

INSTITUT
KURDE
DE PARIS

Information and liaison bulletin

N°203

FEBRUARY 2002

*The publication of this Bulletin enjoys a subsidy
from the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGCID)
and the Fonds d'action et de soutien pour l'intégration et la lutte contre les discriminations
(The Fund for action and support of integration and the struggle against discrimination)*

This bulletin is issued in French and English

Price per issue : France: 6 — Abroad : 7,5

Annual subscription (12 issues) France : 60 — Elsewhere : 75

Monthly review

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

ISBN 0761 1285

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**PARIS : AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE
SITUATION OF WOMEN IN KURDISTAN**

THE Paris Kurdish, in partnership with *Kurdish Women's Action against Crimes of Honour* and the International Network of Kurdish Women's Studies, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Employment nad Solidarity and the *Fondation Frances-Libertés*, brought together, on 22 February at the Palais de Luxembourg (the Chambers of the French Senate) about twenty experts and representatives of

Associations from Kurdistan and the Western countries to start thinking about the present day condition of women in Kurdistan, assess the situation and explore new peraspectives.

The conference, introduced by Mrs. Danielle Mitterrand, President of the *Fondation France-Libertés*, began with an "description of the dynamics of violence: a theoretical analysis of the idea and practice of violence

against women", followed by a second round table of representatives of leading members of associations for the defence of womens rights from Diyarbekir and Istanbul, who described the fate of "women in situations of armed conflict : Violence against women and the feminist challenges". Mrs. Shirin Amedi, President of the Kurdistan Union of Women, from Irbil, and Mrs. Kafie Suleiman, General Secretary of the Zhinan Union of Kurdistan Women, from Suleimaniah, Guests of Honour of the Conference also expressed their support for this event as well as

Leyla Zana, first Kurdish women Member of the Turkish Parliament. As you all know, she was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment in 1984 for a "crime of opinion" and won the European Parliament's Sakharov Prize and so had to express her support by a message sent from her prison in Ankara.

The afternoon was devoted to round tables on "the Policy of Extermination: the Anfal Campaigns in Iraqi Kurdistan"

followed by "Domestic Violence: the practice of violence upon women's bodies and strategies of resistance". Speakers from Iraqi Kurdistan and several European countries bore witness to the situation of women during the so-called Anfal campaign of extermination by Saddam Hussein's troops, and the after-effects of this campaign on the survivors. The conference also allowed considerable room for spontaneous reactions and

questions from the body of the hall. It ended with a round table on "Kurdish Women in the Diaspora: the dialectic of violence and resistance".

About 300 people took part in this day-long debate. Many others were unable to attend owing to the lack of seating. The transactions of the Symposium will be published later in several languages. (See, in appendix, the conference timetable).

THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE US STATE DEPARTMENT STRESSES THE VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE KURDISH REGIONS OF TURKEY

ACCORDING to the Turkish daily *Milliyet* of 6 March, the State Department's annual report on Human Rights is, this year, stressing the use of torture in Turkey. *"The security forces have, on the whole, continued to practice torture, beating up, and to breach other rights..."* stresses the report. *"According to Human Rights observers and medical specialists, the Turkish security forces, instead of beating detainees with truncheons or their fists, beat them with heavy sacks, or instead of applying electric shocks directly to parts of the body, use metallic chairs to deliver the electric shocks — briefly they opt for methods of torture that leave the least traces in the body"* indicates the report. It also stresses the fact that the police and armed forces implicated in cases of torture are rarely found guilty or else receive to such light sentences as to aggravate the situation. The US State Department reveals the fact that violations of Human

Rights are more intense in Kurdish regions, stressing that violations of freedom of expression and association are particularly intense in these regions. *"The Turkish Constitution does not recognise the Kurds as a national minority, ethnic or racial minority though, in fact, the Kurds constitute the largest ethnic and linguistic minority in the country. In the civil service and in politics,*

those who wish to identify themselves as Kurds and who support the public use of the Kurdish language are threatened by censorship, pressure of all kinds, harassment and legal proceedings" concludes this report, which is submitted to the American Congress to clarify its foreign policy choices.

For a long time militarily and strategically allied to Washington, Turkey knows from experience that these criticisms on the human rights situation, expressed regularly for over ten years, have hitherto had no effect on Turco-American relations.

A CALL FOR THE LIBERATION OF IMPRISONED KURDISH M.P.s

A network of human rights associations, including CILDEKT and France Libertés have just launched an appeal for the liberation of the four Kurdish former M.P.s who have been imprisoned in Turkey for the last 8 years. Their only fault is a fierce determination to make known the rights of the Kurdish people. Below is an appeal to be sent, firstly, to the French Prime Minister, then to Members of Parliament so as to arouse their awareness and make the French political powers act on the fate of the Kurdish MPs jailed in contempt of the most elementary Human Rights.

Mr. Prime Minister / Member of Parliament,

In November 2000 a campaign was launched "Your Human Rights, if you Please!". Several tens of thousands of citizens took part in this public opinion campaign, conducted in partnership with Agir pour un Monde Solidaire, ACAT, Amnesty International, la CIMADE, CRADHOM, France Libertés, and Le Mouvement de la Paix.

However, since then, the Human Rights situation in Turkey have barely changed, and France has taken no steps to contribute to any improvement. This situation is particularly hard for the Members of Parliament who are still imprisoned to date. This is why we are launching an "Appeal for the liberation of four former Kurdish M.P.s imprisoned in Turkey: Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Selim Sakak and Orhan Dogan".

Tried by the Ankara State Security Court on 8 December 1994, they were sentenced to 15 years imprisonment. The European Human Rights Court, to which the case was presented at the request of the former M.P.s handed down its verdict on 17 July 2001. The Court unanimously found Turkey guilty of violation of Article 17 on the European Human Rights Convention because of the lack of independence and impartiality of the Ankara State Security Court, since the petitioners had not been informed in time of the alteration in the charges against them and had been given the possibility of cross examining the prosecution witnesses.

The two recent reports on Turkey presented to the European Commission on 25 October and 13 November 2001, referring to the 17 July 2001 decision, ask that Turkish legislation embody measures for taking into account condemnations by the European Human Rights Court, and particularly a guarantee of the restoration of civic and political rights in cases where they had been restricted following sentence, the re-opening of the trial proceedings and the question of damages in cases where the trial were found inequitable.

We, French citizens, call on the French Government to take whatever initiatives may be needed at the Ministerial Committee of the Council of Europe for it to oversee the execution of the 17 July 2001 verdict of the European Human Rights Court and that it demand that Turkey:

- take the necessary legislative measures to free the four imprisoned MPs — Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Selim Sakak and Orhan Dogan,

- grant the right to a retrial before an independent and impartial Court, in accordance with the principles of the European Human Rights Convention.

- ask the French Members of Parliament to create a Parliamentary study group on the Kurdish question and to set up a mechanism for checking the observance of Human Rights in Turkey and the context of the European Union/Turkey Association Agreement.

TWO AMERICANS TRIED WITH "KURDISH SEPARATIST PROPAGANDA"

EVEN while Turkey aims at joining the European Union, freedom of expression continues to be flouted by the Turkish authorities and merely to mention the Kurds or Kurdistan constitutes a crime in Turkey, under Article 7 of the Anti-Terrorist Act that represses "terrorist propaganda".

Thus, on 13 February, the Turkish publisher of the American intellectual and linguist Noam Chomsky, was acquitted by the Istanbul State Security Court that had charged him with "separatist propaganda" on the grounds of Chomsky's book on "American interventionism", which mentions the Kurdish problem.

Mr. Chomsky was not, himself, charged in this case, but insisted on being present at the trial because of his "moral responsibility as a human being" for the situation in Turkey. "I am responsible for crimes committed in Turkey. As the United States is supplying 80% of Turkey's weaponry with the precise aim of perpetrating a violent and brutal repression (of the Kurds) it is my responsibility and I want to go to the place where this is happening" explained Mr. Chomsky.

The owner of Aram Publications, Fatih Tas, who is still being charged because of several other books dealing with the Kurdish problem thanked the American author for his presence which "has helped in securing this decision

to acquit" as he said at the end of the hearing. "We did not expect this verdict" said Mr. Tas who had pleaded "Not Guilty" to the accusations of separatist propaganda, "and we think that Turkish law must learn to respect those it is trying". Mr. Chomsky, for his part, hoped that Mr. Tas' acquittal would be "a step towards the establishment of freedom of expression in Turkey". He insisted on the "very difficult situation" of Turkish intellectuals, considering that their struggle for freedom of expression was "was an example for the whole world".

In his book, quoting extracts from his Harvard University lectures, denounces the sale of arms to Turkey, which, as he recalls, uses them for the "repression of the Kurds". "Countries like the USSR, China or the Latin American dictatorships ban, or have banned, my books — but this is the first time that someone is sued for publishing my lectures. This is so extreme that I wanted to be here to support him" said Mr. Chomsky.

Noam Chomsky then visited Diyarbakir, because that town "is the centre of repressive activity" he considered. In the course of a symposium organised by local government organisations, Mr. Chomsky expressed the hope for the creation "one day" of an "autonomous Kurdistan" in the Near East that would bring together millions of Kurds scattered throughout the region. "I hope that, one day, there will be

an autonomous Kurdistan and that tens of thousands of Kurds, will live on its soil" he said at Diyarbakir. "The inhabitants of this Kurdistan will be politically autonomous and culturally independent" he continued.

Furthermore, the American author supported the demand for the teaching of Kurdish in schools. "I respect Kurdish and I also respect those who courageously work to demand to learn their mother tongue in the schools" he said in particular. Teaching in any other language but Turkish is forbidden by the Constitution. The country's leaders are opposed to it although it is one of the cultural rights that the European Union, which Turkey wants to join, is asking it to grant to the Kurdish population.

Regarding his country's objectives in Iraq, threatened with the possible extension of the American anti-terrorist campaign, Mr. Chomsky considered that the United States would use Turkey as a "mercenary" against that country by promising it, in return, the Kurdish oilfields of Kirkuk and Mosul. "Such an (military) eventuality would provoke an explosion in the Middle East and a revolution in Saudi Arabia" he considered.

In Diyarbakir, Mr. Chomsky met members of the People's Democratic Party (HADEP) which is struggling for the recognition of Kurdish cultural rights and is the subject of legal proceedings aiming at the banning it on the grounds of links with Kurdish separatists in Turkey.

Moreover, the Turkish language

edition of the book by Jonathan Randal, former *Washington Post* correspondent and author of *"After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness?"* found itself in the dock and its publisher risks imprisonment for this book, that has already been published in Kurdish, Persian Arabic and English.

"Curiously, the preface to my book, that I wrote specially for the Turkish translation, was excluded from the charges against the book, although I particularly welcomed in it the recent democratic reforms in Turkey and indicated that Turkey was the country where the Kurds might have the best chance of seeing their ambition of being treated like first class citizens realised" indicated J. Randal.

The Istanbul State Security Court accuses the book's publisher of the following incriminating passages:

Page 23: I was woken up, in a cheap hotel in Turkish Kurdistan, by uninterrupted volleys of gunfire only a few hundred yards from there

Page 25: In recent times the Kurds of Iran, Iraq and Turkey have all been engaged in simultaneous but uncoordinated revolts. In 1991, the first Kurds in seven decades were elected to Parliament in Turkey as representatives of Kurdish interests. Insurprisingly they lacked political qualities to avoid isolation, arrest and imprisonment - means used by the government dominated by the Turkish Armed Forces.

Page 27: Modern Turkey has been pursuing, for the last 70 years, a policy whose aim is to wipe out the Kurds' cultural as well as

political identity. In March 1924, less than a year after the foundation of Mustafa Kemal's Turkish Republic, the Kurdish culture, language and even place names were banned. For decades, Turkey has insisted on the 'fact' that the Kurds were "mountain Turks" who lived in the "East and South-East" and not in any "Kurdistan".

Page 49: In the last days before the Kuwait war in 1991, for example, hundreds of thousands of Kurds of Turkey fled their homes in

the South-East of Turkey. Late in the night, at the bus stop, I observed desperate men sending their wives and children as far as possible from the Kurdish regions considered to be most dangerous.

Page 309: All these hopes evaporated when successive governments failed, after 1984, with the ever more ruinous civil war that began in Turkish Kurdistan

The trial of this book for "separatist propaganda" will take place in early April.

EUROPEAN UNION COMMISSONER VERHEUGEN PRESSES ANKARA TO SETTLE ISSUES OF THE DEATH SENTENCE AND KURDISH EDUCATION

ON 13 February, the European Commissioner for Enlarging Membership. Guenter Verheugen, urged Turkey to accelerate democratic reforms, high lighting "some problems" over the death sentence and Kurdish education. "Turkey has made some in 2001 (...) the reforms undertaken are certainly an important advance but, from the European Union's point of view there are still problems and tackling them is equally important, not to say crucial" he said at a Press Conference with the Foreign Minister Ismail Cem.

He was referring to the reforms adopted by the Turkish Parliament aiming at widening freedom of thought and of expression in Turkey to bring it closer to the European Union's standards, reforms that even in Turkey are perceived as inadequate. "The year 2002 will be an important, if not crucial, year for E.U.-Turkish relations",

Mr. Verheugen stressed, urging the Government to tackle the questions of abolishing the death sentence and of education in Kurdish. Turkey has abolished the death sentence — save in wartime and for terrorist crimes. Its leaders are categorically opposed to any education in the Kurdish language, as required by the European Union.

Regarding the speed of reforms, Mr. Verheugen stressed that a "country is certainly not a racing car, but it can still accelerate from 0 to 100 Km/hour in some seconds".

Mr. Cem stressed that, despite certain "problems" and some "ups and downs" EU-Turkish relations were on the right road. He indicated that Turkey's objective was to ask, during the Danish Presidency (from June to December 2002), for the establishing of a timetable for opening negotiations for membership in 2003. "It is a matter of objectives within our

reach" he said. Mr. Verheugen pointed out that Turkey must, imperatively, observe the Copenhagen political criteria on Human Rights and democracy before opening negotiations. *"The process and the timetable*

depend on Turkey's progress" he said. Mr. Verheugen is also due to meet the Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and the Deputy Prime Ministers Mesut Yilmaz and Devlet Bahceli.

IMF ANNOUNCES A \$ 16.3 CREDIT FOR TURKEY

On 5 February, the International Monetary Fund declared that Turkey had met the conditions required of a fresh agreement for a \$ 16.3 loans over three years. The tug of war between the Turkish President, Ahmet Nejdettin Sezer, who have several times vetoed the bank reform that Parliament and the three party government had voted had delayed, for a while, the reforms demanded by the IMF. However, observers note that this IMF aid is not unconnected with Turkey's opposition to Iraq. To date, Turkey is the principle receiver of IMF aid, which, however, continues turning a deaf ear to Argentine's plight.

BULENT ECEVIT SENDS HIS OLD FRIEND SADDAM HUSSEIN A "LAST WARNING"

ON 4 February, British and American planes patrolling the Iraqi Kurdistan air exclusion zone bombed Iraqi anti-aircraft defence systems as a reprisal for shots fired at their planes, according to an American official. The official Iraqi news agency stated that four people had been killed by the air raid at Mossul.

This is the first time that Anglo-American air Forces have bombed the region since the 11 September bomb attacks, insisted Captain Brian Cullin, spokesman for the Euro-American Command in Stuttgart, Germany. The bombs were released after a routine-air-patrol was targeted by Iraqi North East of Mossul, the Command specified in a written

communiqué. British and American planes, based on south-eastern Turkey, have been patrolling Iraqi air space since 1991. France, which took part in this mission initially, withdrew in 1996. Washington and London state that this surveillance aims at protecting the Kurdish population living in the area from Saddam Hussein.

This attack comes at a time when a debate is raging on the possibility of extending the American "anti-terrorist war" to Iraq. American officials have clearly given their allies to understand that they were prepared to go it alone. According to them, Iraq, pinpointed along with North Korea a constituting what the US President described as the "axis of evil" is so dangerous that

preventive action may be necessary. *"If the world, or someone, fails to show what a danger they represent to their own people and for their neighbours, we will act freely"* declared the US Defence Minister in an interview on 3 February on the PBS Television network. *"They could invade Kuwait again, that's certain. They could even invade Saudi Arabia"*. Furthermore, Paul Wolfowitz, under-secretary for Defence has stated *"What the President has done is to identify the problem. We are far from having taken any decisions on what we must do"*.

The Turkish Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, a faithful friend of Saddam Hussein, has, for his part, sent a letter to the boss of Baghdad, extensively reproduced by the Turkish press on 2 February. The Turkish Prime Minister calls on Saddam Hussein to be more cooperative with the United Nations and to authorise the arms inspectors to return to Iraqi soil and to stop developing weapons of mass destruction. B. Ecevit asks the Iraqi leader *"not to miss the opportunity of protecting the regions stability and not to subject the region to gun fire"*. *"This is an important message. I hope Saddam Hussein will take it seriously. It is no longer necessary to continue a solitary and senseless resistance against the rest of the world"* Bulent Ecevit continued, speaking at a meeting of his party's Parliamentary group.

For his part, the US Vice-President, Dick Cheney, has announced that he will be making an official visit to the Middle East next March.

KURDISH ORGANISATIONS INVITE UN HUMAN RIGHTS RAPPOREUR TO INVESTIGATE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN IRAQ

IN a letter to the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Iraq, Andreas Mavrommatis, twenty nine Iraqi Kurdish local organisations invited the UN official to visit Kurdistan to observe the Iraqi human rights violations in the region, said *Al-Mu'atamar* newspaper on 16 February.

The letter was sent on the occasion of the visit on 11 February by Andreas Mavrommatis to Iraq, the first by the UN human rights' special rapporteur since 1992.

This "exploratory official visit" to Iraq did not include the Iraqi Kurdish-held region. In their letter to the UN official, the Kurdish organisations invited the UN official to investigate the Iraqi policy of displacement of Kurds and non-Arab minorities in the Kurdish regions which are under Iraqi control.

The Iraqi authorities have, in the past years, intensified the policy of displacement of Kurds and other non-Arab minorities with the view of Arabising the Kurdish regions they control, particularly the oil-rich governorate of Kirkuk. Arab families from the South and centre of Iraq are settled in the region in the place of the Kurds who are expelled to the Kurdish-held areas or to Southern Iraq.

The Kurdish organisations deemed it "extremely necessary to examine the humanitarian situation in the region and investigate the

[Iraqi government's] campaign of forcible displacement of thousands of Iraqi families, Kurds, Turkomans and Assyrians who live in the [Kurdish] regions which are under the control of the central power". They added that "approximately 170,000 people have been displaced from their homes after having confiscated their official documents and properties; an act which is in breach of UN Resolutions 688 and 986 and of all the UN Resolutions regarding racism and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights".

The organizations have also called upon the UN official to investigate the fate of the Kurdish civilians, who "disappeared" in late 1980s, during the Iraqi Anfal campaign of Kurdish extermination, during the period February to September 1988, in Iraqi Kurdistan.

This campaign caused the death of thousands of civilians, men, women and children, killed by chemical and conventional weapons, the destruction of more of than 4000 villages and townships, the internment of more than 300,000 civilians in camps, put under the control of the Iraqi security services and the "disappearance" of hundreds of civilians: men, women and children, whose fate the Iraqi authorities refuse to reveal. Kurdish sources estimate the number of "disappeared" Kurdish civilians during Anfal campaign at over 180,000.

The Kurdish newspapers questioned why the UN official neglected the Kurdish region, where human rights violations have been widely committed by the Iraqi government, and is pursuing a campaign of Arabisation of Kurdish territories.

DEATH OF AYSE NUR ZARAKOGLU, TURKEY'S "MOTHER COURAGE"

ON 28 January, Ayse Nur Zarakoglu, a Turkish intellectual committed to the defence of Human Rights, died of cancer at the Capa Hospital of the Istanbul University Medical Faculty, at the age of 56 years.

A stubborn woman, Ayse Nur founded the Belgé Publishing House with her husband Ragip, and, braving their bans and taboos, had published many forbidden works irritating to the sensitivities of the Kemalist regime. Amongst them were the

books of the Kurdish sociologist, Ismail Besikçi, and the first book on the Armenian genocide. This tenacity earned her several jail sentences, but the couple's obstinacy finally paid off since the book "Genocide" by the American academic Vahak Dadrian and the translation of Franz Werfel's "Musa Dagh" on the Armenian resistance were finally tolerated by the Turkish authorities.

In 1998, Ayse Nur received the International Association of Publisher's Freedom Prize, in

recognition of her courageous work as a publisher. Her death leave a great void in the little world of Turkish intellectuals

who make the defence of minority rights their daily struggle.

ISSUE N° 3 OF ÉTUDES KURDES (KURDISH STUDIES) HAS COME OUT

Harmattan publishing has just brought out the third issue of the bi-annual research review "Études Kurdes".

This issue contains :

Le debat sur l'identité ethnique des Alevis kurdes (Discussion on the ethnic identity of the Kurdish Alevis) by Martin Van Bruissen

Les Alevis et le courant protestant (XIXème – début XXème) (The Alevis and the protestant trend (19th - early 20th Century)) by Hans-Lucas Kieser

A propos de la solidarité des intellectuels arabes (About the solidarity of Arab intellectuals) by Riad Fahmi

Correspondence des frères Bedir-Khan et Pierre Rondot (Correspondence between the Bedir-Khan brothers and Pierre Rondot) by Hamit Bozarslan

Comptes rendus : Land and der Greenze et les massacres de Diyarbekir (Accounts : Land and der Greenze and the Diyarbekir massacres) by Hamit Bozarslan

All the issues of *Études Kurdes* are available on sale at the Kurdish Institute as well as at the *Éditions Harmattan*.

AS WELL AS ...

• **THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ADOPTS A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR THE ENDING OF PROCEEDINGS AGAINST HADEP.** On 28 February, on the initiative of the GUE/NGL (United European Left/Northern Green Left) Group passed a resolution "on democratic rights in Turkey and, in particular, the situation of HADEP" calling for an end to the proceedings against the People's Democratic Party (HADEP) "considering that it is acting in favour of the granting of civic rights to those of

Kurdish origin in Turkey ... (and that it) denies any organic links with the PKK or any other terrorist organisation". The European Parliament "calls on the Turkish government to respect and protect all parties that use democratic means, respectful of the rule of law, to promote their political objectives, whatever their attitude to government policy". The resolution "(also) expresses its concern at the increasing frequency of the banning of activities and political parties in Turkey".

On 1 March, the President of HADEP, Murat Bozlak, defended

his party, threatened with banning, before the Turkish Constitutional Court. Arriving with six of his assistants, he himself defended his party before the Court, meeting in closed session, for over an hour. "The proceeding against us had been started in an atmosphere of conflict three years ago, and they lack any legal basis" he considered speaking to the Press at the end of the hearing. He said he was "convinced" that they would be rejected by the Court.

The European Parliament, moreover, stressed that "the status being of a country applying for membership gives Turkey increased responsibilities and commitments regarding the European Union". It "welcomes the amendments to the Constitution which should lead to a partial lifting of restrictions on the use of the Kurdish language", "insistently calls for this action be promptly followed by other measures leading to a broad acceptance of the cultural aspirations of the Kurdish people and to the solution to the social, economic and political problems in South-Eastern Turkey, hopes that the Turkish State will shortly guarantee the legitimate rights of all the minorities in Turkey". Furthermore, this resolution "pressingly calls on the Turkish authorities to cease all other actions against the students who have asked that the Kurdish language be amongst the subject taught and release those who have been arrested".

THREE NEW BISHOPS APPOINTED IN IRAQI KURDISTAN. In the presence of the personal envoy of World Chaldeans Church to Iraqi Kurdistan, Archbishop Shlimon

Wurduni, three new bishops were appointed last week in Iraqi Kurdistan, said Khabat newspaper on 8 February.

A grand ceremony was held on 6 February for the occasion at Mar Ethalaha Church in Duhok, and in the presence of religious communities' representatives, political parties, regional government officials and local figures, said the newspaper. In a speech he made during the ceremony, Fadhil Mirani, representative of the leader of Kurdistan Democratic Party, Massoud Barzani, praised "the coexistence and cooperation between the different religious communities who live in Kurdistan region" and stressed that "the intellectual and religious diversity which exist on Iraqi Kurdistan region's territory would be further developed".

On the same day, the participants at the ceremony headed to Zakho where, bishop Poutros Haryouli, appointed as Duhok and Zakho bishop, in a special ritual ceremony held at Mar Gorgis church in Zakho.

On the following day, in similar ceremony, bishop Rabban Al-Qas, appointed as head of Amadiya Bishopric and another one, that the newspaper did not mention the name, was appointed in Al-Qosh.

The Christian community constitutes the second largest minority group in Iraqi Kurdistan, after the Turkomans. They have their own political parties, newspapers and are represented at the Kurdistan regional parliament with five seats and have officials, at the

level of minister, in the Kurdish regional administration.

WOMEN OCCUPY IMPORTANT POSITIONS, SAYS THE FIRST WOMAN JUDGE APPOINTED IN IRAQI KURDISTAN. Women have been able to occupy important administrative positions in the past years in Iraqi Kurdistan, said Kamila Ali Salim, the first woman judge in Iraqi Kurdistan, appointed in May 1997, at Duhok civil court.

In an interview with the daily Brayati newspaper on 19 February, Judge Kamila Ali Salim said Iraqi Kurdish women's "role is noticeable as university professor, researcher, journalist, head of administration, and minister at the regional government, practising their job along with men".

In an earlier interview with Iraqi Kurdistan Dispatch, Ms Nasreen Sideek, Minister of Reconstruction and Development in the Arbil-based Kurdistan regional government said, "More than 40% of my work force is women including engineers, computer operators, technician and administration staff."

Early this year, the Suleimaniya-based regional government appointed the second woman judge, and was the first political authority in the Middle East to abolish the law on "honour crimes", to consider it as any other crime punishable by law, following pressures from local women organizations.

"Honour crime" is committed by male members of the family against females of the same

family, for adultery or for having relation before marriage.

"Honour" crimes are committed mainly among the rural population and towns people of rural origin. The dramatic deterioration in the social and economic situation in Iraqi Kurdistan, after the 1991 uprising, is believed to have largely contributed to its increase.

"In addition to other social issues, like condition of children, youth, emigration and displaced people, the Kurdish political authorities, alarmed by the deterioration of women conditions, took measures at legal and social levels" said Ms Narmeen Qaradaghi, lawyer at Arbil Court.

In a statement to our web site, Narmeen Qaradaghi said "several old Iraqi laws on women status have been amended in favour of women by the Kurdish judicial authorities, and other new laws are under discussion to be passed for vote in the [Iraqi] Kurdistan [regional] parliament".

Following talks for several days between Kurdish regional parliament representatives and local women organizations, the parliamentary committee of protection of women's rights was set early last year.

"There are numerous social and women organizations working mainly on the awareness of women on their social and legal situation. It is a good start, but still long way to go", said Narmeen Qaradaghi.

• AT THE DEMAND OF THE POLICE, THE TURKISH MINISTRY OF CULTURE BANS THE FILM THAT HAD

RECEIVED THE MOST AWARDS IN TURKEY. The Turkish High Control Committee of Films, Video and Music decided, on 28 February, to ban the film that had been most highly praised and received the most awards of the year — on the demand of the Police Directorate. The grounds are *"attacks on the territorial and national integrity of the country"*. *"Büyük adam, küçük ask"* (Great man, little live" has been showing for over five months and had won awards in five classes, including that of Best Film, at the Golden Orange Festival, (the Turkish equivalent of the Cannes Film Festival). The film had also won a grant from the Turkish Ministry of Culture of 20,700 and a credit of 16,600 from the same Ministry. it is also amongst the favourites as Turkey's entry for the Oscar.

The report of the Police Directorate, dated 26 December 2001, notes that *"the film shows extrajudicial executions by the police, displays a chauvinist attitude to the Kurdish identity and language, undermines the feeling of confidence in the security bodies and shows parallels with separatist propaganda"*.

Questioned by the press, İstemihan Talay, Minister of Culture, declined all responsibility for it, stressing that it was due to the High Committee, composed of seven members, including a member of the General Secretariat of the National Security Council (MGK), a representative of the Ministries of the Interior, National Education and Culture, while recognising that the representative of his own

Ministry had voted for banning the film. The President of the Authors' Copyright Bureau, Güney Görmez, on the other hand, recognised that the fact that the film, in its foreign export version is called "Hejar", the Kurdish first name of the film's main character, was one of the reasons for the Ministry's irritation.

"Hejar" (Poor) is the story of a little girl who only speaks Kurdish, and who is looked after by a family in a big city after the execution of her parents by the Turkish police. The film tells the story of the sympathy and tenderness of a retired Turkish public prosecutor and Hejar.

• **EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS COURT FINDS TURKEY GUILTY OF TORTURE DEATH OF YOUNG KURD.** On 14 February, the European Human Rights Court found Turkey guilty of the death of a young Kurd, who died in 1993 after having been tortured by the Security Forces. Abdulsalam Orak died in 25 June 1993 at the age of 25, two weeks after his arrest by the Turkish Security Forces who suspected him of being involved in activity with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The Turkish government explained that the young man, who died from head injuries, had tried to escape and was wounded in the struggle that followed.

"The government provides no plausible explanation for the areas of bruising that appear on, amongst others, the arms, thighs, the soles of his feet and his shoulders, nor for the scratches

on his genitals or the causes of the cerebral haemorrhage that apparently caused his death " noted the Court in giving its verdict. The Court stresses that Abdulsalam was in good health before his arrest and that he was only transferred to the hospital, in a coma, "six days after the alleged attempt to escape ".

Turkey was found guilty of violation of Art. 2 (Right to life), of Art. 3 (forbidding any torture) and Art. 13 (Right to effective legal recourse) of the European Human Rights Convention.

The government will also have to pay 68,500 Euros to the victim's heirs and 4,000 Euros to his father, the plaintiff, for moral and material damages.

• **CHILDREN INTERROGATED FOR PARTICIPATION IN RIGHTS COMPETITION.** On 18 February, the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD) stated that children of between 7 and 14 had been interrogated by inspectors of the Ministry of Education for having participated in a competition run by the IHD in Diyarbakir. "The enquiry was opened at the beginning of February and is continuing " specified Muharrem Erbay, of the IHD office in Diyarbakir, who revealed that "the children's psychology has been seriously affected. They have been interrogated as if they had committed a crime by making innocent drawings and essays ".

Some 300 children had taken part, in December 2001, in a competition of drawings and essays to mark Human Rights Week. Twenty children and

about forty teachers have been interrogated by inspectors on their reasons for taking part in IHD's competition instead of the one organised by the governor. The local authorities refused to make the slightest comment.

However, IHD had received the local Council's permission to organise this competition and to publicise it through posters.

• **59 HADEP MEMBERS ARRESTED IN A MONTH.** On 11 February, the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic Party (HADEP) announced that fifty-nine of its members had been arrested in several Turkish towns in the course of a month for having supported a wide campaign in support of the teaching of Kurdish in schools and Universities. This campaign began in November and thousands of students have been pulled in for questioning in Turkey for having signed petitions to this end. Two weeks ago, Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit categorically opposed any teaching in Kurdish in Turkey. "It's impossible " he said, particularly denouncing "the manoeuvres of certain European countries aiming at dividing Turkey "

The European Union, which Turkey wants to join, demands of it more cultural rights for its Kurdish population, particularly in the areas of Television and education in Kurdish.

• **LOCAL TELEVISION NETWORK BANNED FOR 365 DAYS FOR HAVING BROADCAST LOVE SONG BY KURDISH MUSICIAN SIVAN PERWER.** On 11 February, the Turkish High Audiovisual

Council (RTUK) announced its decision to ban a Diyarbakir TV network for a year for "broadcasts of a nature to support the PKK ". According to the network's officials, the RTUK took this decision because GUN TV had broadcast a song by the Kurdish musician Sivan Perwer, which, however, only spoke of love. The RTUK will later announce the dates on which its decision will take effect.

Since its creation in 1994, the RTUK has, according to official's figures, already suspended, for varying periods, over 500 radio and TV networks.

• **PKK ANNOUNCES "TRANSFORMATION", INCLUDING HALT TO ALL ACTIVITIES UNDER ITS PRESENT NAME.** According to the 9 February issue of the pro-Kurdish paper, *Ozgur Politika*, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has decided to stop all its activities under its present name, in Turkey and Europe, to advance towards a legal platform. "Our Party's assembly considers it necessary to stop all political, organisational and practical activity under the PKK label in the territory of the Turkish Republic and the countries of the European Union" stresses a communiqué published at the end of a PKK meeting held at the end of January (probably on the Iraqi-Iranian borders) *Ozgur Politika* indicated. This decision is part of the strategy of "restructuring and transforming" the PKK into a legal political organisation, the communiqué said.

According to this statement, the PKK calls on its members in

Europe to continue to work with groups affiliated to the PKK and urges its members in Turkey to organise themselves "in conformity with the decisions of the leadership" of the party. The document stresses that the efforts of "transformation", including the abandoning of the name "PKK" will be "finalised" at the PKK's 8th Congress, whose date has not been specified, but which should take place in the course of the year.

Furthermore, the PKK accuses Turkey of wanting to oppose all changes in the world and turning a deaf ear to Kurdish claims. "The present structure of Turkey is contrary to the realities of the 21st Century and to democratic civilisation", according to the communiqué. It states that the Kurdish people's "patience" for a settlement of the Kurdish conflict has "limits", warning the Turkish authorities who have rejected the previous PKK calls for peace.

The PKK, moreover, supports the demonstrations organised in Turkey calling for Kurdish language teaching which the Turkish leaders categorically oppose. "We will never abandon our humanitarian demands" the document adds. The campaign to demand teaching in Kurdish began in November in Istanbul University where hundreds of Kurdish students have signed petitions to this effect, and the movement has spreads to other establishments. The Turkish authorities consider the movement as part of the PKK's determination to politicise itself.

Some people do not hesitate to consider that this decision

presages the approaching dissolution of the PKK, which has waged a 15-year guerrilla struggle against the Turkish State for the creation of an independent Kurdish State in Kurdistan.

• **TURKISH POLITICIANS DEBATE "POLITICISATION OF PKK", WHILE KURDISH M.P.S REMAIN JAILED FOR "THOUGHT CRIMES".** On 25 February, the Speaker of the Turkish Parliament Omer Izgi, categorically opposed a "politicisation" of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) indicating that there was no place in the Turkish political horizon for a "terrorist organisation". "The PKK is a terrorist organisation that has asserted itself by actions aimed at dividing the country" he said in reply to another Minister last week. "It is impossible for an organisation like the PKK, that reflects its will to act in terrorist actions, could have any place in Turkish political life", Mr. Izgi declared.

The Minister of State for Customs, Mehmet Kececiler, member of the influential Motherland Party (ANAP) which is part of the three-party coalition government, had indicated, in statements that appeared on 21 February in the Turkish press, that his party "would beat" the PKK in the Kurdish provinces in the event of its presenting candidates at the next General Election. This debate is taking place at a time when Leyla Zana and her three fellow MPs of the pro-Kurdish Party for Democracy (DEP) are still in Ankara prison after eight years for crimes of opinion, and when the Turkish authorities

refuse to discuss the release of these elected representatives.

The ANAP, whose chief, Mesut Yilmaz is Deputy Prime Minister responsible for European affairs, campaigns for Turkey to rapidly join the European Union and so adopts a more moderate approach to the granting of cultural rights to the Kurds — to the great anger on the National Action Party (neo-fascist), also a coalition party, of which Mr. Izgi is a member.

However, observers do not seem to be fooled by his declarations, especially as the opinion polls give less than 10% of voting intentions to ANAP and is seeking to attract the Kurds. In any case Mehmet Kececiler, who represents the Islamist-conservative wing of his party, backed off his statements the very next day, insisting that he had been "misunderstood", and that, in anycase, he had only expressed a personal opinion that in no way committed the party. "If you question the coalition government partners they will tell you that the next elections will be in April 2004 but the present political manoeuvres of the members of the coalition suggest that the elections will be sooner than we think" wrote Ilnur Çevik, editorial writer of the English language Turkish Daily News on 27 February.

• **ITALIAN AUTHORITIES ACCUSE TURKEY OF TURNING A BLIND EYE TO ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING IN PEOPLE.** Eighty-four Iraqi Kurds were found in a refrigerated lorry on a ferry arriving from Patrai (Greece) and

going to Ancona (Central Italy) according to the local daily *Corriere Adriatico* of 18 February. The illegal immigrants were discovered the day before, during the sea crossing by the crew of the ferry, the *Superfast II*, who warned the *carrabinieri* (national armed police). These Kurds had been obliged to pay the smugglers over 1000 euros per head, according to the local paper, which stressed that it was one of the largest attempts to land immigrants anyone remembered in Ancona, apart from a boat load of Albanians in 1990.

Over 20,000 illegal immigrants landed in Italy last year and repatriation procedures undertaken of people without papers concerned over 75,000, according to figures provided by a Ministry of the Interior official, Alfredo Mantovano, who accused Turkey. "The real problem is to avoid that derelict boats be filled in the Turkish ports of Istanbul and Smyrna, under the eyes of the a police force that knows how to be very efficient when its wants to be. They then set sail for Europe, and especially for Italy, passing through Greek territorial waters without much difficulty" he stated.

Furthermore, a Greek fishing boat carrying 131 illegal immigrants, mostly Kurds, ran aground at Karystos. In their first statements, the immigrants indicated that the smugglers had picked them up on the Turkish coast. According to the coastguards, they included 8 women and 12 children.

• **DIPLOMATIC TENSION**

BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE EUROPEAN UNION. The Turkish Workers' Party (IP - "Left" ultra nationalist), through its President Dogu Perinçek, has made public the contents of some e-mail correspondence by Karen Fogg, European Union representative in Turkey. Stating that he possessed 300 e-mail messages from Mrs Fogg, D. Perinçek accused the E.U. representative of "espionage" and demanded that she be declared *persona non grata* in Turkey. For her part, Karen Fogg has tabled a complaint on this matter to the Turkish Foreign Ministry, which seems highly embarrassed at giving an explanation.

• **THE KURDISH INSTITUTE OF ISTAMBUL CLOSED BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNOR.**

The Kurdish Institute of Istanbul, a private foundation publishing Kurdish magazines and teaching the Kurdish language, was closed down by a police operation on February 28. Its director, Hasan Kaya, explained that, although charges against him concerning private instruction had been dismissed, his establishment was summarily closed solely on the order of the governor of Istanbul with no official notification.

HADEP (People's Democracy Party, — pro-Kurdish) is demanding that this "anti-democratic" decision be immediately reversed.

• **TURKISH ARMY ANNOUNCES MINE CLEARING OF SYRIAN BORDER.** On 25 February, the Turkish Army General Staff

announced that a mine-clearance programme on the Turco-Syrian border would be launched at a cost of \$35 million over a five year period. The border, which is 877 Km long, includes the Kurdish towns of Mardin, Urfa, Antp, Kilis, and Hatay will thus be cleared of mines, according to the Turkish Army, which has already received a budget of 15 trillion Turkish lire (12 million euros) to this end. "With the mine clearance, an area of 350,000 ares will be available for irrigation. The cotton fields which will replace the minefields should produce 160,000 tonnes of crops, that is 64, trillion Turkish lire (52.5 million euros) in annual revenue" declared the Member of Parliament for Urfa, Mehmet Yalçinkaya when the project was announced.

• **TURKISH HUMOUR ? : FIRST ICO-EU FORUM ON CULTURAL DIVERSITY HELD IN ISTANBUL.**

European diplomats are not lacking in a sense of humour — nor hypocrisy. Although the first Ministerial level Forum between the Islamic Conference Organisation (ICO) and the European Union (EU), held in Istanbul from 12 to 13 February, reached a superficial consensus regarding the importance of "tolerance" and of "mutual understanding between cultures" and insisted that "the resurgence of deep-rooted prejudices" should be avoided — yet Ankara still rejects any dialogue with the culture and civilisation of its 15 million Kurdish citizens going even so far as to ban private lessons in Kurdish or the broadcasting of songs.

The Forum "restates its firm

conviction that cultures, in their diversity, are complementary and strengthen one another". Ismail Cem, Turkish Foreign Minister also declared, in closing the forum, that "this meeting constitutes a message of hope" and that it had "achieved its objective of bringing the two organisations together, which constitutes an encouragement of peace and stability". Meanwhile, the Turkish Human Rights Foundation (THIV), in its report on Human Rights in Turkey for the year 2001, revealed that "pressures have intensified in 2001". Yavuz Onen, THIV President, stated "a change of philosophy is needed. The existing project is to create a society with no differences. The system requires only one religion, one language, and one national identity. It cannot tolerate cultural variety. People of different origins should be able to live in a democratic environment". Let us hope that the "spirit of Istanbul" will inspire Ankara. Not one European Minister thought it appropriate to reveal the grotesque nature of the situation and invite the host government to respect, on its own soil, this diversity of cultures.

• **MORE THAN A TON OF MORPHINE, BOUND FOR EUROPE VIA TURKEY, SEIZED.** On 7 February, the Iranian police seized 1.2 tonnes of morphine which was been transported to Europe via Turkey. "The morphine, seized a week ago on two lorries in Teheran, came from the Southern part on the province of Khorassan and was intended to go to Europe via Turkey" the Assistant Chief of the

Teheran Police, Ghader Karimi, indicated. According to Mr. Karimi, this quantity of morphine has a sale value of "\$ 8.75 million abroad".

Iranian territory is a major route for the transit of drugs, which enter Iraq for local consumption but are also destined to Europe, Central Asia and, increasingly, to the countries of the Persian Gulf. The Islamic Republic of Iran represents 80% of the total quantity of opium and 90% of the morphine seized in the world. According to year 2000 report of the International Drug Control Organisation. Iran imposes the death sentence for any person found in possession of more than 30 grams of heroin or more than 5 Kg of opium.

• **REPORTS ON CONTACTS BETWEEN JUND AL-ISLAM AND IRAQI AUTHORITIES.** The Kurdish Islamic armed group, Jund al-Islam has been operating in concert with Iraqi intelligence services, said the Kurdish newspaper Tima on 19 February.

"There is an established history of cooperation and coordination between the two. Arab recruits to Jund Al Islam came from Baghdad and Mosul with the knowledge of the Iraqi authorities" said the newspaper.

Jund al-Islam, or Solders of Islam, was established on 1 September of this year, controlled two Iraqi Kurdish townships on the Iranian border and declared war on Iraqi Kurdish secular ruling parties. On 23 September, they attacked and slaughtered more than 40 fighters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK, which led to a

wide range armed confrontation between both sides.

Jund al-Islam was reported, by PUK officials and London-based Arabic newspapers, to have Afghan Arabs in their ranks, as well as Kurds who served in Afghanistan and Chachnya. It was also reported that the group was financed by Al-Qa'ida organization and its members were trained in Afghanistan.

Earlier, in November last year, a Kurdish official told "*Iraqi Kurdistan Dispatch*" that Iraqi Kurds received information on contacts between Jund al-Islam and Iraqi authorities. See our news bulletin dated 18 November 2001 and our editorial dated 2 October 2001.

Recently the group changed its name into Ansar al-Islam, or Supporter of Islam in Iraqi Kurdistan, after a merger with Mala Krekar Islamic military group. Ansar al-Islam held talks with the PUK leadership in order to settle their differences. The PUK deemed it necessary that the Arab nationals leave

Kurdistan, and that the group stops to be a radical and military organization and should abide by the regional government's laws.

In another development, the body of Abu Abdul-Raham, a founding member of Jund al-Islam in Kurdistan and, reportedly, the personal envoy of Usama bin Laden was handed over to his relatives in Biara township in Iraqi Kurdistan, a few miles from the Iranian borders, said Tima newspaper.

It said that Abu Abdul-Rahman was killed in November last year when the Suleimaniya-based regional government's forces launched a campaign to dislodge Jund Al Islam group.

"Abu Abdul-Rahman was a graduate of Al Qa'ida training camp in Kandahar, in Afghanistan and was considered as an expert in explosives. Usama bin Laden had dispatched him specifically to Kurdistan in order to supervise the formation and organization of the Al Qaeda affiliate Jund Al Islam" said the PUK Kurdistan.

READ IN THE TURKISH PRESS :

THE CONFESSIONS OF A "GOOD COP": GLAD "TO HAVE KILLED MANY KURDS". On 10 February the Turkish daily Hurriyet published an interview with the Ayhan Çarkin, a member of the Turkish Special Forces (TIM), one of the rare persons to be sentenced in connection with the Susurluk scandal. "*Ayhan Çarkin, member of the Turkish Special Forces, sentenced for Susurluk, reveals the*

biggest mistake: the State should never have brought us down from the mountains" headlined Hurriyet unflinchingly. Indeed, the editorial by its Editor in Chief, Ertugrul Ozkok, on the next day was an all out plea in favour of A. Çarkin. "*All countries have recourse to legitimate people like this ... A country enjoying an unfortunate geography will need such men again in the future*" writes E. Ozkok. Here are

extensive extracts from the interview with Ayhan Çarkin.

"I am not a mercenary, I am a State official ... In the East, in the south-east, I was in the fights and the operations ... in all these we opened fire. That was my mission ... It is this country that brought me up. I am a product of this State ... The things we did in the South-East were not murders. The conditions were balanced. In front of us were people who were betraying the country ... Of course, we also formed our own defence mechanisms. The Turkish Republic gave us the authority to do this. But we have not succeeded in explaining this ... There may be gangs inside the State but I don't believe it. The real criminal gangs are those who wrote this in their report ... the politicians ... Thanks to this report, all the terrorist organisations will be able to ask for political asylum in European countries..."

In the name of an honest society, there are some people who want to cover us with mud. I am proud of all the services I have performed ... First and foremost, Mehmet Eymur (Editor's Note: former senior officer of the political police) should also have been amongst those accused. He said that he knew Abdullah

Çatli, that he knew that he was guilty and when he was asked whether he knew that it was an offence to give official missions to criminals he retorted that that was a State secret and that he couldn't answer ... We are policemen of the Turkish Republic, policemen of the State ... There is only one State — there are many governments ... Let history be our judge.

I have never refused any mission. The idea never crossed my mind ... I have often asked myself questions ... Yes, I have killed many people. I was my mission, my job. I did not hesitate one second ... If I had died, what would have happened? Would I have been hailed as a hero, instead of found guilty as I am today? There were days when I couldn't stand any more. I felt as if I was dead ... The operations were so hard. We didn't come down from the mountains for months on end ... I was not a good husband or a good father ... But I was a good policeman! The State awarded me between 300 and 350 distinctions. Even when I was at the gates of the prison I was awarded a prize ... What we went through went beyond anything you could imagine in films...

It was during operations that I felt

at my best. Even today, I would like to return to the mountains. I was one of the ten people most involved in all the operations in that region ... Expect any pity from me? There is nothing that could make me happier than to kill them over there. I would kill them without turning a hair ... Call me a Rambo but never a mercenary ... In the south-east I kept my eyes open and found myself in fights. In Istanbul it was still the same: I took part in 50 clashes. I was trained for that. The work I know best are the operations ... But one cannot do anything without orders from above. In the last resort, even as member of the special forces, you are only just State official N° 657. My director in Diyarbakir was Huseyin Kocadag ... Ibrahim Sahin was the office manager, I received my orders from him ... We were the last links in the chain. What upsets me most is that I was sentenced by a State Security Court". (Editor's Note: The new reform of the Turkish penal code takes responsibility for banditry away from the State Security Courts and passes it to the ordinary criminal courts. However this clause was vetoed by the President at the first reading).

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Women, Violence and the Politics of Mobilizing Resistance: The Case of Kurdish Women

Friday, February 22, 2002

9:00am - 19:00pm



PALAIS DU LUXEMBOURG

16, rue de Vaugirard, 75006 Paris

Organised by :

Kurdish Institut of Paris

Kurdish Women Action Against Honour Killing

International Kurdish Women Studies Network

With the participation of :



The organisers wish to thank

ALTO Conseil et prestations linguistiques for the provision of volunteer interpreters,

The Palais du Luxembourg for generously making the Conference hall available.

Conference Programme

9:00 - 9:05am Nazand Begikhani : Welcoming Address (KWAHK, Kurdish Institute, University of the West of England)

9:05 - 9:15am Madame Mitterrand : Opening Address (President of France-Libertés)

9:15-10:00am SESSION 1

Explaining the Dynamics of Violence: Theoretical Analysis of the Discourse and Practice of Violence against Women.

Discussant: Sévé Izouli (Lawyer, Kurdish Institute, Paris)

— **Margaret Grieco** (Professor, Napier University): Culture or repression? Gender, Autonomy & the Sacrifice of Life.

— **Juliette Minces** (Author, specialist on Islam and women, Paris): Bodies Militarised: Violence against Women with a Comparative Perspective.

10:00 – 12:00 SESSION 2

Women in Armed Conflict: Violence Against Women and Feminist Challenges

Discussant: Heidi Wedel (Researcher, London)

— **Nebahat Akkoç** (KA-MER Women's Centre, Diyarbakir): The Effects of Displacement on Kurdish Women & Children in Diyarbakir and Women's Response.

— **Fatma Karakas** (Lawyer, Legal Aid Project for Women Raped or Sexually Abused in Custody, Istanbul): Sexual Violence Against Women & the Legal Aid Project.

— **Meral Danis Bestas** (Lawyer, Diyarbakir Bar Association, Women's Commission): The Situation of Kurdish Female Prisoners & the Activities of the Diyarbakir Bar Association.

— **Necla Açik** (Researcher, Manchester): Women Images and Self-Sacrifice in the Kurdish National Struggle.

12:00 - 12:30 MESSAGES FROM HONOUR GUESTS:

Mrs. Leyla Zana, Kurdish M.P. imprisoned at Ankara winner of the European Parliament's Sakarov Peace Prize.

Mrs. Shirin Fattah Amedi, President of the Kurdistan Women's Union (Erbil)

Mrs. Kafia Suleiman, General secretary of the Kurdistan Women's Union of (Suleimanieh)

Lunch: 12:30 – 14:00pm

14:00 – 15:45 SESSION 3

Politics of Extermination: The Anfal Campaigns in Iraqi Kurdistan

Discussant: Nashmil Ghassemlou (Psychotherapist, Germany)

- **Pakhshan Zangana** (Journalist, Cologne): The Anfal Campaigns: Causes and Consequences.
- **Wazira J. Saaid** (Editor-in-chief of *Bergri* magazine, Suleimaniya): Anfal & the Women's Movement in Iraqi Kurdistan
- **Karin Mlodoch** (Psychologist, Berlin): The Psychological Situation of Women Anfal Survivors in the Garmian Area.
- **Inga Rogg** (Journalist & cultural anthropologist, Munich): Violent Voices, Silenced Voices- Anfal & Memory.

15:45 – 17:30 SESSION 4

Naturalised Violence: the Practice of Violence Against the Bodies of Women and Strategies of Resistance.

Discussant: Martin van Bruinessen (Professor, Utrecht University)

- **Roonak Faraj** (Researcher, Women Information Centre, Suleimaniya): Notions of Shame and Honour: the Practice of Honour Killings in Iraqi Kurdistan
- **Narmeen Karadakh** (Lawyer, Erbil): The Functioning of the Law and the Situation of Women in the KDP Controlled Area.
- **Nazaneen Rasheed** (Project co-ordinator, Kurdish Women Action against Honour-Killing, London): The *Aram* Shelter for Women in Suleimaniya: a Sociological Analysis of Shelter in the Kurdish Context.
- **Nazand Begikhani** (Researcher, University of the West of England, KWAHK & Institut Kurde, Bristol): Kurdish women and political Islam.

17:30 – 18:45 SESSION 5

Kurdish Women in the Diaspora: the Dialectic of Violence and Resistance.

Discussant: Abbas Vali (Senior lecturer, University of Wales, Swansea)

- **Rachel Gorman** (Researcher, Toronto University): Learning for Life: Kurdish Women's Tales of War & Diaspora.
- **Monireh Moftizadeh** (Chair-person, Kurdish Women Organisation & KWAHK, London): Kurdish Women's Life in Exile: Power of Adaptation, Experience of Violence & Mechanisms of Resistance
- **Carina Grosser-Kaya** (Researcher, Leipzig): Between resistance & adaptation : The everyday life of Kurdish women in Leipzig, Germany.

18.45-19.00 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Isabelle Rigoni (Researcher, Warwick University)

IRAN

Petite nomenclature de la vie politique à Téhéran

Religieux ou laïcs, conservateurs ou réformateurs. Libéraux ou dirigistes...
Voici un panorama des différents groupes politiques qui coexistent dans l'Iran actuel.

IRAN EMROOZ

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Trois grands courants se partagent le paysage politique de l'Iran autour de l'opposition entre tradition et modernité.

Le despotisme religieux

La spécificité principale de ce courant est sa vision religieuse, une véritable manière culturelle d'aborder les questions politiques et sociales. Les membres de ce courant ne croient ni en la démocratie ni dans les autres aspects de la modernité et ne les instrumentalisent que dans des buts politiques. Sa survie dépend exclusivement du régime politique actuel. On peut identifier trois groupes au sein de ce courant :

- L'islam traditionnel, qui inclut le guide suprême Khamenei. Extrêmement traditionnelle, la vision de l'économie par ce groupe est très simpliste. Elle considère le pays comme un consommateur parasitaire de la technologie des sociétés modernes. C'est pour cette raison que ce groupe cherche la stabilité économique dans l'échange commercial et dans les revenus substantiels associés au pétrole et au trafic d'armes.

- Le deuxième groupe, fasciste fondamentaliste, est animé par ceux qui avant la révolution islamique s'opposaient à la fois aux monarchistes, à la gauche et à l'ayatollah Khomeyni. Dans le passé, ils considéraient que tous les mouvements qui agissaient en dehors du leadership religieux de Nadjaf [l'un des centres

religieux chiites en Irak] avaient pour visée la séparation de la religion et de la politique. Le régime totalitaire de Khomeyni a pu incorporer ces groupes en mettant sur pied des structures comme le Conseil des Gardiens de la révolution, le ministère des Renseignements et les tribunaux religieux. Il a pu aussi, dans ce mouvement, écarter ses rivaux politiques, qui incluaient des intellectuels et des personnalités religieuses modérées comme Ali Hossain Montazeri (ayatollah éclairé assigné à résidence depuis 1993).

- Le troisième groupe est celui des technocrates religieux. Hachemi Raf-

sandjani, à son arrivée au pouvoir [il fut chef de l'Etat de 1989 à 1997], a déclaré qu'il n'avait pas besoin de ministres politiques dans son administration, car il remplissait lui-même ce rôle. Ce groupe voit dans les rivalités au sein du régime le moyen de s'imposer. Son mot d'ordre économique est la privatisation, mais c'est en réalité un stratagème pour distribuer les ressources nationales à diverses factions politiques amies, de manière à les rendre dépendantes et à réduire leur champ d'action politique.

Le mouvement laïc

Le deuxième grand courant politique iranien est le mouvement laïc. La confrontation de cette tendance avec la culture religieuse a donné naissance à trois groupes distincts :

- La modernisation autoritaire (partisans du régime des Pahlavi [1925-1979] et des nationalistes iraniens).

Ses promoteurs considéraient le développement comme le seul moyen de moderniser le pays, fût-ce au prix de la répression de toute résistance. Ce processus, malgré la création d'institutions nouvelles, est resté superficiel et finalement contraire à la modernité. Le despotisme religieux a été la conséquence de cet autoritarisme, il est apparu en effet comme un refuge pour certains opposants intellectuels à ces transformations.

- Les marxistes (le Parti Toudéh, communiste, et le Parti des Fedayin du peuple, marxiste-léniniste) sont nés de la quête de justice sociale en Iran.

Ils soutiennent aujourd'hui le mouvement démocratique en Iran et regroupent diverses tendances économiques allant de l'orthodoxie communiste au libéralisme. Leur opposition aux Etats-Unis durant la guerre froide les a initialement rapprochés des despotes religieux.

- Les libéraux démocrates (comme les partisans du Premier ministre Mossadegh [1951-1953] et le philosophe réformiste Sorouch). Ce groupe se réfère à la Constitution et à une presse libre. Il croit qu'un développement équilibré du pays permettra un basculement idéologique de la société vers une pensée laïque.



▲ Dessin de Cost paru dans Le Soir, Bruxelles.

Les réformateurs religieux

Ce troisième grand courant politique du pays occupe une position intermédiaire. Bien qu'il soit sensible à certains aspects de la religion, des acquis de la modernité ne lui sont pas étrangers, comme la liberté d'expression, les droits de l'homme, la justice sociale, la séparation des pouvoirs et la démocratie. Il tente, à travers une lecture moderne de la religion, de répondre à la crise identitaire. On peut distinguer les nationalistes religieux (comme le philosophe réformiste Shariati), qui prônent plutôt une gestion de l'économie par l'Etat, les réformateurs au pouvoir (le président actuel Mohamad Khatami), qui pensent mettre fin à la crise en promouvant un certain degré de démocratie, et les réformateurs au sein du clergé (Montazeri, Kadivar), acquis à la modernité.

Massoud Omid

The Gun Is on the Table, and Iraqis Await Their Liberators

By William Safire

WASHINGTON — When a dramatist places a gun on the table in the first act, the astute playgoer knows that the weapon will be used before the drama ends. In his State of the Union address, George W. Bush warned three nations sponsoring terror — North Korea, Iran and Iraq — that the United States "will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."

That means he has decided to destroy the destructive potential of the most dangerous states before they can credibly threaten to wipe out a U.S. city or infect America with an epidemic.

President Bush's refusal "to leave terror states unchecked" leaves only secondary decisions: when and how to attack "the axis of evil" — an apt allusion to the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis of World War II.

In ascending order of preemptive priority:

North Korea is "a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction."

The United States has been paralyzed by South Korea's fear of renewed invasion despite U.S. intelligence indicating the North's secret nuclear buildup.

Seoul, near the border, is vulnerable to long-range artillery. This could be countered by shipment to South Korea of advanced counter-artillery capable of tracking the trajectory of incoming shells. U.S. B-52s could then take out Kim Jong Il's key nuclear bomb-making sites, which he now refuses to permit International Atomic Energy Agency inspectors to see.

Iran is building nuclear bombs with Russia's help. It supplies and controls the Hezbollah terrorists in Lebanon, and just escalated its war on infidels by shipping 50 tons of rockets, C-4 terror explosive and other arms to Yasser Arafat's army to kill more Israeli civilians.

These acts have exploded the myth, long embraced by wishful thinkers at the U.S. State Department, of a "moderate" ayatollah supposedly resisting the hot-eyed fundamentalists. That

rosy scenario of rapprochement was sunk with the capture of the Iranian-Palestinian terror ship. Should intelligence reveal a nuclear danger from Tehran coming onstream, a surgical air strike would be called for.

Iraq, of course, is the most immediate target. Because Saddam Hussein has dispersed his nuclear facilities and placed his germ warfare plants in such places as the basement of the Baghdad hospital, air strikes alone would not meet the threat. Despite CIA chief George Tenet's dislike of the leaders of the anti-Saddam Iraqi National Congress, and despite furious posterior-covering by Brent Scowcroft and Colin Powell, President Bush has evidently decided to force a change of regime in Baghdad.

To avoid certain military defeat, Saddam is likely to send Tariq Aziz out with "inspection feelers" to the United Nations. Six months of negotiation about who (other than spying Americans) would be on the inspection teams would be followed by

six months of misleading the inspectors. By then Saddam would have his deadly weapons — and would thereby tip the strategic balance in terror's favor.

