

INSTITUT
KURDE
DE PARIS

Information and liaison bulletin

N°189

DECEMBER 2000

This bulletin is issued in French and English

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

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

Monthly review

Directeur de la publication : Mohamad HASSAN

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

ISBN 0761 1285

INSTITUT KURDE, 106, rue La Fayette - 75010 PARIS

Tel. : 01-48 24 64 64 - Fax : 01-48 24 64 66

www.fikp.org

E-mail: bulletin@fikp.org

CONTENTS

- THE KURDISH WRITER MAHMUT BAKSI HAS DIED IN STOCKHOLM.
- TURKEY SIGNS THE "PARTNERSHIP FOR MEMBERSHIP" WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION.
- MORE THAN 30 DEATHS IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST THE HUNGER STRIKERS IN TURKISH PRISONS.
- JUST APPEARED IN ISSUE N° 2 OF "ETUDES KURDES".
- AS WELL AS...

THE KURDISH WRITER MAHMUT BAKSI HAS DIED IN STOCKHOLM

THE Kurdish writer and journalist; Mahmut Baksi, died in Stockholm on Tuesday 19 Decembe at 7 pm, as a result of a long illness.

Mahmut Baksi was born in 1944; at Kuzluk, in Turkish Kurdistan. After his secondary schooling, he plunged into Trade Union activity and, as from 1976, journalism. His first novel was published in 1969. Called *Mezra Botan*, it was inspired by Kurdish life of his childhood. His writings, his

activity on behalf of the Kurdish people and his Trade Unionism earned him a series of trials. Threatened with years of imprisonment in Turkey, he sought refuge, at first in Germany and then, in 1971, in Sweden where he became a well known writer and public figure.

He was, in particular, a journalist on the Social Democratic daily *Aftonbladet* and the sole member of foreign origin on the executive of the Union of Swedish Writers. A

member of the Paris Kurdish Institute since 1986, he was a member of its Board of Directors from 1993 to 2000.

Author of about twenty books, some of which have been translated into foreign languages (Swedish, Norwegian, German, Finnish, Turkish and French), Mr. Baksi exercised his trade of journalist in the Swedish and Kurdish press almost until his death. He also did reporting and wrote documentaries for Swedish television.

The French publishing house *Harmattan* recently published his autobiographical account of his

youth *Mon enfance en Kurdistan* (My childhood in Kurdistan).

A memorial service for him took place on Saturday 23 December in Stockholm, on the initiative of the

Federation of Kurdistan Associations in Sweden, with the participation of the Kurdish Institute and in the presence of his family. In accordance with the terms of his will he will be buried in Diyarbakir.

However, Turkey remains on the sidelines of the convoy of countries considered for the enlargement at the end of the Nice Summit, after having passed its first year debating, without notable advance, the political reforms required for joining the European Club. It is offended that it is not even mentioned in the conclusions of the Nice summit.

TURKEY SIGNS THE "PARTNERSHIP FOR MEMBERSHIP" WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION

ON 4 December, the European Union declared that they had finally avoided a serious crisis on the "membership partnership" offered to Turkey and forced an agreement between Greeks and Turks at the end of a effort described as a real piece of "jig-saw".

There was a "great deal of toil over the words" used in the "membership partnership" document, which defines the road Turkey has to follow to join the E.U. It was "practically a piece of jig-saw", commented French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine, whose country is exercising the Presidency of the Union till the end of December 2000, to give an idea of the difficulty they had in finding a solution.

Ankara did not want any mention of the Cyprus problem amongst the short term political criteria to be achieved by Turkey before the end of 2001, in contrast to Greece. Turkey's resentment and anxiety were all the stronger in that the achievement of the political aspects of the so-called "Copenhagen criteria" is an indispensable prerequisite for any candidate country to be able even to begin negotiations for membership of the Union.

According to European sources,

however, the differences between Greece and Turkey remain in the document, but under the section of the "membership partnership" entitled "intensified political dialogue and political criteria" and an allusion to "territorial questions in the Aegean in accordance with the United Nations Charter". This section is in line with the decisions of the Helsinki summit that had allowed Turkey to accede to the status of candidate for membership before having begun the process of negotiating its conditions of membership.

On the eve of the Nice summit, an essential meeting for deciding on the enlarging of Europe, the Fifteen have thus avoided a serious crisis between Greece and Turkey.

"They might at least have included a little explanation. It is evident that they neglected this point. They might have paid more attention to this so as not to create an ease on our side" remarked a Turkish diplomat off the record.

"Turkey has not yet been given the status that, officially, was granted to it at Helsinki" recognised a European diplomat (also off the record). *"In the background there are a whole number of hesitations"* regarding this country, he added. *"Moreover, Turkey has not done enough to show that it really does want to join"* he considered.

"The fact that Turkey was not even mentioned strengthens the camp of those in Turkey who are opposed to joining" judged the editorialist of the liberal daily *Yeni Binyil*.

MORE THAN 30 DEATHS IN MILITARY OPERATIONS AGAINST HUNGER STRIKERS IN TURKISH PRISONS

ON the 61st day of the hunger strike launched by 250 detainees linked to Left wing groups protesting against the project of new prisons, the so called Type F (cells for 2 or 3 people, that the detainees call "coffins", which will replace the dormitories of 50 to 60 people) the Turkish Army

launched an assault on 19 December. The operation has caused at least 30 deaths, including 2 of the troops. The attempts at mediation had been broken off on 15 December.

It was with automatic weapons that the gendarmes invaded the prisons. Police, backed by gendarmes and army units responsible for ensuring

security in the prisons, launched simultaneous "rescue" operations at 5 am on about twenty prisons across Turkey. They were, in particular the Bayrampasa and Umraniye Prisons in Istanbul, the Ulucanlar Prison in Ankara, as well as prisons in Ceyhan, Bursa, Aydin, Buca, Usak, Çanakkale, Kırsehir, Kahramanmaraş, Nigde and Çankiri.

According to the Turkish Minister of Justice, Hikmet Sami Turk, at least 2 of the victims had committed suicide in the first hours of the assault by setting themselves on fire. One woman detainee at Umraniye is said to have 'committed suicide' by attacking the security forces who riposted by opening fire. Mr. Turk, moreover, confirmed that the transfers to the Type F prison at Sincar had begun, although on 9 December he had postponed the entry into force of the new system to a later date.

"They have burned 6 women alive" hurled two women prisoners, whose faces bore burn marks, as they were being carried to hospital on stretchers. The scenes, broadcast by CNN-Turk seem to contradict the Justice Minister's statements who, for his part, preferred to talk of the 'suicide' of the prisoners.

In Istanbul, the lawyer Eren Keskin, local officer of the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD) and about 30 other people were detained, to be followed in the course of the day by many other arrests. The detainees families also went to the scene demanding news of their relations. In the last fortnight the Kurdish ex-M.P.s Orhan Dogan, Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle and Selim Sadak have also joined the protest movement. The gendarmes broke into their dormitory and wanted to take them to hospital. In the face of their

refusal, they refrained from using force to oblige them.

According to evidence collected by the Turkish Human Rights Association, detainees have declared that *"the police first sprayed us with some liquid then set us alight"*. Leading officials of the Medical Council confirm this version.

It should be recalled that the victims are political activists, well known for their militancy, and perceived by the Turkish authorities as *"agitators"*. Everything leads one to believe that they were cold bloodedly murdered by the Army, under cover of the confusion resulting from the operation. During similar operations in Diyarbakir Prison a year earlier, a dozen prisoners were killed. More recently, during the attack on the Ulucanlar Prison in Ankara, about a dozen prisoners were slaughtered in the prison courtyard, in full view of the other powerless prisoners — including the jailed Kurdish Members of Parliament. The authors of these massacres have never been brought to trial.

Learning from past experience, the Turkish Army, this time, carried out its operations according to a detailed plan, meticulously prepared for over a year, including its diplomatic and media aspects. The unarmed hunger strikers were presented as very dangerous leftist extremists.

The Turkish press simply echoed official statements and the few recalcitrants were immediately brought to heel. Broadcasting of the NTV news channel was interrupted by the police in the morning of 21 December while its correspondent was reporting the police operations live. The Director General of Prisons, Ali Suat Ertosun, vehemently attacked the Turkish journalists: *"Do not ask any questions that cast doubt on the attitude and behaviour of the State"* he warned.

The European Commission reacted cautiously, declaring that it was *"concerned"* by the attacks on Human Rights. The French Foreign Ministry spokesman, François Rivasseau, declared *"we are aghast at the outcome of the hunger strikes in the Turkish prisons"*.

JUST APPEARED IN ISSUE N° 2 OF "ETUDES KURDES"

Issue N° 2 of the Kurdish Institute's six-monthly periodical, *Etudes Kurdes*, has just come out.

This issues contents are: *The Merwanide Kurdish princes and the Syriac scholars*, by Ephrem-ISA YOUSIF; *Clothing as an indication of the integration of Iraqi Kurdish refugees*, by Chirine MOHSEN; *Some reflections on the development of Kurdish literature in Iraqi Kurdistan between 1991 and 1999*, Farhad PIRBAL; *Which way democracy three minutes before the third millenium?* Sami SEÇUK

A European research project on the Kurdish community in France, Salih AKIN; *Two letters by Cherif Pasha to Benito Mussolini*, Mirella GALLETTI; *Kurdistan in the Shadow of History and The other Kurds. Yezidis in Colonial Iraq*, Hamit BOZARSLAN; *Three Obituaries*: A. BABAKHAN, I. AHMET AND P. RONDOT; *A Chronology of Events*, Rüsen Werdi.

Etudes Kurdes is distributed by Editions Harmattan and the Kurdish Institute.

AS WELL AS...

THE TURKISH ARMY INTERVENES IRAQI KURDISTAN, WHERE FIGHTING BETWEEN THE PKK AND THE PUK IS BECOMING MORE INTENSE. On the morning of 17 December, the Turkish Army deployed over 700 troops and heavy artillery in the Raniyah and Qandil region of Iraqi Kurdistan, about 300 Km inside its borders, to attack PKK camps in the region. This fresh Turkish incursion cannot even be justified by the alibi of "right of pursuit", since the PKK is no longer fighting in Turkey, and it openly violates international law and the sovereignty of a neighbouring State.

According to the English language Arab daily, *Al-Zaman*, of 19 December, Ankara is said to have been called to the rescue by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) which had been getting the worse of the latest clashes with the PKK, involving 3,000 fighters in the region. On 21 December, in the Arabic language daily *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, Adil Murad, one of the PUK leaders, totally denied this, stressing that "the situation in Raniyah is stable and peaceful. Regarding the Turkish Army, the whole world knows that for years the army has been entering Iraqi Kurdistan on the pretext of fighting the PKK".

It remains difficult to determine the number of victims of this fighting, but according to eye witness accounts received in Paris, there are said to be already several hundreds of them in the region. According to the daily *Al-Hayat* of 22 December, the PKK chief, Abdullah Ocalan, is

said to have written to his brother, Osman Ocalan, based on the Iraqi-Iranian border, asking him "to avoid fighting the Turkish Army whatever the price".

Moreover our Committee's President, Mrs. Danielle Mitterrand, has just sent a letter to President Chirac, in which, in particular, she writes: "Can we still continue to consider the Turkish Government, with its policy of repression, as a democracy capable of joining Europe? You have recently ratified, at Nice, the European Charter of Fundamental Rights. Even if it does not completely satisfy us, this document stipulates the necessity of democratic, or at least humane, processes for any European power. I would remind you that the Turkish Army, in defiance of all international laws and conventions, has again made incursions into Northern Iraq... This appeal is also made to public opinion so that the massacres in the Turkish prisons may cease and the Turkish Army put an end to practices that endanger the peace of the whole region".

ACCORDING TO FORMER CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT, DEPRIVING THE KURDS OF THEIR STATE WAS "A SERIOUS INJUSTICE AND A HISTORIC MISTAKE". In an article published by the German daily *Berliner Tagesspiegel* of, former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt considered that the 1919 Versailles Treaty, hindering the creation of a Kurdish State was a serious injustice and a historic mistake,

"From a geopolitical point of view, the question is as follows: in Turkey, a fifth of its population of 70 million inhabitants are Kurds. The two contending parties engage in armed confrontations in Hamburg. The fact that the Kurds were not granted a State in the 1919 Versailles Treaty was a serious injustice. Is this conflict going to be introduced into the European Union? One would have to be called Joscha Fischer to support such a thing in the cause of European idealism." Mr. Schmidt declared. He furthermore stated that "giving Turkey the status of candidate for membership was a serious mistake... It was done on the basis of a false hope. Apart from the fact that it brings with it the danger of other immediate problems, it also leads to problems whose solution may well cost us very dearly".

THE EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS COURT JUDGES ABDULLAH OCALAN'S PETITION RECEIVABLE. The petition by Abdullah Ocalan's petition regarding the many violations of his rights during his trial in Turkey was judged receivable by the European Court for Human Rights in Strasbourg. A panel of 7 human rights judges declared Ocalan's petition receivable in respect of the violations of his "right to life" to the "the forbidding of ill-treatment" to "freedom and security" to "a fair trial" and to "freedom of thought, conscience and religion as well as freedom of expression". A. Ocalan also secured the Strasbourg Court's agreement to examine his allegations regarding the violation of his right not to be sentenced "for an act that was not an offence at the time it was committed" and to "enjoy an effective right of appeal". Moreover, the Strasbourg judges

declared receivable Ocalan's allegations regarding violations of his rights "to respect for his private and family life" and to "the banning of discrimination", to the "limitation of the use of restriction of rights" and to "the right of individual appeal".

On the other hand, the Court rejected Ocalan's complaints regarding two secondary aspects of his appeal such as "the right of every person apprehended to be informed of the reasons for his arrest and all charges levelled against him".

The seven judges decided, in view of the complexity of the case, to confide to the Upper Court (made up of 17 judges) the duty of ruling on the basis issues of the case. This decision cannot take place for several months, whereas Turkey has suspended Ocalan's execution pending a ruling by the Human Rights Court. The abolition of the death sentence is one of the criteria for Turkey's membership of the European Union.

Turkey has minimised the impact of the European Court's acceptance of the petition, while his defence has welcomed the ruling. "It is only a matter of a decision on the receivability of the petition" the Turkish Minister of Justice, Hikmet Sami Turk, said laconically.

The lawyer, Hasip Kaplan, described the ruling as "an important step" welcoming the decision of the lower Court to confide the task of deciding on the essence of the case to the Upper Court of 17 judges.

• ACCORDING TO THE ANTI-TORTURE COMMITTEE (ATC) OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE: A "GOLDEN PRISON" FOR

ABDULLAH OCALAN — TORTURE FOR THE OTHERS. According to a report published in Strasbourg on 7 December with the agreement of the Turkish Government, after a visit to Turkey by the ATC from 23 February to 9 March 1999, Abdullah Ocalan, detained in the Island prison of Imrali "has a 13m² cell, well lit by natural light, properly equipped with a bed, a desk, toilets shower, wash bassin and air conditioning, all of very good quality". Subjected to rigorous isolation, he runs, however, no risk of ill-treatment, and four doctors are looking after him — a general practitioner, a heart specialist, a specialist in internal medicine and an psychiatrist.

In addition, he can listen to broadcasts by the Turkish TRT-FM radio network and he regularly receives books, periodicals and daily newspapers. The Turkish Government, whose statement is attached to the report, states that Abdullah Ocalan can read any books he wants to, as well as publications and newspapers brought to him by his lawyers and family, who visit him regularly.

Furthermore, to attenuate the negative effects of isolation on Mr. Ocalan's mental health, people specially trained in human relations "hold daily conversations with the prisoner at specific times", according to Ankara.

In reply to the urgings of the ATC that they enlarge Abdullah Ocalan's living space or break his isolation by allowing him to have cell mates, Ankara's answer was a firm NO, partly for security reasons and partly because the Anti-Terrorist Act forbids it. Moreover, the

Government stressed, the prisoner has available an exercise yard of 45m² — whereas the cells reserved for "dangerous criminals" in certain Western prisons, in Germany, Norway and Finland "are much smaller".

In the same report, the ATC reveals several new cases of torture and ill-treatment in the Istanbul and Izmir anti-terrorist police stations: "Palestinian hanging" (suspension by the arms), beating all over the body, electric shocks ... The ATC's doctors were able to verify some of these allegations. The most serious case, acknowledged by Ankara, is that of the Trade Unionist Suleyman Yeter, tortured to death while in detention between 5 and 7 March 1999 in Istanbul. The three policemen, alleged to have carried out the torture have subject to proceedings, the Government said. "Decisive action must be taken to eradicate, once and for all, the use of torture and ill treatment by the police" of the Istanbul anti-terrorist police, says the ATC.

THE IMF PROMISES \$ 10 BILLION TO TURKEY. On 6 December, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) flew to the help of Turkey by announcing help to the tune of \$ 10 billion to settle its liquidity crisis, in exchange for an acceleration of the reform of the Banking sector and of further privatisation. As a sign of the re-establishment of confidence, the Istanbul Stock Exchange took off and ended the day with an increase of 18.6% over the previous day, which itself had picked up, in anticipation of the IMF announcement, after two weeks of falls that had reached nearly 50%. And the overnight rate of interest

steadied at about 200% after having peaked at 1,700% at the height of the crisis.

The IMF General Manager, Horst Koehler, will ask the Board of Directors for credits of a little more than \$ 10 billion, of which a first slice of \$ 2.8 billion will be released on 21 December, the date of the Board meeting, the European Manager, Michael Deppler, announced in Ankara. Moreover, the World Bank's chief economist, Nicholas Stern, had announced on 5 November, that the Bank would shortly be discussing an aid programme for Turkey of about \$ 5 billion.

In exchange, the Turkish Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, announced a series of measures to accelerate the privatisation of Turk Telekom, Turkish Airlines (THY) and of the Electrical supply sector, strengthening the reform of the banking sector, which will be detailed in a letter of intent to the IMF, as well as a struggle to reduce inflation to 12% by the end of 2001 (it is running at 44% at present).

At the end of October 2000, ten banks, many of which were involved in corruption scandals, were placed under State supervision. On 5 December an eleventh banking establishment, Demirbank, whose difficulties had sparked off the crisis, joined them and yet another, Investment Bank had its licence withdrawn. The financial crisis is linked to the fragility of the banking sector, which relied heavily on Treasury Bonds whose profitability melted away with the drop in interest rates and the success of the fight against inflation — and delays in the privatisation process — a component of the anti-inflation reforms started in December 1999 in

agreement with the IMF, which had released \$ 3.7 billion worth of credits over three years.

TURKEY FOUND GUILTY OF HOMICIDE COMMITTED BY POLICE OFFICERS. On 14 December, the European Human Rights Court found the Turkish Government guilty of homicide committed by three policemen who had fired volleys 50 to 55 bullets through the door of the victims apartment.

The judges unanimously ruled there had been a violation of Mehmet Gul's right to life and made the point that the Turkish authorities had failed in their obligation to conduct an effective enquiry into the circumstances of his death.

The Court also unanimously sentenced Turkey to pay a total of 142,622.82 euros to Mehmet Gul's family. His widow and three children will receive the sum of £st 35,000 material damages and £st 20,000 moral damages. The victim's father, the sole petitioner, will receive £st 10,000 damages and £st 21,000 costs.

During the night of 7 to 8 March 1993, Mehmet Gul was riddled with bullets by three policemen during a house search in the context of an enquiry into the activity of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The man was hit even as he was unlocking the door of the apartment where he lived with his family in the small town of Bozova (Kurdistan).

In 1996, after an enquiry that had "important omissions", according to the European Court, in particular the fact that the Public Prosecutor did not take any evidence from the policemen. According to the European judges, they were

acquitted, the Sanliurfa Criminal Court judging that they had not committed any fault.

THE TURKISH POLICE REBELS AGAINST ITS CHIEFS AND THE GOVERNMENT. Taking as excuse an attack with automatic weapons, on 11 December, against a police coach in the Gazi quarter of Istanbul, which caused two deaths and several wounded, the Turkish police in several towns demonstrated, brandishing their weapons and shouting threats against the State authorities, civilian and illegal organisations, intellectuals and the hunger strikers. In several towns, including Istanbul and Izmir, the rioters manhandled their local police chiefs and threatened to lynch them. Here are some of the slogans shouted by the demonstrators: "We will sell whoever sells us out" "The government takes the amnesty law and destroys it" "Organisations (including civil ones) come down into the street — we have weapons" "Ankara, Ankara, listen to us. These are the agile steps of the police. We will betray those who betray us" "The police are here — where are the intellectuals?" "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The State must not negotiate with traitors".

Some have explained this movement by the very low living standards of the police but many are those who criticise their level of training. Fatih Altayli, journalist on the Turkish daily *Hurriyet* wrote, in this respect: "If they hadn't become police they'd have been terrorists". In fact, the bulk of the police were recruited from the ranks of the extreme Right with a view to fighting the Kurdish nationalists and the democratic left. According to Professor Dogu Ergil "these events are very serious but foreseeable. They have been led along

this road (...) Their slogans reflect their own perceptions of the oppressive authority of an oppressive regime".

Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit declared that certain persons had pushed a button to unleash the discontent. All the press took up the idea, seeking everywhere to identify those guilty of having pushed the button, and Minister of the Interior Sadettin Tanrıvermiş declared, on 18 December, that 64 policemen had

been suspended for their active participation in the demonstrations.

THE TURKISH PRESIDENT HAS RATIFIED THE AMNESTY BILL. On 20 December the Turkish Parliament passed the Amnesty Bill on its second reading and in identical terms to the first. This Bill will allow the release of nearly half of the 72,000 prisoners in the country, despite the President's opposition. The Turkish President, Ahmet Sezer, finally signed the Bill on 21

December since he cannot veto the same Bill twice.

This measure principally releases criminal law prisoners (rapist, murderers etc...). Kurdish activists and the bulk of Turkish political prisoners sentenced for "*crimes against the State*" remain excluded from this peculiar 'amnesty' which even the President found "*unfair and inequitable*".

Iran's Weary Would-Be Reformer

Khatami Was 'Never a Rebel' and Has No 'Cause,' Critic Charges

By Geneive Abdo
International Herald Tribune

TEHRAN — Long before the outside world had heard of Mohammed Khatami, a "silent revolution" appeared to be in the making.

A group of Iranian intellectuals met regularly in one of Tehran's popular restaurants to try to find ways to integrate Western ideas of social justice, freedom and democracy into the Islamic Republic. Now their effort seems to be unraveling.

Many of the intellectuals are in jail. Their ideas, once splashed across dozens of lively newspapers, have been denounced and their publications shut. President Khatami himself admits that his policies have failed.

Mohsen Sazegara, a Muslim intellectual and former revolutionary who was a member of the restaurant circle, said his group had created the concept of a "civil society," an idea now associated with Mr. Khatami. But the president never managed to make it a reality.

"The basic problem is that the people around Khatami who call themselves reformers don't believe in freedom. Many of them are no different from the hard-liners," said Mr. Sazegara. "We didn't expect miracles. But we expected some progress. Instead, Khatami has thrown away many opportunities."

"The Americans," a newspaper editor said, "like to say Khatami is a rebel with a cause. But they were wrong from the beginning. Khatami was never a rebel, and now the conservatives have taken away his cause."

At least half the students in a powerful national university organization that supported Mr. Khatami believe his presidency is a failure.

The Parliament, which claims at least 100 supporters of reform among 290 lawmakers, has been repeatedly overruled by a conservative body of clerics.

Even Mr. Khatami admits that he has limited power to rule. In a speech on Sunday, the second time in recent months that Mr. Khatami has effectively conceded defeat, he blamed his lackluster presidency on the inherent obstacles within the system, not on his own shortcomings as a politician.

"I declare after three years as president that I don't have sufficient powers to implement the constitution, which is my biggest responsibility," he told a gathering of clerics, lawyers and intellectuals.

Based on dozens of interviews over several months with Mr. Khatami's loyalists, a picture has emerged of a cleric who at one time believed he could fundamentally reform the system. But faced with the risk of political extinction at the hands of his conservative rivals, or the

prospect of social upheaval that could threaten clerical rule, he acquiesced to the limitations of his office.

Mr. Khatami, sources say, is now weary and filled with despair.

He has agreed to run for a second term in a presidential poll scheduled for May, according to his close associates. But he still may change his mind and bow out of the race.

From the moment the bookish Mr. Khatami contemplated running for president in late 1996, there were signs he had the potential to be a different kind of Iranian leader. He was the dark horse in the race, challenging the establishment.

Using tactics familiar to American voters; Mr. Khatami toured the country on a bus, pressing the flesh from town to town and village to village. Voters immediately were impressed by his modesty and accessibility, completely at odds with the aloofness of past Iranian leaders. Many appeared simply to like his smile.

On election day, the image he had crafted paid off: He won 20 million votes, or almost 70 percent of the electorate, prompting one of Iran's leading intellectuals, Abdolkarim Soroush, to call his victory a "silent revolution."

With such a broad mandate, Iranians were confident he could bring about the profound reform he had promised. Chief among these, was the "rule of law" — the civic freedoms and rights enshrined in Iran's constitution but never fully implemented — and political, social and even religious pluralism.

At one point, his followers adopted the slogan, "Iran for All Iranians."

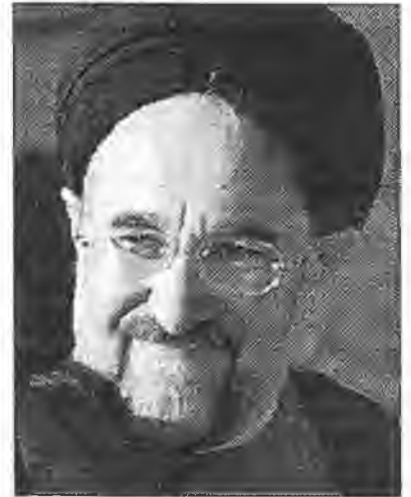
But once in office, Mr. Khatami found himself confronted not only with entrenched clerical opposition but with Iran's centuries-old legacy of despotism, hierarchy and religious absolutism.

"The political culture of Iranians is still under the influence of beliefs and norms of the era of the kings — despotism and tyranny," wrote Mahmoud Sarioolghalam, an Iranian scholar.

Ruhollah Khatami, a well-known ayatollah in the central town of Ardakan who preached against the secular edicts of the shah's regime, overthrown in 1979, had taught his eldest son to stand up for his principles. But this childhood training was no match for the Faustian wheeling and dealing Mohammed Khatami would encounter as president.

Mr. Khatami's first major crisis came in July 1999. University students staged a demonstration to protest the closure of Salam, Iran's first reformist national newspaper, which helped Mr. Khatami win the presidential election.

The peaceful demonstration turned violent after Islamic vigilantes, backed by security forces, burst into the dormitories and brutally beat students to avenge the protest. Scores were critically injured and an unknown number



Hasan Sarhakshian/AP

Mr. Khatami had a vision of creating a modern Islamic society.

died.

The melee provoked five days of student demonstrations across the country; the bloodiest occurred in the northern town of Tabriz. In Tehran, the unrest spilled out from the university campuses onto the streets, where ordinary Iranians joined the pro-democracy students.

When it was all over, President Khatami delivered a landmark speech in the town of Hamadan, in what was a clear sign to loyalists that he was unprepared to stand up to the conservative establishment. Before thousands of young men and women, he criticized the students for their demonstrations and distorted the facts in retelling the story of the five days of rage.

Along the way, the president stood by as some of his confidants were imprisoned for alleging that conservative clerics had established a monopoly on religious interpretation.

For his supporters, the biggest betrayal came last spring when conservatives in the judiciary began closing reformist newspapers.

For a decade, the reform movement believed that the press would be the key to creating political and religious pluralism. But as each newspaper was closed, the president declined to take a stand until the judiciary had banned 30 publications and imprisoned numerous writers on accusations that they had violated Islamic values.

On Sunday, Mr. Khatami finally accused the judiciary of distorting the intent of the constitution for political purposes.

On Tuesday, he was criticized by the judiciary chief, Mahmoud Hashemi-Shahrudi, for trying to exploit the constitution.

The direct attack on the president indicated that Mr. Khatami's attempt to use the rule of law to change Iran was unlikely to succeed.

Deux organisations non gouvernementales françaises préparent à nouveau un vol vers l'Irak

LA DEUXIÈME tentative semble être la bonne : après avoir échoué, début octobre, dans l'organisation de leur opération « Un avion pour l'Irak », destinée à « violer légalement » l'embargo aérien imposé de facto à Bagdad (*Le Monde* du 2 octobre), deux organisations non gouvernementales françaises – Enfants du monde-Droits de l'homme et Comité international pour la levée de l'embargo – associées au Père Jean-Marie Benjamin, secrétaire général de la Fondation Beato Angelico, ont fixé au vendredi 1^{er} décembre leur départ. Ils ont le soutien des anciens ministres Claude Cheysson, Anicet Le Pors et Françoise Hostalier, de la députée Roselyne Bachelot et de Gisele Halimi, ancien ambassadeur auprès de l'Unesco.

Les organisateurs précisent que le vol s'effectuera à bord d'un avion de la compagnie française Aigle Azur, avec un retour prévu le 3 décembre. Début octobre, alors même qu'ils avaient rassemblé les passagers à l'aéroport, ils n'avaient pas été en mesure de dire quelle compagnie assurerait le vol, deux compagnies leur ayant, selon eux, fait faux bond en raison de « pressions américaines ». A la différence de ceux qui ont déjà été organisés

par des organismes divers, voire par des personnalités officielles, leur vol revêt, à leurs yeux, « une importance particulière par la qualité de ses participants et des personnalités qui le soutiennent et représentent une large partie de l'opinion française ».

Le fait est qu'en l'espace de quelques semaines, quelque 70 avions se sont posés à Bagdad. Samedi 25 novembre, dans un geste de défi vis-à-vis de l'ONU, le vice-premier ministre irakien, Tarek Aziz, a pris un avion des Iraki Airways pour se rendre à Damas, puis en Inde le lendemain.

VALEUR SYMBOLIQUE

Ces vols n'impliquent pas la reprise des vols réguliers vers l'Irak. Une compagnie aérienne privée émiratie, la Nada el-Chark International, qui avait l'intention d'organiser à partir du 22 novembre quatre vols hebdomadaires vers Bagdad, s'est vu refuser l'autorisation du comité des sanctions de l'ONU. De son côté, la compagnie aérienne jordanienne Royal Jordanian a décidé d'organiser des charters – vraisemblablement hebdomadaires – pour Bagdad, tout en précisant qu'il ne s'agira pas d'une reprise du trafic aérien normal entre les deux pays.

Car, s'il est vrai qu'aucune résolu-

tion des Nations unies n'interdit le trafic aérien régulier, les résolutions 661 et 770 n'en bannissent pas moins clairement toute transaction commerciale et/ou financière avec ce pays. Or une reprise normale du trafic ne pourrait éviter de telles transactions, puisque les appareils devront se réapprovisionner en carburant, payer des taxes d'aéroport et d'entretien des appareils. Sans oublier les risques encourus par les avions du fait de l'existence, au sud du 33^e parallèle et au nord du 36^e de zones d'exclusion aérienne imposées par les Etats-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne et la France.

Les avions affrétés à l'heure actuelle ont essentiellement une valeur symbolique et visent à dénoncer le maintien des sanctions imposées à l'Irak et à démontrer que l'autorisation du Comité des sanctions des Nations unies n'est pas requise, dès lors que Bagdad n'en tire aucun bénéfice financier. Washington et Londres, qui exigeaient une telle autorisation, sont désormais visiblement dépassés. Paris et Moscou ont toujours défendu une lecture légaliste des résolutions et estimé qu'une simple notification du vol suffit.

Mouna Naïm

IRAN

Lettre ouverte d'un journaliste emprisonné

Du fond de sa prison, le journaliste réformateur iranien Akbar Gandji* écrit au gouvernement. Il affirme qu'on lui reproche sa trop grande curiosité dans des affaires impliquant de hauts responsables de l'Etat. Ce document n'a pu être reproduit dans la presse iranienne.

Les représentants du peuple savent que la victoire des réformateurs aux élections a été immédiatement suivie par la tentative d'assassinat de Saeed Hadjarian (dirigeant du Front de la participation, ancien conseiller au ministère de l'Intérieur). Les conservateurs étaient à la recherche d'un prétexte pour se défaire une fois pour toute des réformateurs. La conférence de Berlin [organisée par la Fondation Heinrich-Böll et réunissant des intellectuels et des activistes iraniens réformateurs] leur a servi d'excuse. Elle a permis aux manipulateurs d'attiser le ressentiment du public en montrant à la télévision un reportage truqué. L'objectif était d'en finir avec la presse indépendante [depuis le mois d'avril, une trentaine de quotidiens et de journaux ont été interdits], de procéder à l'arrestation massive des réformateurs et de modifier la loi sur la presse. Après cent neuf jours d'emprisonnement, j'ai pu lire un numéro du quotidien *Kayhan* [conservateur] qui annonçait en première page, pour le lendemain, l'ouverture du procès à huis clos des participants à la conférence de Berlin. De la même manière, j'ai appris que le procès de Ganji aurait lieu le 10 novembre à 9 heures. Pendant cent huit jours, j'ai été maintenu à l'iso-

lement. Durant sept mois, je n'ai pas eu le droit de rencontrer mon avocat. Le délit pour lequel je serai jugé n'est en réalité pas lié à ma participation à la conférence de Berlin. Je serai condamné pour avoir suivi l'affaire des assassinats en série [des intellectuels et d'opposants, survenue fin 1998]. On m'avait ouvertement dit que je ne devais pas évoquer dans mes articles l'implication de hauts dirigeants iraniens dans ces assassinats et que je devais m'arrêter au rôle de Saeed Emami [l'un des employés du ministère de l'Intérieur accusé d'être responsable des assassinats en série d'intellectuels iraniens ; il a été retrouvé mort dans sa cellule]. Les conservateurs ne veulent pas que cette affaire soit éclaircie, parce que l'implication de personnalités haut placées – les « maîtres gris » [référence à l'ex-chef d'Etat Hachemi Rafsandjani] – serait évidente. Mon emprisonnement est par conséquent politique.

Notre délit est d'avoir défendu une lecture divine et humaine de la religion, en nous opposant à une lecture fasciste et royaliste. Notre propos vise principalement la question de la religion officielle. Nous voulons que la religion ne soit pas en antagonisme avec la liberté, la justice, la diversité et le pluralisme, la modération et la patience, les droits de l'homme et la raison. C'est pourquoi, être prisonnier est un grand honneur pour moi.

Akbar Gandji (extraits)

* Journaliste à *Sobh-e Emruz*, symbole du mouvement réformateur, il a été arrêté le 22 avril 2000 ; son procès s'est ouvert le 10 novembre.

Un fonctionnaire européen a écrit au PKK: une "erreur", selon Bruxelles



BRUXELLES, 2 déc (AFP) - 12h46 - Un fonctionnaire de la Commission européenne a écrit aux dirigeants du parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) en soulignant que les droits des Kurdes n'étaient pas respectés en Turquie, a indiqué samedi un porte-parole de la Commission en parlant "d'erreur très regrettable".

Ce fonctionnaire, chargé des relations avec la Turquie, a écrit le 20 novembre "au centre d'information du Kurdistan et au conseil de la présidence du PKK", a déclaré à l'AFP ce porte-parole de la Commission, Reijo Kemppinen.

Selon lui, bien que la lettre ait été signée par ce fonctionnaire "de la part" de Romano Prodi, président de la Commission européenne, M. Prodi "n'était pas au courant de la lettre".

Ce texte, dont le contenu précis n'a pas été dévoilé par le porte-parole qui a affirmé ne pas l'avoir vu, n'aurait pas dû être envoyé. "Il s'agit d'une erreur administrative très regrettable", a assuré M. Kemppinen.

"La Commission européenne considère que le gouvernement turc est notre seul partenaire officiel" et tient à souligner "les bonnes relations avec la Turquie dans la mise en place de la stratégie du partenariat d'adhésion" à l'Union européenne, a ajouté le porte-parole.

Le PKK est considéré comme une organisation "terroriste" par les autorités turques et son chef, Abdullah Ocalan, a été condamné à mort.

La Commission européenne, tout en condamnant les atteintes aux droits de l'Homme en Turquie, a proposé début novembre un "partenariat d'adhésion" à Ankara, pour l'aider à remplir les critères qui lui permettront d'engager des négociations d'adhésion à l'Union européenne.

L'UE a reconnu à la Turquie le statut de candidat officiel à l'adhésion en décembre 1999, sans pour autant engager de négociations comme elle le fait avec les douze autres pays candidats.

Le partenariat évoque la nécessité d'un règlement de la question de Chypre, dont la partie nord est occupée par la Turquie, ce qui a fortement irrité le gouvernement turc. La Grèce a en outre exigé que le partenariat évoque aussi les contentieux territoriaux qui l'opposent à la Turquie en Mer Egée.

Les ministres des Affaires étrangères des Quinze, qui se réunissent lundi à Bruxelles, doivent discuter de ce partenariat d'adhésion et éventuellement l'adopter. Une adoption qui dépend essentiellement de l'attitude de la Grèce.

La lettre de l'Union Européenne au PKK est une "honte" (Yilmaz)



ANKARA, 2 déc (AFP) - 15h07 - Le vice-Premier ministre turc Mesut Yilmaz a qualifié samedi de "honte" une lettre envoyée par la Commission européenne au groupe rebelle kurde qu'Ankara considère comme une organisation de "terroristes".

"Il faut que nous en sachions plus sur ce qui lie l'UE à cette lettre, mais quoiqu'il en soit, que la lettre ait été envoyée avec ou sans l'aval de la Commission est absolument honteux", a déclaré M. Yilmaz, cité par l'agence de presse turque Anatolie.

La lettre envoyée le 20 novembre au nom du Président de la Commission européenne, Romano Prodi (Italie), à la présidence du PKK (Parti des travailleurs kurdes) et au Centre d'Information sur le Kurdistan, indiquait que les droits des Kurdes n'étaient pas respectés en Turquie.

Selon un porte-parole de la Commission européenne, la lettre a été rédigée par un fonctionnaire européen et M. Prodi n'avait aucune connaissance de ce texte.

Pour sa part, le ministère turc des Affaires étrangères, a indiqué vendredi soir, dans un communiqué, que "le fait que la Commission considère comme un interlocuteur une organisation terroriste responsable de milliers de morts innocents" n'avait "aucun sens".

Un représentant de l'UE à Ankara a d'ailleurs été convoqué au ministère vendredi pour entendre les doléances turques sur cette affaire.



Samedi 2 décembre 2000

COMMENTAIRE

Après les votes du Sénat français, des Parlements européen et italien et la déclaration du Pape

Effet pervers d'une reconnaissance

Le mois de novembre a été riche en votes ou en déclarations sur la reconnaissance du génocide arménien (Sénat français, Vatican, Parlement européen, Parlement italien), des événements qui s'inscrivent dans le contexte de l'examen de la candidature d'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne.

Il ne s'agit ici ni de minimiser la portée des déclarations ou des votes sus-mentionnés, ni de verser dans une paranoïa aiguë, qui ferait de tous nos interlocuteurs des ennemis potentiels. Il convient juste d'évaluer correctement le contexte créé et ses implications.

Pour éviter une analyse par trop exhaustive, nous nous bornerons à examiner à travers un éclairage jusque-là inédit, et pourtant fort instructif, le texte sans doute le plus ambigu : celui de la résolution du Parlement européen.

Rappelons donc que les députés européens invitaient, le 15 novembre dernier, «le gouvernement turc et la Grande Assemblée nationale turque à accroître leur soutien à la minorité arménienne, notamment par la reconnaissance publique du génocide que cette dernière a subi avant l'établissement d'un Etat moderne en Turquie» (cf. n° 337, p. 1).

Outre le fait que le texte de la résolution n'a pas - à l'image de celle du 18 juin 1987 - de portée juridique, il paraît difficile, avec le recul, de passer sous silence un autre élément susceptible de provoquer un certain malaise côté arménien : le lien établi entre l'invitation lancée aux autorités turques à reconnaître le génocide arménien et le «soutien» accru que celles-ci manifesteraient par-là même à leur «minorité arménienne».

UN SOUTIEN AMBIGU AUX ARMÉNIENS DE TURQUIE

Cette relation de cause à effet appelle trois remarques. La première renvoie à l'absence de la Diaspora arménienne, ou du peuple arménien en général, dans le texte de la résolution : son caractère restrictif - le soutien à la minorité arménienne de Turquie - n'incite-t-il pas au moins à une certaine vigilance, au moment où la Diaspora se bat, avec l'appui de l'Arménie, pour l'internationalisation de la question de la reconnaissance ?

La deuxième observation a trait aux réactions que ces reconnaissances en chaîne ont engendrées auprès de la «minorité arménienne de Turquie» : les communiqués de «réprobation» du Patriarche des Arméniens de Turquie ne sont que le reflet de la marge de manœuvre inexistante d'une communauté prise en otage, depuis «l'établissement d'un Etat moderne en Turquie». Son silence face à ces reconnaissances en série vaudrait consentement, à n'en pas douter, aux yeux des autorités turques, avec les conséquences que l'on imagine. Cela dit, il faut noter que le Patriarche Mesrob II, tout en réprouvant les déclarations ou résolutions invitant la Turquie à reconnaître le génocide

arménien, n'a de cesse d'appeler Turcs et Arméniens au dialogue. Or, c'est précisément ce dialogue que refuse Ankara, qui persiste à adopter une attitude monolithique sur la question, alors qu'une petite frange de l'intelligentsia et de la population turques a déjà ouvert une brèche - si modeste soit-elle - dans le négationnisme d'Etat.

Côté arménien, certains se sont émus, voire même plutôt indignés, des communiqués de «réprobation» des Arméniens de Turquie face à cette série sans précédent de reconnaissances du génocide. Faut-il leur rappeler qu'ils jettent l'anathème sur une communauté de quelques dizaines de milliers d'âmes, citoyens de seconde zone, qui jouent leur destin à chaque instant ? Un mot de travers et c'est fini, il ne faut jamais l'oublier ! Ceux qui fustigent la pusillanimité de cette «minorité arménienne de Turquie» ont-ils conscience que celle-ci se bat néanmoins pour vivre, qu'elle défend bec et ongles, à l'image du très combatif Patriarche Mesrob II, ses droits culturels et l'inaliénabilité de ses biens communautaires ? Ont-ils conscience qu'au lieu de manifester un surcroît de solidarité à l'égard de cette communauté soumise à d'incessantes pressions, ils sèment les germes d'une division dommageable pour tous, au moment où tout le monde se fait le chantre de l'unité ?

LE RISQUE D'INSTRUMENTALISATION

Enfin, comment ne pas souligner que jusqu'à présent, aucune instance européenne - pas plus le Parlement qu'une autre - ne s'était véritablement soucieuse du sort de la «minorité arménienne de Turquie» ! Le Parlement européen n'avait pas émis le moindre début de protestation lorsque le leader kurde Abdullah Öcalan, il y a quelques années, se faisait traiter par le ministre turc de l'Intérieur de «clown d'un sperme arménien» (cf. n° 170, 12-04-97). Il n'avait pas davantage réagi lorsqu'à plusieurs reprises, ces dernières années, la «minorité arménienne de Turquie» se voyait interdire le droit d'enseigner en arménien dans ses propres écoles, ou tentait désespérément de sauver des biens communautaires que les autorités turques cherchaient à confisquer.

On objectera à tous ces arguments - et peut-être plus ou moins à juste titre - que le processus d'intégration de la Turquie à l'Union européenne n'en était pas encore, il y a quelques années, à un stade aussi avancé, et que le Parlement européen ne pouvait appeler à la reconnaissance du génocide arménien qu'en soulevant la question du respect nécessaire par la Turquie des droits de ses minorités, en l'occurrence l'arménienne. Certes, mais comment ne pas accueillir avec un soupçon de méfiance la soudaine relation de cause à effet mentionnée plus haut ? Après avoir dressé ce bilan, il n'est pas interdit de se demander si le fait d'appeler la Turquie à reconnaître le génocide constitue l'un des meilleurs moyens d'«accroître son

soutien» à sa «minorité arménienne»... Aujourd'hui, la Turquie est tenue par le respect des critères définis pour son adhésion à l'Union européenne. Mais demain ?

Le risque d'instrumentalisation de la question du génocide arménien par les adversaires de l'entrée de la Turquie dans l'Union européenne n'est donc pas nul, loin s'en faut ! Si demain, les autorités d'Ankara recommencent à exercer une forte pression sur les écoles arméniennes, ou tentent de confisquer de nouveaux biens communautaires ou des églises arméniennes, le Parlement européen va-t-il adresser un coup de semonce au candidat à l'adhésion à l'Union européenne sur la question du «soutien» à sa «minorité arménienne» ? La question se pose avec acuité, car la réponse, malheureusement, n'est pas évidente.

Donc vigilance, plus que jamais vigilance ! Ne soyons pas aveuglés par la joie légitime que procurent les reconnaissances du génocide !

LA BATAILLE N'EST PAS GAGNÉE D'AVANCE À L'ASSEMBLÉE NATIONALE

Le mot d'ordre vaut bien entendu également pour le cas français. Deux semaines après le vote du Sénat, Jean-Marc Ayrault, président du groupe socialiste à l'Assemblée nationale, estimait que les textes adoptés les 29 mai 1998 et 8 novembre 2000 «valent déclaration solennelle du Parlement» et «engagent moralement la France» (cf. n° 338, p. 2, col. 3). Tout en reconnaissant que la question du retour à l'Assemblée nationale du texte voté par le Sénat n'avait pas encore été débattue par le groupe socialiste, il livrait son sentiment personnel sur la question, en déclarant : «Cela me paraît acceptable, je ne pense pas que nous y reviendrons.»

Après le communiqué commun - fait rarissime - de l'Elysée et de Matignon, qui tentaient le 8 novembre dernier de rassurer le partenaire turc (cf. n° 336, p. 3, col. 1) en minimisant la portée du vote du Sénat, après les déclarations de l'ambassadeur de France en Turquie Bernard Garcia, qui répétait une semaine plus tard à Bursa que ce vote avait été organisé «contre la volonté du gouvernement français» (cf. n° 338, p. 2, col. 3), le président du groupe socialiste essayait d'influer sur le cours des événements, tout en se ménageant une porte de sortie : si d'aventure le groupe socialiste décidait, par exemple à l'aide de sa niche parlementaire, de soulever la question, M. Ayrault pourrait alors s'abriter derrière le sacro-saint jeu démocratique, en s'inclinant devant la décision du parti.

La ficelle est assez grosse, mais elle pourrait tromper ceux qui se contenteraient d'une simple reconnaissance morale, à l'image des victoires du même nom que les Arméniens ont malheureusement collectionnées depuis des décennies. ●

Varoujan Mardikian

PKK Leader Says 15 Dead in Attack by PUK Forces

December 4, 2000

TUNCELI, Turkey (Reuters) - Turkish Kurd rebels said Monday a rival Iraqi Kurdish faction had attacked their bases in a breakaway region of northern Iraq and 15 fighters from both sides had been killed.

The separatist Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) said the attack had been launched by Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) despite a unilateral cease-fire the PKK announced in October after weeks of fighting.

"Despite all our efforts for peace, Talabani's forces launched an attack on us last night," senior PKK commander Osman Ocalan told Kurdish Medya TV television channel broadcasting from Europe. PUK officials were not available for comment. The PKK has used a mountainous enclave in north Iraq -- outside Baghdad's control since the end of the 1991 Gulf War -- as a base in its 16-year-old campaign for home rule in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast.

The latest clashes involved 5,000 militiamen loyal to Talabani in the rugged region called Boti and Kanicengi close to the Iranian border, Ocalan said. He said PKK guerrillas killed 10 of Talabani's forces and took six of them as hostage for the loss of five men from their own ranks. Fighting was continuing, he added.

Talabani controls a large swathe of territory in northern Iraq along with another rival militia -- the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) led by Massoud Barzani -- under the shield of U.S.-led air patrols flying from Turkey against any possible attack by Baghdad. The PKK rebel group, on the orders of its condemned leader Abdullah Ocalan, pulled out of Turkey last year and relocated in northern Iraq and Iran. Turkey often sends its troops to the enclave in pursuit of the guerrillas. KDP militiamen have fought the PKK along with Turkish soldiers.

Talabani promised Turkish authorities earlier this year his "peshmerga" fighters would do more to combat the PKK on the border between Turkey and Iraq.

* * * * *

Contradictions Mark Turkey's Policy Toward Kurds

Washington Post December 4, 2000

ISTANBUL — Last year a film produced by a Kurdish cultural center won an award at the Ankara Film Festival, sponsored in part by the Turkish Culture Ministry, which had banned the film from Turkish cinemas. For the past eight years, Turkish security courts have hired interpreters from a Kurdish linguistics institute in Istanbul, yet its director now faces trial in another court on charges that the institute is an illegal business.

As Turkey campaigns to join the European Union -- which has demanded that it grant more rights to its Kurdish minority -- public debate over the Kurdish issue is becoming more vitriolic than ever and government policies are increasingly divided.

As the long Kurdish rebellion has diminished since last year, and satellite television and the Internet make Kurdish culture more accessible, many top Turkish officials say the country should lift bans on Kurdish-language television and arts. But hard-line nationalists, fearful that any recognition of Kurdish identity will fragment Turkey and strengthen separatism, are fighting back with political threats, vaguely worded laws and sympathetic security forces.

"We're in chaos," said Hasan Kaya, who faces trial over his role as chairman of the Kurdish Institute, which researches Kurdish culture and language. For years, international human rights organizations have criticized Turkey for its refusal to grant basic rights to its approximately 12 million Kurdish citizens -- almost a fifth of the country's population. But the issue has grown more important as the European Union has taken up the issue.

In addition, modern communications have diminished the effectiveness of prohibitions on Kurdish-language television programs, movies, plays, music -- and the teaching of Kurdish language in schools. Last week, Senkal Atasagun, Turkey's civilian intelligence chief, said, "Kurdish people living in the southeast are already watching illegal broadcasts of Medya TV," a Kurdish-language channel broadcast from London via satellite.

The conflict between the government and separatist Kurdish guerrillas in the southeast, which has left an estimated 30,000 people dead and hundreds of thousands displaced, has subsided significantly since last year's arrest of Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan, adding to pressure for the government to relax restrictions.

