations and mediated disputes on the set. Most important was Mr. Ghobadi's mother, who cooked hot meals for the cast and crew every day and visited her local mosque in times of crisis.

"My mother had a crucial role — praying," said Mr. Ghobadi in an interview during a recent trip to New York, his first ever. "Every morning she would call and ask, 'What do you need?' I'd tell her, 'I need a cloudy sky tomorrow' or 'I need snow right now.' She would go immediately to the mosque. She did everything she could to bring God to my set."

Mr. Ghobadi, an Iranian Kurd, is only 31. But his first feature film, "A Time for Drunken Horses," won the Camera d'Or award at the Cannes International Film Festival this year and has been richly praised at film festivals from Telluride to Toronto. It opens tomorrow in 16 cities nationally as part of the Shooting Gallery Film Series, including New York at the Loews State, Broadway at 45th Street.

Like many Iranian films that capture the joys and travails of everyday life, "A Time for Drunken Horses" is about a family. But this is also one of the first films about Kurdistan, filmed mostly in Kurdish and underscoring Kurdistan's separateness from the fierce political battles swirling in Tehran hundreds of miles away. About 8 percent of Iran's population is Kurdish, and most Kurds are Sunnis, not Shiites, as are most Iranians. There is no Islamic republic in the film — no clerics, no call to prayer from the mosques, no photographs of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the father of Iran's revolution. Kurdish women wear their bright-colored tribal dress, not the long, black chadors worn by many of Iran's most religious women.

Filmed in the unforgiving terrain on Iran's border with Iraq, the film tells the story of a family of five children whose mother died in childbirth and whose father has disappeared in a smuggling operation across the land-mine-laden Iraqi border. Ayoub (which means Job), the teenage son, is left to provide for his three sisters and his brother, Madi, a sickly 15-



Melissa Jones for The New York Times

Bahman Ghobadi, director of "A Time for Drunken Horses."

year-old with deformities who has only a short time to live. Ayoub is determined to keep his sister Amaneh in school and, even more difficult, to earn the money for an expensive operation that will prolong Madi's life, though only for several months.

The young Ayoub becomes a smuggler, carrying heavy loads of tires and construction materials on mule caravans through the steep, snowy mountains to Iraq, dodging security forces of both countries. The title of the film refers to the alcohol that is poured into the drinking water of the mules, turning them tipsy but helping them endure the harsh cold. (The film is about mules that can make the trip across the mountain, not about horses, which probably could not. But, Mr. Ghobadi said, "The word mules doesn't sound good, especially in Farsi.")

One day Ayoub returns to find that his uncle has bartered his older sister, Rojine, as a bride to an Iraqi Kurd whose family has promised to pay for Madi's operation. In one of the most moving scenes of the film, Rojine crosses the mountains through the snow with Ayoub and Madi to meet her husband's family on a barren field at the border. Her mother-in-law, who has 10 children of her own, refuses to abide by the agreement to take in Madi, and then she refuses to grant Rojine a divorce.

But a deal is struck: the family of the groom gives Ayoub a mule, Madi goes back home, and Ayoub restarts his campaign to save his brother's life.

Mr. Ghobadi grew up in the Kurdish town of Baneh and studied film-

making at a university in Tehran run by Iran's state-controlled television and radio. He worked as an assistant to Abbas Kiarostami, probably Iran's best-known director, who has been making films since before Iran's 1979 revolution. And he honed his skills by filming children in a day care center where he worked for three years and by making dozens of short films, mostly about neighbors and friends.

He decided to make his first feature film about Kurdistan primarily because it was the world he knew best. He said: "I belong there. I know the culture. Everything in the film sprang from my interaction with other Kurdish people. There are also misconceptions about the Kurds. They are always seen carrying guns and shooting people. Whenever I tell people I am going to Kurdistan, they say: 'Be careful. They're going to cut your head off.'"

Indeed, Baneh was a haven for the "ready-to-die" Kurdish guerrillas who waged a rebellion until it was crushed by the Iranian Army. It remains a small, poor town, but today it is the filmmaker, not the guerrilla, who is the hero in Kurdistan, and Iran is now the 10th-largest producer of films in the world.

"When I walk down the streets, people approach me, young and old, with scripts," said Mr. Ghobadi, an affable man with well-groomed, slicked-back hair who is just beginning to fit into his new celebrity. "Now people are buying cameras. People are praying that their kids become filmmakers."

The film began without a script. Instead, like Mr. Kiarostami, his mentor, Mr. Ghobadi began to follow people around, pointing his camera at them. None of the actors are professionals. "I wanted the film to be a mixture of documentary and imagination," he said.

Mr. Ghobadi began the film with the cooperation and financing of the Farabi Cinema Foundation, an arm of Iran's vast Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture. Initially the permission, the camera, the film, some of the crew and even the catering were provided by the Islamic Republic. The culture minister, Ataollah Mohajerani, would check with the director on the film's progress.

But Mr. Ghobadi was dissatisfied with the initial rushes and decided that many scenes had to be shot again because of the weather. De-

spite the film's tundralike setting, it snows hard in Kurdistan only a few weeks of the year. (Indeed, most of the smuggling between Iran and Iraq is done in trucks and small vans on paved roads, and the smugglers who use mules work only two months of the year and seldom in the dismal conditions depicted in the film.) So he decided to wait for another winter. When the ministry balked at investing more money, he borrowed from family members and friends to buy out Farabi's rights. The entire production cost about \$125,000.

In promoting his film around the world, Mr. Ghobadi has found himself cast in the role of a spokesman for the 20 million Kurds who inhabit a large swath of territory in Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria. "I consider myself an Iranian first and then a

Kurdish Iranian," he said. "But people have turned me into a spokesperson for the Kurdish cause. Sure, there are a few thousand armed fighters who want independence. But instead of picking up a gun, let's pick up a camera."

Mr. Ghobadi acknowledged that the film's quasi-documentary style leaves the impression that it reflects real life in Kurdistan, but he said: "I don't want you to get the impression that Kurdistan looks like this. Kurdistan is very beautiful. I wanted it to be snow-covered to hide that beauty. I wanted a miserable, dismal environment." He also said that he sanitized the lives of the smuggling underworld.

"Smugglers don't have work 10 months of the year, so they don't have much to do, and that idleness

causes addiction," Mr. Ghobadi said. "Sometimes in the smuggling operations the boys get raped by older smugglers. The whole situation disgusted me so much I didn't delve into it."

But the overarching message of the film — familial love and loyalty — resonates throughout. "Nothing can keep this boy from doing what he wants," Mr. Ghobadi said. "He isn't even afraid of dying. When he crosses the Iraqi border at the end, he doesn't know what will happen. Will he step on a mine? Will he be eaten alive by a wolf? Will he be captured by security forces?"

Mr. Ghobadi is already planning his second feature film. It is the story of a town in Iraq inhabited by 400 women, but no men. Except, that is, for Madi.

Iranian Bahais, Fleeing Religious Persecution, Find a Refuge in Turkey

By AMBERIN ZAMAN

Los Angeles Times October 28, 2000

VAN, Turkey--When the prominent Iranian doctor was invited back home last year with promises that he would no longer be persecuted for his adherence to the Bahai faith, he resigned from a well-paid job in Saudi Arabia and flew to Iran. "Within six months, I was in jail," said the frail-looking 65-year-old, who now has fled across the border to eastern Turkey, as he broke down in tears. "They fed me my own flesh." The doctor, a longtime campaigner for Bahai rights, identified himself as Parvaz Mukhtari, but that is not his real name. Like many other Iranian Bahais seeking asylum in Turkey, he refuses to reveal his real name because he wants to protect loved ones back home. The Bahais are part of a crush of refugees in this eastern Turkish city. Officials here say the refugees, most of them Kurds fleeing a 15-year separatist insurgency in the country's largely Kurdish southeast, have more than doubled the official population of 226,000. Besides Iranian Bahais, who normally are granted asylum because of the persecution they face, there are as many as 10,000 illegal Iranian immigrants here, officials estimate. Necmettin Salaz, an advisor to Van's mayor, said the refugees have created "unbearable" pressure on city resources. Most of the refugees live in adobe huts with plastic sheeting for windows and no heating or toilets. Many men work illegally in construction; women in growing numbers are said to be turning to prostitution.

Officials at the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Van say the number of Iranian asylum-seekers, including Bahais, has steadily risen over the last three years. Nearly half of those granted refugee status last year were Bahais. Like most of the other Bahai refugees, Mukhtari believed that conditions for Iran's largest religious minority would improve when the country's moderate president, Mohammad Khatami, was elected in May 1997 with promises of democratic reform. But Mukhtari said he was arrested and put in solitary confinement in a jail in Isfahan, about 200 miles south of the Iranian capital, Tehran, after refusing to renounce his faith. A ragged scar zigzags the length of Mukhtari's left calf from where he said his interrogators had carved out a piece of flesh. "They grilled it in the form of a kebab and forced it down my throat," Mukhtari recalled, tugging fiercely at a set of turquoise worry beads as he spoke. "For them, it was a great joke." Such treatment is part of what critics call a policy of repression against Bahais in Iran. Western diplomats say that continuing persecution of Bahais might be part of the broader power struggle in Iran between hard-liners and Khatami's reformers.

Just a year after Khatami was elected, Ruhollah Rowhani, a Bahai, was executed on charges of apostasy stemming from his alleged conversion of a Muslim woman to the Bahai faith, said Techeste Ahderom, a spokesman for the Bahai International Community in New York. At least 11 Bahais remain in jail for refusing to recant their faith. Four have been handed death sentences, Ahderom said. The U.S. State Department's annual report on religious freedom for 1999 accused Iran of implementing policies against Bahais "geared to destroying them as a community" through prolonged imprisonment, confis-

cation and desecration of their holy sites and graves, and by denying them university education and government jobs. Iranian authorities in September 1998 shut down a covert chain of Bahai "open universities" set up shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution in response to the group's exclusion from high schools and universities.

Last year, four Bahai faculty members arrested in the crackdown were sentenced to up to 10 years in prison on charges of having established "a secret organization" engaged in "attracting youth, teaching against Islam, and teaching against the regime of the Islamic Republic," the State Department report said. Numbering about 350,000 in Iran and 5 million worldwide, the Bahais are considered apostates by Iran's clerical regime chiefly because of claims that their spiritual leader, a 19th-century Persian noble-

man named Bahau'llah, succeeded the prophet Muhammad as God's latest messenger. More than 200 adherents of this largely pacifist community have been executed since the revolution. Thousands have fled the country. In Turkey, however, the Bahais' aversion to politics and calls for equality between men and women have made them welcome. Leaders of this predominantly Muslim but officially secular nation continue to view Islamic radicalism as the No. 1 threat to the modern Turkish republic founded by Kemal Ataturk more than 70 years ago, and they accuse Iran's clerical rulers of seeking to export fundamentalism. "Of all the Muslim countries in the world, Turkey is where we feel the greatest freedom," said Cunevt Can, a physics professor at Ankara's Middle Eastern Technical University and a local community leader for Turkish Bahais.

For that reason, says Can, Bahais fleeing Iran are well received by local authorities, and Turkey is a favorite transit route for those seeking asylum in Western countries. "The Turkish police, the people have been very kind to me," said a 54-year-old Bahai asylum seeker, who would identify herself only as Shaziya. She said her 40-year-old brother was shot dead by Iranian revolutionary guards in 1981. "I still keep the shirt he was wearing," she said, producing a crumpled, blood-stained garment out of a plastic bag. She said Iranian secret police still raid the family home and detain males for long periods. Last year, she said, her husband was jailed for refusing to convert to Islam and has yet to be released. "I decided to come here to save my poor son," Shaziya said, pulling a teenager to her side. The pair made it to Van in February after a harrowing four-day trek through the snow-clad mountains separating Turkey from Iran. Like hundreds of Iranians who cross illegally into Turkey every year, they paid Kurdish smugglers about \$600 each to get them across the heavily mined frontier.

They are waiting to be resettled in Norway by the High Commissioner for Refugees. As they await resettlement, community elders such as Mukhtari organize classes for Bahai youth to pass on the religion's teachings but also tutor them on such subjects as English and math. "Come what may," said Mukhtari, "we shall keep the spirit of our faith alive."

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GILMAN, HELMS DEMAND ANSWERS ON SANCTIONS-VIOLATING FLIGHTS INTO IRAQ

House International Relations Committee

October 27, 2000

WASHINGTON (Oct. 27) - U.S. Rep. Benjamin A. Gilman (20th-NY), Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, sent the following letter today to Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright concerning sanctions against Iraq:

October 27, 2000

Dear Madam Secretary:

We suspect that you are extremely concerned, as we certainly are, about the increasing number of sanctions-violating flights into Iraq. Needless to say, it is not surprising that these flights have been initiated by Russia and France, both of which are permanent members of the Security Council.

Following the lead of Russia and France, other countries have likewise flown into Iraq. Among these countries are recipients of significant amounts of U.S. foreign aid.

This, Madam Secretary, is outrageous.

Since August, Russia has permitted three direct commercial flights to Baghdad, requesting permission

for only two of those flights from the U.N. Sanctions Committee. We understand that Russia does not view these flights as sanctions violations.

In your testimony last month before the Foreign Relations Committee, you emphasized that this is not the U.S. position; specifically, you made clear that the United States believes "that these flights need approval, and . . . I think that absent any new kind of consensus, the [Sanctions Committee] will continue . . . to operate under practices of the last 10 years, that these flights require approval, not just notification." Sanctions are a vital tool in denying Saddam Hussein the funding and supplies necessary for him to pursue weapons of mass destruction. Vigilance is all the more urgent, given the absence of weapons inspectors in Iraq for nearly two years.