If Bush follows words with deeds, he will avert that disaster. He will apply his Afghan template: Supply arms and money to 70,000 Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq and a lesser Shiite force in the south, covering both with Predator surveillance and tactical U.S. air support.

In Phase II, I'll bet it was recently agreed in Washington that Turkish tank brigades and U.S. Special Ops troops will together thrust down to Baghdad. Saddam will join Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar in hiding. Iraqis, cheering their liberators, will lead the Arab world toward democracy.

It's not a pipe dream. It's the action implicit in the Bush doctrine enunciated this week. The gun laid on the table by this political dramatist will go off in the next act.

The New York Times.

Kurdistan Regional Government
Council of Ministers
Ministry of Humanitarian Aid & Cooperation
Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan

Statement

Latest Developments on Iraq Kurdistan Asylum Seekers

In light of recent developments in Holland and Sweden concerning the situation of Iraqi Kurdistan asylum seekers, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) would like to make the following statement.

With regard to presence of Iraqi Kurdistan asylum seekers living in various European and other countries, the KRG has continued to encourage the authorities of those countries to deal with them in a helpful and humane manner that takes into consideration the special circumstances of this region. Some countries are instituting policies to encourage the repatriation of Iraqi Kurdistan asylum seekers. The KRG has maintained, from the start, the position that it will not be a party to any arrangements whereby such asylum seekers are forcibly repatriated. This position has been constant in communication from the KRG with the various delegations that have visited Iraqi Kurdistan as well as during missions and visits by officials from the region that have traveled abroad.

The KRG has often raised the question, with delegations that have come here and in our meetings abroad, about the manner in which Iraqi Kurdistan asylum seekers will be considered for repatriation. With regard to this issue, we wonder how asylum seekers who have had their cases rejected, and who are therefore barred from employment, education and any assistance including housing, can in reality make a free choice to voluntarily return to their country of origin. When asylum seekers leave their countries and are admitted to another certain obligations ensue. Iraqi Kurdistan asylum seekers have had to dispose of all their personal assets in order to make the journey. To ask them to voluntarily

repatriate without meaningful assistance would put them in a situation whereby they do not have the means to successfully re-establish themselves in their own country.

A delegation from Sweden visited the region recently with the purpose of communicating us the changes in policy and procedures of the Swedish government related to Iraqi Kurdistan asylum seekers and the arrangements for repatriation that are to be implemented in February 2002. Their mission was simply to convey those changes that had already been made and not to hold discussions with the KRG. Nonetheless, the KRG has taken this and other opportunities to clarify its own position on the matter.

The democratic experiment launched by the people of Iraqi Kurdistan some ten years ago continues to be under threat from outside borders. The current arrangements for the protection of our population are acknowledged and appreciated but it falls short of that guaranteed security with which people could feel at ease to go about their daily lives without fear about their future and that of their children. We appeal to the various governments who are housing Iraqi Kurdistan asylum seekers to view Iraqi Kurdistan within its full regional context and not in isolation for it is in only this full context that their situation can be understood. We ask that they be considered thoughtfully and carefully.

Finally, the KRG believes that if international guarantees for permanent and peaceful political and economic security of Iraqi Kurdistan were put in place, then far fewer people from the region would feel the need to leave their country.

America's new enemy

George W. Bush has denounced Iran as no better than North Korea and Iraq. But there are signs that it has played a useful role in Afghanistan, say **Guy Dinmore** and **Roula Khalaf**

When George W. Bush used his State of the Union speech this week to place Iran on a par with Iraq and North Korea in an "axis of evil", he not only dismayed the Tehran government. He also alarmed some of the closest allies of the US, who saw a shift in the administration's stance.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the country's supreme leader, described Mr Bush as "blood-thirsty", while Mohammad Khatami, the president, said he "spoke arrogantly, humiliatingly, aggressively and in an interfering way". Mr Khamenei is among the conservative clerics whom Mr Bush criticised as "an unelected few [who] repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom".

The new US stance contrasts with that of European governments as they engage with Iran in an effort to bolster Mr Khatami's reformist government. "We share US concerns but we believe the best way to address them is through dialogue that supports the moderates," said a UK official.

Before September 11, worries about Iran's apparent pursuit of weapons of mass destruction and support for radical Middle Eastern groups were widespread in western capitals. But most administrations, including that of President Bill Clinton, favoured a nuanced approach to Tehran. That stance was continued by Mr Bush's administration.

The change in US attitudes has partly been driven by the suspicion that Iran has tried to undermine the new Afghan administration and continued to arm some warlords, including Ismail Khan in Herat and Rashid Dostum in Mazar-e-Sharif. US officials also suspect that al-Qaeda fugitives have fled to safety through Iran.

But the US has been influenced mostly by the Israeli seizure on January 3 of the Karine-A, a ship loaded with arms said by Israel to have originated in Iran and bound for the Palestinian Authority. The discovery suggested that Iran was stepping up its support for radical groups in the Middle East.

Mr Khatami appears to have had little success in toning down Iran's stance on the Arab-Israeli conflict. The huge military imbalance in the Palestinian uprising



Attitude to America: Tehran and Washington have exchanged harsh words this week

Reuters

against Israel seems to have persuaded conservative elements in the Tehran regime to increase assistance to groups they see as resisting Israeli occupation.

But European and US officials believe that Iran has been behaving responsibly in Afghanistan. Some of those involved in the

Afghan peace process say that, at least in some areas of Iran's foreign policy, the ideology of revolutionary Islam has given way to a more pragmatic approach driven by national interests.

For more than 20 years, since the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Iran has been a key ally of

factions from the non-Pashtun minorities sharing the same Persian language and, in the case of the Shia Muslim Hezara, the same strand of Islam. These factions, grouped together under the Northern Alliance that fought the Taliban regime for six years, now form the core of the interim

government, which is led by Hamid Karzai, a Pashtun.

European and United Nations diplomats credit Iran with helping achieve success in the Bonn conference and later encouraging the two ambivalent warlords to make compromises and support Mr Karzai. According to diplomats, it was Tehran that persuaded Ismail Khan at the last moment to attend the inauguration in Kabul of the interim government and even supplied an aircraft to get him there.

In return, through Iran's mediation, Ismail Khan has been confirmed by Kabul as governor of Herat province, although not of all the five eastern provinces to which he had aspirations. The veteran mujahideen fighter has also been named as commander of the 7th corps of the new

national army, which is in the process of being formed. For his part, Mr Dostum, an ethnic Uzbek, has been appointed deputy defence minister.

Iranian diplomacy also played a key role when Northern Alliance forces were about to enter

Kabul in mid-November. Burhanuddin Rabbani, the alliance leader and UN-recognised "president" of Afghanistan, declared his intention to liberate the city but rivals within his coalition threatened to arrest him. It was a critical moment, with the loose-knit alliance, in effect acting as

ground forces for the US, on the verge of disintegration. According to diplomats, it was an Iranian envoy who secured a deal. Mr Rabbani would enter the city but he also agreed to issue a statement declaring his intention to hand over power to a broad-based government, which he did.

European diplomats are sceptical that Iran would harbour al-Qaeda elements loyal to Osama bin Laden the Saudi-born exile. Iran closed its border with Afghanistan as soon as the US launched its military campaign, not just to keep out an expected wave of refugees but also to prevent Arab sympathisers transiting Iran. Several were arrested.

Iranian officials privately admit that some members of al-Qaeda may have escaped through Iran with the help of traffickers of drugs and people. But they reject any complicity, arguing that Shia Iran has waged a largely hidden struggle with the Sunni extremists of al-Qaeda for several years. Iran came close to war with the Taliban in 1998 after eight Iranian officials and one journalist were murdered in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Despite a general conviction within the UN that Iran is playing a positive role in supporting the interim government, Kofi Annan, UN secretary-general, recently visited Tehran seeking further assurances. Concerns had been raised by speeches made by two influential clerics close to Mr Khamenei, who is widely seen as allied with the conservative faction opposed to the reform programme of Mr Khatami.

The clerics questioned the Bonn process and the motives behind pledges of aid for Afghanistan, while labelling Mr Karzai a puppet of the US and the UN. Mr Khamenei gave a rare audience to Mr Annan, one that focused largely on denouncing US foreign policy in Palestine and its attempts to misuse the UN. He described the US Central Intelligence Agency as "one of the world's most important terrorist centres".

The supreme leader is concerned that the US will maintain a permanent military presence in Afghanistan, as it did in Saudi Arabia after the 1991 Gulf war with Iraq. Mr Khamenei insisted that Iran seriously supported the establishment of security in Afghanistan and had a duty to help in rebuilding the country, as seen in Iran's pledge of \$530m (£613m) in grants and loans at the Tokyo donors' conference.

According to a UN official, Mr Annan left Tehran with the assurances he wanted. Diplomats engaged in the UN effort believe

there is an understanding between Mr Khamenei and Mr Khatami that stability in Afghanistan is in Iran's national interests.

Iranian influence in Afghanistan, and its links with weapons of mass destruction are clearly legitimate concerns for Washington. US officials insist that Washington has to act with determination against Iranian support for terrorism. "Rather than waiting for some eventual political change that might change attitudes towards [weapons of mass destruction]... it's important to do whatever we can at this point to keep Iran from getting the materials and technology," says Richard Boucher, US state department spokesman.

European officials fear that US isolation of Iran could be counter-productive and undermine Mr Khatami's efforts to moderate Iranian foreign policy. Mr Bush's language suggests that the US will from now on treat Iran similarly to Iraq. But it may find itself facing strong resistance from European governments over a policy that many will see as not only dangerous but also based on shaky evidence.

Additional reporting by Richard Wolfe in Washington

**Iranian diplomacy
played a key role
when Northern
Alliance forces were
about to enter Kabul**

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune
FEBRUARY 1, 2002

No, This Isn't the Way to Change Regimes in Iran and Iraq

By Amin Saikal

DUBAI — The branding by President George W. Bush of Iran and Iraq as part of an "axis of evil" is simplistic and in many ways misplaced. It could undermine the position of reformists in Iran and give Saddam Hussein a further excuse to tighten his hold on Iraq and prevent the United Nations from resuming its inspection of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Bush's approach ignores the political complexities of Iran and Iraq.

In Iran, a small, unelected theocratic faction of hard-liners certainly has more influence than it deserves. The group has managed to maintain control of

the armed force, the security forces and the judiciary. It has remained vocal in its stand against the United States.

But there is another side of Iranian politics. The country is in the grip of a reform fever. The reformist movement, led by President Mohammed Khatami and supported by an overwhelming majority of voters, has been working hard to generate an "Islamic civil society" with a democratic system of government and a foreign policy based on peaceful coexistence. This group, which controls the presidency and the National Assembly, wants to normalize relations with the United States.

President Bush's branding of Iran as a terrorist state, despite Iran's opposition to the Taliban and Al Qaeda and its acquiescence to America's campaign against terror in Afghanistan, could easily play into the hands of the hard-liners.

In Iraq, Saddam Hussein's regime is indeed deplorable. It would be in the long-term interest of the Iraqi people and the region if the regime were replaced with a democratic one. But there lacks a viable alternative. The United States has not succeeded in generating a credible opposition from either within Iraq or the exiles outside. London- and Riyadh-based opposition groups remain as di-

vided as ever.

Repeated American threats against the regime have so far only helped Saddam to strengthen his dictatorship. One of the casualties of this is the United Nations, which has not been able to get its weapons inspectors back into Iraq.

The United States should work out a viable alternative before it acts to remove Saddam's regime.

The writer is professor of political science and director of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies at the Australian National University. He contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

Turkey and its Kurds

A turn for the worse

MERSIN

Turkey's Kurds are getting angry again. Not surprisingly

WHEN, nearly three years ago, Fazil Turk became the first representative of the pro-Kurdish Hadeb party to be elected mayor of Akdeniz, a bustling commercial quarter in the Mediterranean port of Mersin, the local soldiery were not amused. After all, they had been fighting a Kurdish insurrection in the hinterland for 15 years and had long regarded Hadeb as a political front for the rebels. Mr Turk was chuffed, however, to be invited to the army's annual Victory Day celebrations. "I thought it was great," he recalls. "We weren't going to be treated any differently from other political parties."

It was not to be. When he turned up, fellow mayors from Mersin's other districts trooped in unhindered—but he was turned away at the entrance. After that, though,

Mr Turk's relations with the armed forces gradually seemed to improve. Last year the local naval commander sent Mr Turk an invitation by hand, and this time he was allowed in. "They've come to realise that we're not enemies of the state and that we want to live in unity and peace with our Turkish brothers," he says.

Mersin is one of three Turkish cities—the others are Izmir and Adana—outside the country's predominantly Kurdish south-east where Hadeb candidates were swept to power in local elections in 1999, on the votes of thousands of Kurdish migrants displaced by the long rebellion of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as the PKK. Mr Turk's apparent honesty and his readiness to look after the interests of all his constituents, be they

Kurds, Arabs, Turks, Orthodox Christians or Jews, earned him the trust and respect of the local authorities.

Other Hadeb politicians too have made their mark. One of them, Emrullah Cin, has been sowing the seeds of drastic social reform in Viransehir, a drab town of 16,000 on the edge of the mainly Kurdish zone. Facing down crusty tribal chiefs and meddlesome mothers-in-law, he has—among other projects—founded a smart new health clinic where nurses speaking in Kurdish teach peasant women to use contraceptives. Such is the clinic's success that the wives of local policemen have begun to pop in for free prescriptions. The authorities have not intervened, as they would have done a few years ago.

Elsewhere in western and central Turkey, cultural barriers have fallen. A thriving bar in Ankara, the capital, plays live Kurdish music just a few minutes' walk from parliament.

But deeper in the Kurdish heartland the mood is much less happy. Between Diyarbakir, the largest and predominantly Kurdish city in the south-east, and Hakkari, near the border with Iraq, some 30 Hadeb mayors are routinely harassed, their offices sometimes ransacked by security forces. Many have been repeatedly detained. Others have been accused, often with scant evidence, of taking orders from the PKK. Hakkari's Hadeb mayor was charged with subversion for publishing a calendar in English and Kurdish. Mr Cin says that every project for which he has sought financing from the central government in Ankara has been rejected.

A retrograde move

The mayors' plight reflects the continuing refusal of Turkey's topmost civilian and military rulers to attend to the demands of their country's 12m or so Kurds, nearly a fifth of Turkey's total population. This is a step back. In September 1999, when the PKK called off its armed rebellion on the orders of its captured leader, Abdullah Ocalan, and withdrew nearly all its 3,000-5,000 fighters into northern Iraq, there were signs that the government might feel confident enough to give non-violent Kurdish politicians a longer leash.

Turning a deaf ear to more militantly nationalist Turks calling for Mr Ocalan's execution, the government decided to let him stay alive in prison on an island in the Sea of Marmara, not far from Istanbul, even though a court had sentenced him to death for treason. Since then, Mr Ocalan has repeatedly said he no longer wants an independent Kurdish homeland and that a grant of wider cultural rights, which would have to include at least a lifting of the ban on broadcasting and education in Kurdish, would be enough.

But Mr Ocalan's efforts to switch his campaign from armed rebellion to politics



Visible enough, but still harassed or ignored



► seem to have failed to sway the authorities, who still appear bent on pursuing the decades-old policy of forcing the Kurds to assimilate with the Turkish majority. Security forces in the eastern city of Van recently rounded up some 500 students for signing a petition calling for the right to be educated in Kurdish. Elsewhere across Turkey, hundreds of other Kurdish students and their parents have been arrested, and sometimes beaten and jailed, for airing similar demands in a new campaign which the authorities insist, probably rightly, is orchestrated by the PKK. Despite legislation in October that was meant to loosen the curbs on Kurdish broadcasting, local radio stations that dare to air Kurdish tunes are still heavily fined.

Worse, killings of suspected Kurdish nationalists, which had fizzled out after the PKK's ceasefire, are once again on the rise, according to the Turkish Human Rights Association. Osman Baydemir, a young lawyer who runs its Diyarbakir branch, lists a string of alarming incidents.

What has prompted this apparently harsher behaviour by the security forces towards the Kurds? Some say that the West

is turning a blind eye to official brutality because it is grateful to Turkey for being foremost among Muslim countries in backing the campaign against al-Qaeda. "The government believes that it can do whatever it wants now and the West will look the other way," sighs Mr Baydemir.

Is the West being too kind?

Moreover, the EU does not want to upset the Turks over some other matters. Lately they have been helpful over two particular issues: Cyprus, and the EU's planned rapid-reaction force. The Turkish government is considered at least partly responsible for persuading Rauf Denktaş, leader of the breakaway ethnic Turks in Cyprus, to hold face-to-face meetings with his Greek-Cypriot counterpart after years of non-speaking. And Turkey has pleased both its European allies and the Americans by dropping its objections to a European force that would have access to equipment and other assets belonging to NATO, of which Turkey is a keen member.

But some of the EU's leaders will want to tell Turkey that it stands no chance of joining their club if Turkey's constitutional

court bans Hadeep on the ground that it is the PKK's political arm. Hadeep, for its part, would help itself if it were to drop its refusal to label the PKK as terrorists. Were it to do so, it would win more trust not just from the Turkish authorities but from Turks at large, most of whom doubt the sincerity of Hadeep's proclaimed commitment to peaceful politics. True enough, thousands of Kurds who vote for Hadeep do also continue to sympathise with the long-violent PKK.

As pressure against Kurdish nationalists of all stripes rises again, the PKK has indeed threatened to resume its war. In October, after security men wearing ski masks stormed a municipal worker's home and shot him dead without an adequate explanation, thousands of locals went out on to the streets in the town of Dogubayazit and took over a local police station. Few Kurds have the stomach for another long rebellion. But, at least in the Kurdish south-east of Turkey, many still passionately demand some cultural autonomy. It may prove foolish to ignore them. ■

The Economist February 2nd 2002

Immigrants in Sweden and Denmark

The worries and the welcomes

COPENHAGEN

Help them, or keep them out?

THE murder of Fadime Sahindal, a young Kurdish woman, in the Swedish university city of Uppsala was no ordinary affair. Her father shot her in the head, in front of her mother and younger sister, for refusing an arranged marriage with a stranger from her Turkish homeland.

The killing has stunned Swedes. Thousands have joined torchlight vigils in her memory. Thousands more are expected to attend her funeral in Uppsala's Lutheran cathedral. Miss Sahindal was an outspoken champion for second-generation immigrants seeking their own way of life, often against their more tradition-minded parents' wishes. Mona Sahlin, Sweden's immigration minister, called her "a fantastic role model for young women".

The murder has also touched a raw nerve in Sweden by questioning the country's ability to integrate its ethnic minorities. Issues such as forced or arranged marriages and the clash between Swedish values and those of immigrants have leapt up the political agenda. The problem is not just Swedish. Denmark too worries about integration, and a row about arranged marriages is now blazing there.

But the two governments have taken different approaches. After Miss Sahindal's death, Sweden's ruling Social Demo-

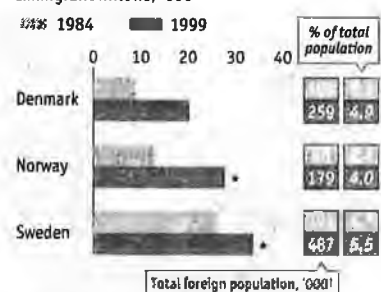
crats said they would give more cash to crisis centres and support groups for young women seeking to avoid arranged marriages or to leave violent partners. They also said they would close a legal loophole that lets foreign girls as young as 15 marry, when 18 is the threshold for everyone else. The tone of Swedish ministers was one of sympathy for victims of forced marriages.

Not so in Denmark. Foreigners—or at least immigrants—plus their descendants for a couple of generations make up about 7% of the population. No vast figure, and foreign need not mean brown or black. But the new centre-right coalition was helped to power in November by a promise to curb immigration, and at times will need votes in parliament from the overtly anti-immigrant People's Party, which made large gains. The government has chosen to take action at the border. Till now, the foreign spouse of a Danish resident was entitled, automatically, to come in with a residence permit. But under proposals unveiled last month, this—with some exceptions, maybe—would no longer be true, even for Danish citizens, if either person was aged less than 24 (unless, of course, the incomer was a Dane or other EU citizen). Even for a couple both aged 24 or more, the permit would not be automatic; cases would be decided individually.

The Danes are also making it harder for foreigners to come to Denmark to join family members already there. The reason, they say, is that unemployment among young immigrants is already too high. Human-rights campaigners suspect grubbier motives: to keep Denmark's proportion of brown and black residents below 10%. ■

Scandinavia ahoy!

Immigrant inflows, '000



*2000 †National statistics differ, tending to include people born to foreign parents
Source: OECD, Trends in International Migration 2001

Turkey Has Met Loan Requirements, IMF Says

Compiled by Our Staff From Dispatches

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey has met all the conditions for receiving \$16 billion in loans that the International Monetary Fund is scheduled to approve Monday, the IMF said Friday.

"We understand that all prior actions will be completed today, which means the board meeting will take place as scheduled," Odd Per Brekk, the IMF representative in Turkey, said. He declined to give further details.

As part of its IMF program, Turkey said Friday that it would close some 900 branches of lumbering state banks in preparation for their privatization.

The IMF program focuses on bank restructuring and financing a huge domestic debt load swollen by a bailout of banks after a financial-markets crisis a year ago.

Analysts welcomed the banking announcement as a sign that concrete steps would be taken to deal with inefficient state banks that have often fallen victim to political interference.

"It's very positive for that to be happening,"

said Hakan Avci of Global Securities in Istanbul. "It's one of the IMF requirements the government needed to fulfill."

Meeting the IMF requirements brings Turkey within sight of winning the foreign lending it badly needs to handle a punishing domestic debt load and pull its economy out of its deepest recession since 1945. Approval of the funding would make Turkey the Fund's biggest borrower.

"The required preconditions for the board of directors to discuss the new standby arrangement

to restructure debts and helps banks by offering state capital injections that could total \$4 billion in order to help them improve their capital adequacy ratios.

Mr. Sezer's spokesman said the president still had the right to apply to the Constitutional Court to review the law. Mr. Sezer had objected to three articles.

"He has 60 days from publication in the gazette," the spokesman said.

Analysts say the articles Mr. Sezer objected to are not directly related to the capital injection plan and do not compromise the essence of the law.

Most of the IMF money will be earmarked to help Turkey roll over its domestic debt load, which stood at 122.2 quadrillion lira (\$9.21 billion) at the end of 2001.

The IMF plan depends on Turkey returning to growth in 2002 after a 2001 recession in which gross national product is expected to have fallen around 8.5 percent. It also relies on drawing foreign investment and lowering sky-high interest rates.

(Bloomberg, Reuters)

have been completed and will be published in a supplementary edition of the Official Gazette today," the Treasury said Friday.

The banking watchdog said it had submitted two directives for publication in the supplement Friday.

President Ahmet Necdet Sezer ratified a banking sector support package Thursday after Parliament overrode his initial veto of some sections of the law.

The legislation encourages banks and compa-

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE,
FEBRUARY 2-3, 2002

The Economist February 2nd 2002

Nokia and Motorola in Turkey

Beware Turks bearing phones

ANKARA

A salutary tale of Byzantine borrowing

MOTOROLA and Nokia, the world's two largest mobile-phone makers, may be wishing they had called around a bit more before choosing a business partner in Turkey. On January 28th, the American and Finnish companies jointly filed a lawsuit in a New York federal court to reclaim more than \$3 billion that they say they are owed by Telsim, Turkey's second-largest mobile-phone operator. Citing 13 counts of wrongdoing by the Uzan family, which controls Telsim, the suit invokes four counts of "criminal activity" under the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt

Organisations Act (RICO), a law often used to indict mobsters.

Kemal Uzan and his two sons, Hakan and Cem, are accused in particular of diverting Nokia and Motorola loans "through an elaborate scheme of deceit and intimidation" to other family-owned companies. The money was supposed to have financed the acquisition of base stations and other gear to bolster Telsim's network. But last May the Uzans, citing liquidity problems after a devaluation of the Turkish lira, failed to pay a \$728m instalment to Motorola. The telephone makers say they will present evidence of "a pattern of serial fraud" by the Uzans, whose empire (of tv stations, newspapers, cement companies and a football club) is Berlusconi-esque in its scope and value.

The Uzans, who have long been in dispute with Turkey's capital-markets regulator over some earlier financial shuffling, have dismissed the case as "an obvious attempt to ruin our credibility". Warnings

that Turkey's own credibility would suffer and foreign investors shy away—repeated most recently by President George Bush during his meeting in January with Bulent Ecevit, the Turkish prime minister, in Washington—appear to have had little impact on the Uzans. The family seems to be more charitable abroad than it is at home. In return for attendance at a lavish dinner in Buckingham Palace last summer, Cem Uzan gave generously to the Prince of Wales Foundation, a charity set up by the heir to the British throne.

One person to have unwittingly benefited already from the lawsuit is Bill Gates. The world's richest man was to have been Cem Uzan's neighbour at the top of the Trump World Tower in New York. But Mr Uzan is believed to have forfeited his \$10m deposit on the \$38m property to keep it out of Motorola's hands. ■

DÉFENSE

Annulation définitive par la Turquie d'un contrat d'armement avec la France, après la visite pourtant réussie à Ankara du ministre français de la Défense, Alain Richard

La Turquie souffle le chaud et le froid dans ses relations avec la France

Le ministre français de la Défense, Alain Richard, s'est rendu jeudi 24 janvier à Ankara, pour une visite de deux jours destinée à poursuivre le réchauffement des relations franco-turques, sérieusement mises à mal par l'adoption en janvier 2001, par le Parlement français, de la loi sur le génocide arménien. Un objectif confirmé par le ministre turc de la Défense, Sabahattin Cakmakoglu, qui a estimé selon le journal turc *Zaman* que la visite de M. Richard avait pour objectif «d'améliorer les relations entre la Turquie et la France, qui sont entrées dans une période de stagnation depuis l'adoption par le Parlement français de la proposition de loi sur le "génocide arménien"».

De son côté, Alain Richard a souhaité que sa visite permette d'améliorer les relations bilatérales d'une «manière constructive», après «l'agitation créée par le vote du Parlement français». Soulignant que le vote de ce dernier sur le génocide arménien ne portait pas pour autant l'approbation du gouvernement, il a jugé qu'il s'agissait d'un «incident isolé», car les relations entre les deux pays «évoluent de façon très positive». «Nous avons l'intention d'établir une relation de travail

constructive entre nos deux gouvernements en matière de défense. J'ai présenté une série de propositions pratiques qui nous permettront d'entreprendre des actions utiles aux deux nations, et de soutenir l'action convergente que nous menons, y compris avec nos soldats côte à côte dans toutes les situations internationales de tension et de crise», a déclaré M. Richard.

La France, qui souhaite vivement renouer des relations d'amitié avec la Turquie, a fait assaut de bonnes intentions auprès des dirigeants turcs. Alain Richard, qui a également rencontré le premier ministre turc Bülent Ecevit, a indiqué que la France appuie le projet turc de commandement de la force internationale de maintien de la paix en Afghanistan, laquelle soutient le gouvernement provisoire formé après la chute du régime taliban. La Turquie cherche en effet à prendre le relais de la Grande-Bretagne, qui remettra son mandat dans trois mois. «Notre gouvernement considère que la Turquie est parfaitement préparée à assumer cette responsabilité à l'avenir», a déclaré le ministre français de la Défense, selon le *Turkish Daily News*. Ankara s'est déjà engagé à envoyer en Afghanistan 261 soldats qui

se joindront aux forces américaines, britanniques, françaises et allemandes.

Mais il était dit, décidément, qu'Ankara soufflerait le chaud et le froid dans ses relations avec Paris. Le même M. Cakmakoglu, qui s'est pourtant dit «persuadé qu'à partir de maintenant, les initiatives destinées à compenser [les effets de la loi de janvier 2001] et à améliorer la situation se poursuivront», a déclaré à son homologue français, selon l'agence turque *Anatolie*, que les relations franco-turques «resteraient» malgré tout «affectées», en particulier dans l'industrie de la défense, par l'adoption de la loi sur le «génocide arménien».

Illustration : en dépit de la confirmation en décembre dernier de l'ouverture de négociations entre Ankara et l'entreprise d'armement française Thalès (ex-Thomson-CSF) (cf. n° 391, p. 1), portant sur la livraison de systèmes électroniques sophistiqués à 80 avions de combat F-16 turcs, Ankara décidait au terme de la visite de M. Richard d'annuler définitivement ce contrat d'armement avec la France. Le projet, d'un montant de 200 millions de dollars, a finalement été confié à deux entreprises publiques turques en voie de fusion, Aselsan et Mikes. ●

EUROPE

La Commission des Affaires étrangères du Parlement européen adopte le rapport du député vert suédois Per Gahrton

Ankara est invité à reconnaître le génocide arménien et à mettre fin au blocus contre l'Arménie

La Commission des Affaires étrangères du Parlement européen a adopté mercredi 23 janvier le rapport du député vert suédois Per Gahrton, «sur les relations de l'Union européenne avec le Sud-Caucase, dans le cadre des accords de partenariat et de coopération».

Deux paragraphes concernent tout particulièrement l'Arménie et les Arméniens. Le paragraphe 12 de la résolution dispose que «le Parlement européen invite [...] la Turquie à prendre les mesures adéquates, conformément à ses aspirations européennes, notamment en mettant fin au blocus décrété contre l'Arménie [...] ; rappelle à cet égard la position par lui prise dans sa résolution du 18 juin 1987, où il reconnaît la réalité du génocide perpétré contre les Arméniens en 1915, et invite la Turquie à en faire autant».

Quant au paragraphe 11, il rappelle à l'Arménie et à

l'Azerbaïdjan qu'ils ont pris l'engagement de trouver une solution pacifique au conflit du Karabagh, et les invite à cet effet à relancer leur coopération avec le Groupe de Minsk de l'OSCE. Il demande au Karabagh de montrer une attitude «constructive», en «s'abstenant de tout geste» susceptible d'entraver le règlement du conflit, mais aussi «d'éviter toute action visant à pérenniser la mainmise arménienne sur les territoires occupés».

Le rapport invite par ailleurs l'Union européenne à soutenir le développement des trois pays du Sud-Caucase, et souligne «le rôle important» que peuvent jouer les trois grands pays voisins - Russie, Turquie et Iran - pour le rétablissement de la paix dans la région.

Le rapport de M. Gahrton sera soumis au vote en séance plénière du Parlement européen à la fin février ou au mois de mars prochain. ●

■ LA TURQUIE EMBARRASSÉE PAR LE BLOCUS : le chef de la délégation arménienne à l'Assemblée parlementaire du Conseil de l'Europe (APCE), Hovhannes Hovhannissian, a indiqué mardi 29 janvier à *Armenpress* que la Turquie «n'a pu fournir d'explication sensée» au blocus qu'elle impose à l'Arménie, lors d'une session de l'APCE qui s'est déroulée du 21 au 25 janvier derniers à Strasbourg. M. Hovhannissian a estimé que le conflit arméno-azéri ne saurait justifier le blocus exercé par la Turquie à l'encontre de l'Arménie. Il a ajouté que la délégation arménienne soulèvera ce problème jusqu'à ce qu'il trouve «une solution équitable», et que «de nombreux membres de l'APCE» commencent à partager les vues d'Erévan sur cette question. Le coût annuel du blocus pour l'Arménie a été évalué par les experts européens à 500 millions de dollars (580 millions d'euros).



Khamenei loyalists may be trying to topple the interim Afghan government

President Khatami wants to open dialogue with the West, but hard-liners still stand in his way

Tehran's Game

Iranian meddling in neighboring Afghanistan raises new concerns about an old troublemaker

By ROMESH RATNESAR

FIRST THERE WERE THE TRUCKS. THEY started rolling into southern and western Afghanistan late last year, full of clothes and food and medical supplies for delivery to a few lucky warlords and their charges, courtesy of Iran. Then came the money, brought by Iranian intelligence agents who entered Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban to try to gain influence

over local commanders. An Iranian general named Sadar Baghwani started showing up at Afghan mosques, reportedly telling Afghans to resist the U.S. presence in their country. "The Americans are infidels," he said. And then there are the weapons, which Western officials believe Iran is funneling directly to Ismail Khan—the strongman in the Afghan city of Herat and a long-time client of Tehran who has been reluctant to obey the new Afghan govern-

ment in Kabul. That has led the U.S. and its Afghan allies to a familiar conclusion: Tehran is up to no good. "Iran's real objective," says Yousef Pashtun, secretary to the governor of Kandahar, "is to create as much instability as possible to the establishment of a permanent government in Afghanistan."

With thousands of American soldiers now calling Kandahar home and post-Taliban stability nowhere in sight, Washington isn't brooking Iranian mischief in Afghanistan. Three weeks ago, responding to reports that Iran was sending arms to pliant Afghan warlords and even harboring al-Qaeda fugitives, President Bush issued

an ultimatum: "If they in any way, shape or form try to destabilize the government," he said, "the coalition will deal with them, in diplomatic ways initially." The line played well with most Americans, who are still inclined to believe the worst about Iran. Washington lists Iran as the top state sponsor of terrorism and regularly warns that Tehran is developing nuclear weapons. The U.S. last year cited an Iranian military officer for helping engineer the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers barracks in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 U.S. servicemen. Iran's hard-line establishment continues to support the destruction of Israel and has aided and abetted the radical Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad as well as Lebanon's Hizballah militia. The State Department said on Jan. 10 that "the weight of the evidence" suggests Iran was involved in the thwarted shipment of 50 tons of arms to the Palestinian Authority, despite Iran's denial. As TIME reported, Israel says the shipment was orchestrated by operatives close to Imad Mughniyah, a notorious Hizballah terrorist who has long enjoyed support from Iran.

Does that make Iran a first-order threat? The ongoing struggle between pro-Western reformists, led by democratically elected President Mohammed Khatami, and religious conservatives loyal to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatullah Ali Khamenei, certainly makes Iran a volatile power. The rhetoric of the country's religious leaders is peppered with anti-American bile, and powerful elements within Iran's conservative security establishment have in the past launched free-lance operations abroad as a way to undermine relations with the West. Now the discord is playing out in Afghanistan. While Khatami is trying to influence post-Taliban political arrangements without alienating the international coalition, U.S. officials believe, security operatives loyal to Khamenei may be stirring up unrest outside the Khatami government's command. That said, even the country's conservatives have lost interest in returning to the days of exporting revolution and issuing fatwas against novelists. Iran's constitution gives the Supreme Leader final say over foreign relations, but Khatami has in-

creased his clout by reactivating the powerful Supreme National Security Council and working to change the country's image as a regional menace. The President has normalized relations with Iran's Arab neighbors, cozied up to Russia and improved ties with Germany, France and Britain. Iran and Iraq have shown signs of a possible rapprochement, but with the Bush Administration making noise about taking the war on terrorism to Baghdad, a senior Iranian official told TIME, Iran might cooperate in a military campaign to remove its old enemy Saddam Hussein. "Obviously, this can't be our public stance," the official says. "But our history

that large segments of the Iranian people—65% of whom were born after the 1979 Islamic revolution—favor a rapprochement with the Great Satan.

The aftermath of Sept. 11 has produced some breakthroughs. Shortly after that day, British Prime Minister Tony Blair phoned Khatami and arranged for Foreign Minister Jack Straw to visit Tehran; his was the highest-level Western delegation to go there in two decades. Iran had an interest in moving toward the mainstream. Its history of sponsoring terrorists made it a potential U.S. target when Bush declared a general war on terrorism. Sources close to Iran's hard-line Revolutionary Guards—



STRONGMAN: Khan's Iran-backed arms buildup has enraged rival warlords



which are allied with Iran's ruling clerics—say the Guards have withdrawn nearly all their troops from Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, probably out of fear the U.S. might attack them for aiding Hizballah.

Before launching the war in Afghanistan, the U.S., with the British government acting as intermediary, secured Iran's agreement to rescue any American pilots who might

be downed over Iran by the Taliban, a regime Tehran loathed and actively sought to remove long before the West took notice. Iran instructed its Northern Alliance clients to cooperate with the U.S., and while registering nominal concerns about civilian casualties, it did not object when American bombers continued strikes during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month.

[with Iraq] is bitter enough that we'd be happy to pull another Afghanistan."

Even before Sept. 11, the reformists in Iran had begun nudging the country closer to an accommodation with the U.S. than it had been since 1979, when Washington suspended diplomatic relations after Iranian radicals made hostages of Americans at the U.S. embassy in Tehran. Polls show

The U.S. suspects that several hundred al-Qaeda operatives have slipped out of Afghanistan and into Iran. But that seemed to happen in spite of efforts by Tehran, which tried to keep al-Qaeda fighters out by tightening border patrols and reimposing visa restrictions on gulf Arabs. "Some may have escaped here," says a Western diplomat in Tehran, "but not with government complicity." Iran's Shi'ites detest al-Qaeda's brand of Sunni extremism. Terrorists linked to Osama bin Laden were allegedly responsible for the 1994 bombing of the shrine of Imam Reza, Iran's holiest site.

that both Iran's reformist government and its religious establishment want to nurture a Tehran-friendly government in Kabul and prevent the U.S. from gaining a foothold in Iran's backyard. Its ruling clerics distrust interim Afghan President Hamid Karzai because of his long-standing loyalty to exiled King Mohammed Zahir Shah. A Western diplomat told TIME that Iranian officials in Afghanistan began attempting to influence the shape of the future government late last year by providing their preferred candidate, former President Burhanuddin Rabbani, with hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash so he

claims it has told him to fall in behind Karzai's government in Kabul. "There's no truth to allegations of supporting a faction," says Deputy Foreign Minister Javad Zarif. "The objective of this exchange is to enhance cooperation, not to provoke rivalry." The Iranian government says it has little interest in fomenting chaos in Afghanistan that would give rise to another Taliban. A Western diplomat in Tehran gives credence to Iran's defense: "There's a more negative spin than is warranted. Right now, Iran's game is to be publicly obstructive and privately constructive."

Not everyone sees it that way. Western intelligence sources told TIME that elements of the Revolutionary Guards have encouraged Hazaras—ethnic minorities in Afghanistan who, like most Iranians, practice Shi'ite Islam—to turn against the U.S. troop presence. "They're not telling the Hazaras to drive the Americans out," says an official. "But we're worried this will be a green light to take action."

Meanwhile, Khan's arms buildup in Herat has irked Pashtun warlords in southern Afghanistan, who say Iranian money and rifles have made their way to pro-Tehran commanders as far south as Helmand province, near Kandahar. Last week a group of 70 local leaders met in Kandahar to discuss mounting an anti-Khan offensive. An Afghan source told TIME that a proposed attack on Khan's forces was quashed at the last minute by a U.S. official who attended the meeting flanked by special-ops soldiers. But the warlords may be hard to restrain. "Our army is prepared. We will take Herat in no time," says a senior commander. "And we do not need the government's permission to do it."

The U.S. has started to take action against Iran's intrusions. Over the past two weeks, the white vapor trails left by B-52 bombers have been a fixture in the skies over Herat. The U.S. bombed a cache of Iranian arms that Khan was hoarding at the Khol-Urdu base on Herat's outskirts. Last week Khan tried to distance himself from Tehran, telling the BBC that he was "grateful" to the U.S. and has no quarrels with Kabul. He has also allowed U.S. special-ops forces to conduct search-and-destroy missions for al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters holed up in Herat.

How far Iran's hard-liners will push to win proxies in Afghanistan remains to be seen. They say they support the establishment of a modern Islamic regime in Afghanistan, perhaps headed by Fahim or Foreign Minister Abdullah Abdullah. "Iran



But since late last year, the U.S.-Iran warming trend has abated. Iranian officials grumble that they have received precisely nothing for their good behavior during the war and its aftermath. Iran has committed more money (\$560 million over five years) than any other country to the international aid package for Afghanistan. (The U.S. has pledged \$297 million for Afghanistan in the next year.) Western diplomats praise Iran for helping broker the Bonn agreement that created Afghanistan's provisional government. But that's not enough to pull Iran out of the terror-state doghouse or persuade the U.S. to lift economic sanctions against the regime.

Suspicion about Iran's current agenda in Afghanistan will not help. It's no secret

could buy the loyalty of tribal elders in eastern Afghanistan.

It didn't work, but Tehran has kept at the intrigue. Foreign diplomats in Kabul told TIME that in a meeting this month with Afghanistan's interim Defense Minister, Mohammed Fahim, Iranian intelligence agents encouraged Fahim to resign from the new government and take his forces with him—a move, the diplomats say, that was intended to topple Karzai's government and spoil United Nations plans to hold a grand tribal assembly in May. The sources say Fahim spurned the Iranians, but that has not stopped Ismail Khan, a Persian-speaking Tajik, from continuing to take their arms and money.

Iran defends its support of Khan and

respects the interim government and will cooperate with it," says Abbas Maleki, a conservative former foreign-policy adviser. "But naturally the Afghan people may want others in power, to reflect the real choice of the Afghan people."

Whether Iran will aggressively try to influence that choice may depend on whether Khatami can face down the conservatives, who in the past have supported operations to sabotage the reformist agenda. Khatami has largely purged the military and intelligence apparatus of the rogue squads and increased oversight of the unregulated religious funds that financed them. Reformists have tried to increase their influence through the foreign-policy commission in Parliament, which supports dialogue with the West and wants to cut funding to groups like Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

"We're willing to say anything the mul-

lahs want," says a prominent legislator. "But we're trying to make sure not a cent more of Iranian money goes to these groups." Yet in recent months forces loyal to Khamenei have clamped down on the reformists. Hard-liners in the ruling Guardian Council have paralyzed the Parliament by blocking reform legislation, while the conservative-controlled judiciary has imprisoned one legislator and is prosecuting 30 others on trumped-up charges.

Some Western officials think that because of the uncertainty of Iran's political situation, the U.S. and its allies should throw their support squarely behind Khatami, despite his nationalism and refusal to give up Iran's weapons program. "It's up to the West to give him as much support as it can," says a senior British official. "You want to think about how you use the tools you have to help it make a break with terrorism."

That's one argument for easing sanctions against Tehran. And it's another reason the West's long-term commitment to rebuild Afghanistan looms so large. The West now has the opportunity to show that countries can reap benefits for renouncing terrorism, not simply avoid punishment. Many Iranians are watching to see whether Afghanistan, with American help, can become a modern, functional state freed from the grip of fundamentalism—the kind of country they want for themselves. The U.S. has never had a better chance to convince Iranians they can get it too. —**Reported by Scott MacLeod/Cairo, J.F.O. McAllister/London, Tim McGirk/Kabul, Azadeh Moaveni/Tehran, Michael Ware/Kandahar and Adam Zagorin/Washington**

Iraq's Tempting Oil Tests U.S.-Russia Ties

By Michael Wines
New York Times Service

MOSCOW — President George W. Bush may have plenty of reasons why Russia, his new ally in the war on terrorism, should stop cozying up to Iraq, one of the states he sees as part of an "axis of evil."

But Leonid Fedun has 20 billion reasons why Russia should not.

Mr. Fedun is vice president for development at Lukoil, Russia's biggest oil company. He oversees a 23-year contract to develop Iraq's West Qurna oil field — 667 million tons of crude, a half-million barrels a day — and one of the world's largest oil deposits. It is potentially, he says, a \$20 billion moneymaker.

But only potentially. Thanks to UN sanctions on Iraq, Lukoil has not pumped a drop from West Qurna since it won drilling rights in 1997. With the United States now talking openly of removing President Saddam Hussein of Iraq from power, Mr. Fedun wonders whether Lukoil ever will pay off.

"If the Americans start military operations against Iraq," he said, "we may lose a contract, and American oil companies will come in our place. No one has ever said the opposite."

For two nations that have jointly pledged to stem the spread of terror, weapons and the despots who would use them, agreeing on what to do about Mr. Saddam is the first serious test of a wobbly new friendship, with pragmatism and suspicion rife on both sides.

"I'm very critical of Russian supporters of Saddam," said Andrei Kozyrev, former President Boris Yeltsin's first foreign minister and one of the United States' more consistent supporters in Moscow. "But speaking about Washington, it's a very, very awkward, very simplistic and inflexible approach they take toward Iraq. There's a lot of room for improvement."

Some American experts are no less confounded about Russia's aims. "Do I want to curry favor with the Iraqi regime?" asked Eugene Rumer, a State Department policy strategist in the Clinton administration who is now a Russia scholar at the National Defense University in Washington.

"Or do I want to maintain a solid relationship with the United States and, to a lesser degree, with Europe? The answer to that ought to be fairly obvious."

Even after Sept. 11, Russia has clung to its position as Iraq's chief protector against new UN sanctions or a new U.S. attack.

The United States has done almost nothing to allay Russia's fear for its multibillion-dollar stake in Iraq.

The Kremlin also wants an end to British and U.S. patrols of the no-flight zones that were imposed after the Gulf War to prevent Mr. Saddam's jets from bombing Iraq's Kurdish and Shiite minorities. Russia argues that the United Nations never specifically approved such zones.

Mr. Rumer argues — and some Russians agree — that the Kremlin has let Russia's best interests in Iraq take a back seat to the agendas of a powerful oil industry and a bureaucracy still nursing Cold War resentments.

For its part, however, the United States has done almost nothing to allay Russia's very real fear: that if Mr. Saddam goes, Russia's multibillion-dollar stake and its influence in Iraq will go with him.

Baghdad still owes Russia at least \$8 billion from the days of the Cold War when, as a client state, Iraq outfitted its military with armor bought on Soviet credit. Then there are billions

of dollars in oil contracts with Russian companies, and billions of dollars more in trading that could be done with a pro-Russian government in Baghdad.

The U.S. silence on Russia's actual and potential stake in Iraq only solidifies the conviction of some Russians that the White House cannot be trusted to play fair — new friendship or not.

So far, Mr. Saddam has played deftly on America's rage and Russia's fears. He gave Russia by far the largest share of Iraq's contracts last year — \$1.3 billion — under the UN oil-for-food program, which allows Iraq to sell oil to buy supplies to help Iraqi civilians.

In late September, days after President Vladimir Putin cast Russia's lot in with the West's war on terrorism and the White House began expressing its concern about Iraq, Baghdad announced plans to award Russian companies another \$40 billion in contracts as soon as UN sanctions were lifted.

The Kremlin offers some diplomatic arguments for its policy: that the United States has overstepped the UN mandate on Iraq and that it is unproved that Iraq is developing weapons of mass destruction or supporting terrorism.

Russia does not say that Mr. Saddam is a friend, because he is not. "There are no emotional bonds between the Russians and the Iraqis," said Dmitri Trenin, a top expert on Russian foreign policy at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Moscow. "It's not Yugoslavia or Serbia. You have to talk about interests — very specific, very easily identifiable interests."

Experts on both sides say a savvy Kremlin almost surely would grab any U.S. compromise that reassured Russia on its economic interests and unpaid debt in exchange for Moscow's help in increasing pressure on Mr. Saddam.

Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan d'Iran
Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan
Member of the Socialist International



جێزێی دیموکراتی کوردستانی ئێران
حزب دیمکرات کوردستان ایران

Appeal to the international human rights organizations, and institutions for immediate measures to save the lives of Kurdish political prisoners whom the implementation of their sentences threatens their lives

Paris, 4 February 2002

After the execution of Karim TOUJALI, the ex-member of Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) on January 24, 2002, in the yard of Mahabad intelligence department, the Political Bureau of PDKI with a press release along with publishing the news of this crime, had warned that: this execution is an indication of the rise of another wave of executions of Kurdish freedom activists in Iran that currently large number of them live under captivity in the regime's notorious prisons.

The information that has reached us from reliable sources within Iranian Kurdistan, along with confirming such warning, particularly emphasize that the peril of death threatens the lives of a number of these prisoners who have been sentenced behind the regime's sealed courts without defending lawyers. Since the families of these prisoners can not convey the subjugated cry of their captive relatives to the international human rights community, fearing oppression and encountering similar destiny, we believe that it is our duty to publish the names of 8 of these prisoners, unlawfully sentenced to death, with their imprisonment location and the year of their confinement, and request from the international human rights organizations and establishments, particularly the United Nations Human Rights Commission and Amnesty International to take immediate and necessary measures to save the lives of these political prisoners before it is too late.

It is necessary to remind you that Karim TOUJALI who in 1996, after withdrawing his membership with PDKI, intending to seek refuge in one of the western countries headed to Turkey, where he was abducted by the Turkish police in 1998, and was handed over to the intelligence apparatus of the Islamic Republic. Karim after spending more than 3 years in prison, and bearing the barbaric tortures, was executed in the yard of intelligence bureau in Mahabad in January 24, 2002.

Here, we enclose the names of 8 of these death-sentenced prisoners whom the danger of death threatens every moment of their lives:

Last Name	First Name	Year of Capture	Sentence	Prison
1- GHADERI	Hamza	1997	Death	Urumieh
2- MAHMUDI	Hasan	1997	Death	Urumieh
3- SHOGHI	Khaled	1997	Death	Urumieh
4- VIESI	Kheder	1998	Death	Urumieh
5- SHAHRVERANI	Muhammad	1998	Death	Mahabad
6- GUDARZI	Saleh	1999	Death	Sanandaj
7- FARAI DUNI	Khaled	2000	Death	Mahabad
8- AFANI	Nader	2000	Death	Mahabad

**The International Bureau
of Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan**

Turkish Kurd rebels signal new phase, change name

Reuters Feb 6, 2002

Kurdish separatist leaders said on Tuesday the September 11 attacks on the United States had prompted them to drop the name of their group to show they were seeking change through political means.

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), whose commander Abdullah Ocalan was captured in 1999 and sentenced to death for treason, said it aimed to change its name at a party congress within the next few days.

"After the events that took place on September 11, new international solutions are needed. The whole world, especially the Middle East, has changed," rebel leaders based in northern Iraq said in a statement sent to Kurdish satellite television channel, Medya TV. "By taking the necessary steps, the PKK has entered this new period," they added.

The PKK's 17-year-long armed struggle for self-rule in mainly Kurdish southeast Turkey has claimed more than 30,000 lives, but fighting largely ended after Ocalan's arrest. Turkey describes the PKK guerrillas as "terrorists" but unsuccessfully lobbied the European Union to include the group on its list of deemed terrorist organisations.

"From today onwards, the PKK's organisational and party endeavours in Turkey and countries belonging to the European Union have been stopped. No work will be conducted under the PKK name," the statement said.

Sources close to the PKK said alternative names being considered were the Democratic Republic Party or the Kurdistan Freedom Party. But the leaders also hinted they could resort to arms again if their cultural demands failed to be met.

"Turkey, God willing, needs to realise our positive, democratic steps are not permanent," the PKK statement said.

Ocalan has ordered his followers to withdraw from Turkey and seek cultural rights for Turkey's 12 million Kurds through political means. Turkey has dismissed Ocalan's peace overture as a ruse to escape execution and said it will never negotiate with the PKK. Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit last month ruled out Kurdish language education, saying bringing the Kurdish language to Turkish classrooms would erode the country's unity.

The EU, which Turkey hopes to join, has counselled Ankara to expand civil liberties for Kurds.

Turkish soldiers regularly pursue PKK fighters into the mountains of northern Iraq, where the army says about 5,000 guerrillas are encamped.

* * * * *

Turkish Reforms Get Mixed Reviews EU-gear changes will curb torture but not much to expand freedom of expression, human rights advocates say.

By AMBERIN ZAMAN Los Angeles Times February 8, 2002

ANKARA, Turkey – A set of long-delayed reforms aimed at bolstering Turkey's chances for membership in the European Union will help reduce widespread torture but do little to expand freedom of expression, human rights advocates and legal scholars said Thursday.

The package of constitutional amendments was passed by the 550-member parliament Wednesday despite tough resistance from the ultranationalist wing of Turkey's three-party coalition government, whose members said the reforms would encourage Kurdish separatists and other enemies of the state. Husnu Ondul, chairman of Turkey's Human Rights Assn., the country's leading advocacy group, said the changes will dramatically improve human rights in four Kurdish-dominated provinces where most abuses occur. Those four provinces are governed by special emergency laws. Under the new law, detainees accused of so-called terror crimes can be held without trial for a maximum of seven days.

Previously, anyone accused of sympathizing with rebels of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party, better known as the PKK, or of committing other terror offenses--often with scant evidence--could be held indefinitely without access to a lawyer. As a result, hundreds of prisoners are languishing in jails throughout the four provinces.

It is unclear what will happen to current detainees under the new law.

Emergency rule was introduced throughout the southeast to help quell an insurgency launched in 1984 by the PKK, which sought to establish an independent Kurdish state.

Rebels declared a unilateral cease-fire following the 1999 capture of their leader, Abdullah Ocalan, and an atmosphere of relative peace now prevails. As the PKK began to scale down its attacks, the Ankara government started phasing out emergency rule in the Kurdish regions. In 1999, Turkey became the first predominantly Muslim nation to be added to the EU's list of official candidates for membership. But the country's poor human rights record and its refusal to grant its estimated 12 million Kurds greater cultural rights are cited among the chief reasons why Turkey has not yet been admitted to the bloc. Ondul said in a telephone interview that most of the reported abuses occur during pretrial detention. Reducing the length of that period will reduce torture, he said.

"It's a huge improvement," he said.

But critics say the reforms do not go far enough, noting that laws against insulting or defaming the Turkish state remain on the books, even though the maximum jail term has been cut from six years to three.

"The broad interpretation of the law will continue to result in scores of academics, journalists and politicians being prosecuted and jailed for expressing dissenting views," said Nevzat Toroslu, head of Ankara University's penal law department. "The interpretation of the laws is left in the hands of the judges, and as long as the mentality of the judges does not change, there cannot be progress," Toroslu said.

Turkey is likely to face a new round of criticism Wednesday, when Istanbul publisher Fatih Tas is to appear in court. Tas published a book containing excerpts from a speech by American linguist and social critic Noam Chomsky in which he accused Turkey of "brutal repression" of Kurds. Prosecutors are seeking to send Tas to prison for a year. Chomsky said in a telephone interview that he would travel to Istanbul for the trial "to show support for this extremely brave individual."

A senior Turkish official who declined to be identified acknowledged that "Chomsky's presence would be hugely embarrassing," partly because the trial coincides with a conference in Istanbul bringing together foreign ministers from Islamic and EU countries. The forum is meant to highlight Turkey's self-proclaimed role as a bridge between East and West.

"With Chomsky around, more likely they'll probably be focusing on our human rights record," the official said.

* * * * *

EU: Rights Reform Sparks Controversy In Candidate Turkey

Radio Free Europe

By Jean-Christophe Peuch February 8, 2002

Four months after modifying its constitution, Turkey is considering amending the most controversial provisions of its penal code in a further attempt to bring its legislation in line with European democratic standards. But liberal critics have dismissed the proposed reforms, saying they will restrict individual freedoms rather than expanding them.

PRAGUE

Despite Turkey's recent efforts to reshape its basic legislation to better harmonize with European standards, much work remains before the country can meet the requirements to begin EU accession talks. Although Ankara applied for EU membership in April 1987, it was granted official candidate status only two years ago -- a delay due mostly to European concerns about human rights. Ankara now stands last among 13 candidate countries.

Last March, the coalition government of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit approved a national program of political, eco-

nomic, and legal reforms aimed at paving the way for accession negotiations. Seven months later, the Turkish parliament passed constitutional changes officially aimed at catching up with EU democratic standards. Among improvements endorsed by the legislature were amendments limiting the use of the death penalty to cases involving terrorism and easing the media ban on languages other than Turkish – a move Ankara presented as a green light to broadcast in the Kurdish language.

Granting greater cultural rights to Turkey's estimated 12 million Kurds -- whom Ankara does not recognize as an official minority -- is one of the EU's prerequisites to beginning accession talks.

Rights groups and EU officials initially welcomed the constitutional amendments as a step in the right direction, but later concluded these changes had in practice made very little impact.

In its 2002 report on Turkey, the New York-based Human Rights Watch (HRW) notes authorities are still using various legal pretexts to prevent broadcasting in Kurdish and other minority languages. In an interview with RFE/RL, HRW Turkey researcher Jonathan Sugden described last fall's language amendments as merely cosmetic.

"[The Turkish authorities] changed Articles 13 and 14 of the constitution to say and present this as an end to the problems with freedom of expression. [But] at the moment, Fikret Baskaya, a journalist, is in prison for referring to the Kurdish minority in something that he wrote. And the proprietor of a newspaper is in prison for saying that the 1999 earthquake was divine justice. So it really did not impact on fundamental rights in any practical way at all."

Adding to Europe's concerns, a bitter row recently emerged between Ecevit's two coalition partners over new draft legislation that Turkey says is required to reflect the constitutional changes.

The rift arose last month when Deputy Prime Minister and leader of the center-right Motherland Party Mesut Yilmaz -- who oversees government relations with the EU -- said the 15-nation bloc had notified him that the drafts were not satisfactory and should be revised. Speaking to RFE/RL on condition of anonymity, one high-ranking EU official denied the European body had made any official assessment on the proposed drafts. But he echoed Yilmaz's concerns, saying the projected changes were "broadening the scope of restrictions imposed on individual freedoms rather than narrowing it."

At the core of the dispute are two controversial provisions of the Turkish Penal Code -- articles 312 and 159 -- which the EU would like Ankara to amend.

In its current version, Article 312 states that inciting crowds to hostility on religious, racial, social, or cultural grounds is punishable by up to three years in prison. The amended draft reportedly extends the criminal offense to include cases of inciting hostility in individuals.

Article 159 says anyone criticizing certain aspects of the military, the police, or other state institutions may face up to six years in jail. Journalists, academics, and human rights activists have been imprisoned under this law, which Turkey's influential military also invoked last year to obtain the closure of a website inviting soldiers to air complaints about army life. Article 159's revised version reportedly extends the ban on criticism to any part of these institutions.

Deputy Prime Minister Devlet Bahçeli, the leader of the far-right Nationalist Action Party (MHP), vigorously defends the proposed amendments, which he says are a safeguard against national disintegration. He also says his opponents are striving to legalize what he describes as "ethnic and religious separatism."

Addressing the MHP parliamentary group yesterday, Bahçeli lambasted Yilmaz, whom he accused of yielding to European pressure at the cost of Turkey's domestic stability. "This pathetic picture does not correspond to our understanding of how earnestly the state should be managed."

President Ahmed Necdet Sezer has said he does not wish to get involved in the dispute. Last week (1 February), he nonetheless entered the fray, saying individual freedoms should be expanded. Asked by reporters what the president's views on the proposed changes were, Sezer's chief spokesman Metin Yalman said: "We cannot possibly interfere in the debate at the present stage. However, as a former chairman of the Constitutional Court and as president of the republic, Mr. Sezer believes it is necessary to broaden the scope of individual freedoms. He has open-

ly expressed this opinion in a great number of statements, including his inaugural speech to the [parliament]." Turkey's nationalist politicians and army generals also advocate the preservation of antiterror legislation passed in the early 1980s, when Ankara was confronted with an armed insurgency in its predominantly Kurdish separatist provinces. Although Turkey's southeast has been relatively calm for the past two years, emergency laws are still being used to jail militants of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which advocates the creation of an autonomous state near the Iraqi border.

In a bid to appease Europe's criticism, the government last week (30 January) said it would resume observing a key provision of the 1950 European Human Rights Convention and that the maximum detention period before an individual is brought to justice would be reduced to four days from the current seven to 15 days. The change will also allow detainees to contact relatives and lawyers.