The new efforts to make some accommodation for the Kurds have sharply divided Turkey's coalition government and bureaucracy. Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and many senior ministers are pushing for freedoms for the Kurdish population. But Ecevit's main coalition partner, the Nationalist Action Party, is resisting, as are the military and other security forces, and local government authorities in the southeast.

The conflict became an uproar last week when the intelligence chief, Atasagun, declared that the government should permit Kurdish television broadcasts. Turkish nationalists were even more outraged the following day when Ecevit announced he had authorized the pronouncement and agreed with it. "To demand Kurdish TV in Turkey is nothing but treason," said Abdulhaluk Cay, a minister from the Nationalist Action Party, which, as its name suggests, is an ultranationalist group.

"Turkey is coming out of long years of trouble and bloodshed, and now it's time to debate," said Ozdem Sanberk, director of the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation, an Istanbul think tank that advocates greater democracy and openness in Turkish government and society.

No segment of Kurdish society has been whipsawed more by shifting attitudes and a divided government than organizations trying to promote Kurdish culture through its music, film, theater, literature or language. "If you speak in Kurdish, sing in Kurdish or promote any arts in Kurdish, you are accused of being separatists," said Hatice Coban, 34, a member of the executive board of the Mesopotamia Culture Center in Istanbul.

In the nine years since the center opened, its branches in the southeast have been shut and its leaders – including Coban – have routinely been arrested. During one arrest, Coban said she was stripped and beaten. Although the government won't permit the center's films or plays to be performed publicly in Turkey, last year's film about the emotional conflicts of a man whose village had been burned won a first prize at the Milan Film Festival – and a special jury award at the Ankara Film Festival, which is sponsored in part by the Culture Ministry.

This year, the cultural center was invited to enter a Kurdish play in another Ankara festival. But when the center invited theater critics and others to attend a free dress rehearsal, police locked the center's theater and dressing room for "unlicensed theater activities." "Juries can watch [Kurdish plays or films] and we can win awards in Turkey, but the people shouldn't see our productions," said Coban.

The Kurdish Institute's Kaya also has been the victim of inconsistencies in government policies. He said the institute was formed in 1992 to preserve a "culture about to be forgotten for future generations." The institute has built an archive of Kurdish literature and music and recently published a dictionary.

In March, an Istanbul prosecutor charged Kaya with teaching Kurdish language courses, which is illegal under Turkish law. Prosecutors later amended the charge to operating an illegal business.

Kaya said that eight years ago the institute received a charter from the Trade Ministry to operate. And in what he said is a sign of its acceptance by many parts of the government, "We've provided translators to state security courts."

In its effort to prove that Kaya's institute is teaching illegally, the indictment against him lists as evidence five dictionaries that define "institute" as a school.

Istanbul prosecutors also charged Kaya with inciting hatred through Kurdish music recordings that allegedly praised PKK activities. Kaya said the institute received permission from the Culture Ministry to preserve the music. Although an Istanbul judge dismissed the charges, prosecutors have appealed to a higher court.

And although 10,000 copies of the institute's new Kurdish dictionary have been distributed throughout the country – including to government offices – police confiscated copies of it from a bus garage and from a branch of a teachers union in the southeast.

In contrast to such police actions, Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz recently urged an immediate end to emergency rule in the east and southeast, saying that a state that "belittles its citizens, does not like their religion, customs and clothing," and views them as a "danger to its existence, cannot carry Turkey into the 21st century."

Kurdish language ban debate may herald change

Reuters December 4, 2000

When the leader of Turkey's only legal Kurdish party has words of praise for the country's chief spy, it might be a sign that change is afoot.

Intelligence chief Senkal Atasagun dropped a bombshell recently when he suggested the state should set up a Kurdish language television channel to secure the loyalty of the country's 12 million Kurds, many of whom do not speak Turkish.

Not so many years ago, the Turkish state denied the existence of Kurdish as a separate language.

Murat Bozlak was re-elected leader of the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) last week, 18 months after he resigned the post because of a political ban and a jail sentence imposed because of links to the terrorist/separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Sitting in his office under a portrait of Ataturk, the founding father of the Turkish Republic, Bozlak welcomed remarks by the head of Turkey's National Intelligence Agency (MIT) in favor of lifting the ban on Kurdish language broadcasting.

"It's time for Turkey to abolish these taboos," Bozlak said. "We find it positive that such debate has started at the upper levels of the state. This debate will start in public as well."

Ending the ban on Kurdish language broadcasting is a key condition for Turkey to start membership talks with the European Union which last month published a document laying out ambitious economic and political changes it wants to see. Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit signalled his openness to the move, saying the National Intelligence Organization (MIT) chief had spoken with his permission.

But he may have trouble persuading at least one of his coalition partners, the hardline Nationalist Movement Party (MHP), not to mention the powerful and conservative army, which has always adamantly opposed what it sees as moves that threaten the unity and security of the Turkish state.

Army's position still unclear

Liberal academic Dogu Ergil said the intelligence chief would not have made such explicit comments without army approval; so Atasagun's remarks were significant as the first public statement of what powerbrokers in Turkey may now have accepted as an inevitable step.

"The MHP will go along with the army at the leadership level," Ergil said. "But the MHP based its political position vis-a-vis the rank and file on opposing anything Kurdish, not only the PKK. So they will have problems convincing their supporters."

The army itself may be divided on the issue, or at best it is giving mixed signals. Daily Sabah said in an unsourced report last week that the army regarded the MIT proposal as a deviation from the principle of the unity of the state.

Human Rights Minister Rustu Kazim Yucelen said last month that Turkey could launch Kurdish language broadcasts within a month if the ban is lifted -- a move that could end the dominance of the satellite channel Medya TV which echoes the views of the PKK.

Bozlak said lifting the ban would be a positive step but that Turkey still needed to take other measures to solve the Kurdish problem and create a "real democracy."

Top of his list are an end to emergency rule in the Southeast, abolition of the death penalty, an amnesty covering what he calls "political prisoners" and full acceptance of human rights in Turkey.

Bozlak says his goal is to make HADEP a mainstream party representing all kinds of people in Turkey, not just Kurds. It polled strong support in the Southeast in elections last year and holds several key mayoral offices in the region. But a 10 percent hurdle kept it out of the national Parliament.

Bozlak faces a tough battle. The party faces a state move to ban it on accusations of links with the PKK. State prosecutors have opened an investigation into accusations that HADEP's party congress last Sunday featured chanting in favor of terrorist leader Abdullah Ocalan who was sentenced to death last year for treason.

Bozlak himself spent more than six months in prison last year and like many senior members of HADEP he still has several outstanding cases against him. "These are political cases brought against us, not because we have committed any crime," Bozlak said.

"Turkey should not try to make its way forward by silencing its citizens ... As soon as Turkey becomes a real democracy such cases will not be a concern."

Ocalan's fate key for Kurds

HADEP denies links with the PKK, which itself has renounced the armed struggle since Ocalan called for a change of tactics from his prison cell last year.

Turkey holds Ocalan responsible for a 16-year campaign of violence in which some 30,000 people died.

Violence has dropped sharply since the ceasefire, and Bozlak said Turkey should take advantage of the calmer situation to end emergency rule in four southeastern provinces which are still controlled by an all-powerful governor appointed by Ankara. "The ceasefire has prepared an important foundation for peace. And Turkey has made its choice to enter the EU. Both of those have made a positive contribution, but Turkey should move fast in this positive environment and take into account the will of the general population," Bozlak said.

The European Court of Human Rights is currently hearing an appeal against Ocalan's death sentence.

Turkey has effectively had a moratorium on the death penalty since 1984 and the government is aware that executing him would end any hopes Turkey has of joining the EU in the near future. Even Atasagun has said it would be against Turkey's interests to hang Ocalan.

Still, feelings run strong when it comes to "Apo." "I am opposed to the death penalty... with just one exception, and that's Abdullah Ocalan," said Can Ozbay, a lawyer representing an association called "Mothers of Martyrs" which groups relatives of Turkish soldiers killed by the PKK.

"All Turks are against the death penalty and want it to be scrapped -- with the exception of Abdullah Ocalan," he said. "How can the murderer of 30,000 people be forgiven?" he concluded.

* * * * *

PUK resumes assaults

Kurdish Observer 06 December 2000

Clashes have once again begun following two months of silence in South Kurdistan [Iraqi Kurdistan]. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) failed to heed calls for peace and continued military preparations following the cessation of clashes on October 4, and once again began assaults against PKK forces the other evening.

According to news received from the region, the PUK peshmergas are being directed by Turkish military officers in the region. Additionally, the main headquarters of the People's Defense Forces made a statement concerning the activities being carried out with air support, and said that the PUK's assaults began the other evening about 23:00 in the regions of Boti and Kani Cenge. The PUK positioned a 4,000-man group of peshmergas along the Kani Cenge line, and was forced to withdraw after continuous clashes at about 6:30 in the morning after suffering heavy losses.

The people must take action

The main headquarters called on the people to not remain silent against the PUK assaults, and said it was time for all the Kurdish people, especially those in the Soran region, to take a definite stance against the PUK.

According to information received, five guerrillas lost their lives in the clashes, while the bodies of 10 PUK peshmergas are in the hands of the guerrillas.

Additionally, 6 peshmergas were captured and eight Kalashnikov rifles, one B-7 rocket, and one pistol were seized by the guerrillas. The People's Defense Forces statement also said that a helicopter belonging to a country which has not been determined continually toured over the battle field while the clashes were continuing and that the assaults were directed from this helicopter.

The main headquarters of the People's Defense Forces also indicated the role of the Turkish state in these latest clashes. The statement recalled that a 70-person Turkish military delegation had scouted out the area and made pre-

parations prior to the assault and that 20 TIR trucks loaded with weapons and ammunition had been delivered to PUK officials in Suleymaniya a few days ago.

'The deception tactic did not work'

The statement from main headquarters said, "In order to cover up preparations for this last assault, Talabani invited a delegation from the KNK (Kurdistan National Congress) to Suleymaniya, employing a tactic of deception, and thus aimed at catching the PKK forces unprepared. But, just like before, he met with disappointment," sending the message that the PUK will be given the necessary lesson if it continues its current stance. Shipments continuing

Turkish military units have been sending soldiers to South Kurdistan, according to information we have obtained from local sources, Local sources call attention to the delivery of 14 trucks of heavy weapons and 10 vehicles carrying soldiers, and said that the transport was carried out in the evening in order to not draw reaction from the people. The shipments have been sent from the Semdinli district of Hakkari to Suleymaniya in South Kurdistan.

Meanwhile, it has been learned that the Turkish military has amassed a great number of troops along the border with South Kurdistan and that many people from border villages have been detained.

The cease fire was abused

A de facto cease fire to the assaults that began on September 14, 2000 against guerrillas positioned in the Karadag region near Suleymaniya and carrying out front work had been secured with initiatives of the Kurdish intellectuals. The PUK used this cease fire, however, to prepare the base for further assaults.

During this period, the PUK has continued its relations with Ankara and Tehran to wage war against the PKK, while it received weapons and ammunition in recent days from Turkey.

'Peace with PKK, never!'

Last September, while clashes were continuing,, PUK Politburo member Mele Baxtiyar, speaking on peace among the Kurds, had said that they could observe a cease fire with the PKK but that they would never make peace. In a statement made on PUK television, Baxtiyar said that their entire efforts were aimed at getting the PKK out of the region.

PUK Ankara representative Shazad Said, meanwhile, said that they had given their word to Turkey that they would not allow the PKK in the region. Warning to those behind the attacks

PKK Council of Leaders member Duran Kalkan delivered the news that the PUK forces had begun assault when speaking on the "Gundem" program on MEDYA-TV the other evening.

Kalkan sent the message that they were determined to continue their peaceful stance and called on the PUK to "not become a part of the initiatives of foreign forces towards the region."

"We will undoubtedly use our right to self-defense against such an assault," Kalkan said, continuing, "The PUK has become a pawn of the international conspiracy to liquidate the PKK. A 70-person Turkish military delegation carried out scouting activities together with PUK forces throughout all the Southern regions, in the rural areas around Ramya and Kaladize, and took photographs. We have also obtained information that other military forces are present."

Warning to Iran and Turkey

Kalkan called attention to the roles that Iran and Turkey had played in the PUK's assaults, and issued the following warning to both countries: "If Turkey wants to secure gains from such conflicts, it is mistaken. It absolutely must stay far from such initiatives. And if Iran is going to stand behind the PUK and have them attack us, this will be to its own detriment. They must stay far from such things."

Kalkan said that Talabani's acceptance of the delegation from the KNK could also be evaluated as a part of the pre-

parations for assault, and continued: "We are asking, what happened during this period so that the delegation which was brought all the way to Tehran could not be brought to Suleymaniya? What relations occurred during this period, what type of decisions did the PUK make, with whom did it meet? The answers to these questions must be found."

Call from the PKK

Kalkan said that everyone must do their part to obstruct these developments which would be to the harm of the Kurdish people and stressed the following: "We are calling on the Kurdish people, the democratic forces in Turkey, and the international democratic forces to be sensitive. We are calling on Kurdish intellectuals and the national democratic forces to take a stand against such initiatives as these that will harm the Kurdish people and to increase their efforts to find a solution through peace and democratic cooperation. As a party, we will be on your side in all these initiatives."

The assault is related to Turkey

Kalkan said that the situation in South Kurdistan was related to the recent debates in Turkey, and continued: "Those who could not tolerate the developments which have occurred for a democratic solution to the Kurdish question and general democratization, those who have been pressed by this, and circles which cannot democratize themselves may develop sabotaging initiatives. Everyone must be alert to this."

Kalkan noted that the PUK was also among those circles which viewed democratic development as contrary to their own existence.

* * * * *

Turkish military says PKK is still "significant threat"

7 Dec 2000 Agence France-Presse

ANKARA, Dec 7 (AFP) - Turkey's powerful army has said that the rebel Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is still a threat for the country despite its peace bids and warned against politicization efforts by the guerrillas. "There are some 4,500 terrorists left and they continue to constitute a significant threat even though most of them are abroad," a general staff report said, according to the Anatolia news agency.

"The Turkish armed forces are determined to continue the struggle until this threat is eradicated, that is, until the last terrorist is rendered ineffective," the report added. In September 1999, the rebels said they were halting the armed campaign and retreating from Turkey to seek a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish conflict upon peace calls from condemned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan.

Ankara says that rebels who left Turkey are now based in northern Iraq, an area outside Baghdad's control since the 1991 Gulf War that the PKK has used as a springboard for attacks on Turkey. The army said the PKK still entertained separatist ambitions and kept its troops as a "trump card" against Turkey despite its peace bid, which was a cover-up for its goal to convert into a political organization.

"In its (politicization) efforts, the PKK uses slogans highlighting ethnic identity, education and broadcasts in Kurdish and a need to strengthen local administrations," the report said. Turkey's accession process to the European Union had encouraged the rebels to seek a new platform for themselves within the country's drive for democratic reforms, it added. The public had serious doubts that some EU countries provided direct or indirect support to the PKK, the report said without elaborating.

The army, however, acknowledged that the PKK was less active this year when compared to the past. The number of PKK attacks dropped to 45 from 3,298 in 1994. They claimed the lives of 15 civilians and 29 troops, while 1,479 civilians and 1,145 troops were killed in 1994. Around 36,500 people have been killed since the PKK took up arms in 1984 for self-rule in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeast.

* * * * *

PUK Communiqué on the fighting with the PKK

'Kurdistani Nuwe' web site, Al-Sulaymaniyah, daily newspaper in Sorani
Kurdish published by Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, 5 December 2000

[Communique: Communique by the general command of Kurdistan Peshmarga forces]

As it has been clear for all the faithful [people] of the Kurdish nation, and on the basis of the testimonies of the political parties of Turkish and Iranian Kurdistan and most of the Syrian and Iraqi Kurdish political parties, the PKK [Kurdistan Workers Party] leadership has imposed an unfair fighting on the PUK [Patriotic Union of Kurdistan] and the [PUK-led] Kurdistan regional government. This unfair fighting has broken out following orders by the PKK defeated and kneeled down leader Abdallah Ocalan.

According to the testimonies of tens of Kurdish cadres from Turkey and Syria who left the ranks of the PKK, [protesting] against PKK's aggressive policies, the PKK Leadership Council insists to continue its dirty fighting with the intention of imposing itself on the Kurdistan regional government and occupying, as much as possible, of the Iraqi Kurdistan liberated territories. This criminal policy is [executed] by the PKK leadership and by orders from occupiers of Kurdistan, with their veiled and unveiled assistance.

Dear Kurdish sisters and brothers patriots!*

The PUK was patient for a long time, hoping that the efforts [of mediation] which were exerted by friendly parties to both sides, the Kurdistan Toilers' Party and Kurdistan Democratic Socialist Party, would succeed and that the PKK leadership would abandon its criminal policies, aggression and provocation. But, unfortunately, according to both political parties, these efforts and attempts were useless, because the PKK leadership was not ready to implement the agreements and meet its promise of retreating [its forces].

This means continuation in its attacks and provocation. Recently, it has gathered all its forces [which were positioned] in Khirenah, Shaykh Sharo, Shaykh Aysh and Kharpap, and deployed them in Qandil foothills. In the past

days, and with the assistance and cooperation of the Iraqi government and the leadership of the KDP [Kurdistan Democratic Party], it has transferred more than 250 gunmen from [its forces based] in Makhmur [under the Iraqi government control] to Zar Gale, with the intention of attacking Kewa Rash and Raniyah.

These provocation and criminal policies by the PKK leadership have once again led to the imposition of fighting on the PUK forces and the Kurdistan regional government, which, on its own liberated territory, protect the achievements of the [1991] uprising and our people's new revolution.

By imposing this unfair fighting, which is [led under the] orders from the defeated and collapsed Abdallah Ocalan, the PKK leadership commits the greatest and dirtiest national betrayal in the Kurdish political history. It is a betrayal, which has no example in the history of the people of Kurdistan. It is the betrayal of opposing liberated and federal Kurdistan with the assistance of the occupiers of Kurdistan, after having kneeled down before the government of its own country.

This is why all the Kurdish patriots should be keen on the liberation of Kurdistan, and condemn the new crime of Ocalan's leadership.

It is certain that the PUK, with the support of all the faithful [sides] to Kurds and Kurdistan, will confront, albeit forced, this attack by Ocalanists, in order to foil the dirty intention of the occupiers of Kurdistan, which Ocalan has now become the instrument in their hands. This is why, we appeal upon all the PKK sisters and brothers armed people not to shed their blood for the sake of the occupiers' dirty plans, and to join, as soon as possible, these tens of conscientious PKK cadres, who understood the dirty intention very early, and have joined the arms of the Kurdistan people.

[Signed] General command of Kurdistan Peshmarga forces, 4th December 2000

KDP denial

Source: 'Brayati', 5 December 2000, published by the KDP

The Kurdistan Democratic Party [KDP] has issued a clarification regarding a statement by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] forces command on 4th December. The following is the text of the clarification:

The PUK forces command issued on 4th December a military communique on the resumption of its military operations against the forces and military positions of the Kurdistan Workers' Party [PKK] in Nawdasht area, Rawanduz

and Qala Diza sectors.

The PUK military communique accused the KDP of supporting the PKK in the fresh confrontations between the two sides.

The KDP would like to state the following to the public:

1. The PUK military command's accusation of [the KDP] helping the PKK is a false and unjust accusation. It is also completely devoid of truth and is not corroborated by any material evidence. The PUK leadership is well aware

that if the KDP had exploited the PKK's conflict with the PUK for its purely selfish reasons - as the PUK leadership did throughout the last decade when it provided shelter for, supported and encouraged the PKK gangs to fight the KDP, the masses and the Iraqi Kurdistan people's experience - the balance of power would have changed completely in a way adverse to the PUK's interest. However, the KDP does not fish in murky waters, as it [the PUK] has been and is doing. The KDP does not want to rejoice at the misfortune of either of the two warring sides, but in order to confirm a historical fact to the coming generations, we would say that the PUK leadership in its current bloody conflict with the PKK is only paying for its fatal political mistakes and it is reaping what it had sown.

2. The PUK's new accusation is nothing but a desperate attempt to divert attention and cover up the series of military setbacks and defeats against the PKK forces, which began last September when the PKK forces gained control over large areas in Raniyah and Qala Diza, and as a way out and to cover up its defeat if it failed to regain the areas it had lost in previous battles.

3. The KDP has bravely made clear its stance vis-a-vis the PKK, as a movement that is alien to the main body of the Kurdistan people's

national liberation movement. It has practised terrorism against the sons of the people of Kurdistan, has forced its involvement in the affairs of Iraqi Kurdistan and inflicted the worst damage to the reputation of our people's humanitarian and democratic movement and to their democratic experience in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The KDP has been confronting the PKK's violations since 1992, and it has exposed its aims and dubious and destructive policies. Meanwhile, the PUK leadership and its spiritual mentors were singing the praises of PKK's victories against the masses of innocent people and boasting about their ties and excellent relations with Ocalan's national leadership. This stance of the KDP vis-a-vis the PKK has not changed. It [KDP] still believes that its [PKK's] presence and activities in Iraqi Kurdistan constitute a threat to the region's security and stability.

4. The PUK's false allegations and accusations against the KDP have become common place; the latest of which being the KDP's support to the PKK in the current confrontation. In order for the Kurdish public to learn the truth, the KDP demands the setting up of a fact-finding committee composed of Kurdistan parties based areas controlled by each and for the outcome of its [the committee's] investigation to be made public so that our people would learn the truth behind the PUK's false accusations.

[Signed] Official spokesman for the KDP

mardi 5 décembre 2000, 10h37

L'Irak a repris le pompage de brut à Ceyhan mais pas les exportations



ANKARA, 5 déc (AFP) - L'Irak a repris vendredi dernier le pompage de brut vers le port turc de Ceyhan (sud de la Turquie) afin de remplir ses réservoirs, au lendemain de l'arrêt de ses exportations via ce terminal, mais sans reprendre pour autant celles-ci, a indiqué mardi à l'AFP une porte-parole de la compagnie pétrolière publique turque Botas.

"L'Irak a recommencé à pomper du pétrole à Ceyhan vendredi à 23H00 locales (21H00 GMT) après une interruption de 23 heures, uniquement pour remplir les réservoirs et non pour l'exporter", a-t-elle dit.

Le brut irakien coule dans les réservoirs au rythme de 380.000 à 530.000 barils par jour, contre près d'un million de barils par jour en "temps normal", a-t-elle ajouté.

L'Irak avait arrêté jeudi dernier ses exportations de pétrole via le terminal de Ceyhan et celui irakien de Mina Al-Bakr, réalisées dans le cadre du programme "pétrole contre nourriture" des Nations unies, qui autorise l'Irak à exporter du brut pour se procurer des biens de première nécessité sous strict contrôle de l'ONU.

L'Irak et l'ONU sont en désaccord sur le mécanisme de fixation des prix du pétrole à adopter à partir du 1er décembre. Bagdad a demandé à ses clients de verser 50 cents de plus que le cours officiel sur chaque baril de pétrole, à partir du 1er décembre, sur un compte non contrôlé par l'ONU, les avertissant qu'ils perdraient leurs contrats en cas de refus.

IMF Team in Crisis-Hit Turkey

Officials to Discuss an Emergency Loan to Restore Confidence

Reuters

ANKARA — Turkey's central bank governor has said that authorities were determined to "cool off the fireball" that has ripped through local financial markets as an IMF team arrived in Ankara on Sunday to discuss emergency measures to shore up the economy.

In Washington, the managing director of the International Monetary Fund, Horst Koehler, said that Turkey had made significant progress in its economic stabilization and reform program and that he wanted to strengthen market confidence in Turkey.

Mr. Koehler said he hoped talks that were to begin in Ankara on Sunday evening could be completed expeditiously so the IMF could move forward with a loan to help calm a crisis that was triggered two weeks ago by fears about criminal inquiries into some of 10 banks that are in receivership.

The stock market has fallen nearly 40 percent in two weeks and key interest rates have soared to more than 1,000 percent as the probe raised fears of a banking system crisis.

The IMF Turkey desk chief, Carlo Cottarelli, arrived in Ankara with a team of economists who will meet with Turkish officials this week to discuss emergency funding to restore confidence.

The central bank governor, Gazi Ercel, said in a newspaper interview on Sunday that Turkey had \$18.8 billion in reserves to deal with what he called "a speculative attack" on the country, and said he expected the crisis to end soon.

"I think we will overcome this in the coming week," Mr. Ercel said in the interview with Cumhuriyet newspaper. "We are trying to cool off the fireball."

"We have reserves of \$18.8 billion. All of this can be used. Some say that only a small part of these reserves could be used but that is wrong," he said. "I do not include our gold reserves in this. There is the gold reserve of \$1 billion."

Bankers say that the central bank has sold about \$6 billion since the start of the crisis amid soaring demand for dollars by foreign investors who have largely pulled out of Turkey.

The latest official figures, released on Thursday, showed reserves fell \$2.85 billion to \$21.58 billion by Nov. 24, three days after the bank began emergency funding to handle a cash crunch.

The IMF has vowed to put Turkey on fast-track status for emergency loans worth an estimated \$4 billion.

Mr. Koehler said he hoped the IMF could make a decision on a loan package at its scheduled board meeting on Dec. 21.

The Treasury undersecretary, Selcuk Demiralp, said the central bank had done

The stock market has fallen nearly 40 percent, and interest rates have soared to more than 1,000 percent.

everything possible to ease the liquidity crisis, but was bound by strict criteria under an existing \$4 billion IMF-backed disinflation plan.

On Thursday, the central bank ended emergency funding auctions which had violated the terms of the IMF plan.

That triggered a sharp rise in interest rates, but economists said it was a signal that Turkey had secured commitments from the IMF.

"The IMF naturally will get involved in the crisis because this is a matter of prestige for them as well as for us," Mr. Demiralp was quoted as saying in Sabah newspaper.

"The IMF's contribution will both refresh confidence in the economic program and create liquidity through additional funding," Mr. Demiralp said. "We will determine the dimensions and amount of the support after negotiations in Ankara," he said.

Economists said the IMF could deliver \$2 billion to \$4 billion in extra loans via a supplemental reserve facility — a short-term, higher interest loan designed to deal with emergency needs.

On Friday, tens of thousands of Turks staged strikes and protests against unemployment, low wages and social security cuts for which they blame the IMF.

Under the IMF's plan, Turkey aims to cut inflation from about 44 percent to single digits by the end of 2002.

The State Statistics Institute said Sunday that consumer-price inflation rose 3.7 percent in November for an annual figure of 43.8 percent, down from 44.4 percent in October.

Wholesale prices rose 2.4 percent in November, down from 2.8 percent in October, for an annual figure of 39.1 percent, down from 41.4 percent in October.

■ Hackers Erase Web Site

Two Turkish hackers erased the Web site of the Turkish prime minister's office on Sunday to protest government plans for a limited pay raise to public employees, Agence France-Presse reported.

"This Web page has been destroyed," read a message left by the hackers on the site for the office of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit.

It added that the raid was carried out to protest the 10 percent raise the government promised to public employees for the first half of 2001 under a tight anti-inflation program.

"The hackers themselves are the children of civil servants," the message said.

Trade unions say the planned raise is not sufficient and will push workers into further economic hardship, while the government says it will not let employees suffer and will make extra funds available if inflation in the second half of next year rises above the targeted level.

L'Irak a cessé ses exportations de pétrole

NEW YORK (Nations unies). L'Irak a cessé ses exportations de pétrole via le terminal turc de Ceyhan (sud) et le port irakien de Mina el Bakr, sur le Golfe, a indiqué, vendredi 1^{er} décembre, le porte-parole de l'ONU, Fred Eckhard. L'Irak et l'ONU sont en désaccord sur une nouvelle formule de prix pour décembre. Bagdad exporte actuellement 2,3 millions de barils par jour, sous strict contrôle de l'ONU, pour acheter des biens de première nécessité. Il a accusé vendredi le Comité des sanctions de l'ONU d'entraver ses exportations de brut, en rejetant la

nouvelle formule de prix proposée par Bagdad pour le mois de décembre. Les Etats-Unis, a déclaré le porte-parole de la Maison Blanche, Jake Siewert, sont prêts à « faire face a toute éventualité » et au besoin à puiser dans leurs réserves pétrolières stratégiques à la suite de la décision de l'Irak. Le secrétaire américain à l'énergie, Bill Richardson, avait indiqué jeudi que plusieurs pays exportateurs du Moyen-Orient s'étaient engagés à compenser toute pénurie résultant de l'arrêt des exportations pétrolières irakiennes. — (AFP)

4 Kurdes condamnés pour l'occupation du consulat de Grèce à Francfort

FRANCFORT (Allemagne), 4 déc (AFP) - 16h32 - Quatre Turcs d'origine kurde ont été condamnés lundi à des peines allant jusqu'à 2 ans et 4 mois de prison pour l'occupation du consulat de Grèce à Francfort, au moment de la capture d'Abdullah Ocalan en février 1999.

Le tribunal de Francfort (ouest) a reconnu les quatre Kurdes, âgés de 26 à 38 ans, coupables de trouble à l'ordre public et de dégradation de matériel.

Le consulat général de Grèce à Francfort avait été investi le 16 février 1999 par une trentaine de manifestants kurdes après la capture du chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan. Ce dernier, après avoir trouvé refuge à l'ambassade de Grèce à Nairobi, avait été remis aux autorités kenyanes, puis capturé par les forces spéciales turques.

Plusieurs centaines de manifestants kurdes avaient à l'époque occupé en signe de protestation les représentations diplomatiques grecques dans différentes villes d'Allemagne, dont l'ambassade à Bonn et les consulats de Stuttgart, Hanovre, Bonn, Leipzig, Hambourg et Duesseldorf.

A Francfort, la police avait dû intervenir avec des canons à eau et des matraques contre les manifestants qui s'en étaient pris à des voitures aux abords du consulat grec, avant d'investir le bâtiment. Plusieurs personnes avaient été blessées, dans les rangs des manifestants et des policiers.

Kurdish rebel leader Ocalan has model prison conditions: report

AFP 7 Dec 2000

STRASBOURG, Dec 7 (AFP) - 14h38 - Rebel Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan lives in model prison conditions in Turkey, but other inmates have been subjected to torture, a Council of Europe report approved by Ankara said on Thursday.

According to the report by the council's committee against torture (CPT), Ocalan is kept in a cell measuring 13 square meters (140 square feet), which features natural lighting, air conditioning, a shower and basic furnishings which are all "of very high quality."

Ocalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), was sentenced to death in June 1999 for treason and separatism under the terms of a Turkish law covering "terrorist" acts.

The report, based on a visit by CPT members to Turkish prisons between February 23 and March 3, 1999, was published with the Turkish government's accord under rules of the Strasbourg-based council. It also noted several cases of torture and mistreatment of prisoners by anti-terrorist police units in Istanbul and Izmir, in western Turkey, which included electroshocks, beatings, and "Palestinian hangings," or suspension by the arms.

In the most serious case, union leader Suleyman Yeter was tortured to death between March 5-7, 1999 in Istanbul, just two days after the committee left the country. Three policemen suspected in the killing are being prosecuted, the Turkish government said. Ocalan's detention regime is markedly different, according to the report. Though prevented from having contact with other inmates, Ocalan has four doctors monitoring his health, a primary care physician, a cardiologist, a specialist in internal medicine, and a psychiatrist. He listens to Turkish radio and receives books, periodicals, and daily newspapers.

Comments by the Turkish government which accompany the report stress that the PKK leader can read all the material provided during regular visits by his lawyers, his brother and two sisters.

They also say that Ocalan is protected from the negative effects of isolation by personnel trained in human relations who "have daily conversations, at specific times, with the detainee."

He also has access to an exercise yard which measures 45 square meters, while "dangerous criminals" in certain Finnish, German, and Norwegian jails are restricted to smaller spaces, the Turkish government noted.

* * * * *

Les banques turques fragiles, voire passibles de corruption



5 décembre 2000

ANKARA, 5 déc (AFP) - Un système bancaire fragile, frappé récemment par d'incroyables scandales de corruption, est le noeud du problème de la crise financière que traverse la Turquie, rappelant l'urgence d'un assainissement réclamé à grands cris par le Fonds monétaire international (FMI).

Ce système est au bord d'une transition douloureuse au terme de l'accord conclu par la Turquie avec le FMI en décembre 1999, qui a vu le lancement d'un programme serré de lutte contre l'inflation.

La Banque centrale avait alors décidé d'ancrer la livre turque sur un panier monétaire et de procéder à une dévaluation progressive sur 18 mois pour réduire les risques d'une dévaluation sauvage, et de réduire ses injections.

La nouvelle politique a donné des fruits puisque l'inflation a diminué, à 44% en glissement annuel en novembre contre 69% en 1999, sans atteindre les 25% espérés par le gouvernement mais loin des 100% et plus du milieu des années 90.

Quant aux taux d'intérêt, ils avaient été ramenés de 100% en début d'année à 30% en juin, avant de flamber avec la crise.

Or, les très nombreuses banques turques (81) ont largement profité pendant des années de ce contexte d'inflation très élevée alimenté par un déficit budgétaire considérable.

Les banques ont négligé les opérations commerciales pour acheter des bons du Trésor à haut rendement, véritables vache à lait. Selon un expert bancaire, sur le total de leur bilan, soit quelque 135 mds USD, un tiers environ provient de ces bons et un autre tiers des crédits.

Les intérêts perçus sur les titres de l'Etat et les bénéfices des opérations d'arbitrage leur ont assuré le retour sur fonds propres le plus élevé de tous les pays de l'OCDE, soit 52%, contre 20% aux Etats-Unis ou 19% en Grande-Bretagne.

Mais le programme anti-inflation a sapé cette rentabilité, alors que seules les grandes banques étaient préparées au changement.

Bon nombre d'instituts ont sombré: 10 banques en faillite sont passées sous le contrôle de l'Etat et leur recapitalisation devrait exiger près de 10 mds USD, soit 5% du Produit intérieur brut.

Et dans quelles conditions! Le propriétaire d'Egebank, Yahya Murat Demirel, neveu de l'ex-président Suleyman Demirel, a atterri en prison après avoir été filmé par les caméras de surveillance de sa banque en train de vider les coffres. Il est accusé d'avoir retiré 5 millions de dollars deux jours avant qu'Egebank ne passe sous contrôle de l'Etat.

L'Agence de supervision bancaire, dirigée par l'ancien ministre des Finances Zekeriya Temizel, poursuit une "opération mains propres" dans le secteur, et le gouvernement, ses privatisations, qui doivent prochainement toucher 3 banques.

Le déclencheur de la crise a été les difficultés d'une des banques, la Demirbank, qui détenait relativement à ses actifs le plus de titres d'Etat. Pour faire face à ses besoins de liquidités, elle s'est mise à les vendre massivement, faisant monter les taux d'intérêt.

A ce signal d'alarme, les investisseurs ont fui, aggravant la crise de liquidités que la Banque centrale a tenté de freiner en injectant 6 mds USD en six jours.

Mais au-delà de cet incident, le FMI s'était déjà inquiété du niveau inquiétant d'endettement des banques turques en devises étrangères par rapport à leurs actifs --puisqu'elles trouvaient plus rentable de s'endetter en dollars pour acheter en livres turques des bons du Trésor.

La Banque centrale a fini par rappeler les banques à l'ordre, créant une demande très forte d'achat de dollars de leur part, ce qui a aussi malmené les taux d'intérêt.

Les Quinze et la Turquie s'accordent sur un « partenariat d'adhésion »

Les susceptibilités d'Ankara ont été ménagées

BRUXELLES

de notre bureau européen

Les Quinze se sont mis d'accord sur une formule de « partenariat d'adhésion » avec la Turquie et celle-ci convient aux autorités d'Ankara comme à celles d'Athènes : tel est le résultat essentiel de la réunion, lundi 4 décembre, des ministres européens des affaires étrangères. En ce qui concerne l'ensemble de la stratégie d'élargissement de l'Union, les ministres se sont bornés à confirmer les conclusions du « document stratégique » adopté, le mois dernier, par la Commission européenne. Sur ce point, Hubert Védrine a rappelé qu'il est souhaitable d'accélérer le processus de négociations avec les douze pays candidats, conformément au cadre « ambitieux et réaliste » proposé par Günter Verheugen, le commissaire européen chargé de l'élargissement.

En clair, l'Union rappelle qu'elle est prête à accueillir les premiers candidats « à partir de la fin de 2002 », ce qui ne signifie pas grand-chose. Les « Treize », qui seront présents, jeudi 7 décembre, à Nice, lors de la première journée du sommet européen, ne se font d'ailleurs aucune illusion : la stratégie d'élargissement de l'Union y sera bien évoquée, mais en dépit des souhaits des pays candidats, il n'est pas question pour les Quinze de fixer la moindre date de fin des négociations. Celle du 1^{er} janvier 2003 ne sera, à l'évidence, pas respectée et, compte tenu des délais de ratification, il est probable que les premiers élus n'intégreront pas l'UE avant 2005.

ASSURANCES GRECQUES

Un pas important vient cependant d'être franchi avec la Turquie, qui n'allait pas de soi tant les relations entre Ankara et les Quinze s'étaient durcies ces dernières semaines. La Commission, en particulier, avait inclus la solution au problème de Chypre (divisée entre Turcs et Grecs) parmi les critères politiques qu'Ankara devait respecter

pour pouvoir prétendre accéder au plein statut de pays candidat à l'Union. Les Turcs s'étaient dits « trahis » par une telle exigence, qu'ils considéraient comme contraire aux conclusions du sommet d'Helsinki, en décembre 1999, lequel, en effet, n'a pas établi de lien direct entre la démarche d'adhésion et la résolution du problème chypriote ainsi que celui concernant la souveraineté d'une poignée d'îlots en mer Egée.

La solution trouvée par les Quinze – dont Ismaël Cem, le ministre turc des affaires étrangères, s'est félicité, lundi, qu'elle prenne en compte les « opinions » et les « sensibilités » turques à propos de Chypre et de la mer Egée – est, comme l'a souligné Hubert Védrine, un exemple de « marquerie » diplomatique. « En accord avec les conclusions d'Helsinki, et dans le contexte du dialogue politique » (avec Athènes), l'Union européenne déclare soutenir fermement les efforts du secrétaire général des Nations unies pour parvenir à un « règlement pacifique » du différend sur Chypre. Ce même « dialogue politique » est invoqué s'agissant des « disputes de frontière », ce qui vise le conflit en mer Egée. M. Védrine a indiqué avoir obtenu dimanche des assurances de Georges Papandréou, le ministre grec des affaires étrangères, et a précisé que les Quinze, « donc la Grèce », considéraient qu'il s'agit d'un « bon accord ».

Athènes avait insisté jusque-là pour qu'un lien explicite soit établi entre la question chypriote et les critères politiques qu'Ankara doit remplir pour obtenir le statut de pays candidat. La décision des Quinze constitue donc une avancée pour la Turquie, mais celle-ci est relative. Dans son « document de stratégie », la Commission européenne avait souligné le très long chemin que la Turquie doit parcourir – notamment s'agissant de l'établissement de la démocratie et de l'Etat de

Un grave crise financière

Une délégation du Fonds monétaire international, arrivée d'urgence à Ankara, a entamé, lundi 4 décembre, des négociations avec les autorités du pays sur la question du versement immédiat de fonds d'assistance supplémentaires pour surmonter un manque de liquidités sur les marchés financiers. La crise a été déclenchée en partie par l'enquête ordonnée après la mise sous tutelle de dix banques en difficulté. Huit d'entre elles avaient été placées sous le contrôle de l'Etat en décembre 1999. En octobre, le Conseil de supervision des banques a demandé la saisie de deux établissements supplémentaires. Des dizaines de personnalités très en vue, et notamment le neveu de l'ancien président Süleyman Demirel, ont été arrêtées pour fraude.

La banque centrale a été contrainte de puiser dans ses réserves pour injecter quelque 6 milliards de dollars sur les marchés financiers afin de faire face à la crise de confiance qui a suscité des retraits massifs de capitaux. Les taux interbancaires ont atteint 1 300 %, lundi. – (Corresp.)

droit – avant de pouvoir rejoindre le peloton des douze pays candidats qui sont d'ores et déjà placés dans une position de pré-adhésion. Pour ne prendre que le seul chapitre du respect des droits de l'homme, le rapport soulignait : « Par rapport à l'année dernière, la situation ne s'est cependant guère améliorée et la Turquie ne remplit toujours pas les critères de Copenhague. »

Laurent Zecchini

La «question kurde» à l'Espace Renoir

Demain soir à l'Espace Renoir de Roanne, le Comité relais de France-Libertés propose une séance de projection du film iranien, *le Tableau Noir*, primé à Cannes cette année. Le film sera suivi d'une conférence sur la «question kurde» en présence de Kamuran Ji Kikan, juriste et secrétaire d'état de l'Institut kurde de Paris.

Le Progrès, 7 décembre 2000

Tableau Noir,
un film
de Samira
Makhmalbaf
qui mêle poésie,
humanité
et réalisme.



LE *TABLEAU NOIR* est un film qui mêle poésie, humanité et réalisme. Rien que pour ça, le long métrage de Samira Makhmalbaf, une jeune cinéaste iranienne âgée de 20 ans, vaut le détour. Pour se rendre compte de cela, les premières minutes suffisent. Le décor tout d'abord, un cadre somptueux, en territoire iranien. Quelques instituteurs voquent de villages en villages, un tableau noir sur le dos, alors qu'un nouveau bombardement se termine. Un tableau noir qui fait quasiment office de personnage principal. Le tableau noir est l'un de ceux que l'on peut trouver au mur de n'importe quelle salle de classe d'un pays occidental. Mais là, en Iran, dans la partie que les Kurdes aiment appeler le Kurdistan iranien, ce sont les

instituteurs qui cherchent les élèves, qui cherchent à donner des repères à ces jeunes et à les faire accéder à la culture d'un peuple opprimé.

Problèmes d'identité pour un peuple sans état

Suite à la projection de ce film magnifique qui fut primé à Cannes cette année, le secrétaire d'état de l'Institut kurde de Paris, Kamuran Ji Kikan, tentera d'expliquer les problèmes que rencontre le peuple kurde.

Les problèmes d'identité pour un peuple qui n'a pas d'état. « En effet, on considère qu'il existe un Kurdistan iranien, un Kurdistan irakien, un Kurdistan turque et un Kurdistan syrien... Mais pas de Kurdistan kurde ! » confirme

Madeleine Jayol, la coordinatrice départementale du Comité relais de la Loire de France-Libertés. « Les Kurdes forment un peuple opprimé dans leur liberté d'expression et d'association et notamment par la Turquie, un état qui revendique sa place dans l'Union européenne. En Iran, également, il est porté atteinte à leur identité culturelle. En Irak, Bagdad a eu recours aux armes chimiques contre le peuple kurde à la fin de la guerre d'Iran en 1988 », poursuit Madeleine Jayol.

Le Comité relais de la Loire de France-Libertés invite à découvrir ce peuple, et les problèmes qui entourent la «question kurde», lors d'une soirée spéciale demain soir à l'Espace Renoir.

E. GR

Le Pays Roannais, 7 décembre 2000

ESPACE RENOIR

La question kurde

A l'occasion du film iranien

« Le tableau noir »



Le beau film de la jeune Iranienne Samira Makhamalbaf est projeté à l'Espace Renoir du 6 au 20 décembre. « Le tableau noir » est un conte symbolique tourne dans les montagnes du Kurdistan aux confins de l'Iran et de l'Irak. Courageusement, la jeune réalisatrice y évoque les problèmes ethniques, linguistiques et culturels des minorités nationales dans la région, notamment des Kurdes.

Le comité-relais France Libertés de la Loire organise, le 8 décembre, une soirée spéciale où, à l'issue de la projection, une conférence-débat aura lieu, animée par le secrétaire de l'Institut kurde de Paris, M. Kamuran Ji Kikan, qui a accepté de venir à Roanne pour parler de la situation du peuple kurde aujourd'hui.

Les Kurdes sont en effet un peuple sans Etat, implanté dans cinq pays différents. Il y a un Kurdistan de Turquie, un Kurdistan d'Iran, un Kurdistan d'Irak, un Kurdistan de Syrie, mais il n'y a pas de Kurdistan... Kurde. Les Kurdes aspirent depuis le XIX^e siècle au statut de nation reconnue, voire d'Etat indépendant dont la perspective leur avait été offerte par le traité de Sévres (août 1920) qui clôturait la Première Guerre mondiale mais qui ne fut jamais appliqué, la Turquie s'y étant toujours opposée.

Pire que cela, depuis cette date la Turquie nie l'existence même des Kurdes. Elle les opprime dans leur liberté d'expression, d'association ; elle interdit l'enseignement de leur

langue, pratique emprisonnement et torture à leur égard. En Iran également, il est porte atteinte à leur identité culturelle. En Irak, Bagdad a eu recours aux armes chimiques contre les Kurdes à la fin de la guerre contre l'Iran en 1988.

Que fait la communauté internationale ?

Que fait l'Europe face au terrorisme d'Etat pratiqué par la Turquie contre la minorité kurde forte de 15 millions de personnes ?

L'Union européenne peut-elle accepter le principe de l'adhésion de la Turquie à la communauté des quinze ?

Ne doit-elle pas exiger une amélioration des droits de l'homme dans ce pays candidat, comme condition essentielle à son entrée dans l'Union ?

Une telle demande à l'adresse des élus politiques est l'objectif de la campagne nationale pour le respect des droits de l'homme dans la zone euro-méditerranéenne et en particulier en Turquie soutenue par France Libertés et qui se déroule du 1^{er} novembre 2000 à fin février 2001 (elle veut profiter de l'occasion offerte par la présidence française de l'Union européenne).

Le comité-relais de la Loire, qui désire sensibiliser la population locale à ce problème, vous invite à venir écouter le secrétaire de l'Institut kurde de Paris vendredi 8 décembre, à 20 h, à l'Espace Renoir, après la projection du film de Samira Makhamalbaf « Le tableau noir ».

«Grève à mort» dans les prisons turques

139 détenus politiques jeûnent pour protester contre leur transfert.

Istanbul de notre correspondant

Ils ont cessé de s'alimenter depuis le 20 octobre, et les 139 «grévistes à mort» se disent prêts à aller jusqu'au bout. Entrés hier dans leur 47^e jour de grève de la faim, ces prisonniers politiques de treize établissements veulent protester contre le plan du ministère de la Justice turc qui prévoit le transfert des détenus dans des cellules individuelles d'isolement. Selon l'Association des parents des détenus, 48 sont déjà dans une phase critique. Le mouvement de protestation avait commencé dans dix-huit établissements pénitentiaires avec la participation de 816 détenus politiques, accusés d'appartenir à des organisations d'extrême gauche, comme le Front-Parti révolutionnaire de la libération populaire (DHKP-C), le Parti communiste ouvrier de Turquie

(TKIP) et le Parti communiste de Turquie (marxiste-léniniste). Les prisonniers membres ou proches du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) ne participent pas activement à cette «grève jusqu'à la mort» mais soutiennent le mouvement par des grèves de la faim de solidarité de sept jours. Parmi les 12 000 prisonniers politiques de Turquie, trois quarts sont accusés d'appartenance au PKK. La population totale des établissements pénitentiaires atteint 68 000 personnes. Un mouvement similaire avait eu lieu en juillet 1996. Douze grévistes de la faim étaient morts, à partir du 60^e jour. C'est encore une fois la création de nouveaux types de prison conçus par le ministère de la Justice, dits de type F, qui entraîne ce mouvement. Ces centres de

détention sont formés de cellules individuelles d'isolement ou de trois personnes. Actuellement, les détenus politiques ou de droit commun vivent dans des cellules de 20 à 200 personnes. Les clans mafieux ou les groupes politiques y règnent en maître. Les autorités, qui ne contrôlent que les murs d'enceinte, affirment que les prisons sont devenues des «camps d'entraînement idéologico-politiques des organisations séparatistes et terroristes». Refusant toute négociation, elles assurent que «les grévistes de la faim sont soumis aux pressions des organisations terroristes». Les parents des détenus récusent de telles accusations. Des membres du gouvernement ont proposé une intervention des forces de l'ordre afin de transférer les grévistes à l'hôpital où ils seront nourris

48

détenus politiques, sur les 139 en grève de la faim depuis le 20 octobre, sont déjà dans une phase critique.

de force.

Les prisonniers politiques, leurs parents et les militants des droits de l'homme, ainsi que certaines personnalités du monde médical, s'opposent à ce nouveau type de prisons. Les experts estiment

que le gouvernement ne pourra pas transférer l'ensemble des prisonniers politiques dans des prisons de type F avant la proclamation d'une amnistie attendue avant la fin de l'année et destinée à diminuer la population carcérale. Les condamnés pour des délits de terrorisme ne devraient pas en bénéficier, selon le ministère de la Justice ●

RAGIP DURAN

Le PKK reste une menace "importante" qu'il faut combattre, selon l'armée



ANKARA, 7 déc (AFP) - 17h07 - La rébellion kurde de Turquie est toujours une "importante" menace pour l'unité du pays qu'il faut combattre "jusqu'à ce que le dernier terroriste soit neutralisé", indique l'armée turque dans un rapport publié jeudi.

"Il existe encore environ 4.500 terroristes, pour la plupart en dehors des frontières turques, qui représentent toujours une importante menace", précise le rapport d'évaluation pour l'année 2000 des efforts de l'armée dans sa lutte contre les Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK).

Le texte, cité par l'agence Anatolie souligne la détermination de l'armée à mener la lutte "jusqu'à ce que le dernier terroriste soit neutralisé", même si le PKK a annoncé qu'il renonçait à la lutte armée et se retirait de Turquie à partir de septembre 1999, à l'appel de son chef Abdullah Öcalan, condamné à mort en juin 1999.

Le rapport indique que le PKK, qui avait déclenché une lutte armée en 1984 pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est anatolien à majorité kurde, n'a jamais renoncé à son objectif de "diviser la Turquie".

L'armée estime que le PKK tente aujourd'hui de rentrer dans le jeu politique en défendant "soi-disant" des valeurs comme la démocratie et les droits de l'Homme, et en profitant du processus de démocratisation lancé en vue d'une adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne (UE).

"Cette situation encourage la poursuite de l'existence et des activités du PKK et nuit aux efforts de la Turquie pour en finir avec le terrorisme", souligne le document.