Being fully committed, as we are, to ensuring that this despot does not develop the weapons to threaten the United States, our allies, or our interests, we acknowledge that this will be increasingly difficult if Saddam's neighbors (and our allies and aid recipients) continue to violate the sanctions intended to protect them.

Madam Secretary, two points: 1) In your view, absent permission from the sanctions committee, do these flights constitute sanctions violations? And (2) Under the terms of Section 534 of the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act of 2000, do you agree that no assistance should be provided to nations in violation of U.N. sanctions on Iraq?

Please let us hear from you as to how Section 534 applies to the countries in violation of UN sanctions, and in particular to Russia and Egypt, two flagrant violators who receive billions in U.S. foreign aid.

We urgently need your response, Madam Secretary. Sincerely, JESSE HELMS (Chair, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, R-NY). BENJAMIN A. GILMAN (Chair, House International Relations Committee, R-NY)

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UN sanctions Iraqi sale of oil in euros

Agence France Presse October 31, 2000

GENEVA — The United Nations (UN) sanctions committee on Monday gave authorisation for Iraqi crude oil exports to be paid for in euros instead of dollars, diplomats said after the three hour closed-session meeting to discuss the Iraqi request. Iraq has however told the committee it will wait until November 6 before implementing the currency change. Iraq had made the request for the switch to pricing in euros, and Iraqi Oil Minister Amer al-Rashid earlier described the US dollar as "the currency of an enemy state".

"There is no legal basis to block the request," from Iraq for the switch to euros, a UN diplomatic source said at the end of the meeting. However, UN financial experts said "cumbersome" administrative arrangements would be required and recommended further study before making the switch.

All revenue from Iraq's crude oil exports are handled by the UN under the sanctions regime imposed on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

The chair of the sanctions committee, Dutch ambassador to the UN Peter van Walsum, will now write to the UN Secretariat informing it of the decision taken by the committee, the diplomats said.

Baghdad had let it be understood that it might interrupt its oil exports if the UN refused to give permission for the switch.

The committee also asked the UN Secretariat to report back in three months on the effect of the changeover to euros. The Secretariat was also asked to be in direct contact with the Iraqi authorities to solve any technical problems that the changeover might bring, diplomats said.

A report by UN Treasurer Suzanne Bishopric said the switch could cost at least \$270m a year in exchange costs and lost interest on the dollar account.

The report also warned that the move could mean delays in settling accounts, because not all purchasers of Iraqi oil or their bankers would necessarily hold euros in large quantities.

* * * * *

GÉNOCIDE

Bill Clinton a fait reculer le Congrès

La résolution sur la reconnaissance du génocide arménien a été retirée de l'ordre du jour

La pression de la Maison Blanche a fini par faire plier les parrains de la résolution sur la reconnaissance du génocide arménien au Congrès américain. La résolution a donc été retirée jeudi 19 octobre de l'ordre du jour, juste avant le vote de l'ensemble de la Chambre des Représentants.

Le président Bill Clinton avait dressé le même jour une lettre au président de la Chambre des Représentants, Dennis Hastert, dans laquelle il s'inquiétait des conséquences que pourrait entraîner l'adoption de la résolution 596 (sur la reconnaissance du génocide arménien). *«Nous avons des intérêts importants dans cette région troublée du monde, écrit le président américain : contenir la menace que fait peser l'Asie centrale et orientale, stabiliser la situation dans les Balkans et développer de nouvelles sources d'énergie. L'examen de cette résolution en cette période sensible affectera négativement nos intérêts, et pourrait saper les efforts entrepris pour promouvoir une amélioration des relations entre la Turquie et l'Arménie, l'objectif ultime affiché par les parrains de cette résolution.»*

Pour justifier le retrait d'une résolution dont il a été l'un des plus ardents défenseurs, le président de la Chambre des Représentants, Dennis Hastert, a expliqué que son adoption *«pourrait avoir un impact défavorable sur la situation au Moyen-Orient et mettre en péril la vie de ressortissants américains»*. Le président Clinton lui a fait part de ses *«fortes inquiétudes»* quant à *«l'opportunité»* de cette résolution, au regard des intérêts américains au Moyen-Orient. *«Chaque patriote américain devrait tenir compte de la requête du président»*, souligne M. Hastert, qui pense que la résolution *«aurait recueilli le soutien de la majorité de la Chambre des Représentants»*.

A Ankara, la joie et le soulagement provoqués par le retrait de la résolution sont à la mesure de l'inquiétude suscitée ces dernières semaines. Le président turc Ahmet Necdet Sezer a remercié son homologue américain Bill Clinton d'avoir déployé ses efforts en vue de bloquer l'adoption de la résolution, qui n'est ni plus ni moins qu'une *«tentative de détruire les bonnes relations bilatérales entre nos deux pays»*. La Turquie accorde *«la plus haute importance aux relations avec son ami et allié les Etats-Unis»*, a écrit M. Sezer au président américain. *«Je suis sûr que vous partagez comme moi le désir de ne pas voir se renouveler de telles initiatives visant à entraver le développement des relations bilatérales»*, a souligné le chef de l'Etat turc.

Pour le ministre turc des Affaires étrangères Ismail Cem, les relations turco-américaines ont été *«sauvées d'une grande menace»* par le retrait de cette résolution, une initiative *«pleine d'injustices contre la Turquie»*. M. Cem a remercié le président Clinton, la secrétaire d'Etat Madeleine Albright, le secrétaire à la Défense William Cohen, l'ambassadeur des Etats-Unis en Turquie William Pearson, ainsi que les membres du Congrès ayant *«défendu les réalités»*. *«Nous devons continuer à expliquer les vérités»*, a-t-il déclaré.

Le premier ministre turc Bülent Ecevit a exprimé sa *«gratitude»* au président américain Bill Clinton, au Secrétaire d'Etat Madeleine Albright, au Secrétaire à la Défense William Cohen et au Pentagone, pour le retrait de la résolution sur le génocide arménien de l'ordre du jour du Congrès. Il a également exprimé sa gratitude au Patriarche des Arméniens de Turquie, Sa Béatitude Mesrob Mutafian.

Sur les relations arméno-turques, M. Ecevit a déclaré que sa politique à l'égard de l'Arménie n'avait pas changé. *«Il y a deux conditions préalables au dévelop-*

pement des relations bilatérales, a-t-il dit : premièrement, le rejet par l'Arménie d'interprétations erronées de l'histoire, et deuxièmement, la conclusion d'un accord avec l'Azerbaïdjan. Ces deux points seront profitables à l'Arménie. Sachez juste qu'il n'y a jamais eu de génocide durant toute l'histoire de la Turquie !»

On notera une seule voix discordante en Turquie : celle du président de l'Assemblée des Associations turco-américaines (AATA), Tolga Cubukcu, qui a déclaré depuis Washington (*Turkish Daily News*, 26-10) que *«les membres du Congrès n'ont pas montré leur désaccord à l'égard du contenu de la résolution retirée in extremis, mais ont plutôt fait prévaloir les intérêts stratégiques des Etats-Unis en Turquie, la crise récente au Moyen-Orient ayant rendu le rôle d'Ankara primordial»*. Pour M. Cubukcu, *«il est évident que le succès obtenu par la Turquie grâce à son importance stratégique et régionale ne peut déboucher sur un changement de l'opinion publique américaine sur cette question»*.

LA CONTRE-OFFENSIVE TURQUE

Après les premières réactions officielles à l'annonce du retrait de la résolution du Congrès, la Turquie a lancé sa contre-offensive. Un Institut de Recherches Arméniennes (IRA) va être fondé à Ankara pour tenter de démonter les accusations de génocide proférées contre la Turquie dans le monde. L'IRA va étudier la culture et l'histoire arméniennes, et ouvrir les archives ottomanes au public via Internet. L'ancien ambassadeur Omer Engin Lutem a été nommé directeur de cet institut, qui sera formé au départ de 10 académiciens et diplomates à la retraite, et qui collaborera avec le Centre d'Etudes Stratégiques Eurasiatiques.

Par ailleurs, un groupe d'études va être mis sur pied au Parlement d'Ankara, pour contrer les accusations qui visent la Turquie. Des historiens turcs et étrangers remettront leurs conclusions le 24 avril 2001, a révélé le nouveau président du Parlement, Omer Izgi.

La justice turque a ouvert également une enquête lundi 23 octobre à l'encontre d'Akin Birdal, militant turc des droits de l'homme, auquel elle reproche d'avoir accusé la Turquie, lors d'une conférence donnée récemment en Allemagne, d'avoir perpétré un génocide à l'encontre des Arméniens. Selon l'agence turque Anatolie, Akin Birdal est passible d'un maximum de trois ans d'emprisonnement, pour *«incitation à la haine raciale»*. Akin Birdal, l'ancien président de l'Association de défense des droits de l'homme de Turquie, a déjà été libéré de prison le mois dernier, après avoir purgé une peine de dix mois de prison, pour *«incitation à la haine raciale»*. Il avait été condamné pour des discours prononcés en 1995 et 1996 sur les droits des Kurdes, dans lesquels il appelait à la fin de la guerre menée depuis 1984 par l'armée turque contre les rebelles kurdes dans le sud-est anatolien.

Enfin, cette contre-offensive turque sur le génocide arménien s'accompagne d'un brusque regain de tension avec la Grèce en mer Egée, puisqu'Athènes a



décidé dimanche 22 octobre de se retirer d'un exercice de l'OTAN, après le refus de la Turquie d'autoriser les avions grecs à simuler une attaque à l'intérieur de ses terres.

Soulagement côté turc, mais aussi du côté du constructeur américain Bell-Textron, qui risquait de se voir éliminer au profit du consortium russo-israélien Kamov, dans la course à l'achat par l'armée turque de 145 hélicoptères de combat. «Bell est satisfait que ce problème ait été résolu», a déclaré l'un des dirigeants du groupe. Nous pouvons à présent nous concentrer sur les négociations avec les Turcs.»

Côté arménien, on réagit diversement selon que l'on se trouve en Turquie ou en Arménie. Le Patriarche des Arméniens de Turquie, Sa Béatitude Mesrob II, qui a qualifié la résolution du Congrès américain de «cas-tête», a appelé la Turquie et l'Arménie au dialogue pour trouver une solution au problème. Dans une déclaration écrite rendue publique après le retrait de la résolution, Sa Béatitude Mesrob II a affirmé qu'il était «vain» d'espérer un résultat «en comptant sur des tiers». «Ce problème ne devrait pas devenir un casse-tête», a-t-il ajouté. Il ne devrait pas être exploité par des politiciens pour leurs propres intérêts. Personne n'a le droit d'exploiter les douleurs des gens, quelle

que soit l'appellation qu'on leur confère. Le dialogue turco-arménien est la voie à suivre. Les historiens et chercheurs objectifs, sélectionnés par les deux parties, devraient examiner cette question. Tous les pays possédant des archives devraient les ouvrir pour examen. En ma qualité de Patriarche des Arméniens de Turquie, j'ai toujours recommandé la formation d'un dialogue entre l'Arménie et la Turquie. Je suis prêt à y contribuer par tous les moyens possibles.»

ERÉVAN «DÉPLORE» LE RETRAIT DE LA RÉOLUTION

L'Arménie a «déploré» vendredi 20 octobre par la voix d'Ara Papian, porte-parole du ministère des Affaires étrangères, le retrait de la résolution sur le génocide arménien. Il a néanmoins formé le vœu que la Turquie acceptera d'entamer un dialogue avec l'Arménie, sur tous les problèmes «entravant la normalisation des relations bilatérales».

Hovhannes Hovhannissian, le président de la commission des Affaires étrangères au Parlement d'Érevan, a attribué quant à lui le retrait de la résolution à la «forte pression» exercée par la Maison Blanche, et a établi des parallèles entre les États-Unis et la France, où le blocage du Sénat se poursuit. «La même chose

s'est produite à Washington», a-t-il déclaré à Radio-Liberté. Kim Balayan, du Parti Dachnak, a accusé Washington de pratiquer une politique de «deux poids deux mesures». Samuel Avetissian, de Pays des Lois, a estimé pour sa part que la crise du Moyen-Orient a permis de «renforcer le rôle géopolitique de la Turquie aux yeux des dirigeants américains».

Quoi qu'il en soit, il y a fort à parier que les organisations arméniennes des États-Unis reviendront à la charge après l'élection de la nouvelle Chambre des Représentants. Selon un rapport du Centre d'Etudes Internationales et Stratégiques (CEIS) des États-Unis, une résolution identique sera rediscutée au Congrès américain durant l'année prochaine. L'auteur du rapport, David McKeeby, a souligné que «le lobby arménien n'abandonnerait pas ses efforts» en vue de la reconnaissance du génocide arménien. En cas d'adoption de la résolution, les intérêts stratégiques des États-Unis au Moyen Orient en seraient «considérablement affectés». Cette affaire pourrait également avoir des «répercussions» sur la candidature de la Turquie à l'Union européenne, car celle-ci pourrait exiger d'Ankara une «reconnaissance préalable». David McKeeby a recommandé que cette question soit traitée par les historiens. ●

MGK "Recommendations" to Government Outlined

Sabah 28 Oct 00 p 26 by Mahmut Bulut

Adoption of new measures to combat the threats against the secular system was debated during yesterday's session of the National Security Council [MGK]. A MGK General Secretariat report, "Strategy for Fighting Reactionism," prepared at the prompting of a directive issued by the Office of the Prime Minister, voices the need to adopt new steps and radical measures, especially in the fields of education, judiciary, and executive, and proposes an action plan for this purpose. Among others, it calls for the raising of the compulsory education from eight to 12 years, transforming Imam-Hatips into vocational schools by barring female student attendance, purging ministries and universities of reactionary cadres, and enforcing strict administrative and financial control over societies, trusts, and Islamic business groups.