Article 5 of the human rights convention, which Turkey endorsed four years after joining the Council of Europe in 1950, theoretically guarantees detainees swift access to a judge and the right to immediate information about the charges brought against them. Ten years ago Turkey withdrew from Article 5, claiming the exemption under a convention article allowing signatories to suspend certain rights and freedoms in time of war or public emergency.

Council of Europe Secretary-General Walter Schwimmer welcomed Turkey's decision to lift the ban on Article 5 as "entailing progress in terms of human rights protection of detainees." He also reiterated his conviction that "respect for basic human rights is not incompatible with a vigilant attitude towards the threat of terrorism."

Since the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States, Turkish authorities have toughened their stance toward separatist and leftist radical movements they commonly refer to as "terrorist organizations."

Besides the PKK, which Ankara claims has been responsible for the deaths of more than 30,000 people since 1984, such organizations include the radical Islamic group Hizbullah -- not to be confused with the Lebanon-based organization of the same name -- and an urban guerilla group known as the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C). Even though Turkey has been observing a moratorium on executions since 1984, pending the beginning of its accession talks with the EU, several DHKP-C and Hizbullah militants have been sentenced to death over the past four months on charges ranging from murder to attempts to subvert constitutional order and create an Islamic state.

Despite urging from Turkey, the EU has so far refused to include the PKK and the DHKP-C in a list of terrorist organizations, as the U.S. and Britain did in the aftermath of the September attacks.

If Turkey's political elite remains divided on how to amend the penal code, there seems to be a broad consensus in Ankara on the need to resist European pressures on Kurdish cultural rights. Both Yilmaz and Ecevit have notably ruled out the possibility of allowing Kurdish-language education in Turkish schools and universities.

Dozens of Kurdish university students have recently been imprisoned for submitting petitions demanding the right to education in their mother tongue. According to Article 8 of Turkey's antiterror law, the students may be charged with disseminating "propaganda aimed at destabilizing the state."

HRW's Sugden believes this is further evidence that last fall's constitutional amendments mean very little in practical terms. "This is definitely something done for external consumption, so they could say that the language problems are solved. And the fact that we have now 64 students in prison because they have petitioned for a change to their curriculum shows how the arrangements concerning the language were completely empty."

Last week (29 January), the influential National Security Council -- Turkey's main policymaking body, in which the military wields large powers -- accused the PKK of orchestrating the petitioning campaign and said Turkish will remain the only language authorized in classrooms. In a further move to clamp down on Kurdish separatism, authorities last week temporarily closed down the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul, a privately funded establishment which publishes documents and holds courses in the Kurdish language.

Turkish legislators are due to discuss possible legal changes in the coming weeks or months, but no date has been appointed yet for the hearings. The new drafts are still being examined by the parliament's legal committee, and it is still unclear what their final wording will be.

But whatever the outcome, some analysts say the ongoing debate may already be damaging Turkey's EU bid.

In an article published on 29 January in the conservative "Milliyet" daily, columnist Sami Kohen lamented that the dispute over the draft legal changes could undermine Turkey-EU relations just as Ankara and Brussels had marked some progress on Cyprus and other international issues.

Kohen added: "Most importantly, however, is that [the debate] could deal a blow to the hopes and expectations of the Turkish people regarding modernization and democratization."

* * * * *

Are negotiations being carried on with PKK?

Radikal February 7, 2002 By Ismet Berkan

The PKK's decision to cease its activities under the PKK name in the European Union (EU) and Turkey is making people wonder what to think.

A news article sent from Diyarbakir by the Dogan New Agency the other evening was quite attention-grabbing. It was announced in a statement made on Medya TV, the PKK's broadcasting organ, that the separatist terrorist organization would no longer carry out activities under the name PKK in Turkey and the countries of the EU.

It is possible to interpret this as a new maneuver on the PKK's road to politicization. Case in point, it appears that the organization will be active under the same name in northern Iraq and countries such as Russia, Armenia, and Iran. Moreover, as long as the PKK maintains its armed people and camps in northern Iraq, refraining from action within the borders of Turkey and the EU represents more a position of waiting than a real change in any case.

On the other hand, the same statement discussed the PKK's changing its name in the future. News coming from the region is to the effect that there are even thoughts of taking the expression "Kurdistan" from the PKK's name. (It is asserted that one of the new names being considered is "Democratic Republic Party.")

Actually, even this step is not a development that means much in and of itself if weapons are not dropped. But, of course, it is still a step. Essentially, it would be useful to read the PKK's latest announcement together with another text. That text was published in Hurriyet on 16 January 2002. The article published with the title "An interesting warning to the PKK" in that day's Hurriyet said the following: "The state security units have given the PKK a 12-point warning full of meaning." The warning was included in a report prepared by security units.

Saying, "If the terrorist organization ends the indicated practices, it is clear that Turkey could, removed from the environment of terror and separatism, evaluate its problems as a natural result of democracy," this work, which is one of the more interesting reports prepared on this subject, presented a 12-point note. Here is the note:

1. The word Kurdistan—including the Kurdistan in the PKK's name—must be removed from all PKK organizations operating outside the country.
2. The PKK must end, in particular, separatist practices such as participating in official or semi-official meetings held in countries such as Italy and Belgium as representing Kurdistan.
3. Medya TV must not refer to Turkey's Southeast and East Anatolia regions as Kurdistan or to the provinces in these regions as Kurdish cities in the news it broadcasts in Turkish and two Kurdish dialects. It must end the heavy propaganda being waged against Turkey.
4. The practice by the same TV establishment of announcing the weather in the provinces in the aforementioned regions under the name of Kurdistan must be ended.
5. It must end the activities of the Kurdistan National Congress.
6. The map of Kurdistan that appears in the PKK's visual and written broadcasts and publications and on its internet sites must be done away with.
7. The removal from the agenda of such projects as the Kurdish Businessmen's Association, the Kurdish Language Institute, the Kurdish Bank, the Kurdish Encyclopedia, and the Kurdish Economic Congress must be assured.
8. The citizens of Southeast and East Anatolian regions absolutely must be distanced from the aim of breaking away from the Turkish community and of creating, in terrorist Osman Ocalan's words, a Kurdish nation.
9. The stance based on denial kept up by the PKK and its offshoot organizations against the national anthem and Atatürk must be ended.

10. Support must not be given to the Armenian and Syriac groups that are active against Turkey in the international arena.
11. All members of the terrorist organization must drop their weapons and surrender to security forces.
12. The logic that "Kurds must receive Kurdish education because they are Kurdish" brings along with it the mentality that "Kurds must be able to speak Kurdish in the courts; Kurdish history and Kurdish geography must be studied at every level of schooling; Kurds must be able to establish Kurdish businessmen's associations or Kurdish bar associations." In this situation, the hundreds of associations, foundations, and unions formed by Kurds and Turks could split and this split will be reflected in society. Mentalities carrying aims along these lines must be forsaken.

When these developments are put side by side, it could give the impression that some bargaining is going on. But, before all else, the origin of the "warning" published in Hurriyet is not totally clear. Although "security forces" is generally the name given to the Office of the Chief of the General Staff, top-level sources reaching Radikal last month did not officially corroborate this "warning." But, on the other hand, the PKK's latest "step" is standing there as if tossed out as a beginning to fulfilling the conditions listed in this "warning."

If the "warning" was a deception or manipulation, it means the PKK's latest step will get no response. This, too, could result in a dangerous disappointment. But if no covert diplomacy is being carried out, if it is not going to look like bargaining and negotiations that will always be officially denied are being carried out, then it will be understood that we are passing through a very interesting process.

Under any circumstances, it is understood that very interesting days are beginning.

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Respectable Turkey

Sabah February 4, 2002

by Sukru Elekdag (former Ambassador to US)

The subjects of freedom of speech and expression, Kurdish education and radio and TV broadcasts in Kurdish, which suddenly came into the forefront on the agenda of Turkey in connection with the EU adaptation laws, carry a meaning far beyond the distance traveled on the course to EU membership. This is the yearning of our public to see a respected Turkey, which has a soundly operating democratic order based on the supremacy of law.

The prerequisite of becoming a respected state in the world today, goes through providing a democratic environment guaranteeing the basic rights and freedoms of the citizens within the country. The present form of Articles 312 and 159 of the Turkish Penal Code, brings restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, which are only befitting dictatorial regimes. In fact, it is observed that of the 608 persons who were sentenced from the 3,468 persons tried on the basis of these articles between 1999-2000, a majority of the statements claimed to form a crime had not exceeded the limits of normal criticism.

For this reason, in the lawsuits opened by the injured parties at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), a great number of conviction judgments have been taken against Turkey. For this reason, it is necessary to reorganize these amendments related to the subject articles in light of the interpretations of the ECHR. Whereas, this was not done and they were content with making some changes, which could be called cosmetic. If Ankara wants to be saved from this embarrassing attitude, it should eliminate the chains it has put on freedom of speech and expression. When doing this, Turkey should take the norms clearly specified in the judgments and interpretations of the court into consideration in a manner so that Turkey will not fall once again into the position of being guilty at the ECHR.

We should state immediately that the view of President Sezer on this subject, "statements that do not call for actions and that do not create concrete threats cannot be punished", expresses these norms succinctly. As for the subject of education in Kurdish, one of the most reasonable and balanced approaches I followed on this subject was expressed by Deniz Baykal, the CHP General Chairman, on a TV program, which I can summarize as follows:

"Turkey's official language and education language is Turkish. However, all of our citizens have the right to speak their native tongues freely, to develop them and to preserve their cultural riches. The state cannot have a race, religion or sect. The state is ethnically blind. It sees only its citizens. It does not differentiate them according to their native tongues, religions and sects. The approach of the state on the subject of education and training includes two different areas, the public and private areas. In the public area, education and training are made in our official language, which is Turkish. In the public area, the state does not have an obligation, such as giving education in other native tongues. In the private area, all Turkish citizens should have the right, within the framework of individual rights,

to have the opportunity for forming private educational institutions and courses." Within the scope of individual rights, mentioned by Mr. Baykal, the obstacles in front of making Kurdish broadcasts on private radio stations and TV channels should also be lifted. A short time ago, Ankara had removed the expression, "language forbidden by law" from the Constitution, in order to bring a freedom of "TV and radio broadcasts in a native tongue". In the EU circles, it is said that this was done just before the Laeken Summit, with the objective of deceiving. Such an attitude is not befitting Turkey. From this aspect, I am hopeful that the necessary changes in the RTUK law will be made and that it will open the way for Kurdish broadcasts.

Dear readers. Moscow has stopped being an external threat for Turkey. It wants to become a member of the NATO and it considers cooperation with Turkey to be in line with its national interests. Other than this, we have an army with a strength that can cope with all the states, which could constitute a potential external threat. This army displayed great success in breaking the back of the armed forces of the PKK.

From this aspect, nothing can be as nonsensical as to oppose requests within the scope of individual cultural rights, by asserting reasons such as that they would constitute a threat from the aspect of the territorial integrity and the political union of our country. In this connection, let us stress that to consider the use of the right to petition, expressed in Article 74 of our Constitution, which is a universal individual right, as a crime -even if it is used as an instrument for a political campaign- is a violation of a constitutional right.

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Turkey summons Belgian envoy over MPs' meeting with rebel Kurd official

BBC Monitoring Service February 7, 2002

Jan Matthysen, the Belgian ambassador to Turkey, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry related with the meeting of the three Belgian deputies with Osman Ocalan [brother of jailed Kurdistan Workers' Party leader Abdullah Ocalan] in northern Iraq.

Sources said on Wednesday [6 February] that Foreign Ministry Intelligence and Research General Director Cenk Duatepe met with Matthysen. The sources noted that the views and reactions of Ankara regarding the issue were conveyed to Matthysen.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Huseyin Dirioz, responding to a question if the ministry had launched an initiative regarding this issue during the weekly press conference, said: "We have launched an initiative. Our views have been conveyed to not only in Brussels, but also in Ankara."

* * * * *

History brochure sparks tension between Turkey and Sweden

02-Feb-2002 AFP

ANKARA, Feb 2 (AFP) - Turkey's foreign ministry Saturday summoned Sweden's number two diplomat and formally protested at a controversial Swedish brochure about Turkish history, distributed at a bilateral meeting in western Turkey.

The brochure, published in Sweden with a preface by Prime Minister Goeran Persson, said the word "Turk" did not signify a people or a nation, but a linguistic group, according to Turkish media reports. It said 1.5 million Armenians were massacred by Ottoman military units, comprised mainly of Kurds, during the dissolution years of the Ottoman Empire in the early 1900s and the Turks then turned against the Kurds, killing about 800,000 of them, fearing Kurdish separatism, according to Milliyet daily.

The foreign ministry said the brochure's contents were unacceptable, adding that the Swedish ambassador to Turkey, Anne Dismorr, would also be summoned once she returned to Ankara from Izmir, where the brochure was circulated on Friday. The small document, penned by a diplomat who has served in Turkey, was distributed by Swedish embassy officials at a so-called "Swedish Business Culture Day" gathering, organized by local businessmen and attended by the Swedish ambassador.

The brochure triggered protests by the guests and sparked a row between the ambassador and the head of a local business association, who later walked out.

In his meeting at the foreign ministry Saturday, the Swedish charge d'affaires said the brochure's publisher, the Swedish Institute, was an independent institution and that Persson's preface was a standard text used in similar brochures about EU member and candidate countries, a foreign ministry statement said.

"A more satisfactory explanation was demanded about the brochure and its distribution at the Izmir gathering," it added. The deputy head of the government's far-right Nationalist Movement Party, Bulent Yahnici, said it was "an unfortunate incident with respect to Turkish-Swedish relations."

Members of the opposition center-right True Path Party, meanwhile, laid a black wreath in front of the Swedish embassy here, Anatolia news agency said.

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US Efforts to Assemble Opposition Leaders from Outside the INC

Al-Hayat February 7, 2002 by Ismail Zayir

The United States is intensifying its efforts to arrange the political landscape on the ground so it would acquiesce to the US strike against Iraq. The US efforts are focusing on "changing the Iraqi regime instead of containing it." That is why the US Administration is holding contacts to accomplish two goals.

The first goal is to attain a maximum degree of consensus among the Iraqi opposition factions, including the organizations that do not fall under the Iraqi National Congress or those that split from the INC or those that froze their activities in the INC. The second goal is to reassure the neighboring countries that the US Administration is determined to engage the Iraqi regime in a "decisive battle" when the right time comes. The contacts that the United States has been holding with the Iraqi dissidents indicate that the US Administration is resorting to several channels for consultation, coordination, and action. The US Administration is seeking to gather together political opposition leaders that are outside the INC and Iraqi military personnel that are distributed in several political positions and capitals in the region. Al-Hayah has learned from Iraqi circles that have been contacted by Washington recently that the US Administration has alerted them "to prepare to execute an action shortly." These circles say that Washington has presented the opposition members with several options and names of figures that are expected to play a political role in the next regime in Iraq. Washington has also taken cognizance of the reservations expressed by the opposition members regarding military and political figures suggested by the US Administration.

One of these coordination channels -- in which veteran US Ambassador David Mack, the current vice-chairman of the Middle East Institute, is active -- is concentrating on assembling the largest number possible of former officers in the Iraqi army. Opposition sources have disclosed that a good number of these former officers have been holding consultations among themselves and that another group has held meetings in the United States and Britain. The US Administration wants to attract military personnel and independent political figures that stayed outside the INC for different reasons and to bring them together in order to widen the political and popular base of the expected alternative to the current regime. The names have come up of officers such as Lt. General Nizar al-Khazraji and Major General Hasan Mustafa al-Naqib, and civilians such as Mudar Shawkat and a representative of the Mawlud Mukhlis family from Tikrit that was subjected to a harsh liquidation campaign in the middle of the 1990s after the regime accused it of planning a coup.

The United States has informed the leaderships of the Kurdistan Democratic Party headed by Mas'ud Barazani and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan headed by Jalal Talabani that its policy under President George W. Bush "is not like that of its predecessor. When it talks about change in Iraq it means exactly what it says." Washington is thus seeking to remove Kurdish doubts regarding this US policy and to dissipate apprehensions regarding a US "venture" that may aggravate the tragedy of the Kurds.

* * * * *

GUERRE CONTRE AL QAIDA Après une timide amorçe de dégel au moment de la guerre d'Afghanistan,

Téhéran se retrouve à nouveau soupçonné d'encourager

L'Iran redevient l'ennemi de l'Amérique

Washington :
de notre correspondant
Jean-Jacques Mével

Aux deux extrémités de l'« axe du mal » dessiné par le président américain, ni l'Irak ni la Corée du Nord n'ont vraiment besoin qu'on noircisse leur dossier. Le tableau iranien est plus nuancé, et la Maison-Blanche s'est mise à la tâche : nourrir un réquisitoire convaincant contre un régime que l'Europe et les États-Unis eux-mêmes avaient fini par trouver fréquentable.

Depuis que George W. Bush a élargi sa doctrine antiterroriste à ces trois pays, il ne se passe plus de conférence de presse sans que les responsables iraniens se retrouvent cloués au pilori, au même titre que les maîtres de Bagdad et de Pyongyang. Dans l'œil américain, Téhéran se retrouve vingt ans en arrière, soupçonné d'armer les ennemis d'Israël, de fabriquer un arsenal de mort semblable à celui de Saddam Hussein, et, pour finir, d'aider les dirigeants d'Al Qaida.

Cinq mois après les milliers de morts de Manhattan, l'accusation la plus lourde est l'aide que l'Iran aurait apportée à la fuite des complices d'Oussama ben Laden. Citant des sources à Hérat, dans l'Ouest afghan, la presse américaine rapporte que la frontière iranienne se serait discrètement ouverte à quelque 250 responsables d'Al Qaida et du régime des talibans, alors que se précisait la chute de Kaboul, en novembre. L'ordre serait venu tout droit de l'entourage de l'ayatollah Khamenei, autorité religieuse et chef des « durs » iraniens.

Sans entrer dans le détail, le Pentagone confirme l'accusation : « Nous disposons de multiples témoignages montrant que l'Iran a facilité le transit de partisans d'Al Qaida par son territoire », affirmait ce week-end le secrétaire à la Défense. Donald Rumsfeld oppose volontiers ce coup bas de Téhéran aux bons points accumulés par Isla-

mabad, oubliant qu'il a lui-même fermé les yeux sur l'exfiltration de centaines de demi-soldes des « services » pakistanais, piégés eux aussi en novembre, dans le siège de la ville de Kunduz.

Complétant le tableau, *USA Today* rapportait hier qu'une bonne vingtaine de dirigeants des réseaux d'Oussama ben Laden se trouverait aujourd'hui au Liban, pays où Téhéran dispute son influence à Damas. Le quotidien cite des sources dans le renseignement britannique. Il souligne le rôle clé joué dans le transfert d'Al Qaida par le Hezbollah pro-iranien, groupe inscrit sur la liste américaine des organisations terroristes.

À la Maison-Blanche, l'affaire tombe à point pour placer l'Iran à la charnière de deux terrorismes : l'antiaméricain à l'est, centré sur l'Afghanistan, et l'anti-Israélien à l'ouest, sur les rives de la Méditerranée.

Qu'il s'agisse de damner Yasser Arafat ou de remonter les filières palestiniennes d'armement clandestin, Téhéran fait désormais figure de suspect numéro 1 à Washington. L'échec de la paix au Proche-Orient serait l'effet non pas de l'indifférence américaine, mais des noirs desseins du terrorisme en

général, et des ultras iraniens en particulier.

À Jérusalem, le gouvernement d'Ariel Sharon se trouvera soulagé par l'explication. Hier – est-ce un hasard ? –, Shimon Pérès a révélé que l'Iran aurait fourni au Hezbollah quelque 8 000 missiles d'une portée allant jusqu'à 70 km. Ces engins, précise le chef de la diplomatie au *Herald Tribune*, mettraient les habitants du port israélien de



Depuis que George W. Bush a élargi sa doctrine antiterroriste, il ne se passe plus de conférence de presse sans que les responsables iraniens se retrouvent cloués au pilori, au même titre que les maîtres de Bagdad et de Pyongyang. (Photo AP)

Haïfa à la portée du Sud-Liban. L'accusation vient alourdir le dossier ouvert le 3 janvier avec l'arraisonnement par Israël d'un cargo bourré de 50 tonnes d'armes iraniennes à destination de Gaza, dans les territoires palestiniens. La Maison-Blanche y avait trouvé la preuve tangible de la mauvaise foi de Yasser

Arafat quand il se réclame de la paix. Le vice-président Dick Cheney y a logiquement discerné le signe d'un inquiétant virage vers Té-

héran : « La réalité est que l'Autorité palestinienne, Yasser Arafat et son entourage direct travaillent désormais avec l'Iran et le Hezbollah », affirmait-il il y a quelques jours.

Que ce soit justifié ou non, faire porter d'un coup tous ces chapeaux à Téhéran met fin au dégel timidement espéré par Colin Powell et par les diplomates du département d'État. Les signes en remontaient à la présidence Clinton, et la température était montée d'un cran après les attaques de New York et de Washington.

Téhéran avait condamné sans délais les terroristes du 11 sep-

*Du point de vue
américain, Téhéran
se retrouve
vingt ans en arrière*

tembre, accepté une opération militaire américaine à sa frontière et, pour finir, donné sa bénédiction au nouveau régime afghan souhaité par Washington.

Le raidissement renvoie aux calendes grecques tout espoir de

réchauffement. « *Le soutien de l'Iran au terrorisme et l'acharnement dont il fait preuve pour s'équiper d'armes de destruction massive sont un démenti flagrant aux intentions affichées par ailleurs* », dit Condo-

leeza Rice, conseiller du président américain pour la sécurité. En clair, les Etats-Unis sont redevenus méfiants, ils ne veulent plus donner de gages aux réformateurs iraniens. Pour que cela change, il faudra attendre que

les ultras de Téhéran se retrouvent vraiment sur la touche. Ou que le rapport de forces s'inverse une fois de plus à la Maison-Blanche...

Téhéran met en garde Washington

Conservateurs et réformateurs iraniens étaient hier à l'unisson pour dénoncer l'offensive lancée par l'Administration américaine contre leur pays, associé par George W. Bush à l'Irak et à la Corée du Nord au sein d'un prétendu « axe » mondial du « Mal ». Téhéran a prévenu que toute attaque contre l'Iran constituerait « une erreur irréparable ». Les déclarations du président américain sont « fondamentalistes et contraires aux idéaux de la civilisation », a déclaré le porte-parole du gouvernement Abdollah Ramazan-Zadeh, qui a comparé George W. Bush à un « gladiateur ». Pour le porte-parole des Affaires étrangères, Hamid-Reza Assefi, ces accusations sont « inspirées et dictées » par Israël. « Il serait souhaitable que les dirigeants

américains s'expriment sur la base de faits réels et non de leur imagination, et qu'ils fournissent des preuves à l'appui », a souligné M. Assefi. Ce dernier a également démenti les accusations, dimanche, du secrétaire à la Défense Donald Rumsfeld, selon qui l'Iran aurait accueilli des membres du réseau Al Qaida, l'organisation d'Oussama ben Laden. « Pour ce qui nous concerne, nos frontières sont fermées et nous réprimons toute entrée illégale », a-t-il déclaré. Les responsables iraniens se sont en revanche réjouis de voir l'Union européenne et la Russie se démarquer des positions américaines. « Nous saluons ces positions. Le monde, dans son ensemble ne s'est pas réjoui des accusations américaines contre l'Iran. »

Le quotidien iranien anglophone *Kayhan International* estimait hier que, si les menaces de Washington se précisent, l'Iran n'aura que le choix entre « se soumettre à Washington ou s'engager dans une confrontation militaire directe en utilisant toutes les armes disponibles de son arsenal ». « En ces temps de récession globale », ajoutait ce journal, l'usage de l'arme du pétrole par l'Iran, deuxième producteur de l'Opep, pourrait conduire à « une crise énergétique susceptible de créer de nombreux problèmes ». Selon l'ancien président iranien Ali Akbar Rafsadjani, une attaque américaine contre l'Iran « ferait grimper le baril de pétrole à plus de 50 dollars » (le cours du baril est actuellement légèrement inférieur à 20 dollars).

TURQUIE Après l'obtention d'un crédit de 12 milliards de dollars du FMI, le gouvernement prépare un train de réformes

Ankara prêt à se battre contre la corruption

Istanbul :
de notre correspondant
Eric Biégala

La Turquie est un pays pressé... pressé de toutes parts pour se réformer. L'enveloppe de 12 milliards de dollars consentie en début de semaine par le Fonds monétaire international n'est pas sans contreparties. Quant à l'Union européenne, elle se fait également insistante sur le chapitre de la démocratisation. Pour obtenir l'aide du FMI, Ankara s'est engagée à un sérieux agglomération des pratiques en vigueur. Outre de strictes politiques fiscales et monétaires, la Turquie doit élaguer les branches les plus lourdes d'un appareil d'Etat surdimensionné. Dans les prochains jours, un plan d'action élaboré par le ministre de l'Economie Kemal Dervish doit être rendu public. Il vise à combattre la corruption endémique

ainsi qu'à renforcer l'efficacité de l'administration.

Pour la première fois, le financement de la vie politique est abordé. Jusqu'à présent, les partis se finançaient généralement grâce aux dessous de table versés par les entreprises. Également en chantier : l'arrêt des dépenses extra-budgétaires, la privatisation de pans entiers de l'économie et la refonte d'un système bancaire ayant précipité la récession la plus sérieuse depuis 1945.

Ce programme correspond à ce que l'Union européenne attend de la Turquie sur le plan économique. Le ministre des Affaires étrangères Ismail Cem a annoncé que son pays entendait obtenir de l'Union une date ferme pour entamer les pourparlers d'accession. Officiellement candidate à l'intégration depuis 1999.

Ankara n'a pas encore commencé ses négociations d'adhésion proprement dites. L'Union européenne entend pour ce faire que le pays souscrive aux « cri-

tères de Copenhague », c'est-à-dire qu'il ait réformé ses institutions dans un sens plus libéral. La Turquie a légèrement modifié sa Constitution, mais la libéralisation des lois pose toujours problème. Le gouvernement vient, par exemple, de proposer l'amendement de trois textes ayant très largement servi à emprisonner intellectuels, journalistes et autres opposants du régime, ou présumés tels. Le problème, c'est que les nouvelles dispositions se révèlent davantage répressives que les anciennes.

Les représentants de l'UE à Ankara sont récemment montés au créneau mais les partis politiques, et notamment l'extrême droite gouvernementale, refusent toujours d'amender ces lois dans un sens clairement libéral. Le son de cloche est le même sur le chapitre kurde. L'Union européenne a demandé que les Kurdes de Turquie aient la possibilité d'obtenir un enseignement dans leur langue maternelle d'ici à 2004.

Depuis novembre, une campagne a été lancée en ce sens par les étudiants kurdes à l'université et auprès des parents d'élèves. La réaction du pouvoir a

été très ferme : plus de 5000 interpellations et plusieurs dizaines d'arrestations. Et pour le premier ministre Bülent Ecevit les choses sont claires : « Une

éducation en kurde est inacceptable. Elle n'est tout simplement pas possible. »

Les bonnes affaires de l'armée turque

**Istanbul :
de notre correspondant**

Inauguré il y a un an, l'aéroport international d'Istanbul Sabiha Gökçen dispose d'un terminal superbe, d'équipements ultramodernes et d'un personnel tout sourire. Mais, au tableau des départs, deux vols seulement sont affichés. « *Nous ne ferons pas forcément tout de suite les profits escomptés* », concède Dursum Ali Ercan, directeur de l'organisme qui a commandité le projet. Si l'aéroport est un fiasco, l'armée turque sera la première à en pâtir : c'est elle qui en a assuré le financement, les bénéfices éventuels devant apporter des ressources supplémentaires à une institution militaire déjà bien nantie.

L'aéroport Sabiha Gökçen n'est qu'un exemple parmi d'autres. L'un des cinq premiers groupes industriels et financiers du pays est d'ailleurs détenu par les 180 000 officiers des forces armées turques. Une situation unique au monde.

A priori, la part des dépenses publiques affectées à la défense n'a rien d'extraordinaire : autour de 10 % du budget de l'État, et ce de manière à peu près constante depuis 1994. Mais ce n'est que la partie visible de l'iceberg.

Un tiers du budget de la défense est affecté aux dépenses d'équipement, mais les militaires peuvent puiser dans le Fonds de soutien à l'industrie de défense qui, pour l'année 2000, a consenti une rallonge de 35 % sur les crédits d'équipement. Ce fonds, qui a déboursé 92 % des 710 millions d'euros de l'aéroport Sabiha Gökçen, ne figure pas au budget de l'État. Le FMI entendait le faire supprimer avant d'accorder son aide financière mais les militaires ont tenu bon.

Le total des dépenses mili-

taires reste secret. A l'occasion du vote du budget 2001, un député s'est aperçu que l'essentiel d'une ligne de crédit dénommée « autres dépenses » était destiné

à l'armée. « *Il en a toujours été ainsi* », lui a platement expliqué le ministre des Finances. Certains parlementaires estiment qu'un tiers des ressources de l'État reviennent à l'institution militaire.

Pesant de tout son poids sur les dépenses comme sur la vie publique, l'armée est présente dans l'économie grâce à une institution unique en son genre : Oyak. Fondé en 1961, au lendemain du premier coup d'État ayant porté les généraux au pouvoir, le Fonds de pension des forces armées (Oyak) est une holding qui coiffe 26 sociétés employant 12 500 personnes. Son principal fonds de roulement : la solde des 180 000 officiers qui ont l'obligation d'y affecter 10 % de leurs revenus.

Présent dans l'automobile en association avec Renault, dans le pétrole en partenariat avec Elf ou dans les assurances avec Axa, le groupe a rendu public, à l'automne 2001, certains de ses résultats, pour la première fois depuis quarante ans. Si l'on en croit ces chiffres, Oyak n'a guère

été affecté par la plus grave crise qui frappe le pays depuis 1945.

Selon son PDG, Coskun Ulusoy, le groupe n'a aucune dette et a même majoré ses profits de 50 % en un an. Fer de lance de sa structure financière, Oyak-bank s'est même payé le luxe de reprendre plusieurs des banques nationalisées en 2001 pour leur éviter la faillite et récemment cédées au

titre de la restructuration du secteur. Oyak est exempté des taxes d'accises, de l'impôt sur l'entreprise, sur les transactions comme sur les bénéfices et autres revenus...

Facette originale du capitalisme « à la turque », Oyak est aussi représentatif d'un état d'esprit. Ouverture des militaires sur la vie civile, disent les optimistes ; militarisation de la vie économique, répondent les pessimistes. L'une des dernières campagnes de publicité d'Axa-Oyak semble donner raison aux inquiets : les initiales de l'entreprise, AO, se détachaient en lettres capitales sur des affiches nanties d'un unique slogan : « *Garde-à-vous !* » Il y a eu plus subtil.

E. B.

**L'armée a assuré
le financement
de l'aéroport d'Istanbul**

Le patronat, moteur de la démocratisation

**Istanbul :
de notre correspondant**

« *Le drapeau de la liberté est porté par la bourgeoisie !* » C'est en citant Karl Marx qu'Ishak Alaton avait défrayé la chronique en 1995. Certes, le président du conseil d'administration et fondateur du groupe Alarko est atypique : une réputation sans tache

au pays de la corruption, affichant ses préférences sociales-démocrates et son appartenance à la communauté juive, il n'est pas, représentatif du patronat de Turquie... Il incarne l'une de ses principales tendances : celle qui entend libéraliser politiquement le pays et ne craint pas de l'affirmer haut et fort.

Le bureau d'Ishak Alaton ne ressemble pas à celui du classique « *biznesman* » turc. Le dé-

corum lourd et protocolaire où le maître reçoit généralement du haut d'une petite estrade a été remplacé par des meubles simples. Sur les étagères, *Le Capital* de Karl Marx côtoie les professions de foi de Margaret Thatcher ou de George Soros. La véritable richesse du lieu, c'est sa vue imprenable sur le Bosphore.

En contrebas de l'ancien hôpital transformé en siège de la S. A. Alarko, les cargos, pétroliers et autres « *vapur* » défilent vers la pointe du Sérail. Au loin, les coupoles et minarets de la vieille ville se découpent dans le contre-jour du crépuscule.

« *Le capitalisme turc est caractérisé par sa corruption endémique* », assène d'entrée le patron d'Alarko, qui a monté un groupe employant 7 000 personnes, présent dans le BTP,

l'énergie, le tourisme, l'agroalimentaire, comme à l'exportation. « *C'est malheureux à dire mais la corruption est telle en Turquie qu'il est difficile d'y travailler quand on est honnête* », déplore Ishak Alaton.

Dénoncer la corruption dans un pays où, selon diverses études, elle renchérit tout investissement de 20 à 30 %, reste dans les attributions attendues du patronat. « *Il y a quelques milliers de personnes qui s'arrogent le droit de dire « L'État c'est moi » alors qu'elles sont coupées du peuple et de ses attentes, explique encore le patron d'Alarko, c'est pourquoi j'ai beaucoup travaillé à la désignation d'un médiateur dans les rapports que nous avons remis en 1995.* »

Cette année-là, la Tüsiad, le Medef turc, rendait publics ses premiers rapports. Démocratisa-

**Il est difficile de travailler
honnêtement en Turquie**

tion, réforme des institutions, de la loi électorale, nécessité d'un aggiornamento en matière de droits fondamentaux, les études de la Tüsiad font l'effet d'une bombe. Commandités par le patronat, rédigés par des experts issus de la société civile : juristes, sociologues et autres universitaires, ils abordent des questions taboues et adoptent un ton critique inhabituel dans un pays où l'appareil d'État est volontiers absolutiste. Pour Ishak Alaton, il est logique que le patronat as-

sume ce rôle « *puisque le libéralisme économique ne peut exister dans une société qui n'est pas libérale* ».

Un rapport de la Tüsiad sur les droits de l'homme de 1995 abordait la question kurde et démontrait que la lutte armée du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, très actif à l'époque) s'enracinait dans les difficultés économiques du Kurdistan turc, appellation par ailleurs frappée d'opprobre. L'analyse fit scandale mais fut adoptée par la frac-

tion la moins idéologue de l'appareil d'État. Même l'armée milite aujourd'hui pour une prise en charge économique plus importante des régions à majorité kurde.

Sur bien des sujets, la Tüsiad exprime des vues libérales tranchant avec l'unanimité de la propagande officielle. Dernier exemple en date : Chypre. En novembre, en plein concert natio-

naliste, alors que ministres, hauts fonctionnaires et une bonne partie de la presse multipliaient les coups de mentons menaçant d'annexer le nord de l'île, le patronat recommandait de cesser tout soutien au leader chypriote-turc Rauf Denktash. Le gouvernement ne l'a pas suivi mais les négociations en vue de réunifier l'île ont repris quelques jours plus tard. Et on ne parle plus d'annexion.

E. B.

Irak : le message américain aux alliés par Philip H. Gordon

DANS son récent discours sur l'état de l'Union, George W. Bush a fait savoir, plus clairement que jamais, que les Etats-Unis envisageaient sérieusement l'idée d'une action militaire unilatérale contre ce que le président appelle « l'axe du mal ». « *Je ne resterai pas sans rien faire, a déclaré Bush, alors que le péril approche.* » « *Les Etats-Unis ne laisseront pas les régimes les plus dangereux au monde nous menacer avec les armes les plus destructrices au monde* », a-t-il encore assuré.

Le discours ne garantit pas, bien sûr, que le président a décidé d'attaquer l'Irak, aujourd'hui considéré comme la cible numéro un du fait de ses programmes d'armes de destruction massive et de leur utilisation dans le passé. En réalité, l'administration américaine est en pleine délibération. Bush a très clairement dit, cependant, qu'à ses yeux le succès militaire en Afghanistan n'était pas la fin de la guerre contre le terrorisme, mais son début.

L'idée d'une intervention américaine en Irak est une source d'inquiétude pour un certain nombre d'alliés des Etats-Unis en Europe et au Moyen-Orient, qui craignent les pertes civiles et militaires, l'instabilité dans la région, la menace sur l'intégrité territoriale de certains pays voisins de l'Irak, la colère des populations arabes et le chaos économique créé par une flambée des prix du pétrole. Ces pays craignent aussi qu'une invasion de l'Irak provoque l'utilisation d'armes de destruction massive et des attaques terroristes, alors que son but est de prévenir de telles actions.

Washington n'ignore pas ces risques. Pourtant, Bush – ainsi que de nombreux autres Américains – semble convaincu qu'il serait encore plus risqué de laisser un dictateur agressif en Irak se doter de l'arme nucléaire. « *Je n'attendrai pas que quelque chose arrive, a déclaré le président, alors que les dangers s'intensifient.* »

Si les amis et les alliés des Etats-Unis veulent les dissuader d'attaquer unilatéralement l'Irak, ils doivent faire plus que de s'inquiéter des dangers liés à une intervention dans ce pays. Il est nécessaire de prendre des mesures concrètes pour stopper ou ralentir le rythme de développement des armes de destruction massive, pour empêcher l'utilisation de ces armes dans le cadre d'actions terroristes et pour faciliter l'arrivée au pouvoir d'un régime nouveau et meilleur.

Tout d'abord, les partenaires des Etats-Unis, y compris la France et la Russie, au Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies, devraient se joindre à Washington pour insis-

Un nouveau régime de sanctions permettrait d'alléger l'embargo commercial

ter sans ambiguïté sur la nécessité pour l'Irak d'accepter le retour des inspecteurs en désarmement, comme il est spécifié dans les résolutions du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies. La nécessité du

retour des inspecteurs devrait être accompagnée de manière très claire par une menace ferme d'action militaire : si l'Irak refuse les inspections ou essaie de les rejeter avant que le travail soit terminé, la communauté internationale, sous leadership américain, aura recours à une action militaire.

Deuxièmement, les alliés devraient soutenir de nouveaux mécanismes de dissuasion qui montreraient clairement que le soutien de Bagdad aux réseaux terroristes, le transfert d'armes de destruction massive aux terroristes et l'hébergement de groupes terroristes mèneraient directement à une action militaire pour renverser le gouvernement. En dépit de toutes les agressions passées et des erreurs de calcul de Saddam Hussein, il n'a, depuis la guerre de 1991, jamais agi de manière à risquer une attaque des Etats-Unis. Les alliés devraient se joindre aux Etats-Unis pour faire en sorte que Saddam Hussein connaisse les limites de l'acceptable.

Troisièmement, les alliés devraient soutenir le projet des « *sanctions intelligentes* » qui est discuté au Conseil de sécurité des

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Nations unies depuis l'été dernier. Un nouveau régime de sanctions permettrait d'alléger l'embargo commercial contre l'Irak, tout en continuant à bloquer l'importation des biens pouvant être détournés à des fins militaires. Il permettrait aussi de mettre un frein au tra-

fic illicite de pétrole, qui génère plusieurs milliards de dollars de revenus illicites pour Saddam Hussein chaque année. La Russie et certains pays voisins de l'Irak se sont opposés au nouveau système du fait des intérêts économiques que l'actuel mécanisme représente pour eux. Ils devraient être dédommagés pour perte de revenus, mais aussi avertis que l'alternative aux sanctions intelligentes n'est peut-être pas le statu quo, mais une intervention militaire contre l'Irak.

Enfin, les alliés, tout particulièrement l'Europe et la Russie, devraient faire rigoureusement respecter le contrôle des exportations provenant des fournisseurs, avec des sanctions sévères pour les entreprises qui enfreignent les restrictions. C'est maintenant évident : l'Irak a fait des progrès significatifs dans son programme nucléaire pendant les années 1980, important secrètement des entreprises européennes la technologie de l'uranium enrichi. Aujourd'hui, le manque de matière fissile est l'unique obstacle à la possession de l'arme nucléaire par l'Irak, et tout doit être fait pour que Saddam n'obtienne pas la technologie requise pour la fabriquer.

Aucune de ces mesures ne garantit que la menace irakienne sera écartée et donc que les Etats-Unis renonceront à l'option militaire. Ne rien faire, cependant, provoquera certainement l'effet inverse. Les alliés des Etats-Unis doivent savoir que si l'Irak ne peut pas être contrôlé avec des sanctions plus efficaces, une force de dissuasion renforcée et des efforts de non-prolifération accentués, Washington finira par utiliser la force pour atteindre son objectif.

Le Monde

JEUDI 7 FÉVRIER 2002

Radical Turks' Suicide Plot Gets 2d Look After Qaeda Links Are Found

By Douglas Frantz
New York Times Service

COLOGNE — Three years before the Sept. 11 attacks, a little-known Islamic group in Germany plotted a similarly audacious suicide assault on the pride of Turkish nationalism: Atatürk's mausoleum in Ankara.

The plan was to crash a private airplane packed with explosives into the hilltop shrine just as hundreds of Turkish political figures, dignitaries, generals and foreign ambassadors rose to observe the 75th anniversary of secular Turkey by honoring its founder.

The Turkish intelligence authorities foiled the scheme, and 18 people were later convicted. But the conspiracy is being looked at again because of the discovery of evidence linking Osama bin Laden to the German-based group, which is led by a renegade Turkish preacher, Metin Kaplan. Mr. Kaplan advocates the killing of all nonbelievers and is bent in particular on the destruction of Turkey's secular government.

According to intelligence officials in Turkey and Germany, a delegation from the organization, known as the Kaplan Group and comprising mostly Turks living in Germany, met with Mr. bin Laden in Afghanistan the year before the planned attack in Ankara and later sent people there for training.

The ties between Mr. bin Laden's network, Al Qaeda, and radical Turks in Germany illustrate the reach and complexity of the loose network of militant groups opposed to Western democracy and intent on establishing Islamic rule — and the difficulty of combating what President George W. Bush describes as "tens of thousands" of trained terrorists roaming the world.

They also highlight the dangers lurking in radical Islamic organizations in Germany, which is home to 2 million Turks and was a base for the suspected mastermind of the Sept. 11 attacks: Mohamed Atta, an Egyptian. Some officials regard the Kaplan Group as Germany's most radical Islamic organization.

"What should not be underestimated is that Kaplan is part of a larger movement of extremist Islamic groups in Germany that really need to be watched very closely," Ottmar Breidling, the German judge who sent the group's leader to prison, said in an interview.

Turkey's interior minister, Rustu Kazim Yucelen, said in an interview that "Turkish names found in raids on bin Laden camps correspond with membership rolls of the Kaplan Group."

Mr. Yucelen said intelligence reports indicate that group members are among 14 Turks detained as Qaeda fighters in Afghanistan in recent weeks. But Mr.

Yucelen said he did not know the precise number of detainees linked to the group. The Pentagon declined to comment.

The Kaplan Group is not as sophisticated or widespread as Al Qaeda, though its goals and some of its methods are similar. As the war on terrorism progresses, rooting out these sorts of groups will be an important part of the strategy, U.S. intelligence authorities say.

Just as Mr. bin Laden was once regarded as a braggart with limited reach, Mr. Kaplan was once dismissed as delusional for his claim to rule all of Islam as the caliph in Cologne. Then Turkish intelligence officials learned of the Ankara plot, in which Mr. Kaplan still faces charges in Turkey, although the Germans so far have refused to extradite him.

He is serving a four-year prison sentence in Germany for operating a terrorist organization and inciting a murder. Mr. Kaplan had issued a fatwa, or holy order, calling for the murder of a rival in Berlin.

Testimony at Mr. Kaplan's eight-month trial portrayed him as the leader of a sect of about 1,500 Turks in Germany who followed *Sharia*, or Islamic law, sent money to help Muslim fighters in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Chechnya, and conducted regular military exercises. Members of the group were also linked to other murders that have been unsolved.

When he sentenced Mr. Kaplan in November 2000, Judge Breidling criticized German security agencies for what he called "fearful, even helpless" failure to pay attention to the group and similar militant organizations.

After Sept. 11, the Germans shifted their attitude toward the Muslim militants who took root in Europe in the 1980s, regarding them as more dangerous. In November, the German Parliament passed anti-terrorism legislation that removed constitutional protections for hate speech and other crimes by faith-based organizations. The first target was the Kaplan Group. In December, the group and 19 affiliates were banned. The authorities froze their bank accounts and carried out 200 raids on offices and mosques in seven cities.

The group saw the crackdown coming, the German authorities said. Money and other assets had been shifted to a foundation, called Servant of Islam, in the Netherlands.

Group members and government officials said hundreds of adherents now travel to the Netherlands for weekend meetings because they can no longer congregate legally in Germany.

In January 1997, a delegation went to Afghanistan with messages and books from Mr. Kaplan. The group visited a terrorist training camp near Jalalabad to meet Mr. bin Laden, whom one member

described as "the troublemaker of the big devil, the United States."

The conversation lasted all night, said Hasan Cundullah, who described the session in the Kaplan organization's newspaper. Mr. Cundullah said the Turks' eyes filled with tears as Mr. bin Laden described abandoning a life of privilege in Saudi Arabia to devote himself to jihad. They were stung when he chastised them for not joining his terrorist organization.

"He said that mujahidins from all over the world had come, but he couldn't see any Turks among them," Mr. Cundullah said. "We felt his reproach."

Turkish intelligence agents were keeping close watch. They saw group members travel from Germany to Afghan training camps after the 1997 meeting.

Mr. Yucelen, the Turkish interior minister, said the information had been shared with the Germans, but no action had been taken. Mr. Kaplan was charged in 1998 in Turkey over the attempted suicide bombing in Ankara, but the Germans, wary of the death penalty that could be imposed in Turkey, refused to extradite him.

"What if Germany captured bin Laden?" Mr. Yucelen asked. "Would the Americans promise not to execute him to win his extradition?"

Mr. Kaplan was arrested in March 1999 in front of his main mosque in Cologne. He was charged with operating a terrorist organization and inciting the murder of Halil Ibrahim Sofu, a Turkish physician in Berlin who had declared himself caliph in 1996.

In May 1997, three people entered Dr. Sofu's apartment in the middle of the night, according to police reports. Dr. Sofu was shot four times in the face with three different pistols. His wife, who was next to him in bed, and their 6-month-old infant, cradled in his arms, were unharmed. The Berlin police could not identify the killers.

In raids on group offices as part of the investigation, the authorities found \$1 million in cash and jewelry. They also discovered videotapes in which Mr. Kaplan called for the assassination of Dr. Sofu, saying in one, "When a second caliph turns up while there is already a caliph, cut the second one's head off."

Mr. Kaplan was convicted in November 2000. His second-in-command, Hasan Basri Gokbulut, was convicted in absentia and remains at large. The authorities suspect he is directing the group's operations from an Islamic country.

Iraqi Terror Hasn't Hit U.S. in Years, CIA Says

By James Risen
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — The Central Intelligence Agency has no evidence that Iraq has engaged in terrorist operations against the United States in nearly a decade, and the spy agency also is convinced that Saddam Hussein has not provided chemical or biological weapons to Al Qaeda or related terrorist groups, according to several U.S. intelligence officials.

American intelligence officials said they believe the last terrorist operation by Iraq against the United States was a botched attempt to assassinate former President George Bush during his 1993

visit to Kuwait. That plot was disrupted before it could be launched, and U.S. intelligence officials believe Mr. Saddam has been reluctant to use terrorism since then for fear of being detected.

George Tenet, the CIA director, is scheduled to testify Wednesday before the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence about the global threats facing the United States.

During his appearance, his first before Congress since Sept. 11, Mr. Tenet is likely to be asked about a wide range of terrorism-related issues, including Iraq.

[On a related issue, Secretary of State Colin Powell said Tuesday that Iraq's overture to the United Nations to resume talks should be limited to the country's refusal to allow the return of UN weapons inspectors. The Associated Press reported from Washington.

["It should be a very short discussion," Mr. Powell said of the UN's announcement Monday that the secretary-general, Kofi Annan, would receive a delegation from Iraq. "The inspectors have to go back."]

Since Sept. 11, there has been widespread speculation about possible Iraqi links to the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, based largely on reports of a meeting in Prague between Mohamed Atta, who is believed to have been the leader of the Sept. 11 hijack teams, and an Iraqi intelligence officer. The intelligence reports about that meeting have been the subject of intense analysis and debate within the U.S. intelligence community, and some officials have questioned whether the meeting took place at all.

Now senior U.S. intelligence officials have concluded that the meeting between Mr. Atta and the Iraqi officer, Ahmed Khalil Samir al-Ani, did occur, but they say that they do not know what was discussed and they do not believe the meeting itself is enough evidence to tie Iraq to the Sept. 11 attacks.

Some experts say that, even if Iraq were somehow involved in Sept. 11, Mr.

Saddam never would have entrusted such a sensitive matter to a mid-level intelligence officer like Mr. al-Ani.

U.S. intelligence officials said they believed that Iraqi intelligence now focuses most of its resources on helping to evade and violate the trade and economic sanctions that have been imposed on the regime since the Gulf War.

The officials also said that their greatest concern about Iraq is its continuing development of chemical and biological weapons, covert programs that have resumed since UN weapons inspectors left the country in 1998. They said that Mr. Saddam believes weapons of mass destruction would give him greater influence in the region and would deter the United States and its allies from another military attack.

A CIA report released last week noted that Iraq probably is also continuing a low-level program on nuclear weapons research, but its inability to obtain enough material capable of fission is the biggest obstacle to Baghdad's nuclear aspirations.

The major threat to the United States from Iraqi efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction would come instead from Iraq's parallel efforts to develop long-range missiles, which could be tipped with chemical or biological warheads, the CIA believes.

In his State of the Union Address last week, President George W. Bush described Iraq, Iran and North Korea as an "axis of evil" that the United States must confront to maintain global stability.

Mr. Bush also said Iraq "continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror," but the section of his speech devoted to Iraq focused primarily on Baghdad's efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction.

Some U.S. intelligence officials say that the Bush administration does not have enough evidence of Iraqi complicity in terrorism to justify making Iraq the next target in the war on terrorism.

To be sure, there have been signs in recent years that Mr. Saddam might consider terrorism as a tool against the United States in the long-running duel between the two countries over the suspected chemical and biological weapons sites in Iraq.

In 1998, American and Middle Eastern intelligence agencies discovered that Abu Nidal, the Palestinian who was one of the most feared terrorists of the 1970s and early 1980s, had moved from Libya to Baghdad.

Mr. Nidal had been ousted from his

previous haven because its leader, Colonel Moammar Gadhafi, had decided to cut his ties to terrorists to bring an end to international sanctions.

But Mr. Nidal does not appear to have engaged in any anti-American operations since his arrival in Iraq, and it is possible that he actually has ended his terrorism career, officials said.

■ Powell Presses for UN's Return

Secretary Powell said UN weapons inspectors should return to Iraq because Mr. Saddam must demonstrate that he is not trying to develop weapons of mass destruction, the Associated Press reported.

Inspectors left Iraq in 1998 and have been barred from returning.

The UN said Monday that Amr Moussa, the secretary-general of the Arab League who recently visited Baghdad, had told the UN secretary-general, Mr. Annan, that Iraq would resume talks without any special conditions.

Mr. Annan responded that he was prepared to receive a delegation from Iraq.

But the UN gave no indication whether the Iraqi government was willing to discuss the return of the UN's inspectors.

Diplomats at the United Nations told The New York Times that the offer relayed by Mr. Moussa had all the hallmarks of an attempt by Mr. Saddam to build up international opposition to an American attack.

They noted that Mr. Saddam made a similar offer more than a year ago, when sanctions against Iraq were being discussed and his officials came to the UN with stacks of documents purporting to prove that Baghdad was in compliance with UN resolutions.

Mr. Powell, speaking before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that Iraq should not hesitate to admit the inspectors if it were not developing weapons of mass destruction.

But Mr. Moussa, speaking to reporters Tuesday in Washington, said all issues — not just the return of the inspectors — should be on the table.

Mr. Moussa refused to say whether he believed a breakthrough could be reached, but said, "The conditions under which the Iraqi people live also need a fresh look."

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune

PUBLISHED WITH THE NEW YORK TIMES AND THE WASHINGTON POST

FEBRUARY 6, 2002

Le FMI accorde 16 milliards de dollars à la Turquie

WASHINGTON. La Turquie s'est vu accorder, lundi 4 février, par le Fonds monétaire international (FMI) un prêt de 16 milliards de dollars (près de 17,8 milliards d'euros) sur trois ans, censé l'aider à faire face à la plus grave crise économique de son histoire. Ce prêt, qui s'ajoute

aux 20 milliards de dollars reçus par Ankara depuis 1999, facilitera le remboursement de la dette (équivalent à 100 % du produit intérieur brut) dans un contexte où la livre turque a perdu 50 % de sa valeur et où l'inflation croît.

Confrontée en 2002 à un remboursement de 5,6 milliards de dollars au FMI, la Turquie recevra prochainement 9 milliards de dollars sur la nouvelle ligne de crédit. Cet accord entre la Turquie et l'institution financière internationale est le dix-huitième du genre. — (Bloomberg.)

Remove Saddam? The Chore Would Have to Be Well Done

By David M. Malone

NEW YORK — On the margins of this past weekend's World Economic Forum meeting, geostrategic chat focused on President George W. Bush's Jan. 29 reference to an "axis of evil" involving Iraq, Iran and North Korea. The strong rhetoric provides Iraq with too much company.

Washington is irritated by Iran's involvement in a recent shipment of weapons apparently destined for Palestinian fighters, and concerned at Iran's mixed signals on Afghanistan. Iran is thought to have maintained chemical weapon capacities since Iraq attacked it in the early 1980s, and with Russian help it is building nuclear reactors.

But with a power struggle under way between theocratic hard-liners and reformers, Iran hardly seems lost, yet, to the forces of evil.

North Korea, under a Stalinist regime of the worst sort, negotiated a deal with the United States in 1994 under which it would freeze its plutonium development in exchange for Western assistance with its energy sector. It does not, for the time being, seem likely to test Washington's resolve to defend South Korea and Japan.

Iraq, on the other hand, is a major and pressing concern in Washington. No links have yet been established between Baghdad and the Al Qaeda terrorist network, but Iraq has been defying the international community for many years, and the Bush administration believes that Saddam Hussein has been using this time to develop weapons of mass destruction.

A decade ago, when Washington decided at the end of the Gulf War in defense of Kuwait not to pursue the fleeing Iraqi army to Baghdad, the decision seemed a wise one. There was no United Nations mandate to

overthrow Saddam Hussein. There was also no plan on how to hold the country together after his fall.

U.S. policymakers feared that with Baghdad's power broken, a new Kurdish state would emerge in the north, threatening Turkey with irredentist claims, along with a Shiite state in the south closely allied with Iran and possibly threatening the Gulf emirates, Saudi Arabia and U.S. oil interests.

Instead, a policy of forced disarmament was imposed on Iraq, monitored by United Nations personnel and buttressed by severe economic sanctions. Washington, London and Paris established no-flight zones over northern and southern Iraq. The United Nations was successful at uncovering some Iraqi weapons sites.

However, the sanctions regime gradually lost the support of most countries, while the Clinton administration vacillated over possible responses to the end of Iraqi cooperation with UN inspectors in 1998.

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks have changed the prism through which Washington views Iraq. America's belief in its own military capabilities has been reinforced, with a new generation of weapons proving highly effective in Afghanistan. The United States constructed a broad coalition of political support around the world, not least because its seriousness of purpose was clear.

Disappointment over the unwillingness of Arab governments assertively to counteract the theocratic propaganda of Osama bin Laden and other extremists now runs very deep in the United States. A sense exists that America cannot return with its erstwhile Arab partners to the situation that existed before Sept. 11 — a cynical co-dependency resting mostly on

trade of Middle East oil for U.S. weapons. That arrangement turned out to provide a fertile breeding environment for Al Qaeda supporters.

The Bush administration now seems quietly committed to finishing off Saddam Hussein, although this will be difficult. U.S. allies, including Britain, are queasy at the prospect, fearing an upheaval in the Arab world. Arab governments worry that America will again leave the job half done. Large sections of the Pentagon are not keen on the militarily daunting task of invading Iraq.

U.S. generals know that while air attacks can severely weaken Iraqi military capabilities, only ground action can remove Saddam Hussein. Having failed to support a Shiite rebellion that it had encouraged in southern Iraq in 1991, the United States cannot count on significant internal help in any military campaign. Iraqi opposition groups in exile are widely seen in the Middle East as a bad joke.

What is to be done? A sure-fire military strategy, relying at worst on active British and Turkish support only, will need to be developed. Arab regimes must be convinced that Washington will not fail. To limit Arab street solidarity with Baghdad, the current spiral of violence between Palestinians and Israelis will need to be broken. The outlines of a new Iraqi government, possibly federal in nature, should be worked out in advance to avoid fragmentation of the country.

Saddam has recently signaled that he is open to negotiations on the return of UN inspectors. He is clearly aware of the danger that his regime faces.

If they were sure that America would achieve its objective of eliminating Saddam Hussein, would Arab governments, European allies, Russia and

China oppose the United States in this venture? Probably not.

The writer, on leave from the Canadian Foreign Service, is president of the International Peace Academy in New York. He contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune
FEBRUARY 7, 2002

The U.S. Military Colossus Will Be Right to Focus on Saddam

By Jim Hoagland

WASHINGTON — President George W. Bush followed last week's galvanizing speech to the nation denouncing "an axis of evil" with proposals for defense spending increases that would make the United States a military colossus without equal in human history. It is a bold grab for authority to transform a nation and a world that Mr. Bush had been expected to manage, not command.

His State of the Union message and the unveiling of the security-centered high-deficit budgets that will hang over his first term and beyond are a statement of mission and determination that will stir doubts and resistance on a broad front at home and abroad. Much of the noise will be just that. But not all the misgivings can be dismissed.

The increase that Mr. Bush and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld seek for next year at the Pentagon is \$48 billion — 150 percent of the annual defense budget of France, the second largest spender in NATO. The proposed defense budget of \$379 billion will lift U.S. military spending to about 40 percent of the total that all nations in the world spend on their militaries, according to some estimates. Friend as well

as foe will be left behind on another military planet if the new U.S. dollars translate into new defense capability, as Mr. Rumsfeld promised in testimony to Congress on Tuesday.

The war speech given by President Bush paved the way for the war budget described in detail by Secretary Rumsfeld a week later. Hopes abroad that the former was mostly rhetoric were vaporized by the latter.

The serious program that the president laid out on Jan. 29 will require serious spending and military planning. Without using the words, he committed America to a policy of preemptive strikes against hostile nations which develop biological, chemical or nuclear weapons and have links to global terrorism.

The president's description of Iraq as such a state was detailed and well thought out. He seemed most intent on settling the debilitating debate within his administration about the need for military action against Saddam Hussein. He deliberately gave the impression of using his words to launch a sustained planning and training effort for U.S. forces in helping Saddam's foes topple the Iraqi dictator.

Mr. Bush paid tribute to "the Iranian people's hope for free-

dom," which is being frustrated by "an unelected few." There is still time and room for change in Iran, his words suggested, that would avoid a direct collision.

Europe responded with dismay to Mr. Bush's rhetoric. The "axis of evil" reference was denounced as too threatening to the two Islamic states, which can supposedly still be tamed with reason and business contracts. But that concern is misplaced. The immediate tactics that Mr. Bush has adopted are sound.

It will not be possible to deflect Iran from its drive to obtain weapons of mass destruction as long as Saddam Hussein's deadly regime is in power next door. Iraq must be dealt with first, in the context of an eventual return to normal U.S. relations with Iran.