Le rapport exprime en outre des préoccupations concernant la création d'émissions de radio ou de télévision en kurde ou l'enseignement en kurde, demandés par l'UE à la Turquie, estimant que cela correspond à des "slogans" du PKK, laissant ainsi entendre que l'armée y est opposée.

Le vice-Premier Ministre Mesut Yılmaz s'est prononcé pour l'existence d'émissions en langue kurde alors que son partenaire de coalition, le Parti de l'action nationaliste (MHP, extrême droite), y est violemment opposé.

TURQUIE

Pour l'honneur de la presse

Un journaliste turc publie une lettre ouverte à deux célèbres rédacteurs en chef. Il les accuse de s'être prêtés à une manipulation visant deux confrères. Et leur demande de s'expliquer.

Nous, les journalistes, nous connaissons le "trou noir" qui se dissimulait derrière les aveux de Semdin Sakik [ancien bras droit du chef du PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, condamné à mort par celui-ci pour dissidence, puis capturé en Irak par l'armée turque]. Ces aveux avaient été recueillis par les renseignements spéciaux de la gendarmerie. Ils ont été transmis aux journaux par une instance supérieure de la gendarmerie, après avoir été rejetés par les tribunaux, qui estimaient que c'étaient des faux. Les bruits de couloir attribuaient la fuite à Cevik Bir (à l'époque, adjoint du chef de l'état-major), mais il était impossible de l'écrire ouvertement. Quelques journalistes, dont moi, y firent allusion. A cause de ces faux aveux, deux journalistes se sont retrou-

vés en très mauvaise posture : Mehmet Ali Birand et Cengiz Candar. Le premier a perdu son poste et le second n'a plus eu le droit d'écrire sur ce sujet. Dans ses prétendus aveux, Sakik les aurait accusés d'avoir reçu de l'argent d'"Apo" [nom de guerre d'Öcalan] pour écrire des articles favorables au PKK. Il n'y avait pas besoin d'être devin pour savoir que ce n'était pas vrai. Mais certains journaux ont néanmoins publié l'information, tout en sachant qu'il s'agissait de mensonges.

Depuis, le quotidien *Radikal* a révélé, avant même le procès de Sakik, que ces aveux ne figuraient même pas dans le dossier d'instruction de l'inculpé. Et, maintenant, nous avons de nouveaux éléments. L'état-major vient de confirmer que les faux aveux faisaient partie d'une stratégie mise au point par certains milieux des forces armées, entre autres proches du général Bir, aujourd'hui à la retraite.

Les deux journalistes qui ont été la cible des

calomnies reprises par les journaux *Hürriyet* et *Sabah* étaient employés par le quotidien... *Sabah* ! Maintenant, il est temps de demander ouvertement des comptes aux rédacteurs en chef de ces deux quotidiens, Ertugrul Özkök et Zafer Mutlu. Qui leur a fourni ces prétendus aveux ? Sous quel prétexte ? Pourquoi n'ont-ils pas cherché à vérifier ces informations, que nous savons tous être des mensonges, avant d'en faire leurs manchettes ?

Au moment de leur publication, nous avons été étonnés : le dossier d'instruction n'était pas public et, jusqu'à l'ouverture du procès, on ne pouvait transmettre son contenu à des tiers, ni le publier. Il serait donc intéressant de savoir quel type de relations a existé entre ceux qui ont fourni ces informations et ceux qui les ont publiées. Pourquoi les ont-ils publiées ? Est-ce qu'ils ont subi une pression quelconque pour le faire ?

Nous attendons des explications de la part d'Ertugrul Özkök et de Zafer Mutlu. Quelles

sont les règles déontologiques qui vous ont autorisés à publier en manchette de tels mensonges ? En publiant ces accusations graves contre vos confrères, avec lesquels vous partagez les mêmes colonnes, n'avez-vous pas songé un instant qu'ils puissent avoir des droits eux aussi ? Quand le procès a commencé, tout le monde a vu qu'il s'agissait de

faux aveux ne figurant pas dans le dossier d'instruction. Pourquoi n'avez-vous pas pensé utile de "rectifier" l'erreur ?

Je lance un appel aux deux rédacteurs en chef. C'est eux qui connaissent le mieux les arrière-pensées qui se cachent derrière la diffusion de ces informations. Qu'ils admettent leur responsabilité et révèlent les noms de

ceux qui sont derrière ce complot contre la presse ! Je lance également un appel à l'Association des Journalistes de Turquie. Qu'ils convoquent Özkök et Mutlu pour qu'ils s'expliquent devant leur pairs afin qu'on puisse dissiper l'ombre qui plane sur la profession.

Oral Cellaar, Cumhuriyet, Istanbul

Le FMI est au chevet de la Turquie en proie à une grave crise financière

La mise sous tutelle de onze établissements bancaires a provoqué une perte de confiance dans le système financier alors que la population redoute de nouvelles restrictions

ISTANBUL

de notre correspondante

La perspective d'un crédit d'urgence accordé par le Fonds monétaire international (FMI) - qui pourrait être annoncé le 6 décembre - a fait remonter la Bourse d'Istanbul. Elle a regagné 20 % mardi après avoir perdu 40 % au cours des deux dernières semaines, à la suite de la grave crise financière qui secoue le pays, en raison de la mise sous tutelle de onze établissements bancaires. Deux délégations du FMI sont arrivées dimanche dans la capitale turque. Elles ont immédiatement entamé des négociations avec les autorités, lesquelles demandent des crédits supplémentaires de l'ordre de 5 milliards de dollars pour faire face à une carence de liquidités. Le retrait soudain de capitaux, occasionné par la perte de confiance dans le système bancaire turc, avait contraint la Banque centrale à puiser dans ses réserves. Plus de 6 milliards de dollars avaient été injectés sur les marchés financiers en l'espace de quelques jours. Puis, lorsque la Banque centrale avait décidé de fermer les robinets, les taux d'intérêt à court terme avaient grimpé vertigineusement pour atteindre 1 700 % vendredi.

En décembre 1999, le FMI avait signé avec la Turquie un accord de *stand-by*, qui prévoyait le versement de 4 milliards de dollars sur une période de trois ans. Bien que la Turquie n'ait pas atteint tous les

objectifs fixés pour la fin de l'an 2000, la détermination des autorités à appliquer le programme d'austérité a, jusqu'à présent, satisfait l'organisme international. L'inflation, qui avait atteint 39,1 % pour les prix de gros à la fin du mois de novembre, est à son taux le plus bas depuis quinze ans. Une réforme profonde du secteur bancaire figurait également dans le programme. Parmi les quatre-vingts banques qui se disputent un secteur restreint, bon nombre avaient, pendant des années, vécu presque exclusivement du marché lucratif des bons du Trésor qui offrait des taux d'intérêt très élevés. Ces taux ayant chuté avec la mise en place du plan d'austérité, les banques dont les activités ne s'étaient pas suffisamment diversifiées ont été condamnées à disparaître.

PERSONNALITÉS EN VUE

La crise actuelle a été en partie déclenchée par l'enquête consécutive à la mise sous tutelle des onze banques. De nombreuses personnalités en vue, dont le neveu de l'ancien président Suleyman Demirel, sont désormais sous les verrous. L'enquête a également permis de démontrer que, dans certains cas, le gouvernement a mis des mois à réagir, alors que des rapports avaient attiré l'attention sur les malversations pratiquées. Le Conseil de supervision des banques a emprunté 6,1 milliards de dollars

au Trésor pour réhabiliter ces banques dans le but de les vendre.

L'injection d'argent frais du FMI devrait être suffisante pour mettre fin à la crise actuelle, pour autant que ces crédits soient versés rapidement. Si la tempête financière devait se poursuivre, la livre turque pourrait d'être dévaluée et le plan d'assainissement tout entier serait en danger. Le FMI est conscient du risque et a déjà annoncé qu'il agirait rapidement. « Il s'agit d'une crise de trésorerie, pas d'une crise économique », explique un banquier français à Istanbul. Reste à savoir quelles conditions seront imposées par le FMI. Si la crise actuelle n'a pas causé de panique au sein de la population, les pertes subies devront en définitive être comblées par le contribuable. Le 1^{er} décembre, des dizaines de milliers d'employés du secteur public avaient fait grève pour protester contre les limitations des hausses de salaires imposées sous l'égide du FMI. Des restrictions plus strictes encore pourraient désormais être introduites. Le FMI insistera également sur la privatisation rapide des entreprises et des banques d'Etat. Le gouvernement turc a déjà annoncé qu'il entendait accélérer la privatisation de 33,5 % de Turk Telekom. Mais surtout, pour éviter qu'une telle crise se répète, les autorités devront sérieusement faire le ménage dans le secteur bancaire.

Nicole Pope

LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR

ARTS-SPECTACLES

De notre envoyé spécial à Istanbul

La voix des Alevi

Sabahat Akkiraz est l'idole de cette communauté ésotérico-religieuse anatolienne qui vénère autant l'imam Ali que le poète Pir Sultan ou Atatürk. Elle est en concert à Paris



Petit, trapu, le *dede*, luth sous le bras, fonce vers l'estrade de la salle de cérémonie. Hommes et femmes assis en tailleur l'attendaient avec ferveur. Après un court prêche débité à une allure folle, le maître spirituel prend son *saz*, luth à long manche, et avec la même énergie enchaîne à un rythme qu'on n'ose dire d'enfer chanson sur chanson. Très vite pour les fidèles qui frappent dans leurs mains, c'est l'extase, parfois même la transe. C'est un *cem*, cérémonie rituelle des Alevi turcs, communauté ésotérico-religieuse anatolienne de quelque 20 millions d'âmes, soit un tiers de la population turque.

Karacaahmet Sultan Dergahi, dans la banlieue d'Istanbul, est l'un de leurs principaux centres culturels et culturels. Ils s'y réunissent chaque jeudi soir, eux qui ne connaissent ni mosquée ni église, pour y célébrer leur foi. Aux murs, les portraits de l'imam des chiites, Ali, du troubadour-poète du XVI^e siècle Pir Sultan brandissant son *saz* comme une arme, et du très laïque Atatürk considéré par les Alevi comme une sorte de prophète, font très vite comprendre que ces drôles de paroissiens sont adeptes d'un syncrétisme étonnant.

Cette cérémonie en forme de concert évoque à la fois les *zikr* musulmans de Syrie ou d'Égypte où sont invoqués les noms d'Allah et les églises noires de Harlem. Le frénétique *dede* a tout d'un Al Green turc pour qui la musique

est la plus belle forme de la prière. En fin de soirée, les femmes entrent dans la danse et font une ronde extatique, le *semah*, dont l'origine est clairement chamanique.

Au fond de la salle, recueillie et souriante, Sabahat Akkiraz participe au rituel. A 40 ans, cette chanteuse à la voix sublime est l'idole des Alevi. Élevée en Anatolie orientale, elle est avec sa grand-mère l'une des rares femmes à chanter dans les *cem* aux côtés du *dede*. Son répertoire est immense. Chants populaires et

mystiques alternent. Beaucoup appartiennent à la tradition orale, celle qui, depuis le XVI^e siècle, a transmis les chansons extraordinaires de Pir Sultan, ce poète rebelle vénéré par les Alevi comme un saint.

Ce soir, le *dede*, emporté par son propre chant et les réponses exaltées des fidèles, oubliera de faire chanter Sabahat. Accompagnée au *saz* par son frère, on la retrouve le lendemain chez elle, en petit comité. Délicate ambiance de salon de musique. Son chant est gai, léger. Elle ne force jamais la voix, préférant faire entendre avec la plus exacte subtilité mélodies et paroles. Parfois, sur des « airs longs » de la tradition alevi, elle s'autorise des accents plus passionnés et des variations vocales d'une grande force émotionnelle. Les *asik*, les bardes anatoliens, ont été ses maîtres. « Je chante à la fois des prières pour Ali, l'amour de l'homme et de la justice », dit-elle en ajoutant qu'une grande partie de ses chansons sont des chants de révolte.

Majoritairement de gauche, cette communauté à la gnose ésotérique, aux rites informels et au refus de se plier à toute loi islamique irrite – le terme est faible – les autorités politiques et religieuses. Les islamistes ne se privent jamais de harceler ces « musulmans » dont la soumission aux dogmes et obligations religieuses est particulièrement minimaliste.

Sabahat Akkiraz a su séduire au-delà de sa communauté. Ses quatorze disques ont eu en Turquie un immense succès. Elle est l'ambassadrice de sa religion, littéralement extraordinaire car personne n'est vraiment capable d'en définir les principes tant ils sont secrets et appartiennent aux plus vieilles croyances nomades d'Asie centrale. Sabahat Akkiraz n'est que sourire. C'est sans doute sa manière à elle de prier.

GILLES ANQUETIL

Des juristes s'élèvent contre un projet de réforme des prisons et d'amnistie



8 décembre 2000

ISTANBUL, 8 déc (AFP) - Au centre d'une grève de la faim qui dure depuis 50 jours, un projet de réforme des prisons assorti d'une loi d'amnistie amène à nouveau la Turquie au point d'ébullition, et ses opposants réunis en colloque annoncent une catastrophe humanitaire.

Cette conférence organisée par le barreau d'Istanbul rassemble jusqu'à samedi des dizaines de juristes européens et turcs autour du thème "Droits des prisonniers et systèmes pénaux", prétexte à une vive critique du projet.

"Nous allons au devant d'une catastrophe si l'Etat maintient son projet de nouvelles prisons", a expliqué à l'AFP Me Necati Ozdemir, ancien procureur, responsable de la prison de Bayrampasa (Istanbul) quand une grève de la faim y avait fait 12 victimes, en juillet 96.

Depuis 50 jours, quelque 200 détenus d'extrême-gauche observent une grève de la faim totale dans une vingtaine de prisons du pays.

Ils protestent contre le projet de nouvelles prisons, dites de type F, qui doivent bientôt entrer en service et seront faites de cellules pour 2 à 3 personnes, remplaçant le système actuel de dortoirs de 50 à 60 personnes.

"Je connais les détenus et je connais la manière de penser de l'Etat: les prisonniers vont s'opposer jusqu'au bout à ces prisons parce qu'ils pensent qu'elles vont les anéantir, et c'est ce que je pense aussi", a estimé Me Ozdemir.

Pour le ministre de la Justice, Hikmet Sami Turk, "les opposants aux prisons de type F sont les organisations terroristes qui vont perdre leur contrôle sur la population carcérale".

L'ancienne présidente de la Commission des Droits de l'Homme du Parlement turc, Sema Piskinsut, auteur de rapports très crus sur la pratique de la torture dans les commissariats et en prison, a également exprimé des doutes sur un système "plus proche des bagnes du XVIIIe siècle que des bases d'une démocratie pour le XXIe siècle".

"Les risques de pression psychologique, de lavage de cerveau, d'isolement forcé, d'impossibilité de communiquer inquiètent beaucoup", a-t-elle expliqué à l'AFP.

Plus grave encore pour Mme Piskinsut : "le personnel de l'administration pénitentiaire va demeurer, or on sait bien que le problème de violence vient de là. Quelques mois de formation ne suffiront pas à leur inculquer le respect des Droits de l'Homme".

Les intervenants du colloque sont régulièrement revenus sur la nécessité d'un profond changement des mentalités dans l'administration pénitentiaire, alors qu'il n'y a "aucun respect des droits fondamentaux dans les prisons turques", a estimé le professeur de droit Ugur Alacakaptan.

"Il faut imposer le respect des lois, de la démocratie et des Droits de l'Homme", a réclamé Necati Ozdemir.

"La Justice, pas plus que les Droits de l'Homme, ne saurait s'arrêter à la porte des prisons", a rappelé le bâtonnier de Bruxelles, Pierre Lambert, constatant que la Turquie avait "malheureusement été souvent condamnée pour tortures par la Cour Européenne des Droits de l'Homme de Strasbourg".

Autre plat de résistance de ce colloque: le projet de loi d'amnistie qui doit vider les prisons de quelque 35.000 détenus, soit la moitié de la population carcérale, et concernera les peines allant jusqu'à dix ans de prison.

Le Parlement a entamé vendredi la discussion de cette loi d'amnistie, objet d'un âpre débat depuis 18 mois entre les trois partis membres de la coalition gouvernementale, qui doit être passée d'ici à la fin de l'année.

Cette amnistie ne respecte pas le droit à la vie, a regretté M. Alacakaptan, car "certains qui ont attenté à la vie d'autrui vont être libérés, alors que vont rester en prison de simples prisonniers d'opinion".

Le sort du parti islamiste dans la balance



10 décembre 2000

ANKARA, 10 déc (AFP) - La Cour constitutionnelle turque examine mardi une demande de fermeture de l'unique parti islamiste de Turquie, 3-ème force politique de ce pays musulman, qui met en jeu la stabilité gouvernementale et les aspirations européennes d'Ankara.

Cette affaire intervient alors que la Turquie vient d'être secouée par une grave crise financière dont elle n'a pu sortir qu'avec l'aide du Fonds monétaire international (FMI) mais au prix d'un engagement à approfondir un vaste programme de réformes économiques qui rend indispensable la stabilité politique.

Le parti de la Vertu (Fazilet) est accusé par le procureur général d'activités contraires aux principes laïques qui fondent la République, de se conduire comme "un vampire" en exploitant les sentiments religieux, et d'être le successeur d'un parti interdit, le parti de la Prospérité (Refah).

La fermeture d'un parti —courante en Turquie où 22 ont été interdits depuis la création de la Cour constitutionnelle en 1960— irait à l'encontre du processus de démocratisation réclamée par l'Union européenne à la Turquie si elle veut concrétiser sa candidature.

"Une fermeture serait un signal très négatif et provoquerait une très grande préoccupation au sein de l'UE quant à une adhésion de la Turquie", a souligné un diplomate européen sous couvert de l'anonymat.

D'autant que le procureur ne s'est pas contenté de demander l'interdiction du Fazilet: il réclame aussi que tous ses députés démocratiquement élus (103 sur 550) soient démis de leur mandat.

Cela entraînerait la tenue d'élections partielles, voire générales, dont le résultat pourrait remettre en cause le fragile équilibre de la coalition disparate du Premier ministre Bülent Ecevit.

Elle rassemble son parti de la Gauche démocratique (DSP, gauche nationale), le parti d'extrême droite de l'Action nationaliste MHP, aux tonalités religieuses, et le parti de la Mère patrie ANAP (droite) du ministre chargé des relations avec l'Europe Mesut Yılmaz.

Selon les quelques rares sondages disponibles, le MHP serait en bonne position pour devenir le premier parti de Turquie en ravissant la place au DSP de M. Ecevit.

Les délibérations de la Cour pourraient prendre plusieurs semaines.

Au vu des conséquences que pourrait avoir une fermeture, les analystes tendent à penser que le Fazilet échappera au couperet, ou du moins, que ses députés ne seront pas déchus de leur mandat.

Le Fazilet a succédé au Refah, fermé en janvier 1998 quelques mois après que son chef Necmettin Erbakan ait dû démissionner sous la pression de l'armée du poste de Premier ministre, en juin 1997, après un an de coalition avec le parti conservateur de Tansu Ciller de la Juste Voie (DYP)

Depuis l'éviction de M. Erbakan, l'armée a posé le fondamentalisme musulman en principal danger pour la République, avant même le "danger pour l'unité" du pays posé par la rébellion kurde.

La puissante armée turque, héritière et défenseur de l'idéologie laïque du père fondateur de la Turquie Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, procède elle-même régulièrement à des "purgés" d'officiers islamistes dans ses rangs.

Le Fazilet, religieux et conservateur, se pose pourtant en parti modéré, pro-européen, pro-démocratique, partisan de l'économie de marché, loin de la violence armée à l'algérienne, de la rigueur iranienne ou du purisme afghan.

Mais il ne trouve aucune grâce auprès des Kémalistes, convaincus qu'il veut profiter de la démocratie pour la supprimer.

L'emploi du kurde divise la Turquie

Istanbul : Éric Biegala

« Autoriser la langue kurde à la télévision sert les intérêts du PKK », titrait hier le quotidien *Hürriyet* en première page, reprenant la position de l'armée sur la question. Il y a deux semaines, le premier ministre déclarait au contraire dans un entretien avec le même journal que l'usage du kurde devrait être envisagé « tôt ou tard » sur les ondes turques.

Par médias interposés, caciques du régime et simples citoyens ont entamé un large débat sur l'opportunité de diffuser des émissions en kurde. Un débat dont le coup d'envoi a été donné par l'Union européenne début novembre. Parmi les priorités que l'UE entend voir adoptées par la Turquie d'ici à un an figure en effet le « retrait de toutes les dispositions légales interdisant l'usage par les citoyens turcs de leur langue ma-

ternelle dans les émissions de radio et de télévision ».

Le mot « kurde » a été soigneusement évité mais personne n'est dupe : les citoyens turcs « ne pouvant utiliser leur langue maternelle » sont bien les Kurdes. Des stations en kurde existent, qui émettent depuis l'Irak du Nord ou l'Europe. Medya-TV diffusée par satellite

la chasse aux rebelles, notamment en Irak du Nord où ils se sont retirés. Le ministre en charge des droits de l'homme a annoncé que des émissions en kurde pourraient être envisagées « d'ici à quelques mois ».

Le Parti de l'action nationaliste (MHP, extrême droite), l'une des deux formations principales de la majorité, s'y oppose fermement, au motif que cela détruirait « la structure unitaire du pays ». Un pas supplémentaire a été franchi lorsque le directeur général du MIT, les services secrets turcs, se pronon-

L'armée refuse cette concession à l'Union européenne

çaient lui aussi officiellement pour une télévision en kurde, à des fins de contre-propagande.

Aujourd'hui, ce sont les recteurs d'université ou les associations qui se disent à leur tour pour ou contre le kurde à la télévision. Selon l'ancien ministre Salih Yildirim, 80 % des Kurdes de Turquie ne connaissent pas d'autre langue.

çaient lui aussi officiellement pour une télévision en kurde, à des fins de contre-propagande.

Aujourd'hui, ce sont les recteurs d'université ou les associations qui se disent à leur tour pour ou contre le kurde à la télévision. Selon l'ancien ministre Salih Yildirim, 80 % des Kurdes de Turquie ne connaissent pas d'autre langue.

Grève de la faim de deux cents détenus dans des prisons de Turquie

ISTANBUL

de notre correspondante

Alors que plus de deux cents détenus répartis dans plusieurs prisons de Turquie en sont à leur cinquième jour de grève de la faim, l'Assemblée nationale a adopté, vendredi 8 décembre, une loi d'amnistie très controversée qui pourrait permettre la libération de près de la moitié des 72 000 personnes actuellement incarcérées. Cette loi d'amnistie intervient alors que le mouvement de protestation des prisonniers se durcit. Ceux-ci protestent contre le transfert prévu dans des cellules individuelles où de trois personnes, ce qui les obligerait à quitter les salles collectives et briserait la vie communautaire.

Ces grèves de la faim ne sont que l'une des plus récentes manifestations du chaos qui règne dans les prisons turques. Armes, drogues et téléphones cellulaires sont régulièrement confisqués lors de fouilles. « Depuis les premiers jours de la République, il y avait une politique non-déclarée de laisser les détenus

organiser la discipline quotidienne. On donnait des privilèges à quelques durs parmi eux pour qu'ils fassent le boulot », expliquait récemment Yücel Sayman, qui dirige le barreau d'Istanbul.

Après le coup d'Etat de 1980 et l'arrivée de milliers de prisonniers politiques, la situation dans les prisons s'est rapidement dégradée. Les détenus sont actuellement logés dans des conditions insalubres, dans des dortoirs surpeuplés comptant jusqu'à 100 personnes. Ils estiment cependant qu'ils seraient plus vulnérables aux mauvais traitements des gardiens si, comme le veut le gouvernement – qui entend briser la domination des organisations politiques et criminelles à l'intérieur des pénitenciers –, ils étaient éloignés de leurs camarades et logés dans des cellules des nouvelles prisons de type F.

ÉTAT CRITIQUE

L'opinion publique s'oppose à la loi d'amnistie, laquelle offre des réductions de peine de dix années aux condamnés dont les faits reprochés remontent avant le 23 avril

1999. Certains villageois, accusés d'avoir soutenu le PKK, le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, pourront quitter le pénitencier. Toutefois, la formule adoptée après des mois de négociations par les trois partis au sein de la coalition au pouvoir exclut les personnes reconnues coupables de crimes contre l'Etat, et notamment les prisonniers kurdes et Abdullah Öcalan, les militants islamistes, les membres d'organisations gauchistes, les hommes accusés de viol, les fonctionnaires corrompus, les banquiers détenus pour fraude et les trafiquants de drogue. Les meurtriers, en revanche, pourront être libérés.

L'amnistie sera soumise au président Ahmet Necdet Sezer, lequel examinera la constitutionnalité du texte avant qu'il puisse entrer en vigueur. L'an dernier, Suleyman Demirel, alors chef de l'Etat, avait opposé son veto à un projet similaire. La loi nouvellement votée par le Parlement n'affectera probablement pas la situation des grévistes de la faim, dont la plupart sont membres d'organisations de

gauche. Certains d'entre eux ne boivent que de l'eau depuis cinquante jours et sont dans un état critique. Des dizaines d'autres ne se nourrissent que d'eau salée et sucrée et sont donc engagés dans une grève de soutien. Des médecins se sont rendus au chevet des grévistes et ont annoncé qu'il serait contraire à l'éthique médicale d'intervenir contre la volonté des patients. En 1996, douze prisonniers s'étaient ainsi laissés mourir de faim.

L'amnistie ne devrait pas mettre fin à la polémique suscitée par les nouvelles prisons de type F. Elle ne correspond pas à un véritable changement de politique. Alors même que les députés débattaient de la possibilité de libérer de milliers de prisonniers, l'activiste des droits de l'homme Senar Yurdatapın était incarcéré pour avoir cité des objecteurs de conscience dans un petit livre intitulé *Liberté d'opinion*.

Nicole Pope

KURDISTAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY
International Relations Bureau



KDP

PRESS RELEASE

**A STATEMENT BY KDP SPOKESMAN
ON IRAQI TROOP MOVEMENT INTO KURDISH SAFE HEAVEN
IN BA'EIDRA - SHIEKHAN DISTRICT**

Salahuddien 11 Dec 2000

On Saturday 9 Dec at 05:00 hrs local time an Iraqi infantry military Brigade and two battalions moved north towards the town of Ba'Eidra in Shie Khan district and controlled mountain ranges overlooking the town. This area is part of the Kurdish enclave of safe heaven that has been outside Iraqi government control since 1991 uprising.

The aim of Iraqi troop was to control the town of Ba'Eidrah and install their authority over the town and a number of nearby villages and settlements. Yet the people of Ba'Eidrah organized a large protest march against the Iraqi incursion and pledged allegiance to their Kurdish regional administration. The KDP leadership responded swiftly by deploying a large Peshmerga force to defend the town's people and region.

We believe the Iraqi military move and threat against the security of the region's population is unwarranted and astonishing since no provocation has taken place against the Iraqi government authorities by the people or by the local Kurdish authorities. We demand the withdrawal of Iraqi forces to their original places. We have acted in caution and patience to deal with this matter until the situation is clarified and avoid further complications to the safety and security of our people.

The KDP has always been committed to a peaceful solution of the Kurdish issue within a united Iraq, but attempts by Iraq to return by force is totally unacceptable, as it would lead to further and new suffering and catastrophes for the people of Iraq as a whole.

KDP Spokesman

Kurds Says Iraqi Troops Enter Northern Enclave

December 11, 2000

ANKARA (Reuters) - A Kurdish faction said on Monday that President Saddam Hussein has sent troops into northern Iraq's Kurdish-controlled enclave and appeared poised to attack a town and several villages.

A spokesman for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which administers territory near the Turkish border, told Reuters that two Iraqi battalions and an infantry brigade had entered the mountainous enclave on Saturday and moved to hilltops surrounding the town of Ba'idrah and other small settlements.

"The Iraqi forces are well within the Kurdish-administered area," the spokesman said. "This is totally unprovoked...The aim of the (Iraqi military) is to take control of Ba'idrah." Baghdad has no direct control over northern Iraq since the end of the 1991 Gulf War. Two rival Kurdish groups that run the region are protected from Iraqi government attack by U.S.-led air patrols flying from Turkey.

The United States has warned Iraq of military action if it threatens the enclave's Kurds. Armed KDP "peshmerga" fighters, who maintain a presence in the area, are on alert, the KDP spokesman said. Iraq's Kurds rebelled against Baghdad during the Gulf War, but only managed to gain control of the region later with allied air support.

Fighting then broke out between the KDP, backed by Iraqi forces, and its Kurdish rivals, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Relative peace between the two groups was restored with a 1997 U.S.-brokered cease-fire.

* * * * *

Department of Defense News Briefing

December 12, 2000

Presenter : Mr. Kenneth H. Bacon, ASD PA

Q: Is Saddam Hussein -- is the Iraqi military moving against the Kurds in the north? There have been a number of reports.

Bacon: Well, let me tell you what we know about that, and I start with the caution that most of our information comes from Kurdish reports. As you know, the northern corner of Iraq is Kurdish territory, and there is a line called the green line that was established in 1991. It was the line to which the Iraqis drew back to after mounting a military operation against the Kurds. That green line runs approximately from -- it runs from a point on the Iraqi-Turkish border down to a point on the Iraqi-Iranian border. And it's divided in half, approximately, by two Kurdish groups, the KDP and the PUK. The KDP is the Kurdistan Democratic Party.

There is a town about five kilometers inside the green zone -- in other words, beyond the green line in Kurdish territory -- called Baidhrah, spelled B-A-I-D-H-R-A-H. It's a town of about 10,000 people. The Iraqi army generally has a brigade right in that area, around Baidhrah. And on Saturday we got a report from the Kurds that the Iraqi forces had moved across the green line and assumed positions in some ridges around Baidhrah, not in -- they did not go into the city of Baidhrah, but they assumed positions around Baidhrah on some ridges.

The Kurds claim to have responded by mobilizing their own reserve force, about 5,000 people. I think there were about 150 Kurdish military people or fighters, militia, whatever they're called, in Baidhrah at the time, and they said that they mobilized reserves of about 5,000 people. This is the Kurdish report.

The Iraqis did move some reinforcements into the area. But basically what's happened is, no shots were fired. There was no direct engagement between forces, and the Iraqi troops have withdrawn from the hills around the town to a plain. They were essentially a little north of the town, in the hills. Now they've withdrawn to a plain between the town of Baidhrah and the green line, essentially south of the town.

This has been -- as I said, there -- it -- no shots were fired. There was no direct engagement, and it seems to have calmed down. And both sides are apparently moving back to their original positions. There is some report from the Kurds that this may have been a political move by the Iraqi forces, encouraged by a tribal faction, a religious faction of the Kurds, one faction jockeying with another faction.

We don't know why this happened. The Iraqis have not explained it to us, and we have the Kurdish speculation, but that's it at this stage.

Q: Does the United States consider this a violation of its warning against attacking the Kurds, or...

Bacon: Well, there were no attacks. I think that's the crucial point here, that there were no shots fired, there was no direct engagement between troops, and it was not an attack. It was, from the best we can tell, a movement of some troops and then a return toward original positions. So this does not appear to be a threatening or serious incident at this stage.

Q: The assessment that no shots were fired and there was no direct engagement and that the Iraqis withdrew from the hills to the plain, is that still based on Kurdish reports?

Bacon: Almost all of what I've told you is based on Kurdish reporting.

Q: Has the United States ever pledged that they would come to the Kurds' aid in a situation like this? Is this covered under that no-fly zone -- you know, threaten the Kurds?

Bacon: Well, the no-fly zone patrols functioned during this period, and in their normal way. We did not change our flight operations in any way during this, but they continued to monitor what was going on.

Q: (Off mike) -- in that umbrella area?

Bacon: Well, Baidhrah, as I said, is on the other side of the green line, but the fact of the matter is there was no attack here. There was no military -- there was no military firing. There were some movements of troops; they moved in and now they appear to be moving back. So --

Bacon: You said they moved in. Did they move across the green line?

Bacon: Yes. They moved across the green line.

Q: The Kurds in this area are really worried about this movement and they said that future threat, they could be attacked.

Bacon: Well, I can't psychoanalyze the Kurds or comment on what they have said. All I can tell you is that according to their own reports, the Iraqi troops appear to be moving out or at least back toward the green line, and they no longer surround the town as they did at one point. At no time did they move into the town and, I repeat, there were no shots fired.

Q: How large is the Iraqi force again?

Bacon: Well, there were two battalions that moved, that took separate positions, and each battalion was about 400 people.

Q: Was there any information about what prompted the Iraqi troops to --

Bacon: Well, all I can tell you is the Kurds themselves speculated that it might have been the result of some political jockeying between a Kurdish religious faction or tribal faction on the one hand and the Iraqis on the other. But beyond that, I don't have any information, and that was their speculation as to what could have caused it.

* * * * *

December 11, 2000

Iraq Is Forcing Kurds From Their Homes, the U.N.

Reports New York Times

By BARBARA CROSSETTE

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 8 — More than a decade after President Saddam Hussein began a murderous campaign against rebellious Kurds, unknown thousands of them and other non-Arab Iraqis are again being driven from their homes, United Nations officials in the region say.

Much of the forced migration is taking place within northern Iraq, from government-controlled locations like the oil-producing area around Kirkuk, which the displaced people say President Saddam Hussein is trying to "Arabize."

They are being resettled in Kurdish areas in the north. The relocation, which the United Nations is beginning to quantify, adds to an already large refugee population in the north. The earlier refugees are Iraqis displaced by sporadic outbreaks of Kurdish infighting, families who fled or were forced north from government-controlled areas of central and southern Iraq during the Persian Gulf war of 1991, and others from Iran.

Officials say the 805,000 displaced people there — about 23 percent of the population — are putting strains on international relief efforts and local populations. They have asked Baghdad to stop the flow.

In a briefing to the Security Council last Monday, Benon Sevan, who directs all of the United Nations programs in Iraq that are not related to weapons, said he was "greatly concerned with the increasing numbers of internally displaced persons." He said conditions at refugee centers were "abominable."

Officials working in the Kurdish region say about 59,000 people have been surveyed, mostly Kurds and some Turkomen, and report that they have been displaced from homes near Kirkuk — an oil-producing city about 200 miles north of Baghdad near the border of Kurdish areas — where there is also a huge military base and airfield.

They have told officials that the Iraqi government apparently does not want them in that strategic area.

This round of expulsions has been going on to varying degrees for two years, human rights groups say, but has attracted little attention until now, when the concentrations of people arriving at refugee camps has made the trend obvious.

In its 2001 world report, the private group Human Rights Watch said this week that Kurds and Turkomen were being expelled from at least half a dozen districts as part of a government program that has forced ethnic minorities to sign forms renouncing their ethnic identities and declaring themselves to be Arabs.

Some refugees arriving in the north say that even that was not enough to avoid expulsion and the seizure of their properties. Human Rights Watch documented more than 800 expulsions from January to June of this year. At the State Department, the office of the ambassador at large for war crimes, David Scheffer, has been watching the forced relocations as officials prepare evidence for a possible war crimes indictment of President Hussein.

The Kurds, a rebellious and fractious people, have particular reasons to fear the central government. In 1987 and 1988, 50,000 to 100,000 Kurds were gassed to death with chemical agents by Mr. Hussein's government, American officials say.

At a refugee camp at Kani Shaitan, east of Kirkuk in Kurdish territory, 1,375 people, 994 of them children, have been crowded into a settlement built for 550 people. People continue to arrive at the camp, officials say, sometimes in groups that appear to have been driven out of government-controlled regions en masse.

* * * * *

INC Statement On PKK Attacks

Press Release

LONDON (12 December 2000): The Leadership Council of the Iraqi National Congress strongly condemns the recent attacks by the PKK against the liberated areas of Iraqi Kurdistan. These attacks are a violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq and a threat to the residents of the area.

The PKK has clashed with forces of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan around of Qandil Mountain and surrounding areas. There has been severe loss of life and destruction of property.

The INC expresses serious concern about the continued threat posed by the PKK against Iraqi Kurdistan. The INC calls upon Iraq's neighbours and the international community to assist the people of Iraqi Kurdistan in resisting this threat.

The INC condemns Saddam's support for the PKK which takes the form of weapons and logistical support. This is part of Saddam's recent policy to heighten tension and threaten the liberty of Iraqi Kurdistan. These actions must be challenged and Saddam must be stopped.

* * * * *

Le PDK accuse les troupes de Bagdad d'occuper des hauteurs au Kurdistan



DUBAI, 11 déc (AFP) - 21h48 - Le Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) a affirmé lundi que les troupes irakiennes avaient occupé ces derniers jours des hauteurs dans le Kurdistan (nord de l'Irak), qu'il contrôle en partie.

"Samedi matin, une brigade d'infanterie et deux unités de l'armée irakienne ont progressé en direction du village de Baadra (...) avant d'occuper les hauteurs qui le surplombent", a déclaré un porte-parole du PDK, dans un communiqué reçu à l'AFP.

"La progression des troupes irakiennes vise à envahir et contrôler Baadra ainsi que tous les autres villages et agglomérations à proximité", a ajouté le PDK.

Le Congrès national irakien (CNI, qui se présente comme la principale alliance de l'opposition), a pour sa part affirmé dans un communiqué que "les troupes irakiennes ont occupé le village d'Ain Sifni (près de Baadra) où elles ont établi leur quartier général".

Le CNI, basé à Londres, a indiqué qu'"après des affrontements avec les forces du PDK, l'Irak a dépêché une brigade d'infanterie pour soutenir les deux autres déployées dans la région".

Selon le communiqué du PDK, ces régions avaient été libérées par les Kurdes après le soulèvement populaire au Kurdistan en 1991, au lendemain de la guerre du Golfe. Le gouvernement central de Bagdad ne contrôle plus le Kurdistan depuis cette date.

Le communiqué a indiqué à ce propos que "les habitants de Baadra ont organisé une manifestation au cours de laquelle ils ont affirmé leur volonté de rester sous contrôle de l'administration kurde".

"Le comportement injustifié des forces irakiennes constitue une menace pour les habitants de la région (kurde)", a poursuivi le porte-parole, en appelant "au retrait de ces troupes jusqu'à leurs positions initiales pour éviter toute escalade".

"Nous sommes attachés à tout règlement pacifique et équitable du problème kurde. Toute tentative de revenir par la force dans la région du Kurdistan est totalement rejetée et conduira à d'autres catastrophes qui toucheront tout le peuple irakien", a-t-il encore ajouté.

Le PDK de Massoud Barzani et l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK) de Jalal Talabani se partagent le contrôle du Kurdistan depuis qu'il a échappé à l'autorité de Bagdad en 1991.

Le Pentagone confirme des mouvements irakiens mais minimise leur portée



WASHINGTON, 12 déc (AFP) - 22h18 - Le Pentagone a confirmé mardi une incursion des troupes irakiennes dans le Kurdistan irakien (nord) qui échappe au contrôle de Bagdad, indiquant que ces troupes ont pris position sur des hauteurs proches de Baadra, avant de se retirer dans la plaine au sud de la ville.

Le porte-parole du Pentagone, Kenneth Bacon, qui citait des informations kurdes, a minimisé la portée de ces mouvements qui ont commencé samedi quand deux bataillons irakiens ont franchi "la ligne verte" dans le nord du pays qui sépare les régions contrôlées par les Kurdes des territoires qui sont sous l'autorité du gouvernement de Bagdad.

"Aucun coup de feu n'a été tiré. Il n'y a eu aucune confrontation directe et il semble que la situation s'est calmée et que les deux parties ont apparemment reculé et réintégré leurs positions antérieures", a-t-il dit.

"Il ne semble donc pas qu'il s'agisse à ce stade d'un incident sérieux et menaçant", a-t-il souligné.

Selon Kenneth Bacon, 800 militaires irakiens ont pris part à cette opération. Il a affirmé, citant des sources kurdes, que l'action irakienne était en riposte à des combats entre groupes kurdes rivaux.

Lundi, le Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan avait affirmé qu'une brigade d'infanterie et deux unités de l'armée irakienne avaient occupé ces derniers jours des hauteurs dans le Kurdistan qu'il contrôle en partie, ajoutant que cette "progression des troupes irakiennes visait à envahir et contrôler Baadra ainsi que d'autres villages et agglomérations à proximité".

Des étudiants kurdes frappés et arrêtés à Téhéran,



TEHERAN, 13 déc (AFP) - 9h34 - Des étudiants kurdes ont été frappés puis arrêtés mardi à Téhéran par la police, a affirmé mercredi matin un député de Sanandaj (ouest), chef-lieu du Kurdistan iranien, devant le Majlis (Parlement).

Ces étudiants, dont il n'a pas cité le nombre exact, participaient à un "rassemblement pacifique", interdit "in extremis", à l'Université de Téhéran, selon Bahaeddine Adab, proche du courant conservateur.

M. Adab a très vivement dénoncé "la police secrète", qui a agi, selon lui "sans respecter le droit de manifester". Il a affirmé que lui-même et deux autres députés kurdes présents au rassemblement avaient été "traités sans égard" par les policiers.

"Des agents en civil sont intervenus et ont commencé à insulter et frapper les manifestants, dont des étudiants, et en ont arrêté plusieurs", a déclaré M. Adab, qui a demandé "leur libération immédiate".

Le 28 novembre, un autre député de Sanandaj, Jalal Jalalizadeh, réformateur, avait fait état devant le Majlis d'une "campagne d'assassinats en série et l'interdiction de culte" dont est victime, selon lui, la minorité kurde sunnite en Iran forte de quelque 6 millions de personnes.

Le chiisme est la religion dominante et officielle en Iran.

Jalal Jalalizadeh avait fait état de "meurtres en série d'intellectuels" ainsi que "de destructions de mosquées sunnites".

M. Jalalizadeh a demandé l'intervention du Guide de la République islamique, l'ayatollah Ali Khamenei et du président Mohammad Khatami pour que soit mis fin à ces discriminations visant les Kurdes en Iran.

Les Kurdes ne disposent plus de parti politique en Iran, le parti démocratique du Kurdistan iranien (PDKI) ayant été interdit après la révolution islamique de 1979, et son principal dirigeant Abdolrahman Ghassemlou, ayant été assassiné à Vienne en 1989.

Requête d'Ocalan recevable: Ankara minimise, ses défenseurs se félicitent



ANKARA, 15 déc (AFP) - 16h19 - La Turquie a minimisé l'impact de la recevabilité vendredi par la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme de la requête du chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan concernant des violations de ses droits lors de son procès, alors que ses défenseurs ont salué ce jugement.

"Il ne s'agit que d'une décision en faveur de la recevabilité d'une requête", a dit laconiquement le ministre turc de la Justice Hikmet Sami Turk, interrogé par des journalistes.

Il a souligné que la Cour se prononcera maintenant sur le fond.

La décision de la cour de Strasbourg a par contre provoqué la satisfaction des avocats du chef du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK).

"Nous nous réjouissons de cette décision à laquelle nous nous attendions après une défense méticuleuse", a dit au téléphone à l'AFP Me Hasip Kaplan.

Il a qualifié d'"important pas" le jugement, saluant la décision de la cour de sept juges de confier à la Grande chambre (composée de 17 juges) le soin de se prononcer sur le fond, au vu de la complexité de l'affaire.

Me Kaplan a souligné que les avocats d'Ocalan et la Turquie avaient le droit d'interjeter appel contre cette décision dans un délai de trente jours.

La Cour a déclaré recevable la requête d'Ocalan concernant la plupart des violations de ses droits.

Ocalan, condamné à mort en juin 1999 pour "séparatisme et trahison" par la justice turque, a également obtenu que la Cour examine au fond ses allégations de violations de son droit à ne pas être condamné à une peine "pour une action qui ne constitue pas une infraction au moment où elle a été commise" et à "bénéficier d'un recours effectif".

Ankara avait suspendu son exécution dans l'attente d'une décision de la Cour de Strasbourg.

L'abolition de la peine de mort, qui n'a pas été appliquée en Turquie depuis 1984, est l'un des critères d'une adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union européenne.

Le PKK, qui a lutté pendant quinze ans pour la création d'un Etat kurde dans le sud-est, a annoncé en septembre 1999 l'arrêt des combats et son retrait de Turquie. Mais l'armée turque s'est dite déterminée à pourchasser les rebelles jusqu'au bout.

Saddam's Regime Forces New Kurdish Migration

By Barbara Crossette
New York Times Service

UNITED NATIONS, New York — More than a decade after President Saddam Hussein began a murderous campaign against rebellious Kurds, unknown thousands of them and other non-Arab Iraqis are again being driven from their homes, UN officials in the region say.

Much of the forced migration is taking place within northern Iraq, from government-controlled locations like the oil-producing area around Kirkuk, which the displaced people say Mr. Saddam is trying to "Arabize."

They are being resettled in Kurdish areas in the north. The relocation, which the United Nations is beginning to quantify, adds to an already large refugee population in the North. The earlier refugees are Iraqis displaced by sporadic outbreaks of Kurdish infighting, families who fled or were forced north from government-controlled areas of central and southern Iraq during the Gulf War of 1991, and others from Iran.

Officials say the 805,000 displaced people there — about 23 percent of the population — are putting strains on international relief efforts and local populations. They have asked Baghdad to stop the flow.

In a briefing to the Security Council last week, Benon Sevan, who directs all

of the UN programs in Iraq that are not related to weapons, said he was "greatly concerned with the increasing numbers of internally displaced persons." He said conditions at refugee centers were "abominable."

Officials working in the Kurdish region say about 59,000 people have been surveyed, mostly Kurds and some Turkomen. The officials report that these people have been displaced from homes near Kirkuk, an oil-producing city about 320 kilometers (200 miles) north of Baghdad near the border of Kurdish areas, where there is also a huge military base and airfield.

They have told officials that the Iraqi government apparently does not want them in that strategic area.

This round of expulsions has been going on to varying degrees for two years, human rights groups say, but has attracted little attention until now, when the concentration of people arriving at refugee camps has made the trend obvious.

In its 2001 world report, the private group Human Rights Watch said last week that Kurds and Turkomen were being expelled from at least half a dozen districts as part of a government program that has forced ethnic minorities to sign forms renouncing their ethnic identities and declaring themselves to be Arabs.

Some refugees arriving in the North say that even that was not enough to

prevent expulsion and the seizure of their properties.

Human Rights Watch documented more than 800 expulsions from January to June of this year. At the U.S. State Department, the office of the ambassador at large for war crimes, David Scheffer, has been watching the forced

relocations as officials prepare evidence for a possible war-crimes indictment of Mr. Saddam.

The Kurds have particular reasons to fear the central government. In 1987 and 1988, 50,000 to 100,000 Kurds were killed by being gassed with chemical agents by Mr. Saddam's government, U.S. officials say.

At a refugee camp at Kani Shaitan, east of Kirkuk in Kurdish territory, 1,375 people, 994 of them children, have been crowded into a settlement built to hold 550.

"Unfortunately, the number of families at the Kani Shaitan camp appears to be increasing," Mr. Sevan said. Arrivals are getting ahead of efforts to build homes for newcomers.

At a nearby camp, Chamchamal, plans to build nearly 500 houses in time for the harsh winter of mountainous northern Iraq have been held up by a dearth of materials. In other settlements the United Nations has been putting up tents and supplying them with heaters.

Turkey May Amnesty 35,000

Pope's Assailant Could Be Among Those to Qualify

By Douglas Frantz
New York Times Service

ISTANBUL — The man who shot Pope John Paul II is among about 35,000 inmates who might qualify for release from overcrowded Turkish prisons under an amnesty bill approved by the legislature.

Former Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, a leader of the country's Islamic movement, would avoid serving a one-year sentence for sedition for challenging the secular government in a 1994 speech. He is supposed to start the sentence next month.

Parliament approved the legislation, 297 to 72, late Friday despite deep divisions over the issue. The bill requires approval by President

Ahmet Necdet Sezer, and people close to him said it was not certain he would sign.

By reducing prison sentences by 10 years, the bill would free nearly half of the country's 72,000 inmates. The beneficiaries would include hundreds of political prisoners.

Some death sentences would also be commuted, though none have been carried out in Turkey since 1984. However, the bill specifies that terrorists will still face the death penalty, which means that Abdullah Ocalan, the jailed Kurdish rebel leader, could be executed.

Rapists, corrupt government officials, drug traffickers and people convicted of certain crimes against the state, including Kurdish guerrillas and leftist and Islamic militants,

also would not benefit from the amnesty.

Whether Mehmet Ali Agca, who shot the pope, would qualify is unclear. He was extradited to Turkey in June after being pardoned in Italy for the 1981 attack in St. Peter's Square in Rome. He is now serving a 10-year term for the murder of a newspaper editor in 1979 and is facing trial for armed robbery.

His lawyer, Sevkettin Can Ozbay, told The Associated Press he would try to get his client released, though Mr. Agca would be likely to remain in prison until a decision in the robbery case.

Turkey's prisons are overcrowded, and riots by inmates are frequent. The government said the amnesty was necessary to improve conditions.

Kurdish students beaten, arrested in "peaceful" Tehran demo : MP

AFP - 13 Dec 2000

TEHRAN, Dec 13 (AFP) - 9h10 - A number of Kurdish students were beaten and arrested during a peaceful demonstration at the University of Tehran, a Kurdish MP said Wednesday.

Bahaeddine Adab, who represents the principal Kurdish area of Sanandaj and is close to the conservatives, reported the incident in parliament, where he denounced the "secret police" for not respecting the right to demonstrate.

He said that he and two other Kurdish MPs who attended the demonstration Tuesday were treated "without regard" by the police. "Plainclothes policemen intervened and began insulting and beating the demonstrators and arrested a number of them," he said, without giving a number.

Adab demanded their immediate release.

On November 28, reformist Kurdish MP Jalal Jalalizadeh denounced before parliament what he said was a campaign of repression and serial killings against the some six-million-strong Kurdish minority in Iran. This included prohibition of religious freedom for the Sunni Muslim Kurds, in a country that has a Shiite Muslim majority, he said.

* * * * *

Pentagon plays down Iraqi move into Kurdish area

AFP - 12 Dec 2000

WASHINGTON, Dec 12 (AFP) - 22h11 - Iraqi forces made a foray into a Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq, taking up positions on mountain ridges near Badrah and then withdrawing to a plain south of the town, the Pentagon said Tuesday, citing Kurdish reports. Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon played down the significance of the Iraqi troop movement, which began Saturday when two Iraqi battalions crossed the "green line" that separates the Kurdish-controlled area in the north from territory controlled by Baghdad.