More Stricter Struggle

The four and half-hour MGK meeting was held at Cankaya presidential mansion under the chairmanship of President Sezer. The meeting assessed the results of the three-month implementation of the "Strategy for Fighting Reactionism," which had been put into effect with a directive issued by the Office of the Prime Minister. A report on this issue submitted to the meeting by the MGK General Secretariat states that "reactionism continues to remain the number one threat against the Republic of Turkey" and lists the measures that should be adopted to combat it. The report says the strategy for combating reactionism "encompasses measures that should be taken as regards education, staffing, reactionary businesses, public relations, the institutions involved in anti-reactionary struggle, and foreign elements supporting reactionism."

Amnesty, Banks, State of Emergency

Reiterating that every ministry should be responsible for monitoring its own personnel, the report goes on to list the following institutions that should specifically combat reactionism: State Ministries responsible for the economy; the Ministries of Justice, Interior, Foreign, Finance, and National Education; the Customs Undersecretariat; the High Education Council [YOK]; Religious Affairs Department; and General Directorate of Trusts.

In listing the new steps that need to be taken by the ministries and the institutions in the struggle against reactionism, the report also calls for extra vigilance in looking into the allegations surrounding

"reactionary sportsmen." [reference is to a sportsman at Sydney Olympics who refused to wear a uniform with Turkish flag on and even refused to compete]

The prison revolts and the amnesty issue were also debated at the meeting. The military branch of the MGK asked that the sensitivity of the public should be taken into consideration over the amnesty of convicts that have committed crimes of terror.

Minister of Interior Tantan submitted a report to the meeting on the latest situation concerning the issue of the bankrupt banks. The MGK called for decisive measures against the bankrupt banks and gang crimes. It was also decided that the Cabinet should be informed of the extension of the State of Emergency in Diyarbakir, Tunceli, Hakkari, and Simak for another four months as of 30 November.

Armenian Problem

The meeting also evaluated the latest developments on the "so-called Armenian genocide" claims. To combat Armenian claims, the meeting looked into the possibility of setting up a scientific institution made up of scholars from all over the world. The institution will be run from a single center to be set up at a university.

Foreign Minister Ismail Cem briefed the MGK on the latest developments concerning the Middle East peace process. The meeting decided that Turkey should continue its contributions to the Middle East peace process.

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Iraq Claims To Have Hit Enemy Plane

AP - 28 Oct 2000

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Iraq claimed Saturday that its air defense units had struck an enemy plane patrolling in the southern no-fly zone earlier in the day.

A spokesman for the Iraqi Air Defenses told the official Iraqi News Agency that "the heroes of the air defense units have hit an enemy plane which came from the Saudi skies."

The spokesman did not give details as to where the plane was hit or how much damage was caused.

But a British Ministry of Defense spokesman said Saturday night that it had no reports of any damage to its aircraft. "No (Royal Air Force) or USA plane has been hit or shot down at all. It's been patrolling as normal," he said. He said claims that coalition planes have been hit or brought down have been made before, but have proved not to be true.

U.S. and British warplanes enforce no-fly zones over north and south Iraq to protect groups opposed to the Baghdad government. Iraq does not recognize the zones and has been challenging the planes since December 1998.

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Syria's vice president to visit Turkey

UPI- 29 Oct 2000

DAMASCUS, Syria, Oct. 29 (UPI) -- Syria's Vice President Abdel Halim Khaddam plans to visit Turkey next month, becoming the first high-ranking Syrian official to make such a visit since the 1980s, according to diplomatic sources. The sources told United Press International that Khaddam will hand a letter from Syrian President Bashar Assad to his Turkish counterpart during the planned visit to Ankara early next month. They said the letter would be related to "bilateral ties and the situation in the region"

and that Khaddam was also to meet a number of Turkish officials, including the prime minister. Khaddam's visit would be the first by a high-ranking Syrian official to Turkey since the 1980s when then-Prime Minister Abdel Raouf al-Kassam visited Ankara. It will be also the first since the two countries signed the Adana security agreement in 1998 following Turkish reinforcements on the Syrian northern border that came after Ankara accused Damascus of supporting the separatist Kurdish rebels headed by Abdallah Ocelan.

Un haut responsable présumé du PKK renvoyé devant les tribunaux



KARLSRUHE (Allemagne), 30 oct (AFP) - 15h58 - Un haut responsable présumé du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, interdit en Allemagne) a été renvoyé devant le tribunal, a annoncé lundi le Parquet général fédéral.

Halat K., un Turc d'origine kurde âgé de 40 ans, devra répondre d'appartenance à une organisation terroriste, d'incitation à la violation de domicile et de trouble à l'ordre public. Il sera jugé par le tribunal de Celle (nord) ==.

Actuellement en détention provisoire, il est soupçonné d'avoir ordonné l'occupation des représentations diplomatiques de Grèce, du Kenya et d'Israël en Allemagne, après la capture du chef du PKK Abdullah Ocalan par la Turquie en février 1999.

Selon le Parquet, Halat K. aurait été actif par intermittence en Allemagne, de mai 1994 à mars 2000, d'abord comme dirigeant du PKK dans la région de Stuttgart (ouest). Après un séjour à l'étranger, il aurait dirigé à partir d'août 1998 la région nord du pays, qui couvre les villes de Cassel, Hanovre, Bielefeld, Osnabrueck et Salzgitter.

Entre l'arrestation d'Abdullah Ocalan en février 1999 et mai 1999, Halat K. avait rejoint une "cellule de crise" de la direction du PKK, sur ordre du coordinateur européen du PKK, un certain "Sahin", selon le communiqué du Parquet fédéral de Karlsruhe (ouest).

De mai 1999 à mars 2000, il aurait ensuite été responsable de la région sud avec Francfort, Mayence, Giessen, Mannheim, Sarrebruck et Darmstadt.

Douze rebelles du PKK tués par l'armée dans le sud-est (autorités turques)



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 30 oct (AFP) - 9h09 - Douze rebelles kurdes du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) ont été tués et trois soldats turcs blessés lors d'un affrontement dans la province de Sirnak frontalière avec l'Irak et la Syrie, a annoncé l'autorité chargée de l'état d'urgence à Diyarbakir (sud-est).

L'accrochage, le plus meurtrier de ces derniers mois, s'est déroulé dans la région de Beytussebap, à une cinquantaine de kilomètres de la frontière irakienne, indique le communiqué sans préciser quand il a eu lieu.

Les affrontements dans l'est et le sud-est ont considérablement diminué depuis que le PKK a annoncé en septembre 1999 qu'il mettait fin à ses quinze ans de lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant, répondant à l'appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort en juin de la même année pour trahison et séparatisme.

Mais l'armée turque a promis de lutter contre les rebelles jusqu'à ce qu'ils se rendent, estimant que leur annonce d'un arrêt des combats était une manœuvre.

Quelque 36.500 personnes ont été tuées en quinze ans dans les violences liées à la rébellion du PKK, selon un bilan officiel.

Over 102,000 tons of goods exported from Kurdistan in 6 months

IRNA - 28 Oct 2000

Sanandaj, Kurdistan prov., Oct 28, IRNA -- Over 102,000 tons of non-oil goods have been exported from the western province of Kurdistan in the first six months of the current Iranian calendar year of 1379 (started March 20), Sirous Shah-Gheibi, a provincial official, told IRNA here on Saturday.

The official put the value of exported commodities at over rls 12 billion.

The exported items included clinkers, cements, dried apricot, raisins, natural chewing gums and broad beans.

The commodities were shipped to Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman.

Currently the U.S. dollar exchange rate against the national Iranian currency is around 8,150 rials.

Syria Speaks Up for Iraq

Longtime Foe Says It's Time to Lift UN Sanctions

Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches

DAMASCUS — In a sign of improving ties between Syria and Iraq, Damascus called Tuesday for the lifting of United Nations sanctions against Baghdad.

The gesture came after President Bashar Assad met with Tariq Aziz, deputy prime minister of Iraq, who was visiting, a presidential spokesman said.

Ties between Syria and Iraq, ruled by rival factions of the Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party, started to improve three years ago after nearly two decades of animosity over Iraq's 1980-1988 war against Iran and Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

Syria sided with Tehran during the Iraq-Iran war and joined the U.S.-led multinational force that drove Iraqi troops out of Kuwait in 1991.

Mr. Aziz was the most senior Iraqi official to visit Syria since Bashar Assad took office in July following the death in June of his father, Hafez Assad.

Mr. Aziz also met with the Syrian foreign minister, Farouk Shara, who said afterwards: "Syria supports calls for removal of sanctions imposed on Iraq. We expressed this position during recent meetings of the UN General Assembly and the Arab League."

He added: "We believe the preservation of sanctions is not justified because the people of

Iraq are those who are mainly suffering as a result. Syria wants to ease the agonies of the Iraqi people."

The Syrian move followed a flurry of other overtures in Iraq's direction. On Monday, France proposed that aircraft be allowed to fly to Iraq with just simple notification of the UN committee monitoring sanctions against Baghdad. But the United States protested that the committee must authorize all flights, not just know about them.

Coming on the heels of unauthorized flights to Baghdad by French and Russian aircraft, the proposal marked another step in the campaign by Iraq's UN supporters to end what they contend is an illegal air embargo against Baghdad.

It also put the spotlight again on deep divisions within the UN Security Council 10 years after it imposed trade sanctions over the invasion of Kuwait.

While France, Russia and China have launched a new campaign to try to chip away at the sanctions, the United States and Britain are determined to maintain the embargoes until UN inspectors certify that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction have been eliminated.

At a sanctions committee meeting on Monday, France submitted a proposal that would

end the committee's practice of requiring 24 hours prior notification of any flight so that members had time to register objections, said the Netherlands' UN chief delegate, Peter van Walsum, who chairs the committee. The French proposal, he said, "is based on the assumption that it is a notification procedure only."

Under the proposal, the committee would be notified of all flights to Iraq and the route to be flown.

Aircraft would be inspected at departure, at any stopover and at arrival in Baghdad by independent inspection agents to ensure that no unauthorized cargo was on board, Western diplomats said.

The sanctions committee includes all 15 members of the Security Council.

In Paris on Tuesday, organizers said that a French plane would fly to Baghdad on Friday, the second such flight in a week.

Organizers of the forthcoming flight, including a former French foreign minister, Claude Cheysson, and two other ex-cabinet ministers, said the chartered plane carrying French politicians and intellectuals, would leave Paris on Friday morning and return on Sunday. The organizers said they had chartered an airliner. (AP, Reuters, AFP)

Iraq Says Its Oil Will Be Priced in Euros This Week

Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches

BAGHDAD — Iraq, OPEC's fourth-largest producer, will price its oil exports in euros instead of dollars starting Wednesday even though the move has not been approved by the United Nations, the country's oil minister said Sunday.

France, Russia and China, all permanent members of the UN Security Council "support Iraq's request," said the oil minister, Amir Mohammed Rasheed, according to the official Iraqi press agency, INA. Iraq said in September that it planned to switch to the euro because the dollar was the currency of an "enemy state."

There is a "serious possibility" that Iraq, which accounts for about 3 percent of world oil output, could suspend oil exports because of a delay in approving the request, the Middle East Economic Survey said last week. Iraq's exports are regulated by the UN under sanctions imposed after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, and the country does not participate in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries' output quotas.

The UN informed Iraq last week that it needed more time to study the cost of making the change.

A report on changing the currency in which Iraq is paid for its oil will be taken up in New York on Monday by the UN sanctions committee, which is made up of officials from the 15 members of the Security Council, including the United States.

The U.S. State Department has said that it is not concerned about whether oil payments are made in euros or dollars, only that the oil-for-food program continue to meet its objective of providing the Iraqi people with needed food and medicine.

Iraq also wants to convert to euros about \$10.6 billion sitting in an escrow account at BNP Paribas SA in New York. That could potentially have a greater effect on propping up the euro than the coordinated intervention of Sept. 22, when central banks spent billion of dollars in support of the European single currency. (Bloomberg, AFP)

■ OPEC to Raise Output Quotas Monday

OPEC, which produces about 40 percent of the world's oil, will raise output quotas on Monday for the fourth time this year to lower prices that threaten world economic growth, the United Arab Emirates oil minister said Sunday, according to a Bloomberg News dispatch from Abu Dhabi.

The group pledged in September to increase quotas by a further 500,000 barrels a day if the price of a barrel of crude that the group monitors stayed above its target range of \$22 to \$28 for 20 consecutive trading days after Oct. 1. The OPEC index was at \$31.14 a barrel on Thursday, the 19th day it was above the range.

Crude oil prices have remained high despite OPEC's decision to try to push prices lower with production increases in April, July and October.

State Department watching Iraqi commercial flights in No Fly Zone

UPI - 30 October 2000 18:29 (ET)

By ELI LAKE

WASHINGTON , Oct. 30 (UPI) - The State Department says it will watch Iraqi commercial flights in the United Nations-defined "no-fly" zone carefully but will not consider them a violation of existing restrictions, an official said Monday.