Pressuring the "moderate" forces in Iran and their supporters into trying to wrest the power they have won in democratic elections away from autocratic mullahs may well produce greater results than would quiet, acquiescent diplomacy.

An ambitious U.S. political program of global command emerges from the war speech and the war budget. But the immediate post-Afghanistan focus must be kept on Baghdad and the threat to global stability that the regime there poses.

Russia, France and other countries seemed tempted to make the Iraq issue one of American hegemony in world politics rather than of Saddam's brutality and treachery. That would be a dangerously misguided approach.

The Bush administration can reduce the temptation by doing a better job in explaining both at home and abroad how the huge defense spending increases that it seeks for this year and the future will underpin America's traditional alliances, rather than hollow them out.

Congress has a crucial role to play on two fronts. It should ask tough questions in its defense budget hearings about strategy and the philosophy of leadership, as well as about technical details. And it should make sure that Colin Powell gets the modest 4 percent increase he has requested for the State Department's bare-bones budget.

In Don Rumsfeld's new budget, dollars and computer chips are what iron and blood were to Bismarck: the decisive elements of warfare. But they are only building blocks for what must be a shared global effort to turn back the forces of disorder and, yes, evil.

The Washington Post.

The Bush Goal in Iraq Is 'Regime Change'

Powell Says U.S. Might Have to Act Alone

By Todd S. Purdum
New York Times Service

WASHINGTON — In his sharpest comments yet on the next phase of the war on terrorism, Secretary of State Colin Powell has told Congress that President George W. Bush is set on a "regime change" in Iraq and warned that it is something the United States "might have to do alone."

Testifying before the House International Relations Committee on Wednesday, Secretary Powell, who has been chief among Mr. Bush's advisers in urging caution on Iraq, declined to outline "any of the details" under consideration.

But in somber tones he described them as "the most serious assessment of options that one might imagine" and said that Mr. Bush was "leaving no stone unturned as to what we might do."

Secretary Powell said that United Nations weapons inspectors must have an "unfettered right" to conduct searches throughout Iraq for suspected weapons sites, an operation that began after the Gulf War but was suspended in 1998, after months of noncooperation, before American and British bombing of Iraq.

"Let the inspectors in, but without conditions," he said.

Speaking directly to Iraq, he said, "We don't trust you, and that's why we need inspectors, and that's why they

have to be free to do it any way that they think is appropriate to establish that you are not conducting the activities that we suspect you of, which you claim you are not doing."

At the same time, he said, U.S. intelligence had concluded that Iraq was unlikely to be able to develop a nuclear weapon within a year or shortly thereafter. "It would take them a bit longer, quite a bit longer than that, in the absence of external help," he said.

"The president is examining a full range of options of how to deal with Iraq," Secretary Powell said.

If Iraq does not "let the inspectors in as part of the UN effort," he said, "then regime change is something the United States would — might have to do alone."

"How to do it? I would not like to go into any of the details of the options that are being looked at, but it is the most serious assessment of options that one might imagine."

The secretary of state also had sharp words for Iran, accusing some elements in the government there of "meddling" to destabilize the fledgling interim gov-

ernment of Afghanistan, and for North Korea, which he said continued "to develop and sell missiles that can carry weapons of mass destruction at the same time their people are starving to death."

Together, the remarks amounted to Secretary Powell's strongest embracing of Mr. Bush's linkage of Iraq, Iran and North Korea in an "axis of evil" in his State of the Union address last week. But in contrast to his comments about Iraq, the secretary suggested that dialogue with North Korea and some elements in

Iran was still possible.

Mr. Bush's formulation took many at the State Department by surprise, but Secretary Powell said it was "a statement that all of us had seen beforehand," adding, "We will not shrink back from that early clarity of purpose."

In sum, he made it clear that there would be no quarreling with the president's basic approach but that he would seek to preserve running room for diplomatic options. He did that Wednesday by reiterating that "we are prepared to

talk to North Korea, anytime, anyplace, anywhere, under any set of conditions and with no previously set agenda."

Of Iran, he said: "We're making it clear to the Iranians that you've got to choose. If you want to be part of a world that's moving forward, it's time to stop being a state sponsor of terrorism, get out of the axis of evil column and make a choice."

IRAN

"Une politique pire que celle de ses prédécesseurs"

Voici un extrait du discours prononcé par le président Khatami devant les membres de son gouvernement et largement diffusé dans la presse iranienne.

Le discours de M. Bush montre que non seulement il n'apprend rien de l'Histoire, mais qu'en outre la nouvelle politique américaine est pire que celle de ses prédécesseurs et encore moins réaliste. On retrouve le même ton orgueilleux et interventionniste des politiciens américains et des propos injurieux contre le peuple iranien. L'Iran a été lui-même victime du terrorisme et des attaques chimiques [durant la guerre Iran-Irak], les armes ayant été distribuées par ceux qui souhaitent le renversement de la révolution islamique dans la région. Et ils nous accusent aujourd'hui de soutenir le terrorisme et de fabriquer des armes de destruction massive !

Après le 11 septembre, on aurait pu espérer que le monde se mobiliserait pour faire face au terrorisme. On abuse malheureusement de cet événement important. C'est une tromperie contre l'humanité. Aujourd'hui, l'Amérique accentue son soutien au régime sioniste qui commet tous les crimes possibles contre le peuple innocent et meurtri de Palestine. Ce qui s'est passé le 11 septembre a été un crime contre l'humanité. Il ne faut pas pour autant omettre la part des erreurs politiques des responsables américains dans cet immense préjudice qu'a subi le peuple américain. Les terroristes criminels n'étaient pas les seuls impliqués dans cette affaire. J'ai l'impression que les politiques américains sont prisonniers du tourbillon créé par les sionistes. Nous considérons que les propos de M. Bush sont agressifs, interventionnistes, belliqueux. [...] L'évolution récente unit davantage le peuple iranien face aux gouvernements ambitieux et interventionnistes. Des gouvernements qui, à travers des mensonges, de fausses allégations et des jeux politiques, préparent le terrain à leur propre expansion. Nous vivons dans un monde dans lequel ces actions sont condamnées à l'échec. Le monde

est à la recherche du dialogue et de la raison. Nous croyons en l'avenir de la paix mondiale. L'accueil donné par les plus clairvoyants à l'idée d'un dialogue entre les civilisations en est le témoin. Il est évident que le destin de l'humanité ne va pas dans le sens des belliqueux et de ceux qui s'imposent par la tyrannie. Nous croyons à l'avenir d'une paix durable et juste. Notre peuple a montré qu'il est prêt à payer le prix nécessaire pour l'indépendance, la liberté et la république islamique.



DU 7 AU 13 FÉVRIER 2002

Le Monde SAMEDI 9 FÉVRIER 2002

L'Iran s'insurge contre les accusations américaines

Le Guide de la République, Ali Khamenei, dénonce avec véhémence le « régime oppresseur » des Etats-Unis

APRÈS LE PRÉSIDENT Mohammad Khatami, le président du Parlement Mehdi Karubi et d'autres responsables, c'est le Guide de la République, l'ayatollah Ali Khamenei, qui s'est insurgé jeudi 7 février dans des termes extrêmement virulents contre les Etats-Unis. « Le peuple iranien n'est jamais à l'initiative d'une agression dans le but d'exercer une hégémonie. Mais si quelqu'un veut agresser ce peuple et menacer ses intérêts, la réponse du peuple d'Iran sera vive et les agresseurs regretteraient leur initiative », a affirmé M. Khamenei.

« Le peuple iranien n'est pas seul à vous haïr », a-t-il dit à l'adresse des Etats-Unis. « C'est le monde entier (...) qui hait le régime oppresseur,

arrogant et hypocrite que vous représentez », a martelé le Guide, lors d'une rencontre avec les commandants de l'armée de l'air iranienne. « Le peuple iranien déteste un régime qui (...) brandit le drapeau de la démocratie, de la liberté et des droits de l'homme, mais qui défend le régime d'Israël (...) et qui, en Afghanistan, se comporte de manière inhumaine avec les prisonniers d'autres peuples. » Pour M. Khamenei, le monde islamique est « menacé par une croisade, en raison de la léthargie d'une grande partie du monde islamique, et du fait qu'il n'est pas uni ».

De son côté, le ministre des renseignements, Ali Younessi, a opposé un nouveau démenti aux informations sur la présence de mem-

bres du réseau terroriste Al-Qaida sur le territoire iranien. « Aucun membre du réseau Al-Qaida n'a jusqu'ici été identifié en Iran », a déclaré le ministre, tandis que l'ambassadeur de la République islamique à Moscou démentait que son pays ait l'intention de se doter de l'arme nucléaire. « Aucun pays ne peut dénier à un autre le recours à l'énergie atomique dans un but pacifique », a souligné le diplomate.

BASES D'ESPIONNAGE

C'est la Russie qui aide l'Iran à parachever son programme nucléaire à usage exclusivement civil, ont toujours affirmé les Iraniens, sans vraiment réussir à dissiper les soupçons.

Le quotidien conservateur *Jam-e-Jam* a rapporté que les Etats-Unis construisaient une base d'espionnage dans la ville d'Islam-Ghale, à 25 kilomètres de la ville frontalière iranienne de Taybad. Selon ce journal, une autre base de ce type serait en cours de construction à Kandahar. Toujours d'après le quotidien, des militaires américains occupent des bases aériennes situées près de la frontière iranienne, notamment la base de Chindand, dans l'ouest de l'Afghanistan. « Les agents des renseignements américains se sont même introduits dans le poste frontalier de Dogharoun, qui mène de la frontière iranienne à la ville d'Hérat », dans l'ouest de l'Afghanistan. - (AFP, Reuters.)

Wall Street Journal
February 12, 2002

The Transformation of Iraqi Kurdistan

'It Has Never Been Better in 4,000 Years'

By HUGH FOFE
STAFF REPORTER

ARBIL, Iraq — A 15-story mosque is nearing completion, the most lavish ever built here. A sprawling recreational park opens next month where the army base stood. Books and magazines are more plentiful than ever. Even refugees have satellite TV.

This is northern Iraq, home to the country's 3.6 million ethnic Kurds. Just 10 years ago it was one of the grimmest war zones on the planet. But geopolitics, international largesse and the Kurds' resourcefulness have worked a remarkable transformation.

"It's a golden age. It has never been better for the Kurds in 4,000 years," says Nasreen Mustafa Sadeek, age 33, the region's minister of reconstruction. Ms. Mustafa's mobile phone connects her to an international network, and her desktop computer plugs into a freer Internet than is available in some Mideast states. But as the Kurds' fortunes improve, they increasingly realize how much they have to lose — raising the diplomatic price the U.S. will have to pay to persuade them to join in any attempt to topple Saddam Hussein.

After the Gulf War, Saddam Hussein capped a decades-long campaign of oppression against his country's Kurds with an operation that sent many fleeing from their homes. Spurred by televised footage of 1.5 million Kurds huddled in wintry mountaintop camps, the U.S. and its allies in 1991 began protecting the Kurds with air power. In 1996, the U.S. was instrumental in ensuring that the Kurds receive a chunk of the money earned by Iraq under a United Nations-administered program that allows the Iraqi government to sell oil and buy food with the profits.

The program has funneled about \$1.4 billion (€5 billion) into northern Iraq since 1996 — or about three-quarters of the region's \$1.5 billion annual economy — with close to \$2 billion more still in the pipeline. U.N.-controlled Iraqi oil money is paying for the repair of water and sewage pipes, the construction of electricity grids and the management of telephone networks. It pays for small power stations, trucks, housing, schools, hospital repairs, medical training and vaccinations.

U.N.-organized imports, from wheat to milk powder, provide many Kurdish families with as much as three-quarters of the food they need, thus freeing up funds for other purchases and creating for many their first disposable income in decades. While thousands of Iraqi Kurds remain poor, the majority have seen their lot improve — in sharp contrast to the austerity of life elsewhere in Iraq.

The new strength in Iraqi Kurdistan has reinforced a view among some U.S. officials that the Kurds could be a significant ally in any effort to oust Saddam

Hussein, playing a role not unlike that of the Northern Alliance in unseating the Taliban with U.S. support. It isn't a quid pro quo with which many Kurds are comfortable.

"We will not be party to any project that will endanger what we have achieved," says Massoud Barzani, who rules the stronger of the two Kurdish "statelets" in northern Iraq.

Kurds remember that the U.S. turned its back on them both in 1991 after promising protection, and in 1975 after giving them covert support in another rebellion. The notoriously fractious Kurdish leadership is united on one thing: They won't consider an attack on Mr. Hussein without public pronouncements that the U.S. and its allies are bent on deposing the Iraqi leader. They also want a promise that the U.S. will help formalize their current autonomy. The U.S. refuses to grant this concession, partly because its key regional ally, Turkey, is dead-set against it.

A tour of northern Iraq by U.S. officials in December included a check on Kurdish military bases. The region can field 60,000 fighters, though little in the way of advanced weaponry. "It was an opportunity to see what their capabilities are, what their threshold is on their defense," says State Department spokesman Greg Sullivan. He emphasized that no decisions have been made about any potential military operation against Iraq.

It's also unclear what would happen if Iraqi Kurdish revenues or U.N. spending was trimmed by any change in the sanctions. The region also remains hobbled by such wartime legacies as landmines, which render 20% of agricultural land unusable. Iraqi troops and artillery are positioned only 10 kilometers outside Arbil, and the Kurds blame small, late-night bomb blasts on Iraqi agents trying to keep the population on edge.

For the past five years, Iraq, Iran and Turkey have imposed tough restrictions on travel to the region by reporters and non-government organizations. One way into Iraqi Kurdistan was a route, now used by many Iraqi Kurds, requiring a dash from Syria in a plywood speedboat across the Tigris River, swollen by the first melting snow. This trip involved an invitation from Iraqi Kurds, the permission of Syria, but not the requisite Iraqi visa.

On the opposite bank stands the Iraqi Kurdish customs post, a neat group of buildings under construction, and around them freshly planted pine saplings. Newly paved roads run past rebuilt villages boasting traffic lights and towns with well-stocked shops. By contrast with the war years, when rough roads and gunfire took a heavy toll on cars,

nearly every auto — usually Toyotas and Brazilian-made Volkswagen Passats imported in the 1980s years of Iraqi oil wealth — boasts an intact windshield. Herds of sheep, goats and cows have tripled in size, according to the Iraqi Kurdish Ministry of Agriculture.

In Arbil, where the Iraqi army's old headquarters stood, Kurds in baggy trousers and tightly wound turbans are laying out a 100-hectare park, complete with trees, children's slides and canals for pleasure boats. The Iraqi army abandoned the base — the nerve center of a 1980s campaign that killed 180,000 Iraqi Kurdish men — in 1991 and the Kurds later bulldozed it, removing mass graves and torture chambers.

In the provincial center of Dahuk, the Kurds have turned the headquarters of the feared Iraqi secret police into the new local university's law school. The old Iraqi army base in Dahuk has become the site of Iraqi Kurdistan's first major supermarket, drawing customers from as far away as Bagh-

dad, 400 kilometers to the south. "One Iraqi lady burst into tears just at the sight of our shelves of goods," says Sherzan Jamil, a former guerrilla who now works as a manager in the supermarket and as a part-time TV actor. The Iraqi Kurds have set up nine new television stations since 1991.

The Worst Weeks

Ms. Sideek, the minister of reconstruction, remembers the worst weeks after March 1991, when the U.S. called on the Kurds to rise up against Saddam Hussein and then abandoned them. Then an architecture student, she shivered in the filth, ice and stench of a mountaintop camp along with other Kurdish refugees who had fled to the Turkish and Iranian borders. "I would wake up at night with women wailing when babies died in tents nearby," she says.

When media images of the suffering shamed Western powers into protecting the Kurds, Ms. Sideek walked home with the other refugees. International support bloomed from mid-1991 to 1994. Ms. Sideek worked for the U.N., helping to direct the reconstruction of looted towns and 4,000 villages dynamited by Saddam Hussein.

From 1994 to 1997, Kurdish factions frittered away foreign support with internal battles. The lowest point came in 1996, when the stronger of the two main factions in northern Iraq, ruled by Mr. Barzani, cleared out rivals by briefly allowing Saddam Hussein's troops back into Arbil. The U.S. pulled out its remaining officials and several thousand of their collaborators, the



Nasreen Mustafa Sadeek

cream of the English-speaking Iraqi Kurds.

But 1996 was also the year a U.N. resolution took effect that allowed Iraq to start selling its oil for food and nonweapons development. A 13% share of this income was allotted through the U.N. to Iraqi Kurdistan.

The two main factions — Mr. Barzani's in the west, and that of Jalal Talabani in the east — still squabble over money. But their rival administrations now engage in more positive competition. "They got a cellular phone system first. But we got the first electronic, seven-digit, city telephone exchange," gloats Sami Abdurrahman, a senior aide to Mr. Barzani. "They couldn't connect their mobile phones to anyone in the city, but we could."

Unlike any of its neighbors, Iraqi Kurdistan allows the International Committee of the Red Cross access to its internal prisons. Ethnic and religious minority figures have been given senior governmental posts. The U.N. says the number of babies who die in their first year has dropped to 53 per 1,000 live births, compared with 108 per thousand in Iraq proper. "Since 1998, we've had no polio, malaria infections are down, and no cases of cholera, which is endemic in Iraq," says Jamal Abdulhamid, the region's minister of health.

Iraqi Kurdish politics have benefited, too. Until the early 1990s, Iraqi Kurds lived under Baghdad's administrators and had scant rights or privileges. Elections in 1992, encouraged by the U.S. and others, brought an Arbil-based Iraqi Kurdistan regional administration. It soon split in two, but in both eastern and western halves the political system is now an evolving mix of princely rule, a one-party state and a coalition cabinet. Both halves use words like "ministry," but Iraq's only recognized government is in Baghdad. Now the rift between them is slowly mending and new municipal elections have been held.

"There's a different attitude to governance. They are thinking about civil society," says Pram Unia, Middle East director for Save the Children, which is working in the north.

Even the fortunes of the poor have improved. The most disadvantaged currently include thousands of families displaced by 1994-97 fighting and a steady flow of 50 to 100 Kurds a month evicted from Iraq by Saddam Hussein.

Ali Mohammed Gomar, 40, spent seven years in Iraqi prisons for Kurdish activism until he was released 18 months ago. At that time, his family of eight was forced to leave for northern Iraq. Once owners of a two-story house, they now occupy two small rooms connected from mud, cinderblocks, sacking and plastic sheets in a camp on the edge of Arbil.

The only family member earning money is a 16-year-old son, who makes the equivalent of 40 cents a day working as a mechanic. The family relies on U.N. rations. Yet they have a television, electricity and even a satellite dish. Nearby, 360 housing units paid for by the U.N. are rising from the hard-earth plain. The Gomars will soon have a house there.

"All we are asking for is work," says Mr. Gomar's wife, Harbiyeh, to the deputy minister of reconstruction, Fakher Barzani,

who is visiting the refugee camp and is a distant relative of Massoud Barzani. "But I really hope we get one of the houses with a garden, not a flat."

Aid workers attribute northern Iraq's success to its drive to make self-government work. Two problems vex the rest of the country. The Iraqi government is intent on wrecking the U.N. oil-for-food program — the U.N. has repeatedly criticized Baghdad for its slow implementation — and regain control of its oil revenues. In addition, the U.S. is delaying possible development projects that it says could abet Iraqi re-armament.

Stability has encouraged foreign-based businessmen, mostly expatriate Kurds and some Turkish Kurds, to bring in technology, computer shops, factories and plans for a Disneyland-style amusement park. They usually deploy the Kurds' traditional skill in smuggling to bypass the sanctions imposed by the U.N. and regional states.

Fadi Jalal and Farhad Abid are typical investors. Former Kurdish guerrillas in their late 40s, they fled into exile in 1975 after Iran and the U.S. dropped their backing for another Kurdish rebellion against Saddam Hussein. Mr. Jalal founded a chain of supermarkets in Sweden. Mr. Abid set up a company in 1993 called B-Plan Information Systems Ltd. that is now a market leader in British hospital and police accounting software.

They are back to pursue again their dream of Kurdish self-government. Mr. Jalal sold Swedish assets to open the first full-service hotel two years ago in Arbil, a city of 800,000. Mr. Abid arrived last year to sell his computer systems to new Kurdish institutions. His company hopes to expand into a post-Saddam Baghdad and elsewhere

in the Middle East with Arabic and other versions of the programs it develops.

"This place is a small island of freedom in a region of dictatorships," says Mr. Abid, sipping a Turkish beer with Mr. Jalal in the hotel restaurant and reminiscing about their year operating a jeep-mounted anti-tank cannon. (Some Muslims see no problem with alcohol as long as they drink privately or don't get drunk) "In 1974, we were just a guerrilla army; there was no other form of civilization. Now there are gun-control laws, there is a push toward setting up a civil, progressive society."

As for supporting any new U.S. action against the Iraqi leader, "If Saddam tumbles, and we hope he will, then that's the best thing," says Mr. Abid. But the Kurds would have to have something to win if they were to join the U.S. campaign, he says, adding, "At least with Saddam, there's some level of certainty. It's something you can plan around."

Vulnerable Points

There are still flaws and fragility in the Iraqi Kurdistan. Increasingly, U.S. and other Western officials receive Iraqi Kurdish ministers, but there are no treaties formalizing the relationship. Another issue is how northern Iraq will resolve its yen for political autonomy and its economic dependence on Baghdad. Regional powers fear the emerging Iraqi Kurdish administrative entity will split off from Iraq, fanning Kurdish separatism in Turkey and Iran and

destabilizing the Middle East.

With 25 million ethnic Kurds living in the mountain valleys that are split among Iraq, Iran, Turkey and Syria, the Kurds have long been one of the world's biggest nations without a state. They are divided into hundreds of tribes and many regional dialects, traditionally rebelling against central authority and fighting against neighbors.

They have few natural resources other than livestock and subsistence farming, so many Kurds have earned their living by smuggling or by working in faraway cities. They came late to a national awareness, but their high rates of population growth and mounting insistence on language and other ethnic rights have increasingly collided with the established states of the Middle East. Iraq, Turkey and Iran have all brutally oppressed their Kurdish minorities at times, unwilling to dilute the powers of their ethnic majorities of Arabs, Turks and Persians.

A confident tone now rings in the long-repressed Kurdish language, a cousin of Persian. The government is knitting together the major dialects of Kurdish in schools and broadcasting. "Now we're broadcasting in both dialects of our region," says Karwan Akray, director of a new television station, Kurdistan Satellite TV, which is also watched in Europe and the U.S. "For the first time, all Kurds can understand each other."

In Mr. Akray's schooldays, only Arabic was taught. Even in 1990, just 50 books appeared in Kurdish each year, half of them in praise of Saddam Hussein. There was just one Kurdish newspaper and one magazine. But last year, according to Badran Hasib, who owns the leading Arbil publishing house Araspress, Iraqi Kurds published 250 books and 100 newspapers or magazines. Mr. Hasib recently brought out a new dictionary of administrative terms that had never been necessary in Kurdish before.

"The language is getting deeper and more beautiful," Mr. Hasib says. "We don't fear so much anymore. We are laying the foundations of a state. But as the Kurdish saying goes, 'the goat makes its bed for one night at a time.'"

Turkey shuts down Kurdish TV

Reuters February 12, 2002

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey -- Turkey's broadcasting watchdog has suspended broadcasts for one year by a local television station that played Kurdish-language music videos. The move, on Monday, comes despite a constitutional amendment to allow Kurdish broadcasts.

Turkey altered its constitution in October to allow Kurdish-language television and radio broadcasts, part of a drive to meet European Union human rights standards, but it has yet to change the relevant laws.

"Broadcasts by Gun TV have been stopped for 365 days for playing music pieces with Kurdish lyrics," Turkey's Radio and Television High Council (RTUK) said in a statement. "(Gun TV) was in violation of (laws) barring broadcasts that incite society to violence, terrorism and ethnic separatism and incur feelings of hatred in society," the watchdog said.

An RTUK spokeswoman said the watchdog expects Gun TV to file an appeal once lawmakers make Turkey's legal code conform with the constitutional changes, but said the ban could still stand.

"These are not just romantic songs, but strongly ideological songs," she said.

The EU has said Turkey must improve its human rights record, including expanding cultural and linguistic rights for its 12 million Kurds, if it is to begin membership talks with the bloc. RTUK often imposes short suspensions on television and radio broadcasters for various infringements but rarely imposes bans for as long as a year.

Gun TV broadcast rallies and meetings organized by the People's Democracy Party (HADEP), Turkey's only legal Kurdish party, which faces possible closure for its alleged ties to Kurdish separatists.

"The decision was completely political. There were no sorts of 'separatist' programs being broadcast. It's a one-sided decision," said Nevzat Bingol, Gun TV's owner. Police raided Bingol's Gun Radyo in November, stopping the radio station's broadcasts and seizing studio equipment.

Separately, authorities have cracked down in recent weeks on a campaign calling for Kurdish-language instruction in schools. Police have detained hundreds of university students and parents who signed petitions calling for Kurdish in the classroom. Turkey fears greater Kurdish cultural rights could prompt restive Kurds to demand greater autonomy.

Security forces have fought Kurdish separatists in a 17-year-long conflict that has claimed 30,000 lives, mainly civilians in the southeast. Violence has all but ceased since the 1999 capture of Kurdish guerrilla commander Abdullah Ocalan. Ocalan, now on death row for treason, has called on his fighters to withdraw from Turkey and seek rights for Kurds through political means.

* * * * *

Police say PKK plotting Kurdish identity campaign

Turkish Daily News February 11, 2002

The National Police Headquarters have said that the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) was ready to launch a campaign of Kurdish identity and education as part of its plans to become a political force, Anatolia news agency said. The agency said reports by the national police and intelligence services named the new campaign as "I want to be registered as a Kurd on my identity card." The campaign included demands for Kurdish education in private courses as well, it quoted the reports as saying. The first applications for private Kurdish courses would be made in the eastern town of Batman and the southern town of Icel, it said.

Some 2,000 university students were detained all over the country last month for submitting petitions demanding education in Kurdish at colleges. Authorities rejected the first Kurdish education campaign as a bid by the PKK and many among those detained are expected to face court cases on separatism charges.

The PKK took arms in 1984 for self rule in the country's predominantly Kurdish southeast, but changed track after its leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured and sentenced to death in 1999. The armed conflict between the PKK and Turkish troops has cost more than 30,000 lives. Turkish officials dub the PKK's overtures as a move to save Ocalan from execution.

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US Promises Israel Four or Five Days Notice Ahead of Attacking Iraq

Jerusalem Report February 25, 2002 by Leslie Susser and Jerusalem Report staff

The US has promised Israel "at least four or five days" advance warning, ahead of its anticipated attack on Iraq's Saddam Husayn. The widespread assessment is that Saddam will try to strike at Israel if he feels his regime is in danger. The US-led assault will begin in "maybe three, maybe six months." The Report has been told by sources privy to top-level discussion involving American and Israeli officials. The Americans believe Saddam will fall relatively quickly, with many of his generals sobered by the success of the US assault on the Taliban in Afghanistan, abandoning him. Eleven years ago, Israel was informed only hours ahead of the start of American bombing of Iraq in the Gulf War, on January 16, and was hit by Iraqi Scuds just two days later.

Israeli officials believe Saddam may have chemical biological weapons, and are certain he has the Scud missiles capable of delivering such warheads against Israel. Although the Patriot anti-missile system is much improved since the Gulf War -- when it failed to intercept the 39 Scuds Saddam fired at Israel -- and the Israeli-American Arrow missile defense system should be capable of intercepting Scuds, officials do not feel that they can fully rely on such defense systems. Israel would hardly be able to begin a large-scale inoculation or gas-mask distribution effort days before the US launched its attack, however, since this would obviously alert Saddam. Therefore, Israeli officials are said to be contemplating sending forces into western Iraq as soon as the US begins bombing, to try and thwart any Scud missile launch at source. In their discussions, Israeli officials have asked that the US tacitly support such an action.

Israel had hoped that the next phase of the US anti-terror struggle would focus on Iran. In the annual national intelligence assessment recently presented to the prime minister, the heads of the security services and army intelligence cited Iran as the main strategic threat to Israel. There is, nevertheless, firm support in Israel for an American-led assault on Saddam; coordinating arrangements for the attack was a key, if unpublicized, reason for President Bush's invitation to Prime Minister Sharon for talks at the White House on February 7.

According to the Israeli intelligence assessment, Iran is trying to set up a branch of Hizballah to act directly from the territories against Israel. The supply of Iranian weapons to the PA aboard the Karine A arms ship was part of a new Iranian strategy to create a double front against Israel, with the Lebanese Hizballah threatening Israeli population centers from the north, and the Palestinians doing so from Gaza and the West Bank, both with Iranian-supplied rockets. Sharon is urging the American administration to exert pressure on Syria not to allow the resumption of direct flights from Teheran to Damascus, which could be used to fly in huge consignments of weapons for Hizballah in Lebanon.

Based on the intelligence assessment, David Magen, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense committee, wants the government to hold a full-scale strategic review and to shift the main security focus from the Palestinians to Iran. What most concerns Israel, he says, is Iran's nuclear program, especially in light of former president Ali Rafsanjani's December 14 statement that Iran's aim is to destroy Israel and that it can do it "with one nuclear bomb." Says Magen: "Iran has chemical and biological weapons, is making a supreme effort to get nuclear weapons and encourages terror. That is the main threat. We must deal with it."

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Iraq, Iran Criticize 'Axis of Evil' Policy

Voice of America By Amberin Zaman 12 Feb 2002

The U.S. campaign against global terrorism came under attack during the first day of a conference between European and Islamic foreign ministers in Istanbul. Most of the criticism came from Iraq and Iran, two of the countries recently named by President Bush as part of the axis of evil in the world.

The conference is aimed to foster dialogue and tolerance between Islamic and European Nations, following the September 11 attacks against the United States. But soon after the meeting began, the United States came under verbal attack from various Islamic foreign ministers angry over the U.S. approach to fighting terrorism and its position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Some of the harshest words came from Iran's foreign minister, Kamal Kharazi, who accused the United States of what he called a unilateral and militarist approach to world affairs. He also accused the U.S. government of embarking on "a misguided campaign of misinformation and allegations against other countries."

Mr. Kharamzi was referring to recent remarks by President George Bush describing Iran, as well as Iraq and North Korea, as countries that make up an axis of evil that threatens the peace of the world. Iraq's foreign minister, Naji Sabri, said the United States and Britain were guilty of state terrorism for their bombing of Iraqi territory. The Iraqi foreign minister added that he hoped Turkey would do its utmost to help avert U.S. military action against his country.

His remarks came shortly after Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit repeated his government's firm opposition to any attack against Iraq. He said such action would destabilize not only Turkey, but also the region as a whole.

The conference, which is being hosted by Turkey, brings together ministers and officials from more than 70 European, Arab, Asian, and African nations that belong to the European Union or the Organization of the Islamic Conference. Turkey became the first Muslim-majority country to be added to the EU list of official candidates in 1999. It is a founding member of the OIC. No delegation from the United States is at the conference.

Another issue raised was the violence between Israelis and Palestinians.

The foreign ministers agreed on the need for what EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana termed a two-state solution to the conflict that would foresee the creation of an independent Palestinian state.

The U.S. government, which is mediating between the Palestinians and the Israelis, is said to be opposed to the plan. Instead, it prefers a step-by-step approach, starting with the resumption of peace talks between Israelis and Palestinians. But amid all the anti-U.S. rhetoric there were also calls for peace between Islamic and Western nations and agreement on the need to combat all forms of terrorism.

Mr. Solana said the European Union is determined to reject the association of Islam with terrorism. Developing harmony between East and West, he added, will mean more than the prevention of conflicts. He said it would mean identifying the gaps in mutual perceptions and being willing to openly debate differences between East and West.

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As US targets Iraq, key rebels balk In rare interview, SCIRI leader rejects the "Afghan model" of intervention.

By Scott Peterson The Christian Science Monitor February 13, 2002

TEHRAN, IRAN - The Bush administration is accelerating development of plans to topple Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. But the leader of one of the few credible armed Iraqi opposition groups says he doesn't want Washington's help. "There is no need to send troops from outside to Iraq," says the black-turbaned Ayatollah Mohammad Bakr al-Hakim, leader of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). "It could be seen as an invasion and could create new problems."

Though courted for months by American diplomats to join in their effort to overthrow Mr. Hussein, Ayatollah al-Hakim also commander of the 10,000-strong Badr Brigade militia - urges caution in a rare interview. The chief reason is President Bush's declaration that SCIRI's host and sponsor, Iran, is part of an "axis of evil," as well as the past experience of the Iraqi opposition with "unreliable" US support.

The "Afghan model" of backing proxy forces, as the US did against the Taliban late last year, does not apply to Iraq,

al-Hakkim says. One Pentagon option includes a pincer operation toward Baghdad, with 50,000 American troops moving from the south with SCIRI's Shia Muslim guerrillas and 50,000 more moving from the north with Kurdish fighters.

Such plans are "very far-fetched" and a "bad idea," al-Hakkim says, his cleric's face framed by a gray beard. "The best thing the US can do is force the regime not to use its heavy weapons against the people, like they did in Kosovo. Then the Iraqi people can bring change--it must be done by the Iraqis themselves."

Few doubt growing American resolve against Iraq, though no evidence has emerged that Baghdad was involved in the Sept. 11 attacks, or in any terrorist act for the past decade. But Iraq is clearly a target. US Secretary of State Colin Powell told the Senate Budget Committee on Tuesday there are no "plans" to attack North Korea or Iran, but that Iraq was a special case.

Powell said a "regime change" in Iraq, however, "would be in the best interests of the region." He says Mr. Bush is considering "the most serious set of options one might imagine." Vice President Dick Cheney is to make a nine-nation Mideast tour in March to solidify allied support for any moves against Iraq.

Few armed opponents of Iraqi strongman Saddam Hussein have suffered as much as Iraq's southern Shia Muslims. They have seen their religious leaders assassinated, their marshes - both their economic lifeline and hiding place - drained, and their 1991 uprising put down mercilessly with a toxic cocktail of chemical weapons.

So few might be so willing - after spilling blood for years to topple the Iraqi leader - to embrace Washington's growing plans to do just that. Contacts between SCIRI and US officials outside Iran had warmed during the Afghan campaign, like those between the US and Iran. American diplomats had been increasing contacts for months.

"They were making good progress. It even looked like SCIRI might take US money for the first time, as a gesture of good will," says Toby Dodge, an Iraq expert at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. "There was a minor love-fest going on in London, until the 'axis of evil' speech. We can forget about that now - it's not going to happen."

The SCIRI is now warning that US troops in Iraq would be a "mistake."

But as a serious threat to Baghdad, SCIRI has "petered out" in recent years, says Mr. Dodge.

SCIRI is not a fighting force - like the Iran- and US-backed Northern Alliance in Afghanistan - that could hold front lines. "It was always a hit-and-run organization," Dodge says. The role it could have played in US strategy may remain a mystery because " 'axis of evil' has now alienated any support that may have been building in Tehran [to help the US topple Hussein]." Afghanistan is also a sore point: "Iran had a bad experience at the end of the Afghan war," says Dodge. "They helped, but at the end, the US tried to foist a US-client state on Iran. They are not going to let that happen in Iraq."

On the surface, the aims of SCIRI, Iran, and the US appear to coincide in Iraq. Few dislike Baghdad's rulers more than the Iranians. The Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s was started by Saddam Hussein in the early days of Iran's Islamic Revolution. Few who lived in Tehran at the time forget the rocketing of the capital. Few on the front lines forget how Iraq used chemical weapons against Iranian troops - the spur for Iran's own missile and chemical weapons production.

Still, Iran and SCIRI - which is overseen by Iranian security forces - are trying to gauge the impact of America's saber-rattling against Iraq, and weigh up their own interests. The bottom line: what is the endgame?

"They all wish to get rid of Saddam Hussein, but who will replace him?" says an Iranian analyst who asked not to be named. "The US wants a pro-US government there, but Iran wants a pro-Iran Islamic state and to have influence there." Ayatollah al-Hakkim insists that SCIRI wants to create a democratic regime in Iraq that includes all its ethnic and religious groups. More than 60 percent of Iraqis share the Shia branch of Islam, along with Iran.

But that mix has caused anxiety in the past. Swift calculations by the US and Saudi Arabia at the end of the Gulf War in 1991 - when Kurdish peshmerga fighters captured all of northern Iraq and marched toward Baghdad, and Shia rebels swept up from the south - first raised hopes, and then dashed them.

President George Bush Sr. promised Iraqis that the US would support their uprising, but then appeared to change his mind when it was clear that chaos - and possibly a Shia-run state allied to Iran - could result. In a history-altering decision, US Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf permitted Iraqi helicopters to fly - ostensibly to collect Iraqi war wounded - and Baghdad brutally crushed the revolt. In another failed US mission, a CIA operation aimed at trying to overthrow Saddam Hussein in 1996 helped split Kurdish ranks, before it was mopped up by Iraqi troops.

Today the administration calls that legacy "unfinished business." Ayatollah al-Hakim calls it a reason not to trust the Americans again: "The US in 1991 encouraged the regime to kill the people and stop this uprising," he says.

Complicating the issue further are Iran's views of US imperialism in its back yard. Since the Gulf War, Tehran has complained bitterly about the 20,000 or so US troops and sailors deployed in the Gulf region. The US Navy's Fifth fleet is based in Bahrain. With US forces in Afghanistan, too - and possibly one day in Iraq - they feel squeezed.

"Many Iranian journalists are writing that one of the main reasons the US went to Afghanistan is to check Iran's eastern border," says the Iranian analyst. "They are being sandwiched."

And there is another reason for caution. "Nobody sees Iran participating in a coalition against Iraq," says a Western diplomat in Tehran. "Saddam Hussein is watched by the whole world, so that threat is low. They want Saddam gone, but they fear a disintegration of Iraq out of their control."

That is SCIRI's fear, also. Ayatollah al-Hakim, with a flourish of his hands, says his forces "will use any new chance that comes to hand" to move against Baghdad, though "nobody can speak of the secrets of the [US] administration." He has his own hunch, too, which he delivers with the broadest of smiles: "They say they made mistakes in 1991," al-Hakim says, laughing out loud. "George W. Bush is trying to correct the mistakes of his father."

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U.S. weighs use of Iraqi dissidents: Groups could help destabilize Hussein

Chicago Tribune By Howard Witt and John Diamond February 14, 2002

WASHINGTON -- While actively studying military options against Iraq, the Bush administration is renewing its emphasis on using Iraqi opposition groups to destabilize Saddam Hussein's regime from within, a senior administration official said Wednesday.

"People tend to always underestimate opposition to regimes like that," said the official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "We believe there's considerable opposition and we're doing what we can--we're going to do what we can to support them." The possibility that the U.S. will use military force to topple Hussein has drawn sustained attention in the two weeks since President Bush branded the Iraqi regime part of an "axis of evil."

Bush said Wednesday that he was holding his options "close to my vest" for the time being, but he issued a stark warning to Hussein. "Make no mistake about it: If we need to, we will take necessary action to defend the American people," Bush said after meeting with Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf. "And I think that statement was clear enough for Iraq to hear me. ... Saddam Hussein needs to understand I'm serious about defending our country."

National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice, in an interview with the Tribune on Wednesday, emphasized that Bush has not yet made a decision to use force against Hussein. "Of course, military power is always an option, but it's one among several," Rice said.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, in testimony before Congress in the last week, said officials had prepared a range of economic, diplomatic and military options for the president's consideration. By refusing to allow United Nations inspectors to scrutinize Iraq's attempts to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, Hussein has made it "very clear that he's going to remain a danger," Rice said.

The administration has been sharpening its warnings to Hussein since Bush's State of the Union speech, in which he declared Iraq, Iran and North Korea to be member states of an "axis of evil" whose pursuit of weapons of mass destruction would not be tolerated.

Backing up the rhetoric

That rhetoric is being backed by active planning to finally accomplish a goal that has eluded the United States since the 1991 Persian Gulf war: what the Bush administration terms "regime change" in Iraq.

On the diplomatic front, those plans hinge on the implementation by the UN of so-called smart sanctions, a narrowed list of items with potential military uses that Iraq would be prohibited from importing until it agrees to allow UN weapons inspectors into the country.

U.S. diplomats have said that Russia, which has extensive economic ties with Iraq, is close to agreeing to the new sanctions formula. That arrangement would replace broad sanctions the UN imposed after the gulf war. Iraq and many other countries claim those sanctions have harmed civilians.

But the senior administration official said the president is not interested in mere "behavior modification," suggesting that even if Hussein were to agree to allow UN inspectors into his country, it might not be enough to satisfy the administration. U.S. allies in the war on terrorism, particularly European and Arab nations, have expressed nearly unanimous concerns about any U.S. military attack against Iraq, warning that such action could destabilize the entire gulf region and stoke Islamic extremism.

But Powell told Congress last week that, in the event the president decides to use military force, the United States is prepared to go it alone against Iraq if allies cannot be persuaded to help. The State Department, sensitive to how American actions are perceived in the world, is preparing various Iraq scenarios and gauging predicted international reactions.

"What's the worst that could happen if we decide on a unilateral-type direction in Iraq? How long can that action take? What would a post-Saddam Iraq look like? Those are the kinds of questions we are asking," a State Department official said. "Post 9/11, and post-Afghanistan, there's a sense that we have new options available to us."

Groups pose little threat

As part of its strategy, the administration is trying to strengthen contacts with Iraqi opposition groups, which are numerous but so far have shown little ability to pose a real challenge to Hussein's hold on power. All but a handful operate outside Iraq, in Britain, Syria, Jordan and Iran. A few rival Kurdish factions function in northern Iraq in a UN-controlled enclave established after the gulf war.

Last month, the Bush administration restored financial aid to the largest opposition group, the Iraqi National Congress, a London-based umbrella group. The State Department had suspended the funding over questions about how the group used the \$12.4 million in U.S. aid it had received since 1998.

The Iraqi National Congress and six other groups named in the 1998 Iraq Liberation Act, passed overwhelmingly by Congress, are authorized to receive up to \$97 million in surplus U.S. military equipment. But the Bush administration, like the Clinton administration before it, has declined to fund any opposition activities inside Iraq.

The senior administration official said that the White House is reviewing that funding policy.

The other groups are the Iraqi National Accord, the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Islamic Movement of Iraqi Kurdistan and the Movement for Constitutional Monarchy. These and other opposition groups pursue their own often sharply divergent agendas. And none appears to have the weaponry or geographic position to challenge Hussein's heavily militarized regime.

"This is like Nazi Germany," said John Pike of Globalsecurity.org, a Washington think-tank. "Saddam has had a third of a century to perfect his security apparatus, and I think he has effectively extirpated any formal or informal resistance in areas that his forces control." The Iraqi National Congress has advanced the theory that a modest amount of U.S. military pressure on Iraq would spark an uprising that would topple Hussein's regime.

A U.S. official familiar with some of the planning and ongoing operations against Iraq said there are little-known opposition cells inside the country that present an opportunity to the U.S. For now, though, the Bush administration considers them so vulnerable to an Iraqi crackdown that they cannot be named or described even in general terms.

Another scenario would be for Hussein's lieutenants to overthrow him. A history of violence within Hussein's own family has led some to suggest that one of his sons, Uday Hussein, who runs the country's security apparatus, could mount a coup. The question for Washington would be whether such an act would change anything for the better.

"How far down into the Iraqi regime would we have to go before we found somebody who would be acceptable to us?" Pike said. A military offensive against Iraq would also pose serious problems, particularly finding a base in the region from which to launch it. It is almost certain, for example, that Saudi Arabia, which allowed U.S. troops to use its bases during the Persian Gulf war, would not allow its territory to be used as a springboard for invading Iraq.

Army Gen. Tommy Franks, who probably would command any military action against Iraq, was in Kuwait this week amid speculation he was laying the groundwork for deployment of U.S. troops that would form the nucleus of an invasion force. Franks denied such speculation. Vice President Dick Cheney is set to depart on a tour of Middle East and Persian Gulf countries next month, although administration officials insist that the trip is not intended to line up support for possible military action against Iraq.

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Iranian First Vice President Rejects Change of Iraqi Regime

Xinhua February 13, 2002

DAMASCUS, February 13 (Xinhuanet) – Iranian First Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said here on Wednesday that his country was opposed to change of the Iraqi regime in line with a U.S. formula. Aref made the remarks after a meeting with Syrian Vice President Abdel-Halim Khaddam who underscored the necessity of legitimate resistance against foreign occupation. Aref told reporters that his visit to Damascus was aimed at discussing with the "Syrian brothers" the developments of the regional and international situations as a prelude to adopting common positions.

On the recent U.S. threats against Iran, Aref said "the threats are not the first of their kind."

"The threats that have been going on since the victory of the Islamic Revolution of Iran adopted a tougher nature after U.S. President George W. Bush took office," he added, noting that the Iranian position on the threats was the same as it used to be. On the position of his country if the United States tried to change the Iraqi regime through military force, the Iranian leader said "We are against any foreign intervention in the internal affairs of other countries." "We believe that the future of a country should be determined by its own sons," he pointed out. Bush described Iraq, Iran, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in his State of the Union address recently as "the axes of evil." On the question of the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance group, Aref said "the issue was not discussed with the Syrian leaders." However, he said both Iran and Syria supported the national resistance in the region. Replying a question on the Iranian-Iraqi rapprochement after the U.S. threats to the two neighbors, Aref said the Iranian foreign policy always sought to put aside the old differences while trying to solve them in a friendly way in order to build a peaceful prosperous future.

He expressed hope that the talks between Iran and Iraq would lead to positive results as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, Khaddam told reporters that the recent U.S. threats to Iran have been there a long time ago. "Our firm position on the threats is more important than the threats themselves," he said. "Resistance against foreign occupation is a legitimate right for all nations. There is no power that can deprive any occupied country of this right or undermine it," he added. The visit of the Iranian first vice president to Syria is of special significance as it reasserts the strategic alliance between Iran and Syria after the increasing U.S. pressures on Syria to stop backing Hizbollah. The visit also followed the U.S. accusations against Iran of being part of the "axes of evil."

Aref arrived here on Wednesday morning as head of a senior political economic delegation for a three-day visit to Syria.

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"Hürriyet", champion malléable de la cause turque

PRESSE - Principal quotidien de Turquie, "La Liberté" est aussi le premier journal turcophone en Allemagne. Ses prises de position radicales ont semé le trouble parmi les responsables allemands. Mais il a finalement décidé de faire le dos rond.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG
Frankfort

Le journal *Hürriyet* est puissant. "Hürriyet domine l'Europe", déclare Halit Çelikbudak, journaliste à l'édition allemande. Entendez par là l'Europe turque. *Hürriyet* ("La Liberté") est, avec plus de 500 000 exemplaires vendus chaque jour, le plus grand quotidien de Turquie et le plus grand journal étranger du reste de l'Europe. L'édition européenne tire à 80 000 exemplaires, dont les trois quarts sont vendus en Allemagne, où on estime que chacun d'entre eux est lu par quatre personnes et au moins par dix dans les bars à kebabs, selon M. Çelikbudak. Le journal touche donc largement plus de 200 000 lecteurs outre-Rhin. Lancé en Allemagne en 1965 à destination des travailleurs immigrés turcs, ce journal comprend depuis 1973 une édition allemande qui est réalisée aujourd'hui par une vingtaine de journalistes et par une centaine de pigistes dans six bureaux régionaux.

Hürriyet est tellement puissant que Halit Çelikbudak peut regretter, non sans une certaine suffisance, qu'il n'ait plus de véritable concurrent en Allemagne. Le marché était plus étendu et plus disputé quand la télévision par satellite n'existait pas et que les journaux étaient le seul moyen pour les immigrés turcs de s'informer sur leur pays. Le quotidien progressiste *Sabah*, l'un de ses plus grands concurrents, a mis un terme à son édition européenne en 2001. *Hürriyet*, nationaliste et conservateur, occupe aujourd'hui 54 % du marché selon le Centre d'études turques de l'université d'Essen, 80 % selon ses propres chiffres.

UNE PROPAGANDE SERVIE PAR LA BARRIÈRE LINGUISTIQUE

Mais les leaders aussi – et peut-être surtout – sont vulnérables. Le quotidien est accusé depuis des années d'attiser la méfiance des Turcs vis-à-vis des Allemands et de faire obstacle à leur intégration. La rédaction allemande s'est trouvée en mauvaise posture l'année dernière puisque ses propos agressifs lui ont valu quatre plaintes pour

► Dessin de Rademacher paru dans Die Zeit, Hambourg.

■ **Politique**
Ozan Ceyhan, député européen d'origine turque (SPD), n'est pas seulement satisfait du changement de ligne d'*Hürriyet*. Il en est l'un des premiers bénéficiaires. Après l'avoir insulté, le quotidien lui propose depuis décembre dernier de tenir une chronique hebdomadaire dans ses colonnes. "Un geste qui prend des allures de réparation", commente la *Frankfurter Rundschau*. En outre, le quotidien de Frankfort souligne l'enthousiasme mitigé de certains confrères turcs, qui estiment "tout de même honteux qu'il ait fallu une intervention du gouvernement allemand pour en arriver là". Une réflexion qui témoigne aussi de l'amertume qu'engendre



injures diffamatoires et une réprimande du Conseil allemand de la presse. Aydın Dogan, tsar des médias et éditeur du journal, a été convoqué à la présidence de la République et au ministère de l'Intérieur pour "discuter du caractère peu incitatif à l'intégration des articles de l'édition allemande", pour reprendre les termes de l'Office fédéral de presse (BPA). *Hürriyet* n'est en fait pas plus provocateur qu'avant, mais

bien plus surveillé. Fini l'époque où le quotidien n'était pas traduit par le BPA pour des raisons d'économie et pouvait insulter en toute tranquillité le gouvernement allemand avec des titres comme "Bande de salauds !" parce qu'il avait cessé ses livraisons d'armes à la Turquie. *Hürriyet* faisait de l'agitation

l'absence d'alternative dans le secteur de l'information. Persebe, l'hebdomadaire bilingue du jeudi diffusé avec le quotidien berlinois *die tagesszeitung*, a disparu après un an d'existence.

dans la population turque sans que les Allemands s'en aperçoivent.

Ce journal, considéré comme proche du gouvernement turc, démasquait régulièrement de prétendus "ennemis de la Turquie". La rédaction publiait l'adresse, le numéro de téléphone et de télécopieur de supposés sympathisants des Kurdes ou des islamistes et encourageait les lecteurs à donner leur avis sur les cibles de ses attaques. Le journaliste Klaus Bednarz a fait l'objet de l'une de ces campagnes d'*Hürriyet* au milieu des années 90 après s'être demandé au cours du *Tagesthemen* [le journal télévisé de 22 h 30 d'ARD, la première chaîne de télévision allemande] si la politique de la Turquie à l'égard des Kurdes ne poussait pas les gens vers le PKK. *Hürriyet* avait alors répliqué que : "Le gouvernement chinois donne deux marks pour chaque rat. Combien pensez-vous valoir, monsieur Bednarz ?" Ce dernier a bénéficié de la protection de la police. Le journal a à plusieurs reprises l'année dernière traité Cem Özdemir, député vert chargé de la politique intérieure au sein de son groupe parlementaire, de "traître à la patrie". Celui-ci a cependant réagi quand *Hürriyet* a déclaré qu'il avait baisé la main d'un prêtre arménien et exigé un droit de réponse auprès des juges.

Pour M. Özdemir, *Hürriyet* ne fait pas du journalisme, mais de la pro-

pagande. L'Allemagne, c'est "Gurbet", l'étranger, et les Turcs qui y sont installés n'en font pas partie, ce sont des "étrangers". En représentant ses dirigeants, tel Helmut Kohl ou Gerhard Schröder, comme hostiles aux Turcs ("Cet Allemand est notre ennemi"), on donne l'impression aux gens qu'ils vivent dans un pays hostile. Les observateurs allemands ont longtemps considéré que ce contenu rédactionnel était d'autant plus dangereux que la population turque se repliait de plus en plus sur les journaux et les chaînes de télévision de Turquie, devenus de plus en plus facilement accessibles. On parlait d'un "ghetto médiatique" et d'un "cloisonnement" qui permettaient aux médias turcs de diffuser une opinion négative sur l'Allemagne, opinion sur laquelle les journaux allemands n'avaient aucune influence.

BIENTÔT DES PAGES EN ALLEMAND POUR LES PLUS JEUNES

Une étude commandée par le BPA sur le comportement des Turcs d'Allemagne à l'égard des médias réfute cependant cette opinion commune. En effet seuls 17 % d'entre eux – en majorité des personnes âgées – n'utilisent que des médias turcs et 50 % s'informent en allemand et en turc. La presse turque n'a donc pas le monopole de l'information, et l'influence anti-intégration d'*Hürriyet* est plus limitée que ce que l'on craignait. Influence que conteste le journal lui-même. Sevda Boduroglu, la directrice de l'édition allemande, se défend de faire de la propagande nationaliste. Elle affirme qu'*Hürriyet* ne veut entrer en conflit avec personne, mais que le journalisme turc est par essence "combatif" ; le peuple doit s'exprimer quand quelque chose lui déplaît. La presse turque a

l'habitude d'encourager dans "une langue proche du peuple" les lecteurs à manifester leur avis sur un tiers. Les journaux contribuent ainsi à une prise de décision démocratique. La fierté nationale d'*Hürriyet* ne doit pas être comprise comme du nationalisme ; la mention "Türkiye Türklerindir", "la Turquie des Turcs", un slogan d'Atatürk, qui figure à la une, n'est pas une manifestation d'agressivité, mais de fierté. Aujourd'hui encore, le journal sort une édition bordée de noir pour chaque anniversaire de la mort du fondateur de l'Etat turc. "Nous avons des méthodes différentes." Il va pourtant falloir en changer. L'éditeur a promis cet été au président de la République allemande d'adoucir le ton du journal. Ertug Karakullukçu, rédacteur en chef de l'édition européenne et commentateur à la réputation sulfureuse, avait promis de contribuer de façon "entièrement nouvelle à une coexistence idéale" entre Turcs et Allemands. Il a malgré tout dû partir en octobre comme la quasi-totalité de la rédaction en chef de l'édition européenne. Pour Udo Steinbach, le directeur du Deutsches Orient-Institut de l'université de Hambourg, qui a lui-même fait l'objet d'une campagne de diffamation entre avril et juin de l'année dernière ("Le danger, c'est Udo"), c'est la preuve qu'*Hürriyet* devient véritablement plus libéral.

Certes, rien n'a changé dans la structure de production. La rédaction en chef pour l'Allemagne, devant laquelle les drapeaux turc et allemand flottent au vent en parfaite harmonie, produit les textes à Mörfelden-Walldorf, près de Francfort, mais c'est toujours à la centrale d'Istanbul qu'ils sont revus. Raison pour laquelle la rédaction allemande est souvent considérée comme "téléguidée" par Istanbul.

Pourtant, Sevda Boduroglu souligne qu'*Hürriyet* veut devenir "vraiment européen" à l'avenir. Un projet de page régulière écrite en allemand et destinée aux jeunes devrait se concrétiser ce mois-ci après avoir été sans cesse repoussé pendant un an. L'objectif est de "rajeunir" le journal et de conquérir la troisième et la quatrième génération des Turcs d'Allemagne. Car les ventes de l'édition européenne ont baissé de 10 % l'année dernière. Ce qui pourrait également expliquer la libéralisation actuelle.

L'époque se prête d'ailleurs moins aux commentaires dogmatiques. Depuis le 11 septembre, la politique allemande va dans le sens de la laïcité que défend *Hürriyet*. Le journal, qui accusait depuis des années l'Allemagne d'abriter des terroristes islamiques et voyait dans la tolérance dont elle faisait preuve à l'égard des femmes qui portaient le foulard la confirmation de ses dires, a renoncé à ces attaques et suivi avec satisfaction les coups portés aux groupes islamistes. Le 14 décembre, au lendemain de l'interdiction du Califat de Cologne [une organisation islamiste turque], les éditions turques et européennes tiraient en allemand : "Merci l'Allemagne !"

Ces accents conciliateurs sont accueillis avec soulagement. Le BPA constate qu'il n'y a eu aucun "coup au-dessous de la ceinture" depuis des mois. Udo Steinbach, qui avait saisi les tribunaux l'année dernière pour une campagne de harcèlement "qui s'était arrêtée juste avant l'appel au meurtre", est agréablement surpris. *Hürriyet* a appelé son avocat et proposé de prendre les frais du procès à sa charge et de publier une interview de lui. Le journal cherche désormais un arrangement. **Eva Busse**

U.K. Slackens Ties With Iran After Tehran Rejects Envoy

By Warren Hoge
New York Times Service

LONDON — Iran has turned down Britain's choice of ambassador to Tehran after hard-line newspapers there accused him of being "a Jew and a member of MI6," the British intelligence agency.

Britain retaliated Friday night by downgrading the status of the Iranian envoy here and placing relations with



Hashemi Rafsanjani speaking after Friday prayers at Tehran University. The former president, an influential conservative, warned that the United States would be "caught in a quagmire" if it dared to attack Iran.

Tehran on a "more critical" basis.

The confrontation represented a serious setback to Britain's efforts in recent months to thaw relations between Iran and the West. The two countries exchanged ambassadors in July 1999 after a decade-long break, and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw has visited Tehran twice since Sept. 11 seeking help for the anti-terror coalition in Afghanistan and trying to capitalize on the Iranians' opposition to the Taliban regime.

The Foreign Office on Friday denied the claims about its nominee, David Reddaway, 48. In a statement, it said he was "exceptionally well qualified for the job" and asserted that Britain would not be proposing another candidate. Mr. Reddaway has served twice in Tehran, is married to an Iranian and speaks Farsi. He is not Jewish.

"This does not mean a complete reversal of our policy of critical engagement, which by its nature is bound to be difficult, but it will not help," the Foreign Office statement said. "It does mean our bilateral dialogue will inevitably become more critical."

Hamid Reza Asefi, spokesman for the Iranian Foreign Ministry, expressed surprise at Britain's reaction. "Whether or not to accept the ambassador proposed by a country is the natural right of the host country," he told the official Iranian press agency, IRNA. "This is not an unprecedented affair. It has happened many times in the diplomatic

relations of various countries without overshadowing their ties."

There was speculation in London that the action against Mr. Reddaway, which the Foreign Office said was only "conclusively" confirmed Friday, may have been precipitated by Old Guard conservatives exploiting President George W. Bush's denunciation of Iran in his State of the Union speech last week as part of an "axis of evil" with Iraq and North Korea.

Britain is America's closest ally in the anti-terror campaign and was denounced recently by the hard-line Iranian supreme leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, as a "servant of the U.S."

U.S. officials claim that Iran is developing weapons of mass destruction, undermining the pro-U.S. government in Kabul, destabilizing Afghan regions near its border by rearming and financing warlords, and giving arms and support to terrorist groups in the Middle East.

Britain appeared to toughen its own tone Friday night, saying in the statement that "we have always had concerns about Iran's support of terrorist groups and development of weapons of mass destruction." The Foreign Office said that Prime Tony Blair had discussed the case of Mr. Reddaway last month with the Iranian president, Mohammed Khatami, the reformist leader who had invited Mr. Straw to Tehran in September.