"No shots were fired, there was no direct engagement and it seems to have calmed down," Bacon said.

"Both sides are apparently moving back to their original positions," he said. "So this does not appear to be a threatening or serious incident at this stage."

Bacon said about 800 Iraqi troops took part in the operation. He cited Kurdish reports as saying the Iraqi action was in response to infighting among Kurdish tribal groups.

* * * * *

Kurdish Observer

KNK makes call to PUK and PKK

December 12, 2000

The Administrative Council of the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) issued a written statement two days ago stating that the current war could have absolutely no benefit to the Kurdish people, and added, "Friends are saddened by this war, while the enemies are happy."

The KNK stressed that there should be no war in any fashion during the month of Ramadan or the holiday, and called attention to the necessity for peace on the eve of the holiday.

The statement said that the KNK would continue to work for peace in every manner and made the following call: "The two sides must stop the war immediately, and along with this, must end the propaganda in the media and immediately begin dialogue to resolve the problems."

The people upset with the PUK

The assault of Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) against the PKK was protested in various provinces with demonstrations and hunger strikes.

One group arranged a demonstration in the Gunes neighborhood of Mersin to protest the PUK's renewed assaults against the PKK. About 200 people gathered the other evening, marching and shouting such slogans as "Long live President Apo," "To hell with the PUK," and "Long live the Democratic Republic." The protesters were applauded by residents of the area. After the protest, the demonstration dispersed quietly.

In Batman, 15 people gathered at the district headquarters of the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) and began a hunger strike. The protesters said they would continue their strike until the PUK stopped its assaults.

A woman named Rabia Keskin began a hunger strike with the same aim in Adana, and called for assaults to cease. Keskin said, "We are brothers. This chance for peace that has been captured must be used wisely. We do not want

war. If the PUK continues this policy, hunger strikes will spread everywhere."

There were also protest demonstrations in the Eski Camlik and Akincilar neighborhoods of Izmir the other evening. A large crowd gathered in Eski Camlik neighborhood and shouted slogans for a long time, while about 50 people lit fires in Akincilar neighborhood.

The Izmir Initiative for the Families of Detainees and Prisoners also released a statement protesting the PUK. The statement said that the PUK assaults were sabotaging the atmosphere of peace in the Middle East, and continued: "We are calling to the PUK. Stop the war. The historic peace process is an opportunity. Support this opportunity also."

The war in the South is a danger to the peace process

Dogan Erbas, Istanbul Provincial Chairman of the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) held a press conference in front of the party's Istanbul Provincial Headquarters the other day. Erbas said that they "denounce the assaults against the PKK in northern Iraq under the lead of Talabani" and said that this event "carries dangers of sabotaging the peace process in Turkey." The crowd of about 50 people who attended the press conference shouted various slogans and then dispersed without event.

Protest march in Saarbrücken

Mass meetings continue to be held by Kurdistanis in Europe to protest the renewed assaults by the PUK against the People's Defense Forces in South Kurdistan.

Kurdistanis called for a cessation of the clashes that began anew with the PUK's aggressive stance at a meeting in the German city of Saarbrücken, and also protested the PUK's policies of allowing itself to be used as a pawn.

The meeting began in Saar Gallery Square at 14:00 with a moment of silence for those who lost their lives in the war. About 250 Kurdistanis attended the meeting at which speeches protesting the PUK were given. Representatives from the Kurdish Democratic Peoples Unity (YDK) and Free Women's Party (PJA) also gave speeches concerning the clashes at the meeting.

Kurdistanis carried posters with such slogans as "No to war provocations," "Let us unite in national unity against treachery," and "No to the ban on the PKK" in Germany and shouted slogans expressing their loyalty to PKK President Abdullah Ocalan.

Kurdistanis handed out leaflets throughout the meeting which lasted two hours. They also gathered signatures protesting the role that Turkey had played in the PUK assaults and faxed them to the President and Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey.

* * * * *

Turkish military resists EU demand on Kurds

Financial Times; Dec 12, 2000

ARMY CHIEFS' COMMENTS RAISE QUESTION OVER TERMS FOR JOINING EU:

By LEYLA BOULTON

Turkey's politicians today face an important test of will after the country's powerful military chiefs slammed calls for Kurdish language broadcasting - a key condition for European Union membership talks.

Leaders of the three-party coalition will discuss preparations for membership of the European Union with Volkan Vural, head of the country's EU secretariat. But their meeting will be watched closely for any reaction to a statement from the general staff describing calls for Kurdish-language broadcasting and other cultural rights as propaganda tools by the Kurdistan Workers' party guerrilla group.

Milliyet newspaper said the military's message created "the impression that there are two rival powers running Turkey".

The issue is complicated by the fact that Kurdish-language concessions command the support of only two out of three coalition parties. Until recently, Mesut Yilmaz, leader of Motherland, the junior partner, represented a lone voice in favour, before he was joined by prime minister Bulent Ecevit, and even the chief of Turkey's National Intelligence Service.

But the intervention by the military, which regards itself as the chief guardian of Turkey's territorial integrity and secular democracy, has generated two challenges. It encourages the National Action party, the second largest coalition party, to continue opposing any change. It also lends credence to the views held by Turkey's critics that the Turkish military still wield too much power.

Mr Ecevit and the foreign ministry have responded by arguing that the military is simply contributing their voice to a necessary public debate. "The debate will go on until this society in its official and unofficial channels reaches a point of agreement on this," a senior foreign ministry official said yesterday.

Some observers would like to see Turkey commit itself to such change when it publishes a national programme for meeting EU requirements over coming weeks. Others, however, argue that Turkish opinion has plenty of time to evolve after EU leaders indicated last week that Turkey was unlikely to join for another decade.

Ozdem Sanberk, director of the Turkish Foundation for Social and Economic Studies, compared the military's caution to a "surgeon who has successfully completed an operation but is being careful about removing the stitches".

After declaring victory over the PKK in the 16-year guerrilla war in south-eastern Turkey, the general staff cites a continued threat from 4,500 PKK guerrillas in northern Iraq. Its statement also noted that some EU countries had helped the PKK and that the European Commission had recently corresponded with the guerrilla group in what the EU executive described as a mistake.

In addition, the military is worried about the EU's proposals for a European rapid reaction force, which would borrow Nato assets.

* * * * *

Khatami impeachment attempt denied

IRNA - 13 December 2000

The head of the Tehran Justice Department vehemently denied claims that some state critics had submitted a motion to the Supreme Court over President Mohammad Khatami's political incompetence, state television said on Monday night. Abbasali Alizadeh ruled out such a motion ever existed, adding that his office would sue those who had made such an announcement.

"I vehemently deny such a claim... It is sheer lie and those who have made such an announcement will be legally

sued," he said. On Monday, the secretary of the Islamic Revolution's Mujahedin Organization Mohammad Salamati told students that the conservatives had submitted a letter to the Supreme Court, claiming Khatami was not competent to run the country. He said the Islamic Coalition Association had prepared the letter under grounds that Khatami himself had confessed to his failure in enforcing the law. "Our understanding is that this move amounts to a motion on the president's inefficiency. I hope this presumption would prove to be wrong," Salamati said. He said the letter had also charged Khatami was incapable to run the country.

Alizadeh reiterated the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's confidence in Khatami as well as his popularity among the people. "The Supreme Leader and the public believe in President Khatami's efficiency and raising such unreal issues and lies could not be made out of goodwill," Alizadeh said as quoted by the television. He said those who had made such a claim were aiming to incite the public opinion.

"They have political and non-religious objectives and are inciting the public opinion. This is legally an offense and could be sued and that is what we are going to do," Alizadeh added. Earlier the deputy head of the social and information dissemination department of the Judiciary Abdolreza Izadpanah had dismissed the claim, saying the Supreme Court had not received any letter on Khatami's alleged incompetence. In related news, Salamati himself denied that he had made such an allegations.

In an interview with Dowran-e Emrouz daily published Tuesday, Salamati said: "I have not made such a claim. I deny the news in the way it has been published. I did not say a motion on the president's incompetence has been submitted to the Supreme Court. I wonder why they have published the news in this way! It is also regrettable that the Tehran Justice Department chief (Alizadeh) has reacted to the news without carefully reading it." Salamati further explained: "What I said at the roundtable Monday was that a letter has been sent to the Supreme Court by the rivals opposed to the Khatami 2nd (May 23) and the government. (I said) according to the letter, since the president has admitted that he has failed in execution of the Constitution and has, contrary to the law, set up a constitutional follow-up and supervisory committee, he must be persecuted. (I said) from this letter one may come to the conclusion that the said faction (conservatives) has launched a move in the direction of raising the president's incompetence.

* * * * *

Hit Iraqi ground forces from air, allies urged

Daily Telegraph - 13 Dec 2000

By Anton La Guardia, Diplomatic Editor

AMERICAN and British aircraft should increase attacks against an increasingly belligerent Saddam Hussein by hitting Iraqi ground forces whenever they threaten civilians, the main Iraqi opposition umbrella group said yesterday.

Sharif Ali bin Al-Hussein of the Iraqi National Congress, an umbrella group supported by Washington, said the allies' repeated attacks against Iraqi anti-aircraft facilities threatening planes patrolling two "no-fly" zones were "ineffective in changing the regime". Instead, America and Britain should attack Iraqi ground forces. Mr al-Hussein said: "We believe the only way to save the Iraqi people is to change the rules of engagement."

Kurdish groups said two Iraqi battalions had recently taken over positions in the Kurdish safe haven, near the town of Ba'idrah, 40 miles south of Dohuk. But after negotiating for the release of about 150 soldiers who surrendered, apparently without a fight, the Iraqis retreated again.

The Foreign Office said it had received reports of the military movement. A spokesman said: "It had been a matter of some concern, but we are pleased the Iraqis have moved back quickly."

A Ministry of Defence spokesman appeared to rule out offensive action against Iraqi forces. He said: "Our rules of engagement are tailored to make it easier for pilots to defend themselves. They are not for attacking Iraqi troops on the ground. It is not our policy to work for the overthrow of Saddam Hussein."

Boosted by surging oil prices and widespread Arab anger at the West because of the two-month-old conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, Saddam is growing in strength and confidence. Iraq has been steadily breaking out of its international isolation, with several Arab countries restoring diplomatic relations, and challenging the air embargo.

Saddam has also mobilised troops to "help" Palestinians in their uprising against Israel, rattled his sabre at Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and cut off oil exports to try to extort payments outside United Nations control.

Western Banks Promise to Keep Lending to Turkey

By Joseph Kahn
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — Western bankers have vowed to continue lending money to Turkey, giving a vital boost to efforts to restore confidence in that country's finances just days after the International Monetary Fund agreed to provide a multibillion-dollar emergency aid package, bankers and IMF officials say.

The commitments, which are considered nonbinding but are vital for Turkey's financial stability, were made Monday at a meeting of representatives of 30 European and American banks in Frankfurt, where Turkish officials outlined an accelerated plan to sell state assets, reduce spending and close troubled banks.

Bankers have organized a similar session to be held in New York on Wednesday.

"The international financial community will be supportive," said William Rhodes, a Citigroup vice chairman whose bank attended the Frankfurt meeting and organized the New York session. "People are optimistic that Turkey will implement its reform program as it agreed with the IMF."

The monetary fund agreed last week to provide \$7.5 billion in new loans and deliver about \$3 billion in already promised loans early to bolster Turkey, where stocks have plunged recently and overnight interest rates soared on fears that the country's banking system could collapse. The turmoil raised fears not only that Turkey's ambitious economic overhaul would fail but also that investors would lose faith in the prospects of other major emerging economies.

Both Turkey and Argentina experienced a sudden drop in investor confidence late last month, posing the biggest challenge to the monetary fund and the

United States since the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s.

The two nations are likely to receive emergency loans from the Fund this month, the largest bailout packages since an IMF rescue of Brazil in 1998.

The troubles are linked to the recent sharp slowdown in growth of the U.S. economy and the sell-off this year in American stock markets. Export-oriented countries in Latin America, Asia and the Middle East have depended heavily on robust expansion in the United States to power their own tentative recoveries from a recession in the late 1990s.

Foreign investors began withdrawing credit lines from Turkey two weeks ago after fears developed that many Turkish banks, which are under heavy pressure to reorganize, had become insolvent. Argentina faces a different problem: Investors there are worried that its slow-growing economy may not have the wherewithal to repay its hefty foreign debt.

In Turkey, the coalition government of Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, acting with IMF support, began an economic overhaul early this year designed to bring the economy up to European standards, part of its bid to join the European Union.

Turkey set up a strict currency-management system, imposed budgetary discipline and moved to sell some state assets. The effort reduced government borrowing and sharply lowered inflation, but the program forced

Turkey's 81 banks to improve their operations or die.

Allegations of widespread corruption and the government's seizure of 10 banks last month caused investors to panic about the solvency of the banking system.

Gazi Ercel, the governor of Turkey's central bank, and Stanley Fischer, the No. 2 official at the IMF, conducted the meeting Monday in Frankfurt, which was organized by

Deutsche Bank and included representatives from Dresdner Bank and Commerzbank of Germany and Citigroup of the United States, among other major lenders.

Officials described the session as a "soft-touch" appeal to bankers to stay engaged, an effort to forge a public consensus that Turkey's problems can be readily overcome.

One official briefed on the meetings said there was a general sense among bankers that Turkey's economic plans made sense. But the official also said bankers present were not "ecstatic" about the situation and that Turkish officials would be left to negotiate loan commitments in follow-up sessions.

Over all, Turkey has about \$25 billion in debt that must be paid back within a year, according to Moody's Investors Service Inc. Turkish banks hold about \$14 billion in such short-term loans. Though Turkey's overall debt burden is moderate, its banks could face a serious cash squeeze without continued foreign credits.

Turkey's aggressive program of selling state companies — it promised to speed up the sale of its telecommunications and airline companies in conjunction with the latest IMF loans — also depends on the willingness of foreign companies, and their bankers, to invest more money. Early indications are that there is no rush for the exits.

Renewal of Iraqi Shipments Brings Down Oil Prices

Reuters

LONDON — Oil prices dropped 7.6 percent Wednesday after Iraq resumed United Nations-monitored exports by loading an Indian-chartered tanker at the port of Mina al-Bakr on the Gulf.

Prices were prevented from falling even further when U.S. industry data showed that cold weather had eaten into heating-oil inventories in the United States, rekindling concerns of inadequate stocks for the winter. The price of a barrel of Brent crude for January delivery closed down \$1.92 at \$25.14 in London.

Iraqi and Indian officials said a vessel chartered by Indian Oil Corp. began receiving

Iraqi crude early Wednesday. On Dec. 1, Iraq put on hold its daily sale of 2.3 million barrels under the UN oil-for-food program.

Baghdad had been demanding that customers pay a surcharge of 40 cents a barrel directly to an Iraqi account, sidestepping UN controls. Buyers refused to pay the surcharge, saying it would violate sanctions imposed by the world body.

An Indian official said Indian Oil had paid no surcharge for shipments in December. Other Iraqi customers were lining up at the port hoping to get crude soon, but it was not clear whether Iraq would allow any further shipments unless the extra payments were made.

No action was seen at the Ceyhan, Turkey,

port that is the second UN-authorized export outlet for Iraqi oil, because of an absence of tankers there.

Fierce winds and freezing temperatures battered the eastern two-thirds of the United States on Wednesday after paralyzing much of the Midwest a day earlier.

With forecasters warning of worse weather to come, Americans can take little heart from industry data showing an unexpected draw on heating oil stocks. A report Tuesday by the American Petroleum Institute showed that U.S. heating oil inventories fell by 2.7 million barrels in the week that ended Friday as colder weather sparked demand.

Iran's unsteady ship

Guy Dinmore examines the mounting pressure on Mohammad Khatami from within his own party and from the Islamic opposition as he prepares to stand for a second presidential term

The power struggle in Iran between reformers and Islamic hardliners that began in the early days of the 1979 revolution has reached a new intensity. With an election only six months away, Mohammad Khatami, the country's reformist leader, is under pressure from all sides. Open conflict between extremists may be averted only because it risks bringing down the entire Islamic system.

Mr Khatami has not formally declared whether he will seek a second four-year term, but aides say in private they are confident he will run. If he does, few doubt his victory. Conservative opponents, still reeling from their defeat in parliamentary polls last February, have failed to find anyone of stature to lead them. Some suggest they may even boycott the elections in an attempt to discredit the electoral process.

But even if victory seems assured, mounting criticism of Mr Khatami's rule is likely to deny him the landslide achieved in 1997. And without a strong popular mandate, reformists – dominated by the left wing – fear they will be unable to dismantle the last power centres of the hardline right, primarily the judiciary.

Their aim is for the president to at least match his victory of May 1997, when he won 70 per cent of the vote in a huge turnout. But voter apathy, and a feeling among some Iranians that Mr Khatami has not delivered on his promises, seems likely to thwart that ambition.

The reformists' strategy is two-fold. First, Mr Khatami is drawing on Iran's tradition of finding heroes in figures struggling against the odds, some achieving victory in this world, others through martyrdom. Addressing more than 5,000 university students packed into a Tehran campus stadium, he described himself as "a very small drop in a very big ocean". With humility, he apologised for failing to meet all their demands for political and social change. And repeating an earlier statement that shocked the clerical establishment, he said he needed more authority to defend the constitution against its violators.

Mr Khatami needs the students, the driving force behind his surprise victory in 1997, to stay active. "Lots of efforts are being made [by rightwing extremists] to disappoint the nation in the future and undermine legal reforms," he told them. "In a passive society, the extremists would revive. This means domination by extremists and destruction of the revolution." Students chanted in reply: "Khatami, we support you!"

At the same time, the reformists are trying to discredit the conservatives by unmasking a clique of senior clerics and officials they say are behind what is known in Iran as the "serial killings". The architect of this second element to the electoral strategy – as he was in the par-



liamentary elections – is widely believed to be Saeed Hajjarian, a former senior official in the intelligence ministry who is close to Mr Khatami. Mr Hajjarian has been confined to a wheelchair since being shot in the face three weeks after the parliamentary polls. The motive for the attack by Islamist militants was widely believed to be an attempt to silence his exposure of a series of unresolved political killings.

"The terror machine functioned in the brain and nervous system of the Establishment," Mr Hajjarian said recently. "Of course the engine was ignited before the Second of Khoradad – the date of Mr Khatami's election victory – and had claimed some victims. Apparently those who made the machine forget to turn it off, or maybe they wanted it to continue working and claim more victims."

Mr Hajjarian's insights into the "terror machine", possibly gleaned from his connections to the intelligence ministry, were

delivered to the public mainly through Akbar Ganji, a journalist whose best-selling book, *Dungeon of Ghosts*, helped destroy the reputation of Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the top conservative candidate in February's parliamentary polls.

'A couple of years ago we did not dare to speak out about politics'

Retaliation was not long in coming. Mr Ganji was arrested last April and is among 17 activists and intellectuals on trial for attending a conference in Berlin that the prosecution maintains was part of a wider plot to overthrow Iran's Islamic system.

Last week, Mr Ganji, known to

his friends as a very stubborn and also religious man, used his appearance before Tehran's Revolutionary Court to do what he had not dared do before. He named eight prominent hardline clerics, including two former intelligence ministers, judges and a well-known ideologue, who he says were directly behind the killings. Analysts believe Mr Ganji may have been given a signal by associates in the public courtroom to reveal the names. Mr Ganji enjoys wide popularity among students. At last Wednesday's meeting with Mr Khatami, the slogans most chanted were "Ganji, Ganji" and "Free the political prisoners".

A third important figure in the reformist camp is Mustafa Tajzadeh, a deputy interior minister and also long-time associate of the president. He was in charge of the electoral commission that ran the parliamentary polls and has the same position for next May's elections. Reformists credit him with blocking attempts by

conservatives to rig the February elections, although some hardliners accused him of fraud. The response of the conservatives, who have used the judiciary to close down most reformist newspapers and put their editors on trial, has been one of continued repression.

So far, the reformists' approach appears to be partly succeeding. Many students appear to understand the limitations imposed on Mr Khatami and appreciate the need to move ahead slowly with reforms and keep within the law. "A couple of years ago we did not dare to speak out about politics," says Ladan, a 20-year-old student of economics. "The best achievement is freedom of expression."

But frustration is also evident. Reza, also 20, says he campaigned hard to get Mr Khatami elected in 1997 but will not vote for him again. "Khatami did not carry out his promises," he says. "He has not adopted any effective measures and, in practice, has done nothing. I don't know why, maybe to avoid bloodshed, because the hardliners have shown they are ready for that, or maybe he is greedy to hang on to power too."

Even among the president's advisers there are those who criticise him for being too cautious. Another common complaint is that Mr Khatami lacks management skills and knowledge of economics. Factional infighting has paralysed some ministries and led to opposing policies being implemented, as seen in the rivalry between the central bank and the finance ministry.

The economic crisis is seen by conservatives as Mr Khatami's weakest point. They paint a picture of a society in decay and losing its Islamic values. Hossein Shariatmadari, editor of the hardline Kayhan newspaper, has mocked Mr Khatami for defending "freedom of the opponent". More ominously, he added: "The defenders of the revolution will not sit passively for ever, something the men in power should understand... The day is not far off."

The man with the power to give that command to the hardline Basij militia is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader. Close to the conservatives, he gave the green light for the crackdown on the media as "bases of the enemy" but has also personally backed Mr Khatami at critical moments.

Some believe the future of the Islamic republic could hinge on an alliance between Mr Khatami and "moderate" conservatives, to keep in check the nationalists who seek a separation of church and state on the one hand, and the Islamists who oppose democratic reforms on the other. Reflecting that view, Ayatollah Mahmoud Shahrudi, conservative head of the judiciary, warned of the threat posed by personal and factional differences. "All of us are on board one ship," he said. "If God forbid, the ship is wrecked, all will drown."



What's in the pipeline? Saddam Hussein's next move over oil supplies remains unclear as he tries to keep sanctions in the headlines

AP

Saddam's empty oil threat wins concession from UN

Iraqi leader's gambit has not been a total failure, says **Roula Khalaf**

You can always count on Saddam Hussein to make a wrong move when his luck is picking up.

As the Iraqi president's rehabilitation in the Arab world was gathering steam and support for the 10-year-old United Nations sanctions was fast eroding, he turned off the flow two weeks ago of Iraq's 2.3m barrels a day of oil exports.

His aim was to provoke an oil crisis and wrest control of Iraq's oil resources from the UN. However, his oil weapon proved an empty threat, as prices lost more than \$5 a barrel.

Yet the controversy sparked by Iraqi demands that oil buyers pay a 50 cent surcharge into a special bank account unsupervised by the UN has not been a complete setback.

It satisfied Iraq's strategy of keeping sanctions in the headlines. It also led the UN to accept an Iraqi demand for the allocation of some funds out of the UN-monitored oil-for-food programme for the running of the local oil industry.

Iraq's next move is unclear. Although it has indicated that the crisis has been defused, it has yet to resume exports, amid reports that it continues to require companies to make an under-the-table payment, now reduced to 40 cents.

Some analysts say Baghdad could simply be delaying an embarrassing climbdown. Others, however, believe Iraq is determined to pursue a full assault on sanctions.

This would mean raising pressure on buyers to agree to an illegal surcharge while hoping a longer disruption in sales would drive oil prices up.

Most companies, however, are loath openly to contravene UN sanctions. And, in the current climate of oil prices, they have no reason to pay a higher-than-market price for Iraqi oil.

In any case, Iraq's behaviour is its most blatant effort to undermine the sanctions.

"The Iraqis are in the process of testing the boundaries of where sanctions lie. They misperceived the oil market but they got concessions out of the UN and they have consistently been getting concessions," says Raad al-Kadiri, analyst at Petroleum Finance in Washington.

The UN security council passed Resolution 1284 a year ago, calling for the return of UN arms inspectors and promising a lifting of sanctions when key disarmament tasks are fulfilled. But Baghdad has refused to comply, insisting the US would never agree to end the embargo.

Mr Saddam has nonetheless taken advantage of the carrots in the resolution, including the lifting of the ceiling on oil sales. Increased oil exports have led to a rise in smuggling. The expansion in revenues also has helped Iraq lure Arab and western businessmen to Baghdad, with the promise of large commercial contracts under the oil-for-food deal.

Bolstered by the attention and by the divisions over Iraq policy in the UN security council, the Iraqi leader's challenges have become more serious in recent months, with the aim of gaining direct access to Iraq's oil money. Under UN rules, all funds in the oil-for-food programme are controlled by the UN.

In the Baghdad trade fair in November, the largest since sanctions were imposed, Baghdad asked companies to break the sanctions and sign contracts outside the oil-for-food deal. Later that month, it made clear it was preparing to reopen a pipeline to Syria to sell oil outside the UN framework.

Iraq has been helped by a favourable regional and international environment. The US has been eager to avoid a

showdown with Baghdad during a presidential election year. So it has not pressed for a return of UN arms inspectors. Meanwhile, the collapse of the US-sponsored Middle East peace process has accentuated anti-US sentiment in the Arab world.

Officials have not lost all hope of rescuing UN resolution 1284. They insist the core sanctions remain in place and Iraq's gains are marginal.

True, Iraq controls only a tiny fraction of the more than \$20bn in oil sales expected for this year. And it agreed to start a dialogue with the office of Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, in January on ways to restore relations. But Mr Saddam is unlikely to change his position on the UN resolution or drop efforts to shatter the embargo unless he is assured that the next US administration will have a softer policy on Iraq.

"Part of Iraq's strategy is to show the security council that if nothing is done on Iraq policy, the sanctions will simply crumble," says a western official.

"The nightmare situation would be that sanctions erode, there are no inspections, and the security council does nothing – the credibility of the UN would then be at stake."

La Turquie bloque un accord sur les relations OTAN-Union européenne

BRUXELLES

de notre bureau européen

Deux jours de négociations et les pressions conjuguées de Bill Clinton et de la secrétaire d'Etat américaine Madeleine Albright n'y ont rien changé : la Turquie a refusé, vendredi 15 décembre, lors de la réunion du Conseil de l'Alliance atlantique à Bruxelles, de donner son accord au texte des « *arrangements permanents* » qui précise le futur mode de relations entre l'OTAN et les nouveaux organes de décision de la défense européenne.

Ankara ne veut pas que l'accès des Européens aux moyens et à la planification opérationnelle de l'OTAN soit automatique. Candidate à l'Union européenne, la Turquie ne réunira vraisemblablement pas de sitôt les critères de son entrée dans l'Union. Elle n'entend pas échanger pour le moment le pouvoir de veto dont elle dispose comme membre à part entière de l'OTAN contre un statut au rabais dans le cadre de la défense euro-

péenne. Ankara insiste pour participer aux décisions européennes dès lors que des moyens de l'OTAN sont engagés, et refuse d'accepter le compromis conclu entre les Quinze et les autres membres de l'OTAN prévoyant que les premiers auront « *un accès garanti et permanent* » aux moyens de l'OTAN.

Si l'affaire turque a accaparé les discussions, la réunion, à laquelle participaient les dix-neuf ministres des affaires étrangères de l'OTAN, a été émaillée par la polémique liée au caractère « *autonome* » ou « *indépendant* » de la défense européenne. Lord Robertson, le secrétaire général de l'OTAN, ainsi que plusieurs ministres se sont relayés pour affirmer que cette polémique, générée par la position de la France, était largement artificielle. Un dîner, offert vendredi soir par Hubert Védrine à ses homologues de l'OTAN et de l'UE (23 pays étaient représentés), avait d'ailleurs pour vocation de marquer que la construction de l'Eu-

rope de la défense se fait « *en bonne intelligence entre les deux organisations* ».

COEXISTENCE FUTURE

Les divergences de fond restent cependant récurrentes entre certains pays européens et les Etats-Unis, s'agissant de la future coexistence entre les deux organisations. Des propos de Jacques Chirac sur l'« *indépendance* » de la défense européenne ont alimenté la méfiance de Washington, qui soupçonne la France de vouloir réduire au strict minimum les liens de l'Union avec l'OTAN. William Cohen, le secrétaire à la défense, a mis en garde contre une évolution qui consisterait à faire de l'OTAN une « *relique du passé* ».

Le texte adopté à Nice prévoit que l'Union doit avoir une « *capacité autonome de décision et d'action dans le domaine de la sécurité et de la défense* ». Cette autonomie doit-elle aller pour les Quinze jusqu'à se doter d'une « *capacité de planification opérationnelle* » dis-

tingue de celle de l'OTAN ? En précisant la position française, le Quai d'Orsay a jeté de l'huile sur le feu : « *Cette Europe de la défense doit être naturellement coordonnée avec l'Alliance mais, pour ce qui concerne son élaboration et sa mise en œuvre, elle doit être indépendante par rapport au Shape [le quartier général des forces de l'OTAN] : coordonnée mais indépendante.* »

Vendredi soir, Hubert Védrine a estimé que, lorsque les Européens utiliseront les moyens de l'OTAN, ils passeront par la planification du Shape ; en revanche, sans moyens de l'OTAN, cette planification sera assurée par « *les états-majors des pays européens* ». Lord Robertson a seulement admis que, s'agissant d'opérations militaires « *à très petite échelle* », les Quinze pourraient utiliser les moyens de planification français ou britanniques, sans qu'il s'agisse pour autant de recréer un « *nouveau Shape* ».

Laurent Zecchini

Iran : M. Khatami perd un partisan important dans le gouvernement

TÉHÉRAN. La démission, jeudi 14 décembre, du ministre réformateur de la culture Ataollah Mohajerani porte un coup très dur au chef de l'Etat iranien, Mohammad Khatami, à six mois de l'élection présidentielle, estiment les analystes. Après huit mois d'hésitation, M. Khatami a accepté jeudi soir la démission de son ministre le plus populaire, qui incarnait la volonté d'ouverture et l'ambition de réformer la Ré-

publique islamique dans le cadre constitutionnel.

« *M. Khatami perd un partisan, mais surtout un atout politique de très grand poids au sein du gouvernement. C'est le fondement même de l'action du président qui est atteint. C'est une victoire à l'usure des conservateurs* », explique le politologue Iraj Rachti.

Jeudi, le président réformateur, qui n'a pas encore annoncé s'il briguerait un second mandat, a cédé à la demande insistante de son ministre, démissionnaire notamment parce qu'il ne pouvait s'opposer aux purges massives qui ont frappé la presse réformatrice. Une quinzaine de quotidiens favorables au président Khatami ont été suspendus ou fermés depuis avril par la justice, dominée par les conservateurs. - (AFP)

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, SATURDAY-SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16-17, 2000

Ouster of Iran Reformist Drops Curtain on Liberal Era

By Geneive Abdo

International Herald Tribune

TEHRAN — In forcing out as minister of culture and Islamic guidance the man who had come to symbolize free expression in Iran, the country's conservatives have effectively put an end to a period of liberalization in the press and the arts.

President Mohammed Khatami, yielding to pressure from conservatives, accepted the resignation of Ataollah Mohajerani late Thursday.

Mr. Mohajerani had been at the forefront of Mr. Khatami's effort to revise cultural affairs and was the target of conservatives for nearly

four years. His tenure saw dozens of lively newspapers and journals flourish and the debut of films and art previously forbidden.

The newspapers inspired a wide following, turning public opinion into a political force unseen for at least half a century.

In his resignation letter, Mr. Mohajerani, 46, expressed a sense of defeat.

"The conditions and requirements that have taken shape in the realms of art, culture and the intellect have made it impossible for me to continue my duties," he said. "We have not achieved any success worthy of our nation, artists and writers."

The supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, ordered Mr. Khatami to accept

Mr. Mohajerani's resignation, which was written many months ago under pressure from conservatives, according to informed sources.

The order appears to have ended any thread of independence that Mr. Khatami had maintained from the conservative establishment.

Now, nearly all domestic policy is controlled by Ayatollah Khamenei.

Conservatives began an aggressive assault against the press in the spring after reformists won a near majority in parliamentary elections in February. Voters were influenced by the candidates that reformist newspapers had endorsed and went to the polls to put them in office.

In April, conservatives in the judiciary began closing newspapers and journals until nearly 30 had been banned by late summer. The conservatives then shifted their focus to the foreign press reporting from Iran. Foreign journalists are now routinely criticized in conservative newspapers, and some foreign correspondents have been accused in these papers of being spies for Western governments.

Mr. Mohajerani, whose ministry had granted licenses to the banned newspapers, was sure to be the fall man. Under continuous attack, he wrote his political epitaph in a newspaper in May.

Until Thursday, Mr. Khatami had managed

to resist the forces calling for Mr. Mohajerani to resign. But the president, complaining recently that he had limited power to govern Iran, was forced to surrender.

In removing Mr. Khatami's front man from the political scene, the conservatives have eliminated the buffer between their attacks and the president.

Now, Mr. Khatami is likely to be their direct target as he prepares to run for re-election in May, analysts said. The president's potential conservative rival in the race, Mohammed Reza Bahonar, last week began a direct assault on Mr. Khatami's policies.

By revealing the president's impotence

over the Ministry of Culture, one of the few institutions he is fully empowered to run, the conservatives aim to discourage Mr. Khatami's supporters from voting.

In his landslide victory in 1997, Mr. Khatami won nearly 70 percent of the vote by vowing to create a free press and enforce the rule of law. This time, the conservatives hope his margin of victory will be far less due to voter apathy over the president's failure to deliver on these two promises.

Look Again at the Mideast and Spot the Importance of Iran

By Stanley A. Weiss

LONDON — The incoming Bush-Cheney administration will need a new road map for dealing with the Middle East.

The United States should continue its strong ties to Israel, the only liberal democracy from the Atlantic Ocean across Africa to the western frontier of India, while recognizing that there may not be a comprehensive peace between Jews and Arabs for many years.

But America must not ignore the geography of oil and powerful nations in charting its greater Middle East policy. Egypt, Turkey and Saudi Arabia have clearly been drawn in. The one conspicuous omission is Iran.

Iran is pivotal to the West's strategic interests. It bridges the Middle East, Central Asia and the Indian Subcontinent.

Until recently, Washington's policy toward Tehran was fixated on the 1979 seizure of the U.S. Embassy and the holding of American hostages for 444 days, even though the flame of Iran's revolution for export died on June 3, 1989, along with Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

A new era began in 1997 with the surprise victory of a little-known, reform-minded cleric, Mohammed Khatami, who was elected president promising to restore the rule of law and encourage freedom and democracy. Since then Iran has experienced what many call its second revolution.

The republic's first municipal elections put almost 200,000 moderates into office. This year, in the freest parliamentary

elections in Iranian history, 83 percent of the 39 million eligible voters turned out, giving the reformers at least 70 percent of the 290-seat Parliament.

But controlling the executive branch, local councils and the legislature does not mean ultimate power. Political reform is stymied by Islamic hard-liners who can veto decisions of Parliament. And under the Islamic constitution a "Supreme Leader," with authority directly from the Prophet Mohammed, sits above the president and controls the military, the judiciary, the intelligence services, the Islamic business conglomerates and the electronic media.

Still, social reform is flourishing. Women remain second-class citizens in terms of jobs and legal status, but they have made huge strides in education. Their role in government and society is greater than in practically any "secular" Muslim state.

There are more educated people in Iran than in any other country in the region.

Most important are the "children of the revolution," the 40 million Iranians who have no memory of the shah.

The real power of the president lies with the people. Just last month he gave what sounded like his first campaign speech for the presidential election next May. He called for full implementation of the constitution, a civil society bolstered by citizen participation, détente in international relations and an all-out effort to create balanced and sustainable development.

But three days earlier he had accused his hard-line opponents of constitutional violations and admitted that after three and a half years as president he was powerless to stop them. He has not made clear whether, in fact, he will run for a second term.

This ambiguity has convinced the reform camp, which has been impatient with the pace of change, and so-called conservatives who have constantly thwarted his efforts that it is time to get serious about compromise. They both realize that without the reform movement there would be a great risk of a popular explosion.

Washington should do all it can to assure a second Khatami administration. The animosity between Iran and America is unnatural. As the world's largest importer of oil and exporter of grain, the United States has a symbiotic need for Iran. Since sanctions on the sale of food were eased last year, Iran has become a major customer for American corn.

Vice President-elect Richard Cheney, when he was CEO of the world's largest oil field service company, called for an end to the ban on investment by American companies in Iran, calling the policy "a mistake." The Bush administration should work with Congress to lift all nonmilitary trade sanctions.

Areas of common interest include containing Iraq's lawless regime and stopping arms from going into and heroin from coming out of Afghanistan.

Foreign Minister Kamal Kharazi, speaking about his country's policy of détente, says Iran is "ready to act as an anchor of stability for resolving regional problems and crises." That is an offer the incoming administration can't afford to refuse.

The writer is founder and chairman of Business Executives for National Security and former chairman of American Premier, a mining and chemicals company. He contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

**IRAQ REPORT,
IRAQI ARMY ASSAULT ON YEZIDI TOWN FAILS.**

Volume 3, Number 42 RFE/RL

15 December 2000

An Iraqi army unit laid siege to the town of Ba'adre and surrounding territory in the Shaykhan Administrative District of the Dohuk Governorate but later was forced to withdraw, Kurdish Satellite TV from Salah Al-Din reported on 10 December. The station reported that the inhabitants of that area, most of whom are Yezidis, held "demonstrations and marches and reaffirmed their loyalty to the Barzani path and renewed their support to the Kurdistan regional government." At that point, the Iraqis withdrew.

This is the first time the Iraqis have surrounded a town in this region with the clear intention of capturing it. Ba'adre is only 40 Kilometers south of Dohuk. Meanwhile, according to diplomatic sources in Ankara, the United States, Britain, and the Turkish government were aware of the explosive situation and there has been a flurry of activity to prevent a major incident.

Following the Iraqi departure, the demonstrators also reaffirmed that they "are the deep-rooted sons of the Kurdish nation." Kameran Xeyribeg, a Yezidi elder, said that "Let the whole world know that the Yezidis are Kurds. They are one of the most deep-rooted Kurds. Today, we, with our Muslim Kurdish brothers who are fasting today, are defending ourselves and the district of Ba'adre. We will defend the land of Kurdistan to the death."

The Iraqi National Congress (INC) response to Baghdad's assault was sharp. Sharif Ali bin Al-Husseyin said that the repeated attacks against Iraqi anti-aircraft facilities threatening the planes patrolling the two no-fly zones were "ineffective in changing the regime," according to London's "Daily Telegraph" of 13 December. He further asserted that "we believe the only way to save the Iraqi people is to change the rules of engagement." A spokesman for the British Ministry of Defense, however, said that the rules of engagement were intended to protect pilots and not "not for attacking Iraqi troops on the ground." He added that "it is not our policy to work for the overthrow of Saddam Husseyin." (David Nissman)

* * * * *

IRAQ REPORT, Volume 3, Number 42 RFE/RL
15 December 2000

INC CONDEMNS INTRA-KURDISH FIGHTING.

The Iraq National Congress on 12 December condemned ongoing PKK attacks against PUK-controlled Iraqi Kurdistan, apparently fearful that Baghdad may exploit them and invade. Meanwhile, pro-PKK "MEDYA-TV" on 13 December carried a statement by PKK Council of Leaders member Nizamettin Tas, which said that "we are going to make the PUK's peshmerga strength ineffective. We will not finish it off, but we will render it ineffective. This does not mean taking cities or seizing land. It means breaking their will for war," reported the "Kurdish Observer" on 13 December.

The most worrying feature of the current situation is a report that Iraqi forces have been deployed along the border with Kurdistan, with some outlets, including London's "Al-Hayat" speculating that these forces may exploit the intra-Kurdish feuding to invade PUK-controlled territory. PUK sources have pointed to the deployment of Iraqi forces in areas controlled by the 1st Corps, on the Kirkuk border, and the 2nd Corps, on the Diyala border. Additionally, there reportedly are Republican Guard artillery units, infantry divisions, and an armored division deployed in that region.

"Al-Hayat" repoted that there is already an Iraqi "operations room" in the Qadir Karim area, which "includes representatives from the Kurdistan Workers' Party [PKK], the Mujahedin-e Khalq...and Kurds loyal to Baghdad." And the paper notes further that Saddam Husseyin met four times last week with Defense Minister Staff General Sultan Hashim Ahmad as well as the Iraqi leader's son, Qusay. (David Nissman)

* * * * *

Iraq started electricity embargo on the city of "Dhok"

Kurdish Flash News - 16 Dec 2000

The voice of America in Kurdish mentioned today (15 Dec 2000) that after the occupation of the Iraqi colonizing army for the Kurdish small town of "Baadreh" in south Kurdistan, for 2 days, the Iraqi colonizing regime had cut off electricity from the city of "Dhok" in south Kurdistan, completely, starting from 14 Dec 2000.

The voice of America in Kurdish also mentioned that in addition to the problems that our people in "Dhok" are suffering from, due to lack of electricity, this lack of electricity caused lack of water too, and now our people in "Dhok" are suffering from hard problems, during this winter time. Kurdish flash news is begging all the Kurdish nation to run for the aid of our suffering people in "Dhok", especially during this winter period. [Edited by KM]

* * * * *

Turkish deputies approve continued patrols of Iraqi no-fly zone

AFP - 17 December 2000

ANKARA, Dec 17 (AFP) - Turkey's parliament on Sunday extended the mandate of US and British planes to patrol a no-fly zone in northern Iraq, despite Iraqi calls on Ankara to withdraw its consent, Anatolia news agency said.

Operation Northern Watch (ONW), a force of some 45 US and British planes charged with enforcing the no-fly zone north of the 36th parallel to protect local Kurds, is based at Incirlik in the southern Turkish province of Adana.

ONW began on January 1, 1997, since when the Turkish parliament has renewed its mandate every six months.

It was preceded by Operation Provide Comfort, which ran from April 1991 to December 1996.

Sunday's decision extends ONW for another six months from December 31. Baghdad does not recognise the northern no-fly zone, nor a similar exclusion zone in the south of the country aimed at protecting the Shiite Muslim population. Neither is authorised by any specific United Nations resolution.

Iraqi forces have regularly fired on patrol aircraft since US-British air raids on Baghdad in December 1998. The US says the planes only target military objectives in self-defence. Iraq says that civilians are frequently hit.

In October, Turkish deputies threatened not to extend the ONW mandate if the US Congress recognized the controversial killings of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire as genocide. The speaker of the US House of Representatives, Dennis Hastert, withdrew the bill after US President Clinton cited national security interests, notably the risk of damaging ties with NATO ally Turkey.

Turkish Defense Minister Sabahattin Cakmakoglu told parliament Sunday that Ankara benefitted from ONW in its pursuit of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which has long used northern Iraq -- outside Baghdad's control since the Gulf War -- as a launch pad for attacks on Turkish territory. Ankara says some 4,000 rebels have crossed to northern Iraq since autumn 1999 when the PKK said it was halting its armed struggle and withdrawing from Turkey to seek a peaceful resolution to the Kurdish conflict.

Much to Iraqi anger, Turkey frequently launches incursions into the area to hunt the rebels.

At the same time it firmly supports Iraq's territorial integrity out of fears that any move towards Kurdish independence in northern Iraq could encourage its own separatist-minded Kurds. "We see this region as an indivisible part of Iraq. We hope that the current extraordinary circumstances will be eradicated as soon as possible," Cakmakoglu said, according to Anatolia.

Some 36,500 people have been killed in clashes between Turkish troops and the PKK since 1984 when the rebels took up arms for Kurdish self-rule in southeast Turkey.

* * * * *

Ayatollahs wage war on Internet: Montazeri.com vs. Montazery.com

AFP - 15 December 2000

PARIS, Dec 15 (AFP) - Dissident cleric Hossein Ali Montazeri, once in line to be Iran's supreme leader, this week dropped a political bombshell by publishing his memoirs on the Internet and provoking a cyber war with the leadership in Tehran.

Montazeri, 79, who had been chosen to succeed Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, founder of the Islamic republic, has been living under house arrest in Qom, south of Tehran, ever since he was forced to resign weeks before Khomeini's death in 1989.

A fierce opponent of Iran's current supreme spiritual leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Montazeri in recent years has from time to time managed to make his opinion known through his sons.

But he struck a hard blow on Monday when he published a 600-page memoir on an Internet site based in Britain, which his sons veried as his work. The document, published in Persian and available at www.montazeri.com, provides important testimony to some of the most dramatic moments of the revolution and the war with Iraq.

Authorities in Tehran have so far not publicly reacted to Montazeri's memoirs but on Thursday a counter-site -- www.montazery.com -- appeared on the internet and described itself as representing the office of Khamenei.

Most noteworthy on the first site are Montazeri's remarks on how he tried in 1988 to prevent the summary execution of thousands of opponents to the Khomeini regime.

He states that Khomeini ordered the executions after the opposition launched a fierce offensive against Iranian troops from bases in Iraq. "All those against the revolution must disappear and quickly be executed," the cleric quotes Khomeini as saying in a written note.

Montazeri said he decided to intervene to prevent the killing of 2,800 to 3,800 men by writing a letter to Khomeini in which he appealed for compassion.

"I told myself 'I am after all the Imam's successor and I took part in this revolution'," he says in his memoirs. "If an innocent man is killed, I am also responsible."

* * * * *

Analysis: Powell faces an old enemy

16 December 2000 UPI

By ROLAND FLAMINI

WASHINGTON, Dec 16 (UPI) - Gen. Colin Powell emerged as one of the most admired U.S. military leaders of the 20th century when in 1990, as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, he planned and ran Desert Storm, the successful offensive to free Kuwait from the troops of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

A decade later Powell, as the newly appointed U.S. Secretary of State, once again faces a still defiant Saddam Hussein. And in Powell's first press conference Saturday, immediately following the announcement of his appointment, containment of the Iraqi dictator was high on his list of foreign policy priorities.

"We will work with our allies to re-energize the sanctions (against Iraq)," Powell said. A further U.S. goal, he went on, was the resumption of UN inspections to ensure that Iraq was not producing weapons of mass destruction.

Sanctions against Saddam Hussein virtually collapsed in the past four months, and Powell will have tough time trying to persuade Washington's allies to close the net around the Iraqi regime. France, Jordan, Russia, and other nations have resumed commercial flights to Baghdad, arguing that 10 years of sanctions have brought deprivation to the Iraqi population without lessening Saddam's grip on his country. Saddam has also failed to live up to his agreement to allow UN inspection teams to search for "evil technologies," as Powell referred to weapons of mass destruction. Two years ago, Saddam expelled the weapons inspectors from Iraq, and none have been allowed to return.

If the battle on the diplomatic front doesn't succeed, Powell hinted stronger action: "I don't know what it will take to bring Saddam Hussein to his senses. But we are in a strong position, he is in a weak position, and I think it is possible...to continue to contain him and then confront him should that become necessary." Recently Saddam tried to persuade the UN to allow more flexibility in how he spends his oil revenues. When the UN refused, he threatened to halt Iraqi oil production altogether, thus precipitating a fresh crisis. But his threat was withdrawn when Saudi Arabia said it would increase its own output to make up the shortage.

U.S.-British combat flights enforce the no-fly zone in the northern corner of the country to protect Kurdish refugees living there from Iraqi attack, and the U.S. also enforces a no-fly zone in the south, but in other respects the Clinton administration has soft-pedaled its response to Baghdad's continued defiance.

Analysts think it likely that Saddam won't be able to resist the temptation to test the new administration of President-elect George W. Bush, so Secretary Powell's first challenge could well come from his old nemesis.

How Powell responds will be an indication of what he means by "confrontation." One possible course of action could be a greater willingness to support Saddam Hussein's opposition, principally the Iraqi National Congress. Despite U.S. congressional approval, the Clinton administration balked at giving the group the military hardware they say they needed to topple Saddam. Powell may now have reason to regret his role -- which was said to have been pivotal -- in President George Bush's 1991 decision not to pursue the Iraqi army all the way to Baghdad and topple Saddam Hussein.

But Powell has a deserved reputation for being cautious, which some even regard as indecision. Visitors to the Pentagon during the Gulf War will recall that under the glass top of his desk was a quotation from Thucydides, the Greek historian: "Of all the signs of power, restraint impresses men most." If the quotation itself doesn't make the transition to his office in the Department of State, the sentiment surely will.

* * * * *

Turkish president sidelines anti-Muslim chief prosecutor

18 Dec 2000 Agence France-Presse

ANKARA, Dec 18 (AFP) - Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer on Monday denied a second term in office to the country's top prosecutor, who had led a crackdown against Muslim activists, and appointed a replacement.

Vural Savas, who held the post since 1997, was the driving force behind two important court cases closely linked to Turkey's turbulent politics: the ban against the Islamist Welfare Party and later, its successor, the Virtue Party. Sezer chose Sabih Kanadoglu, a judge at the appeals court, to take the office of the court's chief prosecutor as of January 21 next year, a statement released by the president's office said. Kanadoglu, 62, was one of the five top candidates designated by the appeals court to guide the president in his selection of a new prosecutor.

Savas, also 62, came out first in the election with 153 votes, while Kanadoglu was second with 104 votes. The Turkish president is obliged to choose a new prosecutor for the court from the five candidates determined by the election, but he is not forced to choose the candidate who garnered the most votes.

In 1997, Savas asked for a ban on the Islamist Welfare Party, which was in power then in coalition with a conservative party under heavy pressure from the staunchly secular army. In early 1998, the constitutional court banned Welfare for anti-secular activities and barred Welfare leader and former prime minister Necmettin Erbakan and his close aides from politics for a period of five years. In May 1999, the hawkish Savas moved against the Virtue Party,

Welfare's successor, demanding that the party be banned and all of its 103 deputies in the 550-seat parliament be removed from office.

Savas accuses Virtue of exploiting religious beliefs, inciting protests against a ban on headscarves in universities, and of orchestrating a failed bid by one of its MPs last year to take an oath in parliament wearing a headscarf.

The case is currently being heard at the constitutional court. Savas has also demanded the constitutional court to ban Turkey's main Kurdish party, the People's Democracy Party (HADEP), for alleged ties to Kurdish rebels behind a 15-year insurgency in the country's southeast. The court has yet to decide on the case. Savas was due to retire in 2003.

Iran Sets June 8, 2001 for Presidential Polls

Reuters - 17 December 2000

TEHRAN (Reuters) - Iran's constitutional watchdog, the Guardian Council, Sunday set June 8, 2001 as the date for presidential elections, the official IRNA news agency said.