Iraq said on Monday that it would resume internal flights between the capital, Baghdad, and two cities in the north and south that fall under the U.S.-British-imposed "no-fly" zones, introduced to protect the Kurdish population of these areas. The official Iraqi News Agency quoted Transport Minister Ahmad Murtadah Ahmad as saying that regular flights between Baghdad and Mosul, 250 miles(400 km) north of the capital, and Basra, miles 342 (550 km) south of Baghdad, will resume on Sunday. He said that the airports in the two cities were now ready to receive and service the Iraqi Airways flights, adding that plane tickets for the routes had returned to the market on Sunday. Ahmad added that the national carrier was also organizing bus shuttles from main areas in Baghdad, Mosul and Basra to transport passengers to the airports.

The United States currently monitors the two areas in the south and north of Iraq for military aircraft. If American or British jets catch Iraqi military planes in these zones they are required to ground them.

The official also said unsanctioned international flights, or flights without permission from the UN sanctions committee "were not carried out in accordance with established sanctions regime procedures as they should have been." But the official would not say whether this constituted sanctions violations.

This semantic distinction between "accordance with procedures" and "sanctions violations" is critical. U.S. law prohibits aid to countries that violate the Iraqi sanctions. Both Russia and Egypt, two U.S. aid recipients, in the last month have landed aircrafts in Baghdad without permission of the sanctions committee.

On Friday, the chairmen of the House and Senate committees dealing with foreign affairs, wrote Secretary of State Madeline Albright to get her position on whether the unauthorized flights constituted sanctions violations. Senator Jesse Helms R-N.C. and Rep. Benjamin Gilman R-N.Y. wrote, that insuring Saddam Hussein cannot threaten American interests "will be increasingly difficult if Saddam's neighbors (and our allies and aid recipients) continue to violate the sanctions intended to protect them."

If Albright determines that the unauthorized flights are in fact sanctions violations, she may be forced to invoke section 534 of the Foreign Operations Appropriations bill that prohibits aid to sanction busting countries. In the case of Russia this would cost Moscow only between \$160 and \$180 billion, most American support for the country is in the form of loans and debt relief, two functions not covered in the legislation. But for Egypt, the flights to Iraq could be much more costly. Egypt would receive \$1.3 billion in military assistance in the 2001 foreign aid bill and \$695 million in economic assistance.

That bill is currently before the president, awaiting his signature. A House Appropriations Committee staff member said that no further language on the Iraqi flights was in the bill, but added: "Those funds could be put at risk if the Iraqi sanctions were broken. I'm not sure whether one flight to Baghdad is technically violating the sanctions."

The sanctions question also has some political ramifications. In the second presidential debate this month, Vice President Al Gore said: "But, you know, all of these flights that have come in? All of them have been in accordance with the sanctions regime, I'm told, except for three where they notified." Should Albright respond that the flights were in fact violating the sanctions, she may cause an apparent discrepancy between the current administration and their party's candidate for president in the home stretch of the election.

* * * * *

Interior Minister Tantan says corruption is primary threat

Turkish Daily News October 31, 2000

by Inci Hekimoglu

Interior Minister Sadettin Tantan said on Monday that corruption threatened Turkey's economic and political stability.

"The corruption economy is Turkey's number one threat," Tantan told academics and reporters at a conference on corruption at an Istanbul university. He said, "It lies at the root of many of our country's problems and poses a future threat to our society and constitutional regime."

Corruption imposes a great burden on the economy and companies as Turkey tries to secure a foothold in European markets, bring down costs and cut inflation under an International Monetary Fund (IMF)-backed anti-inflation plan. Some analysts describe it as a "hidden tax."

The minister, stressing the economic costs corruption imposes on a developing economy such as Turkey's, warned that it also financed the radical Islam and violent Kurdish nationalism the military has identified as primary threats to the country.

"Unless we understand that corruption is the main source of radical Islam, terrorism, dirty politics and a state that does not function, and take the necessary steps to drain the swamp, we will spend all our time swatting mosquitoes," he said.

The ex-police chief made no direct reference to Turkey's bid to join the European Union, but analysts say a deep-seated culture of back-handers and influence-peddling could slow progress towards membership. The EU will formally tell Ankara next week what political changes it expects for talks to start.

High-level corruption was most notoriously exposed in 1996, when a car crash revealed links between far-right organized crime and the state. The scandal prompted nationwide protests and calls for a clean-up, but prosecutions have gone nowhere.

Under Tantan, the Interior Ministry has made high-profile arrests and launched investigations into bribery and dishonesty among businessmen and middle-ranking state officials.

While a series of financial operations, starting with the bailout of eight private banks reached an apex as Etibank and Bank Kapital were taken over by the state last week, the public is questioning the relationship between bankers, politicians and bureaucrats. While the risk incurred by the state from the bailout is about \$8.9 million, the proportions of the Egebank investigation revealed the extent to which graft has permeated society.

Society's trust in the state was dealt a severe blow as it became clear that it was unable to take precautions against graft. The government bore down with the austerity measures in the context of the three-year stability, program with the IMF, the staggering proportions of the risk incurred by the state through the bailout operation was revealed.

Despite the lack of confidence, the public is carefully following the operations led by Interior Minister Sadettin Tantan, first among which is the Egebank scandal, where Yahya Murat Demirel, nephew of former President Suleyman Demirel, is the main actor. Civic associations have begun to express their concerns more openly as the proportion of corruption emerged. Noting that the struggle against corruption cannot succeed without enlisting the support of civic associations, the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) started a joint project with the Interior Ministry.

The project will last two years

The first stage of the two-year corruption investigation launched by TESEV was discussed at a meeting at Bogazici University yesterday. Tantan said, "The signing of the protocol was an indication of the significance attributed by the ministry to good relations with civic associations."

Tantan confirmed the "willingness and determination" of his ministry to conduct an investigation into corruption in coordination with TESEV. Defining corruption as "the robbery of public resources and of the savings of our nation," Tantan emphasized that it had become the main weapon of organized crime groups.

During the speech which coincides with the arrest of Murat Demirel and "Operation Typhoon," the code

name of the police investigation into the Egebank scandal, Tantan made the following comment: "Until today, the architects and actors of the 'corruption economy' were seen as effective, powerful and respectable citizens. Robbers and oppressors, who should have been condemned forever in the conscience of the people, walked among us as respectable and prestigious people."

Stressing that corruption violated the rights of the poor and the needy, shook democracy from its base, breached the principle of the superiority of the law, decreased confidence in the state and impeded development, Tantan described the legal loopholes encountered in the struggle against corruption. He said that major crimes were evaluated as light offenses and received minor punishments because of the "lack of expertise of prosecutors and judges" and only at the end of "very long interrogations." Tantan underlined his ministry's determination in the struggle against corruption and pointed out that some people were disturbed by their efforts. "People who are worried by this struggle are waiting for an opportunity to go back to their old habits and mentalities and divert our people from the fight," Tantan said.

TESEV Chairman Can Paker described the starting point of the struggle with corruption and drew attention to the obligations incurred by Turkey by applying for full membership of the EU. He noted, "Turkey should fulfill all of its obligations" for EU membership and said, "We need to be vigilant in the struggle against corruption, a current issue which disturbs the public conscience."

The project, which is the first large-scale study into corruption in Turkey, will last for two years and include three stages. First, there will be a study of 3,000 households all over Turkey where people will be polled and interviewed in depth. Following the research, which will take six to eight months, the sectoral distribution and the methods of corruption will be investigated. The third stage will be dedicated to educational, legal and administrative measures. The Treasury, the Interior Ministry, the State Supervision Board and the Ministry of Justice will participate in the project.

Kurd faces trial in Germany as activist of banned party

AFP - 30 Oct 2000

KARLSRUHE, Germany, Oct 30 (AFP) - 17h51 - A leading official in Germany of the banned Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has been committed for trial on charges of membership in a terrorist organisation, officials said Monday.

The federal prosecutor's office said the suspect, identified only as Halat K., 40, was also charged with inciting serious breaches of the peace.

He, along with other PKK cadres, is accused of ordering the occupation of the Greek consulates in Frankfurt and Hanover, among others, in February 1999 in protest at the arrest of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. Greek diplomats were involved in the arrest of Ocalan in Kenya by Turkish agents.

Stones were thrown at police guarding the Frankfurt mission, while in Hanover the occupant of an apartment above the consulate was held prisoner. There was also considerable material damage done to both missions.

According to federal prosecutors, Halat K. has held PKK responsibilities in Germany since 1994.

He was allegedly responsible from May 1994 to July 1995 for the PKK in the Stuttgart region and after a period outside Germany took charge in April 1998 of the PKK's north German region covering Kassel, Hanover, Bielefeld, Osnabrueck and Salzgitter. >From May last year until his arrest in March he was in charge of a southern German region covering Frankfurt, Mainz, Giessen, Mannheim, Saarbruecken and Darmstadt, they said. Since 1998 he was allegedly involved in procuring false identity papers in order to smuggle PKK activists in and out of the country.

The PKK was banned in Germany in November 1993 after its militants mounted coordinated firebomb and other attacks on Turkish interests around the country. The authorities have since then arrested and charged a number of suspected senior PKK officials.

The PKK has since 1984 waged a bloody war in Turkey for Kurdish independence.

There are some two million Turkish nationals living in Germany, about a quarter of them Kurds.

Seven Foreign Planes Land in Baghdad

Reuters - 31 October 2000

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Seven foreign planes landed in Baghdad Tuesday bringing officials and business delegations to take part in the opening of a trade fair, the state news agency INA reported.

One plane each came from Ireland, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey and Lebanon, while three arrived from Russia, the agency said.

Arab countries and some others have been sending flights to Iraq to protest against decade-long sanctions -- including extensive restrictions on international flights -- imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The flights have been largely symbolic and have sought to lessen Baghdad's isolation by exploiting a loophole in a 1990 U.N. Security Council resolution.

The first plane to arrive from Ireland in a decade brought members of parliament and a trade delegation. A UAE Boeing 747 arrived with an eight-member delegation headed by the chairman of the national airline, INA said. A Russian Tu-154 landed at Saddam International airport with a delegation of 50 members of parliament and businessmen led by Pyotr Romanov, a Communist deputy speaker of the Russian lower house of parliament, the Duma.

They were due to participate in a Baghdad trade fair opening Wednesday. Another 15-member delegation of businessmen arrived on a later flight. "The visit affirms the deep-rooted relations between Russia and Iraq," Romanov told INA.

An earlier direct flight from Siberia had brought a number of Siberian officials and artists. Airport officials said a Lebanese and a Turkish plane landed carrying business delegations.

"The visit aims to boost friendship ties between the two countries' peoples," Jacques Sarraf, head of the Association of Lebanese Industrialists, told INA.

The Lebanese delegation received a red carpet welcome from Trade Minister Mohammed Mehdi Saleh.

* * * * *

Turkish police round up senior members of extreme Muslim group

31 Oct 2000 Agence France-Presse

ISTANBUL, Oct 31 (AFP) - Police in Istanbul have rounded up 18 suspected members of the Islamic extremist group Hizbullah, including five senior commanders, Anatolia news agency reported Tuesday. Acting on a tip, police raided a house in Kartal district, on Istanbul's Asian side, where the suspects had gathered for a meeting to discuss ways of reviving their organization, the victim of a massive police crackdown since January, Anatolia said without specifying when the raid took place.

Among those captured was Mehmet Sudan, believed to have taken over the leadership of the group since mid-January when Hizbullah leader Huseyin Velioğlu was killed and two senior commanders captured in a shootout with police in Istanbul, the agency said.

Following the shootout, police launched a nationwide crackdown on Hizbullah, rounding up hundreds of suspected members and recovering the bodies of 68 people kidnapped and murdered by the group across Turkey.

Turkish authorities say the group, which is not believed to have links with its Lebanese namesake, aims to overthrow the country's strictly secular order and replace it with a hardline Islamic state. Hizbullah is blamed in all for some 500 murders committed between 1991 and 1999. Prosecutors dealing with the cases of suspected Hizbullah militants have accused Iran of providing military training and financial support for the group.

Turkish troops kill 12 Kurdish rebels in southeastern province

AFP - 30 Oct 2000

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey, Oct 30 (AFP) - 8h14 - Turkish soldiers have killed 12 Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels in one of the deadliest clashes in recent months in the southeastern province of Sirnak, security officials said Monday.

Three members of the Turkish security forces were wounded during the fighting in a rural area near the town of Beytusebap in the province which borders Syria and Iraq, a statement from the emergency rule headquarters in this southeastern city said. The statement did not say when the clash took place.

Previously heavy fighting in the mainly Kurdish-populated southeast and east has scaled down considerably since September 1999, when the PKK said it was halting its 15-year armed campaign for self-rule and pulling out of Turkish territory. The truce announcement, launched following peace calls from condemned PKK rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, was brushed aside by the Turkish army as a "ploy".

The conflict has claimed some 36,500 lives, according to official figures.

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The Mothers for Peace were exposed to sexual harassment

Kurdish Observer - 31 Oct 2000

ISTANBUL

Detained at Habur Border Gate after holding a meeting with PUK (Kurdistan Patriotic Unity) Leader Jalal Talebani in Suleymania in order to put an end to the assaults between PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and PUK and to secure peace, the Mothers for Peace were reported as being tortured and harassed in detention.

Lawyer Eren Keskin, IHD (Human Rights Association) Istanbul Branch Chairwoman who prepared a follow-up report after holding meeting with the Mothers in Mardin Prison, stated that the mothers had been tortured and sexually harassed for 3 days in Silopi Gendarmerie Station in which they were detained. Keskin continued saying the following: "The mothers whose eyes were blindfolded and who were undressed stark naked must endure to the harassment of the soldiers who were in the age of their grandsons. Fahriye Bikim who was 65 year old, and had been through an operation and had high blood tension problem, was made stand in the cell for all night long in spite that she expressed her health problem clearly, and was insulted sexually. Rahime Ince, age 65, was throttled, her hairs were pulled off and her shoulders were crushed in by a heavy material. But the very thing which most hurt the mothers' feelings was insults such as "Whore", "Harlot" and "Did you make sex with Talebani?" and statement that their daughters made love with men."