Britain cut ties with Iran in 1989 after

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini issued a fatwa urging people to kill the British author Salman Rushdie because, he asserted, his book "The Satanic Verses" was blasphemous. Formal relations were restored in 1998 when the fatwa was lifted.

British hopes of producing a thaw in the relations between Iran and the West this autumn had been high. On arriving in Tehran Sept. 24 — the first time a British foreign secretary had been there since the Islamic revolution of 1979 — Mr. Straw said: "I'm devoting as much time as I can to ensure that the relationship is a much deeper one than it has been in the past. What I've started today is a high level dialogue with the Iranians, of a kind that we've not enjoyed for years."

That trip sharpened disputes between reformist and extremist elements in Iran, with a conservative newspaper commenting, "The bad smell of the British is in our nostrils once again."

Mr. Blair's spokesman acknowledged Friday the internal struggle and said Britain would still seek to engage the reformist side. "I think everyone knows there is a debate within Iran about which direction it should go in," he said, "and it should come as no surprise therefore that decisions are sometimes made that disappoint us."

Evil in Baghdad and Tehran ■ By David Ignatius

Europe isn't being helpful

PARIS

Listening to the chorus of European criticism of President George W. Bush's "axis of evil" speech, I found myself recalling an evening spent nearly 20 years ago in the apartment of a Soviet dissident in Moscow.

It was just after President Ronald Reagan had given his famous speech denouncing the Soviet Union as an "evil empire." The conventional wisdom at that time was that Reagan had made a stupid blunder, supposedly typical of his cowboy brand of conservatism. How differently the speech was perceived in Moscow.

My host that night was a Russian professor who had lost everything — his job, his privileges, his ability to travel — because he had dared to question the Communist rulers. He turned to me, an American visitor, and said something I have never forgotten.

"How can it be," he wondered, "that the United States has elected a president who dares to tell the truth about the Soviet Union? We thought that America, with all its money, had become decadent. But now you have called us by our true name."

I never looked at Reagan in quite the same way after that. In the very naïveté of his comment, he had broken through a barrier. He had given ordinary Russians and East Europeans hope that communism would not be a permanent condition. The Evil Empire was gone within less than a decade.

This past week, all right-thinking people in Europe seemed convinced that Bush had made another stupid American blunder. France's foreign minister, Hubert Védrine, summed up the European critique on Wednesday when he called Bush's anti-terrorism policy "simplistic."

But, as with Reagan in 1983, Europeans seem to be missing the point. For starters, the real audience for the

"axis of evil" comment was not in the mirrored corridors of the Quai d'Orsay but among ordinary Iranians living in the dirt alleyways of south Tehran.

And far from being simplistic, the Bush speech engaged what may be the most subtle and difficult issue of this decade: how to encourage political change in Iran and Iraq. (Let's drop North Korea for a moment. Its inclusion on the "axis" list was a bit of rhetorical overkill.)

But will it work? That pragmatic test is the right way to measure the Bush policy. And by that measure, there are some serious problems.

The Bush administration seems to believe that Iran is in a prerevolutionary state. That is why Bush's speech included a blast at "an unelected few [who] repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom."

Administration officials point to the wave of popular unrest that has swept Iran in the past several years — ranging from dissident mullahs in Qum to striking schoolteachers or the "soccer rioters" who have taken to the streets after recent World Cup games. The officials note that after Sept. 11, pro-American demonstrators held candlelight marches in north Tehran.

The Bush argument is that it makes no more sense to ally with a halfway reformer such as President Mohammed Khatami than it would have made to embrace Yuri Andropov when Soviet reform efforts were beginning in the early 1980s. Better to encourage the true revolutionaries.

The practical problem with this argument is that it's dangerous, both for the Iranian revolutionaries and for the

United States. What coaxed Soviet communism toward its eventual collapse was a combination of carrots and sticks. The United States nurtured Soviet dissidents in part by keeping the doors open. Even Reagan continued to do business with the Communists in

Moscow, discussing a sweeping arms control agreement at Reykjavik.

The greatest danger in coming months is that Iran will take control of what is left of the Qaeda networks, melding them into its already potent terrorist infrastructure around the world. The Iranians did the same thing with Yasser Arafat's Fatah networks after he was driven from Beirut by the Israelis in 1982. That covert alliance was responsible for the destruction of

two U.S. embassies and a U.S. Marine barracks and for the kidnapping of several dozen American hostages.

Bush's goal of toppling Saddam Hussein in Iraq is worthy but immensely difficult. And the problem is complicated by the administration's penchant for declaring war on everybody at once. The Bush plan for Iraq seems to involve popular uprisings in the Kurdish north and the Shiite south, under cover from U.S. forces based in Turkey and Kuwait. Saddam's Revolutionary Guards would be drawn out of their barracks to put down the revolts, leaving them vulnerable to American airpower, à la Afghanistan.

It's a great plan, except for two problems — Iran and Saudi Arabia. The plan implicitly relies on stable

U.S. relations with those two key regional powers. Unfortunately, they are the very countries that the Bush administration has been working overtime to offend of late. There are reports, for example, that the United States is already beginning to move military equipment out of Saudi Arabia because of strained relations.

There is nothing simplistic about Bush's goals. They are worthy not only of the United States but of its European allies. It would be nice if the Europeans stopped complaining about American arrogance and began offering constructive advice. It's needed.

International Herald Tribune
The Washington Post



13 FEVRIER 2002

Double jeu iranien avec les talibans

Téhéran aurait ouvert ses frontières aux forces du mollah Omar et de Ben Laden.

Herat envoyé spécial

L'Iran a-t-il donné asile à des membres du réseau Al-Qaeda? Qari Ali Ahmed, un gros Afghan calme et plutôt jovial surnommé le Manchot, n'est a priori pas du genre à faire des confidences sur la république islamique d'Iran. Ne serait-ce que parce que c'est elle qui a créé, armé, financé, dirigé et continue probablement de contrôler l'organisation qu'il dirige, baptisée, comme au Liban, le Hezbollah. Cette formation militaro-politique est l'une des principales organisations islamistes chiites de la province afghane d'Herat, frontalière de l'Iran. Est-ce parce qu'il hait à ce point les talibans et Al-Qaeda qu'il en est venu à reconnaître implicitement que des combattants de ces deux organisations ont pu trouver refuge dans ce pays frère? «Officiellement, non. Mais, secrètement, peut-être», lâche-t-il doucement. Dans sa bouche, le «peut-être» équivaut à un aveu, d'autant que l'on attendait plutôt de lui un démenti furieux. Car les rapports entre l'Afghanistan des talibans et l'Iran ont toujours semblé exécrables au point que les deux Etats ont donné l'impression d'être prêts à se livrer bataille en 1998. «L'Iran est hostile aux Etats-Unis et les talibans aussi. Peut-être que cela les a amenés à avoir des relations (...). Regardez, Téhéran et Bagdad étaient ennemis. Maintenant ils sont amis. C'est comme ça la poli-



Un prisonnier taliban rase la tête d'un codétenu, le 25 novembre dernier à la prison d'Herat. Au moins 280 talibans y sont incarcérés.

tique», ajoute-t-il en faisant glisser les grains de son chapelet de sa seule main valide.

Affrontements. Les combattants du Hezbollah afghan se sont rendus maîtres de Kohe-Char, l'une des principales casernes de la ville. A l'entrée, on compte une quinzaine de chars soviétiques. Ancienne base d'Al-Qaeda, elle a été écrasée sous les bombardements américains. Lorsque les talibans ont quitté He-

rat, en novembre, les combattants du Hezbollah se sont précipités depuis l'Iran voisin, où ils s'étaient réfugiés, pour reprendre la ville. Ils n'étaient pas les seuls puisque Ismaël Khan, l'ex-homme fort d'Herat, chassé par les talibans en 1995, puis réfugié en Iran, avait aussi lancé ses hommes. «Or, confie un intellectuel très bien informé sur les relations entre l'Iran et les talibans et qui parle sous condition de l'anonymat, les uns et les autres se sont vu interdire par Téhéran d'emprunter la grande route qui va de la frontière à Herat. Pourquoi? Pour ne pas qu'ils risquent de se trouver face avec les talibans et les groupes d'Al-Queda qui quittaient la ville pour se réfugier en Iran.» Pour lui, il ne fait aucun doute que Téhéran a ouvert secrètement ses frontières aux hommes du mollah Omar et de Ben Laden. Il ajoute que ces derniers, lorsqu'ils ont fui par des routes secondaires – celles de Golran et de Kohshan – pour gagner l'Iran, ont rencontré les combattants du Hezbollah et d'Ismaël Khan, qui rentraient dans leur pays.

Avant la chute du régime taliban, des témoins verront circuler vers l'Iran un mystérieux convoi d'une cinquantaine de Land-Cruiser aux vitres fumées et tous feux éteints.

«Alors il y a eu des affrontements. Les forces antitalibanes se sont emparées d'une dizaine de véhicules de leurs ennemis», ajoute la même source.

Discrimination. Téhéran a toujours démenti avoir permis aux talibans et à leurs alliés de se réfugier sur son sol, ce dont l'accuse régulièrement Washington. Dernièrement, le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Kamal Khazai, a admis que certains d'entre eux avaient pu franchir la frontière du fait de sa porosité. Il a ajouté que, si cette hypothèse se vérifiait, ils seraient arrêtés et expulsés. Officiellement, Téhéran et les talibans n'ont toujours eu que des relations hostiles, lesquelles s'étaient gravement envenimées après l'exécution, en

1998, de huit diplomates iraniens lors de la prise de Mazar-i-Sharif par les «étudiants en théologie». De plus, l'Iran a été l'un des principaux fournisseurs d'armes du commandant Massoud et de l'Alliance du Nord. S'ajoute que les talibans sunnites ont pratiqué une politique de discrimination à l'encontre de la minorité chiite (10 % de la population afghane, proche culturellement de l'Iran), qu'ils considé-

raient comme hérétique. Les contentieux étaient des plus lourds entre les deux régimes.

Pourtant, plusieurs signes indiquent que Téhéran, du moins la faction conservatrice qui dispute le pouvoir au président Khatami, a joué en fait sur les deux tableaux en ayant des relations à la fois avec le commandant Massoud et ses ennemis fondamentalistes. «L'Iran a refusé que les talibans ouvrent un consulat à Machad

(la grande ville de l'Ouest) mais permis qu'un bureau commercial le soit dans la ville-frontière de Taibat. Les événements du 11 septembre ont empêché son inauguration», indique le même intellectuel. Il ajoute que le ministre taliban des Affaires étrangères, Wakil Ahmed Moutawakil, s'était même rendu secrètement à Isfahan pour obtenir une reconnaissance officielle de l'Iran mais que ce pays a posé des conditions jugées inacceptables par les chefs fondamentalistes de Kaboul.

Mouvement inverse. Après le 11 septembre, les deux régimes vont encore se rapprocher. Un haut responsable iranien des services de sécurité se rend à Kaboul. Après la première semaine de bombardements américains, des volontaires d'Al-Qaeda transitant par l'Iran commencent à affluer à Herat au nombre de 5 à 10 par jour. «C'était de jeunes Arabes. Je le sais parce que j'ai pu parler avec eux dans un garage d'Herat où ils faisaient réparer leur Land-Cruiser», relate le même intellectuel. Les attaques américaines s'intensifiant, il y aura un mouvement inverse sur la route de Herat à Islam Qalat, ville-frontière afghane. Avant la chute du régime taliban, des témoins verront circuler un mystérieux convoi d'une cinquantaine de Land-Cruiser aux vitres fumées et tous feux éteints. A cette occasion, les talibans locaux, qui contrôlaient les barages routiers, seront remplacés pendant deux jours par des guerriers plus sûrs ou plus discrets, venus de Kandahar, selon un témoignage recueilli à l'hôtel Safed, situé entre Herat et la frontière. S'agissait-il de hauts responsables des talibans et d'Al-Qaeda? La réponse se trouve de l'autre côté de la frontière ●

JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN

Iran poised to send home terrorism suspects

By Guy Dinmore in Tehran

Iran is preparing to hand back about 25 Taliban and al-Qaeda prisoners to their respective governments, a senior Iranian politician said yesterday, disclosing plans that diplomats said appeared aimed at calming tensions with the US.

The prisoners included one or two high-level figures "who would be of interest to the US", the politician, who asked not to be named, told

the Financial Times. He declined to identify the prisoners but said the Taliban members would be given soon to Afghanistan's new interim administration, while the suspected al-Qaeda activists would be handed to authorities in their home countries, which included Saudi Arabia.

Diplomats said they believed the total number of prisoners to be much higher and that they included western nationals who had been

caught on their way to Afghanistan to help the Taliban or were arrested while trying to escape through Iran.

President George W. Bush warned Iran last month not to harbour any al-Qaeda "murderers" and said any found on its territory should be handed over to the US. Later, in his State of the Union address, he accused Iran, Iraq and North Korea of constituting an "axis of evil" through their efforts to

acquire weapons of mass destruction that could be used by terrorist groups.

Behind the defiant public rhetoric of preparing to repel any US military attack on Iran, the pro-reform government of President Mohammad Khatami has been trying to defuse the crisis. Iran's Shia Muslim leadership is seeking to convince western opinion that it has been waging its own hidden war against the Sunni fundamentalist al-Qaeda network

for some years. Iranian anger is being directed more at Pakistan. A government spokesman yesterday accused "a neighbouring country" of seeking to infiltrate al-Qaeda members into Iran.

Last Friday Ali Yunesi, Iran's intelligence minister and an ally of Mr Khatami, accused Pakistan of not doing enough to curb the activities of Pakistani "terrorist groups" that he said had infiltrated Iran to sup-

port other Sunni fundamentalist groups.

The minister said about 20,000 people who had entered Afghanistan through Pakistan with the help of the Taliban were now "scattered in the region" and that many were crossing into south-east Iran from Pakistan. He said they included US and European citizens and Arabs but that they had no links with al-Qaeda.

"The presence of these people in Iran is not to our

national benefit," he said, suggesting that some would be handed over to their embassies, while any Taliban member would be delivered to the "legal government" of Afghanistan.

Iranian officials also said at the weekend that Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, a former Afghan warlord who has declared his intention to attack foreign forces in Afghanistan, would no longer be able to carry out political activities.

Le Monde

12 FÉVRIER 2002

Iran : le retour du temps des diatribes

ON SE CROIRAIT revenu des années en arrière, au temps où, dans les années 1990, l'Iran était accusé, notamment par les Etats-Unis de chercher à se doter de l'arme nucléaire et de menacer ses voisins ; au temps où les relations entre la Grande-Bretagne et la République islamique connaissaient de vives tensions ; au temps où les diatribes officielles américaines étaient un lot quasi quotidien à Téhéran.

La CIA soupçonnait alors l'Iran d'être sur le point d'acquiescer à l'arme nucléaire dans des délais assez courts – les estimations variaient alors entre trois et cinq ans. Les Etats-Unis, qui voulaient contenir l'Iran et l'Irak dans un « double endiguement » avaient, entre autres, interdit à leurs propres sociétés pétrolières de traiter avec Téhéran – au grand dam des intéressées qui voyaient filer les contrats au profit des Européens. Les sanctions furent ensuite étendues aux sociétés étrangères, menacées, en cas de participation à l'industrie pétrolière iranienne, d'interdiction de territoire américain – c'est la loi dite D'Amato. Et, dans les prêches du vendredi, les responsables iraniens se succédaient à la tribune pour vouer les Etats-Unis et Israël aux gémonies. Quant à la Grande-Bretagne, elle n'était représentée à Téhéran que par un chargé d'affaires, à cause de la fatwa condamnant à mort l'écrivain britannique Salman Rushdie ; fatwa qui polluait par ailleurs l'ensemble des relations irano-européennes.

Depuis quelques années, singulièrement depuis l'accession en 1997 du réformateur Mohammad Khatami à la présidence de la République iranienne, ces tensions s'étaient apaisées, à défaut d'être dissipées, une certaine méfiance

réciroque étant toujours de mise, que les conflits factionnels à l'intérieur même de l'Iran ont contribué à entretenir. L'affaire afghane semble avoir réveillé les contentieux. L'Iran est en effet désormais accusé de jouer les trouble-fête dans l'Afghanistan post-taliban, de chercher à se doter de l'arme nucléaire et d'armements biologiques et chimiques, d'aider le Hezbollah libanais, de participer à un trafic d'armes à destination de la Palestine, bref, de faire partie de cet « axe du mal » qui inclut également, aux yeux du président George W. Bush, l'Irak et la Corée du Nord. Ces accusations émanent des Etats-Unis et d'Israël, et, au moins pour ce qui concerne de présumées turbulences en Afghanistan, certains pays européens ne lavent pas Téhéran de tout soupçon.

TENSIONS AVEC LONDRES

Côté britannique, les tensions ont recommencé à propos de la nomination d'un nouvel ambassadeur de Sa Gracieuse Majesté en Iran. Téhéran ayant refusé l'accréditation du diplomate David Reddaway, choisi par Londres pour le représenter, le Foreign Office n'a pas hésité à porter l'affaire sur la place publique et à annoncer qu'il était hors de question d'en proposer un autre. La Grande-Bretagne sera donc à nouveau représentée par un chargé d'affaires et, par mesure de réciprocité, l'ambassadeur d'Iran en Grande-Bretagne n'aura accès désormais qu'à un fonctionnaire de deuxième rang au ministère des affaires étrangères. Le gouvernement iranien s'est dit indigné de cette manière de procéder, contraire, selon lui, aux règles internationales, qui autorisent un pays à refuser l'accréditation d'un diplomate. Téhéran sem-

ble considérer que Londres a saisi cette affaire comme un prétexte pour mettre ses pas dans ceux de Washington.

Pourtant, il y a quelques jours encore, le gouvernement britannique avait pris ses distances par rapport à la théorie de « l'axe du mal » tracée par l'administration américaine et estimé qu'elle encourageait les tenants d'une ligne dure en République islamique, alors même qu'il fallait au contraire continuer d'encourager les partisans d'une ouverture et d'une libéralisation, si modestes soient-elles. Et, au début de la crise afghane, lorsque Téhéran et les pays occidentaux s'étaient retrouvés sur une même ligne antitalibane, les dirigeants britanniques n'avaient pas manqué de s'en féliciter. Le secrétaire au Foreign Office, Jack Straw, avait effectué une visite à Téhéran, et le premier ministre britannique, Tony Blair, avait eu plusieurs contacts téléphoniques avec le président Khatami. Depuis 1999, les relations entre les deux pays s'étaient normalisées, après que Téhéran se fut engagé à ne pas faire exécuter la fatwa par laquelle dix ans plus tôt, le père de la République islamique, l'ayatollah Rouhollah Khomeiny, avait condamné à mort l'auteur des *Versets sataniques*, jugés diffamatoires pour l'Islam.

Qu'ils soient réformateurs ou conservateurs – selon la classification désormais convenue pour désigner les deux factions adverses à Téhéran –, les responsables iraniens se sont relayés pour démentir les soupçons et accusations portés contre leur pays. Certains, tel le Guide de la République, c'est-à-dire son autorité suprême, l'ayatollah Ali Khamenei, figure de proue de l'aile conservatrice, n'ont pas hésité à brandir des menaces : une éventuelle atta-

que contre l'Iran ne sera pas une promenade de santé pour ses auteurs, a-t-il prévenu en substance, qualifiant « le régime » américain d'« arrogant » d'« hypocrite » et d'« inhumain ». Les Iraniens ont, par ailleurs, été invités à manifester leur unité et à exprimer leur rejet des accusations « américano-sionistes » le 11 février, date anniversaire de la proclamation de la République islamique.

Dans une démarche plus rationnelle, une délégation du Parlement iranien, à majorité réformatrice, ne s'en est pas moins rendue récemment sur la frontière avec le Pakistan et l'Afghanistan pour « vérifier sur place les allégations américaines au sujet de l'entrée de membres d'Al-Qaïda en Iran », selon l'un de ses membres, Meissam Saldi, membre de la commission de la sécurité nationale du Parlement. D'après lui, « l'enquête a démontré que certains pays et services secrets étrangers cherchaient à faire transiter » par l'Iran des talibans et des membres d'Al-Qaïda. « Nos services secrets sont au courant et ont réussi à arrêter jusqu'à présent plusieurs personnes qui s'étaient infiltrées en Iran », a-t-il ajouté sans identifier les pays et services secrets auxquels il faisait allusion. « La mission d'enquête a examiné de près les problèmes de sécurité dans les zones frontalières » et va remettre ses conclusions au Parlement. Le ministre des renseignements, Ali Younessi, avait rejeté jeudi les accusations américaines sur la présence de membres d'Al-Qaïda en Iran, demandant au Pakistan de mieux contrôler « les frontières communes ». Déclarations qui semblent autant de doigts accusateurs pointés vers le voisin pakistanais.

Mouna Naïm

White House reportedly near decision on plan to oust Saddam

By Michael R. Gordon and David E. Sanger

The New York Times

WASHINGTON: Secretary of State Colin Powell has said that the Bush administration is considering a variety of options to topple President Saddam Hussein, amid indications that President George W. Bush and his top advisers are close to settling on a plan.

While taking an unusually tough tone toward Baghdad, Powell was careful to draw a distinction Tuesday between Iraq on one hand and Iran and North Korea on the other, three countries that Bush has lumped together as an "axis of evil" because of their quest for weapons of mass destruction.

"With respect to Iran and with respect to North Korea, there is no plan to start a war with these nations," Powell said in testimony before the Senate Budget Committee as the administration approached a decision on how to dislodge Saddam.

But in discussing Iraq, Powell delivered a stern message, one that was deliberately crafted to sound stronger than the testimony he had given previously.

"With respect to Iraq, it has long been, for several years now, a policy of the United States government that regime change would be in the best interests of the region, the best interests of the Iraqi people," Powell said. "And we are looking at a variety of options that would bring that about."

Senior officials said that there was a consensus within the administration that Saddam must be overthrown and that plans to do so were being drawn up. But there is no agreement as to how precisely that should be done or how long the United States should be prepared to wait for action.

Next month, Vice President Dick Cheney is scheduled to visit a number of nations that border Iraq, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Turkey. Cheney also plans to visit Britain, Egypt, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman, all of which are nations whose political support as well as bases might be useful for any campaign against Iraq.

At the Pentagon, officials have been drawing up plans for an Iraq campaign. The Iraqi National Congress, as the Iraqi opposition is known, has received a much warmer reception from the Bush administration since Bush's State of the Union speech in January, although the administration still has not agreed to provide its members with military training. Dur-

ing a recent meeting at the White House, Iraqi opposition officials were told by a senior administration official that Bush had decided that Saddam needed to be replaced.

"We were told that the president has made up his mind: Saddam has got to go," an Iraqi opposition official recalled.

At the hearing Tuesday, Powell stressed that Bush had not made any final decisions and that military action was not imminent.

General Tommy Franks, who heads the U.S. Central Command, which is overseeing the campaign in Afghanistan

and which would run any campaign against Iraq, said Tuesday that a military plan had not yet been settled. "I do not think I am at a point where a decision has been made about where to go next, leave alone the precision of how we will be going about doing this," he said.

A senior administration official said that the Pentagon still needed several months to wind up the fighting in Afghanistan and make preparations for a potential military campaign in Iraq.

Among the difficult military issues that officials are wrestling with is the possibility that Saddam would respond to an attack by using weapons of mass destruction against U.S. forces and possibly Israel; the extent to which U.S. ground forces would be needed, and how Iraq would be administered after Saddam was toppled.

The Bush administration also needs to lay the diplomatic foundation. The British government is still wary of an Iraq campaign, the Turks are fearful it could lead to an independent Kurdistan, Israel is apprehensive that it might be targeted by Iraq's missiles, and other states in the region are skittish about a major U.S. military operation so nearby.

Several senior administration officials have begun to talk privately about a two-track approach to deposing Saddam that would balance the military and diplomatic planning.

The first steps, which could take five months or more, involve working through the United Nations to develop tighter but more focused sanctions against Iraq and demand that it allow nuclear inspectors unfettered access to the country. But senior administration officials say they fully expect that such an effort would fail, an outcome that would lay the base for a military campaign, one in which the United States would both encourage internal rebellions against the Iraqi leader's rule and use U.S. military power.

"If we put smart sanctions in place in May, then it gets harder for Iraq to make the case that it should not allow weapons inspectors," a senior official said. "But we know that it is only matter of time before the weapons inspections get stopped and we have yet another bit of proof that Saddam will never give up."

Discussing the diplomatic approach, the British foreign secretary, Jack Straw,

said after a recent meeting with Powell that he expected that when the UN Security Council meets in May to renew economic sanctions against Iraq, the United States and British could issue an "ultimatum" to Saddam to let in the weapons inspectors. Straw said he hoped that Russian pressure would persuade Iraq to cooperate, but unlike hard-liners in the Bush administration, he did not say what action should be taken if Iraq refused to comply.

While strong economic interests and decades of diplomacy bind Baghdad to Moscow, a senior administration official said that Russia might acquiesce in an attempt to remove Saddam. In an interview Monday with The Wall Street Journal, President Vladimir Putin did not rule out military action as a last option under a UN mandate.

"Such problems can't be solved by one country alone," Putin said. "The military option is far from being the sole, universal or best solution."

Powell's appearance Tuesday was significant because he has long been considered the most cautious member of the administration when it comes to confronting Iraq. By making statements in a congressional hearing Tuesday and making them in a more strongly worded fashion than in similar testimony he gave last week, he demonstrated his loyalty to the president and thus gave himself an opportunity to influence the outcome as discussion continued within the administration.

International Herald Tribune
Thursday, February 14, 2002

U.S. Asks Muslims' Reaction to Attack on Iraq

UPI Feb. 14, 2002

WASHINGTON The United States is watching to see how Muslim countries will react if Washington launches a military offensive to oust Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

Diplomats from Muslim countries told United Press International this week that U.S. officials discussed the possibility of a military offensive against Iraq with Islamic leaders who came to the U.S. capital.

Leaders from Turkey, Jordan and Saudi Arabia have visited Washington recently. Jordan and Turkey were represented at the highest level, and Saudi Arabia sent several key members of the ruling al Saud family.

"Both Jordan and Turkey have economic interests in Iraq and fear that a military offensive against Saddam can adversely affect their economies," said one Muslim diplomat. Turkey's Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit also raised the issue of his country's minority Kurdish community when he visited Washington last month. Turkey fears that strikes against Iraq could encourage moves toward a separate Kurdish state in northern Iraq, which, in turn, would boost the separatist aspirations of Turkey's Kurds.

Turkey is the only Muslim member of NATO.

Jordan's King Abdullah was more supportive but sought economic assurances from the United States, the diplomats said.

Jordan already finds it difficult to fully enforce the 11-year-old U.N. sanctions against Iraq. Many Jordanians have a deep sympathy for Iraqi civilians who have been hit hard by the sanctions, and businessmen want to maximize their trade with Iraq. Lacking oil, Jordan relies heavily on trade and foreign aid. It has a rapidly growing population of 5 million, three-quarters of whom are under 30. The recent history of the Middle East has shown the young are most vulnerable to militant Islamic propaganda.

Saudis Fear Another Failure

The Saudis have different concerns. They fear that a new U.S. military offensive to remove the Iraqi leader may also fail, like the previous attempt by President G.H.W. Bush. Another failed offensive, they fear, may increase Saddam's popularity among the Arab masses, already perturbed over recent U.S. air strikes in Afghanistan.

Discussing U.S. plans for an offensive against Saddam, the Saudis say that the Americans are taking major risks.

According to them, the Americans believe that by weakening Saddam, they will enable an Iraqi opposition alliance to take over Baghdad. The Saudis see flaws in this plan. "To begin with, no such alliance exists so far," said one Muslim diplomat. "Even if the Americans use their influence to form one, there is no guarantee that it will succeed in replacing Saddam."

However, after President Bush's Jan. 29 speech, in which he called Iraq, Iran and North Korea part of "an axis of evil," most Muslim leaders are convinced the Americans will sooner or later launch a military offensive against Iraq.

'Not if but When

"The question is not 'If the Americans will attack,' but 'when will they attack,'" said another diplomat.

"There is a great deal of nervousness about the likely nature of the campaign and the real resolve of the United States to see this through," said Michael O'Hanlon, a senior fellow at Brookings Institute. "But if the action is quick and successful, it will be condoned, if not welcomed, by most of the Arab world." Statements emanating from Washington not only increase this "nervousness" but also create confusion about U.S. intentions.

Though last week Washington was abuzz with rumors of an imminent U.S. attack on Iraq, this week some U.S. officials said they were also considering options other than a full-fledged military strike. The CIA is working on a plan for covert action to remove the Iraqi dictator, and it has already been authorized to destabilize the regime, they said.

Secretary of State Colin Powell referred to one option on Tuesday when he jokingly said that "natural causes" could also make Saddam disappear. Powell said that though Saddam and he were the same age, the Iraqi did not enjoy good health. O'Hanlon, however, believes that "there are more than 50-50 chances that the United States will opt for the military action."

"Covert actions don't tend to work, particularly against someone so good at staying in power. His presidential guards are faithful to him, and most people are fearful of him. They may not participate in a coup attempt. Plans like this make the Arab world nervous." He believes that the military action against Iraq will easily succeed, but it will be more difficult to put together an alliance to rule over Iraq after Saddam.

"There are groups like the Iraqi National Congress and Kurdish parties, but calling them an alliance will be an overstatement," he said. "Like in Afghanistan, the United States will have to force people to work together, telling that they would get U.S. support only if they work together."

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Baghdad's Neighbors Nervous As U.S. Weighs Options

Radio Free Europe

Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) By Charles Recknagel February 14, 2002

Prague - As Washington toughens its rhetoric toward Baghdad, Iraq's neighbors are growing increasingly nervous that the U.S. could next target Iraq in its war on terror.

The past few weeks have seen the U.S. administration increasingly move from terming Iraq a regional menace to calling it a threat to America's own national security. That shift in terminology manifested itself most dramatically in a speech by U.S.

President George W. Bush last month (29 January) in which he labeled Baghdad part of an "axis of evil" that also includes Iran and North Korea. Since then, top U.S. officials have made it clear Washington reserves the right to act unilaterally to remove any danger that Iraq might one day supply weapons of mass destruction to terrorists.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said last week that the United States continues to look at possibilities for a regime change in Baghdad and that Bush is examining "the most serious assessment of options one might imagine." Powell added, however, that while "with Iraq, we are always examining options for regime change...we are not [now] at some point where we are going into contingency plans to invade Iraq." The repeated signals that Washington views Baghdad as a potential target in its war on terror come as U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney prepares to make a Mideast tour next month. The "Los Angeles Times" reported that the U.S. administration is expected to complete an Iraq policy review by the time of Cheney's trip so that he can outline future American plans to Arab leaders. Ahead of Cheney's trip -- his first to the region as vice president -- several countries are expressing nervousness over Washington's increasingly tough talk on Baghdad.

Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit told reporters on 11 February that Ankara does not want "a military action against Iraq." Asked why he had chosen this moment to re-state Turkey's fears, he added that "events are developing very quickly" and "at least we have given a warning." Turkish analysts say Ankara is willing to help Washington apply political pressure on Baghdad over any terrorism concerns. But it views any military action against Iraq as carrying a high risk for destabilizing the region.

Seyfi Tashan, director of the Turkish Foreign Policy Institute at Bilkent University in Ankara, also expressed Turkish reservations: "Obviously, Turkey would not leave the United States [to stand] alone if the U.S. demands certain [political] contributions from Turkey, though the form of these contributions is not yet absolutely clear." He continued: "[However,] Turkey does not wish to get involved in a warlike situation with Iraq. And secondly, there is a general belief that if there is a U.S. intervention in Iraq, then Iraq may, let's say, break down, be partitioned and that then maybe [there would be] a Kurdish independent state in northern Iraq, [and that is] anathema for Turkey." Jordan -- another of Iraq's neighbors and a key U.S. ally -- also is urging Washington to be cautious. Shortly after Bush's speech last month, Jordan's King Abdullah warned that targeting Iraq would "create immense instability in the whole region." Other states have given mixed responses to the prospect of U.S. action.

Saudi Arabia has warned against any U.S.-led invasion of Iraq but indicated it would work closely with

Washington to foment a revolution against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Prince Turki al-Faisal, who was the kingdom's intelligence chief for more than two decades before leaving the post in August, told U.S. reporters recently that "we believe the way to go is from inside Iraq." He added, "If you send an invasion force to Iraq...you're going to create...resentment and fear and anger at the United States." Saudi public opinion is currently deeply divided over the continuing presence of some 5,000 U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia since the Gulf War of 1991. U.S. media has quoted some Saudi officials as saying anonymously that the American soldiers should leave.

Kuwait, which like Saudi Arabia has no diplomatic relations with Baghdad, has not publicly endorsed or opposed any new U.S. military action. But this weekend it urged Iraq to readmit UN arms inspectors in order to "avoid exposing the Iraqi people to harm" and warned that if there is a military operation, "it will not be like what happened in the past." Iran -- which fought an eight-year war with Baghdad in the 1980s and also has no diplomatic relations -- has taken little part in the new debate over Iraq. But Tehran has stepped up its own criticisms of Washington in the wake of being dubbed part of an "axis of evil" itself.

Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi told a meeting of Islamic and European countries in Turkey yesterday that what he called a widespread global consensus against terrorism had formed after the 11 September attacks. But he said, "unfortunately, the voices coming from Washington recently are totally out of this international line." As Cheney prepares for his Mideast trip, U.S. analysts say his main challenge will be to convince America's allies in the war on terrorism that Washington is correct to increasingly focus attention on Iraq.

Judith Kipper is a regional expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C., who recently made a three-week trip to the Gulf states. She says support among U.S. allies is still strong for the war on terror, but many remain to be convinced about whether the war needs to be expanded to Iraq. "I don't think that any country which is a friend and ally of the United States is reassessing being part of a coalition against terror. Everybody is against terror, and terror has been a problem and a threat to countries like Egypt and others over the years.

But I think there are real questions that have been raised about American objectives, about how the whole notion of terrorism might include countries like Iraq, which has weapons of mass destruction [and] is under UN sanctions. [And yet] so far there is no evidence linking it to a recent terror attack." She continues: "So the U.S. really has to make an effort to not use slogans but to really do some serious explaining and consultation with friends and allies who have a high degree of concern and anxiety, which is understandable considering they don't have as much information about U.S. policy as they need." Cheney is due to visit some 10 countries, including Iraq's neighbors Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. A top aide to Cheney told Reuters last week that he will "hold wide-ranging discussions on matters...including our ongoing campaign against terrorism and other regional security issues."

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Prospects for democracy in Iraq: Summary of seminar proceeding

KurdishMedia.com By Karen Dabrowska
15 February 2002

Summary of the proceeding of a one-day seminar held at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) under the auspices of Iraq Institute for Democracy - Erbil in collaboration with: The Iraqi Cultural Forum (London) and the Centre of Middle Eastern Studies (SOAS), University of London

Prospects for democracy in Iraq

Session One: Chair: Sarah Graham Brown, author "Process of Change: Global, Regional and Domestic Dynamics: Democratization of Iraq"

(International environment; internal factors and neighbourhood; catalysts affecting the process of change) The seminar opened with introductory remarks from Hussain Sinjari, President of the Iraq Institute for Democracy. He poin-

ted out that when Iraq was founded in the beginning of the last century, some citizens were more equal than others. The rights of the Kurds, the Shi'ites and those of minorities such as Turkomen, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Yezidies, Jews and Sabia's, were both recognized and violated.

Burdens grew and became worse, but the catastrophic deterioration occurred under the present regime. Iraq is now considered one of the most closed states in the twenty-first century. Reformation and democratisation of Iraq is possible when the people of Iraq and the world democracies unite their efforts to facilitate this reformation and democratisation. Dictatorship cannot bring stability. Denial of communal rights creates instability, and breeds evil totalitarian approaches in the streets as well as in the palaces of the despots. Recognition of people's rights is an essential ingredient in bringing stability and prosperity.

The next three speakers, Paul Hirst, Faleh Jabar and Sami Zubaida were from London University's Birkbeck College. Paul Hirst described the three basic elements of democracy: representative government; a liberal framework of political norms and social and institutional pluralism. Some people give much greater emphasis to one of the three and often the relationship between the three is confused in our everyday political language.

Hirst drew attention to the huge wave of democratisation that has taken place in the last twenty years and said it was obviously better than a wave of authoritarianism but many of these new regimes are weak democracies with shallow foundations. When people argue about systems of government one thing that becomes absolutely clear is that whatever the faults of democracy, anything else is worse. The fundamental reason is that if government does not involve consulting the people who are affected by decisions then those decisions will tend to be bad and self-interested.

Faleh Jabar concluded that there is a new co-relation between the state and society. The total hegemony which was achieved by the Baath Party, through oil revenues, through psychological hegemony, its security apparatuses and even by the success of the social services is cracking. The very pillars of these successes are cracking. Some of them have cracked beyond recognition. This will create a new window of opportunity for civil society and perhaps some sort of democratisation.

Sami Zubaida drew attention to the fact the countries in the region which have a measure of real pluralism although not often of liberalism or of the rule of law are Turkey and Iran in very different ways. In both Turkey and Iran very few of the political forces and the centres of social power are democratic. But at the same time the very fact that there is a multiplicity of power centres, and each one of them may be democratic, promotes the possibility of democracy. This was also true of pre civil war Lebanon. You don't have an Abdel Nasser, of Saddam Hussein or Qathafi who will just hold all the power within a clique in the centre but for historical reasons you have a dispersion of centres of social power.

So the road to democratisation is really a very difficult one. I can only conclude with the reported response of the Irish peasant who was asked by a tourist how do I get to Dublin from here? He replied: If I were I would not start from here at all.

In his analysis of Turkey's attitude towards democratisation in Iraq Dr William Hale from the Department of Political Studies at SOAS said that Turkey has some difficulties over this: it doesn't want to push this as a major point since its main efforts are concentrated on democratisation at home, and dealing with its own Kurdish problem. It also probably doesn't want to annoy Saddam unnecessarily, and insists merely that he must comply over weapons inspections, etc. However, in principle it strongly favours a more democratic and stable Iraq, provided this can be achieved without a period of chaos or dismemberment of the country.

Turkish reactions to the extension of the war on terrorism to Iraq are not quite certain. For instance, Turkish Ambassador in Washington, told the US journal Defense News in November that 'we would definitely rather the war did not spread to a neighbouring country.... However, if credible evidence is given that Iraq was behind the terrorist attacks on the United States then Turkey would not ignore the matter, it would review its standards vis-a-vis Iraq.' Similarly, on December 19th the Defence Minister, Sabahattin Cakmakimlu, was quoted as saying that 'we have frequently stated that we do not want an operation directed against Iraq. But new conditions could bring new assessments onto our agenda'.

The discussion at the end of the morning session was chaired by Roger Hardy of the BBC.

Session Two: Chair Dr Laith Kubba National Endowment for Democracy USA Iraqi Kurdistan as a Model

Democracy Building in Iraq; Democratic Iraq and the Democratization of the Region

In his introduction to the presentations in the afternoon session, Dr Laith Kubba pointed out that if Iraqis change their mind set, manage to control the fear through which the regime has imprisoned them, overcome the apathy which has paralysed them and stop seeing themselves as victims, they will shake the foundation of totalitarianism and Saddam Hussein will be brought down.

The first speaker Carole O'Leary Adjunct professor, School of International Service, American University presented a research paper on Democracy and the Politics of Identity in Iraq. The paper was divided into six sections: an examination of the form and substance of democracy; democratization in Iraqi Kurdistan; an overview of how social scientists, particularly anthropologists, have approached the issue of collective identity in the Middle East; a discussion of the nation state as a construct and as a framework for socio-political organization in the Middle East; an analysis of the ideology of Arab nationalism and the construction of Iraqi identity; and, some observations on the idea of federalism as an appropriate model for Iraq, including the issue of Arab state support for such a model.

In her discussion of democratisation in Kurdistan, O'Leary pointed out that the emergence of democratic institutions and civil society in Iraqi Kurdistan has been a welcome, though largely unintended, consequence of the establishment of the Kurdish safe haven in 1991. Democracy and civil society building have taken root from within the society; they have not been imposed from without. She noted that the people she interviewed while in the region suggest that good governance is emerging due not to outside pressure but to the evolving sense of accountability within the KDP and PUK leadership. 'In this regard, I am struck by the dearth of public discussion concerning these developments among scholars, policy makers and the media in the US. The municipal elections held in the region in February 2000 and again in May 2001, the efforts of the two main parties (the KDP and PUK) to peacefully resolve their differences and collaborate on issues of critical importance to the region as a whole, the growth of local NGOs, the promotion of human rights, including women's rights, the reform of the educational system, and the increasing transparency and efficiency of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil and Sulaymania, among other developments, have yet to be seriously analyzed', O'Leary said.

An independent researcher whose presentation focused on economic development said that if we are to use social science literature as a guide to possible democratic forces within Iraq then it is to the economy that we should look for the growth of collective groupings with independent power who could act as a restraint on state power.

In Baghdad controlled south and central Iraq the imposition of sanctions has forced the government to withdraw from large parts of the economy. The groups that have grown up to take the governments place are clearly larger, more social diverse and more independent than their processors in the 1980s. They have some of the hallmarks of a nascent bourgeoisie. They are clearly tied to the regime, but not of it. First and foremost this bourgeoisie serves the demands of the domestic market. Until 1990 this market was largely shaped and controlled by the Iraqi regime. After 1990 the regime has come to realise that social quiescence is dependent on the free flow of goods over Iraq's borders into the economy. In the medium term this is dependent on cordial relations with Iraq's neighbours but also a vibrant and happy entrepreneurial class. Hence the new rich of Iraq have a degree of autonomy from the regime unknown in over the last twenty years. The crucial question is the role they will play as sanctions are either reformulated or lifted. A central role has been allocated to the private sector in the current government induced building boom. Building materials imported into the country under the terms of the oil-for-food deal with the U.N. are largely distributed through the private sector at subsidized costs. The result has been an up turn in construction and the housing market. The fact that the government has chosen to rely on private sector contractors to rejuvenate this part of the country's infrastructure indicates that Baghdad has developed a more positive attitude to non-state economic actors. Possibly learning from the mistakes of the early 1990s the regime appears to have learnt to live with a diversified and comparatively autonomous economic sector.

Michiel Leezenberg from Amsterdam University presented a paper on Democratization in Iraqi Kurdistan: Achievements, Prospects and Constraints. He pointed out that after ten years of de facto Kurdish self-rule, Iraqi Kurdistan knows moderate economic prosperity, but little durable political stability. Despite the shortcomings of the Kurdish parties, the region is in most respects far better off under Kurdish rule than it has ever been under the

Baath government; but whatever achievements have been booked are under the permanent threat of disruptive outside intervention, be it from the side of the Iraqi government and military, or from other countries like, most importantly, Turkey, Iran, and the United States.

The election of a parliament has thus far hardly led to the development of a genuine political pluralism in the region. Instead, two (or, at the time of Islamic Movement rule over Halabja, three) effectively one-party statelets were formed, which are at times disparagingly referred to as 'Barzanistan' and 'Talabanistan'. Here, political opposition is tolerated in the form of small junior parties, but neither the KDP nor the PUK will tolerate activities of its main rival on the territory it considers its own. Except for the Islamic League, which captured a solid 30% of the vote in the latest regional elections in Sulaymaniya, there are hardly any substantial political alternatives for the PUK and the KDP.

But, although there is no really independent civil society, a system of checks and balances has nonetheless evolved. Because the Kurdish parties in power know that there are local alternatives, they realize that they cannot entirely ignore the population's plight and desires. In this respect, I would suggest, the situation in government-held territory is rather worse: few credible alternatives to the Iraqi regime have emerged, and state propaganda can conveniently blame all shortcomings and abuses of the regime on the effects of the international sanctions.

Discussion at the end of the seminar focused on the process of change in Iraq. In his final remarks Fuad Hussein of the Middle East Bureau the Netherlands said that with regard to matching the Lebanese style system, the Iraqi National Congress in 1992 tried to copy that system. There were three leaders. One of them was Massoud Barzani (one of the Kurdish leaders in Iraq). Bahr Uloom (one of the Shite religious leaders) and the third one was a Sunni. They formed the leadership of the INC. At that time people were thinking of choosing the Lebanese model. That experience did not succeed, not because of the combination of these three people but because of external and internal problems among the political parties and influence from outside.

In the future it will be very important to recognise the rights of the Turkoman, the Kurds and the Assyrians. That means to reserve places for the representatives of these communities in Baghdad, in the centre of power. Without that it will be difficult to talk about real democracy, a real coalition and a final solution.

Having said that I agree that it will be difficult to talk only about the Shias and the Kurds. Who are the Kurds, who are the Shias, there are many political parties. Many Shias do not identify themselves with religion but with their political ideology. So if one wants to have a stable situation in Iraq it will also be very important to recognise the role of the political parties, especially the major political parties.

I was talking about change with the help of the outside world, in both the case of a military coup and also the change through the participation of the main groups in the process of change. I have the feeling that because of the fact that politics in Iraq is highly personalised and is completely dependent on the person of Saddam Hussein if there is a change the whole system will collapse. When I am saying the whole system will collapse I am also saying that the army will collapse. The army may be able to bring the change but I don't know if they will be able to keep themselves in power. They are no longer the only actors in Iraqi society. There is not just one army, there are many armies: the Kurds have armies, the Shia have armies. It will be difficult for them to keep power without co-ordination with other groups.

Laith Kubba is right when he is asking the Iraqis to think as Iraqis but the problem is that in Iraq we do not have one major party which applies to all Iraqis. The Communist Party is trying to that but because of its ideology and its history they became a marginal political party. If we look to other groups and political organisations then we see the Kurds and the Kurdish political parties. They are talking about democracy in Iraq but the system, the organisation and the leadership is Kurdish. If we analyse the Shite political organisations - the Supreme Council, the Dawa they are talking about Islam about Iraq in general, about the Iraqi people but the leadership, the organisation, the ideology has been as rooted in the Shia community.

So there is a lack of a major political party which can apply to all the Iraqi people. Besides that we do not have an Iraqi leader who can collect all the Iraqi people around him under one slogan. The Iranian revolution had Khomeini against the Shah. So without having a leader and a main organisation which applies to all the Iraqi people the only thing which is there are those organisations which represent the large communities in Iraqi society. If they can co-operate in the change comes there will be a kind of coalition between these groups. That is why there was a question this morning about why the Iraqi people in exile are not talking about democracy. They are not thinking as Iraqis. Why are we not linking our struggle between the system and citizenship in Iraq. First of all we don't have an orga-

nisation which can apply for all Iraqis. We have seen repression of the Shia and the Kurds and people are choosing first for their identity and second for the political system in Iraq.

Speakers and chairs include: Paul Hirst (Birkbeck College), Sami Zubaida (Birkbeck College), Sarah Graham Brown (author), Carole O'Leary (American University, Washington, USA), Michael Leezenberg (Amsterdam University), David Stayan (Birkbeck College), Faleh A. Jabar (Birkbeck College), Laith Kubba (National Endowment for Democracy, Washington, USA), Toby Dodge (Royal Institute for International Affairs), Fuad Hussein (Middle East Bureau, the Netherlands), Roger Hardy (BBC Monitoring Service), Bill William Hale (SOAS, University of London), Wendy Kristianasen (Le Monde Diplomatique)

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PKK seeks image change with new name

February 20, 2002 Washington Times (From combined dispatches)

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey The new name says it all. A Kurdish rebel group with a history of ruthless guerrilla attacks is trying to shed its bloody image and become a legitimate political force.

What was the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, will become the Democratic Republic Party, said Kurdish sources, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "The coming days will be decisive for the PKK's future," said the group's leader, Abdullah Ocalan, who is being held on a remote island while he appeals a death sentence.

His statement, appearing in the Germany-based Kurdish paper *Ozgur Politika*, indicated he is trying to reshape his party from behind bars, where he has been held for three years.

But the government is unlikely to accept the group and says giving in to Kurdish demands could break up the country along ethnic lines. The PKK's attempts to clean up its image are likely aimed at Europe, where the group has a strong presence, analysts say. Turkey is pressing the European Union to include the PKK on its list of terrorist groups, as the United States has done.

"The PKK is the old PKK with a different tactic," said Michael Radu, an expert on terrorism with the

Philadelphia-based Foreign Policy Research Institute. "Ocalan is a much more effective public-relations strategist than Turkey, and he is telling Europe how nice his organization is." The PKK was founded 24 years ago in 1978 with the goal of getting Turkey to grant autonomy to the Kurdish minority. It turned to armed struggle in 1984, and the fighting has claimed 37,000 lives.

There are some 12 million Kurds in Turkey, most living in the southeast. Although they represent about 20 percent of the population of 67 million, the government doesn't recognize them as an official minority. Kurdish language is outlawed in schools, at official events and in broadcasts other than music. "People can speak Kurdish if they want," Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit said on Friday. "But we cannot accept Kurdish education."

Ocalan called a cease-fire after his arrest, but the government rejected it, and fighting continues, though it has decreased considerably in recent years.

While most Turks consider the Kurdish rebels a barbaric terrorist group, there is considerable sympathy for them outside the country. Ocalan's fate has become a key issue in Turkey's relations with the European Union. The EU has demanded that Turkey lift Ocalan's death sentence and says allowing Kurdish education is crucial for Turkey's hopes of joining the union. On the third anniversary last Friday of Ocalan's arrest, Diyarbakir the largest city in the Kurdish-dominated southeast was surprisingly calm.

Previous anniversaries have seen clashes, but on Valentine's Day the bars and restaurants were crammed with romantic couples. That's quite a change from the days before the cease-fire, when the streets would have been empty after dark.

Many Kurds in Diyarbakir supported the PKK's decision last week to rename itself and halt activities under the old name. In turn, they say, authorities should end discrimination against Kurds.

Veysi Bolca, who manages local Gun TV a station that was banned for a year last week for airing a Kurdish song critical of Turkish soldiers expressed his frustration. "They are always looking for something to punish us for," he said.

Meanwhile, Turkey and Iraq its neighbor to the southeast, which is also concerned about Kurdish nationalism began discussing their economic ties this week amid mounting concern in both countries that Baghdad could be the next target of U.S. military strikes.

A Turkish diplomat told Agence France-Presse that senior diplomats from Iran and Iraq met in Ankara on Monday and "took up the economic aspect of our relations, and also international developments." The diplomat said the talks were part of regular political consultations between the two countries. The head of the Iraqi delegation, Mohammed Ahmed, said Baghdad was willing to boost trade with Turkey.

"Trade is constantly improving, and both sides are willing to further develop the relations," Anatolia news agency quoted him as saying. Turkey, a member of NATO and a key Muslim ally of the United States, has recently stepped up efforts to revitalize trade with Iraq, which has been badly affected by U.N. sanctions imposed on Baghdad for its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Turkey puts its trade losses as a result to about \$40 billion.

While the Iraqi diplomats met with their Turkish counterparts, a group of U.S. congressmen held a separate meeting at the Foreign Ministry in Ankara to promote Turkish-American friendship.

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Kurds have doubt about US military action in Iraq

UPI February 15, 2002

IRAQI KURDISTAN -- The two parties that govern the autonomous area in Iraqi Kurdistan have made it plain that they are less than enthusiastic about a possible U.S. military intervention to bring down Saddam Hussein -- at least as things stand now. With recent statements from Secretary of State Colin Powell and the print media awash with articles about President Bush's determination to rid Iraq and the world of Saddam, the Kurds are yet to be convinced that the military option would be a good thing for them.

That part of Iraqi Kurdistan ruled, not from Baghdad, but by the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, could provide an extensive area from which to mount operations into adjacent Kurdish areas under Saddam's control, the major oil center of Kirkuk, and on to Baghdad and the south of Iraq.

As well as desirable real estate, the Kurds also possess militias with a combined strength of about 60,000 men that could prove very useful in dealing with Saddam's forces. However, the Kurds fear that the stability and relative prosperity they have enjoyed in the area of the Kurdish Regional Government could be destroyed.

While Powell was telling the world that the administration is studying ways of getting rid of Saddam, the president of the KRG parliament, Rozh Shaways, was on a visit to London. He told reporters that the Kurds are worried about what they could lose as a result of a U.S. military intervention. Free of rule from Baghdad since 1991 and with war between the two parties halted in 1997, recent years have brought generally better conditions than those of Iraqis living under Saddam's control.

Shaways' views have been repeatedly voiced by representatives of both the KDP and PUK during visits to Washington over the past year.

The Kurds have managed so well because, as they acknowledge, because the United States with Britain maintains a safe haven for them. It was established in 1991 and is protected by U.S. and British air patrols that enforce the exclusion of Baghdad's planes from the area. The success of the campaign in Afghanistan appears to have given Bush confidence that a military operation could succeed. First of all, though, the administration is pursuing a diplomatic plan involving the United Nations. It is seeking to have the Security Council order Saddam to re-admit the weapons inspectors he expelled in 1998.

This is seen not only as an end in itself but also a likely means for legitimizing American intervention. If Saddam allows inspectors back, he is expected to prevent them from conducting the unfettered and intrusive inspection necessary to determine what he has in the way of weapons of mass destruction.

The Kurds have direct experience of such weapons. In 1988, Saddam employed poison gas on them, killing 5,000 men, women and children. The Kurds are not alone in worrying that Saddam might resort to such weapons again. U.S. military planners are mulling over how to protect troops from the chemical and biological arms Saddam possesses.

They also have worries about their neighbors. In the Afghan campaign, all the neighboring governments including eventually Pakistan's, were against the Taliban and al Qaida. The contrary is the case for the Iraqi Kurds.

Turkey fears with a paranoid intensity that an American-lead change of regime in Baghdad is all too likely to end with the disintegration of the Iraqi state and the emergence of an independent Kurdistan. The authorities in Ankara, and most critically, the Turkish Army, have said plainly that they would not tolerate a Kurdish state on their border. They fear it would incite renewed separatism in Turkish Kurdistan that marches with Iraq. The Iranians have similar fears involving their Kurds. Both countries have intervened for years in Iraqi Kurdistan. The Turkish army has units stationed deep within the region in support of the secular authorities that last year had to fight a Taliban-like Islamist group with ties to Osama bin Laden. The Turks are also concerned about Turkish Kurdish insurrectionaries of the Kurdistan Workers Party, known as the PKK, who are encamped in the mountains that border Iran but from where Turkey is accessible.

The Iranians have been active in promoting Kurdish Islamist groups in the PUK area bordering on Iran. At the beginning of February, Jalal Talabani, the PUK leader, reaffirmed a 1997 Tehran accord that protects the Islamists.

Then there is the fear of Saddam reconquering all of Northern Iraq. He has massed troops on the edge of autonomous area and probed Kurdish defenses. Of course, if U.S. military intervention ended in the creation of a federal Iraqi state with democratic institutions, the Kurds would be very happy.

The problem is that the United States has taught the Kurds not to trust it.

In 1975, the United States, having egged on the Kurds to make war on Saddam, withdrew its support overnight. This enabled Saddam to take a terrible vengeance. It is an incident that is said to still trouble Henry Kissinger who was in office at the time.

There have been more American betrayals since the Persian Gulf War, first when Bush senior called on the Iraqis to rise up and overthrow Saddam. When they rose, with the government losing control of 14 out of Iraq's 19 provinces, the United States did nothing to help. However, when the pressure of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurds trying to escape into Turkey created a crisis for Ankara, the United States helped its Turkish ally by creating the Kurdish safe haven and so ending the Turks' border problem.

During the Clinton years there were more incidents when Washington lead the Kurds on, only to change its mind at the last minute. One particularly notable event was the Iraqi army's swoop into Arbil, the seat of the Kurdish administration, on Aug. 31, 1996.

The United States did nothing other than send helicopters to pull out as many CIA assets and members of the Iraqi National Congress, then based in Arbil, as it could. Nevertheless, the INC was decimated. As yet, for all the tough talk in Washington and the undoubted sincerity of the president in wishing to get rid of Saddam, the Iraqi Kurds, and other people in the Middle East, continue to have doubts as to just how much determination the United States would bring to the task. After all, as everyone admits, the administration has yet to make up its mind just what it intends doing and how.

So Jalal Talabani has said, "We will not enter adventures whose end is unclear" and the KDP leader, Masud Barzani, "We will not be ordered by America or any others. We will not be a bargaining chip or tool of pressure to be used against Iraq."

It was Masud's father, Mullah Mustafa Barzani, whom Kissinger betrayed in 1975.

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Kurdish Leaders want to know alternative to Saddam Hussein

RFE/RL IRAQ REPORT Vol. 5, No. 6, 15 February 2002

The two Kurdish leaders Mas'ud Barzani, head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Jalal Talabani, head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), said in an interview with Al-Jazirah Satellite Television on 10 February that before talking about toppling Saddam Husseyn or participating in a U.S. scenario to strike Iraq, the alternative to the Iraqi president should be known.

Barzani stated that "we are not custom-made revolutionaries" and pointed out that "the situation here is completely different than that of Afghanistan." The Al-Jazirah interviewer asked him about the current status of his dialogue with Baghdad. He answered that there are no conditions for holding the dialogue, but, "as you know, the Kurds are unanimous on a federal solution to the Kurdish issue within a united Iraq."

Talabani believes that it is impossible to change the Baghdad regime from the inside by means of a coup. "First, the Iraqi army has become a large army that consists of tens of divisions. Second, moving any military unit requires the approval of a number of sides, including the military commander, the party official, the special security official and the intelligence official. Third, the military units move without ammunition. In addition, the present regime has its own guard, the Republican Guard. Therefore, I do not believe a military coup is possible."

In an earlier interview with NTV in Istanbul on 8 February, Barzani also made the point that if Saddam is to be replaced "the identity of the person who will replace Saddam is important. I can say this is the most important point for us. He also pointed out that if the United States decided to strike Iraq, there is nothing "we" could do. "Nevertheless, we will never become an orderly in the hands of the United States or any other force. Nor will we serve as a negotiating card or as a means of pressure to be used against Baghdad." (David Nissman)

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Saddam mulling peace with Kurds

Iraq Press (London) February 19, 2002

Arbil - The embattled Iraqi leader is considering a peace initiative to bring rebel Kurds to the negotiating table. The Iraq Press has learned that Saddam Hussein has held a meeting with senior aides to discuss the possibility of granting Iraqi Kurds sweeping autonomous powers.

The move is seen as part of Saddam's last-minute overtures to avert a possible U.S. military strike to overthrow his regime. The United States has made it clear that it advocates a regime change in Baghdad.

Senior U.S. officials have said they are determined to topple Saddam even if they have to act unilaterally.

The Kurds turned down Saddam's previous calls for negotiations, saying there is no guarantee the Iraqi strongman will not renege on any promises he makes. Saddam, according to well-informed sources, is expected to address the nation shortly to announce the initiative. No details are available on what Saddam has in mind and whether the Kurds will welcome the overture.

The Kurds administer their own affairs away from Saddam's authority in a semi-independent enclave that includes much of Iraqi Kurdistan. U.S. and British warplanes mount almost daily patrols of the area to deter Saddam from sending troops into the region. Saddam has recently made several peaceful overtures with the aim of persuading the Americans to change heart.

But his moves have all but foundered.

Both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia have spurned his offer to normalize ties. And many see his proposal to the United Nations for talks without preconditions as merely a tactical move to buy time.

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INCIDENT DIPLOMATIQUE

Une brochure de l'ambassade de Suède sur les Arméniens fait scandale en Turquie

Une brochure distribuée par l'ambassade de Suède et qualifiant de génocide le massacre des Arméniens sous l'empire ottoman a fait scandale lors d'un colloque sur les relations commerciales turco-suédoises vendredi dernier à Izmir.