With just under six months left before the polls, it is not yet clear whether incumbent President Mohammad Khatami will stand for re-election. He had announced he would run for a second term in office, but later said he was still considering whether to do so.

Nor was it clear whether conservatives would put up a candidate against the popular Khatami, who has tried to institute moderate reforms in the Islamic Republic since he was first elected to office in May 1997.

Khatami's efforts to liberalize Iran have been frustrated by the Guardian Council. The panel, dominated by conservative clerics appointed by supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has the right to veto laws it considers un-Islamic or unconstitutional.

Khatami said in a keynote speech earlier this month that he lacked the authority to fulfil his election promise to ease freedom of expression and ensure the rule of law.

More than 30 newspapers have been banned and Culture Minister Ataollah Mohajerani, the chief architect of the brief breath of freedom in the press and the arts, resigned under pressure from the conservatives led by Khamenei.

Meanwhile some reformers, unhappy with the lack of progress made by Khatami have mooted putting up their own candidate for the polls, but again no name has clearly emerged.

The government has suggested holding by-elections on the same day as the presidential polls for 18 seats in the 290-member parliament left vacant after general elections in May when the Guardian Council canceled those results citing irregularities.

But the Guardian Council has said the by-elections should be held before that time, but has yet to set a date.

* * * * *

Khatami weakened ahead of polls by loss of allies

AFP - 17 December 2000

TEHRAN, Dec 17 (AFP) - Iran's reformist President Mohammad Khatami faces elections in six months, weakened by the loss of three key allies, respectively jailed, maimed for life in an assassination bid, and forced to resign under relentless conservative pressure.

The last to go was Ataollah Mohajerani, whose resignation finally took effect Sunday after a long battle with conservatives who reacted to the freedom he had given the press by closing down virtually every pro-reform daily through their control of the courts.

Before that Khatami saw Abdollah Nuri, 51, jailed for five years at the end of November last year by the ultra-conservative Special Court for Clergy, a tribunal he refused to recognise. Nuri, a former interior minister and vice-president, was found guilty of anti-Islamic propaganda in the newspaper he ran, after a lengthy trial which he used as a platform to ridicule the conservatives and plead for a less rigid conception of Islam.

Nuri had been tapped to lead the reformist campaign in the parliamentary elections which took place last February, and be speaker of the resulting assembly.

While the polling produced a landslide for reformists, overturning the conservatives' control of the parliament, they lacked a leader. Newcomers like Mohammad-Reza Khatami and Ali-Reza Nuri were the most prominent, but more because of their position as the respective brothers of the president and the former minister.

The speaker of parliament is Mehdi Karubi, a former Islamic radical who had held the post before, a compromise

choice unsatisfying to many voters. The second Khatami ally to go was Said Hajarian, 47, another newspaper chief and a key adviser to the president, who was gunned down in Tehran on March 12.

Ideologue Hajarian was the man who conceived Khatami's reformist programme, but he is now confined to a wheelchair and his voice is almost silent, literally because of his injuries and figuratively because of the crackdown on the press.

A pro-conservative student was jailed for 15 years for shooting him after a hasty trial which reformists alleged was rushed to allow those actually responsible to go free. Mohajerani, 46, a protege of the president, pushed the Khatami line from within the government, becoming the darling of intellectuals of all stripes, but particularly film-makers and writers.

Slammed persistently by conservatives, who were backed up by Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Mohajerani finally decided to quit in April, powerless to stem the crackdown on the press engineered by the conservative-led courts.

Khatami staved off the resignation of his most popular and pugnacious minister for eight months, before finally accepting it last week. Mohajerani's successor has not yet been named. If he is to run for a second term, Khatami will have to revise his strategy rapidly and find influential new aides, as well as campaign without the aid of a friendly press.

While many newspapers are theoretically only suspended, there is no sign of them reopening. At the same time, many Khatami allies have also been hauled before the courts because their activities as journalists or clerics have upset the conservative religious establishment. Several are being prosecuted for their participation at a conference in Berlin in April which has been branded anti-Islamic, and some face the death penalty for an offence of "warring against God."

Khatami meanwhile complains that he is powerless under the constitution to stem what reformists see as a campaign to stop him standing for the presidency again. The conservative-run Council of Guardians, the elections authority, announced Sunday that the polls would take place on June 8 and not May 29, the date originally mooted, state radio reported.

* * * * *

Syrian Human Rights Out of Hiding

AP - 17 Dec 2000

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) - A Syrian human rights group that spent 10 years underground and saw its founders imprisoned has come out into the open, publicly urging President Bashar Assad on Sunday to promote further political reforms.

"In light of the positive and related political developments in Syria, the human rights group has emerged once again to work in the open, reasserting its demand for a general amnesty for all political detainees," the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights in Syria said Sunday.

Assad ordered the release of 600 political prisoners last month - a move human rights activists and his opponents welcomed as a step away from the policies of his father, the late President Hafez Assad, who was intolerant of dissent during his 30-year rule.

The younger Assad, who became president a month after his father died in June, also ordered that the infamous Mezze prison be converted into a modern hospital. Additionally, he signed an amnesty freeing thousands of convicted deserters and smugglers.

Earlier this month, Assad allowed all political parties, allies of the ruling Baath Party, to issue their own newspapers.

Aktham Neissa, leader of the human rights committee, said the recent political overtures are considered as a "positive indication but not sufficient."

"The respect of all human rights in Syria and the rejection of any violation to these rights are our main demand," Neissa told The Associated Press.

The committee demanded a fair and open trial for those accused of crimes against state security and guarantees for the return of all self-exiled opponents.

Neissa, a lawyer from the northern town of Latakia, helped found the group in 1991 and spent seven years in detention until the late Assad pardoned him in 1998.

"The situation is much better now as we are no longer subject to any kind of harassment, but more steps are needed," said Hasiba Abdul-Rahman, 41, a committee member who has been detained three times. She said all the founding members of the group had been jailed at various times.

Syrians, particularly young ones, had looked to the younger Assad, 35, for reform after decades of autocratic rule under his father. At home, the new president appears to have responded, with the prisoner release following an unprecedented loosening of restrictions on debate.

* * * * *

Iraqi Paper Calls America's Powell 'War Criminal'

Reuters 18/12/2000

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - An Iraqi government newspaper on Monday fiercely attacked U.S. President-elect George W. Bush and his Secretary of State-designate Colin Powell whom it branded a Gulf War "criminal."

Bush's father, former president George Bush, is reviled in Iraq for leading the multi-national coalition that ejected Iraqi troops from Kuwait in 1991 and for spearheading painful U.N. economic sanctions.

Powell, as then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, oversaw the U.S. military effort during the Gulf War. He has now called for the sanctions to be "re-energized."

"The son of the war criminal (George) Bush has nominated a war criminal, the retired Colin Powell who took part in the aggression against Iraq, as secretary of state to replace Zionist Madeleine Albright," the newspaper al-Jumhuriya said.

"It seems that the first priority of Powell is Iraq which was able to defeat him during the military confrontation (in 1991) as the American administration had failed to achieve its aggressive and political goals against Iraq," the paper said.

Powell said on Friday Iraq had not lived up to its obligations under a 1991 truce which called for Baghdad to account for its weapons of mass destruction and arms technology programs.

"They have not yet fulfilled those agreements and my judgement is that sanctions in some form must be kept in place until they do so," Powell said. "We will work with our allies to re-energize the sanctions regime."

Sanctions have been eroded this year, with many countries, including Russia, France and Arab nations, resuming flights to Baghdad and moving to revive trade with the oil-rich state.

A senior Iraqi military commander dismissed Powell's comments on Sunday. On Saturday, Iraq's deputy prime minister, giving the first official Iraqi reaction to Bush's presidential election victory, said Baghdad was not concerned with the new U.S. president as American policy toward Iraq would not change.

Many Iraqis, reeling under the sanctions imposed for Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait, believe Bush's father was the driving force behind the Western campaign to isolate and punish their country.

"It seems that the new American administration has nothing new but to continue its aggressive policy and conspiracy against independent nations," Jumhuriya said.

Lieutenant-General Shaheen Yassin, the commander of Iraqi anti-aircraft defenses, said on Sunday if the new U.S. administration threatened to attack Iraq, Iraqi air defenses were ready to retaliate. "We are fully alert, ready with our weapons in our hands to fight against any new threat," he said.

Analysis: Syria seeks to end isolation

UPI - 18 December 2000 13:10 (ET)

By THANAA IMAM

DAMASCUS, Syria, Nov. 18 (UPI) – Syria's recent overtures toward its neighbors has helped it avoid the international isolation it could have faced because of its delay in making peace with Israel and in introducing much-needed economic reforms, analysts have said.

Since he came to power after the death of his father, Hafez Assad, earlier this year, Syrian President Bashar Assad has begun a process of economic reforms and Syrian sources have confirmed his eagerness to present a different strategic view of the region.

Syrian-Iraqi relations, which were frozen for some 20 years following an exchange of bombing accusations, have improved since they were restored in 1997. Since then, Syria has reopened its border with Iraq for trade and has made clear that it does not want to get involved politically with the Iraqi regime, which was punished with U.N. sanctions for invading Kuwait in 1990. Recently, however, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Sharaa said both countries were moving toward establishing diplomatic ties despite disapproval from most of the West.

Syria has maintained a careful approach toward Iraq. Although it allowed Iraq to open an interests office in its capital, Damascus, and received many high-ranking Iraqi officials, it has so far refrained from reciprocating the moves. It has maintained that relations with Iraq do not exceed economic ties because it wants to preserve its ties with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The two countries are becoming closer, however. Iraqi Airways opened an office in Damascus and Syria, violating the U.N. sanctions, sent several planes with humanitarian aid and official delegations to Iraq. Baghdad returned the gesture, sending flight to Damascus with Deputy Prime Minister Tarek Aziz.

A Western diplomat in Damascus told United Press International that though Syrian-Iraqi ties had not reached "a strategic level," the United States "was not looking with satisfaction at such a rapprochement."

The United States is reportedly annoyed by reports that Iraq reopened its oil pipeline to Syria after 18 years and resumed pumping oil from its Karkuk fields on Nov. 20 to Syria's Banias Port at a level of 150,000 barrels a day. Iraq reportedly plans to increase production to 200,000 barrels a day at a later stage. Syrian sources said the pipeline was not fully operational.

According to analysts, Syria's overtures to Iraq has prompted the United States to push some Lebanese political parties to question Syria's military presence in Lebanon. There have been mounting calls by some Lebanese Christian opposition leaders led by Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir for the withdrawal of Syrian forces from Lebanon. Some 35,000 Syrian troops have been stationed in two-thirds of Lebanon since 1976 when they were first dispatched to help stop the country's then raging civil war that ended in 1990.

Syrian sources said Washington had not officially informed Syrian officials of its annoyance with the rapprochement, though they believed the United States was annoyed.

The Western diplomat said the Syrians were trying to separate government and party relations with Iraq. Reconciliation between the governments is possible, the diplomat said, but not the parties. Both countries are ruled by rival wings of the Baath Party, which split in 1966.

Syria is also cementing ties with Turkey, a key NATO ally. A 1998 security agreement succeeded in putting Syrian-Turkish relations back on the right track. The accord came after Turkey sent military reinforcements to the border with Syria following accusations that Damascus was sheltering Kurdish leader Abdallah Ocalan whose guerrillas were engaged in a separatist war against Turkey. Determined to improve ties, Syria relinquished its claim of the Iskenderon port, which was annexed to Turkey by the then-French mandate forces in 1939, and of demands for a larger share of the Euphrates River. It has also stopped criticizing the 1996 Turkish-Israeli military accord, which it first said was meant to "squeeze Syria like a pair of pincers."

Both countries appear ready to improve ties and even discuss a declaration of principles, which political analysts say could be possible despite some conflicts over water sharing and the border. Syria wants a final agreement over the distribution of the Euphrates. According to the 1987 accord, Turkey gives Syria 500 cubic meters of water. Syria wants 666 cubic meters.

Diplomatic sources said both countries were serious about improving ties and consolidating them in various sectors. Syrian Deputy President Abdel Halim Khaddam visited the Turkish capital, Damascus, recently and relayed his country's wish to conclude a global accord when Syrian President Bashar Assad visits Turkey as expected early next year.

The said important steps had been taken by the two countries, with planned visits by oil and tourism ministers and trade expected to touch \$700 million this year and \$1 billion in 2001.

Analysts said Syria's relations with Jordan were more complicated. Despite Jordan's 1994 peace accord with Israel, a political decision to develop bilateral ties with the Hashemite kingdom was adopted after the death of Jordan's King Hussein in 1999. While late Syrian President Hafez Assad's participation at Hussein's funeral came as a surprise, his son and successor, Bashar, has a personal friendship with Jordan's King Abdallah.

Syria has also refrained from criticizing the Jordanian-Israeli peace accord. Sources said Damascus wanted to prevent a deeper split among Arab countries. In a sign of closer ties, Syria pumped millions of cubic meters of waters into Jordan despite its own severe drought. The countries also agreed to construct a "unity dam" on the Yarmouk River with estimated water reserves of 225 million cubic meters. --

* * * * *

Iraq requests enhanced economic and political consultation

Turkish Daily News December 20, 2000

Iraq reportedly asked Turkey to enhance economic and political consultation by establishing both a new mechanism and carrying out high-level visits between the two countries.

Iraqi Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Ismail Nuri el-Weis has been in Ankara for an official two-day visit and met with his Turkish counterpart Faruk Logoglu yesterday.

During yesterday's meeting the two countries' officials once again affirmed that they should improve political and economic relations despite continuing U.N. sanctions.

Speaking to the Turkish Daily News, diplomatic sources said that Turkey did not have any intention to violate the U.N. sanctions in order to improve its relations with Iraq. However, they added that Turkey should make efforts to enhance its political and economic relations with Iraq -- to compensate for its huge economic losses since 1991 -- within the scope of U.N. sanctions.

Although the United States is lukewarm on the idea, Ankara has accelerated its diplomatic efforts to improve relations with Baghdad, especially since discussions in the U.S. House of Representatives on a resolution recognizing a so-called Armenian genocide by Ottoman Turks.

As part of these efforts, Turkey previously decided to upgrade the status of its diplomatic mission in Baghdad, allowed flights of medical aid and agreed to resume rail links between Iraq and Turkey.

Ties between Turkey and Iraq have sometimes been strained by Turkey's role in helping allied planes enforce a no-fly zone over Kurdish-populated northern Iraq and Turkish army raids into northern Iraq.

Iraq has also been urging Turkey not to extend Operation Northern Watch for the sake of improving good bilateral relations. The operation was set up in 1991 to prevent Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi army from extending its hold over the North. It has been extended by the Turkish Parliament every six months since it began.

This issue is expected to be discussed during el-Weis's visit, in addition to certain regional and bilateral issues. In related news, Iraqi Transportation and Communications Ministry Undersecretary Cemil Ibrahim el-Tikriti announced on Tuesday that they were making preparations to start direct flights from the northern Iraqi city of Mosul to Turkey in the upcoming days. copyright 2000. reprinted with permission.

* * * * *

Turkish troops reportedly deployed to support Kurdish PUK against PKK

Text of report by London-based newspaper Al-Zaman on 19 December

Dohuk: The Raniyah areas East of Arbil in the Kurdistan region are witnessing an acute tension following the deployment of Turkish units there in an attempt to support the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] fighters, who have been fighting the Kurdish Workers' Party [PKK] since September. According to PKK sources, 5,000 Turkish troops have been deployed on the roads and hills near Raniyah and the area surrounding Qurnah in preparation for a new round of fighting between the PUK and the PKK, which is operating against Turkey and is using certain areas of northern Iraq as rear-echelon training bases. New-arrivals from Al-Sulaymaniyah have told Al-Zaman that the PUK is preparing for a new round of fighting and that its fighters continue to be deployed in the areas of Raniyah, Qala Diza and Qandil, east of Arbil, and are fortifying their positions there. The fighting is expected to start as soon as the Turkish forces have completed their deployment, which is currently under way. Observers in the region have talked of the danger of the situation and have expressed concern about the spread of the fighting to nearby towns and villages, since the PKK has the capability of taking control of some of the border villages with up to 3,000 of its fighters deployed in the area. If that was to happen, it would mean heavy losses among the civilian population, especially if the Turkish army was to use aircraft, which is something that is anticipated. The PKK, a large proportion of whose forces are concentrated in the Kurdistan region, have warned against any expansion in the scope of the fighting, adding that it is capable of countering any joint manoeuvres by the PUK and the Turkish army. Informed military sources in the region have told Al-Zaman that the PUK's aim over the past five days has been to suspend fighting in order to gain time until the Turkish support reaches them, which has been in the form of financial aid worth 15m dollars and military support in the form of more than 2,000 troops and dozens of armoured vehicles, tanks and personnel carriers.

The Kurdish parties, which say that the war will not solve the problem, seem incapable of doing anything in the face of the recent developments in the region and the rapid intervention by Turkish forces, whose presence most Kurds feel is a threat to the security of the region and will damage relations among the Kurds. In another development, Iraqi forces have withdrawn most of their units, which had advanced towards areas of the Kurdistan region, back to their previous positions in order to restore calm to most of the contact areas. With the exception of sundry units near Shekhan and Fa'idah, north of Mosul, the Iraqi military units that attempted to seize control of some of the areas under Kurdish Democratic Party [KDP] control at the beginning of last week, have all pulled back. Residents of the area said the forces that were ordered back were experiencing harsh conditions and that some local villagers had been giving the soldiers food. They said the soldiers were making overtly derogatory remarks about the Iraqi leadership, giving the victory sign with their hands and laughing as they withdrew, two days after the forces were deployed to the area of Ba'adre, north of Mosul. Some local residents described the troops during the withdrawal as being happy and as though they could not believe the operation, which had been a failure, had ended with a happy outcome for them, given that they were alive and on their way home. Residents of the Shekhan area - under Iraqi Government control and consisting of Christians and Yazidis - told Al-Zaman that schools and government departments in the area had returned to normal two days after the authorities issued orders for their closure to coincide with the Iraqi military operation, and that the state of alert adopted by the army, police, and security forces ended following the failure of the operation. They added that the authorities had allowed the villagers to return to work in their fields and to tend their livestock there. The Iraqi authorities have also tightened security at checkpoints on the roads leading to the region and introduced added measures in order to prevent the smuggling of fuel into Kurdistan, by blockading the area and increasing the number of patrols there. They also warned the residents of villages close to the contact areas against moving around the region or trying to trade with other areas of the region without the approval of authorities.

Source: Al-Zaman, London, in Arabic 19 Dec 00

Bush team sets ambitious target in Iraq policy

Reuters December 19, 2000

By Jonathan Wright

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - With its pledge to restore the vigor of sanctions against Iraq, President-elect George W. Bush's team has set itself a challenging goal which it might live to regret, analysts said on Tuesday.

But the pledge is open to differing interpretations, and some versions would offer concessions to win over countries like Russia and France, which are skeptical about the effectiveness and moral basis for the sanctions system.

Secretary of State-designate Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, made the pledge on Saturday when Bush announced his appointment.

He repeated the Clinton administration mantra that the sanctions, now in their 11th year, should remain as long as Iraqi President Saddam Hussein does not meet the cease-fire conditions imposed on Iraq at the end of the Gulf War in 1991.

"They (the Iraqis) have not yet fulfilled those agreements and my judgment is that sanctions in some form must be kept in place until they do so," Powell said. "We will work with our allies to re-energize the sanctions regime."

Coupled with Bush's remark in a campaign debate with Vice President Al Gore on Oct. 11, that he wanted the sanctions to be tougher, Powell added to the impression that a Bush administration would try to tighten the screws on Iraq.

Some Bush advisers, as well as Republicans in the U.S. Congress, have also openly advocated arming the Iraqi opposition in an attempt to overthrow the Iraqi leader -- a step that the Clinton administration carefully avoided.

Some analysts said the Bush administration would be going down a blind alley if it seriously expected to restore the cohesion of the alliance which defeated Iraq in 1991 and to plug all the gaps breached since then in the sanctions.

SANCTIONS CONTINUE TO ERODE

Against U.S. objections, a long list of countries have started flights into Baghdad. Iraq exports more and more oil outside the U.N. supervision system, through Turkey, Iranian territorial waters and now the pipeline to Syria.

"It is a reality that although the U.S. can try to buttress the sanctions, they are going to continue to erode and there will be steadily less effective control over the normal flow of imports and exports," said Anthony Cordesman, a military and Middle East specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"Tightening the sanctions is not in the realm of feasible realism. The idea also shows traces of unnecessary provocation," added Clovis Maksoud, director of the center for the Global South at American University.

Ruth Wedgwood, a specialist on U.N. affairs at the Council on Foreign Relations, said that in the long term it would not be possible to restore the integrity of the sanctions.

"Given the tenor of the U.N. Security Council -- unless they get a short spurt of goodwill -- but otherwise it's just a long and grinding decay," she said.

But other analysts say there are steps the Bush administration can take to try to stop the erosion and put together a package that would win the support of U.S. allies.

Cordesman said the United Nations could impose restrictions on travel by Iraqi leaders and focus the embargo on "dual use items" -- goods that have both civilian and military uses.

Meghan O'Sullivan, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, said the best approach would be to give up sanctions which do not work in exchange for allied support for those which do. "They should bargain away what's not in place for what is in place, to show we are willing to play ball," she said.

The United States could offer, for example, to let foreign oil companies invest in the Iraqi oil industry in return for a commitment that their governments would stick to the rules.

In the case of Russia, the United States could offer to let it take Iraqi oil to pay down the huge military debt which Iraq owed to the Soviet Union, O'Sullivan added.

SALAMI TACTICS

"It's open to question to what extent a proposal that has something in it for everyone can be cracked, but that should be one of the focuses of the new administration," she said.

Guy Caruso, an oil specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said it would be tough to restore the credibility of sanctions. "But there are some things they can do to stop the salami tactics," he added.

Caruso speculated that the Bush team might tell the U.S. Navy in the Gulf to intercept a tanker loaded with Iraqi oil for which the buyer has paid a covert surcharge.

That would deter other companies tempted to go along with Iraq's surcharge proposal, which is designed to put more of the country's oil revenues outside U.N. control.

Caruso said another idea would be for the U.S. air force to bomb one of the pumping stations along the Iraqi-Syrian oil pipeline, which appears to be carrying Iraqi oil.

But Jon Alterman of the U.S. Institute of Peace said that "smart sanctions" may be just a grand way of saying "sanctions other than the ones we have now" and that the smartest sanctions would do little without smart implementation.

Even if the Bush administration does try to work on a concerted Iraq policy with Europe and Russia, some countries would continue to try to "push the envelope" on sanctions.

"The Europeans only want to cooperate on the basis of the five percent possibility of Iraqi good behavior, not on the 95 percent possibility of Iraqi bad behavior," he added.

The analysts dismissed proposals to overthrow Saddam through the opposition Iraqi National Congress (INC).

"There's a universal feeling in the region that support for the INC and an overt effort to overthrow Saddam Hussein borders on the ridiculous. The INC is greeted with total contempt outside the Beltway (the Washington area)," he said.

"But there are many true believers (in the Republican Party) who have never had much to do with Iraq so it would be foolish to assume it won't be tried," he added.

* * * * *

Turkish army enters South Kurdistan

Kurdish Observer - 19 Dec 2000

The PKK Council of Leaders announced that the Turkish military has entered South Kurdistan [Iraqi Kurdistan] with heavy weapons and that a broad joint assaults with the PUK could begin at any moment.

NEWS CENTER

The PKK Council of Leaders said in a statement made yesterday that Turkey had entered South Kurdistan with the strength of hundreds of vehicles and that they could begin an extensive assault against them together with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) at any moment. The PKK Council of Leaders made the following call to the Kurdish people: "The patriotic people of Kurdistan and democratic public must raised their voices against this treachery and plot and bring this inauspicious assault to naught. Our people must develop popular uprisings (serhildan, intifada) everywhere against this treachery."

The statement said, "The PUK, which has not been able to defeat our forces despite the weapons, ammunition, and logistic support of Turkey and regional powers, has now drawn Turkey's military force completely inside the war."

The statement said that hundreds of vehicles of soldiers and heavy weapons had entered South Kurdistan through Habur Gate yesterday and the day before and had positioned at Ranya and Carkurna. The statement said that a great number of heavy weapons and tanks and military units were also waiting at the border at Silopi. The PKK Council of Leaders recalled that they had taken the peace calls of the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) seriously and given them a positive response, continuing, "The PUK gave no response whatsoever to this call. It is clear that, rather than giving an answer to the National Congress, they struggled to pull foreign powers further into the war."

43 guerrillas lost their lives

The PKK Council of Leaders also gave information about the results of the clashes that had begun with the PUK assault on December 3, as follows: "Taking the support of Turkey and regional powers, [the PUK] began on December 3 a broad assault aiming to crush the People's Defense Forces. Our guerrillas, resisting with a spirit of sacrifice, repelled this assault aimed at annihilation in a short while. While 43 of our guerrillas have fallen in the war to date, the PUK's losses have reached the hundreds."

The statement recalled that almost all of these had been unarmed victims that were mercilessly murdered by the PUK on September 14, 2000 after surrounding the new education force. It also recalled that the PUK had abused the unilateral cease fire that had been called by the PKK so that the war would not lead to more serious results, and had used the time to prepare for new assaults.

Call for the people to rise up

The PKK Council of Leaders called for sensitivity from the Kurdish people and democratic public, saying: "Our patriotic people of Soran and the democratic forces must stand against this treachery and must show with uprisings to both friends and enemies that this treachery will not find life on this soil." The statement also made the following call to the PUK: "Give up this policy that will harm the Kurdish people and strengthen the enemy, and join the line of national democracy and peace. We call on you to pay heed to our people's longing for peace and democracy."

Turkey must abandon dangerous policies

The PKK Council of Leaders made the call for "abandonment of dangerous policies which will push Turkey and the region into an environment of war once again" and made the following warning to Turkey and regional countries: "A war begun in the South will unavoidably spread to all sides. Turkey's problems, foremost the Kurdish question, cannot be solve with war and conspiracies. We are calling on the regional countries which gave the PUK support in order to liquidate or weaken the PKK to remain far from these policies which will pull the entire region into war. Because once begun, this war could slip out of control and bring harm to everyone."

Treachery will lose

The statement, noting that this movement to liquidate the PKK had already been continued for a few years, concluded by saying: "Our party will continue to resist this conspiracy, just as it has through today. The flag of democracy and freedom will not fall to the ground as long as there is one PKK member still standing. Freedom and democracy will win, treachery and conspiracies will lose."

'The PUK is after profits'

HADEP members in Ankara protested the assaults by PUK forces against the PKK. Ankara Provincial Chairman Veli Aydoğan said that the PUK assaults were provoking policies of violence in Turkey.

A great crowd of HADEP administrators and members gathered the other day at Yuksel Avenue to denounce the PUK assaults. Addressing the crowd, Aydoğan said that they were greatly concerned over developments in recent days and said that the PUK had hoped to profit from the environment of conflict in the region.

Students in the Kurtalan district of Siirt also protested the PUK's assaults. The students of private courses arranged a demonstration and blocked highway traffic the other evening when classes were finished. A large crowd also gathered in the Eyyubiye neighborhood of Urfa and shouted slogans against the PUK.

Meanwhile, Memcan Oguzsoy and Serhan Ozkurt, who had been detained on the grounds that they had protested the PUK assaults in a demonstration in Istanbul's Kagithane, were brought before the Istanbul State Security Court (DGM) the other day. Oguzsoy and Ozyurt were formally arrested and sent to Umraniye Prison.

Kurds condemn the treachery

Protest demonstrations against the PUK's assaults against PKK guerrillas continue. Kurdistanis met the other day in the German town of Altefeuerbach tied to the city of Mannheim and rained curses down on the treachery.

A large crowd participated in the march carrying banners reading, "Loyalty to President Apo is loyalty to Kurdistan," "Damn treachery," and "No to death cells." Throughout the march, they handed out pamphlets in German explaining the aim of the PUK assault against the PKK. Slogans of "Damn treachery! Long live resistance" and "We are with you in war and peace, Ocalan" were frequently shouted in the march through city center. The march, which began at 1:00 in the afternoon, continued with a meeting at Neuermass Plaza. The Planning Committee spokesperson called on the Kurdish people to be sensitive against the assault that the PUK had begun against the PKK's strategy for political struggle. After speeches, Kurdistanis danced the halay to musical performances before ending the meeting.

[KM Note: VOA Kurdish program reported that 700 Turkish soldiers have entered south Kurdistan by 80 vehicles in early morning of Sunday (8 GMT). END KM]

* * * * *

PUK Official confirms Turkish troops In Suleymania-region

Dec 20, 2000 The Kurdistan Observer

Sharq Al Awsat, a London based Arabic newspaper, reported today Dec 12, 2000 that Adel Murad, a PUK official, said that a Turkish military force, currently stationed around Qendil Mountains, entered southern (Iraqi) Kurdistan to pursue the members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK).

The PUK official said that the Turkish force, consists of 700 solders and 80 military machines. Also today, the Kurdistan National Congress (KNK) said in a statement that the massing of Turkish army troops in South Kurdistan will lead to a new war in the region.

The statement added that the Turkish army entered southern (Iraqi) Kurdistan with the cooperation of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, aiming to destroy the PKK forces.

* * * * *

Saddam revives PKK efforts in N. Iraq

Middle East Newslines December 21, 2000

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein has revived the Kurdish Workers Party in an effort to regain control over the autonomous north, Turkish sources said. The sources said Saddam has provided funding, weapons and passage to

Kurdistan in an effort to establish control in northern Iraq. Much of the area is now controlled by two rival Kurdish groups.

Saddam is said to be throwing his support with the PKK in an effort to dislodge the Iranian-backed Kurdish group of Jalal Talabani. The Turkish sources said Iraqi's military provided aid to PKK during its clashes with Talabani forces last month. The Talabani forces, with help from the rival group of Massoud Barazani, expelled most of the PKK fighters.

The sources said Ankara is dismayed by Saddam's efforts to help the PKK, which fought a 15-year insurgency against Turkey. They said Turkey has relayed a message of concern to Baghdad during bilateral talks this week. The Iraqi delegation is headed by Foreign Ministry Undersecretary Ismail Nuri Weis. He has been meeting his Turkey counterpart, Farouk Logoglu.

* * * * *

TURQUIE Cinquante détenus politiques en grève de la faim

La bataille des prisons

LE FIGARO LUNDI 18 DÉCEMBRE 2000

Istanbul :
Eric Biegala

La Turquie a décrété un « black-out » sur la bataille des prisons. La Cour de sûreté de l'Etat d'Istanbul vient d'interdire à la presse de mentionner ces événements, qui pourraient « nuire à la réputation de l'Etat ». Vendredi, les grévistes kurdes annonçaient qu'ils mettaient un terme à leur action. Seuls les groupes d'extrême gauche poursuivent le mouvement, une cinquantaine de prisonniers refusant de s'alimenter, certains depuis déjà

cinquante-sept jours. En 1996, douze prisonniers s'étaient ainsi laissés mourir de faim pour protester contre des transferts d'une prison à l'autre. Aujourd'hui, les grévistes exigent l'arrêt du projet gouvernemental de transformation des pénitenciers, la suppression de la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat et la formation d'une commission d'enquête non gouvernementale sur les prisons.

Sur les quelque soixante-quatorze mille détenus que compte la Turquie, environ douze mille sont incarcérés pour des motifs politiques. Les pénitenciers sont organisés sous forme de vastes dortoirs où les détenus s'au-

toadministrent, et quelques maisons d'arrêt sont même considérées comme de véritables centres d'endoctrinement de l'extrême gauche. Pour casser cette logique, le gouvernement a entrepris de transférer ces détenus dans de nouveaux établissements organisés en cellules : les prisons dites « de type F ». L'horreur absolue si l'on en croit les détenus, pour qui la vie en cellule équivaldrait à un isolement total. Même si ceux-ci sont en régression, « le recours à des méthodes comme la privation de sommeil pendant plusieurs jours, les stations debout prolongées et les menaces en direction des familles sont encore largement pratiqués » dans les prisons turques, estime un récent rapport du Conseil de l'Europe.

En réponse aux pressions d'intellectuels comme Yasar Kemal et d'ONG, le ministre de la Justice, Ahmet Sami Türk, annonçait la semaine dernière que le projet des prisons « de type F » était reporté *sine die*. Promesses insuffisantes pour l'extrême gauche, dont les détenus poursuivent leur grève de la faim. Dans le même temps, les manifestations de rue en leur faveur se multiplient, dégénérant parfois en affrontements violents avec la police.

Sursis pour Öcalan

La Cour européenne des droits de l'homme (CEDH) a considéré comme « recevables » la plupart des recours présentés par les avocats d'Abdullah Öcalan. Le chef du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) a été condamné à mort par la Turquie au printemps 1999, mais Ankara a accepté de surseoir à son exécution le temps que la CEDH statue sur le bien-fondé de cette condamnation. Le verdict final pourrait encore prendre plusieurs mois. Détenu sur l'île-prison d'Imrali, en mer de Marmara, le chef kurde a décrété un cessez-le-feu en septembre 1999. La majorité de ses troupes ont cessé le combat et quitté le territoire turc. Mais Ankara est résolue à poursuivre les rebelles jusqu'à ce qu'ils soient tous « neutralisés ».

E. B.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2000

15 Prisoners Die as Turkey Ends Strikes

Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches

ISTANBUL — Fifteen prisoners burned themselves to death and two paramilitary policemen died Tuesday when security forces moved into 20 prisons in Turkey to crush hunger strikes and protests, the Justice Ministry said.

Leftist prisoners began the hunger strike two months ago to protest plans to transfer them from large dormitory wards to small cells where they fear abuse by guards. Many of the hunger strikers were reportedly near death this week.

Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Türk said the raids to restore control had been

successful in 18 prisons and had caused the "minimum possible harm."

In addition to the dead, 57 prisoners were hurt in the raid, most of them by self-inflicted burns, Mr. Türk said.

Paramilitary police troops armed with gas grenades and backed by helicopters struck early Tuesday, moving in after weeks of attempts to bring a peaceful end to the hunger strikes.

The government has long sought to break up large prison wards, some housing as many as 100 prisoners, which leftist, Kurdish or Islamic groups have been running like indoctrination centers.

The inmates frequently smuggle in guns and mobile telephones and stage riots, hostage-taking and hunger strikes to push for demands. Some of the prison wards are decorated with rebel flags.

Prisoners say the small cells will leave them open to abuse by jailers.

"From now on the state's sovereignty will be realized" in prisons, Mr. Türk said.

In Istanbul, plumes of smoke swirled over Bayrampasa prison, one of several where security forces met stiff resistance.

The Interior Ministry said that security forces had crushed the resistance at Bayrampasa and were close to bringing all of the jails under control.

Mr. Türk said 1,139 prisoners were taking part in the hunger strike, with 284 of them on a "death fast," having taken only sugared water for about the last 60 days.

"It is unthinkable for the state to stand by and watch as people bring themselves face to face with death," Mr. Türk said. "The goal of this operation is to save people's lives."

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said every effort was being made not to harm the prisoners, but denounced their demands and the hunger protests. "This operation is an effort to save the terrorists from their own terrorism," he said in Ankara. (Reuters, AP)

DECEMBER 20, 2000

European Immigrants' Troubled Children

Turkish Danes Are Pressured From Both Sides

By Roger Cohen
New York Times Service

ARHUS, Denmark — This is a love story with its share of pain. It begins in a Turkish village where geese roam the dusty streets and days turn to the rhythm of harvest and prayer. It ends in this bustling Danish port where passion undid tradition and where cultures of East and West clashed.

Ali Simsek started it all. Like millions of Turkish immigrants drawn to a Europe that needed laborers, he turned his back on the harsh hills and hushed nights of central Anatolia to become a "guest worker" in a Danish timber factory near here. That was in 1970, and, as befits a guest, he did not plan to stay forever.

So much for plans. His wife and four children soon joined him: a simple procedure at the time. He worked hard, made money, obeyed the law. But Mr. Simsek never learned a word of Danish or gave up Turkish customs. So when his oldest son Bunyamin turned 17, it seemed natural to arrange a marriage for him.

In Turkey, the daughter of Ali Simsek's closest friend was waiting, a modest young woman in a traditional head scarf who knew nothing of life outside the village. The couple were married in a month. Bunyamin recalls: "I did not know I could say no. What my parents said was the truth. So I said yes."

But the arranged marriage would collapse, undone by the sharp cultural differences between Bunyamin Simsek, a Dane in all but name, and his

Turkish bride. For millions of second-generation immigrants in Europe, people who are often tugged between strict tradition and freewheeling Western habits, the failure is an emblem of the unsettling contradictions of their lives.

European governments, uneasy about an influx of foreigners, now say these immigrants must resolve the contradictions by embracing the culture of their adoptive lands.

The bureaucrats have increasingly focused on arranged marriages as disastrous: They hinder integration, offend Western values and encourage immigrant ghettos, or so many officials say. They also bring more immigrants because "family unification" is one of the few legal ways left to get into Europe.

"Immigrants must adapt to Danish cultural norms, which include free speech and the right to choose your spouse," said Nils Preiser, a senior Interior Ministry official. "Arranged marriages are a problem because compulsion is unacceptable and because if generations of immigrants



Thomas Ambro

Bunyamin and Fatma Simsek, Danish citizens of Turkish descent, overcame cultural traditions so they could marry last year after he divorced his first wife from an arranged marriage.

His first wife was a woman from a village in Turkey and the daughter of Mr. Simsek's father's closest friend. Arranged marriages have become a target of criticism by some

politicians in Europe, who say that immigrants must resolve the contradictions by embracing the culture of their adoptive lands.

find their spouses back home, ethnic groups remain separate."

Certainly division seems hard to overcome. In many ways, Bunyamin Simsek, now 30, is a Dane. He was 2 when he arrived in Aarhus; he is a Danish citizen; he speaks fluent Danish; he likes a beer. Unlike his father's cautious generation of newcomers, this second-generation immigrant is at ease with the brisk give-and-take of Western society.

But he is olive-skinned, black-haired and dark-eyed. No Viking, he.

Four portraits of Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the modern Turkish state, hang in his living room.

Bunyamin Simsek is a Muslim; no Danish bacon for him. This year he is fasting for Ramadan. Some people call him a Nydansker, or New Dane, a term that sets him and others like him apart.

"Like many second-generation im-

migrants, I have two identities," he says. "An outside face for my Danish friends, and an inside one for my family. I cannot give up one or the other. With my name, my religion and my appearance, I will never satisfy people here that I'm a Dane.

And I know these calls to become Danish are dishonest because we are always presented with a moving target."

As European states accept — often grudgingly — that they have become immigrant societies despite enduring self-images of ethnic homogeneity, they are looking anew for ways to preserve their national culture, or whatever globalization has left of it.

This campaign — often portrayed as the defense of a cohesive European model of society against a fragmented American multicultural model — crosses party lines. Indeed, in the featureless post-Cold War political landscape of a Europe no longer at risk, the politics of national identity have become pervasive, a leitmotif of the times.

In Germany, the new buzzword of the center-right opposition Christian Democrats is *Leitkultur*, a vague "guiding culture," Christian and German, to which immigrants, many of them Muslims, are being asked to conform.

In Denmark, the prime minister, Poul Rasmussen, a center-left Social Democrat, said recently that he could not accept certain "aspects of the Islamic religion," like prayer interrupting work. Mr. Rasmussen added, "It must be clear that in Denmark we work in the workplace."

The message is clear enough: Conform, at work and in your marriage. Denmark, saying that 90 percent of Danish Turks find their marriage partners in Turkey, passed legislation this year to deter any immigrant younger than 25 from bringing a foreign spouse to Denmark.

The aim of such policies may appear reasonable: promoting integration by obliging immigrants to become fully adapted members of society. But a close look at Bunyamin Simsek's odyssey through his arranged marriage, a passionate affair, divorce, family tumult and uneasy adjustment to Danish life suggest a more complex and troubling reality.

Ali Simsek, trained as a Muslim cleric and known in his central Anatolian village of Kizilcakisla by the high title of Ali Hodja, never really wanted his son Bunyamin to be a Dane. The boy's upbringing was marked by strictness. As dozens of Turks followed Ali Simsek to Arhus from the village, a conservative spirit came with them.

Early in life Bunyamin learned two central elements of Turkish culture: respect, particularly toward parents, and honor, particularly that of the family. The Turkish word for honor, *sheref*, was often heard, and its singular weight was unmistakable.

Like millions of children of guest workers — there are 2.3 million Turks in Germany and tens of thousands in Denmark — Bunyamin found himself tugged between two apparently irreconcilable worlds. Home was Denmark, but it was also the Turkish village, to which the family traveled most summers — a

cluster of houses and dirt roads gathered around a mosque where the boy played with animals and where the open fields seemed thrillingly vast.

In the summer of 1987, Ali Simsek told Bunyamin that he would marry Sorgul Ceran, a young woman whose father, Ali Ceran, had been his close friend since elementary school.

"We had known each other all our lives, and we wanted to join the families," said Ali Ceran, who works in the building trades.

But the joining barely masked a cultural abyss. Sorgul Ceran, six years older than the teenage Bunyamin, had never set foot in Ankara, let alone Denmark. When, a year after their marriage in the village, she secured Danish residence papers and traveled to join her husband, she plunged into the unknown.

A son, Alattin, was soon born. The couple lived with Bunyamin's parents. Sorgul led a protected life, largely insulated from Danes, while her young husband went out to study architecture. But when his university studies ended and he spent more time at home, things quickly soured.

"My wife was wearing a veil, and that was a problem for me in Denmark," he says. "You have to adapt, give up something to get something, but she would not. I was going out with Danish friends, but it was awkward with Sorgul. I felt I could not show her in a veil."

Sorgul's version of events is that her father-in-law insisted that she cover her head. She says that when her husband asked her to wear makeup, she did but still could not please him. Confined to home, how could she adapt and learn Danish?

When, in 1993, the couple moved to their own apartment in an area of Arhus known as "the ghetto" because so many immigrants live there, the arguments became more bitter, even violent at times.

Bunyamin, finding nothing in his chosen field of architecture, was working as a cabin attendant for a Danish charter airline company, Sterling Air; he felt suffocated.

"I was living my life for my parents, to satisfy them," he says. "But then I saw that I needed to live things for myself, and I could not do that without leaving Sorgul."

But Sorgul could not bear the thought of their son's being raised without a father. To the Turks, divorce is dishonor, and dishonor, as the young Bunyamin had heard so many times, is anathema. Ali Simsek would be shamed before the 3,000 Turks of Arhus, whose spiritual authority he had become, his *sheref* shattered.

So when in 1994 Bunyamin announced that he was considering divorce, the response from his father was immediate: "In that case, you will not be my son any more."

By now, another woman with roots in Kizilcakisla had entered Bunyamin's life. Fatma Oektem's grandfather came from the village to Denmark in the 1970s. But born and raised in Arhus and fluent in Danish, Fatma, 27, is very different from Sorgul: at home in the West, emancipated, sparkling, sophisticated.



The wearing of head scarves by Turkish women in Denmark is one way of keeping with their traditions.

She and Bunyamin met aboard one of his flights — to Antalya, in southern Turkey. As a cabin attendant, he served her. On her return, in early 1994, they again met by chance at a gathering of Arhus Turkish associations.

"Our love was clear in that moment," Fatma said. "And that was the beginning of hell."

Here were two descendants of immigrants, both Danish citizens, living in a Western city and falling in love. One was married, so complications were likely. But the reaction they endured was in many ways that of an Anatolian village: theirs was forbidden love.

Turkish women in Arhus started calling Fatma to shout at her: It is because of people like you that we cannot let our husbands out the house. Her grandfather summoned Fatma and said: If you keep seeing that man, there will be war between our families.

Unable to stand the pressure, Fatma left for Antalya, where her father lives most of the time, and then went to Germany to train as a tourist guide. But Bunyamin persisted, telling his father: "I will be a bad man in our people's eyes, but I must be happy."

Sorgul, his wife, was desperate. By her account, Bunyamin had taken to

drinking heavily and disappearing for long periods. In a last effort to save the situation, Sorgul said she would accept Fatma, even in their home.

But to Bunyamin, such an idea was unthinkable, another illustration of the cultural gulf between them. Finally, they separated.

Sorgul, helped by an uncle in Arhus, moved out, taking much of what the couple owned, but plunging into a depression so deep that when a court finally approved the divorce in 1997, custody of Alattin was awarded to Bunyamin.

Back in the village, Sorgul's parents were shattered. To them, Bunyamin suddenly changed, wanting a woman of Western mores.

"Bunyamin is a Dane, but Sorgul is still Turkish," said Ali Ceran. "After such things, no reconciliation is possible."

Honor killings, common in eastern Turkey, are unknown in Kizilcakisla; but the Cerans and the Simseks still there never speak to each other now.

Even when Ali Simsek finally relented on the divorce, he insisted that his son "must never marry Fatma." Arguments about money lingered between Sorgul and Bunyamin: They never talk to each other, even today.

On March 6, 1999, Bunyamin and Fatma were married in Arhus; they and Alattin lived in Bunyamin's old apartment. Ali Simsek still commands authority. But the severe father has softened, even telling his new daughter-in-law that he has learned that "respect has nothing to do with how long your dress is."

Ali Simsek confesses that he has also learned something else: "Ten years ago, 80 percent of marriages here in the Turkish community were arranged. But I

have seen that many results are bad. It's more healthy, I think now, for children to find partners here." He paused, before adding, "But between Turks, of course. Not with Danes."

By rights, having suffered at the hands of old Turkish custom, the young, bruised couple, both Danish citizens, should be enthusiastic supporters of their adoptive land and its campaign to bring "Danish culture" to all, including the more than 8 percent of inhabitants who are immigrants.

But the reality is one of increasing alienation, particularly for Fatma. She has been unemployed for a while and finds that when companies see her name and ask where she is from, they decline even to interview her. Always, she says, there is the sense of "us" and "them," the old Dane and the new Dane, the blue-eyed and the dark-skinned.

"They say we'll change or threaten their culture, but if your culture is strong, what do you have to fear from Islam?" Fatma said. "The fact is the Danes have little national culture left. They adopt Halloween. They adopt Thanksgiving. They adopt Valentine's Day. They eat burgers. And they see our more genuine culture and worry."

This very erosion of national distinctions, occurring throughout Europe, provides fertile ground for nationalist or anti-immigrant outbursts that pay politically. Karen Jespersen, the interior minister, recently increased her popularity by saying that asylum-seekers who commit crimes should be banished to a desert island.

Of course she was talking about criminals — and crime is rampant among disoriented second- or third-generation immigrants in Denmark growing up between worlds. But such negative messages about immigrants tend to cling to all of them, industrious or idle, law-abiding or criminal. The far-right People's Party prospers by denouncing the "family reunifications that bring in 15,000 immigrants a year."

On his flights, Bunyamin is often asked by Danish clients where he comes from. Arhus, he replies. That meets with incredulity. Well, guess, he suggests, and the replies come in: Greece, Italy or Spain — but never Turkey.

"They think I'm nice, so they don't imagine I could be Turkish," he says. "Turkey for them is Islam, and Islam is fundamentalism."

"The Danes say one thing," Bunyamin says, "that they want to integrate us, and do another." "That's why we have to fight."

He fights, heading an "Integration Committee," and Fatma works for an immigrant women's group. Three earnest social workers pay them a visit. They want to know why immigrants have more difficulty finding jobs. They are told about prejudice, and then one, Lars Jakobsen, bares his feelings:

"Yes, the fact is many Danes think, O.K., you came here for a while to work, but don't try to bring all your families here, don't abuse our hospitality." He adds, "Islam is seen as a danger."

No mosque with a minaret has yet been permitted in Denmark.

Jakob Buksti, the transport minister, insists in an interview, "We have to integrate by preventing ghettos, arranged marriages, young women forced to marry men back home. We have to tighten rules on refugees and bringing relatives."

Across Europe, such political messages are garnering votes. But they appear to ignore two basic questions about integration: On what terms should it happen, and how can it occur when subtle barriers are constantly erected?

Arranged marriages are an easy target of attack. Safer Cinar, who heads an association of Berlin's 130,000 Turks, says such unions remain "the basic culture, the usual pattern." He adds, "Western governments portray this all as coercion, but that is not so, or rarely so."

The real issue, it seems, is that these marriages bring in new immigrants. But then Europe, many say, needs immigrants — 75 million over the next 50 years by some government estimates — to compensate for its aging population. And Fortress Europe is surrounded by people clamoring to get in.

Back in Kizilcakisla, for example, the exodus continues. Bekir Siltas, Sorgul's brother-in-law, says all the young villagers leave.

"Most people try to find a way to marry their children to someone already in Germany, or Denmark or Holland. The first choice is get them out to Europe. There is no money here."

Sorgul has already found a new husband in a nearby village through an arranged marriage. He has not yet secured Danish residency papers, so the couple live apart. Sorgul, who has begun to learn Danish and found a job sorting mail at the post office, warily voices hope that her new husband will allow her to continue working.

As for Bunyamin and Fatma, the star-crossed couple, he says you need to be realistic; she says you have to dream. He says the Danes have some history they can be proud of. She says they have none. He says he wants to stay in Denmark. She says she wants to leave because in Turkey, at last, she would be "invisible."

For now, they will remain, Turks in Denmark with Danish passports, in-between people, often misunderstood. With them is Bunyamin's son, the now 12-year-old Alattin Simsek, a Danish citizen, fluent in Turkish and Danish, proficient in English, and already a computer whiz.

The boy, two generations removed from Ali Simsek and three decades on from his grandfather's pioneering three-day train journey from Anatolia to Arhus, has created his own Pokemon Web site. It has already attracted 12,000 visitors; their culture is global, their nationalities unknown.



20 DÉCEMBRE 2000

Sanglant assaut policier contre vingt prisons turques

Objectif: mater une grève de la faim. Au moins 15 morts.

Istanbul
de notre correspondant

Les forces de l'ordre turques ont lancé hier un assaut simultané contre vingt prisons afin de briser un mouvement de grève de la faim des détenus. L'opération, menée par des gendarmes et des équipes spéciales de la police, a débuté vers cinq heures du matin et se poursuivait en fin d'après-midi dans trois grands centres de détention (Bayrampasa, Ümraniye et Canakkale). Quinze détenus sont décédés, pour la plupart après s'être immolés, et deux gendarmes ont été tués lors de l'assaut, a annoncé hier soir le ministre de la Justice, Hikmet Sami Türk. Le bilan officiel était toutefois impossible à confirmer, la presse étant confinée à trois kilomètres des prisons.