Undressed stark naked and tortured

Pointing out that Muesser Gunes, Sekemaz Cakar and Azize Yildiz were undressed buck naked and sexually harassed, Keskin continued saying with words to the effect: "Azize Yildiz was insulted by soldiers with words such as "whore", "prostitute". She was beaten and threatened with rape. Sekemaz Cakar, despite she expressed clearly she has been through 6 operations, was hit on her head, and

when her nose bleed they claimed she pretended and was a terrorist and continued making torture."

"White tulbent" campaign

Stating that they asked for women organizations to send white "tulbent" (a traditional Kurdish head scarf) to the President, Prime Minister, Justice Minister and Sema Piskinsut, Chairwoman of Grand National Assembly Human Rights Investigation and Fact-Finding Committee, Keskin requested the torturers should be tried. Lawyer Fatma Karakas, holding meeting with the mothers said that they would file a complaint against the officials of Silopi Gendarmerie Station.

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ENQUÊTE SUR UNE COMMISSION OCCULTE

« L'Irak paiera ! »

Durant la guerre du Golfe de 1991, les Etats-Unis ont délibérément visé les approvisionnements en eau potable de l'Irak, violant ainsi la convention de Genève sur les lois de la guerre. La récente étude d'un universitaire américain qui a révélé ce crime a été ignorée par les médias. Elle confirme pourtant la stratégie de destruction délibérée de tout un pays. Près de dix ans après la fin du conflit, une population impuissante continue de payer le prix d'une double intransigeance, celle des Etats-Unis et celle du régime du président Saddam Hussein.

Malgré les brèches dans le mur de l'embargo que représentent les vols directs entre d'un côté, Moscou, Paris et Amman, de l'autre Bagdad, rien n'annonce un assouplissement de la position de Washington. Au contraire, la campagne électorale américaine donne lieu à des surenchères. Et le pillage de l'Irak se poursuit, comme le montre le travail de la commission d'indemnisation des Nations unies pour l'Irak, une instance occulte, qui siphonne un tiers des revenus des exportations de ce pays et dont le fonctionnement comme la légalité sont plus que douteux...

Par ALAIN GRESH

P OUR la première fois, le 15 juin 2000, le consensus s'est brisé. Le climat affable des réunions routinières du conseil d'administration s'est brusquement tendu. Pourtant, Genève est peu propice aux éclats de voix. On y préfère le silence protecteur, les discussions feutrées, l'absence de publicité. Il est vrai que les sommes en jeu impressionnent : 15,9 milliards de dollars, deux fois le produit intérieur brut de la Jordanie. Il ne s'agit ni de fusion bancaire, ni d'argent sale recyclé, ni d'offre publique d'achat. Les participants ne sont pas des financiers, encore moins des banquiers, mais des diplomates de haut rang des quinze pays membres du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies.

Ils doivent se prononcer sur une des demandes d'indemnisation formulée notamment par la Kuwait Petroleum Corporation à l'encontre de Bagdad. Les diplomates français et russes exposent leurs réserves. Un tel pactole peut-il être ponctionné sur les ressources d'un pays, l'Irak, dont tous les rapports confirment qu'il s'enfonce dans la misère ? La session est ajournée au 30 juin. Nouvelle réunion, nouvelle impasse, nouveau report à fin septembre 2000.

Avec ses bureaux disséminés dans la Genève internationale, l'United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), la commission d'indemnisation des Nations unies pour l'Irak, méconnue du public, poursuit ses travaux depuis bientôt dix ans. A l'abri des regards indiscrets, cette instance occulte constitue pourtant un des rouages essentiels de la stratégie d'anéantissement de l'Irak. On évoque souvent les sanctions contre ce pays, les enfants qui meurent faute de soins, les hôpitaux sans matériel, le délitement d'une des plus vieilles civilisations de la planète.

Quelques lignes d'une dépêche d'agence, rarement reproduites, rappellent parfois les bombardements quotidiens menés par l'aviation anglo-américaine contre l'Irak. Mais pas un journaliste ne hante les couloirs de la commission d'indemnisation. Aucun débat public ne se déroule sur sa légalité, contestable, ou sur ses pratiques, douteuses. Pourtant, les caisses de cette institution ont récupéré, depuis décembre 1996, un tiers des revenus des exportations de Bagdad : 11 milliards de dollars...

En avril 1991, au lendemain de la victoire des alliés dans la guerre du Golfe, le Conseil de sécurité confirme que l'Irak « est responsable, en vertu du droit international, de toutes les pertes, de tous les dommages (...), ainsi que de tous les préjudices subis par d'autres Etats et par des personnes physiques et des sociétés étrangères, directement imputables à l'invasion et l'occupation illicite du Koweït par l'Irak ». Chargée de recueillir les demandes d'indemnisation, l'UNCC est créée par la résolution 692 du Conseil de sécurité du 20 mai 1991 (lire article, page 17). Son conseil d'administration se compose des représentants des quinze membres du Conseil de sécurité. Il décide du montant des indemnisations à verser à chaque plaignant, sur la base d'un rapport présenté par un groupe de trois commissaires, des experts choisis par le secrétariat exécutif, organe en principe administratif, mais qui est le lieu du réel pouvoir. Pris en main, dès sa création, par les représentants des Etats-Unis, le secrétariat a « orienté » — désorienté serait un terme plus exact — toutes les décisions de la commission.

La procédure adoptée par le Conseil de sécurité n'a pas de précédent, au

moins depuis le traité de Versailles, qui avait mis fin à la première guerre mondiale et... jeté les bases de la seconde. L'article 231 de ce texte rendait l'Allemagne seule responsable de la guerre et l'obligeait à régler d'innombrables réparations. Le mot d'ordre — « L'Allemagne paiera ! » — allait déboucher sur la prise de pouvoir par Adolf Hitler. Désormais, le slogan des Etats-Unis, qui avaient refusé de ratifier le traité de Versailles, est « L'Irak paiera ! ». Avec quelles conséquences ?

Ancien professeur de droit international public, avocat du cabinet Lalive & Partners (1), Michael E. Schneider dénonce la principale aberration de la procédure : l'Irak n'est pas reconnu comme « une partie dans un procès (a defendant party). On se passe de l'accord du principal intéressé. L'Irak, et l'Irak seul, doit payer pour chaque centime de la procédure, pour les émoluments des commissaires et de leurs experts alors que le pays n'a même pas accès aux travaux de ces mêmes experts ». Bagdad doit rendre des comptes pour les dommages provoqués par son invasion meurtrière du Koweït. Mais même un criminel a droit à une défense et à des avocats ; et on ne lui demande pas de payer la procédure, les juges et l'enquête ». On ponctionne chaque année 50 millions de dollars sur les exportations irakiennes pour subventionner la commission, le moindre déplacement de ses experts — en classe affaires —, les appointements substantiels des commissaires... Pour la première fois dans l'histoire du droit international depuis la fin de la seconde guerre mondiale, un Etat n'a pas son mot à dire dans une procédure qui le concerne.

Une procédure digne de l'Inquisition

A MBASSADEUR de Bagdad auprès des Nations unies à Genève, M. Mohamed El Douri, ancien professeur de droit international, travaille « sous embargo ». L'Irak a perdu son droit de vote aux Nations unies, parce qu'il n'a pas acquitté ses cotisations (2), alors que le plus gros débiteur de l'organisation, les Etats-Unis (plus de 1 milliard de dollars de dette), n'a jamais fait l'objet d'une telle sanction. Les communications de l'ambassadeur irakien avec son gouvernement sont laborieuses ; un émissaire met quatre jours au minimum pour aller de Bagdad à Genève et retour. Même le matériel minimal lui manque : la compagnie Xerox a refusé de lui vendre des photocopieuses, par peur, sans doute, qu'il ne les transforme en armes chimiques...

M. El Douri s'explique longuement, minutieusement. Les dossiers n° 4003197 et 4004439, présentés notamment par la Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, pour la somme de 21,6 milliards de dollars, évo-

qués plus haut, sont exemplaires. Ils concernent la suspension de la production et de la vente de pétrole koweïtien durant l'occupation irakienne, ainsi que les pertes dues aux incendies notamment. Les attendus koweïtiens, plusieurs dizaines de milliers de pages, ont été déposés, les 20 mai et 24 juin 1994, devant les trois commissaires chargés du dossier. Bagdad n'a été informé de leur contenu qu'à travers un résumé du secrétariat exécutif le... 2 février 1999, cinq ans après ! Il a eu jusqu'au 19 septembre pour présenter ses observations.

Or, explique la délégation irakienne, le 13 juin 2000, au conseil d'administration, « [ces deux demandes] touchent trop d'aspects légaux, scientifiques, techniques et comptables... Vous devez vous imaginer le temps nécessaire pour transmettre ces volumineux documents, les vérifier, les étudier, les traduire en arabe et ensuite préparer une réponse, qu'il faut encore traduire en anglais. »

La commission n'a pas autorisé le gouvernement irakien à prélever sur l'argent de ses exportations – son propre argent ! – pour assurer le paiement de grands cabinets juridiques. « Nous avons toutefois remis nos observations, poursuit l'ambassadeur, auxquelles le Koweït a répondu, mais... nous ne connaissons pas le contenu de cette réplique. Après bien des tergiversations, nous avons reçu le droit de présenter nos observations – en une heure maximum ! – devant les commissaires, le 14 décembre 1999. » Ceux-ci ont finalement accordé 15,9 milliards aux plaignants, soulevant les réserves française et russe au conseil d'administration. Pour la première fois, le consensus était rompu. « L'Irak est responsable, conclut l'ambassadeur, mais cela n'autorise pas à violer le droit international. »

« Comment peut-on traiter les dossiers sans avis contradictoires, s'interroge Michael E. Schneider, sans donner la possibilité à chacune des parties de présenter son point de vue ? Face aux dossiers ficelés, comment réagir ? Le Koweït a fait un appel d'offres international pour préparer ses dossiers et se défendre. Pour déficeler, il faudrait un travail minutieux que la commission n'a pas le temps de faire. Non seulement l'Irak s'est vu refuser l'argent pour se défendre, mais, de plus, les services de tous les grands cabinets d'avocats sont déjà loués soit par les plaignants, soit par l'UNCC. » Plusieurs cabinets, dont Price Waterhouse, ont été embauchés par l'UNCC, après avoir travaillé pour les autorités koweïtiennes, ce qui n'est pas sans poser une question de « conflits d'intérêts ».

En 1991, le secrétaire général des Nations unies avait recommandé que l'Irak soit « informé de toutes les demandes (claims) et qu'il dispose du droit de présenter ses commentaires aux commissaires ». Finalement, le Conseil de sécurité ne l'a pas suivi et a simplement accepté que Bagdad ait « un droit de recevoir un résumé des rapports éla-

borés par le secrétariat exécutif et de les commenter ». Une procédure qui relève plus de l'Inquisition que des formes juridiques modernes – ce que reconnaît M. Norbert Wuhler, le chef du département légal de l'UNCC, qui parle de « procédure inquisitoriale (3) ». Comme le déclarait le premier secrétaire exécutif de l'UNCC, M. Carlos Alzamora, tous ces garde-fous légaux « qui encombrant les processus judiciaires » ont été éliminés.

L'UNCC justifie ses pratiques par la nécessité de rembourser rapidement les centaines de milliers de « petits », de « sans grade », gravement lésés par l'invasion du Koweït : sur les 2,6 millions de demandes d'indemnisation, la quasi-totalité proviennent de particuliers. Mais la somme qu'ils réclament se monte à seulement 20 milliards de dollars sur les 320 milliards d'indemnisation exigés de l'Irak. Ainsi, les 15 milliards de dollars offerts à la Kuwait Petroleum Corporation équivalent au montant total des réparations qui seront finalement accordées à 2,6 millions de particuliers – ils représentent aussi le double de ce que le gouvernement central irakien a effectivement reçu, entre décembre 1996 et juillet 2000, pour nourrir et soigner 18 millions de personnes. En instituant, pour les requêtes individuelles, des procédures accélérées, fondées notamment sur des modèles statistiques, la commission a certes permis aux particuliers d'être indemnisés. Mais au prix de nombre de manipulations politiques...

Les réclamations classées dans la catégorie C regroupent 1 659 840 demandes individuelles – destruction de biens, angoisse (*mental pain anguish*), obligation de se cacher, etc. – pour des indemnités de moins de 100 000 dollars. En septembre 2000, les derniers plaignants ont vu leurs cas réglés. Le fait que seulement 632 004 demandes aient obtenu satisfaction ne doit pas faire illusion sur le caractère sérieux du travail. En fait, cette catégorie comprenait une requête groupée de 1 240 000 travailleurs égyptiens. Celle-ci soustraite, restent en réalité 420 000 réclamations C, dont... 408 187 furent satisfaites, soit plus de 97 %.

Mais tous les plaignants n'ont pas été traités de la même manière. Près de

100 % des 160 000 demandes koweïtiennes ont obtenu satisfaction, certaines recevant même 110 % des sommes exigées. En revanche, les 40 000 Jordaniens (pour l'essentiel des Palestiniens) n'ont été remboursés qu'à 40 %.