Plusieurs hommes d'affaires turcs, dont le président de l'association patronale régionale ESIAD, Deniz Taner, ont quitté la réunion organisée par la zone franche d'Izmir, qualifiant les propos contenus dans le document d'"accusations infondées" contre la Turquie.

L'ambassadeur de Suède Anne Dismorr est montée à la tribune pour tenter en vain d'apaiser la colère des participants en soulignant que son pays souhaitait promouvoir les relations bilatérales "historiques" entre les deux pays.

"Les génocides ethniques ont une place importante dans les conflits entre les années 1915 et 1916" sous l'empire ottoman, dit notamment le document publié par l'Institut suédois.

Un député danois demande aux autorités de retenir un ex-général irakien



COPENHAGUE, 14 fév (AFP) - 15h40 - Un député danois d'opposition a demandé à la justice de "garantir" que l'ancien général irakien réfugié au Danemark, Nizar al-Khazraji, ne quitte pas le pays avant la fin d'une enquête policière sur son implication présumée dans des massacres de Kurdes en Irak.

Dans une lettre dont une copie a été reçue jeudi par l'AFP, le député de la Liste de l'Unité (ex-communiste), Soeren Soendergaard, demande à la ministre de la Justice Lene Espersen (conservateurs) de "garantir" que l'ex-général irakien "n'obtienne pas le droit de quitter le territoire tant que la police n'aura pas pris position" sur son éventuelle inculpation pour "participation à des crimes de guerre".

Ce militaire, âgé de 63 ans, avait demandé l'asile politique au Danemark en 1999, et obtenu une "autorisation de séjour toléré" dans le royaume, car risquant la peine de mort s'il était refoulé vers son pays.

L'initiative du député fait suite à des déclarations de l'ex-général rapportées mercredi par le quotidien danois Extra Bladet.

Selon le journal, M. Khazraji qui serait considéré par Washington comme un opposant de premier plan pour renverser le président irakien Saddam Hussein, a déclaré à Radio Free Iraq, basée à Prague, qu'il était prêt à se rendre aux Etats-Unis s'il recevait une invitation, afin de discuter de plans de coup d'Etat militaire contre le régime de Bagdad, dans le cadre de la lutte internationale contre le terrorisme.

L'ex-général, résidant à Soroe (50 km au sud-ouest de Copenhague), a ajouté qu'il avait parlé d'un projet de coup d'Etat avec un autre transfuge irakien, l'ex-général Najib al-Salhi, réfugié en Jordanie.

Il a été accusé en octobre dernier par des Kurdes réfugiés au Danemark, victimes d'attaques aux gaz toxiques, d'être responsables de massacres dans des régions kurdes du nord de l'Irak dans les années 80.

Le parquet danois a ouvert une enquête et l'ex-général a été interrogé par la police sur ses activités entre 1986 et 1990.

M. Khazraji a toujours rejeté les accusations portées contre lui, affirmant qu'il n'avait rien à voir avec les massacres de Kurdes.

Les partis libéral et conservateur, au pouvoir au Danemark, avaient indiqué l'année dernière que cet ex-général devait se rendre aux Etats-Unis si les Américains souhaitaient sa coopération.

ÉTATS-UNIS George W. Bush semble décidé à frapper Bagdad et Saddam Hussein, en dépit des réticences formulées par ses plus proches alliés

Washington menace directement l'Irak

LE FIGARO JEUDI 14 FÉVRIER 2002

George W. Bush a affirmé hier qu'il emploierait tous les moyens « nécessaires » pour empêcher l'Irak d'acquiescer des armes de destruction massive susceptibles de menacer les États-Unis ou leurs alliés. « Ne vous y trompez pas : si le besoin s'en fait sentir, nous emploierons toute action nécessaire pour défendre les Américains », a-t-il déclaré. « Je pense que c'est suffisamment clair pour être entendu par l'Irak. Je garderai toutes les options qui sont à ma disposition », a ajouté M. Bush à l'occasion d'une conférence de presse conjointe avec le président pakistanais, Pervez Musharraf, à la Maison-Blanche.

Washington :
de notre correspondant
Jean-Jacques Mével

Entre l'Irak, l'Iran et la Corée du Nord, le président Bush n'avait pas dit quelle serait la cible après l'Afghanistan. L'affaire est aujourd'hui tranchée, et c'est le secrétaire d'État, Colin Powell, souvent décrit comme une voix de la sagesse, qui l'a formellement identifiée : ce sera Saddam Hussein, redevenu d'un coup l'ennemi public n° 1 des États-Unis.

Dans les mots comme dans

l'analyse, le général diplomate se range désormais du côté des faucons de l'équipe Bush : « Pour l'Iran et la Corée du Nord, il n'y a pas de plan de guerre, disait-il au Sénat mardi, comme s'il voulait signaler que le Pentagone s'exerce déjà sur la carte, entre le Tigre et l'Euphrate. En ce qui concerne l'Irak, le point de vue américain (...) est qu'un changement de régime servirait au mieux les intérêts de la région et ceux du peuple irakien. Nous réfléchissons aux moyens permettant d'y aboutir. »

Au sein de l'Administration américaine, le débat est clos.

Voilà Saddam Hussein prévenu, onze ans tout juste après qu'il a sauvé sa peau dans la guerre du Golfe. George W. Bush, à la différence de son père, ne s'arrêterait pas aux approches de Bagdad. Colin Powell enfonce le clou : les États-Unis, cette fois, « ne limiteraient pas leur intérêt national aux vues d'une coalition ».

Pour les Européens, le raidissement du secrétariat d'État

est à coup sûr une nouvelle déception. Depuis l'élection de George W. Bush, ils voyaient en Colin Powell un garde-fou contre la vision du monde jugée trop « simpliste » du président ou contre la tendance naturelle de la superpuissance à considérer ses alliés comme des États satellites.

Là aussi, le chef de la diplomatie américaine remet brutalement les pendules à l'heure. L'équipe Bush est soudée comme un seul homme, et la crise irakienne qui se profile laissera peu de prises à la France, à l'Allemagne, ou même

à la Grande-Bretagne, comme ce fut le cas dans la campagne d'Afghanistan. « Chaque État est en droit de prendre des décisions souveraines, dit Colin Powell. Mais la prépondérance (leadership) américaine est réglée par des principes que nos amis comprennent et devraient respecter. »

Il pourrait se passer des mois avant une confrontation ouverte entre les États-Unis et le régime de Saddam Hussein. Pourtant, les jalons sont déjà posés. Ancien de la guerre du Golfe lui aussi, le vice-président Dick Cheney se rendra dans la région dès le mois prochain. Il s'agit de négocier des appuis plutôt que de chercher des alliés. Si l'on excepte l'inévitable étape à Londres, l'itinéraire ressemble vu d'Irak à un encerclement : Jordanie, Turquie, Arabie Saoudite et les émirats, sans oublier ni l'Égypte, ni Israël.

Le calendrier et le piège tendu au régime irakien se dessinent eux aussi. C'est en mai que le Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies doit arrêter son nouveau dispositif de sanctions contre Bagdad. Pour la Maison-Blanche, la clef de voûte en sera le retour des inspecteurs de l'ONU et leur liberté d'accès à toutes les installations liées à l'arsenal de mort irakien.

Si Saddam Hussein devait renâcler – ainsi que Washington en semble déjà persuadé –, George

W. Bush tiendrait le prétexte d'un ultimatum à l'été. Les alliés, eux, auraient à se déterminer sans délai. « Le président ne cherche pas la guerre, prévient Colin Powell. Mais personne ne trouve la paix en enfouissant la tête dans le sable et en refusant de voir le mal là où il est. »

La guerre du Golfe, suite et fin ? La diplomatie a encore quelques mois à épuiser, même si le président américain semble aussi peu disposé à transiger que sa bête noire irakienne.

De la gauche à la droite, les Américains, eux, s'attendent au



« Nous emploierons toute action nécessaire pour défendre les Américains », a déclaré George W. Bush à l'occasion d'une conférence de presse conjointe avec le président pakistanais, Pervez Musharraf, à la Maison-Blanche. (Photo Ron Edmonds/AP.)

choc. Richard Holbrooke, artisan de la paix en Bosnie, affirme que « la plus grosse bourde des vingt dernières années fut de ne pas achever Saddam Hussein

en 1991 ». Al Gore, battu de la présidentielle 2000, dit espérer « le règlement de compte final », sans prendre de gants cette fois. Quant aux experts militaires,

si souvent démentis, ils ont appris à ne plus jouer les Casandre. « L'Irak ? En 1991, ce fut une promenade de santé, rappelle Ken Adelman, ancien

gourou du Pentagone. La différence, cette fois, c'est que nous sommes plus forts et qu'ils sont plus faibles. »

L'Iran secoué par la mise en cause américaine

Téhéran :
de notre correspondant
Serge Michel

Classé durant des années par la Maison-Blanche dans la catégorie des *rogue states* (Etats voyous), l'Iran fait désormais partie, avec l'Irak et la Corée du Nord, du club plus fermé de « l'Axe du Mal », défini le 29 janvier par le président américain George Bush dans son discours sur l'état de l'Union. A Téhéran, cette « promotion » fait le miel du clergé conservateur, mais semble aussi agiter les profondeurs du système politique iranien au point que des réformateurs lui reconnaissent à demi-mots une certaine utilité.

Le plus à l'aise fut le guide suprême Ali Khamenei. Il a aussitôt dépeint George Bush en « vampire assoiffé de sang humain » dans un violent réquisitoire contre la « politique criminelle » des Etats-Unis vis-à-vis des Palestiniens. Il faut dire que la rhétorique des deux chefs d'Etat est d'une étonnante symétrie : bien avant de se retrouver au cœur de l'« Axe du Mal », Ali Khamenei ne parlait des Etats-Unis qu'en termes de « Grand Satan ».

La réaction du guide, docilement conjuguée par toute la classe politique, a eu pour premier effet de pousser les Iraniens plus nombreux que d'habitude aux célébrations du 23^e anniversaire de la révolution islamique, dimanche 11 février, où le président réformateur Mohammad Khatami a longuement dénoncé « l'immaturité » des dirigeants américains.

« Chaque fois que l'Amérique s'exprime sur l'Iran, c'est au bénéfice des conservateurs »,

déplore Said Laylaz, analyste politique réputé et proche des réformateurs. « Sa vision tellement simpliste leur redonne une légitimité », poursuit-il. On dirait que Bush ne veut pas de démocratie en Iran. »



A Téhéran, le 11 février, le 23^e anniversaire de la révolution islamique fut l'occasion pour les manifestants iraniens de brûler des effigies, symboles des Etats-Unis. (Photo Altra Kenare/AFP.)

Du coup, il y a du côté conservateur quelques va-t-en-guerre qui se sont épanchés ces derniers jours à la télévision. Ainsi le ministre de la Défense Ali Chamkhani a-t-il évoqué une riposte qui laisserait paniquer le monde entier au cas où les Etats-Unis s'aviseraient de frapper l'infrastructure pétrolière iranienne. Très remonté, Mohammad-Baghr Zolghadr, vice-commandant des Gardiens de la Révolution, a ajouté que

plus aucun pays du golfe Persique ne sera en mesure d'exporter du pétrole si la production iranienne devait être bloquée.

Les réformateurs, de plus en plus timorés et ayant depuis longtemps perdu l'initiative politique, n'ont pas trouvé de réaction originale à l'« Axe du Mal ». Leur groupe parlementaire a dénoncé un discours « déraisonnable, impoli et agressif » avant d'estimer que

l'Iran, « pays civilisé et puissant », ne pouvait accepter de menaces de qui que ce soit.

Plus courageux, le Front de participation, le parti de Mohammad Reza Khatami, le frère du président, fustige un

discours au service des intérêts sionistes, mais estime que « certains groupes iraniens » ont fourni des prétextes aux « insultes » de George Bush, en s'opposant au processus de paix en Palestine ou en multipliant les violations des droits de l'homme en Iran.

En matière de relations internationales, les réformateurs iraniens tiennent souvent un discours angélique, inspiré du « dialogue entre les civilisations » prôné par le président Khatami. Avec son « Axe du Mal », George Bush en a réveillé quelques-uns. « Le discours américain provoque un immense débat dans les couloirs du système », confirme

Said Laylaz, qui, du coup, lui reconnaît une « certaine utilité », du moins tant qu'aucun missile n'est tiré.

L'une des directions de ce débat semble être de reconnaître que « certaines erreurs ont été commises par des éléments extrémistes » et qui ont provoqué la colère américaine. Ainsi, sous couvert de l'anonymat, de hauts responsables iraniens n'excluent plus que la cargaison d'armes du *Karine A*, intercepté par la marine israélienne, soit d'origine iranienne. Idem pour les livraisons d'armes à certains groupes afghans.

D'autre part, après avoir nié toute présence sur son sol de membres d'Al Qaïda, l'Iran reconnaît en avoir capturé quelques-uns et serait sur le point de les extraditer en direction de leur pays d'origine, à en croire les confidences d'un politicien publiées hier par le *Financial Times*.

Les parlementaires commen-

cent aussi à se poser des questions sur la présence iranienne en Afghanistan, à laquelle les États-Unis reprochent de chercher à déstabiliser le gouvernement de Kaboul. Les députés se

demandent notamment pourquoi le consul iranien fraîchement nommé à Hérat est un ancien membre des Gardiens de la Révolution et non un diplomate de carrière.

Pour autant, le constat que dresse Saïd Laylaz à la lumière du discours de George Bush est amer. C'est celui de l'isolement du pays : « Nous n'avons jamais trouvé de véritable allié

stratégique. Ni la Chine, ni la Russie, ni l'Europe ne sont vraiment à nos côtés. Alors nous sortirons perdants de toutes les crises dans la région. »

Turquie et Jordanie en première ligne

**Istanbul :
de notre envoyé spécial
Pierre Rousselin**

A Istanbul, lors de la réunion qui s'est achevée, hier, entre les ministres des Affaires étrangères de l'Union européenne et de l'Organisation de la conférence islamique, les menaces de guerre qui s'accumulent sur l'Irak faisaient l'objet de toutes les conversations privées tandis que les délégués débattaient à la tribune du dialogue entre Islam et Occident après les attentats du 11 septembre.

La réunion intervenait quelques jours seulement après l'échec d'une tentative d'Ankara d'éviter une intervention militaire américaine, qui apparaît

de plus en plus probable après les dernières déclarations venant de Washington. Au premier ministre turc, Bülent Ecevit, qui l'invitait à accepter le retour des inspecteurs de l'ONU, conformément aux résolutions du Conseil de sécurité, Saddam Hussein a répondu sèchement que l'Irak ne disposait pas d'armement de destruction massive et ne comptait pas s'en procurer. Il a dénoncé l'attitude des inspecteurs par le passé ainsi que les menaces américaines et demandé la levée des sanctions qui frappent son pays.

Présent à Istanbul, le ministre des Affaires étrangères irakien, Naji Sabri, n'a apporté aucun signe d'accommodement. « Une attaque contre l'Irak ne serait pas à l'avantage de la Turquie ou d'un autre pays », a-t-il sim-

plement déclaré. « Nous faisons tout ce qui est en notre pouvoir pour trouver une solution mais nous ne voyons pas beaucoup de changements », dans l'attitude

irakienne, déplurait hier à la clôture de la conférence le chef de la diplomatie turque, İsmail Cem.

En privé, chacun y allait de ses pronostics. Le ministre jordanien, Marwan Musher, faisait part à ses interlocuteurs de l'impression qu'il ramenait de Washington selon laquelle les Américains auraient déjà pris leur décision d'intervenir en Irak.

Quand et comment ? étaient les questions que chacun se posait. « Si c'est une opération rapide, c'est sans doute pour bientôt. Si c'est une campagne longue, ce sera pour après les élections au Congrès de novembre », se hasardait à prévoir un délégué. La Jordanie, comme la Turquie, redoutent en tant que pays frontaliers les conséquences économiques d'un nouveau conflit. Les deux pays sont

vulnérables, la Jordanie à cause de ses approvisionnements pétroliers venant d'Irak et la Turquie du fait de la fragilité de son économie.

« Nous ne voulons pas que notre région devienne une zone de guerre. Nous pensons que les problèmes peuvent être résolus sans avoir recours à la guerre », a déclaré le premier ministre turc Bülent Ecevit.

La Turquie redoute également qu'une intervention américaine en Irak qui s'appuierait sur la minorité kurde ne relance les aspirations séparatistes au Kurdistan turc.

Malgré sa volonté d'éviter un conflit, la plupart des observateurs turcs relèvent qu'Ankara n'a en fait guère les moyens de s'y opposer. Principal allié des États-Unis dans la région, le pays est déjà largement débiteur des Américains après l'octroi d'un important prêt du FMI sans lequel la Turquie risquait la banqueroute.

'Axis of evil'

By Thomas L. Friedman

Deterrence at last

LONDON
Reading Europe's press, it is really reassuring to see how warmly Europeans have embraced George W. Bush's formulation that an "axis of evil" threatens world peace. There is only one small problem. Bush thinks the axis of evil is Iran, Iraq and North Korea, and the Europeans think it's Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Condi Rice.

Chris Patten, the European Union's foreign policy czar, told The Guardian that the Bush axis-of-evil idea was dangerously "absolutist and simplistic," not "thought through" and "unhelpful," and that the Europeans needed to stop Washington before it went into "unilateralist overdrive."

I think these critics are right that the countries Bush identified as an axis of

evil really are not an "axis," and we shouldn't drive them together. And the critics are right that each of these countries poses a different kind of threat and requires a different, nuanced response.

And the critics are right that America can't fight everywhere alone. And that America needs to launch a serious effort to end Israeli-Palestinian violence, because it is undermining any hope of U.S.-Arab cooperation.

But I'm still glad Bush said what he said. The critics are missing the larger point, which is that Sept. 11 happened because America had lost its deterrent capability.

We lost it because for 20 years we never retaliated against, or brought to justice, those who murdered Americans. From the first suicide bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut in April 1983 to the bombing of the Marine barracks at the Beirut airport a few months later, to the TWA hijacking, to the attack on U.S. troops at Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, to the suicide bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa, to the attack on the destroyer Cole in Yemen, innocent Americans were killed and the United States did nothing.

So enemies took us less and less seriously and became more and more emboldened. They became so embold-

ened that a group of individuals attacked America in its own backyard.

Why not? The terrorists and the states that harbor them thought we were soft, and they were right. They thought that they could always "out-crazy" us, and they were right. They thought we would always listen to the Europeans and opt for "constructive engagement" with rogues, not a fist in the face, and they were right.

America's enemies smelled weakness all over us, and we paid a huge price for that.

The Europeans don't favor any military action against Iraq, Iran or North Korea. Neither do I. But what is their alternative? To wait until Saddam Hussein's son Uday has bio-weapons and missiles that can hit Paris?

No, the axis-of-evil idea isn't thought through, but that's what I like about it. It says to these countries and their terrorist pals: "We know what you're cooking in your bathtubs. We don't know exactly what we're going to do about it, but if you think we are going to just sit back and take another dose from you, you're wrong. Meet Don Rumsfeld — he's even crazier than you are." The Bush team's willingness to restore deterrence and be as crazy as some enemies is one thing they have right.

The New York Times

Manifestations à Istanbul pour l'enseignement en kurde



ISTANBUL, 9 fév (AFP) - 21h50 - Des Kurdes de Turquie ont manifesté de manière éparse samedi dans divers quartiers d'Istanbul pour réclamer un enseignement en langue kurde, annonce l'agence Anatolie.

Les quartiers de Esenler, Bagcilar, Fatih, Zeytinburnu, sur la rive européenne, et de Umraniye, sur la rive asiatique d'Istanbul, ont été le théâtre d'attroupements de manifestants revendiquant un "enseignement en kurde à l'école", jusqu'à l'arrivée de police, selon Anatolie.

Selon la même source, les manifestants ont lancé des cocktails Molotov avant de s'égayer dans les rues pour échapper aux forces de l'ordre, et aucune interpellation n'a eu lieu.

Dans le quartier de Fatih, deux hommes non identifiés ont déposé dans un passage piéton aérien un paquet pouvant faire penser à un colis piégé, mais qui ne contenait qu'une pancarte disant "nous voulons un enseignement en kurde", a révélé l'inspection des services de déminage.

La semaine dernière, le Premier ministre turc Bulent Ecevit s'est catégoriquement opposé à un enseignement en kurde en Turquie, "c'est impossible", a-t-il notamment dit, dénonçant des "manoeuvres de certains pays d'Europe visant à diviser la Turquie".

La campagne pour demander l'enseignement en langue kurde, interdite selon la constitution turque, a débuté en novembre et des milliers d'étudiants dans le pays ont été interpellés pour avoir signé des pétitions en ce sens.

Les autorités turques considèrent le mouvement comme une volonté de politisation du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie) qui a mis fin en 1999 à sa lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est du pays.

L'Union européenne à laquelle la Turquie souhaite adhérer, lui réclame plus de droits culturels pour sa population kurde, notamment une télévision et un enseignement en kurde.

Une chaîne de télévision suspendue pour un an pour soutien au PKK



ANKARA, 11 fév (AFP) - 14h26 - Le Haut conseil de l'audiovisuel turc (RTUK) a décidé d'interdire de diffusion pendant un an une chaîne de télévision à Diyarbakir, chef-lieu du Sud-Est anatolien à majorité kurde, pour "émissions de nature à soutenir le PKK (séparatistes kurdes de Turquie)", a indiqué lundi à l'AFP un responsable de cet organe.

Le RTUK a pris cette décision car la chaîne, GUN TV, émettait à partir de minuit des chansons en kurde "louant le PKK (Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan) et insultant l'Etat turc", a précisé ce responsable sous couvert d'anonymat.

"Diffuser des chansons en kurde n'est pas interdit, mais soutenir ouvertement le PKK avec des marches militaires l'est", a-t-il souligné ajoutant que cette chaîne avait par le passé été fermée par le RTUK pour des raisons similaires.

Le RTUK doit annoncer ultérieurement quand la décision prendra effet.

Depuis sa création en 1994, le RTUK a déjà suspendu pendant des laps de temps divers plus de 500 chaînes de radio et de télévision, selon les chiffres officiels.

Le PKK, considéré comme une organisation terroriste par Ankara, a abandonné en septembre 1999 sa lutte armée en faveur de la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le Sud-Est anatolien, à l'appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort par la justice turque en juin de la même année. Depuis les combats dans le sud-est ont considérablement diminué.

59 membres d'un parti pro-kurde arrêtés, selon le Hadeq



ANKARA, 11 fév (AFP) - 11h22 - Cinquante-neuf membres du Parti de la démocratie du peuple (Hadeq, pro-kurde) ont été arrêtés en un mois dans plusieurs villes turques pour avoir soutenu une vaste campagne en faveur d'un enseignement en langue kurde dans les écoles et les universités, a annoncé lundi le Hadeq.

Cette campagne a débuté en novembre et des milliers d'étudiants ont été interpellés en Turquie pour avoir signé des pétitions en ce sens.

Les autorités turques considèrent le mouvement comme une volonté de politisation du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie) qui a mis fin en 1999 à sa lutte armée, entamée 15 ans auparavant, pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est du pays.

Le Premier ministre turc Bulent Ecevit s'est catégoriquement opposé il y a deux semaines à un enseignement en kurde en Turquie. "C'est impossible", a-t-il notamment dit, dénonçant des "manoeuvres de certains pays d'Europe visant à diviser la Turquie".

L'Union européenne à laquelle la Turquie souhaite adhérer, lui réclame plus de droits culturels pour sa population kurde, en particulier une télévision et un enseignement en kurde.

Le Hadep fait régulièrement l'objet de persécutions policières et judiciaires, sous l'accusation d'aide à la rébellion séparatiste du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan.

La Turquie condamnée pour la mort d'un jeune Kurde torturé en détention



STRASBOURG, 14 fév (AFP) - 16h13 - La Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme a condamné la Turquie pour la mort d'un jeune Turc d'origine kurde, décédé en 1993 après avoir été torturé par les forces de sécurité, selon un communiqué du tribunal publié jeudi à Strasbourg.

Abdulsalam Orak est mort le 25 juin 1993 à l'âge de 23 ans, deux semaines après son arrestation par les forces de sécurité turques qui le soupçonnaient d'être impliqué dans les activités du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes).

Le gouvernement turc a expliqué que le jeune homme qui serait mort des suites d'un traumatisme à la tête, avait essayé de s'échapper et qu'il avait été blessé dans la bagarre qui avait suivi.

"Le gouvernement ne fournit aucune explication plausible pour les régions ecchymotiques réparties entre autres sur les bras, la cuisse, les plantes des pieds et les parietaux ainsi que pour les égratignures sur les parties génitales ou les causes de la congestion cérébrale ayant apparemment entraîné la mort", note la Cour dans son arrêt.

La Cour souligne que Abdulsalam Orak était en bonne santé avant son arrestation et qu'il n'a été transféré à l'hôpital, dans le coma, que "six jours après la tentative d'évasion alléguée".

La Turquie a été condamnée pour violation de l'article 2 (droit à la vie), de l'article 3 (interdiction de la torture) et de l'article 13 (droit à un recours effectif) de la Convention européenne des droits de l'Homme.

Le gouvernement devra également verser 68.500 euros aux héritiers de la victime et 4.000 euros à son père, le requérant, pour dommages matériel et moral.

Tirs israéliens contre des Kurdes à Berlin: pas de légitime défense



BERLIN, 15 fév (AFP) - 16h45 - L'ancien ambassadeur d'Israël en Allemagne, Avi Primor, a reconnu qu'il n'y avait pas eu légitime défense en février 1999, lorsque des agents de sécurité du consulat d'Israël à Berlin avaient ouvert le feu contre des manifestants kurdes, tuant quatre personnes, dans un entretien avec le quotidien allemand Tageszeitung à paraître samedi.

"A l'époque, j'étais persuadé que c'était de la légitime défense parce que les agents de sécurité en étaient aussi persuadés, a déclaré au quotidien M. Primor, mais, a posteriori, je sais que ce n'était pas le cas".

Il a affirmé avoir cru que les Kurdes avaient l'intention de prendre des otages ou de tuer quelqu'un. Mais il s'est avéré que ces craintes étaient fausses, comme l'ont montré les procès intentés contre certains des manifestants et les enquêtes menées, a-t-il souligné.

Le 17 février 1999, des sympathisants du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui accusaient l'Etat israélien d'être impliqué dans l'arrestation par les services secrets turcs du chef du PKK, Abdullah Ocalan, avaient organisé une manifestation devant le consulat d'Israël.

Deux membres du service de sécurité du consulat avaient ouvert le feu sur les manifestants au moment où ceux-ci tentaient de pénétrer dans la représentation diplomatique, tuant quatre militants kurdes et en blessant de nombreux autres.

La justice allemande, tout en poursuivant les Kurdes impliqués dans cette affaire, a émis d'expresses réserves quant à la légitime défense invoquée par les autorités israéliennes pour justifier l'ouverture du feu. Elle n'a toutefois entamé aucune procédure contre les gardes du consulat, protégés par leur immunité diplomatique.

Trois manifestants ont été condamnés à des peines de prison de neuf mois à deux ans avec sursis. Les autres procès n'ont pour l'instant abouti à aucune condamnation. Seul l'un des manifestants avait écopé d'une peine d'intérêt général mais son procès, aux côtés de trois autres jeunes gens, a dû être repris de A à Z au mois de novembre dernier.

Noam Chomsky plaide pour un "Kurdistan autonome" au Proche-Orient



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 14 fév (AFP) - 16h13 - Le militant de gauche et linguiste américain Noam Chomsky a souhaité mercredi la création "un jour" d'un "Kurdistan autonome" au Proche-Orient qui regrouperait des millions de Kurdes disséminés dans plusieurs pays de la région.

"J'espère qu'un jour il y aura un Kurdistan autonome et que des dizaines de millions de Kurdes vivront sur ses terres", a-t-il dit à Diyarbakir, chef-lieu du sud-est anatolien à majorité kurde, lors d'un symposium organisé par des organisations non gouvernementales locales.

"Les habitants de ce Kurdistan seraient autonomes politiquement et indépendants culturellement", a-t-il continué.

Quelque 20 millions de Kurdes vivent en Turquie, Syrie, Irak et Iran, dont environ 12 millions en Turquie.

L'écrivain américain a soutenu la revendication d'un enseignement du kurde dans les établissements scolaires. "J'ai du respect pour le kurde, je respecte aussi ceux qui oeuvrent avec courage pour demander à apprendre leur langue maternelle dans les écoles", a-t-il notamment dit.

L'instruction dans une autre langue que le turc, donc le kurde, est interdite par la constitution turque. Les dirigeants y sont catégoriquement opposés alors qu'elle constitue l'un des droits culturels que l'Union européenne, à laquelle la Turquie veut adhérer, lui demande de concéder à sa population kurde.

Concernant les objectifs de son pays en Irak, menacé par une éventuelle extension de la campagne anti-terroriste américaine, M. Chomsky a estimé que les Etats Unis utiliseraient la Turquie comme "mercenaire" contre ce pays en lui promettant en contrepartie les champs pétrolifères irakiens de Kirkouk et de Mossoul, dans le nord.

"Une telle éventualité (militaire) provoquerait une explosion au Proche-Orient et une révolution en Arabie Saoudite", a-t-il estimé.

M. Chomsky était mardi à Istanbul pour assister au procès de son éditeur turc, poursuivi pour propagande séparatiste après avoir publié son livre intitulé "L'interventionnisme américain", qui évoque la question kurde.

L'éditeur a été acquitté dès la première audience devant une Cour de sûreté de l'Etat.

M. Chomsky n'était pas poursuivi personnellement dans cette affaire, mais il avait tenu à assister au procès en arguant de sa "responsabilité morale d'être humain" face à la politique de son pays envers la Turquie.

Dans son livre, qui reprend des extraits de cours donnés à l'Université de Harvard, il dénonce les ventes d'armes américaines à la Turquie, utilisées pour la "répression contre les Kurdes".

M. Chomsky devait rencontrer à Diyarbakir des membres du Parti de la Démocratie du Peuple (HADEP), qui milite pour la reconnaissance des droits culturels des Kurdes et fait l'objet d'une procédure d'interdiction pour liens avec les séparatistes kurdes de Turquie.

Des centaines de Kurdes manifestent à Marseille pour "la liberté d'Ocalan"



MARSEILLE (France), 15 fév (AFP) - 17h19 - Quelque 700 Kurdes selon la police, 2.200 selon les organisateurs, ont manifesté vendredi dans le centre de Marseille (sud), pour marquer le troisième anniversaire de l'arrestation du chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan, détenu dans l'île-prison turque d'Imrali.

Un drapeau kurde à la main ou le front ceint d'un bandeau rouge, les manifestants sont allés déposer une gerbe devant le consulat de Grèce et celui de Turquie, en scandant "Liberté pour Ocalan", "Démocratie en Turquie".

Le chef du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) avait été capturé par un commando au Kenya, le 15 février 1999, puis condamné à mort en Turquie pour "trahison et séparatisme", le 29 juin 1999.

Après sa capture, le PKK avait arrêté la lutte armée sanglante qu'il menait depuis quinze ans contre l'Etat turc pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le Sud-Est anatolien à majorité kurde.

Chomsky wins case for Turkish publisher

Owen Bowcott

A Turkish publisher accused of disseminating separatist propaganda was acquitted yesterday after one of his authors — the celebrated American linguist and philosopher Noam Chomsky — appeared in an Istanbul court and asked to be tried alongside him.

In a case highlighting the limited freedom of expression permitted in discussions about Turkey's treatment of its Kurdish minority, the director of Aram Publishing, Fatih Tas, escaped the one-year jail sentence he had been anticipating.

"The prosecutor clearly made the right decision," said Professor Chomsky, who had petitioned to be named as a co-defendant. "I hope it will be a step toward establishing the freedom of speech in Turkey that we all want to see. I am here to express support for the writers, journalists and human rights activists who are willing to take serious risks."

A delighted Mr Tas, who last year published American Interventionism, a Turkish translation of Prof Chomsky's essays, declared after the trial: "If [he] hadn't been here ... we wouldn't have expected such a verdict."

Mr Tas still faces charges over books which question Turkey's human rights record. In one of the essays, Prof Chomsky, who teaches at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, alleged that the Turkish government had "launched a major war in the south-east against the Kurdish population" and described the conflict as "one of the most severe human rights atrocities of the 1990s".

The Kurds, he wrote, "have been miserably oppressed throughout the whole history of the modern Turkish state".

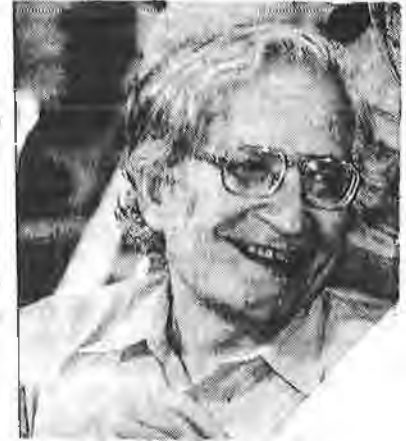
Turkish security forces waged a 15-year campaign against Kurdish rebels which resulted in the deaths of more than 30,000 people and the destruction of thousands of

villages. The fighting effectively ceased with the capture of Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the Kurdistan Workers' party, in 1999.

If Mr Tas had been convicted, it would have been a severe embarrassment for the Turkish government, which this week hosted a meeting of foreign ministers from EU and Muslim states. The conference was supposed to improve understanding between the Christian west and Islam following September 11.

Turkey is keen to develop its position as a bridge between the two civilisations. The parliament recently passed reforms aimed at permitting greater freedom of expression, to enhance Turkey's application to join the EU.

In October last year the government altered the constitution to legalise Kurdish-language television and radio broadcasts, in an attempt to conform to EU human rights standards. This week, however, Turkey's radio and television high council, which oversees the broadcast media, suspended the licence of a local TV station for a year for "playing music with Kurdish lyrics".



Scores of Turkish writers and journalists have been jailed in the past under anti-terrorist laws which forbid criticism of the state's conduct of the war in the south-east.

Prof Chomsky is giving several lectures during his three-day visit to Turkey. Tomorrow he is due to fly to Diyarbakir to meet Kurdish politicians.

Before yesterday's trial he said that Americans had a duty to monitor and protest against human rights abuses in Turkey.

"When the United States provides 80% of the arms for Turkey, for the express purpose of carrying out repression ... that's my responsibility," he explained.

'When the US provides 80% of the arms for Turkey, for the express purpose of repression ... that's my responsibility'

Le PKK va devenir la Parti de la republique democratique

DIYARBAKIR, Turquie (AP) -- Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan mieux connu sous le sigle PKK, mouvement rebelle kurde interdit en Turquie, compte abandonner le nom qu'il porte depuis 24 ans dans l'espoir de réhabiliter son image et de se muer en force politique, a-t-on appris vendredi de sources kurdes.

Le PKK va ainsi devenir le Parti de la république démocratique, une formation présentée comme pacifique et destinée à défendre les droits culturels de la communauté kurde, précisait-on de mêmes sources.

AP Associated Press

samedi 16 février 2002, 0h09

"Les jours prochains seront décisifs pour l'avenir du PKK", a averti le leader du mouvement, Abdullah Ocalan, emprisonné sur une île interdite d'accès où il attend l'examen de l'appel de sa condamnation à mort. Des propos reproduits par le journal kurde "Ozgur Politika" publié en Allemagne.

Tandis que le principal parti kurde semble vouloir se réorganiser et s'éloigner de la lutte armée, les autorités turques restent inflexibles quant à l'enseignement du kurde, langue parlée par 12 millions de personnes en Turquie.

"Les gens peuvent parler kurde s'ils le souhaitent. Mais nous ne pouvons accepter le principe d'une éducation kurde", a répété vendredi le Premier ministre Bulent Ecevit.

DISPARITIONS

Le Monde
MARDI 12 FÉVRIER 2002

Aysé Nur Zarakoglu

Editrice de textes « subversifs »

L'INTELLECTUELLE turque Aysé Nur Zarakoglu est morte lundi 28 janvier à l'hôpital Tchapa de la faculté de médecine d'Istanbul, des suites d'un cancer. Elle était âgée de 56 ans.

Sociologue de formation, Aysé Nur avait, en 1977, fondé la maison d'édition Belgé (en turc « document »), reconnue en Turquie et en Europe pour ses publications sur les minorités. Bravant les interdits de la République kémaliste, Aysé Nur et son mari, Ragip, ont, avec de petits moyens, porté à la connaissance du public de nombreux ouvrages, tant sur la gauche turque que sur le sort des Kurdes et des Arméniens. En 1994, la publication du livre *Le Tabou arménien* – la traduction turque de l'ouvrage d'Yves Ternon *Les Arméniens, histoire d'un génocide* – vaudra à Aysé Nur d'être condamnée, un an plus tard, par la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat pour « incitation au séparatisme ». Si elle évite finalement la prison, l'ouvrage est interdit – il l'est toujours – et les locaux de Belgé sont détruits par une charge explosive. Aysé et son mari rapatrient alors leurs livres dans un entrepôt en sous-sol du vieux quartier stanbouliote de Sultan Ahmet et conti-

nent, imperturbables, à publier. Le couple, à l'origine de la création de l'Association des droits de l'homme de Turquie, en a vu d'autres : entre 1982 et 1995, Aysé Nur est inculpée plus de trente fois et séjourne en prison à quatre reprises.

En 1982, elle est incarcérée – sans jugement – quatre mois durant pour la publication de l'ouvrage d'un universitaire consacré aux mouvements de la gauche turque... au début du siècle. Condamnée en 1990 à six mois de prison pour avoir publié le livre du sociologue d'origine kurde İsmail Besikci – lui-même condamné à une centaine d'années de prison pour ses écrits –, cette femme tennace décide malgré tout, sitôt sa peine purgée, d'éditer trois autres livres du sociologue tabou. En 1993, elle connaît une nouvelle condamnation pour la publication d'une enquête journalistique sur les exactions de l'armée régulière au Kurdistan de Turquie intitulée *Anatomie d'un crime*, tandis que l'auteur du livre, un journaliste turc, trouve la mort en détention.

L'obstination du couple d'éditeurs de textes dits « subversifs » finit par payer : après maintes

batailles judiciaires, la sortie du livre *Génocide* de l'universitaire américain Vahak Dadian finit par être autorisée, tandis que la publication d'une traduction en turc du roman de Franz Werfel *Les Quarante Jours du Musa Dagh* sur la résistance des Arméniens à l'époque du génocide de 1915, non reconnu par la Turquie, ne vaut, exceptionnellement, aucun ennui aux époux Zarakoglu. Invités plusieurs fois à Paris, notamment par le Centre de recherches sur la diaspora arménienne (CRDA), qui milite pour la reconnaissance du génocide et en faveur du rapprochement arménoturc, Aysé et Ragip voient se faire plus rares menaces, mauvais traitements, incarcérations. En octobre 1998, Aysé Nur reçoit de l'Association internationale des éditeurs le Prix de la liberté. Mais il est déjà trop tard. Son dernier combat, elle le livre contre la maladie. Inhumée le 30 janvier à Istanbul, son action a bien été évoquée par quelques médias officiels, mais son cortège funèbre, suivi par des milliers de Turcs, était encadré par une vingtaine de cars de police.

Marie Jégo

« L'axe du mal » au centre des discussions entre l'Europe et la Conférence islamique

Le premier ministre turc, Bülent Ecevit, estime que l'Irak est prêt à un compromis

ISTANBUL

de notre correspondante

Le Proche-Orient et l'éventualité d'une offensive américaine contre l'Irak ont dominé les discussions entre les ministres des affaires étrangères de l'Union européenne et de l'Organisation de la conférence islamique (OCI) réunis à Istanbul les 12 et 13 février pour une conférence qui se voulait avant tout une réflexion sur la diversité culturelle, la perception de l'autre et les moyens d'empêcher le fameux « conflit des civilisations » très souvent évoqué depuis les événements du 11 septembre. Des représentants de 75 pays, dont plus d'une trentaine de ministres des affaires étrangères, avaient répondu à l'invitation de la Turquie pour tenter d'engager

le dialogue entre les cultures.

La plupart des participants ont évité les critiques directes à l'égard de Washington dans leurs discours. Cependant, il est indéniable que l'approche militariste adoptée par l'administration de George W. Bush est une source d'inquiétude et de frustration pour les pays musulmans, lesquels cherchent l'appui de l'Europe. Hubert Védrine, ministre français des affaires étrangères, a souligné la remarque des pays arabes en déclarant : « Heureusement qu'il y a l'Europe pour relancer des initiatives. » Ainsi l'Iran, récemment mis en cause par le président Bush comme appartenant à un « axe maléfique » incluant également l'Irak et la Corée du Nord, a affirmé par l'intermédiaire de son ministre

des affaires étrangères, Kamal Kharazi, que « le monde islamique est convaincu que l'Union européenne peut, et doit, jouer un rôle plus important pour contrer la pression des Israéliens, qui exploitent l'environnement politique actuel afin d'augmenter leur répression brutale et sauvage du peuple palestinien ».

Son homologue syrien, Farouk Al-Chareh, a déclaré qu'il était futile de combattre le terrorisme sans en chercher les causes. « Comment pouvez-vous traiter une maladie sans faire un diagnostic au préalable ? » Mahmoud Hammoud, le chef de la diplomatie libanaise, a affirmé pour sa part qu'il était nécessaire de « différencier entre la lutte légitime d'un peuple contre l'occupation étrangère et le terrorisme ». Bien que certaines

initiatives – notamment la récente proposition française visant à reconnaître un Etat palestinien – soient déjà sur la table, les Européens ne sont pas encore parvenus à adopter une position commune. M. Védrine affirme d'ailleurs que l'intention n'est pas de créer « pour le plaisir » une politique européenne distincte de celle des Etats-Unis, mais il admet néanmoins que « un certain nombre de points de vue diffèrent ».

Les Européens soutiennent la lutte contre le terrorisme engagée par les Etats-Unis mais ils favorisent davantage la négociation et le dialogue plutôt que la confrontation directe. « Le grand défi, c'est de ne pas permettre aux offensives militaires d'affaiblir les initiatives politiques et d'empêcher une érosion de nos

valeurs démocratiques», explique Walter Schwimmer, secrétaire général du Conseil de l'Europe, ajoutant que l'Europe « doit se lancer et jouer un rôle actif » avant de préciser : « Si nous défendons ces valeurs, nous devons les défendre même lorsque nous sommes attaqués. »

En ce qui concerne le Proche-Orient, M. Védrine affirme pour sa part qu'il y a une unanimité européenne sur l'« impérieuse nécessité de revenir sur le terrain du dialogue politique ». Javier Solana, responsable de la politique extérieure et de sécurité de l'Union européenne, a insisté sur le fait que « nous sommes unis par la conviction que la seule solution qui peut amener une paix durable aux peuples concernés est la création de deux Etats ».

ÉVITER UNE OFFENSIVE

La présence à Istanbul du ministre des affaires étrangères irakien, Naji Sabri, a fourni l'occasion de sonder les sentiments de Bagdad, actuellement dans la ligne de mire de Washington. Ankara souhaite désespérément éviter une offensive militaire.

Le premier ministre turc, Bülent Ecevit, a récemment écrit à Saddam Hussein pour lui suggérer d'autoriser le retour des inspecteurs de l'ONU. Il n'a pas obtenu de réponse positive. Toutefois, M. Ecevit a affirmé, à l'issue de sa discussion avec M. Sabri, avoir détecté un assouplissement irakien. « Certains propos ont été exprimés qui peuvent être compris comme signifiant que l'Irak est prêt à un compromis », a déclaré

le premier ministre, ajoutant : « J'ai eu l'impression d'un mouvement, mais il n'est pas encore clair quel résultat il peut avoir et ce qui sera donné en contrepartie. »

Nicole Pope

Washington examine les options sur l'Irak

Le secrétaire d'Etat Colin Powell a affirmé, mardi 12 février, devant la commission du budget du Sénat, que le président Bush « n'a pas en ce moment sur son bureau de plan pour commencer une nouvelle guerre avec quelque pays que ce soit ». Le chef de la diplomatie américaine a toutefois souligné que « l'Irak est le pays qui est source de la plus forte inquiétude », ajoutant que Washington « examinait les options concernant un changement de régime » si Bagdad n'acceptait pas un retour des inspecteurs internationaux chargés de vérifier son désarmement. M. Powell a ajouté que le président Bush « n'a pas devant lui de recommandation impliquant qu'il y ait un conflit armé demain » avec le régime de Saddam Hussein, sans toutefois exclure cette possibilité à plus long terme.

« Il n'y a aucune action militaire imminente », a déclaré de son côté, le porte-parole de la présidence Ari Fleischer. « Aucune décision n'a été prise », a-t-il ajouté. — (AFP)

International Herald Tribune

Thursday, February 14, 2002

Powell looking hawkish on Iraq

By David E. Sanger

The New York Times

WASHINGTON: In the weeks following the defeat of the Taliban and the scattering of Al Qaeda in Afghanistan, the Bush administration was consumed with internal debate about where to take the war on terrorism next.

Now, by all indications, the debate is largely over: Toppling President Saddam Hussein is the next major goal, and the administration is putting in place the diplomatic and military means to accomplish it.

But if allies have grown more nervous that this is the wrong fight at the wrong time, President George W. Bush sounds as if he has grown more certain than ever of the rightness of his course: In Milwaukee on Monday night, he warned that he was "not going to allow regimes such as Iran, Iraq and North Korea to threaten our way of life."

But while Bush made no distinctions among the three in his speech, inside the administration there is now consensus that Iraq is the only one of those three regimes that has to go. That decision has been made vivid in recent days by the remarks of Secretary of State Colin Powell — a case in which Washington's messenger is as important as the message itself.

Powell has long been considered the voice of caution in the Bush war cabinet, the restraining influence on those in the Pentagon, led by Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, who argued for re-

moving Saddam immediately after the Sept. 11 attacks. As the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Gulf War, Powell carried enormous credibility in facing down the Pentagon.

Now, a senior administration official said the other day, "we've finally jelled." Powell, the official noted, used the phrase "axis of evil" repeatedly in reference to Iraq, Iran and North Korea — to signal that there is no daylight between himself and his more hawkish boss.

"It's hard to imagine Colin saying those words on his own a month ago," the senior official said. "Either he's come into agreement with everyone else, or he's decided to embrace the policy in hopes that, from the inside, he can control and modify it."

If that is Powell's secret plan, he may have time on his side.

Even the most hawkish members of the administration say it will be months before the desire to topple Saddam turns into a concrete strategy. But the outlines of the strategy are beginning to emerge.

Between now and May, Bush's team plans to create what amounts to an inspection crisis — demanding that Iraq admit into the country the nuclear inspectors it expelled in 1998. Bush's aides fully expect that Saddam will refuse outright or feign cooperation in the hope of dragging out the process.

Bush's plan is to use either action as evidence that Iraq is hiding active

weapons programs, and use Iraq's resistance to justify more forceful action. Whether that takes the form of direct military attack, support for internal rebellions or other options "is still up in the air," a senior White House official said Tuesday.

But by joining so publicly with his boss and with his rivals in the Defense Department, Powell is clearly signaling to America's reluctant allies that they cannot exploit a division in the administration to forestall action on Iraq.

"At some point," an administration official said, "the Europeans with butterflies in their stomachs — many of whom didn't want us to go into Afghanistan — will see that they have a bipolar choice: They can get with the plan or get off."

It is that kind of talk that has so raised the hackles of European leaders in recent days, including longtime friends of Washington like Joschka Fischer, the German foreign minister, who warned on Tuesday that "alliance partners are not satellites," a phrase that evoked images of how the old Soviet Union dealt with the rest of the Communist bloc.

Powell will have to chip away at such vocal opposition if he has any hope of piecing together an anti-Iraq coalition that would at least give protective political cover to what would essentially be an American action.

But he warned last week that if the allies balk — he clearly had Germany, France and Saudi Arabia in mind, among others — Bush was fully prepared to do it by himself.

Pentagon and CIA making plans for war against Iraq this year

US targets Saddam

Julian Borger in Washington
and **Ewen MacAskill**

The Pentagon and the CIA have begun preparations for an assault on Iraq involving up to 200,000 US troops that is likely to be launched later this year with the aim of removing Saddam Hussein from power, US and diplomatic sources told the Guardian yesterday.

President George Bush's war cabinet, known as the "principals committee", agreed at a pivotal meeting in late January that the policy of containment has failed and that active steps should be taken to topple the Iraqi leader.

But, according to a US intelligence source familiar with CIA preparations, the plans for a parallel overt and covert war only landed on the president's desk in the past few days.

"I will reserve whatever options I have. I'll keep them close to my vest. Saddam Hussein needs to understand that I'm serious about defending our country," Mr Bush said yesterday.

Since the principals committee decision, Colin Powell, the secretary of state and the dove of the administration, has pointedly added his voice to the calls for a "regime change".

"We are looking at a variety of options that would bring

'Regime change would be in the best interests of the region, the best interests of the Iraqi people... we are looking at a variety of options that would bring that about'

Colin Powell

that about," he told the Senate budget committee.

The blueprint for a campaign against Iraq has evolved from a contingency plan drawn up by the joint chiefs of staff that envisaged the use of

a 200,000-strong US force, the bulk of which would invade from Kuwait.

However, it may be that the actual force used will be less numerous, relying more on covert and special forces operations.

Central Command has already set up forward headquarters in the Gulf from which each of the component services will be able to coordinate the war.

The air force headquarters (Afcen) is at the Prince Sultan air base in Saudi Arabia. The army headquarters (Arcent) is in Kuwait, while the navy (Navcen) is in Bahrain.

Central Command's marine component (Marcent) is also expected to move to Bahrain in the next few days, weeks after the main marine force left Afghanistan.

The US, Israel and Turkey were due to hold joint exercises codenamed Anatolian Eagle this year, but in another sign of accelerated preparations there will be three such exercises in the next few months, based at the Turkish air force base at Konya. Once upgraded, Konya could be used alongside Incirlik as a base for air strikes on northern Iraq.

The Pentagon's military planners are reported to have agonised over the Iraq plan because of the significant risk that Saddam — aware that unlike during the Gulf war his own life is at stake this time — would use chemical and biological weapons against US troop concentrations and Israel.

The danger would be minimised by intensive bombing of missile launchers, but the generals reportedly remain extremely concerned that the risks cannot be eliminated entirely.

The CIA's covert war would involve arming and training Kurdish fighters in northern Iraq and Shi'ite forces in Kuwait. CIA trainers and special forces troops have already been dispatched to Kuwait for that purpose, and may already have begun work.

Meanwhile, CIA and special forces will launch a campaign of sabotage and information warfare in the next few months.



The US has begun preparations to remove Saddam Hussein from power

The CIA puts very little faith in the military capacity of the main opposition movement, the Iraqi National Congress, but it has begun intensive consultations with INC officials about the logistics of training and arming the movement's supporters.

The trigger could be the expected row over weapons inspections in three months' time. America's allies are clinging to the hope that US military action will be forestalled by Baghdad's acceptance of unconditional and unfettered weapons inspections when the international sanctions regime comes up for review at the United Nations in May.

However, Iraq's vice-president, Taha Yassin Ramadan, said yesterday there

was no need for "spies" from the UN weapons inspection teams to return to the country.

A US state department official said he thought it very unlikely that the Iraqi regime would be prepared to accept the stringent programme of inspections the US will demand. As the American intelligence source put it, the White House "will not take yes for an answer", suggesting that Washington would provoke a crisis. He added that he expected the war to begin soon after the May ultimatum.

US allies in the Middle East have been informed that a decision to attack Iraq has already been taken, and diplomats from the region said yesterday they were resigned to the inevitability of a war that

may threaten the stability of a string of Arab regimes.

"It is a nightmare situation for us," said one Arab diplomat in Washington. "We feel the Americans will take very drastic action and we have to be prepared for such a reality. But the public opinion in the street will not see this as a benign attempt to restore order, but as American imperialism."

France, Germany and others in the European Union have been queuing up to make clear to Mr Bush that they will not support him in military action against Iraq.

The German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer, this week

joined the French foreign minister, Hubert Védrine, by expressing publicly his concern about US policy towards Iraq.

But Tony Blair and the foreign secretary, Jack Straw, have refused to join the public outcry. A Foreign Office official said yesterday that military action was not imminent, but would be "a question of months".

A Foreign Office spokesman later said: "The prime minister has made it clear from the outset that the campaign would have two phases: the first focusing on Afghanistan and the second looking at dif-

ferent aspects of international terrorism. In that context, we have to look at issues such as weapons of mass destruction."

There are regular exchanges between the US state department and the Foreign Office on strategy for tackling Iraq. The Foreign Office spokesman said: "We will proceed in consultation with our allies and the precise methods of action will be for consultation in due course."

In the months after September 11, the Foreign Office repeatedly ruled out military action against Iraq, other than the regular bombing along its

border with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Its line at the time was that there was no evidence linking Iraq to terrorist activity.

Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Turkey, all US allies neighbouring Iraq, expect to sustain significant economic and political damage from a new conflict. Jordan believes it stands to lose \$800m (£500m) from the interruption of deliveries of cheap Iraqi oil, and has already begun to hint at the need for compensation.

Le Monde 15 FÉVRIER 2002

Les droits des Kurdes de Turquie peuvent attendre

TROIS ANS après la capture, puis la condamnation à mort d'Abdullah Öcalan, dit « Apo », le chef du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), où en sont aujourd'hui les droits de la minorité kurde de Turquie ? Si les armes se sont tues au sud-est du pays, théâtre d'une guerre de quinze ans entre les maquisards du PKK et l'armée régulière d'Ankara, si le *baskan* (chef), maintenu à l'isolement à vie dans son flot-prison d'Imralı, a renoncé à toute visée séparatiste, l'actuelle coalition au pouvoir semble toujours aussi réticente à reconnaître leurs droits culturels aux Kurdes (entre 12 et 15 millions de personnes, soit un cinquième de la population). Ce point figure toutefois en bonne place parmi les « critères de Copenhague » (la mise en place d'un Etat de droit) auxquels la « petite Asie » devra se conformer si elle veut intégrer l'Union européenne (UE).

Le gouvernement turc dit espérer obtenir rapidement – avant la fin de 2002 – une date ferme en vue des négociations d'adhésion avec les Quinze, mais multiplie les démarches contradictoires. Certes une loi adoptée il y a quelques mois, dans le cadre du « Programme national » – le cahier des charges des réformes qu'Ankara s'engage à accomplir en vue de son intégration dans l'UE –, reconnaît bien aux citoyens de la République turque le droit d'utiliser au quotidien « différentes langues, dialectes et patois », mais leur enseignement n'est pas autorisé. Dernièrement, des milliers d'étudiants qui revendiquaient – à Istanbul, à Izmir, à Van ou à Ankara – le droit à des cours de langue kurde ont été frappés, interpellés et accusés d'être des agents du PKK.

C'est aussi pour ses « liens organiques » présumés avec cette organisation que le parti légal pro-kurde HADEP est sous le coup d'une procédure d'interdiction. Le harcèlement des élus de cette formation, qui remportèrent de nombreuses localités lors des municipales de 1999, n'a pas faibli. L'état d'urgence – qui permet 40 jours de garde à vue – a été maintenu dans quatre provinces kurdes ; quatre députés du DEP (le prédécesseur du HADEP), condamnés à quinze ans de réclusion

pour s'être exprimés en kurde à l'Assemblée nationale, croupissent en prison.

LA MENACE DE L'ENNEMI EXTERNE

À l'aune des préceptes kémalistes, il n'y a pas de « question kurde » mais un problème de « terrorisme » et de « séparatisme », manipulé par des puissances externes hostiles. Pourtant, les millions d'électeurs kurdes qui ont choisi le HADEP aux municipales de 1999 aspiraient à la reconnaissance de leurs droits politiques et culturels. Le refus de les leur accorder accreditait l'idée que la représentation politique légale des Kurdes est plus dangereuse que la stratégie de la violence affichée pendant des années par le PKK.

Or depuis la capture de son chef, le 15 février 1999, cette formation extrémiste a mis un sérieux bémol à toutes ses revendications. La direction du parti n'est préoccupée que d'une chose : le sort du *baskan*, régulièrement menacé de pendaison par les nationalistes du MHP (Parti de l'action nationaliste, la deuxième force de la coalition gouvernementale). Récemment, faisant écho à un ultimatum des organes de la sécurité intérieure, qui enjoignait au PKK de proscrire le mot « Kurdistan » de ses intitulés, celui-ci a finalement décidé de troquer son ancienne appellation contre celle de « Parti démocratique ».

Or voici qu'une autre menace se profile. A peine le PKK, l'ennemi interne, a-t-il été neutralisé qu'un autre survient, externe cette fois, les Kurdes irakiens. Depuis le 11 septembre, l'éventualité de frappes américaines sur l'Irak est de

plus en plus évoquée et, avec elles, la crainte chez les Turcs de voir se créer un Kurdistan indépendant au nord de l'Irak. Les relations avec le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) de Mesut Barzani, qui administre la province kurde du nord de l'Irak, se sont détériorées.

Depuis septembre, la noria des camions turcs s'est raréfiée au point de passage de Habur. « Tout passe désormais par la Syrie », explique

Saywan Barzani, le représentant du PDK à Paris. Les revenus du PDK, pour l'essentiel tirés des taxes prélevées au poste-frontière, se sont taris. Ces derniers mois, la presse turque n'a eu de cesse de dénoncer les agissements de Mesut Barzani et de son administration, soupçonnée d'apposer un tampon avec l'inscription « Kurdistan » lors du passage de la frontière ou d'avoir incité au retour des milliers de Kurdes jusque-là réfugiés en Iran, autant de faits démentis par le PDK, qui se défend de vouloir l'indépendance.

La menace d'une nouvelle intervention en Irak n'est pas prise à la légère à Ankara. Au début de février, le premier ministre, Bülent Ecevit, a écrit une lettre à Saddam Hussein le pressant d'autoriser des inspections de l'ONU sur le désarmement pour éviter les frappes américaines.

L'Irak figurait aussi au menu des entretiens de M. Ecevit avec l'administration américaine, lors de sa visite à Washington à la mi-janvier. Peu après son retour des Etats-Unis, la Turquie s'est vu octroyer par le Fonds monétaire international un nouveau crédit de 16 milliards de dollars, afin de l'aider à endiguer la crise économique la plus sévère de son histoire (recul de 8,3 % du PIB et chute de la livre turque de plus de 60 % par rapport au dollar). La plupart des éditorialistes de la presse locale ont interprété l'octroi de ce nouveau prêt comme une récompense faite au pays pour son engagement dans la lutte antiterroriste. Plus que jamais, la Turquie apparaît aujourd'hui comme le meilleur allié des Etats-Unis dans la région. Mais l'alliance avec Washington, parachevée par les liens – avant tout militaires – tissés avec Israël depuis 1996, est moins exigeante que le contrat européen. Renforçant le pouvoir de l'armée turque, cette alliance repose avant tout sur un impératif de stabilité. Le respect des libertés fondamentales, cher à l'UE, passe au second plan. Les droits des Kurdes devront attendre.