«Ils ont brûlé vives six femmes!», hurlaient deux prisonnières sur des civières, arborant des brûlures au visage, alors qu'elles étaient transportées



Un prisonnier de Batin est évacué, hier, vers l'hôpital d'Ankara.

vers un hôpital. Ces scènes diffusées en début de soirée par la chaîne CNN-Türk, semblent contredire les déclarations du ministre de la Justice qui parle, lui, d'immolations de détenus. Les organisations des droits de l'homme ont aussitôt dénoncé l'opération, la qualifiant de «sanglante et sauvage». L'assaut visait à mettre fin à la grève de la faim illimitée, appelée «grève de la mort», de 284 prisonniers politiques qui entraînent

dans leur 61^e journée de jeûne. En solidarité, 802 autres détenus observent une grève de la faim limitée. Tous revendiquent la fermeture définitive des prisons de type F (cellules d'isolement), la fin de la torture et l'amélioration des conditions carcérales. La plupart des détenus de la «grève de la mort», transportés de force dans les hôpitaux, refusaient hier soir de s'alimenter, ont indiqué des sources médicales.

Une cinquantaine de détenus aurait déjà été transférée à la prison de type F de Sincan, près d'Ankara.

«Désormais l'Etat est en mesure de contrôler les prisons», a assené le ministre de la Justice. Le Premier ministre Bülent Ecevit (gauche nationaliste) a indiqué que l'opération de «sauvetage» avait pour but de «défendre les terroristes contre leur propre terrorisme». Plusieurs dizaines de personnes, en majorité des parents de détenus, qui protestaient contre l'assaut, ont été arrêtées devant les établissements pénitentiaires. Tout au long de la journée, des coups de feu et des explosions ont été entendus aux alentours des prisons d'Istanbul et d'Ankara. Douze prisonniers avaient trouvé la mort lors de la grève de la faim illimitée qui avait déjà été organisée en 1996. Pour l'essentiel, les détenus politiques sont accusés d'appartenir à des organisations d'extrême gauche.

RAGIP DURAN

Le Monde

20 DÉCEMBRE 2000

Le gouvernement turc ordonne l'assaut des prisons, théâtres de grèves de la faim

Un détenu s'est immolé par le feu à Bayrampasa.
Les autorités affirment vouloir «sauver» les prisonniers, dont certains sont dans un état critique après un jeûne de soixante jours

UN PRISONNIER a trouvé la mort en s'immolant par le feu à la prison de Bayrampasa à Istanbul, prise d'assaut à l'aube, mardi 19 décembre, par les forces d'élite de la gendarmerie. Des opérations similaires ont été lancées simultanément dans 20 des 48 prisons turques où des grévistes de la faim défient les autorités depuis deux mois. Les détenus, qui vivent actuellement dans des dortoirs bondés contenant jusqu'à 100 personnes, s'opposent au transfert

prévu dans des cellules de une à trois personnes. Les autorités, incapables de contrôler la situation explosive dans les prisons surpeuplées de Turquie, ont bâti plusieurs nouveaux pénitenciers pour tenter de briser l'emprise des organisations politiques et des gangs criminels à l'intérieur des établissements pénitentiaires.

Les prisonniers estiment cependant que, isolés de leurs camarades, ils seraient plus vulnérables au mauvais traitement des gardiens.

Certains des grévistes ont atteint le sixantième jour de leur action de protestation.

Selon le ministre de la justice Hikmet Sami Türk, 284 prisonniers observaient un jeûne total qu'ils entendaient mener jusqu'à la mort, alors que 1249 de leurs camarades étaient engagés dans une grève de la faim partielle pour les soutenir. Le ministre, soulignant que l'intervention des forces armées est une «opération de sauvetage» a indiqué à 10 h 30, heure locale, qu'un total

de 248 grévistes avaient été sortis de leurs dortoirs. Bien que certains des prisonniers hospitalisés soient dans un état critique, plusieurs d'entre eux, encore conscients, ont refusé toute forme de traitement.

En 1996, 12 grévistes de la faim avaient trouvé la mort dans les prisons turques.

L'intervention des forces armées a été conclue avec succès en début de matinée dans neuf pénitenciers, a annoncé le ministre, qui a ajouté que certains des prisonniers avaient

remercié les autorités pour leur intervention. Plusieurs gendarmes, légèrement blessés, ont dû être hospitalisés.

Dans d'autres prisons, notamment Bayrampasa et Umraniye, toutes deux situées dans la banlieue d'Istanbul, les forces de sécurité ont rencontré une forte résistance armée, a annoncé le ministre, ajoutant que l'« opération de sauvetage » était toujours en cours.

« L'Etat ne peut pas demeurer spectateur alors que des gens se dirigent vers la mort. Pour cette raison, cette intervention dans vingt prisons était inévitable », a expliqué le ministre de la justice, qui a affirmé avoir déployé des efforts considérables pour mettre fin à l'action des grévistes. Le gouvernement avait offert de retarder la mise en service des nouveaux pénitenciers, mais les détenus insistaient pour que le projet de transfert soit abandonné. « Je veux faire passer ce message aux familles, les pères et les mères des pri-

sonniers, a déclaré Hikmet Sami Türk. Ayez confiance en l'Etat. Le but de cette opération est de sauver vos enfants ».

Pour tenter d'alléger la tension dans les prisons, où les émeutes sont fréquentes, le gouvernement avait également préparé une loi de réduction de peine (lire ci-contre) qui devait permettre à quelque 35 000 détenus (sur 72 000) de sortir de prison. Le président de la République, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, a cependant refusé le 15 décembre d'approuver cette loi qui avait été adoptée par le Parlement, affirmant qu'elle était contraire au principe de justice et d'égalité de la Constitution. Le gouvernement, malgré l'opposition de l'opinion publique qui ne voit pas d'un bon œil la libération de meurtriers et autres criminels de droit commun, a décidé de re-soumettre cette même loi, inchangée, à l'Assemblée nationale. Le président ne peut utiliser son droit de veto qu'une seule fois. Des

milliers de détenus pourraient dès lors être libérés avant le début du bayram, la fête qui marque la fin du ramadan et débute cette année le 27 décembre.

Nicole Pope

Veto présidentiel sur une loi de réduction de peine

Le gouvernement turc veut faire adopter coûte que coûte une loi controversée de réduction de peine malgré l'opposition du président Ahmet Necdet Sezer, qui y a mis son veto vendredi 15 décembre, l'estimant non conforme à la Constitution. La loi prévoyait une réduction de peine de dix ans maximum assortie d'un sursis pour de nombreux détenus de droit commun mais laissait de côté les prisonniers d'opinion jugés en vertu de l'article 312-2 du code pénal, « atteinte à l'intégrité de l'Etat ». Le président ne peut toutefois opposer une deuxième fois son veto mais il peut saisir la Cour constitutionnelle. - (AFP)

BBC NEWS

You are in: World Monitoring: Media reports
Thursday, 21 December, 2000, 18:44 GMT

The battle of Bayrampasa



Militants and their role models in an Istanbul prison

Conflicting accounts have appeared in the Turkish and Kurdish media over why so many people were hurt during the security operation in Istanbul's Bayrampasa prison.

The Turkish Health Ministry said in an initial statement that a total of eight people died there, five in the prison itself and three later in hospital.

It added that of the 81 prisoners hurt, 66 had been hospitalised.

However, one newspaper, Radikal, reported that 14 of the prison's estimated 300 inmates lost their lives.

Bayrampasa housed militants from the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C), the Turkish Workers and Peasant Liberation Army (TIKKO), the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party [MLKP] and the Kurdistan Workers' Party [PKK].

The mass-circulation daily Milliyet said that, when they first entered the prison, the security forces could not believe how much it had been altered by the inmates.

"There were doors where the walls were supposed to be and doors had been turned into walls," it said.

Another mass-circulation newspaper, Hurriyet, carried a graphic account of the conditions encountered by the security forces.

It said the eyewitness was a soldier who took part in the operation.

The soldier's tale

"We entered C-Block where the militants were housed," the soldier said.

"We urged them by Tannoy to surrender. The prisoners started shouting slogans and setting their beds, quilts and blankets alight. We repeated our surrender request and the PKK militants surrendered...

"We regained control of the cells in C-Block, one after another. But in the section where the terrorists were housed we could hear bombs exploding, and automatic rifle fire.

"The terrorists connected the cells of the block by boring holes through the walls. When their resistance weakened in one cell, they retreated to another. We had to break in through the walls to intervene when the fires started...

"Meanwhile the leaders of the organisation were issuing their orders. But the most horrifying thing was that the leaders poured petrol on the militants and set them alight with



At least eight died in the Bayrampasa operation

matches. We were too far from the burning militants to intervene."

The inmate's tale

Birsen Kars, who had been in Bayrampasa for five years, was among those who suffered serious burns during the course of the security operation.

According to Milliyet, she blamed her fellow militants for her condition: "They set six of us women alight", she said.

But the pro-PKK television channel, Medya TV, which broadcasts from Paris, quoted two unnamed female inmates from Bayrampasa as saying six of their colleagues had been "thrown into the fire alive by the Turkish police forces".

"Six people were killed in the fire. Six persons were burned alive. They were burned alive," one of the prisoners told the TV as she was taken to hospital.

Appeal

Kiraz Bicici, a deputy leader of the Istanbul Human Rights Association, told Medya TV that while some prisoners may

have committed suicide, most of the casualties had been caused by the excessive use of force by the Turkish authorities.

"Once again, the state showed its true face," she said.

"There may have been some who committed self immolation. But the real reason for the deaths were the light anti-tank weapons and tear gas bombs. The inmates were burned by them", she said.

Unbelievable massacres have been carried out in 20 prisons in Turkey. I would like to tell this to the whole world

Kiraz Bicici

"Unbelievable massacres have been carried out in 20 prisons in Turkey. I would like to tell this to the whole world and call the whole world to be aware of this issue."

BBC Monitoring, based in Caversham in southern England, selects and translates information from radio, television, press, news agencies and the Internet from 150 countries in more than 70 languages.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2000

Powell Reconsiders Sanctions on Iraq

5 Years Ago He Wrote Against Them; Now He'd Make Them Tougher

By John Lancaster
Washington Post Service

WASHINGTON — Critics of United Nations sanctions against Iraq, who have long complained about hardships that the restrictions inflict on ordinary Iraqi citizens, could hardly have argued their case more eloquently than General Colin Powell did in his 1995 autobiography, "My American Journey."

"The problem is that sanctions are most often imposed against regimes that have only their own interests and the retention of power at heart," wrote General Powell, who was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the Gulf War that followed in 1991.

"And since these leaders are still going to have a roof over their heads, food on their table and power in their hands, sanctions rarely work against them."

"Saddam was the perfect example,"

he added, referring to the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein.

But General Powell, chosen by President-elect George W. Bush to serve as secretary of state, appears to have undergone a change of heart.

"We will work with our allies to re-energize the sanctions regime," General Powell said Saturday during a joint appearance with Mr. Bush. "And I will make the case in every opportunity I get that we're not doing this to hurt the Iraqi people, we're doing this to protect the peoples of the region, the children of the region, who would be the targets of weapons of mass destruction if we didn't contain them and get rid of them."

During the campaign, Mr. Bush and his advisers accused the Clinton administration of neglecting policy on Iraq, citing the end of UN arms inspections in 1998 and the erosion of support for sanctions by the members of the UN Security Council. Although he did not

offer any specifics, Mr. Bush suggested that he would take a more aggressive approach to get rid of Mr. Saddam, starting with increased support for opposition groups.

A retired colonel, Bill Smullen, General Powell's spokesman, attributed the change to "a contrast of times and conditions."

General Powell's earlier criticism of sanctions, Mr. Smullen said, reflected the former chairman's experience during the buildup to the Gulf War, when he and other members of the Bush administration hoped that economic sanctions alone would force President Saddam to withdraw from Kuwait.

"We're in a different situation now," Mr. Smullen said. "His view today is that sanctions in the year 2000 are in place, and should be, with respect to the containment of the Saddam Hussein regime from building and spreading weapons of mass destruction."

Iran's Supreme Leader Pushes Boundaries of Authority

By Geneive Abdo
International Herald Tribune

TEHRAN — The supreme leader of Iran, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, is changing the nation's postrevolutionary history by expanding his divine mandate to include the daily affairs of governing.

Since being appointed the supreme leader on the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989,

Ayatollah Khamenei has extended his reach to include the affairs of Parliament, the presidency and even the theological seminaries, which long took pride in independence from government control.

Unlike Ayatollah Khomeini, who did not believe in intervening directly in political matters, Ayatollah Khamenei has involved himself in a wide range of governmental activities — and has thus opened himself to more criticism but also weakened the power of the president, a moderate. Analysts say one change that has prompted Ayatollah Khamenei's new role in politics is his solid alliance with conservatives in Iran.

Once Ayatollah Khamenei expresses his will in speeches, loyalists in institutions like the judiciary carry out his desires.

This alliance with a political faction did not exist under Ayatollah Khomeini, even though he at times he ruled by decree. During his 10 years as supreme leader, beginning with the Islamic revolution in 1979, Ayatol-

lah Khomeini preferred to balance Iran's rival political factions.

In an example of direction intervention, Ayatollah Khamenei last week ordered President Mohammed Khatami to oust the minister of Islamic culture and guidance, Ataollah Mohajerani, who had come to symbolize free expression and artistic liberalization. Mr. Mohajerani submitted his resignation months before to ease the mounting pressure from conservatives on President Khatami to remove him. Mr. Khatami had resisted until Ayatollah Khamenei gave the order.

And in August, Ayatollah Khamenei ordered Parliament to kill legislation aimed at reviving publications that had been banned after they supported moderates who made significant gains in parliamentary elections in February and May.

The speaker of Parliament, or the Islamic Consultative Assembly, Ayatollah Mahdi Karrubi, had visited Ayatollah Khamenei to try to gain his support for the new legislation. But after the supreme leader was told that a presidential aide had vowed to persuade 100 deputies to confront him directly if he tried to kill the legislation, Ayatollah Khamenei decided to assert his political power. Just minutes before Parliament was to vote, the supreme leader's order instructing

deputies to kill the legislation was read out in open session.

Analysts said the intervention was unnecessary, because even if Parliament had passed the legislation, a conservative body of clerics and jurists called the Guardian Council would have vetoed it. The Guardian Council, not the leader, is directly charged with determining whether legislation conforms to Islamic law.

Ayatollah Khamenei has also provoked criticism from Ayatollah Yousef Sanai, a moderate, and other senior clerics who have hinted that the supreme lead-

But Khamenei Is Criticized For Role in Political Matters

er's decisions border on one-man rule, an anathema in Shiite tradition, the branch of Islam that is followed by about 90 percent of the people in Iran.

Ayatollah Khamenei's direct role in politics has effectively diffused the powers of Mr. Khatami as president. Now that Mr. Khatami has been forced to accept Mr. Mohajerani's resignation as the minister of Islamic culture and guidance, analysts are asking whether there is anything left of the presidency. Mr. Khatami is considering whether to run for re-election in June. If he does, and wins, he is likely to become more of a figurehead. If he bows out, the conservatives are likely to win the office.

"This is the new Iran," an analyst said. "Khatami supplies the smiling face for the West while the conservatives run the country."

By applying a hands-on approach to running the country, Ayatollah Khamenei has demystified the post

of supreme leader and made himself vulnerable to criticism in the way any politician must answer to constituents. In Tehran, young men have been distributing copies of a letter to Ayatollah Khamenei that criticizes his rule and offers him advice on how to run the country.

That such a letter was sent to him, and then made public, signals the changing role of the supreme leader: The once untouchable post has become a matter open for public debate, even at a high cost. Criticizing the supreme leader carries a maximum prison sentence of three years.

In the letter, the author, identified as a revolutionary who had accompanied Ayatollah Khomeini on his famous plane trip from Paris to Tehran in 1979 to lead the revolution, accuses Ayatollah Khamenei of finding "enemies" in every corner.

"Have you considered that pseudofascist directors of Kayhan can be the very cultural enemies you fear," the letter said, referring to a conservative newspaper. "Your excellency, please believe me. The best way to run a country is to respect the freedoms."

Ayatollah Khamenei has also tried to take control of the established system of collecting religious taxes, the traditional source of senior clerics' power and independence

from the government. Sources in the holy Shiite city of Qum say a representative from the supreme leader's office has visited at least five senior religious officials to propose channeling the taxes, worth tens of millions of dollars, into a general fund under Mr. Khamenei's control.

Such a change would deprive these senior theologians of their valuable patronage networks and force theology students, who receive much-needed stipends, to become loyal to the supreme leader rather than their current patrons, the top clerics who are involved in high-stakes politics and who sometimes are at odds with Ayatollah Khamenei. All but one cleric rejected the proposal, the sources say.

Rasool Nafisi, an Iranian scholar in Washington who is conducting extensive research on the clergy in Iran, said Ayatollah Khamenei's new assertiveness in politics had provoked another divide among senior clerics in Qum.

"There are pro-reform clergy and some senior theologians who are more concerned with the future of Shiite Islam and its institutions than a temporary state-supported religion," Mr. Nafisi said. "These individuals are criticizing rather openly Mr. Khamenei's new turn."

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune
PUBLISHED WEEKLY
150 N. ZEEB RD., SUITE 100
ANN ARBOR, MI 48106-1500
TEL: 734/769-7000
FAX: 734/769-7001

DECEMBER 21, 2000

CULTURE

Des femmes-courage

La galerie Esther Woerdehoff, à Paris, expose une cinquantaine de photographies d'Anne Delassus, consacrées aux femmes kurdes. Des images sans fard d'êtres bouleversés et bouleversants.

LA PREMIERE DES CINQUANTE PHOTOGRAPHIES exposees donne le ton. C'est un plan rapproché, presque horizontal, sur une femme assise sur un tapis. Son corps ramassé se détache d'un mur recouvert à la chaux. Elle fume une cigarette dont la fumée voile la partie éclairée de son visage. L'autre partie est dans l'ombre. Restée dans l'ombre. Sans doute, ce n'est pas un hasard de l'objectif. L'image illustre remarquablement cette exposition consacrée aux femmes kurdes. Il y a quelque chose de grave, partage entre l'ombre et la lumière ; un visage caché mais fixe devant l'objectif, un port de tête digne au-dessus d'un corps replié. Sous forme de reportages réalisés à l'occasion de trois voyages, Anne Delassus s'est initiée à la mémoire d'un peuple. Au plus près des femmes. « *Le peuple kurde est régulièrement chassé de sa terre, dit-elle. Paradoxalement, c'est dans le rythme même de cette terre et dans celui des saisons qu'il semble puiser sa force de vivre, de résister, et son espoir de pouvoir un jour briser la répétition d'une Histoire qui le nie.* »

Photographe indépendante, Anne Delassus a entrepris un premier voyage au Kurdistan au printemps 1992, après que « dix années de guerre entre l'Iran et l'Irak avaient fait de cette région frontalière une terre ruinée, minée. Et l'exode de 1991 n'avait fait qu'empirer la situation. » Deux autres voyages ont suivi, dans l'été 1994 et l'hiver 1997. Trois saisons en trois voyages, trois saisons contrastées. « *Bien souvent, les hommes sont partis et vivent un autre quotidien les armes à la main. Certains villages ne sont plus habités que par des veuves et leurs enfants.* » Dans l'été 1994, plusieurs familles ont pu se réinstaller dans leurs villages, retravailler leur terre. L'été, des plaines du Badinan aux vallées étirées à l'est, les moissons et les récoltes impriment le rythme de la journée. « *On engrange, afin de faire vivre la communauté,* » poursuit Anne Delassus. D'une saison l'autre, les sensations pourraient être différentes. Elles ne le sont pas. Il traîne toujours un peu de douleur, une âpreté de la vie quotidienne, une évidente fragilité mêlée de précarité et de force intérieure. Dans ce rude hiver de 1997, la photographe avait décidé de poser son objectif pour éprouver « *ce temps d'isolement et de ressourcement* » d'un lieu à l'autre. Des villages reconstruits, à nouveau déserts, des habitants qui fuient les affrontements entre l'armée turque et le PKK, d'autres, plus au sud, qui vivent une accalmie dans la tempête. Interpellée par ces êtres si for-

tement enracinés dans la vie, Anne Delassus a tenté « *de saisir ce qu'ils laissent sourdre de ce souffle, et ce qui advient dans la rencontre.* »



Et de voir des photographies qui se placent à la fois dans le temps (parce que l'on sait, d'emblée, que la photographie s'y est rendue) et hors du temps (parce que le drame kurde n'en finit plus). Au regard des images d'Anne Delassus, si la femme est la pérennité, le courage, ce ressort naturel qui manque à l'homme, cette fierté qui jamais ne se couche, disponible, attentive, légère et délicate, obstinée, elle est Kurde. « *Terre de lumière,* à côté des femmes kurdes », selon l'intitulé de l'exposition, présente donc des photographies en jour d'atelier (comme diraient les premiers impressionnistes), des portraits de femmes dont les traits sont marqués, aux visages creusés. Certaines sourient, d'autres tournent la tête vers un impossible ailleurs, improbable Cythère, d'autres encore

portent autour du cou l'image miniature d'un mari disparu (la photographie de la photographie : une métonymie du drame individuel, collectif). Des intérieurs simples, recouverts de tapis, de tissus chargés de motifs ; des scènes de la vie quotidienne, où l'on se réchauffe, malgré la neige, autour d'un feu, autour d'un poêle, où le travail domestique, dans un vaste bâtiment, semble former un étonnant ballet, jouant des noirs et des blancs, des reflets de leur blafarde, timide, qui vont viennent s'accrochent aux parois. D'autres images de femmes prises dans le paysage, tantôt froid, humide, tantôt sec, aride, des images de femmes au temps des moissons, les unes « *au printemps dans un campement de Kurdes* », les autres au « *battage du grain à l'ancienne* ». ... Et c'est encore une famille réfugiée sous la tente, une vieille à peine émergée de ses draperies, un dispensaire, une femme et son nouveau-né, une jeune fille gitane et son père, des veillées funèbres dans une maison isolée, des enterrements, des jeux de neige... Tout le quotidien des femmes kurdes, avec son lot de souffrances, de joies minces, son lot de déterminations surtout. Tout le courage des hères qu'on abat. Qu'on essaye d'abattre. Car si la souffrance n'épargne pas ces femmes, celles-ci donnent l'impression formidable (au sens étymologique du terme) d'un combat sans cesse renouveau, gouverné par la dignité. De fiers allures, des figures qui s'engoncent dans le mythe. Humbles et résolues.

JEAN-CLAUDE RENARD

Terre de lumière, à côté des femmes kurdes, Anne Delassus, galerie Esther Woerdehoff, 36, rue Falguière, 75015 Paris (tel. : 01 43 21 44 83), jeudi, vendredi, samedi de 14 h à 18 h et sur rendez-vous. Jusqu'au 10 février.



21 DÉCEMBRE 2000

Ankara justifie son assaut meurtrier dans les prisons

Au moins dix-sept détenus grévistes de la faim ont été tués.

Istanbul de notre correspondant

L'assaut sanglant des forces de sécurité turques contre les prisons en rébellion se poursuivait encore hier soir à Umraniye (Istanbul) et à Canakkale (Dardanelles) où 158 détenus, barricadés, refusent de se rendre et auraient fabriqué des armes artisanales avec des bonbonnes de gaz. Curieusement baptisée «opération retour à la vie», la répression contre des prisonniers politiques en grève de la faim a déjà fait 17 morts parmi les détenus, 2 parmi les gendarmes et plus de 80 blessés, essentiellement des détenus, selon un bilan officiel provisoire publié hier soir.

Tuerie et brûlures. L'accès aux prisons est toujours bloqué et plusieurs associations turques mettent en doute les déclarations officielles sur les circonstances et le bilan de l'opération. Les responsables de l'Association des droits de l'homme ainsi que ceux de l'Association des parents des détenus, qui la qualifient de «descente délibérée pour tuer les prisonniers politiques», affirment que les forces de l'ordre se sont servies de bombes chimiques et ont «expressément brûlé les détenus». La veille, les télévisions avaient montré une femme gravement brûlée, criant dans les bras des médecins que les soldats avaient mis le feu à des détenues de son dortoir.



Un policier sur les toits de la prison de Bayrampasa, à Istanbul.

Mardi à l'aube, gendarmes et policiers ont simultanément donné l'assaut à 20 prisons abritant plus de 200 détenus en grève de la faim depuis deux mois, soutenus par des centaines d'autres qui jeûnaient pour dénoncer une réforme du système carcéral. Le ministère de la Santé a indiqué que 296 grévistes de la faim ont été

transférés de force dans des hôpitaux. Plus de 500 prisonniers politiques ont été envoyés dans trois nouvelles prisons, composées de cellules individuelles d'isolement et de cellules à trois personnes.

En quarante-huit heures, plus de 600 personnes, en majorité des parents de détenus et sympathisants des organisations

d'extrême gauche et de celles des droits de l'homme, ont été arrêtées par la police alors qu'elles protestaient dans les rues d'Istanbul, d'Ankara et d'autres grandes villes. Seuls quelques petits partis de gauche et deux syndicats du secteur public ont publiquement protesté contre l'assaut des forces de l'ordre. La majorité de la classe politique et des dirigeants des médias soutiennent cette opération qui vise à «réinstaurer l'autorité de l'Etat dans l'ensemble des prisons».

«Force et terrorisme». Le Premier ministre (gauche nationaliste), Bülent Ecevit, a déclaré hier que «l'Etat turc avait montré sa force» et que «les terroristes devraient comprendre qu'ils ne pouvaient pas résister contre l'Etat». Il a ajouté que le gouvernement avait pris les mesures nécessaires pour contrecarrer les attaques probables des organisations d'extrême gauche dans les jours à venir.

Dès mardi, le président de l'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe, lord Russell-Johnston, avait «regretté la perte de vies humaines» et appelé Ankara à la modération. La Commission européenne a fait part hier de sa «préoccupation», alors que la Turquie a signé, il y a quelques semaines, un «partenariat pour l'adhésion à l'UE», qui fixe notamment à Ankara des objectifs en matière de droits de l'homme ●

RAGIP DURAN

La Commission européenne critique l'intervention dans les prisons turques

AP Associated Press

20 décembre 2000

BRUXELLES (AP) -- La Commission européenne a critiqué mercredi l'intervention militaire qui a fait selon elle au moins 18 morts, dont 16 détenus, dans les prisons turques la veille, estimant que cela n'augmentait pas les chances déjà minces de la Turquie d'entrer dans l'Union européenne.

L'intervention militaire était destinée à mettre fin à la grève de la faim des prisonniers qui durait depuis 61 jours pour empêcher le transfert de certains détenus dans des cellules à une ou trois personnes, où ils craignent d'être victimes d'abus ou de tortures.

La Turquie est officiellement candidate à l'UE mais les négociations sur son adhésions sont suspendues, l'Europe estimant qu'Ankara a encore des progrès à faire en matière de droits de l'Homme. Les ministres de l'UE ont toutefois approuvé mercredi un prêt sur trois ans de 135 millions d'euros (885,54 millions de FF) à la Turquie pour préparer son éventuelle adhésion en améliorant le développement social et économique.

BBC NEWS

You are in: World: **Europe**
Sunday, 24 December, 2000, 23:34 GMT

Turkish prison strike continues



Anti-prison reform protesters clashed with the police

The Turkish Government says more than 350 prison inmates are still refusing food, five days after the security forces launched raids on jails across the country to end the protest.

Troops regained control on Friday of the last of 20 prisons, leaving a total of 26 prisoners and two police officers dead.

The inmates want to stop transfers to new maximum security prisons where they say they will be exposed to attacks by guards, who are often accused of committing abuses.

Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Turk warned that the government would not back down from the transfer plans.

Dead end

Mr Turk said that following

the storming of the jails, 1,005 prisoners were transferred to three of the new prisons and that nearly 400 had quit their hunger strike.

He said the jails had been raided to "rescue the prisoners" - many of whom, he insisted, had been forced to fast by extreme left-wing groups.

Mr Turk said that 353 continued their two-month long "death-fast", and that more than 1,600 others were carrying out a hunger strike of solidarity, taking just minimal amounts of sugar.

"Some inmates continue their acts in the trap of fanaticism into which they had fallen," he said.

Condemnation

The minister urged the strikers to put an end to their protests and to realise that they had reached a dead end.

"If their condition deteriorates we will do whatever is necessary for medical intervention," he warned.

The European Commission has expressed concern over the crackdown.

Turkey's attempt to gain membership of the EU depends on improving its human rights record and democratic institutions.

Human rights groups have also condemned the assault.

Amnesty International has called for a full and independent inquiry into the raids.



Inmates fear new cells will expose them to abuse



Many victims are said to have set themselves ablaze

L'assaut des prisons turques a fait au moins quinze morts

Les autorités affirment être intervenues contre les grévistes de la faim pour « sauver les terroristes de leur propre terrorisme »

ISTANBUL

de notre correspondante

Bilan meurtrier dans les prisons turques où les autorités ont lancé, mardi 19 décembre à l'aube, une opération qu'elles avaient choisi d'appeler « Retour à la vie ». Son but, selon le premier ministre Bülent Ecevit, était de « sauver les terroristes de leur propre terrorisme ». D'après les chiffres officiels, 15 prisonniers – dont la plupart se seraient immolés par le feu – et deux membres des forces de sécurité ont trouvé la mort au cours de l'assaut lancé simultanément contre vingt prisons où plus de mille prisonniers refusaient de s'alimenter depuis une soixantaine de jours. Ozgur Tayad, une organisation de soutien aux prisonniers, affirme que le nombre de décès est plus élevé. Des dizaines de détenus ont dû être traités pour des brûlures ou blessures par balle. De nombreux grévistes hospitalisés ont refusé l'intervention des médecins.

Les détenus, membres d'organisations d'extrême gauche pour la plupart, refusaient d'être séparés des camarades avec lesquels ils partagent des dortoirs surpeuplés contenant jusqu'à cent personnes. Les autorités qui n'ont pas eu accès à certains de ces dortoirs depuis près de dix ans, ont récemment bâti de nouvelles prisons avec des cellules prévues pour une à trois personnes dans l'espoir de briser l'emprise des groupes politiques et des organisations criminelles qui font la loi à l'intérieur des pénitenciers.

CELLULES INDIVIDUELLES

Au cours des semaines écoulées, alors que la santé des grévistes se détériorait – certains d'entre eux avaient atteint le 61^e jour de jeûne –, des négociations avaient été engagées par des écrivains, avocats et activistes des droits de l'homme dans l'espoir d'éviter un recours à la force. Les grévistes avaient refusé une offre du gouvernement proposant de retarder la mise en service des nouvelles prisons car ceux-ci estimaient que la population carcérale serait plus vulnérable aux mauvais traitements dans les cellules individuelles. Les prisonniers exigeaient

des garanties fermes pour que le nouveau système prévu ne soit pas mis en place. Les autorités avaient d'ailleurs commencé à transférer une partie des détenus dans ces nouvelles prisons, dites de type F.

Deux pénitenciers, celui d'Umraniye et celui de Canakkale, continuent de résister. Après une pause durant la nuit, l'assaut a repris, mercredi matin. A l'aide de pelles mécaniques et de bulldozers, les troupes d'élite de la gendarmerie s'efforcent de démolir des murs pour pouvoir pénétrer dans les dortoirs. Le ministre de la justice, Hikmet Sami Türk, a annoncé que l'opération avait été conclue avec

succès dans 18 prisons. « A partir de maintenant, il est hors de question d'avoir des grands dortoirs dans les prisons de Turquie », a-t-il affirmé, ajoutant : « Désormais, la souveraineté de l'Etat et le respect pour les droits de l'homme seront manifestes au plus haut degré. »

L'assaut a été condamné par de nombreuses organisations des droits de l'homme qui déplorent depuis longtemps le fait que la sécurité des prisons soit exercée par des forces armées liées au ministère de l'intérieur et non pas par le ministère de la justice. La Fédération internationale des ligues des droits de l'homme a regretté que « des solutions aussi extrêmes et vouées à l'échec aient été choisies ». Jonathan Sugden, de Human Rights Watch, a affirmé que « ces morts auraient pu être évitées. La

crise aurait pu être résolue avec patience, transparence et une volonté de prendre conseil ».

Le gouvernement entend désormais achever le second volet de son opération « nettoyage des prisons » qui consiste en l'adoption d'un projet de loi portant sur des réductions de peine. L'Assemblée nationale en discutera mercredi pour la seconde fois après que le chef de l'Etat, Ahmed Necdet Sezer, a mis son veto une première fois. Cette loi prévoit la libération de près de la moitié des détenus de Turquie. Très controversée, elle exclut la plupart des détenus politiques alors que les meurtriers et autres criminels de droit commun bénéficieraient de remises en liberté.

Nicole Pope

Liberation

22 DECEMBRE 2000

La colère des familles de détenus Mobilisation en Europe contre la répression.

La méthode brutale choisie par Ankara pour imposer une réforme pénitentiaire, qui ne devait pourtant s'appliquer qu'une fois « un consensus social » trouvé, ne va pas redorer l'image de la Turquie en Europe. Le « partenariat d'adhésion » à l'UE, adopté au sommet européen de Nice, lui demande certes « d'ajuster les conditions de détention en prison aux règles standard minimales des Nations unies ». Les prisons surpeuplées qui ont été vidées par la force ne correspondaient sûrement pas à ces règles. Mais l'assaut sanglant

mené contre des détenus en grève de la faim est, pour le coup, contraire à tous les principes politiques et éthiques communs aux pays de l'UE. La Commission européenne a jusqu'ici réagi avec prudence, s'affirmant « préoccupée » par les atteintes aux droits de

l'homme. Mais un peu partout en Europe, familles de détenus, comités de soutien et associations d'extrême gauche ont manifesté leur colère et leur inquiétude. Mardi, le Comité de solidarité avec les prisonniers politiques de Turquie a occupé la banque turque Isrobank à Paris, avant de manifester mercredi devant l'Assemblée nationale. Parallèlement, le comité de solidarité avec les prisonniers pour la liberté était reçu par la Commission consultative des droits de l'homme et prenait contact avec le ministre des Affaires étrangères.

« Nous sommes consternés par l'issue de la grève de la faim dans les prisons turques », a déclaré hier François Rivasseau, porte-parole du ministère, appelant Ankara à respecter les droits de l'homme dans la perspective d'une adhésion à l'UE.

Le siège de *Liberation* a également été occupé pacifiquement, hier pendant deux heures par le Comité de solidarité avec les prisonniers politiques en Turquie, pour dénoncer « le massacre » des détenus et « la manipulation des médias turcs ». « Seuls quatre prisonniers se sont immolés au lieu de se rendre pour être placés dans des cellules d'isolement, dit leur communiqué, les autres furent assassinés et brûlés vifs par l'Etat lors des assauts et le bilan est encore plus catastrophique que les chiffres officiels. A 22h (mercredi, ndlr), nous disposons des noms de 24 prisonniers morts. » Aux Pays-Bas, des manifestants turcs ont occupé le siège du Parti social-démocrate du Premier ministre Wim Kok. En Grande-Bretagne, 50 manifestants kurdes, qui avaient occupé, mercredi pendant six heures la Grande Roue de Londres, ont été inculpés pour troubles à l'ordre public ●

S. Etr.

Turquie:

«Les policiers nous ont brûlées»

Premiers témoignages sur la violence contre les détenus grévistes de la faim.



Hier à la prison de Canakkale, un détenu rampe vers les policiers pour se rendre. Seule la prison d'Umraniye à Istanbul résiste encore.

Istanbul de notre correspondant

La prison de Canakkale (nord-ouest de la Turquie) est à son tour tombée. Les gendarmes et les équipes spéciales de la police sont venus à bout, hier vers midi, de la résistance que leur opposaient depuis cinquante-six heures 128 détenus politiques: au moins 4 prisonniers ont encore été tués, ce qui porte à 23 morts et des dizaines de blessés le bilan de l'opération menée par Ankara contre les détenus en grève de la faim. La Fondation des droits de l'homme de Turquie a contesté ce bilan, affirmant que l'opération avait fait 30 morts. Hier, en fin d'après-midi, seule la prison d'Umraniye à Istanbul, où se trouvent 430 prisonniers,

continuait de résister. Les journalistes sur place ont entendu toute la journée des coups de feu et des explosions.

Transferts. C'est mardi à l'aube que les forces de l'ordre ont lancé leurs descentes contre 18 prisons du pays afin de déloger des centaines de détenus politiques, en grève de la faim illimitée pour protester contre leur transfert de prisons à dortoirs vers d'autres composées de cellules individuelles d'isolement ou de cellules à trois personnes. Au prix d'un bilan meurtrier, Ankara a donc décidé de faire passer en force sa réforme contestée du système carcéral. Le ministre de la Justice, Hikmet Sami Turk, avait justifié l'opération en expliquant que l'Etat n'avait pas d'autre moyen d'alléger les effectifs des prisons surpeuplées,

puisque une loi d'amnistie, qui doit libérer environ la moitié des 72 000 détenus, avait été repoussée la semaine dernière, pour raison constitutionnelle, par le président Ahmet Necdet Sezer. Or hier, alors que pratiquement toutes les prisons avaient été vidées par la force, le chef de l'Etat donnait son feu vert à la loi, accréditant le sentiment que l'assaut avait été mené afin de reprendre en main des établissements pénitentiaires qui échappent complètement à son contrôle, et sont souvent sous la coupe de gangs ou d'organisations politiques.

Brûlures. Hier, l'Association des droits de l'homme à Istanbul a commencé à recueillir des témoignages. Des parents de prisonniers politiques ont en effet pu rendre visite hier matin à des détenues. «Les po-

liciers nous ont d'abord arrosées d'un liquide puis nous ont brûlées», a affirmé une prisonnière. Les responsables de la Chambre des médecins, qui confirment cette version, vont analyser la composition de ce liquide. Ils ont d'ores et déjà fait savoir que les brûlures constatées sont inhabituelles. La diffusion de la chaîne d'information continue NTV a été interrompue hier dans la matinée par la police alors que le correspondant relatait en direct l'opération de la police. Le directeur général des prisons, Ali Suat Ertoşun, s'en est vivement pris aux journalistes turcs: «Ne posez pas de questions qui mettent en doute l'attitude et le comportement de l'Etat», a-t-il averti ●

RACIP DURAN (avec AFP)

The Economist

DECEMBER 23RD 2000 - JANUARY 5TH 2001

INTERNATIONAL

Iran's Kurds

The lucky ones?

SANANDAJ

AMONG the Kurds scattered across the Middle East, those in Iran have one clear advantage. The Iraqi Kurds' experiment in de facto independence, now ten years old, is a hostage to America's readiness to sponsor it (see box). Turkey's Kurds pin their hopes for autonomy on the belief that Turkey will join the EU. Iranian Kurds, on the other hand, do not have to appeal to outsiders but can raise their grievances directly with Iran's reform-minded president, Muhammad Khatami.

Some 1.4m Kurds live in Iran's remote province of Kurdistan, and about twice that number elsewhere in the country. The governor of Kurdistan, Abdollah Ramazanzadeh, smiles broadly when asked about the province's prospects. He freely alludes to the lack of trust between the regime and its Kurds, a consequence of the Iranian-Kurdish insurgency that took place alongside the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s. He admits that Iranian Kurds, who are predominantly Sunni Muslims, believe that Iran's Shia Muslim regime systematically discriminates against them. But, he says, all this is changing: in ten years or so, Kurdistan will be not only a happy province, but also a prosperous one.

Security, a crucial prerequisite, has already been provided, albeit painfully. The Kurdish nationalist movement, the KDP, has been driven into neighbouring Iraq. Iran's support for Jalal Talabani, the leader of the PUK which runs the chunk of the Iraqi enclave contiguous to Iran, has helped to pre-

vent the KDP from launching cross-border attacks. Two years ago, Iran's National Security Council declared Kurdistan "secure" from secessionist violence, and transferred responsibility for law and order from the Revolutionary Guard to the police.

Unlike his predecessor, an ethnic Turk, Mr Ramazanzadeh, a Shia Kurd, has spent his three years in office diligently promoting Kurds, both Shia and Sunni. Of the eight junior governors he has appointed, three are Shia Kurds and two are Sunni Kurds; the under-secretaries of all eight are Sunni Kurds. An insidious vetting system, often used to

Kurdish has risen from two to five, and the provincial government, which used to frown on out-of-school Kurdish classes, paid for 2,500 Kurds to learn to write in their native language last summer. Plans are afoot for the television station in Sanandaj to have programmes in Kurdish for three hours a day. Cultural awareness is reflected sartorially: young men happily sport the goats' wool *chukhoranek*, and cummerbund.

The loudest grumbles are economic. In the past two years, drought has hastened the decline of Kurdistan's primitive agriculture, provincial revenues are falling and the un-

employment rate—13%, according to disbelieved official figures—is spurring an exodus to other provinces. When the state intervenes to create jobs, it often botches it. A notorious steel works, one of the previous governor's legacies, cost \$9m and is still not operating.

Yet Mr Ramazanzadeh boasts that he has used his influence over the president to prise from next year's national budget an extra \$18m—one-and-a-half times Kurdistan's projected income—as well as a \$30m windfall for, among other things, attracting private investment. So far, government loans have financed the expansion of a chewing-gum factory on the outskirts of Sanandaj, and the building of a handful of other industrial units.

Rio Tinto, a British mining company, recently signed a deal with the central government to allow it and its Iranian partner to prospect for gold and other minerals across an area that includes much of Kurdistan.

Three years after Mr Khatami asked Mr Ramazanzadeh to persuade the Kurds that they could prosper inside a unitary Iran, how is the governor doing? Certainly, he has



trip up Kurdish civil-service applicants, is still in place across the country. But Mr Ramazanzadeh's tenure has coincided with an end to the practice of arresting Sunni Kurdish clerics suspected of separatist tendencies.

The governor enthusiastically issues permits for the performance of Kurdish plays and music. The number of weeklies and monthlies published partly or fully in

Bush's Kurdish fans

ARBIL

ONE bunch of people without qualms about George Bush's foreign policy are the 2.5m Kurds living in the American-protected enclave in Iraq. A priority of the incoming administration, said Colin Powell, the designated secretary of state, will be "to re-energise the sanctions regime" against Saddam Hussein. The steady crumbling of these sanctions has made the Iraqi Kurds exceedingly twitchy.

Muhammad Kasro was curled up in the back of his small hardware shop in Arbil bazaar last month when an explosion interrupted his siesta. "Saddam is back, that was my first thought," he said. In fact nobody knows who set off the bomb that killed seven people in a coffee house close

to Mr Kasro's shop. But earlier this month, as officials from the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), which controls about two-thirds of the enclave, hunted for the perpetrators, two Iraqi battalions and an infantry brigade pushed five kilometres (three miles) into Kurdish territory.

"An attack from Saddam has always been a possibility, but we are far more worried now," acknowledged Nechirvan Barzani, the savvy 33-year-old who runs the government set up by the KDP in its own region. Mr Barzani, who is the nephew, son-in-law and heir-apparent of the KDP leader, Massoud Barzani, says such worries stem from the belief that the incumbent administration in Washington is doing lit-

tle to prevent a sanctions meltdown.

Meanwhile, Turkey, the Kurds' main route to the West, is fast improving its ties with Iraq. An ambassador is soon to be sent, and the Turks are talking of opening a new border gate in the six-kilometre strip of no-man's land between Syria and Iraqi territory under KDP control. That would open a direct land link between Turkey and the Iraqi regime—and cut the KDP out of the lucrative trade in smuggled goods.

It was the fight over the proceeds of this trade that accelerated the collapse, in 1994, of the federal regime set up two years earlier between Mr Barzani and his age-old rival, Jalal Talabani. The war that followed claimed thousands of Kurdish lives, and resulted in the virtual partitioning of the Kurdish enclave. Faced with an Iraqi-Turkish threat, will the two Kurdish leaders be prepared to join forces again?

problems. Distrust runs too deep to be eradicated without a big shift in the province's fortunes. Kurdish nationalists know that progress towards decentralisation—their minimum political goal—is dependent on the approval of Iran's "Supreme Leader", who is cooler towards minorities than the president. Moreover, some Iranian Kurds have been transfixed by the image of autonomy, no matter how imperfect, that they see on the other side of the Iraqi border.

Turkey

Not yet slotted in

ANKARA AND BRUSSELS

NATO and the EU have yet to find a way of making Turkey feel comfortable in a new defence arrangement between the two organisations

IT IS not every day that the American president telephones the leader of a NATO country to say that its own interest, and that of the organisation as a whole, would best be served by a certain diplomatic move on which other members of the club have agreed. Nor does it often happen that, in the face of a point-blank refusal, the American responds with soothing language about his ally's legitimate concerns, and the need for further efforts to meet them.

But in this case the ally in question was Turkey, a country whose strategic value to the West goes far beyond the confines of the Atlantic alliance, to which it provides the second-largest land army and one of the few NATO defence forces that is moderately well-equipped, battle-hardened and eminently willing to take, as well as inflict, casualties.

With the full backing of Turkish public opinion—the political class as well as ordinary Turks—Bulent Ecevit, the prime minister, has firmly resisted President Bill Clinton's pleas that he should accept a new deal between NATO and the European Union, designed to ensure the transatlantic alliance's primacy in matters of European security. After failing to persuade her Turkish counterpart, Ismail Cem, to give a little ground, Madeleine Albright, the American secretary of state, told her farewell meeting with fellow NATO ministers that all sides should try a

bit harder to be nice to each other. "The Turks have to feel comfortable, the EU has to feel comfortable, the other members of NATO have to feel comfortable," she cooed, seeming confident that the desired level of universal felicity would eventually be attained.

But in Turkey there is a strong feeling that its veto over European defence arrangements is a card that can and must be played, as the only way of asserting Turkish interests in the face of an EU defence plan that might be harmless in the short run but could seriously damage Turkey's interests in a few years' time. "The meaning of this whole scheme [a European-only defence] is to make

Turkey agree to be stupid," thundered Ahmet Tasgetiren, a prominent Turkish commentator, and many Turks agree. The United States gently counter-argues that the Turks' cleverest move would be to support arrangements guaranteeing NATO, and therefore Turkey, a tight grip over anything the EU does in the field of security. But this argument has not, or not yet, been persuasive.

Instinctively, Turkey dreads the idea that the EU, which has kept it at arm's length for nearly 40 years and includes its historic rival Greece, should play any role at all in matters of defence. The only thing that would assuage such fears would be to promise Turkey that it could fully join in any EU military consultations—and, if they happen, actions.

The Union has, in Mrs Albright's words, made a "good-faith and reasonable effort" to reassure Turkey that it would be brought into consultation at an early stage on how to

manage a security crisis; and that it would be an equal member of a "committee of contributors" to any military operation. For the foreseeable future, any European-only operation worth the name would require some use of NATO assets, and that would give any NATO member, including Turkey, the ability to veto the whole thing.

Even so, an ad hoc group of European nations could still mount a limited military mission, such as the Italian-led effort which brought a measure of order to Albania in 1997, without involving NATO. Even these small operations, at least since the Suez crisis of 1956, would hardly be undertaken, in practice, if the United States, and therefore NATO, strongly opposed them. But Turkey, whose territorial disputes with Greece remain unresolved despite a warming of the mood in the Aegean, remains unconvinced.

As a result of the impasse, a NATO meeting on December 15th broke up in some disarray. The effort to find a working arrangement between the Atlantic alliance and the Union will stretch well into next year, when Sweden, which is not a NATO country but takes military matters quite seriously, will assume the EU's rotating presidency.

In the view of the outgoing Clinton administration, the best way to harness the EU's desire to play some role in defence is to keep the EU and NATO in lock-step with one another. NATO would offer—nay, insist on providing—its services as a military planner and, where possible, lend hardware to the EU. But this would be on condition that the EU did not succumb to French ambitions to create a separate European military power. The latest round of talks went at least some way to exorcising that ghost; despite France's initial objections, it produced an agreement that the EU and NATO would talk frequently and at many different levels. But the other part of the European defence jigsaw—providing Turkey with the desired level of comfort—has yet to be slotted into place.



Turkish friends of America, wary of the European Union

Last chance for Turkey

Turkey is in the last chance saloon. Yesterday's decision by the board of the International Monetary Fund to grant \$7.5bn from the supplemental reserve facility gives the current stabilisation programme a second opportunity. But the country does not enjoy a deep fund of credibility. This is hardly surprising given the failure of 16 previous programmes with the IMF. The Turkish government must prove the doubters wrong.

Sceptics are not to be found only in the markets. Many governments also question the Turkish reliance on a crawling exchange rate peg as the anchor for disinflation. Unhappy experience has demonstrated how vulnerable such pegs can be. The Turkish authorities are unlikely to be given the benefit of any more doubt. They must fulfil all their commitments. Admittedly, the programme

could fail even if they did so. If they do not, failure is certain.

Nevertheless, the IMF was right to give Turkey the assistance it sought. The country has already achieved far more than ever before. The primary balance of the public sector (the balance before interest payments) has shifted from a deficit of about 2 per cent of gross domestic product in 1999 to a surplus of 3 per cent in 2000. Inflation has been cut to between 2 and 3 per cent a month from an average of 80 per cent a year over the previous decade. The authorities have also put in place many structural reforms, including privatisation and financial restructuring.

Interest rate rises

Sadly, perhaps because things seemed to be going quite well,

the authorities relaxed in the second half of this year. The partial privatisation of Turk Telekom was delayed. Worse, when some banks fell into difficulty in November, the central bank expanded liquidity in response, thereby calling into question its commitment to the exchange rate peg. That generated a crisis of confidence. To stem the resulting capital outflow, interest rates rose to unsustainably high levels. At one point overnight interest rates reached 1,700 per cent. With such rates the survival of borrowers can be measured in days rather than weeks.

Tasks ahead

The IMF has come to the rescue. The money from the supplemental reserve facility and approximately \$2.9bn available under its current stand-by arrangement buys Turkey some time. But success depends on the swift return of confidence and, with it, fresh capital inflows. The need for such inflows is clear: the current account deficit, at about 5.4 per cent of gross domestic product this year, is dauntingly large. Turkey cannot rely on official assistance alone. This is one of the reasons why rapid progress

with privatisation is important. Inflows of private equity in response to privatisation are, as Brazilian experience shows, among the best ways to attract large inflows of foreign capital.