Dès l'origine, la procédure C a été « orientée ». Homme-clef de l'UNCC, M. Michael F. Raboin est le secrétaire exécutif adjoint, responsable de la division de traitement des réclamations (il supervise donc toutes les demandes d'indemnisation) et citoyen américain. C'est lui qui a mis en place le secrétariat, dès 1991. Il a amené avec lui M. Norbert Wuhler, avec qui il avait travaillé à l'Iran-United States Claims Tri-

bunal, établi au début des années 1980 et qui continue de travailler à La Haye pour régler le contentieux entre les deux pays. Ces deux responsables affirment : « Nous sommes impartiaux. Les commissions ont pris en compte les positions de l'Irak. D'autant que nous avons dû traiter plusieurs centaines de milliers de demandes en un temps très rapide. Beaucoup de plaignants nous accusent même d'être trop favorables à l'Irak. »

« Impartiaux » ? En avril 1995, M. Erik Wilbers, responsable de l'unité des indemnisations C, réunit ses collaborateurs : « Tout ce travail abstrait que nous faisons dans ce bâtiment à air conditionné en Suisse nous amène facilement à oublier ce pourquoi nous sommes ici, aider les plaignants. » Et il ajoute, évoquant les tortures subies par les Koweïtiens : « Il est utile pour nous de nous souvenir du luxe dans lequel nous sommes. Nous sommes tous plus ou moins coupables, et l'important est que vous vous en souveniez quand vous avez l'impression d'aller "un peu trop loin"... » « Un peu trop loin » ? Un appel voilé à « dépasser la légalité »...

Un ancien fonctionnaire égyptien ayant travaillé dans cette unité se souvient qu'on lui demandait régulièrement, dans son travail, de « rendre les critères aussi généreux que possible » pour aboutir à un maximum de réponses favorables. Un autre fonctionnaire européen a été frappé par une formule régulièrement utilisée : « doctoring the samples » (manipuler les échantillons). Ainsi, les modèles statistiques qui devaient permettre de rembourser rapidement les victimes, ont été allègrement modifiés.

Le peu de documents de première main (reçus, factures, etc.) fournis par les plaignants facilite ces manœuvres. Ainsi, les Koweïtiens ont rempli 160 000 demandes individuelles, certaines au nom de nourrissons... Dans de nombreux cas, des dossiers différents portaient les mêmes numéros de téléphone, concernaient les mêmes pertes. Plusieurs documents signalent ces « doublons » : la représentante chinoise protesta même à plusieurs reprises, un audit critiqua les méthodes (*lire encadré page 16*), sans succès...

Un autre fonctionnaire européen évoque les pressions organisées par la délégation koweïtienne « de manière que les procédures soient favorables à son pays. La victime participait d'un peu trop près à cette élaboration. Ils n'étaient pas dans nos locaux tous les jours, cela serait un peu excessif. Disons, tous les jours et demi... ». Ainsi, de nombreux hommes d'affaires koweïtiens seront remboursés pour des entreprises appartenant à des Arabes, souvent des Palestiniens : la loi koweïtienne obligeait les étrangers à passer par un « prête-nom » local pour ouvrir une entreprise...

Plus scandaleux encore, le gouvernement américain a officiellement demandé – en février 1998 – au conseil

d'administration de revoir les paramètres pour le paiement des Koweïtiens. « Les États-Unis rappellent qu'ils ont appuyé l'utilisation d'un modèle statistique comme une voie juste pour traiter un large nombre de demandes sur une base rapide. Néanmoins, ils sont préoccupés parce qu'il pourrait y avoir une erreur dans le modèle. » Le secrétariat exécutif se pliera à ce « conseil ». Les pratiques utilisées par Washington rappellent la manipulation par les États-Unis de l'Unscm, la commission d'inspection pour le désarmement de l'Irak, truffée d'agents de la CIA...

Les plus gros dossiers d'indemnisation sont en voie d'examen – il restait ainsi, au 16 juin 2000, 267 milliards de dollars de demandes à traiter. Bien sûr, nombre d'entre elles, fantaisistes, ont été ou seront rejetées (certains pays ont demandé de l'argent pour le coût de mobilisation de leurs troupes). Mais il faut remarquer que les alliés des États-Unis, Koweït, Arabie saoudite ou Israël, bénéficient d'un traitement de faveur, sous prétexte notamment qu'ils ont été touchés par des missiles Scud. Ainsi, des entreprises de fleurs ou de légumes, de nombreux cinémas et hôtels israéliens ont reçu des millions de dollars pour compenser la baisse de leurs activités durant la crise... Imagine-t-on la Grande-Bretagne exigeant de l'Allemagne des compensations parce que la fréquentation des salles de cinéma a diminué entre 1939 et 1945 ?

Les demandes déposées par les différents ministères koweïtiens (catégorie F-3) pour une somme de 2,2 milliards de dollars ont été satisfaites à hauteur de 1,53 milliard. La commission chargée du dossier a envoyé six missions au Koweït et aux États-Unis pour vérifier les demandes, mais sans la présence d'un représentant de l'Irak, qui n'a pas non plus été invité à s'exprimer devant les commissaires. Les membres de la commission eux-mêmes ne s'y sont pas rendus (sauf dans un cas), se bornant à

envoyer des « experts » fournis par le secrétariat exécutif, dont le rôle va croissant. Et toutes les questions soulevées par les « gains » ou les « économies » que le Koweït a pu faire en raison de la guerre – augmentation des prix du pétrole, non-activité de ses institutions (et donc diminution des dépenses) durant plusieurs mois, renouvellement de son capital – furent soit ignorées, soit à peine effleurées.

La commission a reçu des demandes d'indemnisation pour une valeur de 320 milliards de dollars, dont 180 milliards pour le seul Koweït – l'équivalent de neuf fois le produit intérieur brut du pays en 1989, ce qui n'a l'air d'étonner personne. A supposer même, comme on le dit dans les couloirs de la commission, que les indemnités accordées se limitent à un tiers de cette somme, cela représenterait 100 milliards de dollars. Auxquels il faut ajouter les intérêts, pour des périodes variant de 10 à 15 ans : on

atteindrait ainsi la somme d'environ 300 milliards de dollars (4). Ce qui, au prix actuel du baril, très élevé, représente entre quinze et vingt ans de l'ensemble des exportations pétrolières de l'Irak. Si le pays continue à y consacrer un tiers de ses recettes, il aura achevé ses remboursements en 2050 ou 2060 (5) – sans parler des dettes antérieures au 2 août 1990... Que restera-t-il alors des écoles, des hôpitaux, des infrastructures irakiennes (6) ?

Est-il légal de faire payer un pays indépendamment de ses capacités, sans fixer aucun plafond ? L'article 14 du traité de paix entre les États-Unis et le Japon de 1951 affirmait : « Le Japon devrait payer des réparations aux puissances alliées pour les dommages et les souffrances causés durant la guerre. Néanmoins, nous reconnaissons que les ressources du Japon ne sont pas suffisantes s'il veut maintenir une économie viable, payer totalement les réparations (...) et remplir en même temps ses autres obligations (7). »

Rappelons que le chef de l'État était à l'époque l'empereur Hirohito, un criminel de guerre qui aurait été passible (comme le président Saddam Hussein), de la Cour pénale internationale... si celle-ci avait existé. D'ailleurs, la résolution 687 reconnaissait aussi que l'on devrait prendre en compte, pour le paiement des indemnités, « les besoins du peuple irakien, la capacité de paiement de l'Irak ». Mais les Nations unies respectent-elles leurs propres textes ?

Une rançon honteuse

DEPUIS de longues années, la commission de droit international, mise en place par les Nations unies, planche sur le thème de la responsabilité des États. Elle prépare une convention qui fait l'objet d'un large consensus. Dans l'article 42 du texte élaboré, il est précisé : « En aucun cas la réparation n'a pour effet de priver une population de ses propres moyens de subsistance. »

Certains juristes, comme l'Allemand Bernard Graefrath, ont été plus loin et mettent en cause le droit du Conseil de sécurité de déterminer les montants des compensations dans un litige entre deux parties. A plusieurs reprises – attaque israélienne contre l'aéroport de Beyrouth en 1968, agression portugaise contre la Guinée en 1970 ou celle de l'Afrique du Sud contre l'Angola en 1976 –, le Conseil de sécurité a décidé que des indemnités étaient dues aux victimes, mais sans jamais en fixer les montants. Cela ne relève pas de ses prérogatives. Dans le cas de l'Angola, par exemple, le représentant britannique au Conseil de sécurité rappelait à l'époque : « Le Conseil de sécurité n'est pas une cour de justice et il n'est pas le lieu approprié pour se prononcer sur des demandes de compensations. »

Interrogé, M. Raboin, comme d'autres membres du secrétariat, précise : « Nous pensions que les Nations unies, avec l'UNCC, inauguraient une nouvelle époque, marquée par la victoire du droit. » On a vu rapidement ce qui est advenu, depuis ce précédent, de ce « nouvel ordre mondial » en Bosnie comme au Liban sud ou en Palestine... Contraindra-t-on Israël à payer des compensations au Liban pour les vingt-cinq années d'occupation du sud du pays du

Cèdre ? Comme le confie un diplomate européen, le fonctionnement partiel de l'UNCC tient plutôt à la situation internationale de 1991. « Aujourd'hui, une telle institution ne verrait pas le jour. Les États-Unis seraient incapables de l'imposer. Tout le monde s'y opposerait. » Paris, d'ailleurs, tente d'obtenir un changement de procédure, avec la possibilité pour l'Irak de se défendre, et une baisse de 30 % à 20 % des sommes prélevées sur ses exportations pétrolières pour les indemnisations.

Tite-Live rapporte cette histoire, sans doute mythique, puisqu'elle date de 385 avant Jésus-Christ. Rome, vaincue, décida de négocier. Le Sénat chargea les tribuns militaires de traiter avec les Gaulois, qui assiégeaient la ville. On se mit d'accord sur une rançon de 1 000 livres d'or, rançon honteuse « pour un peuple qui allait bientôt commander le monde ». « A ce fait déjà révoltant, précise Tite-Live, s'ajouta une action révoltante. Les poids apportés par les vainqueurs étaient faux, et comme le tribun les refusait, le Gaulois eut l'insolence d'ajouter aux poids son épée et de prononcer ce mot insupportable pour des Romains : "Malheur aux vaincus !" »

ALAIN GRESH.

(1) Le cabinet a déposé une demande pour assurer la défense de l'Irak sur les fonds de l'UNCC. Cette demande a été rejetée. Lire Michael E. Schneider, « How Fair and Efficient is the United Nations Compensation Commission System », *Journal of International Arbitration*, vol. 15, n° 1, mars 1998.

(2) La proposition de l'Irak que les Nations unies prélèvent cette somme sur les exportations de pétrole a été rejetée.

(3) Lire son texte « The United Nations Compensation Commission : A new contribution to the process of international claims resolution », *Journal of International Economic Law*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999.

(4) Le 18 décembre 1992, le conseil d'administration a décidé que les intérêts seront payés.

(5) Les demandes d'indemnisation déposées à l'UNCC ne mettent pas fin à toutes les procédures contre l'Irak, puisque cette commission n'a pas vocation à une compétence exclusive... Tel ou tel plaignant peut aussi poursuivre Bagdad pour d'autres « indemnisations ».

(6) Lire « Muette agonie de l'Irak », *Le Monde diplomatique*, juillet 1999.

(7) Cité par Bernhard Graefrath, « Iraqi Reparations and the Security Council », *Heidelberg Journal of International Law*, 1995, 551.

RÉVÉLATIONS SUR LE COUP D'ÉTAT DE 1953

Quand la CIA complotait en Iran

POUR la première fois, le 19 mars 2000, la secrétaire d'Etat américaine Madeleine Albright reconnaissait l'« implication » des Etats-Unis dans le coup d'Etat qui renversa le premier ministre iranien Mohammad Mossadegh en 1953. Pourtant, les circonstances de cette intervention restent mal connues. Un rapport de la CIA, divulgué en avril 2000 par le *New York Times*, révèle le rôle joué par les services secrets de Londres et de Washington dans un événement qui renversa les rapports de forces au Proche-Orient.

Par MARK GASIOROWSKI *

Il y a quelques mois, le *New York Times* reçoit le rapport officiel du coup d'Etat mené en 1953 par la CIA contre le premier ministre iranien Mohammad Mossadegh. Le 16 juin 2000, le journal publie ce récit sur son site Internet (1). Les noms de plusieurs personnalités iraniennes impliquées y sont effacés, mais

la plupart d'entre elles sont désignées nommément sur un autre site (2). Ce document passionnant contient d'importantes révélations sur la manière dont cette opération fut menée, et toute personne intéressée par la politique intérieure de l'Iran ou la politique étrangère américaine devrait le lire.

Le coup d'Etat s'est produit pendant une période de grande effervescence de l'histoire iranienne et au plus fort de la

guerre froide. Mohammad Mossadegh est alors chef du Front national, organisation politique fondée en 1949 et militante pour la nationalisation de l'industrie pétrolière, alors sous domination britannique, ainsi que pour la démocratisation du système politique. Ces deux questions passionnent la population, et le Front national devient rapidement le principal acteur de la scène politique iranienne. En 1951, le chah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi est contraint de nationaliser l'industrie pétrolière et de nommer Mossadegh premier ministre, provoquant une confrontation ouverte avec le gouvernement britannique. La Grande-Bretagne réagit en organisant un embargo général sur le pétrole iranien et engage des manœuvres à long terme visant à renverser Mossadegh.