Marie Jégo

ANALYSE

Washington, l'« axe du Mal » et l'Irak

« **NE VOUS y trompez pas !** » C'est la formule favorite de George W. Bush. En version originale : « *Make no mistake about it !* » Depuis quinze jours, depuis que le discours présidentiel sur l'état de l'Union a atterri au beau milieu du débat public américain comme un objet pas conforme aux attentes et mal identifié, les conseillers et les partisans de M. Bush répètent quotidiennement : « *Ne vous y trompez pas ! Le président vient tout simplement de définir la politique des Etats-Unis pour dix ans au moins.* » Autrement dit, ce serait une erreur complète que de comprendre les propos de M. Bush – notamment la volonté de l'administration de chasser l'Irakien Saddam Hussein du pouvoir – à la seule lumière des élections intermédiaires de novembre,

comme a semblé le faire le ministre britannique des affaires étrangères Jack Straw. Une erreur, aussi, d'y voir une sorte de propos général destiné à entretenir la flamme patriotique et antiterroriste – et la popularité que lui doit M. Bush – en attendant d'y voir plus clair sur ce que pourraient être les étapes suivantes de la guerre commencée en Afghanistan. Une erreur, enfin, de croire que le président ait seulement cherché à recoller les morceaux de la politique qu'il avait mise en route dans les huit premiers mois de son mandat et que le 11 septembre et ses suites ont bousculée et désarticulée.

Pour ceux qui en douteraient, les déclarations successives du secrétaire d'Etat Colin Powell,

approuvant la formule bushienne de « l'axe du Mal » et concentrant la pression sur l'Irak, confirment qu'une sorte de tournant politique a été pris le 29 janvier.

Certains néoconservateurs, censeurs acrimonieux du secrétaire d'Etat pratiquement depuis sa nomination et surtout depuis le 11 septembre, se mettent maintenant à l'encenser. Son appui à la politique de M. Bush, disent-ils, apporte à celle-ci un renfort important en pouvant lui rallier la partie de l'opinion qui regarde l'ancien chef d'état-major comme le seul vrai multilatéraliste du gouvernement.

Sur l'Irak, alors que le département d'Etat s'opposait jusqu'à maintenant à une action militaire et plaçait pour une action diplomatique visant à amener Saddam à se conformer aux décisions de l'ONU, M. Powell a évoqué au Congrès, mardi 12 février, « *une variété d'options* » destinées à provoquer dans ce pays un changement de régime, autrement dit à mettre fin au règne de Saddam Hussein.

On aurait tort, pourtant, selon les exégètes de M. Bush, de penser que, finalement, le tournant se borne à cela : une pression accrue sur l'Irak, avec l'accord de ceux qui, au sein de l'administration, étaient jusqu'à maintenant réticents. Le message, selon eux, va bien plus loin. Au fond, de même que Ronald Reagan avait mis fin à l'ère de culpabilité et d'inspection morose qui avait suivi le Vietnam, George W. Bush en a terminé avec la timidité américaine des années 1990 ou les efforts faits par les Etats-Unis pour se faire aimer. L'un avait dénoncé l'« *empire du Mal* » qu'était à ses yeux l'Union soviétique, l'autre parle de l'« *axe du Mal* » formé par l'Irak, l'Iran et la Corée du Nord. Reagan avait été critiqué et moqué, particulièrement en Europe, pour son « *simplicisme* », de la même façon que « *W* » Bush l'est

aujourd'hui. L'un et l'autre, disait le porte-parole de la Maison Blanche, Ari Fleischer, mardi, ont en commun d'avoir « *parlé avec clarté morale* ». Et l'on donnera raison au président Bush, comme l'Histoire a donné raison à Ronald Reagan avec la chute du mur de Berlin et l'effondrement du système communiste.

Le message va plus loin et vise plus large qu'il n'y paraît. Certains suggèrent même que la phase de la lutte contre le terrorisme benladéniste est pratiquement terminée et qu'il s'agit maintenant d'autre chose : le combat contre la prolifération d'armes non conventionnelles, recherchées par des Etats qui veulent avoir un moyen de chantage contre les Etats-Unis, contre l'Occident, contre leurs valeurs de liberté et de démocratie et contre leur puissance économique.

« GUERRE À LA TERREUR »

On dira que ce « découplage » entre le terrorisme islamiste et les

pays à la recherche d'armes de destruction massive est d'autant plus indispensable qu'aucune connexion n'a pu être établie, précisément, entre les deux. La CIA elle-même considère que l'Irak n'est pour rien dans les attentats du 11 septembre et que, d'ailleurs, Saddam ne peut être accusé d'aucune entreprise de nature terroriste depuis la tentative d'attentat déjouée contre le premier président George Bush à Koweït-Ville en 1993.

L'Iran ne peut être mis en cause, aujourd'hui, en matière de terrorisme que pour son appui aux organisations qui combattent Israël, mouve-

ments dont les méthodes sont identiques à celles d'Al-Qaïda – les attentats-suicides –, mais qui n'ont commis à ce jour aucune agression en dehors de leur zone d'opération et de motivation politique. Quant à la Corée du Nord, ses relations avec les mouvements terroristes relèvent encore plus de la pure spéculation sans preuves.

Reste, bien sûr, que l'inspiration ou les objectifs des uns et des autres sont les mêmes ou que leur ennemi est commun : il s'agit toujours de combattre l'Occident et ses valeurs. Et tant mieux si le 11 septembre fournit la passerelle vers une action globale contre « *les régimes les plus dangereux du monde* », selon les termes de M. Bush ! William Kristol, l'un des principaux intellectuels de la mouvance néo-conservatrice, compare la démarche du président à celle de Harry Truman repoussant, en 1947, la tentation isolationniste de l'après-guerre et décidant d'engager une politique destinée à empêcher l'extension du communisme dans un premier temps, à le faire reculer dans un second temps.

Cette politique passait notamment par le plan Marshall pour l'Europe, visant à éviter que leur situation économique ne crée dans ses pays des tensions favorisant l'action des partis communistes. De la même façon, aujourd'hui, George W. Bush, tout en maintenant son projet de protection antimissiles – mais celui-ci peut être considéré comme renforçant la capacité d'action des Etats-Unis en les mettant à l'abri d'une attaque nucléaire, et non pas comme une manière de se retirer des

affaires du monde –, prendrait appui sur la « *guerre à la terreur* » pour entraîner les Américains dans un nouvel engagement en faveur de leurs idéaux.

Et, derrière les trois pays de l'« *axe du Mal* » – expression choisie pour relier Roosevelt et son axe Allemagne-Italie-Japon de la seconde guerre mondiale à Reagan et son « *empire du Mal* » –, les fournisseurs de technologies proliférantes sont prévenus. Il s'agit bien sûr de la Russie et de la Chine, nommés par M. Bush parmi les nouveaux amis de l'Amérique, mais sommés subliminairement d'en finir avec les ventes de matériels à l'Iran ou à la Corée du Nord. Deux entreprises chinoises du secteur de la biochimie viennent d'ailleurs d'être mises sur la liste de celles avec lesquelles les entreprises américaines ne doivent pas commercer parce qu'elles auraient fourni des matériels sensibles à l'Iran. Aux dirigeants russes et chinois, l'administration Bush dit : « *Ne vous y trompez pas !* » Les Etats-Unis ne laisseront passer aucune initiative russe ou chinoise qui puisse avoir pour conséquence, à terme, de les affaiblir.

Face au communisme, l'Europe était une alliée obligée des Etats-Unis, puisqu'il y allait de sa propre sécurité et de sa propre liberté. Face au terrorisme, elle s'entend dire par Washington : « *Qui n'est pas avec nous est contre nous.* » A ceux qui s'indignent de la brutalité du propos, les Américains répondent en demandant aux Européens ce qu'ils proposent d'autre.

Patrick Jarreau

Le Monde

VENDREDI 15 FÉVRIER 2002

U.S. softens tone on 2 'axis' nations

But Powell advises critics in Europe to 'pound on Iraq,' not Washington

By Brian Knowlton

International Herald Tribune

WASHINGTON: Secretary of State Colin Powell, maintaining a tough tone on Iraq, said Sunday that even covert action to oust President Saddam Hussein could not be ruled out, but he appeared to soften the administration's tone on North Korea and Iran, the other countries that President George W. Bush has described as making up an "axis of evil."

Facing unusually sharp protests from some European allies to the speech that introduced the phrase, Powell responded that "my European colleagues should be pounding on Iraq as quickly as they pound on us when the president makes a strong, principled speech."

The national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, made it plain, however, that Bush was not about to order an attack on Baghdad. She and other U.S. officials have continued to refine Bush's "axis of evil" message, saying no action is imminent against any of the three countries.

"I can assure you," Rice said on CBS-TV, "he has taken no decision about the use of force against Iraq."

Powell also rejected European suggestions that Bush was showing a unilateralist bent — treating European allies as "satellites," in the words of the German foreign minister, Joschka Fischer.

Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, appearing on Fox-TV, agreed, saying that "the notion that we're unilateralists is nonsense."

Wolfowitz is known as an administration hard-liner. But he suggested that Bush's intent had been partly to promote, not war, but discussion about countries that he believes pose dangerous risks.

"He put the whole world on notice," Wolfowitz said. "And he's really, in effect, invited a dialogue about how you deal with it."

Powell, who was traveling with Bush as the president began a trip to the Far East, said again, however, that Bush saw little hope for Iraq, as long as Saddam remains in power.

Almost seeming to place North Korea and Iran in a separate category, he said the United States still hoped to renew dialogue with them.

With Bush about to visit Seoul, Powell struck a somewhat conciliatory tone toward North Korea, even while repeating U.S. criticism of the hard-line regime there for selling weapons technology and spending heavily on its military while many of its people go hungry.

Asked by an NBC-TV interviewer what message he would send to Kim Jong Il on the North Korean leader's 60th birthday Sunday, Powell replied: "The people of South Korea are one with you. All Koreans are of one body and soul. And the South Koreans want to reach out and help you in your time of trouble, and America has said clearly that we want to speak with North Korea" at any time or place, without preconditions.

His comments appeared designed partly to ease concerns in South Korea that Bush's tough line on the North could derail tentative moves by Seoul toward closer, more open relations with Pyongyang.

Of Tehran, he said: "We have not isolated Iran totally. We are in touch with them."

He said the United States appreciated the role Iran had played in the Bonn and Tokyo conferences on Afghanistan. At the same time, Powell said, "We don't overlook the things that are troubling."

Powell's comments may also have aimed to respond to European critics, who have said that to lump together in menacing fashion three countries as diverse as Iraq, Iran and North Korea

risks undermining reform-minded forces.

Bush, looking to a next phase in the U.S. war on terrorism, has accused the three countries of pursuing weapons of mass destruction.

Powell acknowledged that Bush's axis speech had created "a bit of a stir in Europe," but added on CNN that it was one that "we'll be able to manage with consultations" and routine contacts.

He sharply rejected criticism that the Bush administration was acting unilaterally. The president, Powell tried to explain, often speaks his mind plainly and directly in a way that can "jangle people's nerves" but he moves ahead in a "prudent, disciplined, determined way."

"What unilateral action have we taken that's causing them to get so upset?" he asked.

At the same time, Powell said that all sanctions — political, diplomatic and military — remained on the table. And he drew deep lines in the sand for Saddam.

The "easiest way" for Iraqi leaders to "see if there's a way out of this mess is to let the inspectors in" without constraints or conditions, he said, referring to United Nations weapons inspectors

who were expelled by Saddam. But that alone would not end U.S. pressure. "Even then, the United States believes the Iraqis would still be better off with a new kind of leadership."

The official Iraqi press agency, INA, quoted Saddam on Saturday as saying his country had been misunderstood. Iraq "is not interested in acquiring weapons of mass destruction," he said, but only in acquiring more science to help its own people and others.

Powell told NBC that he did not believe the Iraqi leader. "I've heard that before," he said. "We've heard it for 10 years."

Asked if even a covert operation to remove Saddam might be considered, Powell replied, "You can be sure that we're examining all possible options." The administration would work to secure support from its European allies and Iraqi neighbors, but would not be blocked by their resistance, he said.

Asked about suggestions that to unseat Saddam would plunge Iraq into internal fighting or yield a successor no more to U.S. liking, Powell said that some in the opposition "would give us, so to speak, a better turn of the cards in Baghdad than the Hussein regime."

U.S. terror claim is blow to Iran reformists

By John Ward Anderson

The Washington Post

ISTANBUL: American claims that Iran is part of an "axis of evil" supporting international terrorism have damaged Iran's fledgling democratic reform movement and ignore the complex battle reformers are waging against religious hard-liners, according to political analysts and Western diplomats.

The accusation, leveled by President George W. Bush in his State of the Union address on Jan. 29, put Western-leaning officials in Iran on the defensive and forced them to join with conservative clerics in condemning the United States and defending their government, political observers in Iran said.

In a remarkable reaction to Bush's comments, tens of thousands of protesters interrupted a speech Monday by the Iranian president, Mohammed Khatami, with chants of "Death to America!" That slogan usually is shouted during speeches by hard-line clerics, not during an address by Iran's leading reformist and chief advocate of strengthening ties with the West.

Khatami and his allies control the elected, administrative wings of the Iranian state, and their moderate, conciliatory approach to politics in recent years has largely ended the country's decades of international isolation and repaired its negative image abroad. But they have been locked in a desperate battle against conservative clerics, who under Iran's Islamic theocracy possess most of the real power and have blocked Khatami's efforts to

enact political, social and religious reforms.

Coming on the heels of the president's speech and at least partly because of it, analysts said, Iran on Friday rejected Britain's proposed new ambassador, plunging relations between the two countries to their lowest point since they restored official contacts in 1998.

The rejection came even though British officials have distanced themselves from Bush's "axis of evil" comment, indicating that Iranian conservatives have the upper hand over reformists, even in the international arena, analysts said.

"This was immensely damaging. It really, really hurt Khatami," said a Western diplomat in Tehran who was interviewed by telephone. "Iran had been engaging in constructive diplomacy since Sept. 11 — as

constructive as anyone. Now, the conservatives are all saying, 'See, we told you they'd screw you in the end.'"

Tensions between reformists and conservatives had reached new heights even before Bush's speech. Some analysts have interpreted his remarks as a sign that his administration has written off Khatami and his reform movement as a spent force.

"This really reversed the course of what was happening between the conservatives and reformists," who seemed to be moving toward decisive showdowns on a host of issues, said a political analyst in Tehran. "There were all these exciting things going on, and George Bush came in and basically wrecked it. Now they are all standing shoulder to shoulder."

Iranian officials angrily denied Bush's ac-

cusations and challenged the United States to produce evidence backing the claims. Despite the denials, many foreign analysts accept that Iran is trying to develop nuclear weapons and has stockpiles of chemical weapons.

Critics of U.S. claims that Iran is behind international terrorism say distinctions should be drawn between the government of Iran and hard-liners who apparently act without

the approval or even knowledge of elected officials.

Additionally, many Muslim countries and some U.S. allies say the key reason Iran is blamed for supporting terrorism is that it backs Palestinian groups fighting Israel. Iran and other countries see this as legitimate backing for a national liberation movement.

Analysts say any official involvement by Iran in terrorism would likely be endorsed in secret by institutions that ultimately fall under the control of Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, Iran's top political and religious authority.

Unelected, conservative clerics under Khamenei control the military and intelligence services, the judiciary, state broadcasting agencies and religious oversight panels that often veto reforms approved by the elected government. The conservatives adamantly oppose normalizing relations with the United States and often have been accused of supporting and exporting terrorism.

Bush seemed to point to the conservatives in his speech, saying that "Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hopes for freedom."

Bush isn't Clinton • By Jim Hoagland

Talk of toppling Saddam is serious

WASHINGTON
For more than a decade, Americans have been told by officials of three administrations that ending the deadly and unique threat that Iraq's Ba'athist regime poses to U.S. interests was not urgent. This was never true. Iraq is America's most important unfinished business abroad.

George W. Bush's recognition of a reality that so many worked so hard for so long to obscure has rallied his own officials to a still evolving policy of regime change in Iraq. No longer are we told by Colin Powell and others that Saddam Hussein is "in a box." Now we are told that the Iraqi dictator must be ousted through diplomatic, political or military means.

There may be less immediate change than meets the eye. In the weeks and months just ahead, both Washington and Baghdad will engage

in set pieces of posturing and playing for time during a period of phony war, phony peace.

If you get confused by plans to "smarten" economic sanctions on Iraq, implied promises to renew weapons inspections there or Iraqi officials ostentatiously paying court to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, then you will have been paying attention. Much of this is dust in the eyes.

But there are key points on which to focus as premature war whoops from hawks and equally uninformed warnings of disaster from doves compete for your attention.

The president's clear emphasis on Iraq recently is a significant positive change in itself. It puts Saddam on notice: Helping Al Qaeda or any other terrorists to develop or acquire the weapons of mass destruction that Iraq has or covets will lead to immediate and devastating reprisal. That is lan-

guage that the Iraqi just may understand, for a while at least.

Bush is conducting a serious review: The Russians, the French and others may not like the results, but they should respect the rigor and deliberativeness of the process as it unfolds rather than trash American impulsiveness. Vice President Dick Cheney's trip next month to the Middle East is designed to advance final decision-making in Washington by shoring up frayed relations with the Saudis and other regional leaders — not to carry to them hastily drafted options and specific operational requests.

The three to six months needed to train and equip Iraqi dissidents to play a significant role in toppling Saddam can be put to good use for other purposes as well. Ahmed Chalabi, a senior figure in the Iraqi National Congress, is urging the Bush administration to give his organization training in civil

administration as well as in military tactics. Chalabi wants to prevent a Kabul-type sudden collapse and a chaotic transition.

Neither Americans nor foreigners should fall into the trap of setting Iraq up as a symbol of American power. This confrontation is about Saddam Hussein's indisputable record of using war, terror and weapons of mass destruction as his only instruments of policy. The long, costly and misguided delay in dealing with him shows that this is not part of an American master plan of global domination.

Fears that Iraq will fall apart if Saddam's strong tyrannical hand is removed are exaggerated and irrelevant. No society held together by terror can or should long survive. The tired prediction that what will come next will be worse (voiced to oppose the break-up of the Soviet Union, for example) is an excuse for doing nothing.

Bush's new and determined focus on Iraq strips away much of the evasion and creative fiction deployed to justify inaction by officials in his father's administration after Operation Desert Storm, by Bill Clinton and

company throughout eight disgraceful years and by Bush's own team in the first seven months of this presidency.

Progress came last week when the State Department dropped the pretense that Syria and other states could be persuaded to police their borders and halt lucrative smuggling with Iraq. The secretary of state also now seems not to be pushing his sanctions-streamlining effort as a way to stall or deflect military action against Iraq, but to set the stage for it.

The Washington Post

Les alliés européens réagissent avec prudence et hostilité aux propos du président américain

Les Européens estiment qu'une attaque militaire contre l'Irak n'est pas une solution.

Les alliés européens des Etats-Unis ont réagi jeudi avec prudence et hostilité aux menaces d'interventions militaires contre l'Irak brandies par le président américain George Bush. Londres, traditionnellement la plus en phase avec la politique extérieure américaine, a indiqué ne pas avoir d'éléments sur le fait que l'Irak pourrait être la prochaine cible de la lutte contre le terrorisme. Le ministre britannique de la Défense, Geoff Hoon, a suggéré qu'il existait «des projets pour lutter contre la menace posée par l'Irak», mais pas «à sa connaissance» de plan d'action militaire imminent.

La France, déjà très critique à l'égard des précédentes déclarations du président Bush sur «l'axe du mal», a encore une fois été prompt à réagir. Pour Paris, une solution militaire au problème irakien n'est pas souhaitable. «L'Irak est sous des réglementations de l'ONU, qui doivent permettre de vérifier son niveau d'armement. Il ne l'a pas respecté, il faut donc maintenir une pression sur ce pays, mais nous

pensons que l'embargo touchant la population n'est plus la bonne solution», a déclaré le ministre français de la Défense, Alain Richard. «L'offensive militaire n'est pas non plus une solution.»

Le Ministère français des affaires étrangères a certes indiqué partager «un objectif identique» et «les mêmes exigences» que les Etats-Unis concernant l'Irak. Mais le porte-parole adjoint, Bernard Valero, a souligné que la France souhaitait «que les Etats-Unis se concertent avec leurs alliés et partenaires, en particulier les membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité» de l'ONU. Cette dernière requête survient après des déclarations du chef de la diplomatie française, Hubert Védrine, mettant en garde contre les dangers de l'unilatéralisme américain.

«Agir en cavalier seul»

Son homologue allemand Joschka Fischer a lui aussi abondé dans ce sens, estimant qu'il n'était pas bon «d'engager quelque chose sans preuves absolues», qui conduirait les Etats-Unis «à agir en cavalier seul». Commentant le concept d'«axe du mal», le ministre allemand a estimé que cela «ne menait pas bien loin de mettre l'Iran, la Corée du Nord et l'Irak dans un

même sac», dans un entretien publié mardi par le quotidien *Die Welt*. «Où veut-on en venir?», s'est-il interrogé.

De son côté, le président russe Vladimir Poutine a réaffirmé jeudi que Bagdad n'avait pas appuyé, financièrement ou militairement, le régime afghan des talibans, tout en admettant que l'Irak posait un «problème» à la communauté internationale. «Nous savons quels sont les pays qui ont financé les talibans et dont les représentants ont combattu à leurs côtés les armes à la main, et l'Irak ne fait pas partie de cette liste», a déclaré Vladimir Poutine à l'issue de ses entretiens avec le premier ministre canadien Jean Chrétien. Celui-ci venait d'estimer à propos de l'Irak qu'il y avait «un problème inacceptable en ce qui concerne le désarmement». «Nous soutenons la lutte antiterroriste et nous participons à l'opération en Afghanistan, mais pour ce qui est des autres pays c'est une tout autre question qui doit être réglée cas par cas», a souligné M. Chrétien.

Ces jours derniers, le président Poutine, ainsi que ses ministres de la Défense, Sergueï Ivanov, et des Affaires étrangères, Igor Ivanov, ont multiplié les mises en garde contre d'éventuelles frappes américaines visant l'Irak.

AFP

Bagdad disposé à une «solution complète»

Tarek Aziz admet que les Nations unies mènent «une forme d'inspection».

L'Irak est disposé à contribuer à une «solution complète» au conflit qui l'oppose à l'Occident, a déclaré le vice-premier ministre irakien Tarek Aziz dans un entretien au quotidien allemand *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* à paraître ce vendredi. M. Aziz a également admis la possibilité que les Nations unies mènent «une forme d'inspection» pour vérifier si son pays ne dispose pas d'armes de destruction massive. Mais cette inspection ne doit pas se réduire à l'Irak seul, a-t-il ajouté, jugeant qu'il fallait s'assurer qu'il n'y avait plus d'armes de ce genre dans toute la région.

L'Irak avait rejeté mercredi toute possibilité d'un retour des inspecteurs en désarmement des Nations unies exigé par Washington sous peine d'action militaire. Le vice-premier ministre a précisé que son pays persisterait toutefois à refuser de limiter le dialogue à ce point, ajoutant qu'une proposition de discussion avait été transmise au secrétaire général de l'ONU, Kofi Annan.

AFP

SÉCURITÉ • Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan a décidé de changer de nom et de se transformer en organisation légale. La police fédérale n'exclut toutefois pas un retour du PKK à la lutte armée

La police continue de surveiller étroitement le PKK malgré l'annonce de sa dissolution

Valérie de Graffenried

Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) a décidé, à fin janvier, d'arrêter toutes ses activités sous son nom actuel et d'avancer vers une plate-forme légale. C'est du moins ce que vient de rapporter le journal pro-kurde *Ozgür Politika* en se basant sur un communiqué distribué à l'issue d'une réunion de l'état-major du PKK. Cette nouvelle orientation laisse présager une dissolution totale du mouvement des séparatistes kurdes qui, pendant plus de quinze ans, ont mené une rébellion armée contre la Turquie pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le Sud-Est anatolien.

Alors que le nombre de membres et sympathisants du PKK en Suisse serait toujours de 4000, la police fédérale ne va pas pour autant baisser la garde. Bien au contraire: la Suisse reste une plate-forme de premier plan pour le dialogue politique des groupes turco-kurdes.

«Nous restons sur nos gardes»

«Nous n'avons pour l'instant pas pu constater une dissolution des structures du PKK en Suisse. L'organisation semble attendre des directives de plus haut avant d'agir», affirme Jürg Bühler, collaborateur du Service de prévention et d'analyse au sein de l'Office fédéral de la police (OFP). «Nous restons de toute façon sur nos gardes car nous n'excluons pas, bien que nous n'ayons pour l'instant pas d'indices concrets, que le PKK puisse revenir à la lutte armée. Nous avons déjà pu observer des revirements de décisions à 180 degrés.» Le Centre kurde des droits de l'homme basé à Genève fait lui clairement savoir que le PKK est déjà dissous et que ses sympathisants «se trouvent donc probablement à l'intérieur des nombreuses associations sensibles à l'évolution du problème kurde en

Turquie». En ce qui concerne le nouveau nom, il rappelle que la décision sera prise dans quelques mois lors du 8e Congrès du PKK. Une information que confirme Omer Kral, président de la Fédération des onze associations kurdes de Suisse. Ce dernier précise être à la tête d'une fédération qui compte 2000 membres, souligne ne pas être membre du PKK et va jusqu'à affirmer qu'il n'existe pas de responsable au niveau suisse. Lorsqu'il évoque le PKK, Omer Kral s'exprime toutefois à la première personne du pluriel en insistant sur le fait que le PKK «opte pour une voie démocratique et n'est plus en faveur de la guerre».

Le PKK a officiellement abandonné la lutte armée en septembre 1999, six mois après la capture, à Nairobi, de son chef Abdullah Öcalan. Ce dernier a été condamné, en juin et novembre 1999, à la peine capitale par la justice turque pour séparatisme et haute trahison. En janvier 2000, le parlement turc a toutefois décidé de reporter l'exécution de la peine jusqu'à ce qu'une décision de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme soit prise. La procédure a débuté le 21 novembre 2000 et le verdict ne devrait pas tomber avant plusieurs années. Si l'arrestation d'Öcalan a dans un premier temps provoqué une vague de protestations et d'actes de violence en Suisse comme ailleurs dans le monde, la police fédérale qualifie depuis le PKK de «plutôt calme», le mouvement ayant choisi de jouer la modération et de ne plus s'illustrer par des occupations d'ambassades. Elle considère néanmoins, dans son dernier rapport sur la protection de l'Etat, le mouvement séparatiste kurde comme «la plus importante organisation recelant un potentiel de violence extrémiste en Europe et en Suisse».

Pas d'interdiction en Suisse

Si l'Allemagne et l'Angleterre continuent d'interdire toute formation du PKK sur leur sol, la Suisse, elle, ne l'a jamais fait. Jürg Bühler: «Nous avons sérieusement étudié la question en 1993 suite à la manifestation devant l'ambassade de Turquie à Berne qui avait fait un mort par balle du côté kurde. Mais nous sommes parvenus à la conclusion qu'il n'y avait pas de danger suffisamment important pour exiger une interdiction.»

Depuis la Seconde Guerre mondiale, la seule organisation que le Conseil fédéral ait fait interdire en Suisse est celle d'Oussama Ben Laden, Al-Qaïda. Des interdictions d'entrée en territoire suisse sont toutefois actuellement en vigueur contre des personnalités ciblées et des activistes kurdes ont par ailleurs à plusieurs reprises été renvoyés avant 1999. Outre des manifestations, aucun acte de violence majeur n'a été recensé depuis 2000, pas plus que des cas d'extorsions de fonds pourtant fréquents dans le milieu. «Contrairement aux années précédentes, aucun camp d'entraînement n'a été découvert en 2000, 2001 et 2002», précise également Jürg Bühler.

La centrale du PKK Suisse se trouverait à Bâle. Depuis 1999, de nombreuses associations qui lui sont liées ont vu le jour tant du côté alémanique que romand. C'est le cas du Bureau de la paix des femmes kurdes venu s'implanter en mars 2000 à Genève et surtout actif auprès de l'ONU. Quant aux dirigeants du PKK au niveau suisse, il demeure difficile pour la police fédérale de les identifier formellement puisqu'ils changeraient de fonction et de lieu de travail tous les six mois environ. Jürg Bühler: «Sur ce point, les interdictions d'entrée sont efficaces car le PKK suisse peine ainsi à faire venir, depuis l'étranger, des figures controversées pour le renforcer.» ■

Al Gore s' enrôle derrière George Bush pour renverser le régime de Saddam Hussein

Alain Camplotti, New York

Al Gore colle à George Bush. Dans sa première intervention de politique extérieure depuis sa défaite, l'ancien candidat démocrate a approuvé l'action et l'attitude de son rival depuis le 11 septembre. Il ajoute cependant que le terrorisme ne disparaîtra pas tant que son terreau existera: la pauvreté, la corruption, l'oppression. Normal: le néo-barbu de Nashville est toujours démocrate, et il a encore des ambitions. Mais ce qui était surtout remarquable dans son discours au Council on Foreign Affairs à New York (et qui en dit long sur l'état d'esprit de la classe politique américaine), c'est que Gore a appuyé Bush jusque dans les projets belliqueux qui font grincer les Européens: il fait sienne la dénonciation de l'«axe du mal» (Irak, Iran, Corée du Nord) et il applaudit la priorité qu'a fixée la Maison-Blanche, autrement dit le renversement par la force du régime de Bagdad.

Camarilla des ultras

Car Saddam Hussein est la prochaine cible. Pas d'annonce officielle, mais un brouhaha organisé en coulisse pour faire savoir qu'un long débat, lancé aussitôt après le 11 septembre par les faucons de l'administration, avait été tranché le mois dernier au Conseil national de sécurité. La politique d'isolement économique et diplomatique de l'Irak a échoué. Le Département d'Etat, le Pentagone et la CIA ont été chargés de préparer et de planifier, par tous les moyens possibles, un changement de pouvoir à Bagdad. Aussitôt après les attentats contre New York et Washington, le parti «anti-Saddam», qui voulait convaincre George Bush de terminer ce que

son père avait laissé en plan il y a onze ans, a cherché à impliquer les services secrets irakiens dans l'attaque contre les Etats-Unis. C'était la ténébreuse affaire des supposées rencontres entre Mohammed Atta, le chef des commandos du 11 septembre, avec un officier du renseignement du régime baasiste à Prague. Cette piste s'est perdue sous le pont Charles, et Colin Powell a pu affirmer avec plus de force que des opérations contre l'Irak feraient éclater la coalition réunie pour mener campagne en Afghanistan.

Puis Kaboul est tombée, les talibans se sont débandés. L'argumentation du secrétaire d'Etat a perdu de sa force, et la camarilla des ultras, emmenée par Paul Wolfowitz, le sous-secrétaire à la Défense, n'a pas relâché son assaut. Il a abouti, le 29 janvier, au discours sur l'état de l'Union, et finalement au ralliement de Powell à une solution de force à Bagdad, confirmé mardi devant une commission du Sénat.

Les doutes et les craintes de l'étranger ne pèsent plus lourd à Washington. Joschka Fischer, fâché, a beau dire que «les partenaires de l'alliance ne sont pas des satellites», Hubert Védrine peut bien dénoncer le «simplisme» et l'«unilatéralisme utilitaire» des Américains, ils ne s'attirent que ce commentaire aimable, cité par le

New York Times: «A un certain moment, les Européens qui ont la trouille (*with butterflies in their stomachs*) – beaucoup d'entre eux ne voulaient pas que nous allions en Afghanistan – verront qu'ils ont un choix simple: ils peuvent accepter notre plan ou se retirer.»

Mais quel plan? Une guerre est possible, probable, mais pas avant plusieurs mois. Colin Powell s'est rallié à la force à condition qu'on admette que l'Iran et la Corée du

Nord sont des cas différents, et que les moyens militaires contre eux sont pour le moment exclus. Il l'a aussi fait sans doute pour garder le contrôle – ou en tout cas de l'influence – dans une entreprise extraordinairement dangereuse.

George Bush, depuis trois jours, va répétant qu'il n'écarte aucune option contre Bagdad, mais qu'il n'en révélera aucune. Cependant, il y a assez de bouches et de messagers à Washington pour qu'on connaisse un peu les cartes que le président a en main. Le plus apparent d'abord. Les Etats-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne, en mai, vont demander un renforcement de sanctions ciblées contre l'Irak, et lancer sans doute un ultimatum: ou Saddam Hussein accepte le retour immédiat des inspecteurs de son armement, ou ce retour lui sera imposé. Mais dès maintenant, les Américains vont développer ce qu'ils ont déjà commencé avec un insuccès complet: CIA, soutien aux groupes d'opposition, opérations des forces spéciales. Ils savent pourtant que l'Irak n'est pas l'Afghanistan, et qu'ils n'y ont pas à leur disposition une Alliance du Nord. Alors, pour les mois d'après-mai, le Pentagone planifie aussi des bombardements, des opérations massives au sol: de 200 000 à 500 000 hommes. Le vice-président Dick Cheney va entreprendre une tournée dans onze pays de la région, pour préparer politiquement le terrain.

Et pendant ce temps-là, les «conseillers» américains s'apprêtent à entrer en action aux Philippines. D'autres sont proposés à l'Indonésie. Une activité de surveillance se développe dans la Corne de l'Afrique. La Corée du Sud se voit promettre un renforcement de la protection américaine pour la prochaine Coupe du monde de football... ■

UN AN EST PASSÉ, ET LES KURDES ONT DISPARU

Débarqués dans le Var, la plupart ont rejoint l'Allemagne.

Samedi 17 février 2001, 3 h 30 du matin, un vraquier s'échoue entre les rochers d'une plage du Var. A son bord, 912 personnes, dont une moitié d'enfants. C'était le premier débarquement sauvage de *boat people* kurdes sur les côtes françaises. C'était il y a un an. Le gouvernement français, obligé d'improviser, parque les Kurdes de l'East Sea dans une ancienne caserne à Fréjus. Légalement, ils sont placés en zone d'attente, en clair, hors de France. Enfin, au bout de quatre jours, les Kurdes sont officiellement admis sur le territoire. Selon un sondage CSA, publié dans le *Parisien*, 78 % des Français sont alors favorables à l'accueil des naufragés. «*Merci la France*», soufflent-ils à cette annonce. Le camp ouvre ses portes, les Kurdes font leurs premiers pas dans Fréjus. Puis, beaucoup d'entre eux disparaissent. Un mois plus tard, il ne reste que 263 personnes hébergées dans le dispositif d'urgence. Tous demandeurs d'asile. Le dernier décompte officiel date de janvier. A cette date, 156 personnes seulement restaient en France.

Evaporation. Où sont les autres? L'hémorragie a vraisemblablement mené les Kurdes en Allemagne. «*D'après nos observations, c'est là qu'ils ont trouvé refuge*», explique-t-on au ministère de l'Intérieur. Kendal Nezan, de l'Institut kurde de Paris, est plus précis. «*Une partie d'entre eux est certainement dans la ville de Celle (dans la périphérie de Hanovre) où se trouvent*

«Les plus petits ont fait des progrès phénoménaux en français. Les adultes les plus motivés font des exercices à la bibliothèque.»
Christèle, assistante sociale

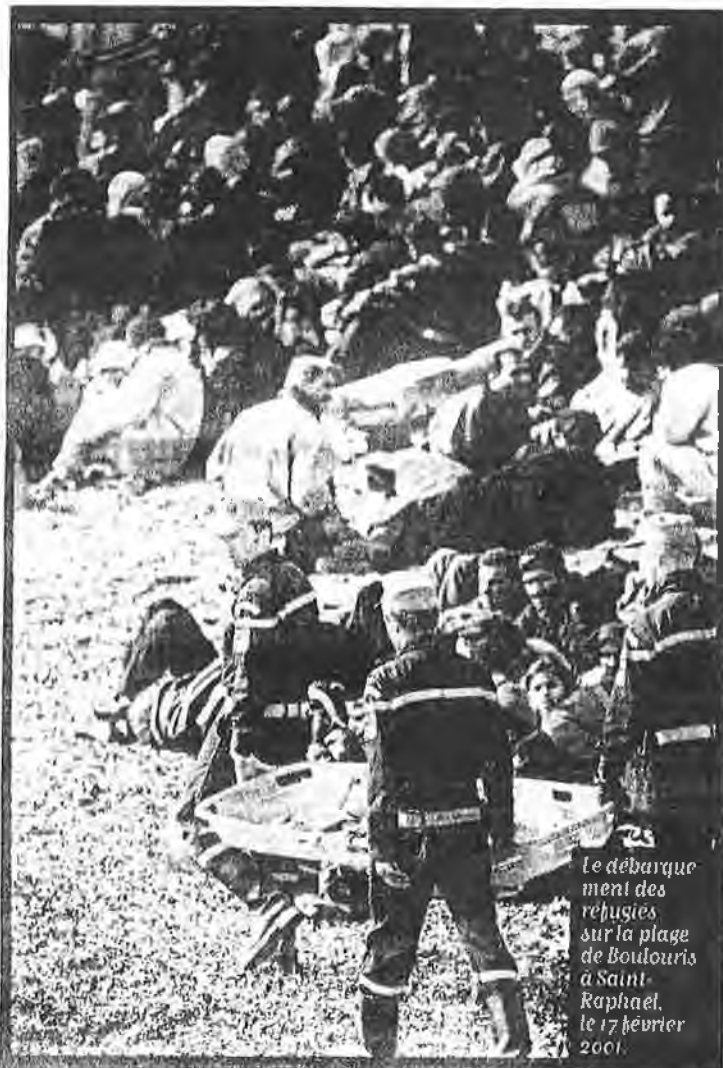
beaucoup de yézidis (religion kurde pré-islamique), et aussi aux Pays-Bas.» Dans ces deux pays, dit ce spécialiste, ils peuvent bénéficier des réseaux communautaires et familiaux. Mais aussi d'un accueil social des demandeurs d'asile réputé plus clément.

De nombreux indices accréditent la piste allemande. Les cabines téléphoniques prises d'assaut, dès la sortie du camp de Fréjus, pour appeler en Allemagne; la présence de voitures immatriculées outre-Rhin qui venaient chercher des familles, des taxis qui monnayaient le passage de frontière, des familles arrêtées par la police allemande,

renvoyées en France et qui se volatilisaient à nouveau. Selon un conseiller du ministère des Affaires sociales, cette évaporation montre que les Kurdes avaient «*un projet migratoire*», dans lequel la France n'était qu'un pays de transit. C'est de plus en plus le cas, note ainsi Olivier Brachet, de l'association Forum Réfugiés, les demandeurs d'asile ont des stratégies en tête. Ils partent moins à l'aveuglette. Pour certains, pourtant, le périple s'est arrêté en France. Une centaine de Kurdes sont actuellement éparpillés dans des centres répartis dans cinq départements:

Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, Aude, Bouches-du-Rhône, Rhône et Yonne. A Lagrasse (Aude), les adultes font maintenant partie de l'équipe de foot du village. Les familles y cultivent deux jardins mis à leur disposition et récoltent tomates, poivrons et aubergines. Elles fabriquent elles-mêmes leur pain et des pâtisseries. Cet été, les Kurdes se sont mêlés aux activités culturelles et festives du village.

Droit de travailler. A Villeurbanne (Rhône), ils sont restés très solidaires. S'invitant à manger ou à regarder la télévision, de chambre en chambre. De la maternelle au



Le débarquement des réfugiés sur la plage de Boulouris à Saint-Raphaël, le 17 février 2001.

collège, les enfants sont scolarisés. Les plus grands sont dans des dispositifs spécialisés pour primo-arrivants. «Les plus petits ont fait des progrès phénoménaux en français», constate Christèle, assistante sociale à Istres (Bouches-du-Rhône). Dans ce centre, «les adultes les plus motivés font des exercices à la bibliothèque, avec des livres bilingues français-arabe.» Les célibataires restent les plus acharnés à apprendre le français. Ainsi, à Manosque, les cinq hommes seuls «parlent correctement», et «sont maintenant autonomes», selon un responsable. Récemment, leur vie d'exilé a basculé. L'Ofpra (Office français de protection des réfugiés et apatrides) a accordé le statut de réfugié à tous ceux qui l'avaient demandé: 89 adultes en tout. Pourtant, leur demande d'asile avait failli être compromise. Au printemps, la majorité des Kurdes a en effet déclaré venir de Syrie, et non d'Irak comme ils le soutenaient depuis leur débarquement. «Les passeurs nous ont dit que si on avouait qu'on venait de Syrie, on nous renverrait là-bas», expliquait alors l'un d'eux. Mais l'Office ne leur a pas tenu rigueur de ce revirement.

Avec le statut de réfugié, tout va s'accélérer. Les Kurdes ont enfin le droit de travailler. «Ils veulent chercher dans le bâtiment ou entreprendre des formations professionnelles», raconte Ali Dogan, un Kurde de Turquie qui les soutient depuis leur arrivée. L'un d'eux est médecin, un autre laborantin, ils veulent faire reconnaître leurs diplômes et exercer comme avant. Un jeune homme hébergé à Istres s'est installé à Montpellier pour des études de lettres. **Allers-retours.** Les Kurdes doivent dorénavant laisser leur place d'hébergement à d'autres demandeurs d'asile. Dans l'Yonne, une famille a déjà quitté le centre de la Croix-Rouge qui l'hébergeait. A Istres, deux jeunes couples et tous les célibataires ont été relogés en foyer Sonacotra. A Manosque (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence), une famille de sept personnes a trouvé à se loger dans le parc privé. «Quand ils sont partis, ils ont rangé et nettoyé l'appartement. Ils n'avaient rien cassé, il ne manquait rien à l'inventaire, c'est rarissime», raconte un responsable. En général, les anciens naufragés ont envie de rester dans la région où ils se trouvent, et s'y stabilisent. Une seule famille a exprimé son sou-

hait d'aller à Strasbourg. Mais entre l'Allemagne et la France, les allers-retours ne sont pas finis. En octobre, une famille de onze enfants âgés de 3 à 19 ans a été refoulée en France par les Allemands, et s'est retrouvée à Manosque. En mai et en juillet, deux familles avaient également été refoulées vers la France, avant de disparaître à nouveau. Il y a ces mouvements contraints et forcés et... les autres. Les bonnes nouvelles commencent en effet à se colporter au-delà des frontières. L'obtention massive du statut de réfugié, la scolarisation des enfants, l'apprentissage du français, le droit au travail commencent à faire des envieux parmi ceux qui, partis en Allemagne, sont réduits à la clandestinité. «Depuis quelque temps, il y a eu de nombreux appels dans les centres, rapporte Ali Dogan, les gens disent qu'ils veulent revenir», notamment à Istres et à Manosque. Et, incidemment, on lui glisse: «Mon cousin regrette. Est-ce que tu peux faire quelque chose?» A ceux-là, Ali Dogan répond que c'est trop tard ●

CHARLOTTE ROYMAN

Libération

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COULISSES BRUXELLES

Piratage à la turque

Qui espionne Bruxelles en Turquie? Un scandale a éclaté cette semaine à Ankara avec la publication de plus de 300 e-mails de l'ambassadrice de l'Union européenne en Turquie. Le courrier électronique de Karen Fogg, représentante de la Commission dans la capitale turque, s'est retrouvé étalé dans des journaux locaux par la grâce d'un petit parti d'extrême gauche violemment antioccidental, le Parti du travail (IP). Son leader, Dogu Perincek, sans vouloir dévoiler comment cette correspondance est tombée entre ses mains, s'en prévaut pour accuser l'ambassadrice de «complot» contre la Turquie et demander qu'elle soit

déclarée persona non grata. Certains des e-mails piratés ont certes de quoi hérisser le poil nationaliste, quand ils évoquent, par exemple, le versement d'une aide à un journal kurde ou critiquent le vieux dirigeant chypriote turc Rauf Denktash. Mais cette fuite n'est-elle pas trop providentielle pour n'avoir pas été orchestrée au plus haut niveau? C'est la question qu'on n'a pas manqué de se poser, tant à Bruxelles qu'en Turquie même, dans la frange libérale proeuropéenne de la société. Si les services secrets turcs ont nié être impliqués dans ce piratage, chacun aura remarqué que l'affaire suivait de peu une mise en garde de l'UE contre la lenteur des réformes démocratiques en cours. Ouvertement soutenus par l'armée, le Parti de la gauche démocratique (DSP,

gauche nationaliste) et le MHP d'extrême droite, tous deux au pouvoir, ont freiné des quatre fers lors de la récente révision de la Constitution et du code pénal turcs. M^{me} Fogg était allée s'en désoler auprès du Premier ministre Bülent Ecevit. Suite aux protestations de la Commission, la justice turque a ouvert une enquête sur ce que Günter Verheugen, le commissaire à l'Elargissement, a qualifié de «crime contre notre ambassade». Mais cette anicroche entre Bruxelles et Ankara vient à nouveau démontrer que, dans le match toujours féroce que se livrent, dans le pays, partisans et adversaires de l'adhésion à l'UE, ces derniers ont plutôt le dessus ●

NATHALIE DUBOIS avec
RAGIP DURAN (à Istanbul)

Scénario à l'afghane contre Saddam

Washington pourrait aider l'opposition irakienne à renverser le régime.

Washington
de notre correspondant

D'un commentaire à l'autre, les Etats-Unis s'approchent depuis fin janvier d'une guerre avec l'Irak de Saddam Hussein. Depuis le discours sur «l'axe du mal» de George W. Bush, le 29 janvier, les responsables américains se sont faits chaque jour plus tranchants. En privé, certains d'entre eux ont même confié que la question n'était plus de savoir s'il fallait intervenir, mais «quand et comment». **«Options».** Pour les commentateurs américains, plus de doute: Washington ne veut plus gérer le problème irakien, mais le résoudre. «La probabilité pour que nous renversions Saddam est à mon avis de 60 %, estime Michael O'Hanlon, le spécialiste de la défense de la Brookings Institution, mais je pense que Bush n'a pas encore tranché, et Saddam peut encore influencer sur sa décision en acceptant ou non l'inspection de ses armements par l'ONU.»

Pour la première fois, mardi devant le Congrès, Colin Powell, le moins va-t-en-guerre de l'administration Bush, a annoncé que l'administration examinait «une série d'options» visant à renverser le dictateur irakien. Jeudi, sur MTV, il a précisé que le Président avait engagé un «travail diplomatique et politique» pour arriver à cette fin, tout en soulignant pouvoir «agir seul si nécessaire». Selon l'administration Bush, Saddam Hussein n'a peut-être aucun lien avec le 11 sep-

tembre, mais il est déterminé à se doter d'armes de destruction massive, et les Etats-Unis ne peuvent prendre le risque que de telles armes atterrisent dans les mains de terroristes.

Le reste du monde, à l'exception de la Grande-Bretagne, est très rétif à l'idée d'ouvrir à nouveau des hostilités contre l'Irak. La France, la Russie et les pays arabes ont dénoncé le projet. Le sujet sera à l'ordre du jour de la tournée de Bush en Asie (Japon-Chine-Corée du Sud), qu'il entame aujourd'hui, et surtout de celle du vice-président Dick Cheney, qui doit se rendre en mars au Proche-Orient, et notamment faire escale dans quatre pays frontaliers de l'Irak: le Koweït, l'Arabie Saoudite, la Jordanie et la Turquie.

Si, malgré les pressions, l'Irak n'acceptait pas la visite d'inspecteurs, les Etats-Unis n'auraient d'autre choix que de passer à l'offensive, ce dont rêve une grande partie de l'administration Bush. Le Pentagone et la CIA ont été chargés d'examiner les plans de bataille possibles. Le scénario privilégié est de provoquer un effondrement du régime «à l'afghane». Mais il faut pour cela trouver en Irak l'équivalent de l'Alliance du Nord: des combattants que l'on financerait, formerait, équiperait et qu'on aiderait à menacer Bagdad, grâce à l'appui de l'aviation et des forces

spéciales américaines.

Galvanisés. Or l'Irak n'a rien à voir avec l'Afghanistan. Les forces d'opposition sont divisées et faibles. Les seules forces visibles sont les Kurdes au Nord et les chiites au Sud. Aider les uns ou les autres à prendre Bagdad ne serait pas sans poser des problèmes avec la Turquie ou les Saoudiens. Timothy McCarthy, un ancien inspecteur de l'ONU envoyé en Irak, aujourd'hui chercheur

au Monterey Institute of International Studies, estime cependant qu'il ne faut pas sous-estimer l'importance de l'opposition «potentielle» qui se manifesterait en Irak si le rapport de force penchait du côté américain: «Je ne pense pas qu'il faille considérer comme

certain le fait que la Turquie s'opposera fortement à une intervention, pas plus que je pense qu'on puisse résumer l'opposition aux seuls Kurdes et aux chiites», estime-t-il. Selon lui, si les Etats-Unis manifestaient très clairement leur volonté de l'emporter, de nombreux éléments se rangeraient contre le régime, notamment au sein de

l'armée ou parmi les tribus armées. Après la victoire écrasante en Afghanistan, les experts militaires américains sont en tout cas galvanisés. Ils estiment qu'une intervention militaire n'aurait aujourd'hui rien à voir avec l'opération Tempête du désert menée il y a onze ans, au cours de laquelle 500 000 hommes avaient été mobilisés contre Saddam Hus-

sein. «On est aujourd'hui bien au-delà de ce modèle, affirme ainsi Edward Atkeson, ancien général de division et expert au Center Strategic and International Studies. Nous avons aujourd'hui un tel éventail d'armes de haute technologie que nous n'avons pas à exposer nos troupes à des dangers extraordinaires. Toute force conventionnelle ennemie peut être détectée et détruite.»

Pertes. Mais tous ne partagent pas cet avis. Pour Michael O'Hanlon, croire que l'on puisse prendre Bagdad sans risque est illusoire. L'envoi de 200 000 soldats américains au sol serait selon lui inévitable pour vaincre 400 000 soldats et 100 000 gardes républicains fidèles à Saddam Hussein. «Les Etats-Unis perdraient quelques centaines d'hommes dans l'opération, et peut-être quelques milliers», prédit-il. Pour se défendre, les Irakiens risqueraient en effet de recourir aux armements chimiques ou bactériologiques qu'on compte justement leur confisquer. Vendredi, les sirènes ont été entendues à Bagdad. Un simple test, ont précisé les autorités ●

PASCAL RICHE

«Saddam peut encore influencer sur la décision de Bush, en acceptant ou non l'inspection de ses armements par l'ONU.» Michael O'Hanlon, spécialiste de la défense

Washington ought to listen ■ By Michael Naumann

Europe doesn't want war in Iraq

HAMBURG

In June 1981, Menachem Begin, ordered a posse of F-16 jets to take out Saddam Hussein's two nuclear reactors. With vast petroleum reserves, Iraq had no imaginable need for nuclear energy — except to make bombs. And Saddam had openly declared his intention to attack Israel.

Publicly, Prime Minister Begin was scorned for his outrageous breach of international law. Privately, however, many politicians agreed: Why not destroy Iraq's potentially murderous nuclear toys? Saddam did go on to start two wars. But he lost both, and if he had been armed with nuclear bombs, world history could have taken a very ugly turn.

However, while the man is dangerous and crazy, we do not know that he has weapons of mass destruction. He seems to have had precious little connection to Sept. 11. His army has been destroyed. Therefore, two decades after Begin's attack, America's European allies would deplore a repetition of the Gulf War. Their doubts are born from an ingrained sense of *realpolitik*.

Europe learned a lesson in World War I. Slipping into a conflict became a basic fear. Europeans' great source of anxiety was the prospect of being caught in an uncontrollable military escalation.

The trauma of World War II, and the experience of senseless and genocidal colonial wars before and after it, combined to telescope this fear into a collective memory that we have today. While American patriotism proudly celebrates its armed forces' power and victories, Europe's diverse loyalties and identities are formed by a war-weary pessimism thoroughly grounded in our history.

Wars can be just, certainly those fought in self-defense can; but they can be bloody useless, too. This pessimism may shade, potentially, into appeasement, yet its roots are real. They explain European reluctance to intervene quickly in Bosnia — a deplorable reluctance, in hindsight — and the present refusal to join arms with the United States against Iraq.

This time, however, the powder keg is not the Balkans but the highly armed, explosive Mideast. Too many guns are drawn, too many fingers are on the triggers, and some of them could be on nuclear bombs. This should be the hour of forceful diplomacy, not to be mistaken for appeasement.

The distance between Europe's leaders and the Bush administration continues to grow. The existence of a new threat, global terrorism, is undisputed. But Washington's unilateralism looks from here like simply a form of America's long-standing isolationism, which is to say that the distance is created by America, not by Europe.

Perhaps NATO members should not whine so much about being left out of Pentagon planning sessions. But the United States might benefit from re-

calling the late Senator J. William Fulbright's diatribes against "arrogance of power."

Technological breakthroughs may have enforced a new military paradigm in the Pentagon. High-tech wars at a distance are now feasible and less dangerous for American forces. Yet the old conundrum of military history, what to do with the losers, remains unsolved. Who would govern Iraq after Saddam?

And would the shaky mullahs in Tehran take "anti-American" revenge on their domestic, reformist opponents (and seize Iraq's south)?

Would Vladimir Putin be able to corral his restless opposition in the underpaid and corrupt Russian Army? He would certainly renew Moscow's reflex, in times of trans-Atlantic disagreement, to drive a wedge into the Western alliance, this time on the strength of Russia's oil reserves.

In the meantime, general elections are looming in France (May) and Germany (September), along

with possible realignments that could draw Europe away from the United States.

A war in Iraq would strengthen Germany's pacifist Party of Democratic Socialism at the expense of the Greens and their pro-American leader, Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer.

Chancellor Gerhard Schröder succeeded by just a few votes in getting approval for German troops to help keep the peace in Kabul. Conflict in Iraq would force him to make the most difficult political commitment of his life — to follow America, come what may. That could cause him to lose in September.

Neither Jacques Chirac nor Lionel Jospin would support war in Iraq. And Tony Blair? He is many things, but he is not Margaret Thatcher. He was indicating before anyone even asked that Iraq would be, for him, an adventure too far.

Ultimately, Washington should return to the fold of its once strong Atlantic partnership, even if it means losing military momentum. A fragmented alliance in Europe is much more difficult to repair than a broken pipeline. A truly enforced policy of serious sanctions against Iraq — and persuading Turkey to stop breaking them — would be more useful.

Asking French, English, Russian and German businesses to suspend their lucrative dealings with Saddam's corrupt cronies; having governments freeze their bank accounts; rekindling negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians — all that would be less spectacular than cruise missiles and Navy Seals televised in green night vision. But it could dislodge the enemy without damaging valued friendships.

In the meantime, let's find Osama bin Laden, together. If alive, he is certainly not in Baghdad.

The writer, a former German minister of culture, is editor and publisher of the weekly Die Zeit. He contributed this comment to The New York Times.

Comment Téhéran est devenu l'ennemi public numéro 1

Malgré le dégel des relations américano-iraniennes, George W. Bush a placé l'Iran dans l'"axe du mal" aux côtés de l'Irak et de la Corée du Nord. Le journaliste et écrivain Patrick Seale explique les raisons de ce revirement.

AL HAYAT
Londres

La nouvelle "doctrine Bush", en faisant de l'Iran, de l'Irak et de la Corée du Nord les trois pays de l'"axe du mal", fait naître inquiétude et perplexité dans les rangs des alliés européens des Etats-Unis, ainsi qu'en Russie et dans le reste du monde. Si Bagdad et Pyongyang ont toujours été la cible de l'hostilité américaine, on avait décelé ces derniers mois les signes d'un dégel dans les relations avec Téhéran. L'Iran a été parmi les premiers à condamner les attentats du 11 septembre 2001 et l'on ne saurait nier que les deux Etats poursuivaient des politiques convergentes en Afghanistan.

Pendant des années, l'Iran a été un adversaire acharné du régime des talibans et a fourni une aide militaire importante à l'Alliance du Nord. L'Iran a également engagé des frais considérables pour fortifier et surveiller sa frontière avec l'Afghanistan. L'Iran a accueilli sur son territoire plus de 2 millions de réfugiés afghans fuyant la famine et les persécutions. L'Iran a promis de verser 500 millions de dollars au fonds international pour la reconstruction de l'Afghanistan. D'ailleurs, la Maison-Blanche a loué le "rôle constructif" de l'Iran lors de la conférence organisée à Bonn, qui a abouti à l'émergence du gouvernement provisoire d'Hamid Karzai à Kaboul. Par conséquent, toutes ces raisons laissaient supposer que les Etats-Unis et l'Iran avançaient dans la voie d'un rétablissement de relations correctes, sinon amicales. Qu'est-ce qui a donc bien pu pousser Bush à placer l'Iran du sceau de l'infamie en en faisant le membre d'un "axe du mal" prêt à répandre terrorisme et armes de destruction massive dans le monde ? Deux facteurs essentiels ont apparemment joué : le premier est lié au rôle influent joué par Israël auprès de Washington, par le biais du lobbying et de la désinformation ; le second tient au fait que les faucons de Washington se sont aperçus que l'Iran restait un obstacle non négligeable à leurs ambitions hégémoniques dans le Golfe et en Asie centrale. Israël s'est efforcé de convaincre la communauté internationale que la République islamique d'Iran et le militantisme islamique qu'elle soutient représentaient

► Saddam Hussein, Khatami, Kim Il-sung, Ben Laden et Bush.
Dessin de Hachfeld, Berlin.

■ Nostalgie

Le discours du président Bush accusant l'Iran de faire partie de l'"axe du mal" a remis Téhéran à l'heure de la fièvre islamiste des années 80. Des conservateurs comme le directeur de *Kayhan* ont salué des Iranais prêts à "des opérations suicides contre des militaires américains et israéliens", et la population iranienne dans son ensemble a repris les démonstrations de rejet de l'Amérique.



une menace mortelle non seulement pour le peuple juif, mais pour l'humanité dans son ensemble. Chacun des dirigeants israéliens de ces dernières années, que ce soient Rabin, Pères, Nétanyahou, Barak ou Sharon, a mis l'accent sur ce thème à la moindre occasion, présentant régulièrement Téhéran comme le centre des réseaux terroristes. Cette position israélienne s'explique aisément. En termes de géopolitique régionale, l'Iran est le seul pays à avoir réussi à défier la suprématie de l'Etat hébreu. L'alliance stratégique de l'Iran avec la Syrie, son appui au Hezbollah libanais ont provoqué des condamnations violentes de la part d'Israël. Le rapprochement entre Téhéran et Riyad a en outre permis à la République des mollahs d'échapper à la politique américaine du "double endiguement", inspirée par Israël. La récente ouverture à l'Irak, tant de la part de l'Iran que de celle de la Syrie, a fait naître la crainte de voir apparaître un "front de l'Est", éternel cauchemar des autorités israéliennes. Mais, surtout, Israël s'est inquiété des signes d'un réchauffement américano-iranien qui aurait permis à l'Iran de se doter de missiles balistiques sans risquer d'être condamné ni même bloqué par Washington.

Dans cette optique, deux campagnes de désinformation sont généralement attribuées aux services de renseignement de l'Etat hébreu. Des sources israéliennes ont fait circuler des informations selon lesquelles l'aile dure du régime iranien et son chef de file, l'ayatollah Khamenei, auraient conclu un accord secret avec Al Qaida. A en croire ces rapports, les forces de sécurité de Khamenei auraient aidé Oussama Ben Laden, le mollah Omar

et quelques-uns de leurs principaux fidèles à se réfugier en Iran. Des rapports très peu plausibles, surtout compte tenu de l'hostilité traditionnelle de l'Iran envers les talibans.