More still must be done: the government needs to achieve the agreed primary budget surplus of 5 per cent of GDP next year; the central bank must adhere strictly to the rule linking domestic monetary expansion to inflows of foreign currency; there needs to be a temporary incomes policy aimed at bringing inflation swiftly down to a single digit annual rate; and the banking system needs to be put on a sound basis. If all this is achieved, Turkey should be able to exit smoothly from the present crawling peg exchange rate regime to a more flexible one, starting next year.

The IMF was right to come to Turkey's aid. But the government must also appreciate its true predicament. This is Turkey's programme. Its aim is not just to achieve stabilisation but to demonstrate the country's capacity to join the community of advanced European economies. Turkey is on trial before a sceptical world. The IMF may have given it its last chance to prove the doubters wrong.

Turkey Frees Prisoners in Huge Amnesty

By John Ward Anderson
Washington Post Service

ISTANBUL — Turkey adopted an amnesty plan on Friday and began releasing inmates from its prison system as paramilitary troops finally ended a four-day-old prison siege.

The government, in announcing the end of resistance at the Umraniye jail in Istanbul, the last prison to defy a nationwide jail crackdown, said troops had shot and killed four inmates who set themselves ablaze and charged them. The four deaths brought to 26 the number of people who have died since Tuesday in confrontations in 20 prisons.

More than half of Turkey's 72,000 prisoners are expected to be released in coming weeks under an amnesty bill approved by Parliament and signed into law by President Ahmet Necdet Sezer on Thursday night.

Mr. Sezer, formerly the chief justice of Turkey's high court, had previously

vetoed the bill, saying it was unconstitutional, but Parliament overrode his veto. Under Turkish law, the president had no choice but to approve the bill when it was sent to him a second time.

The first inmates began walking free on Friday afternoon from Buca Prison in Bolu, a small city about 240 kilometers (150 miles) east of Istanbul. Unless the high court strikes down the legislation as unconstitutional — which seems unlikely to happen before most of the inmates go free — about 35,000 prisoners are expected to be released in the near future.

Critics complained that the bill was unconstitutional because it was an unequal application of the law. Crime victims and others criticized the amnesty for letting violent criminals go free by slicing 10 years off their sentences, while many political prisoners convicted of crimes against the state are exempt from the sentence reduction and will remain behind bars.

The amnesty law was approved in the midst of the deadliest prison uprising in Turkey in years. The disturbance, which began early Tuesday when security officers stormed 20 prisons across the country to break a two-month hunger strike by more than 280 inmates, ended Friday at Umraniye, where 423 inmates, some reportedly armed, had barricaded themselves in a conference hall.

News programs showed bulldozers and other equipment battering holes

through concrete walls, allowing some inmates to escape and permitting soldiers to fire tear gas inside. The final holdouts surrendered Friday afternoon.

It remained unclear whether the stated goal of the operation, ending the widespread hunger strike, was successful. News reports here said that many inmates were continuing their "death fast" from their hospital beds, where doctors were refusing to force-feed them, saying it would be unethical.

The hunger strikers — virtually all of whom were political prisoners — were protesting government plans to move them from largely uncontrolled dormitory-style wards to more restrictive prisons with cells for one to three persons.

Prison officials said the new prisons were needed to break the grip criminal gangs and radical groups have in the large wards. Human rights groups say that the new prisons are designed for long-term isolation and could lead to increases in inmate abuse by guards.

Many analysts here said the prison uprising and amnesty legislation were related; the government, they said, wanted to empty its prisons to make the controversial inmate transfer easier.

"I said at least a thousand times, long before this happened, that the amnesty and prison operations would be coordinated," said a former public prosecutor, Necati Ozdemir, who had tried to help negotiate an end to the hunger strike.

La Turquie à reculons vers l'Europe

UN AN après la reconnaissance de son statut de « candidate à la candidature » à l'Union européenne, voilà la Turquie prise dans une tourmente interne. Engluée dans les faillites bancaires – un « trou » de 40 milliards de dollars –, fragilisée par une instabilité politique chronique, agitée par des affrontements de rue, la « petite Asie » est entrée dans une nouvelle spirale infernale depuis l'assaut des forces de l'ordre contre vingt prisons où des détenus poursuivaient une grève de la faim (Le Monde du 21 décembre).

Lancée pour « sauver des vies », l'opération, menée à coups de bulldozers, d'hélicoptères et d'engins blindés, s'est soldée, ces derniers jours, par la mort de vingt-sept personnes, selon un bilan provisoire. Si la répression, les révoltes de prisonniers et les protestations de rue ne sont pas une nouveauté en Turquie, les récents événements éloignent ce pays de ses objectifs européens et révèlent le délitement avancé de l'Etat.

Minée par ses contradictions, étouffant sous le carcan de son dogme fondateur, la république d'Atatürk marche à reculons vers l'Europe. A peine en question, les critères de Copenhague – relatifs aux droits de l'homme, à la démocratie, à l'Etat de droit et posés par les Quinze comme préalable à tout début de négociations d'adhésion – soulèvent des réticences, surtout au sein de la classe politique, incapable de tirer le pays vers le changement. « N'ayez pas peur des réformes ! », a récemment lancé la Tusiad, l'association des patrons turcs, dans une sévère mise en garde adressée au gouvernement. Cette incapacité à amorcer les changements voulus en vue de l'intégration européenne apparaît de façon plus flagrante encore avec l'adoption d'une loi de remise de peine visant à réduire la surpopulation carcérale.

Pour l'heure, c'est la révolte dans les prisons qui focalise toute l'attention. Sans aucun doute, la brutalité des méthodes employées a justifié les condamnations venues de toutes parts. Toutefois, le fonctionnement des groupes d'extrême gauche, à l'origine des protestations, n'a, semble-t-il, rien à envier à celui des « bourreaux ». Ce sont les procès et les exécutions auxquels ces organisations ont recouru à l'intérieur des prisons pour éradiquer les « traîtres » à la cause.

C'est aussi le tirage au sort des « jeûneurs de la mort » par les instances dirigeantes. C'est encore ordres venus de l'extérieur et qui doivent être suivis sous peine d'exécution sommaire. C'est l'apologie du martyre, l'interdiction faite aux membres de ces « sectes politiques » de rencontrer leurs avocats en tête-à-tête pendant leur incarcération. D'où leur refus du projet de réforme gouvernementale qui prévoit des cellules de trois ou quatre personnes (au lieu de « chambres » de dizaines de détenus) plus conformes aux normes internationales mais moins propices aux regroupements politiques.

Qui sont ces organisations ? Marginales, elles tentent en fait de reconquérir le terrain vide laissé par le PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan), moribond depuis la capture en février 1999 de son chef, Abdullah Öcalan. Leurs méthodes sont celles de n'importe quel groupuscule terroriste. Ainsi le DHKP-C (Front révolutionnaire de libération populaire), à la tête du mouvement de grève dans les prisons, compte à son actif l'assassinat, en janvier 1996, de l'industriel turc Ozdemir Sabanci, ardent partisan de la démocratisation de la société turque. Or, pour une fois, le gouvernement turc a vraiment pratiqué dans cette crise la politique de la main tendue, s'engageant à retarder l'application de la réforme des prisons. En vain : « On a tout essayé, c'est désespérant ! », confiait, dépité, le chef du barreau d'Istanbul, Yucel Sayman, qui fit office de médiateur.

Mais alors que les yeux étaient tournés vers l'assaut lancé sur les prisons, la coalition gouvernementale en a profité pour faire passer en force une loi de remise de peine, contestée et inique, à laquelle le président turc, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, légaliste et européen convaincu, avait précédemment mis son veto. Si l'adoption de ce texte va permettre la libération progressive de 35 000 détenus, un acte bienvenu dans un contexte de surpopulation carcérale à l'origine des nombreux problèmes d'insécurité dans les prisons, elle constitue un sérieux pas en arrière sur le chemin de l'intégration européenne.

« LE CLIENTÉLISME PRÉVAUT »

Annoncée depuis dix-huit mois comme une amnistie générale, la

loi, espérait-on, allait conduire à la libération des prisonniers d'opinion. Ce geste aurait été vu comme un signe d'ouverture vers l'Europe, aurait symbolisé la fin de la répression à l'égard des intellectuels, aurait suscité, enfin, l'espoir d'une réconciliation, surtout au Kurdistan, où les armes se sont tues. Or la loi finalement adoptée n'est pas une amnistie mais une simple mesure de clémence, assortie d'un sursis. Surtout, elle laisse hors du champ de son application la plupart des prisonniers d'opinion. Ainsi les personnes condamnées ou poursuivies pour « atteinte à la sûreté et l'intégrité de l'Etat » (article 312, alinéa 2, du code pénal turc) en sont exclues. Or c'est justement le chef d'accusation le plus utilisé pour condamner et emprisonner des journalistes et des intellectuels qui ont osé briser le tabou de l'« intégrité », en abordant notamment la question kurde.

L'exclusion de cet article représente un recul majeur sur la question de la liberté d'expression. Bien sûr, il n'est pas innocent qu'il ait été laissé de côté. La notion d'« intégrité de l'Etat » est l'un des principes intangibles du dogme kémaliste, sur lequel veille l'armée. Or l'influence que celle-ci exerce à tous les niveaux de la vie politique, notamment par le biais du Conseil de sécurité (MGK), dont les décisions sont suivies à la lettre, est remise en question par l'Union européenne. Si la Turquie devait, avant 2010, intégrer l'Europe, comment, dans ce contexte, pourrait-elle procéder au transfert de souveraineté nécessaire ?

Le fait que cet article ne figure pas dans la loi votée par l'Assemblée rend improbable toute réconciliation. Alors que nombre de condamnés à mort voient leurs peines commuées en perpétuité, conformément à ce qui est exigé des pays candidats à l'UE, le chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Öcalan, dont le cas est examiné en ce moment par la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme, voit sa condamnation maintenue. « Une fois de plus, le clientélisme prévaut sur la légalité », déplore Bénédicte Cheneslong, de la Fédération internationale des ligues de droits de l'homme. Coprésident la commission paritaire mixte Union européenne-Turquie au Parlement européen, Daniel Cohn-Bendit résume : « Les Turcs n'arrivent pas à se mettre dans la situation où il faut tourner la page. Ils ont gagné la guerre et sont sans pitié. Ils se montrent incapables de penser pour tout le monde. En fait, ce Parlement n'a pas encore compris l'époque où il vit. »

Marie Jégo

EU-Based Groups Tied to Turk Inmates

Reuters

ANKARA — The Turkish justice minister said in remarks published Tuesday that instructions sent from Belgium to leftist inmates in Turkey had finally triggered the government's bloody crackdown on 20 prisons last week.

His comments reflect increasing suspicion in Turkey, a candidate for membership in the European Union, that groups the country considers "terrorists" at home can find sanctuary in the countries of Western Europe.

At least 29 people, 27 of them inmates, were killed when troops raided the 20 prisons.

Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Turk told the Sabah newspaper that talks had continued until the last minute with far-left convicts to end the two-month hunger strike against prison restructuring plans.

"Although the decision to stage an operation had been made, we delayed intervention by a day," Mr. Turk said. "During that delay an answer came from the jails that had first been faxed from

Brussels: 'Our glorious resistance will continue.'"

Officials say many of the leftists burned themselves to death rather than let paramilitary police enter dormitories they controlled.

Officials say the armed resistance from the inmates was directed by revolutionary cells based in Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Germany and Greece.

The Interior Ministry has released transcripts of what it says were monitored telephone conversations between groups in the Netherlands and leftists in the besieged jails last week.

Turkey warned the Netherlands over the weekend that it would only damage itself by allowing groups such as the far-left Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front to organize on its territory.

Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit said in September that Belgium was "bowing to terrorism" by refusing to extradite a Front member wanted in connection with the 1996 killing of an industrialist.

A Brussels-based human rights group

called on Belgium on Tuesday to break off diplomatic relations with Turkey.

People's Rights Watch, which also on Tuesday sent a delegation to Turkey to investigate the prisons crackdown, said it was shocked Belgium had not protested to Turkey about the crackdown.

Official European reaction to the crackdown has been muted. Ankara-based diplomats say they have been pushing for restructuring the overcrowded and chaotic prison system for years and do not want to interfere in internal Turkish affairs.

Turkey plans to phase out its dormitory-based prisons, in which leftist and other outlawed groups often write the rules, with new facilities based on smaller cells.

The leftists, many of whom are continuing their hunger strikes, say the new system would make them vulnerable to abuse at the hands of their jailers.

The Justice Ministry said Tuesday that damage to prisons during the raids meant Turkey must start using the new-generation facilities.

En Iran, ouverture du procès des meurtriers présumés d'opposants

Deux ans après les faits, les services de renseignement se retrouvent sur la sellette

MIEUX vaut tard que jamais. Deux ans après les faits, le procès des auteurs présumés de meurtres d'opposants et d'intellectuels iraniens perpétrés en novembre 1998 s'est ouvert, samedi, 23 décembre, à huis clos devant le tribunal militaire de Téhéran. Une nouvelle audience était prévue lundi, toujours à huis clos. Dès la fin de la première audience, le juge Mohammad Reza Aghighi a annoncé la mise en détention provisoire de trois des dix-huit personnes accusées dans cette affaire et dont les identités sont tenues secrètes. D'après l'acte d'accusation, cinq personnes comparaissent en tant que principaux auteurs des crimes et treize autres comme complices.

Les familles des victimes et leurs avocats ont refusé de participer aux audiences pour protester contre le huis-clos, décrété pour des raisons de « sécurité na-

tionale » à en croire la justice. Elles n'en demeurent pas moins claignantes.

Cette affaire fut pratiquement le premier moment de vérité pour le président réformateur, Mohammad Khatami, un peu plus d'un an après son accession à la présidence. Consécutivement aux meurtres, en novembre et décembre 1998, du couple d'opposants Dariush et Parvaneh Forouhar, ainsi que des écrivains Majid Charif, Mohammad Mokhtari et Mohammad Pouyandeh, et à des informations sur une « liste noire » des personnalités mal pensantes à abattre, le ministère des renseignements, sur l'insistance de la présidence, avait été forcé d'admettre que certains de ses propres agents, présentés comme des brebis galeuses, avaient trempé dans ces assassinats. C'était une première non seulement en Iran, mais à l'échelle de la région.

Bien que M. Khatami ait promis une grande diligence, et que des voix se soient régulièrement élevées de toutes parts pour protester contre le black-out imposé à l'enquête, celle-ci a sombré dans la plus grande confidentialité, des raisons de sécurité nationale et les investigations sur de possibles liens des présumés coupables avec des parties étrangères étant régulièrement invoquées pour justifier les délais. Incarcéré, le principal prévenu, Saïd Emami, haut responsable des services de renseignement, était de surcroît décédé dans sa cellule en juin 1999 : les autorités avaient indiqué que l'homme s'était donné la mort en absorbant de la crème dépilatoire. L'ensemble des Iraniens et de la classe politique sont convaincus qu'Emami a « été suicidé ».

Nombreux sont les Iraniens qui sont convaincus qu'Emami lui-

même n'était qu'un second cou-teau et que le ministre des renseignements d'alors, Ali Fallahian, aujourd'hui membre du conseil de discernement des intérêts de la République, tirait les ficelles. L'un des plus célèbres journalistes réformateurs aujourd'hui en prison pour pensée politiquement incorrecte, Akbar Ganji, l'a, du reste, publiquement désigné comme tel.

Quelques jours avant l'ouverture du procès, l'avocat des familles de deux victimes - MM. Mokhtari et Pouyandeh -, M. Nasser Zarafchan a été arrêté pour avoir affirmé que ces deux intellectuels avaient été tués en vertu de fatwas (décrets religieux) promulguées par des religieux conservateurs. M. Zarafchan en est à sa seconde incarcération depuis les assassinats.

Mouna Naïm

Deadly Mix in Turkish Prisons: Tough Inmates and Weak Guards

By Douglas Frantz
New York Times Service

ISTANBUL — Turkish newspapers and television broadcasts were filled last week with images of a brutal crackdown at 20 prisons: a bloodied inmate being dragged away by the police, military helicopters hovering over smoking cellblocks, soldiers using bulldozers to smash through walls to battle leftist inmates armed with flamethrowers.

At least 27 people died, most of them prisoners who set themselves on fire rather than surrender, and Turkey has once again found itself the target of harsh criticism from European officials and human rights organizations.

However, many experts say that at least some blame for the violence also belongs to the radical left-wing organizations that run prison wards like indoctrination centers and refused compromises that might have avoided the disaster.

"The revolutionaries knew this was coming, so they were getting prepared to make the most out of

it," said Murat Belge, a professor at Istanbul.

The roots of the violence lie in the government's lack of control over prisons. For the past decade, political organizations and criminal gangs have routinely run prison wards as independent fiefs.

The government said Kurdish, Islamic and left-wing groups recruited new members and communicated with people outside prison over smuggled cell phones. Authorities also said criminal gangs used beatings and threats to extort money and recruit new members.

A photograph last month in the daily Milliyet showed two convicted drug traffickers on a canopy bed, talking on cell phones in their high security carpeted cell.

Turkey's aged prisons have accommodated these sorts of activities.

Inmates have been living crowded into dormitory-style wards where guards are seldom seen and hostage-taking and riots are almost commonplace.

In an effort to regain authority, the government began building a series of maximum-security pris-

ons with cells for one to three inmates.

"Our goal is to put an end to the sovereignty of armed groups in prison," Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Turk said last month.

But rights groups say torture is common in Turkey's prisons, and inmates feared that the new prisons would leave them isolated and more vulnerable to abuse.

In October about 800 inmates in 14 prisons began a hunger strike to protest the switch to new prisons. The protesters were mostly leftist radicals, joined by relatives and rights advocates.

As more than 100 protesters neared starvation, Turkish soldiers stormed prisons across the country Dec. 19 in what the government called Operation Return to Life. The troops encountered stiff resistance from inmates armed with weapons and gas canisters.

Authorities said soldiers found guns, computers and cell phones. At one prison, they said, inmates had torn down walls separating men and women, who were living together.

Many inmates who resisted were part of a Marxist organization called the Revolutionary People's Liberation Army-Front, which has been linked to assassinations of Turkish officials and attacks on American military and diplomatic missions.

European governments and rights advocates condemned not only Turkey's tactics but also the plan to transfer inmates to the small-cell prisons, though such institutions are the norm in most Western countries.

"The introduction of cells wouldn't be a problem except that the plan was not just to put people in cells, but to isolate people in cells," said Jonathan Sugden of Human Rights Watch.

But others contended that the new prisons — and an amnesty that will free an estimated 35,000 of Turkey's 70,000 inmates over the next month — represented the government's only chance to regain control.

They said political leaders behind the hunger strike were determined to stop the transfers and prolong the fast for fear of losing authority.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2000

Akin Birdal, pour une vraie démocratie

par Christophe Diremszian

Courageux Akin Birdal. Ni un chargeur de pistolet vidé sur lui en mai 1998, ni la prison jusqu'en septembre dernier pour avoir soutenu les Kurdes dans un discours, n'ont encore réussi à faire taire ce militant turc des droits de l'homme de 52 ans, vice-président de la la FIDH et l'un des fers de lance du combat pour la liberté dans son pays. Le 23 novembre, malgré son état de santé fragile, il est venu raconter, le temps d'une soirée au Palais du Travail de Villeurbanne, comment

une Turquie avide d'Europe et de modernité continuait à bafouer les droits essentiels de l'individu et des minorités. Comment les signes d'une amélioration imposée par les Quinze et l'évolution politique - la fin du communisme et de la guerre contre les Kurdes - n'avaient pas remis en cause les fondements du régime, le nombre de procès d'opinion qui explose, les 400 cas de torture répertoriés cette année, les grèves de la faim de prisonniers. Il dénonce l'ambiguïté d'une Europe qui salue

régulièrement les efforts démocratiques d'Ankara en sachant pourtant que rien n'a changé depuis l'acceptation de sa candidature à l'UE en décembre 1999. Akin Birdal est en revanche plus discret sur ses récentes déclarations en Allemagne concernant le génocide arménien. Il n'en dira pas un mot. La perspective de retourner dans les geôles turques où il déjà passé un an incite à la prudence. ● C. D.

Secret Evidence Keeps 6 Iraqi Refugees in Pleasant Midwest Limbo

By Vernon Loeb
Washington Post Service

LINCOLN, Nebraska — As a member of the CIA-backed opposition to President Saddam Hussein's government, Safadim Batat survived three assassination attempts in northern Iraq. Now he works the night shift at a food-processing plant, boxing kosher breakfast cereal.

Mohammed Ammary was an Iraqi Air Force pilot. Today he stocks shoes at Sears and fights his own craving for consumer electronics. "I like this store, Radio Shack, too much," he allowed.

Once a captain in Iraq's Republican Guard, Mohammed Tuma works weekends at a Lutheran nursing home. "I love America," Mr. Tuma said, driving home from community college classes in his Chrysler minivan.

Yet Mr. Batat, Mr. Ammary, Mr. Tuma and three more of their former comrades-in-arms are living a Kafkaesque legal nightmare along with elements of the American dream. The experience of the "Lincoln Six," according to friends and supporters, reflects some of what is worst and best about the United States at the dawn of the 21st century.

On one hand, they are trapped in a battle with the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which forbids them to leave Nebraska's Lancaster County, controls where they work and can deport them at any time. The six accepted those terms last year to get out of jail; they were reunited here with their wives and children after being incarcerated for more than two years, based on secret evidence that — in the view of the immigration service — indicated that they were a threat to U.S. national security.

On the other hand, they are surrounded by Midwestern hospitality and heartland values, able to speak and study freely, start their own businesses and consume as voraciously as their hearts dictate and their wallets allow.

They have never been allowed to see the allegations against them, which apparently suggested that some of them might be Iraqi or Iranian spies. A U.S. intelligence official calls it "uncorroborated intelligence from people whose reliability was questionable." Now, their hopes lie with the U.S. attorney general, Janet Reno.

"It's not just a little bit like Kafka's 'The Trial' — it's exactly like Kafka's 'The Trial,'" said R. James Woolsey, a former director of central intelligence, who has asked Ms. Reno to grant the six asylum. Now a Washington lawyer, Mr. Woolsey was so distressed by the government's use of secret evidence against men

he calls "Iraqi freedom fighters" that he joined their defense team on a pro bono basis in 1998. Their treatment, he said, is a "stain" on the nation's honor.

If that is the case, the people of Lincoln have done their best to wash the stain away, welcoming the Iraqi families with a warmth and generosity that has made what they refer to as "county arrest" a more than tolerable way to live.

"I told them, you guys are going from the worst of the United States to the best — from a prison in California to a pleasant Midwest college town," Mr. Woolsey said.

At first blush, this suburb of 213,000 people seems an unlikely place to resettle Iraqi refugees. But the government started sending Iraqis here in the aftermath of the Gulf War in 1991 because housing is safe and affordable, volunteerism is high and Vietnamese refugees have done well here.

While there is no Iraqi quarter visible from the 400-foot, gold-domed tower of the Nebraska State Capitol, an Iraqi community of about 1,000 supports two Middle Eastern groceries and, in a city with 165 churches and two synagogues, two mosques.

For their part, the Iraqis have managed to separate their feelings toward the U.S. government, which imprisoned them, from their feelings toward their neighbors here, who have taken them in.

"America is not just the government," Mr. Tuma said. "There is a good nation here, good people."

He lives in a new subdivision in southwest Lincoln with his wife, Eman, and their three children. His next-door neighbors are from Afghanistan and Vietnam.

Mr. Tuma's youngest child, Ameer, was only 5 days old when Mr. Tuma led his family across the border from northern Iraq to Turkey for a U.S. airlift to freedom in the fall of 1996.

"The first day, when we crossed the border, it was so happy for us," said Mr. Tuma, a military academy graduate from a wealthy Baghdad family. "It was so difficult for the opposition members' families in the north of Iraq; there was no food, no money. It was just our faith and belief."

But the die was cast for him and his family long before Iraqi tanks rolled into northern Iraq in August 1996, forcing them to flee from the "safe haven" that had been established for the Kurdish minority and Iraqi opposition forces after the 1991 Gulf War. Mr. Tuma defected from the Republican Guard the previous year, after a brother was jailed and an uncle killed as opponents of Mr. Saddam's regime.

"Military security, they were watching me," Mr. Tuma said.

Now, all of that seems far away.

The Iraqis' readiness to distinguish between the government and citizens of the United States comes in large measure from their experience in Iraq.

Asked about the two years he spent imprisoned by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Adil Awadh, 32, another of the Lincoln Six, said, "I had seen worse than this."

A former Iraqi military doctor, Mr. Awadh said he had escaped to northern Iraq and joined the opposition after watching surgeons in a military field hospital cut off the ears of deserters.

"I asked myself, Adil, what would you do if you were one of these surgeons who was asked to do these surgeries?" he recalled. "Do you know what refusal means? Death."

He is studying now for board certification to practice medicine in the United States, although he is unsure whether the immigration service will allow him to travel to Philadelphia for his third and final clinical exam.

In the meantime, he is working as an Arabic-to-English translator in the Lincoln courts, but only as a subcontractor because the immigration service refuses to allow him to contract directly with the court system.

His wife, Sarab, who just had their second child, has found work at a local social service agency. But Mr. Awadh feels that he has been the victim of employment discrimination in Lincoln, having sent out dozens of résumés and never receiving a job offer.

"Some friends say, 'It's not prejudice; they look at you as an overqualified person,'" Mr. Awadh said of his trouble. "But I don't believe that."

A devout Shiite Muslim, Mr. Awadh said he had also come to realize that it was easier to practice his faith in Lincoln than in Iraq, where Shiites were harassed by the Sunni Muslim-dominated regime.

Mr. Ammary is the angriest of the six, saying he would almost prefer deportation to Canada or England to staying here under the thumb of immigration officials.

He wants to start flying again, but the immigration service has refused to let him take a job painting airplanes, let alone fly them. He is a graduate of the Iraqi Air Force College and the Royal Jordanian Air Academy. Yet in Lincoln he is paid \$6.25 an hour in the shoe department at Sears, and \$8.27 an hour in a night job for a company that mails credit reports.

"The American people are great people," Mr. Awadh said. "The American people are fair people. But they need to be educated. The problem is, they know nothing about Iraq."

Next Pentagon chief a supporter of Iraqi resistance

By ELI J. LAKE

29 December 2000 UPI Commentary:

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29 (UPI)-With the appointment of Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense, President-elect George W. Bush has done the Iraqi resistance a great service.

On Thursday Bush gave the keys to the Pentagon to an ardent supporter of the Iraqi National Congress, the umbrella group for the panoply of Iraq's at times disunited rebels, many of whom live in exile, but who strongly believe that American training and weapons are all they need to spark a revolution in Baghdad.

On Feb. 19, 1998 Rumsfeld signed along with most of the Republican Party's neo-conservative foreign policy brain trust a letter urging the president to among other things recognize the INC as Iraq's government in exile. The letter says, "Iraq today is ripe for a broad-based insurrection. We must exploit this opportunity," and outlines a series of steps the government should take to aid the INC including positioning "U.S. ground force equipment in the region so that, as a last resort, we have the capacity to protect and assist the anti-Saddam forces in the northern and southern parts of Iraq."

This last part became the basis for the Iraq Liberation Act, which ended up passing Congress and being signed into law that year. David Wurmser, an analyst at the American Enterprise Institute who specializes in Iraq policy, called the letter a "shot across the bow" of the Washington establishment on Iraq policy, which to that point supported maintaining the U.N. sanctions against Saddam and containing his influence through no fly zones in the north and south.

But a plan to openly arm a coalition of Iraqi rebels found many detractors in the Clinton Administration. To start, the last commander of the Army's central command, Anthony Zinni – who left the post this year – became convinced the Iraqi National Congress had no hope of mounting a successful rebellion in Iraq and told Congress, the press and Clinton's national security team as much whenever asked. The State Department used a number of tactics in the last two years to stall the disbursement of the \$97 million worth of military and financial assistance authorized by the Iraq Liberation Act. It wasn't until this year that the rebels began to see some of the support promised in the legislation. That has amounted to training for non-lethal activities like public relations, some office equipment and even a course in conflict resolution.

To date, despite Congress' promise, the INC has not seen a single weapon. Ahmed Chalabi, one of the leading members of the INC, told UPI, "I think the initial statements of the new appointees are very useful for us; all of them realize that Saddam is a problem." He points to the Republican Party platform, redrafted this summer, which calls unambiguously for "the full implementation of the Iraq Liberation Act." Chalabi was the target of a campaign from the CIA in the mid '90s to blackball him in Washington after initially arming and funding his group in the aftermath of the Gulf War until 1995 with what is estimated to have been between \$15 million to \$100 million.

Despite a whisper campaign that dredged up Chalabi's role in an alleged scandal involving Petra Bank of Jordan, he reemerged and developed close relationships with both Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill. On his many trips to Washington, Chalabi also became a darling of the conservative American Enterprise Institute where he cultivated personal ties with Rumsfeld and Vice President-elect Richard Cheney during the think tank's annual retreats in Beaver Creek, Col.

Chalabi would not get too specific about what kind of "lethal aid" he believes he needs, but he did say he thinks the assistance should go to form a small force not necessarily capable of winning a civil war, but capable of winning some battles against the Republican Guard. In Chalabi's view such victories would create an atmosphere where defections from Iraq's army would be likely because "they would have a place to go."

Chalabi also said he would like to enroll his men in the army's 11- week training course. That, he believes, could help forge his discordant troops into a military fighting unit. A little over 100 INC men have trained with the army in non-lethal courses. Chalabi said he would like to boost this to the thousands.

Because the Iraq Liberation Act is already law, the discretion to deliver that lethal aid rests largely with Rumsfeld. He has the authority to order the shipments he deems necessary for the rebel groups.

Either way it is unlikely he will run into much opposition in Congress. The Iraq Liberation Act had support from both the ranking democrat and chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In the House, one of the INC's recent critics, Rep. Sam Gejdenson, D-Conn., this Congress' ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee, did not win reelection. The man likely to replace him on the committee, Tom Lantos, has been a vocal defender of sanctions and is more likely to go along with the plan. Rep. Curt Weldon, R-Pa. a leading candidate for the House Armed Services Committee told UPI, "I think you will find an aggressive effort early on in the administration to implement the Iraq Liberation Act."

IRAN La Russie relance sa coopération avec le régime islamique malgré les objections américaines

Flirt militaire entre Moscou et Téhéran

Pour la première fois depuis la révolution islamique de 1979, l'Iran vient d'accueillir un ministre de la Défense russe. Le maréchal Igor Sergueïev a annoncé hier la reprise de la coopération militaire Moscou-Téhéran, pour la formation d'officiers et la vente d'armements de deux milliards de dollars. Malgré un interdit américain.

La Russie confirme son retour dans le peloton de tête des marchands d'armes, après les Etats-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne et la France. Elle a signé hier à Irkoutsk un accord de trois milliards de dollars pour la construction en Inde de 140 chasseurs bombardiers Sukhoï 30 MKI. « C'est le plus gros contrat postsoviétique », a dit à l'AFP un expert russe.

Téhéran :
Serge Michel

Le jeune contre-amiral iranien et le vieux maréchal russe, ministres de la Défense de leurs pays respectifs, ont un nombre comparable de médailles sur la poitrine et beaucoup d'autres

intérêts communs. La visite de trois jours du maréchal Igor Sergueïev en Iran a pris fin hier dans l'euphorie de retrouvailles entre deux pays qui narguent les Etats-Unis.

« Une journée historique ! » a lancé hier le contre-amiral Ali Chamrani lors d'une conférence de presse à Téhéran, peu avant le départ de son homologue

russe. « Une journée qui confirme que deux pays indépendants peuvent décider de leur sort sans ingérence d'un tiers », a-t-il précisé, faisant allusion aux tentatives américaines de bloquer les livraisons d'armes russes à l'Iran.

De source russe, l'Iran s'apprête à acquérir pour deux milliards de dollars d'armements

en Russie. Mais aucun contrat n'a été annoncé ces trois derniers jours. « Nous gardons cela pour la prochaine visite du président Khatami à Moscou, voire la visite du président Poutine à Téhéran », laisse entendre un délégué russe.

Le maréchal Sergueïev s'est contenté de dresser l'inventaire officiel du rapprochement irano-russe : « C'est une coopération à long terme. Nous allons procéder à des échanges d'informations mili-

taires, à des discussions sur les menaces que doivent considérer nos deux pays, et nous allons reprendre le programme de formation de per-

sonnel militaire iranien dans les académies russes. »

Sergueïev redoute-t-il des sanctions américaines ? « Pouvez-vous me dire quel règlement international viole notre coopération ? » réplique-t-il. Les deux ministres ont critiqué à plusieurs reprises l'accord secret signé en 1995 entre le vice-président américain Al Gore et le premier ministre russe Viktor Tchernomyrdine. « Cet accord a heureusement été interrompu. Il a causé des dommages irréparables », a déploré le Russe. Accord périmé, a confirmé l'Iranien, « l'ingérence de pays tiers fait planer la menace de nouvelles crises dans la région ».

D'après Ali Chamrani, la coopération irano-russe ne s'étend pas au lancement annoncé d'un satellite iranien par un tir de missile. « Nos missiles ont une technologie unique, entièrement développée en Iran. C'est notre droit strict d'occuper l'espace ; nous le ferons pacifiquement, en respectant la législation internationale », a-t-il déclaré.

Rien n'a filtré des entretiens sur l'Afghanistan de l'émissaire russe avec le président Mohamad Khatami et le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Kamal Kharazmi, sauf l'intention des deux parties « d'œuvrer à la création d'un gouvernement représentant toutes les parties afghanes ».

Les discussions ont sans doute été plus terre à terre : les deux pays sont les plus importants

fournisseurs d'armement de l'alliance du Nord du commandant Massoud, opposé à la milice des talibans. De bonne source, Massoud a effectué récemment plusieurs visites à Machhad, ville du nord-est de l'Iran, où sont retranchés plusieurs chefs de guerre afghans, afin de préparer une offensive commune au printemps prochain.

Pour sa part, porté par le haut prix du pétrole, l'Iran est lancé dans un vaste programme de réarmement. Le budget de l'an prochain prévoit 563 millions de dollars pour le seul renforce-

ment du potentiel de défense. Une aubaine pour la Russie, dont le complexe militaro-industriel a grandement besoin de cash. En cinq ans, le marché iranien pourrait lui rapporter sept milliards de dollars.

L'Iran poursuit également un programme basé sur l'autosuffisance. Un missile sol-mer serait opérationnel et le projet de missile sol-air va bon train. Un mini-sous-marin a été lancé en août dans le golfe Persique, capable de placer des mines et de transporter des commandos. Un mois plus tard, l'Iran annonçait que sa flotte disposait d'un petit destroyer. Mais la construction en série de ces prototypes se fait attendre.

LE FIGARO

29 DÉCEMBRE 2000

Europe-Turquie : des relations très ambiguës

par Anne-Marie Mouradian

Au cours de sa dernière rencontre - électorale - avec la commission des Affaires étrangères du Parlement européen, Ismail Cem a apporté un nouvel éclairage sur le génocide de 1915.

Selon le chef de la diplomatie turque, la définition scientifique du génocide c'est lorsque une population devient une cible uniquement à cause de sa race, alors qu'à l'époque un grand nombre d'Arméniens vivait et a continué à vivre à Istanbul. "Est-ce un génocide ? Ça ne l'est pas. Si vous épargnez une grande partie de la population, ce n'est pas un génocide".

Devant les députés peu convaincus, M. Cem expliqua ensuite qu'il n'y a pas de problème kurde et qu' "en Turquie, contrairement à l'Europe occidentale, la race n'existe pas comme catégorie politique. "Vous nous dites qu'il n'y a pas de Kurdes et pas de problème kurde," retorque Daniel Cohn Bendit, "alors pourquoi la semaine dernière une troupe théâtrale kurde venant d'Allemagne n'a-t-elle pas pu jouer à Istanbul ? Pourquoi n'admettez-vous pas le parti Hadep ? Pourquoi ne voyez-vous pas (...) que c'est pour les Kurdes une manière démocratique de se faire représenter au lieu de s'identifier au PKK ?".

Au milieu du débat, un jeune homme et une femme, militants du mouvement d'extrême gauche DHKP-C, se précipitèrent sur l'estrade, traitèrent M. Cem d'assassin et ouvrirent leur anorak... pour exhiber un tee-shirt sur lequel figuraient des slogans contre la torture dans les prisons turques, avant d'être rapidement emmenés par le service de sécurité du Parlement. "Et si le ministre avait été assassiné !" s'indigna le quotidien Hürriyet qui accuse Daniel Cohn-Bendit d'avoir pris à la légère l'intrusion des deux Kurdes et d'avoir eu un contact avec eux. Des accusations diffamatoires et odieuses explique le député vert qui a entamé une procédure judiciaire contre Hürriyet.

Une "erreur administrative"

M. Cem peut toujours se consoler avec la pensée qu'à ce stade l'avis du Parlement européen est consultatif. C'est vers la fin des négociations d'adhésion que les députés seront invités à dire oui ou non, avec possibilité de blocage, à l'entrée de la Turquie dans l'UE.

Avant même d'entamer les négociations, Ankara doit franchir au préalable un certain nombre d'étapes pour se rapprocher peu à peu



Ismail Cem, chef de la diplomatie turque, devant la commission des Affaires étrangères du PE

des normes européennes. Ses progrès font l'objet d'échanges de vue réguliers avec la Commission, qui représente l'exécutif européen, et le Conseil des ministres des Affaires étrangères. Deux institutions qui professent un langage plus "diplomatique" que le Parlement européen.

Ce qui n'empêche pas là aussi les incidents. Ainsi le "scandale absolu" dénoncé par Ankara lorsque les services de la Commission responsables des relations avec la Turquie écrivent, dans une réponse adressée fin novembre à des responsables du PKK (parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan d'Abdullah Ocalan), que les droits des Kurdes ne sont pas respectés en Turquie.... La lettre reflète le point de vue officiel de Bruxelles "mais cela ne se fait pas d'écrire au PKK, c'est comme si nous écrivions aux terroristes de l'ETA" reconnaît la Commission qui fait amende honorable en parlant d' "erreur administrative très regrettable".

Une tempête bien plus grave a été évitée le 4 décembre. Ce jour-là les ministres européens des Affaires étrangères sous la présidence du Français Hubert Védrine doivent adopter le Partenariat pour l'adhésion définissant les conditions (critères) politiques et économiques à respecter à court et moyen terme par la Turquie. Une première mouture préparée

par la Commission énumère une longue liste de priorités relatives aux droits de l'Homme et à la démocratie : suppression de la torture, abolition de la peine de mort, respect des minorités et de leurs droits culturels, réduction du rôle de l'armée dans la vie politique turque.... Un document avec lequel la Turquie estime pouvoir vivre...

Un "chef d'œuvre de diplomatie"

La situation se corse lorsque le gouvernement grec, accusé par son opposition de brader les intérêts nationaux, exige à la dernière minute que l'Europe ajoute deux conditions supplémentaires, relatives au règlement du problème chypriote et du contentieux territorial gréco-turc en mer Egée. La Turquie a toujours refusé tout lien entre ces questions et son entrée dans l'UE. Sa colère est d'autant plus vive que le Sommet européen d'Helsinki qui a officiellement reconnu la candidature turque en décembre 99 s'était limité à dire que la solution du problème chypriote et du différend de la mer Egée seraient abordés dans le cadre d'un dialogue et non comme conditions préalables à l'adhésion turque. La présidence française de

l'UE multiplie les démarches pour arracher un compromis entre Athènes et Istanbul.

Les chances semblent infinitésimales lorsque Paris trouve en jouant sur les mots la formule miracle qui convient à tout le monde. Elle fait référence au règlement de la question chypriote et de la mer Egée dans le cadre "d'un dialogue politique renforcé et des critères politiques" De la haute diplomatie.

Le texte peut être interprété de différentes manières. Les Turcs n'y liront que le mot "dialogue" ... Les Grecs n'y verront que le mot "critère" ... "Nous maintenons une ambiguïté constructive" admet en souriant une source française. La Grèce a quand même fait une concession et le ministre turc Ismail Cem joint par téléphone par Hubert Védrine le 4 décembre donne son accord à la nouvelle formulation: "nos opinions et nos sensibilités" se félicite-t-il "ont été prises en compte". "La Turquie est désormais dotée, comme tous les autres prétendants à l'UE, d'un document de partenariat pour l'adhésion qui l'encouragera à s'engager sur la voie de la démocratie", souligne-t-on du côté du Commissaire Günther Verheugen. "Une dynamique politique est mise en marche, cela aurait été dommage de tout bloquer pour un problème important certes

mais qui ne regarde qu'un seul Etat membre, la Grèce...Pour Chypre, on verra plus tard..."

Gagner du temps

Si les relations UE-Turquie sont entrées dans un nouveau cycle, tout le monde est bien conscient que rien n'est réglé sur le fonds et que les sujets litigieux entre la Grèce et la Turquie referont surface un jour ou l'autre. Mais le but à court terme était atteint. Un nouveau psychodrame turc a été évité in extremis. Bulent Ecevit a assisté le 7 décembre à la Conférence européenne, sorte d'anti-chambre à l'élargissement permettant aux chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des treize pays candidats de rencontrer leurs homologues des Quinze.

A force de cultiver l'ambiguïté, de reporter à plus tard les problèmes et les sujets qui fâchent -dont la question du génocide arménien- l'Europe pratique une fois de plus la politique de l'autruche, évitant des sujets qui la ren-

voient à ses propres insuffisances et contradictions.

Concernant Chypre, il est inimaginable que la Turquie puisse accéder à l'UE en laissant des troupes d'occupation dans l'île. De tous les pays candidats, Chypre se rapproche le plus des critères européens et est donc apte à rejoindre l'Union en principe dès 2003, bien avant Ankara. Mais faire entrer un pays divisé dans l'Union n'est pas du goût de tous. Les Nations-Unies sont favorables à la création d'un seul Etat doté d'un seul gouvernement. Une position proche de celle des Chypriotes-grecs et d'Athènes qui propose que la totalité de l'île devienne membre de l'UE mais que s'il n'y a pas de solution à la partition, l'Europe s'ouvre seulement à la partie grecque. Refus catégorique d'Ankara pour qui il ne peut pas y avoir de solution à Chypre en dehors de la formation de deux états indépendants. Cette formule n'est pas acceptée par la Communauté internationale. Dans le cadre de l'élargissement à l'Europe, elle reviendrait quasiment à donner une place à la Turquie dans l'UE sans même avoir besoin d'y adhérer... ● A-M M.

Les Assyriens protestent

Pour protester contre l'attitude de la Turquie qui "continue d'opprimer les minorités ethniques et de nier le génocide arménien", les Assyriens manifestent le 18 décembre à Bruxelles devant le Parlement européen. Interview de Nahil Beth-Kinne, président du Centre culturel de Mésopotamie à Bruxelles et porte-parole de l'Assyrian Democratic Organization.

France-Arménie : Pourquoi cette manifestation de la communauté assyrienne et syriaque le 18 décembre ?

Nahil Beth-Kinne : Nous manifestons parce que le 21 décembre un prêtre de l'église syriaque orthodoxe, Yusuf Akbulut, va être jugé pour les propos qu'il a tenus le 4 octobre au quotidien turc Hürriyet. D'après l'article 312 du code pénal turc il risque entre trois et six ans de prison. (N.D.L.R. : Peine infligée aux justiciables condamnés pour avoir provoqué des sentiments de haine et d'inimitié en mettant en avant des différences basées sur la classe sociale, la race, la religion ou l'origine régionale). A l'occasion du débat aux Etats-Unis sur la reconnaissance du génocide arménien, le journaliste de Hürriyet a interviewé le prêtre en croyant que celui-ci allait nier l'existence du génocide. Or Yusuf Akbulut lui a répondu que le génocide arménien était une réalité histori-

quement attestée et que les Assyriens chrétiens en furent également victimes. Hürriyet publia l'interview et la photo du prêtre en titrant "Un traître parmi nous." Le Père Yusuf Akbulut sera jugé le 21 décembre à Diarbékir.

F-A : Pourquoi manifester devant le Parlement européen ?

N.B. : Parce que la Turquie qui veut adhérer à l'UE prétend qu'elle a adopté une législation respectant les droits de l'Homme et la liberté d'expression. C'est faux. Nous voulons dire aux députés européens que tout ce que l'on raconte sur de prétendus progrès à ce niveau est inexact. C'est très bien que la Turquie entre dans l'UE car elle sera obligée de respecter un peu plus les droits de l'Homme et des autres ethnies, -il y en a 42 en Turquie-. Mais il faut au préalable qu'elle reconnaisse leur existence. Nous demandons à l'UE d'intervenir en faveur des droits de l'Homme et qu'elle réagisse face à la mise en accusation du Père Akbulut.

F-A : Qui manifeste ?

N.B. : Les Assyriens de Belgique, des défenseurs des droits de l'Homme et nous espérons aussi la présence d'autres communautés. Des actions de protestations seront menées un peu partout en Europe par la diaspora assyrienne dans le courant du mois de décembre.

F-A : Vous manifestez aussi pour la reconnaissance du génocide arménien. Pourquoi ?

N.B. : Il y a encore pas mal de pays qui n'ont pas reconnu le génocide arménien qui a fait 1,5 million de victimes. Nous voulons qu'il soit

reconnu, comme celui de l'ensemble des populations chrétiennes de l'empire ottoman, c'est à dire aussi des Assyriens et des Grecs. 600 000 Assyriens ont été massacrés.

F-A : Quelle est l'importance de la diaspora assyrienne en Europe ?

N.B. : Durant l'émigration des années 80, environ 300.000 Assyriens sont arrivés en Europe dont la grande majorité réside aujourd'hui en Suède (80 000 personnes) et en Allemagne (50 000). En Belgique, nous sommes 18 000 sans parler des "anciens" arrivés vers 1948, aux Pays-Bas : 22 000, en France : environ 17 000. Il y a aussi des Assyriens d'Irak fuyant l'embargo et ceux de Syrie qui émigrent à cause des problèmes d'eau.

F-A : Combien d'Assyriens vivent encore en Turquie ?

N.B. : Entre 17 et 20 000 à Istanbul. A Tur-Abdin, dans le Sud-est, il y en a encore 3 000 et pas plus de 50 000 au total dans l'ensemble de la Turquie.

F-A : Est-ce que leur situation s'améliore malgré tout ?

N.B. : Ces dernières années, 48 villages assyriens ont été rasés par l'Etat turc, une cinquantaine de personnes ont été assassinées sans parler des viols, vols de bétails etc... Dans le village de Bote, une église assyrienne vient encore d'être transformée en mosquée... Si la situation s'était améliorée on n'aurait pas le problème du prêtre Akbulut... ● ANNE-MARIE MOURADIAN

December 25, 2000

Suffering of war opens way to a brighter future for Kurds

By Betsy Pisik WASHINGTON TIMES

DERBAND RAYAT, Northern Iraq — Her house looks more like a two-story construction site than an ancestral home, but Naska Aziz feels planted here.

After living in tents and temporary shelters for more than 20 years, Naska and Ahmad are back by the banks of the Great Zab River, within sight of the apricot, peach and apple orchards Ahmad Aziz's family has tended for generations.

The family was uprooted by the Iran-Iraq war, and the hills surrounding their village were seeded with land mines. Next, the central government in Baghdad relocated tens of thousands of Kurds to refugee camps without work, land or modern conveniences.

But after that war and the subsequent Persian Gulf war, the 11-member Aziz family returned home. They are rebuilding the house with help from U.N. Habitat. Water eventually will be piped into houses, and construction soon will begin on a power generator for the village.

Until then, the Aziz women —like everyone else here — go to the river to bring up water and bring down dishes and the laundry.

"Life is difficult, especially with so many children," said Mrs. Aziz, whose sons and daughters range in age from 2 months to 18 years. Presiding over afternoon tea at the riverbank with a dozen members of her extended family, Mrs. Aziz joked, "Maybe, with water inside the house, I'll finally become fat."

The Kurds of northern Iraq like to say they are the real winners of the 1991 Gulf war. After decades of repression from Baghdad — or similar treatment by the governments of Iran, Turkey and Syria — the Kurds enjoy being pretty much on their own.

An ethnically and culturally distinct minority, Kurds more closely resemble Iranians than most of their Arab neighbors. Most are Shi'ite, not Sunni, Muslims, and their language sounds more like Farsi than Arabic.

Spread across the northern area of the Middle East, including portions of Turkey, Syria, Iraq and Iran, the Kurds were promised a country of their own at the end of World War I, but the various governments ruling their lands rejected the decision, which was not enforced.

The region has some 14 million Kurds, including 4 million in northern Iraq. For many decades, surrounding governments regarded them with suspicion, blaming them — often rightly — whenever resistance arose.

"We are a separate group, we pine for our freedom and independence from the central [Iraqi] government," said Anala Mohamad, a grandmother of three who describes her existence as "a terrible life in a beautiful place."

The difference between central Iraq, which is governed from Baghdad, and the Kurdish northern governorates — where the United States and Britain have forcibly excluded Iraqi authorities for a decade — is pronounced.

In what Washington calls Iraq's northern "no-fly zone," satellite dishes sprout from every balcony and rooftop.

The people are more comfortable with strangers, making eye contact with passers-by and eager to practice their English. Foreigners are invited into private homes, and even to join boisterous wedding parties that start in late afternoon and end early the next morning.

The United States imposed the no-fly zone in Iraq north of the 36th parallel after the Gulf war to protect the Kurdish minority, which has sought U.S. support, from retaliation by the Iraqi military. A southern no-fly zone was instituted in 1992 to protect southern Shi'ite Muslims and to protect Iraq's neighbors, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The southern no-fly zone extends north to Baghdad's outer suburbs.

Despite the general poverty among the Kurds, larger towns and cities have pockets of construction.

Merchants, smugglers and politicians are building houses with marble facades. U.N. Habitat is covering hillsides with geometric housing developments. Roads, sewers and electric generators are under fitful repair.

One frequently told joke is that before the Gulf war, the Kurdish share of Iraq's oil revenues was limited to mortars,

mines and nerve gas. But today, with oil revenues administered by the United Nations, the three northern governorates receive roughly 13 percent of the proceeds of oil sales —more than \$183 million worth of food staples every six months.