Les Etats-Unis décident tout d'abord de rester neutres et encouragent les Britanniques à accepter la nationalisation tout en essayant de négocier un arrangement à l'amiable, allant jusqu'à persuader Londres, en septembre 1951, de ne pas envahir l'Iran. Cette neutralité continue jusqu'à la fin de l'administration de Harry S. Truman, en janvier 1953, même si de nombreux dirigeants américains estiment déjà que l'obstination de Mossadegh crée une instabilité politique mettant l'Iran « en réel danger de passer derrière le rideau de fer » (page III du rapport). En novembre 1952, peu après l'élection du général Dwight D. Eisenhower à la présidence des Etats-Unis, de hauts responsables britanniques proposent à leurs homologues américains de mener conjointement un coup d'Etat contre Mossadegh. Ceux-ci répondent que l'administration sortante n'entreprendra jamais une telle opération, mais que celle d'Eisenhower, qui va entrer en fonction en janvier, déterminée à intensifier la guerre froide, serait probablement susceptible de le faire.

Le récit de la CIA rend bien compte de la manière dont fut préparée l'opération. Après autorisation du président Eisenhower en mars 1953, des officiers de la CIA étudient la manière dont pourrait être mené le coup d'Etat et se penchent sur le problème du remplacement du premier ministre. Leur choix se porte rapidement sur Fazlollah Zahedi, un général à la retraite qui avait déjà comploté avec les Britanniques. En mai, un

agent de la CIA et un spécialiste de l'Iran travaillant pour le Secret Intelli-



MOHAMMAD MOSSADEGH (1881-1967), deuxième à partir de la gauche

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gence Service (SIS) britannique passent deux semaines à Nicosie (Chypre), où ils mettent au point une première version du plan. Des responsables de la CIA et du SIS la révisent, et une version définitive est écrite à Londres à la mi-juin.

Ce plan était divisé en six étapes principales. Tout d'abord, l'antenne iranienne de la CIA et le plus important réseau de renseignement britannique en Iran, alors dirigé par les frères Rashidian, devaient déstabiliser le gouvernement Mossadegh par le biais de la propagande et d'autres activités politiques clandestines. Fazlollah Zahedi organiserait ensuite un réseau constitué d'officiers capables de mener le coup d'Etat. Troisième étape, la CIA devait « acheter » la collaboration d'un nombre suffisant de parlementaires iraniens afin de s'assurer que le corps législatif s'opposerait à Mossadegh. Puis des efforts sérieux devaient permettre de persuader le chah de soutenir le coup d'Etat, ainsi que Zahedi, même s'il était établi que l'opération serait menée avec ou sans l'accord du monarque.

La CIA devait ensuite tenter, de manière « quasi légale » (page A3), de renverser Mossadegh en provoquant une crise politique au cours de laquelle le Parlement le destituerait. Cette crise serait provoquée par des manifestations de protestation organisées par des dirigeants religieux, qui persuaderaient le chah de quitter le pays, ou créeraient une situation forçant Mossadegh à démissionner. Enfin, si cette tentative venait à échouer, le réseau militaire monté par Fazlollah Zahedi s'emparerait du pouvoir avec l'aide de la CIA.

« Par n'importe quel moyen »

LES trois premières étapes étaient en fait déjà entamées pendant la mise au point du « plan de Londres ». Le 4 avril, la section de la CIA à Téhéran reçoit 1 million de dollars destiné à « faire tomber Mossade[gh] par n'importe quel moyen » (page 3). En mai, elle déclenche, avec les frères Rashid-

dian, une campagne de propagande contre Mossadegh et, on le suppose, mène d'autres actions clandestines contre ce dernier. Ces efforts redoublent de manière brutale au cours des semaines précédant le coup d'Etat (page 92).

La CIA prend contact avec Fazlollah Zahedi en avril, lui versant 60 000 dollars (et peut-être bien plus) afin qu'il « trouve de nouveaux alliés et influence des personnes-clés » (page B15). Le compte-rendu officiel nie que des officiers iraniens aient été achetés (page E22) ; il est toutefois difficile d'imaginer à quoi d'autre Fazlollah Zahedi aurait dépensé cet argent. La CIA n'en comprend pas moins rapidement que ce dernier « manque de détermination, d'énergie et de stratégie concrète » et qu'il n'est pas capable de monter un réseau militaire apte à mener un coup d'Etat. Cette tâche est donc confiée à un colonel iranien travaillant pour la CIA.

Fin mai 1953, la section de la CIA est autorisée à engager environ 11 000 dollars par semaine pour acheter la coopération de parlementaires, ce qui accentue fortement l'opposition politique à Mossadegh. Ce dernier réagit en appelant les élus qui lui sont fidèles à démissionner pour empêcher la formation du quorum, ce qui entraînerait la dissolution du Parlement. Pour le contrer, la CIA essaie alors de persuader certains élus de renoncer à leur démission. Début août, Mossadegh

organise un référendum truqué au cours duquel les Iraniens se prononcent massivement pour la dissolution et la tenue de nouvelles élections. Cela empêche désormais la CIA d'exercer ses activités « quasi légales » même si elle continue à utiliser la propagande pour imputer à Mossadegh la falsification du référendum.

Le 25 juillet, la CIA entame une longue démarche de « pression » et de « manipulation » pour persuader le chah de soutenir le coup d'Etat et d'accepter la nomination de Fazlollah

Zahedi au poste de premier ministre. Au cours des trois semaines suivantes, quatre émissaires rencontrent le chah presque chaque jour afin de le convaincre de coopérer. Le 12 ou 13 août, malgré ses réticences, il finit par accepter et signe les décrets royaux (firmans) révoquant Mossadegh et nommant Zahedi à sa place. La reine Soraya l'aurait persuadé d'agir ainsi (page 38).

Le 13 août, la CIA charge le colonel Nematollah Nassiri de remettre les firmans à Zahedi et à Mossadegh. Mais la longueur des négociations avec le chah a fragilisé le secret, et l'un des officiers impliqués révèle l'existence du complot. Mossadegh fait alors arrêter Nassiri, dans la nuit du 15 au 16 août, au moment où celui-ci s'appête à remettre le premier décret, et plusieurs autres conjurés sont interpellés peu après. Prête à cette éventualité, la CIA avait préparé des unités militaires pro-Zahedi à s'emparer des points névralgiques de Téhéran. Mais les officiers disparaissent lorsque Nassiri est arrêté, faisant échouer cette première tentative.

Zahedi ainsi que d'autres personnes impliquées se réfugient alors dans des cachettes de la CIA. Le chah fuit en exil, d'abord à Bagdad, puis à Rome, et Kermit Roosevelt, directeur de la section locale de la CIA, annonce à Washington que le coup d'Etat a échoué. Peu après, il reçoit l'ordre d'abandonner l'opération et de revenir aux Etats-Unis.

Mais Kermit Roosevelt et son équipe décident d'improviser une autre tentative. Ils commencent par distribuer des copies des décrets du chah aux médias afin de mobiliser l'opinion publique contre Mossadegh. Au cours des jours suivants, leurs deux principaux agents iraniens mènent une série d'opérations « noires » visant le même objectif. Afin de dresser les Iraniens croyants contre Mossadegh, ils profèrent des menaces téléphoniques contre des chefs religieux et « simulent un attentat » contre la maison d'un ecclésiastique (page 37)

en se faisant passer pour des membres du puissant parti communiste Toudeh. Le 18, ils organisent également des manifestations dont les participants prétendent appartenir au Toudeh. A l'instigation de ces deux agents, les manifestants saccagent les bureaux d'un parti politique, renversent des statues du chah et de son père, et sèment le chaos dans Téhéran. Réalisant ce qui est en train de se passer, le Toudeh recommande à ses membres de rester chez eux (p. 59, 63 et 64), ce qui l'empêche de s'opposer aux manifestants anti-Mossadegh qui envahissent les rues le lendemain.

Le matin du 19 août, ces derniers commencent à se rassembler à proximité du bazar de Téhéran. Le compte-rendu de la CIA décrit ces manifestations comme « partiellement spontanées », mais ajoute que « les

Autour d'une crise

11 mai 1949. Après sa victoire sur les armées arabes, l'Etat d'Israël devient membre de l'ONU.

21 juillet 1951. Le roi Abdallah de Jordanie est assassiné par un Palestinien.

28 avril 1951. Tensions maximales entre l'Etat et l'Anglo-Iranian Oil Company : Mohammad Mossadegh devient premier ministre d'Iran et nationalise le pétrole.

23 juillet 1952. Les « Officiers libres » de Gamal Abdel Nasser prennent le pouvoir en Egypte.

19 août 1953. Le gouvernement Mossadegh est renversé. Le chah, secondé par le général Zahedi, instaure son pouvoir dictatorial.

Octobre-novembre 1956. Israël, la France et la Grande-Bretagne attaquent l'Egypte après la nationalisation du canal de Suez. Israël occupe temporairement le Sinaï.

4 juin 1963. Des émeutes paysannes signent l'échec de la « révolution blanche » (la réforme agraire iranienne). Ruhollah Khomeyni est emprisonné, relâché, puis expulsé.

Janvier-mars 1979. Le régime du chah s'effondre, l'ayatollah Khomeyni rentre à Téhéran et fonde la République islamique.

circonstances favorables créées par l'action politique [de la CIA] contribuèrent également à [les] déclencher » (page XII). En effet, la divulgation des décrets du chah, les « fausses » manifestations du Toudéh et les autres opérations « noires » menées au cours des jours précédents poussèrent de nombreux Iraniens à rejoindre ces manifestations.

Plusieurs membres iraniens de l'équipe de la CIA mènent alors les manifestants dans le centre de Téhéran et persuadent des unités de l'armée de les épauler, incitant au passage la foule à attaquer le quartier général du Parti iranien favorable à Mossadegh et à incendier une salle de cinéma et plusieurs rédactions de presse (p. 65, 67 et 70). Des unités militaires anti-Mossadegh commencent dès lors à prendre possession de Téhéran, s'emparant de stations radio et d'autres points sensibles. De vifs combats se déroulent, mais les forces favorables au premier ministre sont finalement vaincues. Mossadegh lui-même se cache, mais se rend le lendemain.

Le compte-rendu de la CIA laisse

deux questions essentielles en sus-pens. Tout d'abord, il n'éclaircit pas l'origine de la trahison qui fit échouer la première tentative de coup d'Etat, se contentant d'attribuer celle-ci à « l'indiscrétion d'un des officiers de l'armée iranienne impliqué » (page 39). Ensuite, ce texte n'explique pas comment l'action politique de la CIA favorisa l'organisation des manifestations du 19 août, ni quelle fut l'importance de cette action dans le déclenchement de ces manifestations. D'autres comptes-rendus, établis d'après des entretiens avec des participants de premier plan, suggèrent que l'équipe de la CIA aurait donné de l'argent à des chefs religieux, qui ne connaissaient probablement pas l'origine de ces fonds. Le rapport de la CIA ne confirme pas cette version. La quasi-totalité des personnes impliquées étant aujourd'hui décédées et la CIA affirmant avoir détruit la plupart des archives concernant cette opération, ces questions resteront peut-être sans réponse.

Il est également difficile de savoir qui est à l'origine de la fuite qui a permis la divulgation de ce rapport officiel et quelle est la véritable finalité de cette fuite. Dans l'article publié le 16 avril

2000, le *New York Times* explique seulement que le document a été fourni par un « ancien officier qui en conservait un exemplaire ». Coïncidence, un mois plus tôt, la secrétaire d'Etat Madeleine Albright, au cours d'un important discours destiné à promouvoir le rapprochement entre les Etats-Unis et l'Iran, avait reconnu pour la première fois que le gouvernement américain était impliqué dans le coup d'Etat et s'en est excusée (3). Beaucoup estiment que la fuite fut délibérément organisée par le gouvernement ou par une personne décidée à soutenir l'initiative de M^{me} Albright. Si tel est le cas, toutefois, il est difficile de croire que l'intégralité du rapport aurait été révélée, mais on ne peut exclure cette possibilité.

(1) www.nytimes.com/library/world/mideast/iran-cia-intro.pdf. Le document est daté de 1954 et signé Donald N. Wilber.

(2) <http://cryptome.org/cia-iran.htm>. La technique utilisée par le *New York Times* était inopérante : il suffisait d'utiliser un ordinateur lent pour lire les noms avant que le cache noir s'affiche.

(3) *Le Monde*, 20 mars 2000.

No objections to Iraq commercial flights, says U.S.

October 31, 2000 Reuters

Washington (Reuters) - The United States joined Britain yesterday and said it saw no problem with Iraqi plans resuming domestic commercial airline flights through Western-imposed no-fly zones in the north and south of the country. But Washington stressed that it would continue to closely monitor air traffic in the zones to make sure that Baghdad's military did not fly in the areas and threaten Iraqis on the ground or neighboring countries.

"We don't see civilian flights as posing a threat" to the no-fly zones, said Marine Corps Lt. Col. Dave Lapan, a U.S. Defense Department spokesman. "The no-fly zones pertain to military flights and protecting civilian populations inside Iraq from attack," Lapan told Reuters in response to questions.

Iraq's Transport Minister Ahmed Murtada Ahmed Khalil was quoted Monday as saying Iraqi Airways flights would resume on November 5 between Baghdad and the cities of Basra, 600 kilometres to the south, and Mosul, 450 kilometres to the north.

A State Department official, who asked not to be identified, also told Reuters on Monday that the United States would monitor Iraq flights closely to make sure that they did not threaten Iraqi citizens on the ground, the country's neighbors or U.S. and British warplanes policing the zones.

"For reasons of flight safety and enforcing the zones, we would require notification of flight schedules and routes no less than 48 hours in advance of each flight," the official said. A British Foreign Office spokesman said earlier in London that his country was also "not at all exercised" about an announcement from Iraq that the flights would resume next Sunday.

Iraq had resumed domestic flights in 1992, a year after they were disrupted by the Gulf War, but suspended them again because of the no-fly zones. Baghdad said then its aircraft needed maintenance.

The United States and Britain say the exclusion zones are maintained to protect a Kurdish enclave in the north and Shi'ites in the south from possible attacks by Iraqi troops.

Commercial flights in and out of Iraq have been curbed by UN sanctions imposed on Iraq for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait. But dozens of humanitarian flights from Arab and non-Arab countries have landed in Baghdad in the last two years to protest against the decade-long embargo.

Turkey continues harassment, arrests, and torture of medical doctors

Outstanding Turkish medical professor prohibited from commenting on torture for five years

Henrik Døcker

Intense attention was paid by the international community to this year's trials of three Turkish medical doctors, all engaged in the rehabilitation work of torture victims, who were accused of various crimes such as making statements that are friendly towards the Kurds or that criticize policemen.

In June 2000, Professor *Veli Lök*, perhaps the most dedicated and respected Turkish physician involved in the long battle against torture and in the professional medical assistance to the victims, was sentenced by a court in Izmir to refrain for five years from publicly giving his opinion on torture. The reason was that he had commented on the treatment of Dr *Zeki Uzun* before the trial of the latter was concluded, thereby violating art. 30/3 in the Turkish Press Law.

The gynaecologist Dr *Uzun* was for his part charged with aiding PKK terrorists (supporting the Kurds), but in May he was acquitted by the Izmir Court. In a statement to the court he described the harassment and torture the authorities exposed him to while he awaited trial. The third accused, Dr *Alp Ayan*, was brought to court for trying to attend a funeral and charged with resisting the police officers who tried to disband the procession.

Among the audience in the State Security Court in Izmir were Dr *Inge Genefke*, Honorary Secretary-General of IRCT, Mr *Jørgen Funder*, President of the Danish Medical Association, and Mr *Delon Human*, Secretary of the International Medical Association. Dr *Genefke*, who has personally attended eight trials against doctors in Turkey within the last three years, condemned "the harassment, persecution, and torture against the foremost peaceful warriors against torture as well as the most renowned Samaritans dealing with torture survivors."

"To go after Professor *Lök* is outrageous" Dr *Genefke* observed. "This highly respected orthopaedic surgeon and Head of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (HRFT) has been in the forefront of the battle against torture for about 25 years. These charges are expressive of a political will in Turkey to destroy the work which is being done at the five centres for torture victims." (in Ankara, Istanbul, Adana, Izmir and Diyarbakir – ed. note).

It is the general impression of several foreign visitors to the trials of Turkish doctors that there has been no improvement in the human

rights situation, despite various pledges from parts of the Turkish authorities. Also a larger group of members of the United States Congress, the so-called Congressional Human Rights Caucus, expressed serious concerns about the trial. A statement addressed to the Prime Minister of Turkey, Mr *Bülent Ecevit*, referred to "these outstanding doctors and human rights defenders [...] on trial for treating persons who have been subjected to the vilest form of human rights abuse" and added: "The Turkish government has a legal obligation to prevent torture and, according to the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture, to provide compensation and rehabilitation to torture victims."

Turkey's general strategy, however, is for the time being characterized by what might be called a *stop-go* policy. It must be recalled that as of 1 March, 2000 the hitherto existing prohibition of using Kurdish names has been repealed by the Turkish Supreme Court. The President of the Court, Mr *Ismet Aslan* has stressed that a Kurdish citizen will from now on be allowed to call his/her child by whatever name he/she chooses. To maintain the prohibition would – in the words of the Court's President – reinforce the discrimination. "This decision is binding on all kind of courts" Mr *Aslan* added. "This is a step towards respect of human rights."

The history of the Turkish torture rehabilitation centres is characterized by the paradoxical attitude which the Turkish government persistently has demonstrated: While politicians and other officials strongly condemn the practise of torture, policemen all over the country keep torturing detained people, mostly Kurds. About five years after the opening of the first centre in Ankara, the doctors have come under pressure. Turkish authorities have tried to force physicians at several of these centres to hand over lists of patient names in flagrant contradiction of the *Hippocratic Oath*. Owing to international pressure, this has not been successful.

Hosts of prominent doctors, politicians, and lawyers from foreign countries have attended the many trials, being convinced that it is important to be present and that the Turkish government continuously practises hypocrisy when it promises the Council of Europe, the European Union, other international organisations, and individual governments that it is amending its laws and changing its practises.

However, the sad effect of the trials is that many Turkish torture victims now are afraid of going to the doctor to get the necessary help. At police stations they are told that they are not permitted to visit the centres.



Professor Dr *Veli Lök*, Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, Izmir Branch.

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Torturing Turkey acknowledges widespread violations of human rights in case raised by Denmark

*The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg
established friendly settlement between Denmark and Turkey,
but torture of Turkish doctors continues*

Henrik Døcker

In a friendly settlement in the form of a judgement delivered at Strasbourg on 5 April 2000, Turkey acknowledged the allegations of torture on a former Turkish, now Danish, citizen and accepted to pay DKK 450,000, i.e. USD 58,000. Consequently, the European Court of Human Rights decided unanimously to strike the application from its list. The Court did not mention the name of the applicant, but 43-year-old Kemal Koc, born as a Turkish citizen, but living in Denmark now, is well known to Danes as well as Turks.

Koc is the first European citizen who was lucky enough to have his new country of residence take over the case of an individual. Thus Denmark transformed his individual application against his former homeland to a state-to-state application, including allegations of torture in Turkey in general. Koc paid a visit to his old country in 1996, since he wanted to be present at his brother's funeral. He was detained for six weeks, beaten, and exposed to psychological torture. He was only released and allowed to leave for Denmark after strong diplomatic pressure by the Danish Government.

The Danish and Turkish governments agree that the use of inappropriate police interrogation techniques as practised in this case constitutes a violation of Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which prohibits torture. This will be prevented in the future, it said in a mutual declaration. The two governments recognize that this aim can best be attained through better training of policemen. The Strasbourg-based Council of Europe initiated a comprehensive programme for improving the education of policemen in 1997. Denmark is already contributing to this programme. The two governments have now decided to establish a continuous bilateral Danish-Turkish political dialogue.

Declaration by the government of Turkey

In a declaration, the Turkish Government regrets the occurrence of occasional and individual cases of torture and ill-treatment despite "the resolute action of the government and existing legislation as well as administrative regulations". New legal and administrative control and punishment regulations have been adopted as a consequence of which such individual acts according to the Ankara Government substantially decreased. However, torture still takes place! The Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg has found Turkey guilty of violation of the prohibition against torture in the European Convention on Human Rights several times.

It should be recalled that the policemen who ill-treated Kemal Koc in Ankara in 1996 were acquitted by the Turkish

High Court, but this judgement has been appealed to the Supreme Court. Mr Koc furthermore wants to have repealed the sentence passed on him in 1997 *in absentia*: four years' imprisonment for supporting the PKK, the Kurdish Workers Party, which is also a guerrilla movement.

Within the last year, Articles 243, 245, and 354 of the Turkish Penal Code were amended to redefine and prevent torture and ill-treatment in accordance with international conventions, and the penalties for such criminal acts were increased. The amendment of Article 354 stipulates the prosecution of doctors and other medical personnel charged with drafting false reports regarding cases of torture or ill-treatment. Simultaneously, Turkish police threaten and – under various pretexts – charge medical doctors at rehabilitation centres for torture victims, as well as arrest and torture them.

"The Regulation on Apprehension, Custody, and Interrogation", which came into force on 1 October 1998, brought procedures in line with the standards of the Convention for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture (CPT). A circular from the Prime Minister's Department concerning increased respect for human rights, issued on 25 June 1999, introduced measures to ensure the effective implementation of the above-mentioned regulation by all relevant public authorities as well as enhanced control of implementation. All this is fine *in theory*.

New legislation – will it change practices?

The circular stipulates that governors, district governors, public prosecutors, public inspectors, other officials entitled to inspection, gendarmerie commanders, and police directors are authorized to implement random checks and inspections. The circular also stipulates that necessary measures will be rapidly taken to remedy deficiencies found during these inspections, and necessary procedures will be initiated for officials at fault. In addition, the Ministries of Justice and the Interior will submit once every three months, starting from 1 January 2000, written information on the results of reports prepared with regard to these checks and inspections for the Human Rights Co-ordinating High Committee of the Prime Minister's Department.

Finally, the Law on the Prosecution of Civil Servants and Other Officials, which was approved by Parliament on 2 December 1999 and has entered into force, facilitates the initiation of investigations and prosecution of public officials.

Brief summary of the allegations against three Turkish doctors:

Dr Alp Ayan

Dr Alp Ayan from the HRFT Izmir Treatment and Rehabilitation Center as well as executives and members of various unions, professional chambers, associations, and political parties were detained after they went to Helvacı village to attend the funeral of a young man who died after a massacre at Ankara Ulucanlar Prison some days earlier. However, the gendarmerie who set barricades at the village entrance prevented the group from attending the funeral. The gendarmerie then attacked the group and detained 68 persons under beating. The detainees were kept in detention for three days and then referred to Aliaga Penal Court of First Instance. Fourteen of them were remanded and the rest were released to be prosecuted without arrest.

Aliaga Penal Court of First Instance gave the decision of remand on the allegations of a breach of the Law on Meetings and Demonstrations no. 2911. The Court sent the file to Izmir State Security Court (SSC) in Izmir on the grounds that it is also within the content of Article 7/2 of the Anti-Terror Law.

This court gave a decision of non-authorization on the grounds that the elements of the Anti-Terror Law were not fulfilled, and sent the file to the Court of Cassation to decide on the responsibility.

The Court of Cassation decided that the case was not related to the Terror Crimes, and assigned Aliaga Penal Court of First Instance for the prosecution. Meanwhile, this Court refused the lawyers' demand of release of the defendants. The sentence that the defendants face in the trial is imprisonment terms between one and a half and three years. A secretary at the HRFT office in Izmir, Ms Günseli Kaya, was detained together with Dr Ayan for more than three months.

Professor Dr Veli Lök

Professor Dr Veli Lök made several press statements to convey his opinions and inform the public about the ill-treatment, detention, and subsequent remand of human rights defenders, including his colleagues Günseli Kaya and Dr Alp Ayan, who with a group of 100-120 people in September 1999 went to Helvacı village to attend the funeral of a young man who died during a massacre at Ankara Ulucanlar Prison. One of his statements was published in the daily Cumhuriyet as a news story entitled "They are made to pay for their fight against torture" on 31 October 1999.

Upon the order of the Ministry of Justice, Izmir Public Prosecution Office made an investigation and subsequently launched a trial at Izmir Penal Court of First Instance No. 2 against Professor Lök and Fiklet İkiz, editor-in-chief of the daily Cumhuriyet, in connection with this statement on the allegations of a violation of Article 30/3 of the Press Law. In the trial, Professor Lök faces an imprisonment sentence between one and six months, and a fine.

Dr Zeki Uzun

Dr Zeki Uzun was detained by police officers from Izmir Security Directorate Anti-Terror Branch in his office on 19 December 1999, on the allegations of "aiding an illegal organization and sheltering its members," because of providing medical treatment to two patients, who are alleged members of an illegal organization. Dr Uzun was kept in detention for seven days during which he was subjected to physical and psychological torture, as specified in a medical report issued by Izmir Medical Chamber's Medical Examination and Reports Commission after the necessary medical examination and tests were carried out. He was referred to Izmir State Security Court (SSC) and released to be prosecuted without arrest, as one of the 15 defendants in the trial, under Article 169 of the Turkish Penal Code.

In this context, the request for permission to initiate an investigation by public prosecutors of civil servants for crimes alleged to have been committed in connection to their duties has to be concluded within four and a half months, including the period for appeal.

Turkish torture victims go directly to Strasbourg

The new law clarified many issues concerning the trial of public officials, determined the bodies that were authorized to allow an investigation, and stipulated the authorities that were entitled to carry out preliminary examinations and preparatory investigations. It should be recalled that the Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg (and previously the Human Rights Commission until its abolition in October 1999) accepted several applications regarding torture from Turkish citizens, even though they had not exhausted all national remedies, as required in the European Convention on Human Rights.

It became necessary to make this exception, since complaints to Turkish authorities (the Public Prosecutor's Office) in almost all cases did not result in any action from the Prosecutor. No torture complaint has ever been satisfactorily investigated. Thus, there was no reason to wait for this mockery of justice. It remains to be seen whether the many

law amendments and the many judgements in Strasbourg, where Turkey has been found guilty in violation of the European Convention, will have any influence on future cases. Despite the political development, the strong desire of Turkey to join other European countries as a member of the EU, no Turkish politician has indicated that this in any way will pave the way for the abolition of torture. Until now, any thus inspired optimism has been disappointed.

Editorial note

Latest news

The sixth hearing in the Alp and Kaya trial took place on 19 September 2000. Although witnesses were heard this time, the case could not be finished and was postponed for two months. From a legal point of view this trial is meaningless. The real problems are the existence of torture and the ways in which doctors, especially Izmir doctors, are able to investigate it, describe it, and document it. The hearing raised international awareness of these problems. The following organizations attended the hearing: The IRCT (Denmark), CVT (USA), The Berlin Medical Association (Germany), and the Primo Levi Association (France).

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