The U.N. Office of the Iraq Program administers a sprawling food-distribution network, created by Baghdad and financed by oil. It is supposed to be the same one that aids nearly 22 million families in south and central Iraq, but by any measure — including Baghdad's —people in the north are far healthier than those elsewhere in Iraq.

"The people of the north have many natural advantages that the people in the south and center of the country do not," said program administrator Tun Myet. Northern Iraq has lush hills and mountains, and the elevation means cooler summers, wetter winters and a variety of fruits and vegetables available nearly year round. Pasture is available for goats, sheep and cattle, and Kurds enjoy the streams that had been favored summer destinations for Baghdad's middle class.

The Kurds say they are grateful for international assistance but critical of U.N. agencies' slow efforts to build utilities.

Unlike many other development zones, there is competition here to build a self-sustaining economy.

A dynamic Kurdish diaspora has created a global network of entrepreneurs eager to invest in their homeland. Aid groups are building hospitals, housing and schools for a population that has long gone without them.

The two rival Kurdish political clans that largely run the three northern governorates are eager to win hearts and minds by heavily subsidizing capital improvements, reading programs and other investments. The Kurds themselves are not shy about exploiting their primary advantage: location. Situated among central Iraq, Turkey, Syria and Iran, the Kurds control routes that generate income from tolls, tariffs, bribes and smuggling.

By comparison, little aid is flowing into central Iraq or the arid south, save for highly publicized sanction-busters, who bring in relatively small amounts of necessities from pencils to penicillin.

* * * * *

Saddam Hussein: The last great tyrant

By Robert Fisk 30/12/2000

The Independent

When the Egyptian journalist Mohamed Heikal visited Iraq during the early years of Saddam's rule, he met the minister for industry. Heikal was impressed by the intense, hard-working, intellectual man running Iraq's dynamic industrial output. So on his next visit, Heikal asked to meet him again. Officials explained that they had no

information about the minister and all enquiries should be addressed to His Excellency the President. So when at last Heikal turned up for his interview with the dictator of Iraq, he asked about the minister for industry.

"He's gone," Saddam said. "Gone?", asked Heikal There was a pause. "We scissored his neck — he was suspected of being a traitor." But was there any evidence of this, the appalled Heikal asked. Was there any proof? "In Iraq, we don't need proof," Saddam replied, "suspicion is enough." In Cairo, he went on, Egyptians might have a white revolution. "In Iraq we have a red revolution." Heikal was horrified. But should he have been surprised?

There is about Saddam Hussein a peculiar ruthlessness, an almost calculated cruelty, perhaps even an interest in pain. It wasn't enough to order the murder of his sons-in-law after their return from exile in Jordan. They had to be dragged away with meat hooks through their eyes. It wasn't enough to order the hanging of the Observer journalist Farzad Bazoft in 1990; Bazoft was to be left unaware of his fate until a British embassy official turned up at the Abu Ghorraib prison to say goodbye. At Abu Ghorraib, women prisoners are allowed a party the night before one of them is to be hanged. Women are dispatched on Thursdays. Families are asked to bring their own coffin when a relative has been executed.

And yet we loved him. In the days when Saddam clawed his way to power, personally shot members of his own cabinet, or used gas for the first time on his recalcitrant Kurds, we loved him. When he invaded Iran in 1980, we gave him Bailey bridges and Mirage jets and radio sets and poison gas — the Mirages from France, the poison gas,

of course, from Germany – and US satellite reconnaissance pictures of the Iranian front lines. I once met the Cologne arms dealer who personally took the photos from Washington DC to Baghdad. The Russians poured in their new T-72 tanks. Saddam's war against Iran – the greatest mass killing in modern Middle Eastern history until the UN sanctions of the last decade – was designed to appeal to both Arabs and the West. For the Arabs who tamely poured their millions into his armoury, Kuwait among the most prominent, his Iraqi sons were wading through anhar al-damm – literally "rivers of blood" – to defend the al-bawwabah al-sharqiyah, the "Eastern Gateway" to the Arab world and Saudi Arabia. To the West, he was fighting off Khomeini's Islamic hordes. Asked why the Iraqis used gas against their enemies, one of his senior confidants replied: "When you weed the lawn, you have to use weed-killer."

Blundering, ignorant of Western (though not Arab) history, largely uneducated, an original Tikriti corner-boy whose first political act was an attempted assassination and an escape, wounded, into the desert; how did he do it? How come the man who defied George Bush senior is still there to defy George Bush junior? How come, 10 years after the "mother of all battles" – a phrase typical of Saddam – and 10 years after UN sanctions that have killed at least a million Iraqis, Saddam is still enjoying his palaces and cigars?

The French are a clue. They idolised Saddam in the late Seventies. He was feted on his arrival at Orly, dined out by the Mayor of Paris (a certain M Chirac), swamped with champagne as he watched a bull-running circus in central France. For the French, he was a kind of Jacobin, the reformer-turned-extremist whose reign of terror had a power all its own. Saddam's "red revolution" was always rubber-stamped by the democratic mockeries of Iraq – he asked the Kurds of a northern Iraqi town if he should hang Bazoof and their cries of affirmation doomed the correspondent – but somehow, in a crazed way, it was modern and progressive. Iraq's hospitals and medical care were on a par with Europe, women's rights were rigorously enforced, religious insurrection was suppressed in blood.

And he was – and is – a very intelligent man. When I first saw him, in 1978, he was espousing the merits of nuclear power, of binary fission (technology courtesy of his beloved France). Self-confident, quoting from Arab poets and writers, replying to foreign journalists who snapped at him, with humour and history. Asked, in view of his little speech, about the danger of nuclear weapons proliferation, he replied: "Ah, you must not ask me about Israel's 250 warheads in the Negev desert – you must ask the Israelis!" He always wore a massive wrap-around jacket with too many buttons, but his shirts and shoes were always the latest in Paris fashion.

I visited his abandoned palace in Kurdistan in 1991, one of the series of massive, fortified royal residences he continues to build across Iraq, evidence, according to Madeleine Albright, that sanctions haven't yet brought him low and thus must continue. In truth, they are evidence that sanctions clearly do not work – because they don't touch Saddam – and thus should not continue. But what was so evident about his northern palace was its tawdry nature, the poor quality of the concrete round the swimming pool, the cracked pseudo-Grecian columns in the dining-room, the under-weeded flower beds. In Baghdad, the palace lawns are better tended, but the same sense of spent taste and vulgarity pervades the president's imagery. Saddam on horseback, in Kurdish clothes, embracing babies and war heroes, riding on a charger in medieval armour to confront the Persians at the Battle of Qaddasiyeh, dressed as Nebuchadnezzar, he who conquered Syria and Palestine, sacked Ashkelon and subdued all the tribes of the Arabs. Like the king of Babylonia, Saddam decided to rebuild Babylon; and so the ancient city was ripped apart and recons-

tructed, Disney-style, in the image of the great man.

Even the giant egg-shell monument to the Iraqi war dead of 1980-88 is a personal museum to Saddam's family. Visit the crypt and beside the names of half a million dead you find a photograph of the young, revolutionary Saddam, on the run from the royal family, of Saddam studying in Cairo (his hero was not Hitler but Stalin), of Saddam with his first wife. Now there is a second wife – the feuding between the wives' two families is one of the causes of the ferocious bloodletting within the family. His son Oday, partly crippled in an assassination attempt while on his way to a nightclub, murdered a bodyguard at a party. "My son must be tried like any other Iraqi," Saddam announced. Then the family of the dead man – surprise, surprise – forgave Oday. Unpunished, he continued to run the highest security apparatus of the state, all the while enjoying the title of head of the Iraqi Olympic committee.

Greatness, for Saddam, is a simple affair. Victorious in war, the people love you. Strength is all. In an Arab world that sadly admires power more than compassion, he was a hero for millions of Egyptians, Saudis, Kuwaitis, Lebanese, even Syrians. "He may be ruthless," a Lebanese journalist remarked to me in 1990, "but you have to admit he's strong. He stands up to people." In reality, Saddam walks tall when his enemies are beaten. He dreams like a sleepwalker. I recall huddling with Iraqi commandos in a shell-smashed city in southern Iran in 1980 when an officer announced a personal message from Saddam to all his fighting forces. They were participating, he

announced, in "the lightning war". There was even a song that played continuously on Iraqi television: "The Lightning War". Like the "Mother of All Battles", it was a mockery of the truth.

There were other hints in his war with Iran, had we but known it, of Saddam's behaviour in Kuwait. In 1983, after proclaiming the Iraqi-occupied Iranian city of Khorramshahr a bastion to be defended to the last man – Saddam's personal Stalingrad – he simply ordered his thousands of troops to abandon the fortress and march back to Iraq, just as he ordered his men to abandon Kuwait the moment the Western armies broke into Iraq in 1991. If his behaviour seems irrational, it is certainly consistent. He believed that a strong Iraq must be self-sufficient. It must make its own weapons, its own tanks, its own bullets.

A year to the day after his 1990 invasion of Kuwait, I was prowling through the wreckage of the Iraqi army along the Basra highway when I came upon an upturned ammunition truck whose cargo of battalion and brigade notebooks had been scattered across the desert, partly buried in sand. "Message from the Supreme Commander," it said in one. And there, page after page, was the text of a secret Saddam speech to his high command. Iraq, he said, must abandon its traditional confidence in other nations; it must set up its own arms factories, invent its own secret weapons. There it all was, in blue Biro, the authentic voice of Saddam speaking from beneath the very floor of the desert.

It is not so difficult to struggle into the mind of Saddam when you read this. He had invaded Iran and the West loved him. Why should they object – or fight him – when, threatened by Kuwaiti demands for the billions of dollars in "loans" used to pay off the Iran war and with the Kuwaitis apparently "stealing" Iraqi oil from beneath the Rumailah field, he invaded Kuwait? Only four months earlier, just after Bazoff's hanging, a group of American senators visited Saddam in Baghdad and assured him that "democracy is a very confusing issue – I believe that your problems lie with the Western media and not with the US government" (this from Senator Alan Simpson). Senator Howard Metzenbaum, announcing himself "a Jew and a staunch supporter of Israel", went on to tell Saddam that "I have been sitting here and listening to you for about an hour, and I am now aware that you are a strong and intelligent man and that you want peace."

So what had Saddam to fear from the US? In that last fateful interview with US ambassador April Glaspie, less than a month before the invasion of Kuwait, Saddam told Ms Glaspie that Kuwait's borders were drawn in colonial days. Saddam had always been an anti-colonialist. "We studied history at school," the luckless Glaspie replies. "They taught us to say freedom or death. I think you know well that we... have our experience with the colonialists. We have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait." In a post-war press interview, as the writer Christopher Hitchens has pointed out, Glaspie gave the game away. "We never expected they would take all of Kuwait," she said.

The Americans were going to let Saddam bite a chunk out of the Kuwaiti border. Saddam thought he had permission to gobble up all of Kuwait. And so we went to war with the Hitler of the Euphrates. And so he lives on in his palaces and bunkers while his people die for lack of clean water and medicines under the UN sanctions that are supposed to harm Saddam. We still bomb him every day – our war with Saddam has lasted 10 years now – and slowly, the Arabs, dismayed by the bloodshed in the Palestine-Israel war, are warming once more to the man

who never gave in. Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the Emirates, Egypt, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia – almost all of them America's allies in 1991 – are now breaking the air embargo by flying into Baghdad. Saddam lives.

* * * * *

En Irak, les Kurdes demeurent tributaires de la communauté internationale

IRBIL

de notre envoyée spéciale

Une mosquée élégante est en construction près du centre de la ville d'Irbil, chef-lieu de la partie du Kurdistan irakien située au nord du 36^e parallèle. C'est une initiative

REPORTAGE

Les rivalités internes empêchent le partage du pouvoir et des revenus

privée qui prouve que cette région du nord de l'Irak est désormais loin de l'indigence des premiers jours. Les étalages, autrefois presque vides, regorgent de fruits et de légumes frais, et des Toyota de modèle récent circulent sur les routes goudronnées qui ont remplacé les chemins défoncés. De grands panneaux publicitaires vantent les avantages de postes de télévision et de réfrigérateurs en provenance de Turquie.

Cette relative prospérité masque la fragilité de la situation des 3,5 millions de Kurdes qui vivent dans cette région. Leur sécurité dépend essentiellement du bon vouloir de la communauté internationale, qui avait imposé au gouvernement de Bagdad cette zone d'exclusion aérienne, dans le but de reloger et de protéger des centaines de milliers de réfugiés fuyant l'avance des troupes irakiennes après une insurrection manquée contre le pouvoir, en 1991.

L'avenir des Kurdes demeure toutefois incertain. « Nous avons des relations pratiques avec Bagdad, nous achetons de l'énergie, par exemple, explique Sami Abderrahman, l'un des dirigeants de l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK). Mais depuis 1991, le gouvernement irakien n'a pas proposé de nous rencontrer pour discuter de la question kurde. Sa position à notre égard est inchangée. » Aucun progrès, assure-t-il, n'a été fait en direction d'un accord permanent qui garantirait les droits des Kurdes.

Au sud de la zone d'exclusion aérienne, la politique d'« arabisation » menée par le président Saddam Hussein continue, affirme

Azad Ali Ahmet, un réfugié moitié kurde, moitié turcoman, récemment arrivé de la ville pétrolière de Kirkouk, sous contrôle irakien. Azad en est à son deuxième exode forcé – le premier était en 1991. Cette fois-ci, « le moukhtar [le maire] est venu nous annoncer que nous étions expulsés », explique-t-il. Accroupie dans la poussière près de leur tente, sa femme prépare le pain pour leurs cinq enfants. Les 52 000 habitants de la petite ville de Benislawa, où Azad a été relégué par le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK), sont tous arrivés de Kirkouk par petits groupes, au cours des vingt dernières années.

« DÉVELOPPEMENT »

« Le plus important pour nous est le maintien de la part de 13 % du programme "pétrole contre nourriture" qui est attribuée à la population kurde, affirme Nechirwan Barzani, neveu du chef du PDK, Massoud Barzani. Ces 13 % nous ont permis de progresser et il est important que cette situation continue. » Les fonds dudit programme, destinés à alléger les souffrances de la population irakienne et qui sont administrés par l'ONU, ont en effet permis à la région de développer son infrastructure. « Nous avons commencé notre programme pour répondre à une urgence, maintenant nous travaillons pour le développement à long terme », explique le dirigeant d'une organisation non gouvernementale occidentale. Mais



« il est important que les Kurdes obtiennent une protection constitutionnelle de Bagdad, une autonomie politique, une protection physique et une sécurité financière », ajoute-t-il.

A l'unisson du régime irakien, les pays voisins de l'Irak – la Turquie, la Syrie et l'Iran – sont méfiants à l'égard des Kurdes. Tous s'opposent à la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant et leurs manœuvres politiques ne contribuent pas à assurer la stabilité de la région. Le PDK coopère depuis plusieurs années avec la Turquie, contre les militants du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) de Turquie, qui ont installé des bases logistiques dans les montagnes de la zone frontalière après la guerre du Golfe.

Dans la zone contrôlée par le PDK, les Turcs agissent comme en pays conquis. Les incursions de l'armée turque à la poursuite des militants du PKK continuent sporadiquement. L'UPK, de Jalal Talabani, politiquement proche de Téhéran, a longtemps refusé de collaborer avec Ankara contre le PKK. Mais au cours des derniers mois, M. Talabani semble s'être rapproché des autorités turques. De violents combats ont éclaté en septembre entre le PKK et les peshmergas de l'UPK. « Il y a eu un certain degré d'assistance de la Turquie à l'UPK. Nous leur avons facilité l'accès », reconnaît Nechirwan Barzani.

La Turquie, qui voyait d'un mauvais œil l'administration conjointe – dotée d'un Parlement et d'un gouvernement – formée par le PDK et l'UPK après des élections en 1992, n'est pas mécontente de voir les deux factions profondément divisées depuis le conflit qui les a opposées en 1994. Aujourd'hui, l'enclave est partagée en deux zones distinctes séparées par une quasi-frontière. Malgré un accord signé à Washington en 1998, l'hostilité entre les deux groupes semble aussi profondément ancrée que la rancoeur des Kurdes à l'égard des régimes voisins qui les ont opprimés. Ils ne parviennent pas à s'entendre sur le partage du pouvoir et des revenus du trafic de pétrole avec Ankara.

Le poste-frontière de Habour offre au PDK, installé à proximité, une fenêtre sur le monde extérieur.

L'Irak veut dialoguer avec le Koweït et l'Arabie saoudite

Un journal officiel irakien a invité, jeudi 28 décembre, l'Arabie saoudite et le Koweït, sans les nommer, à un dialogue destiné à réconcilier les pays arabes. Le quotidien *Al-Saoura*, organe du parti Baas au pouvoir, affirme que les fêtes du Fitr et de Noël « peuvent constituer une occasion pour un appel à un dialogue constructif destiné à faire oublier les douleurs du passé et parvenir à une réconciliation mettant fin aux divisions et aux humiliations ». Bagdad accuse Riyad et Koweït d'œuvrer au maintien de l'embargo en vigueur depuis 1990 et de soutenir les raids des avions américains et britanniques dans les zones d'exclusion aérienne dans le nord et le sud de l'Irak.

L'appel du journal irakien intervient à la veille du sommet annuel des dirigeants des monarchies arabes du Golfe, qui s'ouvre samedi à Manama (Bahreïn). Le chef de la diplomatie irakienne, Mohammed Saïd Al-Sahhaf, a récemment réitéré, dans un message adressé au secrétaire général de l'ONU, Kofi Annan, le « rejet catégorique » par l'Irak des zones d'exclusion aériennes. – (AFP)

Chaque jour, quelque cinq cents camions turcs se franchissent pour acheter à bon marché du diesel irakien, qui est ensuite acheminé en Turquie. Les quantités fluctuent entre 100 000 et 150 000 tonnes de diesel par mois. La communauté internationale ferme les yeux, ce trafic permettant à la fois de compenser la Turquie pour les pertes commerciales subies depuis la guerre du Golfe et de financer l'enclave kurde.

MINORITÉ TURCOMANE

Les Turcs – qui souhaitent amé-

liorer leurs relations avec le gouvernement irakien – ont également, au nord de l'Irak, des alliés naturels, la minorité turcomane, qui compte environ 150 000 membres. Ankara soutient ouvertement le Front turcoman irakien, une organisation qui a toujours refusé de reconnaître le gouvernement régional du Kurdistan irakien. « Nous n'avons pas participé aux élections de 1992 car le processus n'était pas démocratique », explique Mehmet Kemal Yayıci, du Front turcoman. Jusqu'à présent le PDK a refusé nos

demandes. Nous voulons plusieurs sièges au Parlement, deux ou trois ministères et un vice-premier ministre. »

Les Turcomans sont toutefois divisés. Jawdad Najar, un représentant de la communauté, siège, lui, au sein du gouvernement local. « Les gens du Front reçoivent de l'argent de la Turquie. Ils prétendent que les Kurdes nous traitent mal, mais nous avons nos propres écoles, nos journaux et nos organisations culturelles », plaide-t-il. Nous voulons de bonnes relations avec la Turquie, mais nous ne voulons pas d'ingé-

rence. »

En dépit des divergences qui minent la région, Nechirwan Barzani demeure convaincu que la communauté internationale ne peut pas se permettre d'ignorer les Kurdes au profit de relations commerciales avec Bagdad. « Le problème d'une nation ne peut pas disparaître. Le PDK, l'UPK, le PKK peuvent tous disparaître, mais il faudra bien trouver une solution pour les Kurdes », dit-il.

Nicole Pope

December 31, 2000

By Huda Majeed Saleh

Saddam, Firing Shots in Air, Greets Big Army Parade

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - President Saddam Hussein presided on Sunday over what appeared to be the biggest military parade in Baghdad since the 1991 Gulf War, greeting army units with shots from a rifle he held in one hand. The parade displayed sophisticated surface-to-surface and anti-aircraft missiles, artillery and over 1,000 modern, Russian-made tanks as well as infantry units.

Saddam wore a blue suit and a hat and was accompanied by top aides in military fatigues on his reviewing stand. Formations of jet fighters and helicopter gunships hovered over central Baghdad's Grand Festivities Square as forces representing all Iraqi military units, including the navy, infantry and paramilitary Saddam commandos, flowed past. Missiles in the four-hour parade were the Al-Samoud, Al-Fath and Al-Raad, all with ranges under 95 miles that do not violate U.N. arms-control restrictions.

No figures were given for the number of troops or components of hardware taking part in the so-called Al-Aqsa Call Parade, intended as a show of support for Palestinians in their uprising against Israeli occupation. Last month, Saddam attended a parade in Baghdad by nearly two million Iraqis volunteering to fight with the Palestinians against the Israeli army.

That parade capped a month-long training campaign called by Saddam "for volunteers willing to launch Jihad (holy war) to liberate Palestine." Saddam said last month that 6,607,306 Iraqis including 2,051,791 women had volunteered.

'Put An End To Zionism'

Saddam said in October that Iraq was ready to "put an end to Zionism" if Arab rulers did not defend the Palestinians against Israel. Iraq has always taken a hard line toward Israel and during the Gulf War it fired Scud missiles at the Jewish state. It also opposes interim Israeli-Palestinian peace accords and the peace treaties signed by Egypt and Jordan with Israel.

Iraq has lived through two major wars in the last two decades -- against Iran in 1980-88 and in 1991 when its forces which had occupied Kuwait the year before were driven out by a U.S.-led multinational coalition. Saddam has survived a decade of U.N. sanctions imposed for his invasion of the small Gulf state, but the embargo has ruined Iraq's infrastructure and caused a plunge in living standards.

The government said this month that more than 10,000 people, most of them children, had died in November from illnesses spreading as a result of sanctions.

Although Saddam's army was routed by the U.S.-led alliance, he surprised the world by rebounding to crush post-war revolts in Iraq's Shi'ite Muslim south and Kurdish north.

Iraqi tensions with the West have remained high since then, revolving around U.N. Security Council efforts, backed most vigorously by the United States and Britain, to secure the dismantling of Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction.

Saddam has repeatedly engaged in confrontations with the West over U.N.-mandated arms inspections, declaring that Iraq is free of banned weapons and seeking the lifting of sanctions. Baghdad has rejected a Security Council resolution that could ease sanctions if it allows U.N. weapons inspectors to return. They have been barred from Iraq since their departure on the eve of U.S.-British air strikes in December 1998.



14 passage Dubail - 75010 Paris
Tél : 01 40 35 07 00

Commission paritaire n° 72288

En partenariat avec :



Action des Chrétiens
pour l'Abolition de la Torture
Tél : 01 40 40 42 43



Tél : 01 53 38 65 65



Tél : 01 44 18 60 50



Tél : 04 67 06 55 02



Tél : 01 53 25 10 40



Tél : 01 40 12 09 12

Avec le soutien :

Aix solidarité • Centre de recherche et d'information sur le développement (CRID) • Citoyens, défense et paix • Collectif des associations de développement de la région (CADR) • Comité international pour la libération des députés kurdes emprisonnés en Turquie (CILDEKT) • Comités relais France Libertés (dpts 31, 42 et 47) • Coordination de l'action non-violente de l'Arche (CANVA) • Délégation rennaise Kurdistan • Etudiants et Développement • Fédération Artisans du Monde • Fédération démocratique internationale des femmes • Fédération des agences internationales pour le développement (Aide fédération) • Femmes solidaires • Franciscain international • Human rights alliance France • Institut kurde de Paris • Ligue des droits de l'Homme (Fédération du Rhône) • Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté (LIFPL) • Maison des tiers-mondes et de la solidarité internationale (dpt 34) • Mouvement de l'objection de conscience (MOC) • Mouvement international de la réconciliation (MIR) • Mouvement pour le désarmement, la paix et la liberté (MDPL, dpts 34 et 42) • Mouvement pour une alternative non-violente (MAN) • Réseau d'information tiers-monde (RITIMO) • Solidarité et Liberté • SOS Racisme

Campagne pour améliorer
la situation des droits de l'Homme
dans la zone euro-méditerranéenne
et en particulier en Turquie

VOS DROITS DE L'HOMME S'IL VOUS PLAÎT!



Ecrivez dès aujourd'hui au Président
de la Commission européenne,
au Premier ministre et au député
de votre circonscription.

Date limite de participation 28 février 2001

Sommaire

Les droits de l'homme sont-ils solubles en
Méditerranée... et en particulier en Turquie? p. 2/3
Aujourd'hui, la torture existe encore
en Turquie! p. 3
Sur la route de l'adhésion à l'Union européenne p. 4

POURQUOI CETTE CAMPAGNE ?

Torture, maintien de la peine de mort, atteintes aux libertés de la presse et d'expression, aux libertés linguistiques et culturelles, non-respect des décisions de la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme, voilà la Turquie que l'Union européenne (UE) envisage de faire entrer en son sein. Et la question du respect des droits de l'Homme se pose aussi avec acuité dans de nombreux autres pays du pourtour méditerranéen (Algérie, Israël, Maroc, Tunisie...).

L'UE vient d'accepter le principe de la candidature de la Turquie à l'adhésion (Helsinki, décembre 99). Ce pays fait également partie des douze pays du bassin méditerranéen engagés dans le processus dit « Euromed », qui tient son quatrième sommet à Marseille en novembre 2000. L'objectif de ces rencontres est de parvenir d'ici 2010 à la signature d'un accord d'association entre l'UE et chacun des douze pays. Mais ces accords sont essentiellement d'ordre économique, comme l'est l'Union douanière avec la Turquie, en vigueur depuis janvier 1996.

Ce sommet de Marseille, ainsi que la présidence française de l'UE, nous donnent l'occasion d'agir.

Dans le cadre du processus d'élargissement de l'UE comme dans celui d'Euromed, le cas de la Turquie a valeur d'exemple. De la fermeté de l'UE sur la question des droits de l'Homme dépendront les conditions d'adhésion ou d'association des autres pays de la zone. Pour cela, l'UE doit maintenir ses conditions quant à l'entrée de la Turquie, comme elle devrait en imposer pour la signature et l'application des accords d'association euro-méditerranéens. La clause « droits de l'Homme », qui existe aujourd'hui dans quatre accords sur les cinq déjà signés, n'est pas contraignante. Concrètement, si elle n'est pas remplie, elle ne remet pas en cause la coopération économique. La mise en place d'un mécanisme de contrôle et d'évaluation du respect des droits de l'Homme dans la zone euro-méditerranéenne est donc indispensable.

De son côté, la France peut et doit aussi donner l'exemple en suspendant ses exportations d'armements et en exigeant le respect des droits de l'Homme par la Turquie.

La création par les députés d'un groupe d'étude parlementaire sur les Kurdes s'impose. Elle constituerait un geste significatif tant vis-à-vis de la population kurde dans son ensemble qu'à l'égard du gouvernement turc.

Dans un monde en interdépendance croissante, le respect des droits de l'Homme dépend de notre mobilisation citoyenne. La France et l'UE ont une responsabilité commune. Elles doivent l'exercer. C'est ce que nous demandons aujourd'hui.

LES DROITS DE L'HOMME EN MEDITERRANEE... ET EN

Avec plus de 63 millions d'habitants, la Turquie est un carrefour géostratégique entre l'Europe, l'Asie, les pays arabes et les pays du Caucase.

Si l'organisation des pouvoirs publics en Turquie présente la plupart des caractéristiques de base d'un système démocratique, l'existence d'un Conseil national de sécurité, composé de six militaires et de cinq dirigeants civils⁽¹⁾, traduit l'importance du rôle joué dans la vie politique par l'armée. Les militaires continuent de peser de tout leur poids sur un système bien loin des normes démocratiques de l'UE.

Nombre d'atteintes aux droits civils et politiques en Turquie sont liées à la manière dont le gouvernement et l'armée répondent aux problèmes du Sud-Est du pays. L'état d'urgence proclamé en 1987 dans le Sud-Est turc, où sont concentrées les populations kurdes, est toujours en vigueur dans six des neuf provinces. Les militaires détiennent des pouvoirs exceptionnels (décrets-lois 423-424) et contribuent de manière alarmante à restreindre les libertés et droits fondamentaux. L'armée turque a ainsi tué plus de 40 civils lors d'un raid aérien effectué le 15 août 2000, sur le territoire irakien.

25 % des requêtes à la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme⁽²⁾ concernent la Turquie ! Des cas de tortures, de disparitions et d'exécutions extrajudiciaires continuent d'être recensés. Les arrestations et intimidations de militants des droits de l'Homme, députés et journalistes qui s'élèvent contre la politique menée dans cette région n'ont pas cessé, malgré les condamnations répétées des parlementaires européens et de la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme. Ainsi « depuis 1992, plus de 4 500 intellectuels et militants [...] ont été assassinés par les forces paramilitaires turques [...] »⁽³⁾. En août 2000, 93 personnes auraient été torturées dont 3 enfants. 31 journalistes ont été placés en garde à vue, et 3 télévisions ou radios interdites⁽⁴⁾.

Ces exactions touchent autant les défenseurs des droits de l'Homme que les responsables politiques, y compris des partis islamistes, ou les personnes qui défendent une solution pacifique de la question kurde. Le « fondamentalisme islamiste » comme le « séparatisme kurde » sont vus comme des menaces pour l'ordre établi.

Quelques exemples : Akin Birdal, ex-président de l'IHD (Association turque des droits de l'Homme), après avoir miraculeusement survécu à un attentat perpétré dans les locaux de l'association, « est sorti de prison le 23 septembre après avoir purgé une peine de 10 mois de prison pour "provocation raciale" après des appels en faveur d'une solution pacifique au conflit kurde en 1995 et 1996 »⁽⁵⁾. Leyla Zana, députée, lauréate du prix Sakharov pour la liberté de l'esprit, condamnée à 15 ans de réclusion en mars 1994 pour s'être exprimée en kurde au Parlement, est toujours en prison. Une délégation de députés du Parlement européen s'est vu refuser un droit de visite à la députée incarcérée.

« Le parti de M. Necmettin Erbakan⁽⁶⁾, vétéran de la politique, parlementaire de longue date, vice-président du Conseil des ministres à deux reprises [...] est tout sauf "fondamentaliste" »⁽⁷⁾. Malgré cela son parti, le Refah, a été dissous en janvier 1998 par la Cour constitutionnelle. N. Erbakan a été condamné à un an de prison pour « incitation à la haine raciale », prétexte largement utilisé par les autorités turques pour limiter la liberté d'expression.

Le respect des droits de l'Homme est loin d'être une réalité dans de nombreux autres pays de la zone euro-méditerranéenne. En Israël/Palestine, l'actualité brûlante vient nous le rappeler douloureusement. Or la France a ratifié au printemps 2000 l'accord européen d'association avec Israël sans, semble-t-il, réaffirmer la nécessité du respect des droits de l'Homme. En Algérie, au Maroc, en Syrie, au Liban, en Egypte, les mêmes questions se posent. Ainsi, par exemple, de nombreuses « disparitions forcées » ne sont pas élucidées dans ces pays, au mépris des textes adoptés par l'Assemblée générale des Nations unies en 1992.

Les droits de l'Homme n'auraient-ils pas la même valeur au Nord et au Sud de la Méditerranée ?

Les exportations françaises d'armement en Turquie : la maladie de l'Europe folle ?

Le Code de conduite européen sur les exportations d'armement, signé par la France en juillet 1998, stipule que les Etats membres « ne délivreront pas d'autorisation d'exportation s'il existe un risque manifeste que le bien dont l'exportation est envisagée serve à la répression interne ». Les Etats doivent en outre faire « preuve (...) d'une prudence toute particulière en ce qui concerne la délivrance d'autorisations aux pays où de graves violations des droits de l'Homme ont été constatées ».

La France a livré à la Turquie en 1998 pour 176,9 millions de francs d'armement, dont 112,9 millions de francs de matériel terrestre et 63,8 millions de francs de matériel aéronautique⁽¹³⁾. En 1998, la France et la Turquie ont conclu un accord préliminaire pour l'achat de 19 200 missiles antichars Eryx2. En quoi cet accord témoigne-t-il d'une prudence toute particulière ? Les intérêts économiques sont-ils véritablement plus importants que le respect des droits de l'Homme ?

En 1999 s'est déroulée la phase finale de la négociation pour la vente de huit hélicoptères Cougar Mk-1 à la police turque déjà équipée d'hélicoptères Puma. Ces hélicoptères s'ajoutent aux trente commandés par l'armée turque en 1997⁽¹⁴⁾. Or de nombreux rapports font état de l'utilisation par l'armée turque d'hélicoptères pour la répression au Kurdistan. Les exportations françaises d'armement vers la Turquie doivent donc être remises en cause, car elles constituent une violation flagrante du Code de conduite européen.

De plus les principales entreprises aéronautiques (France, Allemagne, Italie, Pays-Bas, Belgique) viennent de se regrouper au sein d'EADS (European Aeronautics Defense and Space). Cela renforce la responsabilité de l'UE dans les contrôles, sans pour cela les atténuer pour les pays concernés.

NE SONT-ILS SOLUBLES PARTICULIER EN TURQUIE ?

AUJOURD'HUI LA TORTURE EXISTE ENCORE EN TURQUIE !

Malgré ses déclarations de bonnes intentions la Turquie reste un pays où la torture est un mal véritablement endémique. Son utilisation quasi systématique touche tous les suspects, aussi bien politiques que de droit commun, et atteint même les mineurs.

Le rapport de la Commission parlementaire de l'Assemblée nationale turque⁽⁸⁾, qui n'a pas été officiellement rendu public, serait véritablement accablant et ferait état de locaux « équipés » dans presque tous les lieux de détention de suspects, qu'il s'agisse de locaux de la police ou de la gendarmerie.

D'après Amnesty international, les délais de garde à vue, bien que réduits en 1997, favorisent le recours à la torture. En effet les personnes arrêtées pour des infractions relevant des Cours de sûreté de l'Etat peuvent être maintenues au secret pendant quatre jours. La durée maximale de la garde à vue peut être portée à dix jours dans les provinces relevant de l'état d'urgence. Les suspects ont, dans la majorité des cas, les yeux bandés pendant les interrogatoires, ce qui ne leur permet pas de connaître leurs tortionnaires. L'impunité dont jouissent ceux-ci (ils ne font qu'exceptionnellement l'objet d'enquêtes, encore moins de poursuites) est un facteur aggravant. L'enregistrement des détentions, conformément au code pénal turc, et leur notification aux familles sont rarement effectués, ce qui laisse libre cours à la torture et aux « disparitions ».

Les méthodes consistent, notamment, à frapper les détenus, à les deshabiller entièrement et à les arroser d'eau glacée à haute pression, à les suspendre par les bras attachés derrière leur dos, à leur infliger des décharges électriques, à leur asséner des coups sur la plante des pieds, à les menacer de mort, à les violer ou à leur faire subir d'autres formes de sévices sexuels.

LA PEINE DE MORT, TOUJOURS PAS ABOLIE !

Tous les membres de l'Union européenne ont supprimé la peine de mort depuis 1994. Bien que la Turquie soit membre du Conseil de l'Europe, signataire de la Convention européenne des droits de l'Homme et candidate à l'UE, la peine de mort n'a toujours pas été abolie. La Constitution turque comprend 13 articles du Code pénal civil, 26 articles du Code pénal militaire, une loi contre le banditisme et une loi sur la forêt qui légitiment et confortent la peine capitale. Il existe cependant un moratoire sur son application depuis 1984. Tout récemment, la condamnation à mort d'Abdullah Ocalan, dirigeant du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) peut faire craindre la reprise des exécutions⁽⁹⁾.

La peine de mort est aussi appliquée aux opposants du régime. A ce jour, plus de 50 personnes attendent d'être exécutées.

Les Kurdes en Turquie

On estime de 15 à 20 millions le nombre de kurdes vivant en Turquie. Ils parlent le kurde, langue d'origine indo-européenne, très différente du turc, langue asiatique ouralo-altaïque. Une littérature écrite depuis le VII^e siècle, une forte tradition culturelle dans le domaine de la musique et une littérature orale très riche, malgré des décennies d'interdiction, ont contribué à un fort sentiment d'identité chez la population kurde de Turquie. C'est ce sentiment qui alimente la revendication de nombreux mouvements.

Depuis la création de la République turque en 1923, le peuple kurde a été l'objet d'une « turquisation » forcée. Malgré l'évolution de ces dernières années, la langue kurde reste interdite en Turquie dans le domaine de la presse écrite, des médias, des publications, de l'enseignement, des contrats et des relations avec l'administration. A la suite des pressions internationales pour la liberté d'expression, la Turquie a aboli en 1991 une loi interdisant l'usage privé de la langue kurde. Le 10 décembre 1998, à l'occasion du 50^e anniversaire de la Déclaration des droits de l'Homme, six prix Nobel de la paix ont signé un appel aux chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement des Etats-Unis et de l'UE pour qu'ils prennent une initiative conduisant la Turquie vers une solution politique du problème kurde.

Dans un conflit armé qui dure depuis plus de quinze ans, 3 428 villages kurdes⁽¹⁵⁾ ont été détruits. La population déplacée, estimée de 3 à 4 millions de personnes, est confrontée à une situation économique et sociale des plus précaires. Les Kurdes constituent les éléments les plus nombreux dans le flux migratoire vers l'Europe occidentale.

ET LA LIBERTÉ D'EXPRESSION ?

En Turquie, la liberté d'expression est limitée par 152 lois et plus de 700 articles⁽⁹⁾. Des écrivains, des journalistes, des artistes, des scientifiques, des intellectuels, des enseignants, des politiciens, des défenseurs des droits de l'Homme ont été emprisonnés cette année encore en Turquie pour avoir tenté de s'exprimer librement⁽¹⁰⁾.

Quelques exemples :

1/6/2000 - Ahmed Turan Demir, président du HADEP (Parti de la démocratie du peuple) est condamné à un an de prison pour « incitation au séparatisme » par la Cour de sécurité de l'Etat d'Ankara. La Cour s'est appuyée sur un discours et de la poésie lus à l'occasion d'une fête pour la paix, le 28 octobre 1999, à Ankara⁽¹¹⁾.

20/6/2000 - Le dictionnaire turco-kurde publié le 10 juin par l'Institut kurde d'Istanbul est saisi sans raison apparente, à l'exception du fait qu'il contient des mots kurdes⁽¹¹⁾ !

Pour avoir prôné une solution pacifique au problème kurde, l'avocat défenseur des droits de l'Homme Esber Yagmurdereli a passé plus de dix-sept ans dans les geôles turques. Son combat a même été récompensé le 29 septembre 2000 par le Prix international des droits de l'Homme - Ludovick Trarieux. Ce prix avait, par le passé, été notamment attribué à Nelson Mandela⁽¹²⁾.

OBJECTIFS

Améliorer la situation des droits de l'Homme dans la zone euro-méditerranéenne et en particulier en Turquie, dont le processus d'adhésion à l'UE a débuté.

Pour cela, nous demandons :

- aux députés français d'appuyer la création d'un groupe parlementaire sur les Kurdes, point majeur pour l'amélioration des droits de l'Homme en Turquie ;
- au gouvernement français d'exiger le respect du volet « droits de l'Homme » des critères de Copenhague dans le processus d'adhésion de la Turquie ;
- au gouvernement français de respecter le Code de conduite de l'Union européenne sur les exportations d'armement, en renonçant à exporter du matériel militaire ou du matériel de sécurité et de police à la Turquie tant que la situation des droits de l'Homme dans ce pays n'aura pas été améliorée et de faire le nécessaire pour que les autres pays de l'Union européenne fassent de même ;
- à l'Union européenne de mettre en place un mécanisme d'évaluation et de contrôle du respect des droits de l'Homme dans les pays engagés dans un processus d'adhésion à l'Union européenne, ou ayant signé ou prévoyant de signer des accords d'association.

MODE D'EMPLOI

1. Signez et faites signer les cartes postales par votre entourage puis envoyez-les au Premier ministre, au député de votre circonscription et au Président de la Commission européenne.
2. Retournez le coupon-réponse à Agir ici afin que nous puissions disposer du taux de participation lors des rencontres avec les décideurs et vous tenir informé(e)s des résultats de la campagne.
3. Commandez des documents de campagne et diffusez-les autour de vous : amis, collègues de travail, associations, médias de votre département, etc.

SUR LA ROUTE DE L'ADHÉSION À L'UNION EUROPÉENNE...

La décision de principe concernant l'élargissement de l'UE aux pays d'Europe centrale et orientale a été prise lors du Conseil de Copenhague en 1993. Les Quinze y ont défini les critères d'adhésion, dits « critères de Copenhague », auxquels les pays doivent satisfaire :

- les institutions du pays doivent être stables, garantissant la démocratie, la primauté du droit, les droits de l'Homme, le respect des minorités et leur protection (critère politique) ;
- le pays doit être doté d'une économie de marché viable capable de faire face à la pression concurrentielle et aux forces du marché à l'intérieur de l'UE (critère économique) ;
- le pays doit être capable de souscrire aux objectifs de l'Union politique, économique et monétaire (acquis communautaire).

Le processus d'élargissement a été officiellement lancé lors du Conseil de Luxembourg en décembre 1997. Les négociations d'adhésion ont été amorcées avec dix pays d'Europe centrale et orientale. En décembre 1999, le Conseil d'Helsinki a accepté le statut de candidat de la Turquie.

Le rapprochement entre l'Union européenne et la Turquie remonte à 1963. Il fait suite à la signature d'un accord d'association (accord d'Ankara), où était déjà mentionnée la possibilité de l'élargissement de l'UE à la Turquie. Celle-ci a demandé officiellement à adhérer à l'UE en avril 1987. **Si cette dernière a toujours confirmé l'éligibilité de la Turquie, les avis de la Commission ont été, de 1989 à 1998, invariablement défavorables « en raison de certaines anomalies dans le fonctionnement des pouvoirs publics, la persistance de violations des droits de l'Homme et des déficiences importantes dans le traitement des minorités »**⁽¹⁶⁾

L'UE a justifié l'entrée de la Turquie dans le processus d'adhésion en affirmant qu'une stratégie de rapprochement et d'inclusion est plus efficace pour la démocratisation. Malgré cela, les rapports sur les violations des droits de l'Homme sont toujours aussi alarmants.

Actuellement, le critère de droit et de démocratie n'est bien évidemment pas respecté dans le cas de la Turquie. La France se doit d'imposer, avec ses partenaires européens, que les critères économiques et monétaires ne soient pas appliqués au détriment des droits de l'Homme. Ces derniers sont une composante essentielle de l'acquis communautaire.

... ET DES ACCORDS D'ASSOCIATION EUROMED...

La conférence euro-méditerranéenne des ministres des Affaires étrangères tenue à Barcelone les 27 et 28 novembre 1995 a été l'acte fondateur du partenariat entre les quinze Etats de l'UE et les douze pays de la zone sud de la Méditerranée. Dans la Déclaration de Barcelone, les partenaires ont défini les trois grands objectifs de ce partenariat :

- La définition d'un espace commun de paix et de stabilité au moyen d'un renforcement du dialogue politique et de sécurité ;
- La construction d'une zone de prospérité partagée grâce à un partenariat économique et financier dont le but principal est l'instauration d'une zone de libre échange avant 2010 ;
- Le rapprochement entre les peuples à travers le développement des échanges entre les sociétés civiles et la compréhension entre les cultures.

Concrètement, cinq accords d'association sont entrés en vigueur. Plusieurs autres sont en cours de négociation. Ils devraient être signés d'ici 2010. L'enjeu de la rencontre de Marseille en novembre 2000, où se tiendra le quatrième sommet du processus Euromed, est la ratification de la « charte euro-méditerranéenne pour la paix et la stabilité ».

Mais ces accords sont essentiellement à vocation économique. Les clauses « droits de l'Homme » doivent systématiquement être intégrées, s'imposer par rapport aux clauses économiques et être une condition indispensable à l'application de ces accords.

... IMPOSONS UN MÉCANISME D'ÉVALUATION !

L'Union a choisi de faire du respect des droits de l'Homme un élément essentiel de ses relations commerciales et de sa coopération avec les pays tiers. Cela concerne autant les processus d'élargissement que les accords d'association.

Les clauses « droits de l'Homme » prévues dans ces relations sont des outils potentiellement efficaces pour promouvoir le respect de ces droits. Mais elles devraient être assorties de mécanismes permanents, réguliers et effectifs de contrôle.

Pour en savoir plus

Bibliographie :

- Amnesty international, Rapport 2000. Tél. 01 53 38 65 65.
- Bichara Khader, *Le partenariat euro-méditerranéen*, L'Harmattan, 1999.
- B. Ravenel, *Vers une sécurité commune en Méditerranée. Démilitariser le concept de sécurité*. Tél. 04 78 36 93 03.
- Bulletin du CILDEKT. Tél. 01 45 23 11 72
- Le Monde Diplomatique, septembre 2000.

Sites internet :

- Union européenne : europa.eu.int
- Euromed : www.euromed.net
- Forum civil : www.euromed-ong.org
- Observatoire des transferts d'armement : www.obsarm.org
- Federation of American Scientists : www.fas.org
- www.kurdishmedia.com
- www.khrp.org
- www.ainice.multimania.com

Un groupe d'étude parlementaire sur les Kurdes

Le bureau de l'Assemblée nationale a agréé, depuis juin 1997, 85 groupes d'étude parlementaire poursuivant un but scientifique, culturel, artistique, sportif ou humanitaire. Depuis 1973, 15 groupes d'étude parlementaire - à vocation ou à caractère international - ont été créés. Existents aujourd'hui des groupes d'étude sur le « problème du Tibet » ou encore sur la Birmanie.

Ce type de groupe a une utilité certaine. Ainsi existe au Parlement européen depuis 1965 une « Commission parlementaire mixte UE-Turquie ». Celle-ci a créé en son sein un mécanisme d'échange régulier d'informations sur les cas de violation des droits de l'Homme en Turquie et dans l'UE. Le travail effectué par cette commission a permis de mettre en lumière à plusieurs reprises le non-respect des droits de l'Homme en Turquie.

Nous demandons que les députés français créent à l'Assemblée nationale un groupe d'étude parlementaire sur les Kurdes, point majeur pour l'amélioration des droits de l'Homme en Turquie. Certains députés se sont déjà engagés, lors du colloque sur la question kurde organisé à l'Assemblée nationale le 31 mai 2000, à porter cette demande.

Sources

1. La Turquie est une république constitutionnelle dont la structure politique a été fixée par la constitution de 1982, élaborée par les militaires après le coup d'Etat de 1980 et approuvée par référendum.
2. Source : site internet du Kurdish Human Rights Project, www.khrp.org.
3. Libération, « Peut-on européaniser la Turquie ? », le 13 mars 2000.
4. Rapport mensuel de l'IHD (Association turque des droits de l'Homme) sur les violations des droits de l'Homme en Turquie, août 2000.
5. Bulletin du CILDEKT (Comité international pour la libération des députés kurdes emprisonnés en Turquie), n° 180, 29/09/2000.
6. M. Necmettin Erbakan a été Premier ministre du 8 juillet 1996 au 18 juin 1997.
7. Le Monde diplomatique, septembre 2000.
8. La Croix, 11/09/2000.
9. Source : IHD. Lors de son dernier Congrès en février 2000, le PKK a officiellement renoncé à la lutte armée pour privilégier la négociation politique.
10. Source : Amnesty international, Rapport 2000 + IHD.
11. Source : Observatoire franco-kurde.
12. Source : Dossier de presse de l'Institut des droits de l'Homme du barreau de Bordeaux.
13. Ministère de la défense - Rapport au Parlement sur les exportations d'armes de la France, résultats 1998.
14. Rapport 1999-2000, Observatoire de transferts d'armement.
15. Commission des migrations du Parlement turc, citée par le Turkish Daily News, 7 juin 1998.
16. Union européenne, Rapport régulier de la commission sur les progrès accomplis par la Turquie sur la voie de l'adhésion, décembre 1998, page 22.

December 31, 2000

Gulf Arabs Sign Defense Pact, Soften Anti-Iraq Words

By Rawhi Abeidoh

MANAMA (Reuters) - Leaders of six oil-rich Gulf Arab states Sunday signed a long-delayed mutual defense pact to fend off potential external attacks, but softened anti-Iraq rhetoric.

The pact calls for the defense resources of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar to be pooled. The six sit on over half of the world's oil reserves. "This is the most important agreement signed by the GCC because for the first time it puts a legal framework to this type of cooperation," Bahrain's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Mubarak al-Khalifa told a news conference after the summit.

Officials said the pact by the GCC, which failed to defend fellow member Kuwait when it was invaded by Iraq a decade ago, would pave the way for a rapid deployment force to deter aggression. It also stipulates that an attack on any member would be considered as an attack against all GCC states.

The Saudi-led GCC countries, which rely on the United States and other Western powers for their defense, have spent billions of dollars to boost their armies since Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

But efforts to expand a small Saudi-based joint force set up in 1986 have so far failed.

Softer Tone On Iraq

A final communique at the end of the two-day summit did not include the routine strong condemnation of Iraq that has appeared in GCC statements since the Iraqi invasion. It urged Baghdad to open "a comprehensive dialogue" with the U.N. Security Council to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction in a way that would lead to the lifting of sanctions imposed on Iraq since 1990.

The communique said the GCC leaders would support any "humanitarian effort that would contribute to ease the sufferings of the brotherly Iraqi people."

"The GCC council affirms its determination to continue its efforts to eliminate these sufferings within the framework of international resolutions."

Earlier GCC statements have regularly blamed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and his regime for his country's isolation.

Delegates said the softened language was a compromise between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which wanted to maintain the crippling U.N. sanctions until Iraq obeyed all Security Council resolutions, and the UAE and Qatar, which called for their end. "It is somehow different from previous communiqués," Sheikh Mohammed said. "It contains a new spirit...We hope that Iraq will respond to U.N. resolutions so that we can achieve a settlement agreeable to all."

The delegates said the joint defense pact plan provided for the so-called "Peninsula Shield" force to be expanded and equipped with a modern early warning system and a sophisticated communications network.

"It stipulates raising the number of soldiers four to five times to at least 25,000, so that it becomes a rapid deployment force until other troops from the member states can join in to repel potential attacks," one delegate told Reuters.

The proposal was presented by Bahrain, which hosts the U.S. Navy's Fifth Fleet, and was swiftly supported by Kuwait, the delegates said. The delegates said the plan had already been approved by Gulf Arab defense ministers at a meeting in Riyadh in October.

* * * * *