CONCURRENCE DANS LE CAUCASE ET EN ASIE CENTRALE.

La seconde campagne porte sur le *Karine-A*, le navire intercepté par des commandos israéliens dans la mer Rouge et qui, selon les Israéliens, transportait 50 tonnes d'armes iraniennes destinées à l'Autorité palestinienne. La machine de propagande israélienne a exploité l'incident au maximum, en profitant pour condamner l'Iran et Yasser Arafat comme autant de "centres mondiaux du terrorisme" et pour diriger sur eux deux l'ire américaine. D'après des sources proches du renseignement occidental, toute l'affaire du *Karine-A* est extrêmement douteuse. Pour certains, elle aurait été inventée de toutes pièces par le Mossad afin de retourner l'opinion américaine contre l'Iran et Arafat.

Mais cette campagne anti-iranienne lancée par Israël n'aurait pas eu un tel impact si les faucons au sein de l'administration Bush eux-mêmes ne considéraient pas l'Iran comme une menace pour les intérêts stratégiques américains. Les Etats-Unis veulent être l'influence extérieure dominante sur l'Afghanistan et préféreraient en exclure tout le monde, à commencer bien sûr par la Russie et l'Iran. Les Etats-Unis et l'Iran sont en concurrence dans le Caucase et en Asie centrale, où Washington consolide sa présence économique et militaire, mais où Téhéran aussi défend activement ses propres intérêts.

Patrick Seale

Des enfant kurdes interrogés pour avoir participé à un concours organisé par l'IHD



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 18 fév (AFP) - 11h53 - Des enfants âgés de 7 à 14 ans ont été interrogés par des inspecteurs du ministère de l'Education pour avoir participé à un concours de l'Association des droits de l'Homme (IHD) à Diyarbakir, chef-lieu du sud-est à majorité kurde, a indiqué lundi l'IHD.

"L'enquête a été ouverte début février et elle se poursuit", a précisé à l'AFP Muharrem Erbey, du bureau de l'IHD à Diyarbakir.

Quelque 300 enfants avaient participé en décembre à un concours en faisant des dessins ou des compositions pour marquer la semaine des droits de l'Homme, a précisé M. Erbey.

Vingt enfants et une quarantaine d'enseignants ont été interrogés par des inspecteurs sur les raisons de leur participation au concours de l'IHD et non à celui organisé par le bureau du gouverneur.

Les autorités locales ont refusé de faire le moindre commentaire.

"La psychologie des enfants a été sérieusement affectée. Ils ont été interrogés comme s'ils avaient commis un crime en faisant des dessins et des compositions innocentes", a relevé M. Erbey.

L'IHD avait pourtant reçu l'autorisation de la municipalité d'organiser ce concours et de le faire connaître par voie d'affiches.

Les autorités ont longtemps accusé l'IHD de liens avec le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui a mené pendant 15 ans une rébellion armée dans le sud-est pour une autonomie kurde, et ses membres sont régulièrement harcelés.

Cette affaire intervient alors que les autorités accusent le PKK d'orchestrer une campagne qui a mobilisé des milliers d'étudiants dans le pays pour réclamer le droit à un enseignement en kurde.

84 Kurdes irakiens découverts dans un camion frigorifique sur un ferry grec



ROME, 18 fév (AFP) - 17h59 - Quatre-vingt-quatre Irakiens d'origine kurde ont été découverts dans un camion à bord d'un ferry en provenance de Patrai (Grèce) et à destination d'Ancône, dans le centre de l'Italie, a rapporté lundi le quotidien Il Corriere Adriatico.

Les clandestins ont été découverts dimanche pendant la traversée de l'Adriatique par l'équipage du ferry, le Superfast III, qui a alerté les carabinieri italiens.

Le camion frigorifique d'oranges était immatriculé en Allemagne et équipé de remorques grecques. Son chauffeur, un Grec, a été arrêté, selon la même source.

Ces Kurdes ont dû payer à des passeurs plus de 1.000 euros par personne, selon le quotidien local qui souligne qu'il s'agit de l'une des plus importantes tentatives de débarquement de clandestins dont on se souvienne à Ancône, hormis les boat-people albanais du début des années 1990.

Les immigrés illégaux débarquent nombreux sur les côtes italiennes, mais le plus souvent les passeurs les font accoster dans le sud, en Calabre, en Sicile et dans les Pouilles.

Plus de 20.000 clandestins ont débarqué l'an dernier en Italie et les procédures de rapatriement ont concerné plus de 75.000 sans-papiers, selon des chiffres fournis lundi par un responsable du ministère de l'Intérieur, Alfredo Mantovano, qui a montré du doigt la Turquie.

"Le vrai problème est d'éviter que dans les ports turcs d'Istanbul et de Smyrne les épaves se remplissent, sous les yeux d'une police qui sait être très efficace quand elle veut, et prennent ensuite la route vers l'Europe et en particulier vers l'Italie en passant sans difficulté les eaux territoriales grecques", a-t-il déclaré.

Quatre Kurdes du PKK doivent être rejugés pour le meurtre d'un couple

KARSLRUHE (Allemagne), 21 fév (AFP) - 14h38 - Quatre Kurdes du PKK, condamnés en avril 2001 à des peines de neuf à quinze ans de prison pour le meurtre d'un jeune couple de Kurdes ayant failli à la discipline de parti, vont devoir être rejugés, a décidé jeudi la Cour fédérale de Justice de Karlsruhe (ouest).

La Cour a cassé le jugement du tribunal de Brême (nord), estimant qu'il avait à tort déqualifié l'accusation d'"assassinat" en "homicide volontaire".

Le tribunal de Brême avait estimé que les accusés, qui avaient reçu des instances dirigeantes du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan séparatistes Kurdes de Turquie, interdit en Allemagne) l'ordre de tuer le couple, n'avaient pas saisi à quel point le mobile du crime était répréhensible moralement, "du fait du système de valeurs" lié à leur patrie d'origine qu'ils avaient intériorisé.

Selon la Cour fédérale, les accusés ont au contraire obéi à un ordre "hautement répréhensible".

Les quatre hommes, des Turcs d'origine kurde âgés, avaient été reconnus coupables du meurtre de Ayse D., 18 ans, et Serif A., un paraplégique de 23 ans, le 24 août 1999.

Le jeune couple avait été retrouvé assassiné, elle étouffée dans la vase et lui vidé de son sang, le crâne fracassé et le corps brisé par les roues d'une voiture, près d'un hangar de sous-marins de la Seconde Guerre mondiale, dans le port de Brême.

Leur tort, selon l'acte d'accusation: ils s'étaient mariés dans une mosquée de Brême en dépit de l'opposition des dirigeants régionaux du PKK.

Le président du parlement turc rejette une "politisation" du PKK



ANKARA, 25 fév (AFP) - 15h48 - Le président du parlement turc Omer Izgi s'est catégoriquement opposé lundi à une "politisation" du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie), indiquant qu'il n'y avait pas de place pour une "organisation terroriste" dans l'horizon politique turc.

"Le PKK est une organisation terroriste qui s'est affirmée par des actions visant à diviser le pays", a-t-il dit, en réponse aux déclarations d'un ministre la semaine dernière.

"Il est impossible qu'une organisation comme le PKK, qui reflète sa volonté en actes par des actes terroristes, puisse avoir une place dans la vie politique turque", a dit M. Izgi, cité par l'agence Anatolie.

Le ministre d'Etat chargé des Douanes, Mehmet Kececiler, membre influent du parti de la Mère Patrie (Anap, centre-droit), partenaire de la coalition tripartite turque, avait indiqué dans des déclarations parues jeudi dans la presse turque que sa formation "vaincra" le PKK dans le sud-est anatolien à majorité kurde au cas où il devait se présenter aux prochaines élections législatives.

L'Anap, dont le chef Mesut Yilmaz est vice-Premier ministre chargé du dossier européen, milite pour une adhésion rapide de la Turquie à l'Union européenne et adopte une approche modérée pour l'octroi des droits culturels aux kurdes, provoquant l'ire du parti de l'Action Nationaliste MHP (extrême droite), partenaire de la coalition dont est issu M. Izgi.

Le PKK, considéré comme une organisation terroriste par Ankara, a abandonné en septembre 1999 quinze ans de lutte armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est anatolien, à l'appel de son chef Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort par la justice turque en juin de la même année. Depuis les combats dans le sud-est ont considérablement diminué.

Washington fetes its enemy's enemy Doubts about Iraqi opposition leader's probity are put to one side

February 22, 2002 The Guardian Julian Borger in Washington

Like many people in Washington these days, Ahmed Chalabi has a plan to get rid of Saddam Hussein. The Iraqi opposition leader just needs 11 weeks of training for his followers, anti-tank weapons, air cover, the support of special forces and some protective gear against chemical or biological attack.

Mr Chalabi is confident that he will get all he seeks. In the current political climate, he has been feted from one end of Washington to the other as the man of the hour.

But the drums of war cannot entirely drown out persistent questions over his integrity. There are some in Washington who doubt that the 57-year-old former mathematician and banker even has a guerrilla force to command any more, and suggest that his war plan is simply the latest in a series of confidence tricks designed to squeeze money out of the US government. Many of the doubters work in the state department and the CIA, which view his Iraqi National Congress (INC) with ill-disguised contempt. But as the resolve to fight President Saddam spreads in Washington, Mr Chalabi's adversaries have been on the defensive, while his backers in the Pentagon, Congress and White House have brushed away the nagging questions - at least for the time being.

Only days before George Bush's recent bellicose state of the union message, the state department had threatened to cut off the INC's funding because of bookkeeping irregularities. But by January 30, the doubts were overtaken by patriotic resolve. Anyone prepared to fight the Baghdad regime was embraced, and on that very day Mr Chalabi had his funding restored.

As for his war plan, he said he was "encouraged by the response". Wheels have begun to turn, Mr Chalabi confided, but he could not give details. "The United States will help us to train and equip light anti-tank battalions, well-trained and highly mobile. Those people, once on the ground, will be able to defeat Saddam's forces."

It would take 11 weeks to train and equip those forces, he added.

In the course of a 90-minute interview, a confident Mr Chalabi frequently laughed, and discussed the defeat of the 400,000-strong Iraqi army as if it was a mere formality. In his view, President Saddam's army was hollow - packed with ill-trained conscripts.

Mr Chalabi gave a theoretical example: a rebel incursion across the Kuwaiti border to capture a frontier town. The rebel force would be protected from counter-attack by US air power, and within days the key southern city of Basra would fall as its garrison mutinied. "Once that happens, our problem will not be finding people - our problem will be absorbing people," he said. His main concern was retaliation with chemical or biological weapons, and he would want his men to be trained and equipped to protect themselves, he said.

First of all, however, Mr Chalabi has to survive the doubters in Washington.

Questions about his probity are part of the problem. He was convicted in a Jordanian court about 10 years ago for embezzling money from depositors in a banking scandal. More recently, the state department found that about half of a \$4m (£2.8m) disbursement in US funding was not properly accounted for.

Mr Chalabi said he was the victim of a setup in Jordan by cronies of the late King Hussein. The accounting issue was dismissed as the quibbles of a bureaucracy which was ill-suited to a covert war, in which few receipts were issued. The more serious question, given Washington's stated aim of "regime change", is whether he can rally opposition forces.

Leith Kubba, who helped Mr Chalabi to found the INC a decade ago, but who left after concerns that it was becoming a US foreign policy tool, has serious doubts. He believes that the only substantial rebel forces in Iraq are commanded by the Kurdish Democratic party leader, Massoud Barzani, and the Tehran-based Shi'ite cleric, Mohammed Bakr Hakim. "These people dictate the agenda," Mr Kubba said.

Both Mr Barzani's party and Mr Hakim's Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq are formally INC affiliates, but that does not mean that they take Mr Chalabi's orders.

Mr Chalabi lost credibility after orchestrating an uprising in northern Iraq in 1995, only to be abandoned by the CIA, acting on government orders. The insurgency, and the INC's presence in the country, was swept aside by Iraq in 1996. Six years on, Mr Chalabi must perform a double act: convince Washington that he has support in Iraq while persuading sceptical resistance leaders that Washington is serious this time.

It is an impresario's job, and for that at least, he has the perfect background.

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Dethrone Saddam: Allow Independent Kurdish State

February 22, 2002 Washington Times Jeffrey T. Kuhner

The Bush administration's campaign against global terrorism has the potential to transform the Middle East and usher in a new era of democracy and peace. Nowhere is this more evident than in Iraq, which continues to menace its neighbors and is governed by one of the world's most brutal dictatorships.

Yet as the White House considers targeting Saddam Hussein in the next phase of the war on terrorism, it must deal with an issue that successive administrations since the end of the 1991 Gulf War have been reluctant to confront: granting independence to the Kurds in northern Iraq. Two prominent human rights organizations have recently released a report that documents Saddam's genocidal campaign of mass murder and ethnic cleansing against Iraq's Kurds.

Ever since coming to power in 1979, Saddam has established a totalitarian police state aimed at eradicating the Kurdish people. During the late 1980s, in a campaign known as "Operation Anfal" Saddam's security forces unleashed a wave of terror that led to the deaths of more than 180,000 people, the deportation of 2 million Kurds and the destruction of 4,500 villages and towns. The report goes on to state that Saddam's genocidal campaign against the Kurds continues to this day. Those Kurds not living in the autonomous enclave in northern Iraq established by the United States and Britain following the Gulf War continue to suffer human rights abuses by Saddam's death squads such as mass murder, forced expulsions, arbitrary arrests and confiscation of homes and property.

The latest tactic in the terror campaign has been to order the beheading of women deemed to be "prostitutes." As the report notes, fabricated charges are often used as a weapon by Saddam's regime to silence political opponents. Pro-democracy activists live under the constant fear that their wives or daughters may be hauled in front of a kangaroo court and convicted of having participated in prostitution. Nearly 2,000 women have been beheaded since 2000.

Despite the long record of crimes committed by Saddam's sadistic regime, the plight of the Kurds has received little attention in the West. They have become the modern-day equivalent of the Jews prior to the creation of Israel in 1948 a persecuted, stateless people who desperately seek a homeland as a strategic buffer against foreign occupying powers.

Yet administration officials fear that the creation of an independent Kurdistan would lead to turmoil in Iraq and destabilize neighboring Turkey. The State Department is under the illusion that the prospect of a "Greater Kurdistan" threatens regional peace and stability. Hence, it has turned a blind eye to Ankara's brutal 15-year military campaign to subjugate Kurdish rebels in southeastern Turkey.

The result is that many of the opposition groups in Iraq including the Kurds do not believe that Washington is serious about toppling Saddam from power. They are convinced that the United States is more interested in preserving Iraq's territorial integrity than in providing assistance to the country's disenfranchised nationalities, who despise not only Saddam's iron-fisted rule but centralized control from Baghdad.

Thus, by backing the right to self-determination for the 3.6 million residents in Iraqi Kurdistan, the administration would be sending a powerful signal that it is determined to promote democracy and human rights in the region. Iraq is a synthetic state, created during the era of European imperialism. Rather than insisting that Baghdad's current borders are sacrosanct and not subject to change, the Bush foreign policy team should focus on supporting the breakup

of Iraq into its constituent parts: an independent Kurdistan in the north, a Sunni Muslim state in the center, and a Shiite Muslim nation in the south. Ankara's concerns that a sovereign Kurdish state threatens Turkey's internal stability is nothing more than a pretext to justify its abysmal human rights record; in fact, the creation of an independent Kurdistan will compel the Turkish government to embrace genuine democracy and do the one thing that will resolve its long-standing minorities problem: give real autonomy to the country's Kurdish population.

Besides their humanitarian and geopolitical significance, the Kurds are important because they are living proof of the destruction that Saddam is capable of unleashing upon his enemies, including the United States. The Iraqi strongman has shown that he is willing to massacre countless Kurdish civilians, women and children by using chemical poisons such as mustard gas and sarin gas in order to entrench his hold on power. There is no doubt that should he get his hands on weapons of mass destruction, he will use them against his adversaries: whether it be Saudi Arabia, Israel or America.

Saddam is a murderous despot who poses a grave threat to the security of the United States. It is high time the administration remove the Butcher of Baghdad from power, and grant his number one victims, the Kurds, the independence that they deserve and have suffered for so dearly.

Jeffrey T. Kuhner is an assistant national editor at The Washington Times.

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After Saddam; US Determined to Oust the Iraqi Leader, But Who Will Take His Place?

The Guardian 23 Feb 02 by Brian Whitaker

Emboldened by success in Afghanistan and tired of being trapped in the quagmire over sanctions and weapons inspections in Iraq, the United States has embarked on a plan to rid the world of Saddam Hussein. Ousting Saddam by force is certainly a hazardous enterprise, but the US, after years of hesitation, seems determined to commit whatever resources it takes to finish the job.

There has, of course, been talk of this ever since Saddam invaded Kuwait in 1990, and the real obstacle has not been military but political: a fear of what might happen once he is gone, both inside Iraq and in neighbouring countries. American preparations for an attack on Baghdad do not mean the political problems have gone away.

The big question is who - apart from President Bush - would rule Iraq. The simplest kind of electoral system in Iraq would produce a government dominated by Shi'a Muslims, since they account for 65% of the population. At the very least, the Sunni Muslims (32%) and possibly the Christians (3%) would want guaranteed power-sharing in order to protect their interests.

Under Saddam, Iraq has been ruled by the Sunni minority, with the Shi'a marginalised and sometimes brutally suppressed. Religious differences have been played down in the Iraqi media, though once Saddam has gone they could easily come to the fore. The other problem with the Shi'a majority is that the US does not trust them any more than Saddam does, because of their religious affinity with Iran which, like Iraq, is a founding member of the "axis of evil". It is doubtful whether the US will allow the Shi'a to predominate, despite their numbers.

In ethnic terms, Iraq is 75% Arab and 20% Kurdish, with other minorities accounting for 5%. The Kurdish population stretches over the Iraqi borders into Turkey and Iran, with smaller numbers in Syria and former Soviet republics. Altogether, the Kurds probably number 25m and form the world's most important ethnic group without a state. Because of sanctions and the no-fly zone, they have a quasi-state in northern Iraq which would be jeopardized by Saddam's overthrow. The likeliest solution in a post-Saddam Iraq would be to grant them enough autonomy to dampen their separatist tendencies but not enough to enable them to break away. That is a difficult balance to strike.

The US is looking to the Kurds to help remove Saddam, but they are in no hurry to become Iraq's equivalent of the Afghan Northern Alliance. The leaders of both main Kurdish parties, the Kurdistan Democratic party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, have said recently that they will not help to topple Saddam unless they know who

the next president will be. Massoud Barzani, head of the KDP, insisted: "We are not custom-made revolutionaries ... We will never become an orderly in the hands of the US or any other force."

The most probable military scenario starts with a massive American bombardment of Saddam's power base and especially those who protect him, such as the Republican Guard. Once that is under way, the hope is that opposition forces or his own guards will strike the fatal blow. But the US is not going to spend billions removing Saddam just to let some disaffected Republican Guard officer or a member of Saddam's Tikriti clan proclaim himself president.

The vast numbers of ground troops reportedly assigned to the Iraqi offensive are probably not intended to take part in the main battle. More likely, they will move into the vacuum as soon as Saddam has gone to prevent the "wrong" people from seizing power. While the "wrong" people are easily recognised, the "right" people are less easy to spot.

Reports in several Arab newspapers say the US has already begun a selection process, working through a list of 55 exiled Iraqi officers. It is doubtful whether such a list exists, but informal soundings are certainly taking place. As in Afghanistan, candidates with useful experience and good connections tend to be unsavoury characters. Almost any senior military figure who served under Saddam has blood on his hands, so unless care is taken the new cabinet could turn out to be a collection of war criminals.

The lack of an obvious successor means that, as in Afghanistan, a new government would be likely to be installed in two stages, starting with a transitional period during which a long-term leader may possibly emerge. Four men widely tipped to play a key role in this are Ahmed Chalabi, Nizar al-Khazraji, Najib Salihi and Adnan Pachachi.

Of these, Dr Chalabi, head of the Iraqi National Congress, is the best known in the west. He is a charismatic figure, loved and hated in equal measure by different factions of the US administration, and is certainly not an American yes-man. There have been questions about his financial probity - he was convicted of embezzlement in a Jordanian banking scandal - but Dr Chalabi says all these accusations have been cooked up by his political enemies. Because of his powerful friends in Washington he cannot be discounted. America's Iraq Liberation Act - which Dr Chalabi managed to push through Congress almost single-handedly - institutionalises the INC as the means for funding political change in Iraq.

General Khazraji, formerly Saddam's chief of staff, fled to the west in 1996 and was eventually granted political asylum in Denmark. There are claims that he was reluctant to leave Iraq, but that the CIA induced him to do so with promises of a major political role. The main Kurdish parties, the KDP and PUK, apparently support him, but a smaller Kurdish group has sought to have him prosecuted for war crimes. This relates to his alleged role in the use of chemical weapons against the Kurdish town of Halabja in 1988. Gen Khazraji says the allegations have been invented by Iraqi intelligence services. Some in the Iraqi opposition say he may have scuppered his political chances in a recent interview by appearing too eager to take over from Saddam - he described it as an honour and "a sacred duty". Brigadier Salihi is a more junior military figure, but increasingly popular. He fled Iraq because of a genuine grievance - a member of his family was raped - and, although he is a Sunni Muslim, appears to have support among the Shi'a. He has avoided giving the impression of power-hungriness, and at conferences in the US has argued that the military should not be directly engaged in politics.

Much of the discussion about future Iraqi governments resembles a casting session for a film of the Afghan war. People debate who should play Karzai and so on. In this process, Adnan Pachach emerges as the Afghan king. A former Iraqi foreign minister and now secretary general of the opposition Democratic Centrist Tendency, he might become a key player, but has said he wants only a facilitating role.

None of this helps to give a clearer view of what Saddam's removal will bring. It only highlights the uncertainties and unpredictabilities. Comparisons with Afghanistan are not necessarily helpful, either, since it is too early to know if the interim administration there will lead to stable, democratic government.

In normal times, the world cares little about what happens inside Afghanistan, so long as it keeps its politics to itself. Iraq, on the other hand, is a major oil producer and central to Middle East politics. The outcome of the struggle for power in Iraq will have an impact on all its immediate neighbours and far beyond. That is no reason for leaving Saddam to fester, but military plans need to be backed up with clear political plans. It is not enough to hope that everything will turn out fine on the night.

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Du Proche-Orient à l'Irak, les Européens confrontés au rôle prépondérant de l'Amérique

Les Quinze sont d'accord pour rejeter la tentation de l'unilatéralisme de Washington mais peinent à élaborer une stratégie commune

BRUXELLES

de notre bureau européen

Javier Solana, haut représentant européen pour la politique extérieure et de sécurité, se rendra sous peu au Proche-Orient « pour faire comprendre aux parties concernées quelle est la position de l'Union européenne » pour sortir le processus de paix israélo-palestinien de l'impasse. Rude tâche, que la réunion des ministres européens des affaires étrangères, lundi 18 février, n'a pas aidé à clarifier. Il est plus facile aux Quinze d'être au diapason pour réagir à la propension grandissante de l'administration américaine à se tourner vers l'unilatéralisme : face à la vision d'un monde partagé entre « bons » et « méchants », les Européens ont beau jeu de réclamer une analyse plus sophistiquée des relations internationales.

Les commentaires qui se multiplient depuis quelques jours dans les capitales européennes vont dans le même sens : les Quinze ne sont pas prêts à se laisser entraîner dans une escalade militaire, contre l'Irak ou d'autres pays assimilés à cet « axe du Mal » dénoncé par le président George W. Bush. Mais les Européens sont confrontés au rôle déterminant de l'Amérique. Au Proche-Orient, les idées européennes pour rompre avec l'approche sécuritaire du gouvernement d'Ariel Sharon, au profit d'une stra-

cord avec l'idée d'accentuer la pression sur Bagdad. Le refus du manichéisme a été réaffirmé par José Maria Aznar dans une interview à l'hebdomadaire *Der Spiegel* : « Dans la lutte contre le terrorisme, a souligné le chef du gouvernement espagnol, il ne doit pas y avoir de division au sein de la coalition internationale. Mais attaquer des prétendus "Etats voyous" [terme utilisé, à Washington, pour désigner l'Irak, l'Iran, la Corée du Nord, la Libye...], d'où émanerait la menace, n'est pas la même chose que la lutte antiterroriste. »

Même sentiment à Berlin, où le porte-parole du gouvernement a souligné que l'Allemagne « ne peut concevoir que les Etats-Unis puissent souhaiter l'aventure » en Irak. Pourtant, comme l'a rappelé lundi Josep Piqué, le ministre espagnol des affaires étrangères, dont le pays assume la présidence de l'Union, « tous les pays européens sont convaincus que l'Irak doit respecter à la lettre les résolutions de l'ONU, et donc accepter le retour des inspecteurs chargés du désarmement sur son territoire ». « Il n'y a rien à négocier [avec Bagdad] : l'Irak doit laisser les contrôleurs de l'ONU travailler librement », a confirmé Hubert Védrine. La France est soucieuse de ne pas de nouveau prêter le flanc à des critiques quant à ses liens réputés privilégiés avec l'Irak, et elle estime, d'autre part, que la tension dans les relations transatlantiques doit laisser place à un mode de relations plus serein.

« Colin Powell est sous pression : il est attaqué, il répond... C'est un échange viril entre amis », a estimé le ministre français. « Il faut absolument que nous ayons des liens étroits avec les Etats-Unis, et que nous renforçons le partenariat transatlantique, a résumé Josep Piqué, mais cela ne signifie aucunement que nous ayons toujours les mêmes opinions sur tous les sujets. » Plusieurs diplomates européens soulignent que Colin Powell est dans une situation minoritaire, voire marginale, à Washington, et que ce n'est pas le moment d'accroître ses difficultés. Est-ce un raisonnement qui

vaut pour le Proche-Orient ? Toujours est-il que les Quinze semblent mesurer à la fois l'ampleur des résistances qui se manifestent dans la région face à leurs « idées » pour ramener la paix, et l'étendue de leurs propres divergences.

A Caceres, il y a huit jours, ils étaient allés un peu vite en besogne pour annoncer une quasi-unanimité dans leurs rangs en faveur de la nécessité de relancer le processus de paix sur une base politique. Depuis, Jack Straw et Joschka Fischer se sont rendus dans la région. Le premier s'est peu ou prou aligné sur les positions américaines en insistant sur la priorité qui doit être accordée aux questions sécuritaires, et le second, lundi, est allé dans le même sens : « Rien ne bougera sans un cessez-le-feu, a-t-il répété. C'est une précondition à toutes les autres idées. »

Ceci expliquant cela, la présidence espagnole s'est empressée de souligner qu'il n'a jamais été question d'un quelconque « plan de paix » des Européens. Ainsi, les « lignes directrices éventuelles pour une politique de l'Union européenne au Moyen-Orient », ce document révisé de celui qui avait été présenté à Caceres par la présidence espagnole ne constitue qu'un « stock d'idées » (M. Védrine), pour « orienter le débat » (M. Piqué).

« Il faut quelque chose qui ressemble à un cessez-le-feu », a confirmé Josep Piqué. Commentaire d'un ministre des affaires étrangères moins prudent, mais préférant conserver l'anonymat : « A Caceres, il y avait un consensus pour découpler sécurité et processus politique. On se retrouve aujourd'hui avec la sécurité comme préalable. Beau progrès que ce revirement substantiel ! »

La réalité est plus pragmatique : les ministres européens découvrent à quel point leurs idées sur la nécessaire prépondérance du « politique » sont accueillies avec scepticisme et une certaine inquiétude par les Palestiniens, tout juste poliment à Washington, et – à l'exception de Shimon Pérès – avec une froideur prononcée à Tel-Aviv.

Laurent Zecchini



« Attaquer des soi-disant "Etats voyous", ce n'est pas la même chose que la lutte antiterroriste »
JOSÉ MARIA AZNAR

tégie plus politique passant par la proclamation d'un Etat palestinien et, selon les propositions françaises, par la tenue d'élections dans les territoires palestiniens, n'ont aucune chance d'aboutir sans l'aval de Washington.

S'agissant de l'Irak, les Européens ne veulent pas accepter la logique américaine consistant à diaboliser tel ou tel Etat mais, sur le fond, ils ne sont pas en désac-

L'« affaire Karen Fogg » jette un froid entre l'UE et la Turquie

Bruxelles s'indigne de la publication des e-mails de la représentante de la Commission à Ankara

BRUXELLES

de notre bureau européen

Considérée à l'origine comme un fait divers monté en épingle par un agitateur notoire, l'« affaire Karen Fogg », du nom de la représentante de la Commission européenne à Ankara, a pris l'allure d'une affaire d'Etat : elle pourrait bien altérer sérieusement les relations – déjà passablement délicates et complexes – entre la Turquie, candidate à l'entrée dans l'Union européenne, et la Commission.

Tout a débuté il y a huit jours, lorsque Dogu Perinçek, directeur de l'hebdomadaire *Aydinlik* (Clarté), a commencé à étaler sur la place publique le courrier électronique de Karen Fogg. Extraits soigneusement choisis, bien sûr, assortis de commentaires destinés à convaincre les lecteurs d'un « complot contre la Turquie » fomenté... à Bruxelles.

Ce piratage de courrier électronique serait presque insignifiant s'il était isolé, mais Dogu Perinçek a affirmé être en possession de quelque 7 000 e-mails de la même source. Fanfaronnade, a-t-on d'abord pensé à Ankara. Sauf que, à raison d'une conférence de presse quasi

quotidienne, et de la publication de nombreux extraits de ce courrier – interne et externe – de la représentation européenne en Turquie dans l'hebdomadaire de M. Perinçek, des dizaines de messages électroniques ont déjà été diffusés. Bref, l'« agitateur » ne semble pas être un mythomane. Son journal est l'organe d'expression (confidentiel) du Parti des travailleurs, un parti d'extrême gauche marginal et non représenté au Parlement.

Vieux militant maoïste longtemps proche du Sentier lumineux péruvien, antiaméricain et tiers-mondiste, Dogu Perinçek s'est mué depuis une quinzaine d'années en militant ultranationaliste et anti-européen. Il s'affirme lui-même proche de ce qu'on appelle à Ankara l'« Etat profond », c'est-à-dire le tout-puissant lobby de l'armée et des services secrets, dont on sait qu'il n'est pas favorable au rapprochement avec l'UE. Mais, la source ayant beau être contestable, la presse turque sérieuse et la plupart des chaînes de télévision font leur miel des révélations de M. Perinçek.

De quoi s'agit-il ? Comme tout diplomate, assure-t-on à Bruxelles,

M^{me} Fogg se livre à des commentaires et à des évaluations sur la politique turque et ses responsables. Il n'empêche : les dénonciations d'*Aydinlik*, qui cite le nom des diplomates européens, mais aussi ceux des employés turcs de la mission de l'Union européenne, ont des accents d'appel à la vindicte populaire. Mardi 19 février, 19 organisations non gouvernementales (ultranationalistes et kémalistes) ont demandé l'expulsion de Karen Fogg, et plusieurs avocats ont déposé plainte contre elle.

TRIPLE DEMANDE

Le même jour, à Bruxelles, Günther Verheugen, commissaire européen chargé de l'élargissement, a convoqué l'ambassadeur de Turquie, Nihat Akyol, pour lui présenter une triple demande : l'arrêt de la publication, sous une forme ou sous une autre, des messages électroniques de la représentation européenne (par le biais d'un référent) ; des mesures pour assurer à l'avenir la sécurisation de sa correspondance électronique ; des mesures de protection pour Karen Fogg, les diplomates et le personnel de la mission de l'UE. On rappelle, de source

turque, que le gouvernement a déjà ordonné l'ouverture d'une enquête, et que l'affaire est entre les mains de la justice turque... laquelle n'est pas renommée pour sa célérité.

Comme l'« affaire Karen Fogg » est finalement loin d'être anecdotique – il ne serait pas surprenant que Dogu Perinçek soit manipulé par la « Grande Muette » turque, qui perdrait beaucoup de pouvoir si la Turquie rejoignait un jour l'Union européenne – le président de la Commission, Romano Prodi, devait téléphoner au premier ministre turc, Bülent Ecevit, mercredi 20 février, pour réitérer les demandes de M. Verheugen.

« Que peut faire le premier ministre ? Chez nous, la justice est indépendante », rappelle un diplomate turc, tout en constatant avec gourmandise qu'après s'être plainte des atteintes à la liberté de la presse en Turquie la Commission demande peu ou prou la fermeture d'un journal... Autant dire que, foi de Dogu Perinçek, dans les semaines à venir, le courrier de Karen Fogg continuera d'être lu par un grand nombre de lecteurs.

Laurent Zecchini

ARMÉNIE-GÉORGIE

Le projet de voie ferrée entre la Turquie et la Géorgie inquiète les Arméniens

S'exprimant au nom du parti "Zang", l'une des principales forces politiques du Djavakhk, et traduisant les inquiétudes des Arméniens, majoritaires dans cette région du sud de la Géorgie, limitrophe de l'Arménie, son co-président M. Torossian a mis en garde dernièrement contre les projets de construction d'une voie de chemin de fer censée relier Kars, en Turquie, à Tbilissi et au-delà, à Bakou, via la ville d'Akhalkalaki, chef-lieu du Djavakhk. Un tel projet risque de modifier la composition ethnique du Djavakhk et des régions voisines, a-t-il souligné, en insistant sur le fait que l'identité linguistique, culturelle et religieuse des habitants s'en trouverait menacée. Dans un entretien accordé à l'agence de presse locale A-Info, M. Torossian a expliqué que des policiers et des soldats turcs risquaient de s'installer dans la région dans le sillage du train et d'en rompre l'équilibre démographique. Un scénario qui inquiète les Arméniens, déjà mobilisés contre les projets visant à réinstaller dans la région les Turcs Meshkets, qui en avaient été chassés pendant la deuxième guerre mondiale par Staline qui les avait déportés en Asie centrale. Les autorités géorgiennes, pour complaire au Conseil de l'Europe et surtout à la Turquie, ont mis de côté leurs réticences pour étudier les demandes des Meshkets désireux de retourner en Géorgie.

C'est aussi au nom de leur sécurité qu'ils estiment menacée par la Turquie que les Arméniens de la région se sont mobilisés en faveur du maintien de la base militaire russe d'Akhalkalaki. Un accord en vue de l'évacuation de cette base, ainsi que des trois autres dont dispose la Russie en Géorgie, avait été signé par les Géorgiens et les Russes en marge du sommet de l'OSCE à Istanbul en 1999. Mais la Russie n'a évacué à ce jour que la base de Vaziani, près de Tbilissi, et traîne des pieds pour évacuer celles d'Abkhazie, de Batoumi et d'Akhalkalaki. Cette dernière assure des emplois aux Arméniens du Djavakhk, une région à l'économie sinistrée, et constitue en outre une

présence rassurante pour une population qui n'a pas oublié les incursions sanglantes des armées turques au début du 20^e siècle, auxquelles n'avaient pu s'opposer les forces géorgiennes.

Quant aux éventuelles retombées économiques d'une liaison ferroviaire entre Kars et Tbilissi, elles semblent peser de peu de poids donc face aux préoccupations sécuritaires de la population arménienne. D'autant que ce projet apparaît comme un nouveau dispositif dans l'encerclement de l'Arménie par la Turquie, et un nouveau maillon du blocus qu'elle lui impose depuis dix ans et qu'elle n'a manifestement pas l'intention de lever. Le plus court chemin pour relier Erzeroum-Kars à Tbilissi et au-delà à Bakou passe en effet par Gumri, traversée par l'une des plus anciennes voies ferrées transnationales de la région reliant Istanbul à Tbilissi, Tabriz et Bakou via Erévan. Mais le tronçon Kars-Gumri, long de quelques kilomètres, est verrouillé par la seule volonté de la Turquie, malgré les demandes répétées des autorités locales de part et d'autre de la frontière arméno-turque pour réhabiliter la voie ferrée. Pour que les trains circulent de nouveau entre Kars et Gumri, il suffirait donc d'un geste d'Ankara, accompagné d'investissements financiers en vue de remettre en état un réseau quelque peu rouillé. Les moyens financiers nécessaires pour cela seraient de toute manière nettement moins élevés que ceux requis pour construire ex nihilo la voie ferrée Kars-Tbilissi. Une dimension que l'Union européenne ne saurait négliger dans la mise en œuvre de son programme TRACECA qui, dans l'esprit de la Route de la Soie, entend réhabiliter les axes de communication reliant l'Europe à l'Asie centrale via le Caucase, si elle ne veut pas donner l'impression que l'Arménie en est exclue, de même qu'elle semble exclue pour l'heure des grands axes énergétiques qui tendent à la contourner au profit d'un oléoduc plus long reliant Bakou et les gisements de la mer Caspienne au terminal turc méditerranéen de Ceyhan, via la Géorgie. Le ministre arménien des affaires étrangères Vartan Oskanian avait évoqué ce projet lors d'une conférence de presse dernièrement à Erévan où il a encouragé le programme européen dans l'intérêt d'une coopération régionale au sud du Caucase. Si le ministre arménien n'a évoqué aucuns délais concernant la mise en œuvre de la voie ferrée, il a émis l'espoir que la nouvelle coopération qui se met en place avec les États-Unis et les institutions internationales dans le cadre de la guerre contre le terrorisme donnera une nouvelle impulsion à un projet dont il a souligné l'importance stratégique.

« La violence faite aux femmes kurdes est un problème universel »

Sous les ors de la République Française, dans les murs du Palais du Luxembourg, s'est tenue vendredi une conférence internationale sur les femmes, la violence dont elles sont victimes et leur résistance, à travers le cas des Kurdes. Une délégation nord-cotentinaise, conduite par Suayip Adlig, avait fait le voyage pour assister à ce colloque. Elle a été accueillie par le sénateur cherbourgeois Jean-Pierre Godefroy.

« Les problèmes que les femmes kurdes vivent sont ceux de beaucoup de femmes dans le monde. C'est pourquoi il est important que des relations s'établissent entre les différents mouvements féminins et féministes, que ceux-ci soient connus, reconnus et soutenus. » Le constat que des services physiques et/ou moraux, à des degrés divers, sont infligés tous les jours à des femmes, en de nombreux endroits de la planète, était bien sûr en filigrane de la conférence internationale qui se tenait vendredi dans les murs du Sénat. « Un dernier recensement de l'organisation mondiale a révélé que plusieurs millions de femmes avaient disparu, simplement parce qu'elles étaient femmes. Les situations les plus dramatiques surviennent bien sûr dans les zones de conflits. Les violences à leur encontre, les viols, sont des armes de guerre des XX^e et XXI^e siècles. Parallèlement, il y a la violence au quotidien :

le foyer reste un lieu très clos, dans lequel la violence peut se perpétuer presque sans aucun contrôle, ni étatique, ni policier dans la plupart des cas », explique le docteur Isabelle Rigoni, chercheuse à l'université de Warwick.

« J'ai pensé dès le début que la violence faite aux

femmes kurdes était un problème universel. Ça a été dit au cours de la conférence, et je prends volontiers cette phrase à mon compte », commentera de son côté l'adjointe au maire de Cherbourg, Huguette Legros, au sortir d'un colloque exceptionnel, qui a beaucoup marqué l'auditoire.

« Nous avons pu entendre des témoignages forts. C'était très émouvant de voir ces femmes qui, réunies ici au Sénat, retrouvent une forme d'identité, et sont heureuses d'avoir un public témoin de ça », relèvera Nicole Briard, l'adjointe cherbourgeoise en charge des affaires sociales.

La résistance

François Bartier, un des rares hommes de la délégation nord-cotentinaise, observe quant à lui : « Ce que j'ai entendu aujourd'hui, je le savais déjà malheureusement. Mais ce qui m'a impressionné, ce sont ces associations de femmes qui parviennent à exister, malgré tout. » Car de résistance il fut aussi beaucoup question, bien entendu, au cours des tables rondes animées par des chercheuses, des universitaires, des avocates et des journalistes. Et c'était même un point essentiel. « Il faut essayer d'arrêter la catégorisation systématique des femmes en vic-

times. On risque ainsi de naturaliser cette souffrance comme un destin féminin. Or, les femmes ne sont pas seulement victimes, elles sont aussi actrices de la résistance », insiste d'ailleurs le docteur Rigoni.

Parmi les figures de proue de

cette lutte, il y a Leyla Zana, absente de la conférence pour cause d'emprisonnement en Turquie. « Ayons une pensée émue pour elle qui, élue députée en 1992, est depuis huit ans en prison pour avoir revendiqué de façon démocratique le droit de ses compatriotes à une solution politique et pacifique. Elle symbolise la quête des Kurdes de Turquie, mais aussi des femmes turques pour la paix, la démocratie, et une solution négociée à la question kurde dans ce pays », a souligné le matin dans son discours Mme Danielle Mitterrand, présente en tant que présidente de la Fondation France-Libertés.

« Ma petite musique »

C'est grâce au coup de pouce de Jean-Pierre Godefroy que la conférence « Femmes, violence et moyens de mobiliser la résistance : le cas des femmes kurdes » s'est tenue au Palais du Luxembourg. Un endroit hautement symbo-



Jean-Pierre Godefroy a accueilli vendredi Suayip Adlig (à droite) et la délégation nord-cotentinaise (sur notre photo, une toute petite partie) au Palais du Luxembourg.

lique. Le sénateur manchols, membre de la commission des affaires sociales, conseiller régional et ancien maire de Cherbourg, reconnaît qu'il est très sensible à la cause kurde, surtout depuis ses longues discussions avec « l'homme de paix et de résistance » qu'est Suayip Adlig.

Réfugié politique en France depuis dix-sept ans, Cherbourgais d'adoption, c'est ce dernier qui a organisé le déplacement de la délégation du Nord-Cotentin à Paris.

« Ce que vivent les Kurdes est un drame horrible. On a l'impression d'un peuple exilé sur sa terre. Je crois que chaque peuple a droit à son

autodétermination. Et dire qu'au siècle dernier, le peuple kurde était un des plus évolués du monde musulman. (voir encadré) ! », déclare Jean-Pierre Godefroy. Son engagement ? « C'est un engagement d'amitié, de conviction, de témoignage. Puisqu'on ne peut créer un groupe d'amitié France-Kurdistan, étant donné que le Kurdistan n'est pas reconnu, je me suis dit qu'un colloque ici était l'occasion de faire quelque chose. J'ai en somme voulu apporter "ma petite musique". »

Sur un ton plus politique, l'élue ajoute : « Le peuple kurde est

sur plusieurs pays, et notamment en Turquie. Celle-ci demande actuellement à faire partie de l'Union européenne. Alors qu'elle donne des gages de démocratie pour ça, à mon sens, c'est aussi important que le gage économique ! »

Suayip Adlig, lui, se montrait vendredi soir « très heureux et très fier » d'avoir pu emmener une trentaine de personnes à cette conférence, qui était organisée par l'Institut kurde de Paris, l'Action des femmes kurdes contre les crimes d'honneur, et le Réseau international d'études des femmes

kurdes, en collaboration avec la Fondation France-Libertés et le ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité.

« Malgré ce que je subis et ce que ma famille a subi, je n'éprouve pas de haine. Mon action se fait dans les domaines de la création, de la communication. Je continuerai toujours dans cette voie, en tissant un réseau d'amitiés », conclut-il, tout en rêvant « d'organiser un jour un festival "colossal" sur la culture française dans (son) pays libre. »

C. GALLIER

Les femmes au Kurdistan : état des lieux

« Le lion est lion, qu'il porte qu'il soit mâle ou femelle. » Ce beau proverbe était l'un des favoris des Kurdes à l'époque où, il y a encore quelques décennies, le statut des femmes passait pour être l'un des plus libéraux du monde musulman. Les voyageurs occidentaux des XVIII^e et XIX^e siècles étaient frappés par cette liberté relative, « tandis que les voisins arabes et turcs des Kurdes mettaient cette singularité sur le compte du manque de plétitude de ceux-ci ! ».

Mais la désagrégation des structures sociales et culturelles kurdes, à la suite des situations de guerre et de ré-

pression endémiques, depuis le partage du Kurdistan dans les années 1920, les déplacements massifs des populations, la destruction des élites, la poussée des islamismes, « ont bouleversé la société kurde et son système de valeurs ».

En Turquie, entre 1984 et 2000, l'armée turque a fait évacuer et détruire plus de 4 000 villages kurdes. « Au cours de cette guerre terrible, qui a fait environ 40 000 morts, les forces turques ont commis en toute impunité des milliers de viols dans le Kurdistan, mais aussi dans des commissariats de police de grandes métropoles

turques. » Un nombre important de jeunes filles violées se suicident, « pour que leur "secret déshonorant" ne se révèle pas au grand jour à l'heure du mariage ».

En Irak, la dictature de Saddam Hussein a détruit 90 % des villages et une vingtaine de villes kurdes. 1,5 million de paysans ont été déportés, ont disparu, et des dizaines de milliers d'autres ont été massacrés par des moyens conventionnels ou par des armes chimiques, comme le gazage de Halabja en mars 1988.

Depuis juin 1991, une partie des Kurdes irakiens (3,5 sur 5,5 millions) gère elle-même ses affaires sur un territoire

vaste comme la Suisse, érigé en zone de protection par l'ONU. Les femmes y jouent un rôle de premier plan dans le renouveau économique, social et culturel. Elles s'organisent pour combattre les agressions et les violences commises à leur encontre par des groupes islamistes, pour dénoncer l'impunité accordée par la législation irakienne aux auteurs de crimes dits d'honneur, pour lutter contre les archaïsmes sociaux et les mentalités patriarcales. « Leur combat a amené les autorités kurdes à abolir la législation irakienne sur les crimes d'honneur, et à qualifier ceux-ci d'homicides passibles de lourdes

peines, à interdire la polygamie et à réprimer sévèrement les mouvements islamistes. »

Il reste cependant un long chemin à parcourir dans la société kurde sinistrée. Pour exemple, si vendredi, des femmes kurdes de Turquie et d'Irak ont pu être présentes au colloque et apporter leurs témoignages, les femmes du Kurdistan iranien qui subissent une double oppression comme femme et comme kurde n'ont pas pu être invitées à la conférence, pour éviter de les exposer à de probables poursuites à leur retour. Les femmes kurdes de Syrie étaient absentes également pour les mêmes raisons.

Un acte de solidarité

Demain, des Nord-Cotentinaises (et quelques Nord-Cotentinois) assisteront, dans les murs du Palais du Luxembourg, à une conférence internationale sur les femmes kurdes. Quelques-unes d'entre elles expliquent pourquoi elles seront du voyage. Les mots de résistance et de solidarité reviennent souvent dans leurs propos.

Dès potron-minet, demain, une délégation nord-cotentinaise prendra le train pour Paris. Elle assistera à la conférence internationale qui se tiendra au Sénat sur le thème « Femmes, violence et moyens de mobiliser la résistance : le cas des femmes kurdes » (lire *La Presse de la Manche* du 19 février).

Le groupe, constitué d'une cinquantaine de personnes, mené par Suayip Adlig, le représentant de l'Institut kurde en Normandie et réfugié politique installé à Cherbourg depuis plusieurs années, comptera une majorité de femmes, qui ont tenu à être présentes à plusieurs titres. Avec la solidarité comme principal flambeau.

Une aventure extraordinaire

« L'humain est vraiment au cœur de mes préoccupations. Je ne supporte pas l'humiliation ; la torture morale est quelque chose qui me touche profondément. Lorsque je voyage dans certains pays, je suis toujours complètement atterrée et bouleversée par les personnes, les femmes essentiellement, et aussi les enfants, les vieillards, qui sont en grande difficulté dans leur existence de tous les jours. A la fin des années 90, j'ai été embarquée, aux côtés de Suayip, dans une aventure extraordinaire : j'ai partagé avec lui, et d'autres, le festival pour la sauvegarde de l'identité kurde », explique Gabrielle.



En tant que présidente de France-libertés, Danielle Mitterrand était présente à Cherbourg en avril 2000 pour inaugurer le festival « Identités ». C'est elle qui ouvrira la conférence internationale sur les femmes kurdes, à laquelle assisteront une cinquantaine de Nord-Cotentinaises. A ses côtés, Bernard Cazeneuve, Jean-Pierre Godafroy, et Kendal Nazan, le président de l'Institut kurde de Paris, co-organisateur de la conférence.

« L'un des moments que je garderai en mémoire, c'est l'émotion très grande de ces Kurdes de voir flotter dans notre ciel cherbourgeois un drapeau interdit, leur drapeau. »

Il y a également ici une affaire d'amitié : « Suayip est un homme de résistance et de paix, et il est essentiel que nous puissions au moins l'accompagner dans son combat. »

Et puis « une femme ne peut rester insensible au sort des autres femmes. Je n'aurais pas pu rester chez moi alors que pour la première fois, des femmes kurdes vont témoigner », lance Gabrielle avec conviction.

Relayer la parole des femmes

Pour Michelle, « notre venue à cette conférence est un acte de solidarité ». « Je crois que par ce biais, en tant que personne vivant dans un lieu démocratique, nous pouvons relayer la parole de ces femmes qui s'organisent pour résister », ajoute cette Tourlavillaise qui, elle aussi, s'est investie dans le festival « Identités » organisé à Cherbourg en avril 2000. « La femme a un rôle important à jouer dans ce genre de combat parce qu'elle est souvent en première ligne, et la plus

vulnérable. » « Je serai au Sé-

nat vraiment à titre individuel et pour défendre la cause des femmes en général, de celles qui dans le monde ont beaucoup de difficultés à s'affranchir des habitudes, des traditions imposées par la religion... », observe Gisèle de son côté. « Je pense que j'apprendrai beaucoup de cette journée ! » Quant à Patricia, elle considère tout simplement « qu'on ne peut pas ignorer ce qui se passe à côté de nous. C'est une opportunité d'aller un peu au cœur de ce débat. »

C. G.

Point de vue

L'identité facteur de dignité

Il en va des peuples, des nations, comme des individus. Leur reconnaître leur dignité pleine et entière, c'est d'abord, c'est toujours reconnaître et respecter leur identité.

La Pologne dans son histoire tragique fut découpée, écartelée, avalée par ses voisins. Sa richesse culturelle, sa volonté identitaire étaient

telles que, même gommée de la carte du monde, la nation polonaise a survécu, elle s'est retrouvée. On sait ce qu'il en fut et ce qu'il en est de l'Arménie.

Aujourd'hui, comme d'autres, mais peut-être plus que d'autres, la nation kurde est partagée entre quatre Etats. Et s'il est difficile de modifier

les frontières, sujet suffisamment délicat pour que nous ne prétendions pas le résoudre dans ces colonnes, du moins peut-on s'interroger sur l'humiliation qu'il y a pour les Kurdes de ne pouvoir vivre leur propre culture, retrouver et aimer leurs racines, être reconnus dans leur identité pour respecter leur dignité, leur intégrité profonde. C'est une démarche à la fois humanitaire et intelligente et qui est facteur de

paix et d'équilibre.

On le voit bien au Proche-Orient, c'est lorsqu'on refuse à un peuple son identité, sa culture, que la haine se développe, que la guerre s'impose, que s'embrasent des régions.

En outre, chaque culture est une part du décor commun de l'humanité, chaque culture peut nous aider à trouver de nouveaux chemins, là où l'on pensait être enfermés dans une impasse.

Aujourd'hui, au Sénat de la République, se tient une conférence inter-

naionale avec le concours du ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité et de la Fondation France libertés que préside Mme Danielle Mitterrand avec l'Institut kurde de Paris, sur le cas des femmes kurdes, leur action contre les crimes d'honneur et contre la violence.

Sujet utile, car dans le monde musulman, les femmes kurdes jouissent depuis toujours d'une grande liberté par rapport à leurs sœurs des autres peuples. Voilà un point de culture développée au sein de la nation

kurde qui est une richesse pour l'humanité et que l'on a intérêt à découvrir, à comprendre, à faire développer.

Une forte délégation de femmes du Cotentin participe à cette conférence internationale. Une manière des gens d'ici de participer à une réflexion qui débouche sur le respect d'une antique et belle culture, puissamment utile pour notre temps, appelé à construire la paix dans le respect des identités, des personnes et des peuples.

Jean LEVALLICIS

Femmes du Cotentin et femmes kurdes réunies au Sénat

J.-P. Godefroy : un engagement amical

Le Sénat accueillait vendredi un colloque international sur la situation des femmes kurdes (voir Dimanche-Ouest-France du 24 février). Une délégation du Nord Cotentin, majoritairement féminine y participait.

Une vingtaine de femmes et quelques hommes n'avaient pas hésité vendredi à prendre le premier train du matin pour assister au Sénat à un colloque international sur la violence envers les femmes Kurdes. Venant des milieux culturels, associatifs et politiques du Nord-Cotentin, elles avaient répondu à la demande de Suayip Adlig, représentant de l'Institut kurde pour la Basse-Normandie. « Pour un colloque réunissant des femmes kurdes de plus de vingt pays du monde entier, je tenais beaucoup à mobiliser des femmes de la région. Je suis heureux qu'elles aient répondu si nombreuses », déclare-t-il. Réfugié politique, Suayip Adlig a quitté la Turquie en 1984. Depuis cinq ans, il a choisi Cherbourg comme port d'attache et œuvre pour la cause de son peuple. Mais c'est grâce à son amitié avec Jean-Pierre Godefroy que le colloque a eu lieu au Sénat. « J'ai tout fait pour que cette manifestation se déroule au palais du Luxembourg », remarque le nouveau sénateur.

Femmes et Kurdes

« C'était pour moi un engagement amical et philosophique. Et un moyen, par l'aspect symbolique du lieu, d'envoyer un message clair au gouvernement turc. Pour entrer



Au Sénat, Suayip Adlig entouré de la délégation cotentinoise.

dans l'Europe, il faut donner des garanties de démocratie », insiste-t-il. Dans une société kurde sinistrée, les femmes subissent une double répression comme femmes et comme kurdes. « Dans toutes les régions, les femmes sont victimes de la violence étatique qui se traduit par la destruction massive des villes et des villages, l'emprisonnement, le viol, les abus sexuels, la déportation et les migrations forcées. En outre elles subissent de multiples formes de violence domestique

exercées au sein du foyer par les membres masculins de la famille », expliquent les organisateurs issus de l'Institut Kurde de Paris, du réseau international d'études des femmes kurdes et de l'action des femmes kurdes contre les crimes d'honneur. Dans le salon Médicis, parmi les 200 participants, Gabrielle Bouillon-Foucalt, conseillère municipale à Cherbourg-Octeville, s'insurge devant la violence des témoignages : « Pourquoi toujours vouloir humilier les femmes si ce n'est pour porter at-

teinte à l'Histoire et à la vie même ? » interroge-t-elle. De son côté, Christine Leterrier de l'association Identité, a vécu là « une grande journée. Ces femmes sont si courageuses, mais, il reste tant à faire ». Entre révolte, espoir et frustration, elle se demande « comment concrètement les aider ». Suayip Adlig lui est serein. « Toutes ces femmes du Cotentin en train d'écouter les témoignages des femmes Kurdes, c'est une réalité qui finira bien par porter ses fruits. »

Situation des Kurdes et du Kurdistan

Le Kurdistan, pays sans frontière, est un vaste territoire montagneux d'une superficie de 530 000 km² (à peu près la surface de la France) qui s'étend de la mer Méditerranée au Golfe Persique. Il part de l'est de la Turquie, entame légèrement le nord de la Syrie, recouvre les régions septentrionales de l'Irak, pénètre en Iran

pour suivre la courbe descendante le long de la frontière jusqu'aux rives du Golfe. Château d'eau du Moyen-Orient, son sous-sol est d'une grande richesse : on y trouve du pétrole, du charbon, du minerai de fer et de nombreux métaux. Des ressources, qui expliquent en grande partie le partage de son ter-

ritoire en quatre parties lors du traité de Lausanne en 1923. A cette époque encore, le statut des femmes au Kurdistan passait pour être l'un des plus libéraux du monde musulman. Non voilées, participant activement à la vie économique et sociale, elles jouaient (et continuent encore aujourd'hui) un rôle essen-

tiel dans la création artistique et culturelle. 25 millions de Kurdes vivent actuellement en Turquie, six millions en Iran, cinq millions en Irak et deux millions en Syrie. A cette population de 38 millions s'ajoutent les deux millions de Kurdes qui vivent dans le reste du monde. 180 000 ont choisi la France.

Iranian Kurds are in great danger!

KurdishMedia.com By Jeff Klein 23 February 2002

At the moment, much of the world's attention is focused on American campaign against terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As the United States sets its sights on Saddam Hussein, the international Kurdish community nervously watches with the situation in the de facto Kurdish state in northern Iraq. In all of this commotion, many seem to be overlooking the dire situation of the Kurdish movement in the Iran.

Many activists from Eastern (Iranian) Kurdistan are in great danger. A large number of eastern Kurdish opposition members and pe°merge have been granted refugee status by the UNCHR, but nonetheless, Turkey and European nations have generally not accepted them within their borders. Earlier this year, Turkey returned Kurdish activist Karim Tuojali to Iran, where he was executed on January 24, 2002.

While eastern Kurdish activists outside of Iran face an uncertain future, the condition of those inside the Islamic Republic is even graver. Thousands are languishing in Iranian jails. Earlier today, the Democratic Party of Iranian Kurdistan (PDKI) issued a press release stating that Iran is planning to execute 15 political prisoners, a large number of them Kurds. The world community, Kurds and non-Kurds alike, all concerned with human rights and democracy, must not turn a blind eye to the crimes being perpetrated by the Islamic Republic of Iran against its indigenous Kurdish minority. All ought to contact their political leaders worldwide to inform that these crimes cannot be ignored. As the international community intensifies its pro-democracy and pro-human rights rhetoric, effort must be made to focus the world's attention on the oppressive regime in Iran.

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Her Excellency's unprivate e-mail

(Economist)

February 21, 2002 A hacker has endangered Turkey's relations with the EU. Deliberately?

JUST who hacked into the e-mail of the European Union's ambassador? No one knows-or at least no one is saying-but the affair has escalated into a full-scale diplomatic row between the EU and Turkey, and open war between those in Turkey's elite who want their country to be part of Europe and those who firmly do not.

The e-mail at issue was correspondence between Karen Fogg, the ambassador, and her bosses in Brussels, as well as an array of Turkish bureaucrats, union leaders, academics and journalists. It was leaked to a maverick weekly, *Aydinlik*, which has already published parts and says it has 300 juicy pages more.

Thanks to whom? A "state institution", says the editor. Not us, insist the usually taciturn armed forces and the national intelligence agency hotly. People in Brussels have been getting heated too. On February 20th, the president of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, rang Turkey's prime minister, Bulent Ecevit, demanding immediate action to stop publication of a third week's extracts of Mrs Fogg's billets-doux. The government says it "cannot" interfere with Turkey's "independent judiciary". A prosecutor in Istanbul is investigating the hack-in.

The scandal has erupted just as Turkey's relations with the EU were turning distinctly rosier, thanks to its support for the resumption last month of peace talks between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriots. It also coincides with a debate within Turkey's awkward three-way coalition, ranging from ultra-nationalists to leftists, over scrapping the death penalty and granting the country's Kurds broader cultural rights-changes which the EU says Turkey must make if it is to ever join the club.

Mesut Yilmaz, the deputy prime minister, who belongs to the coalition's conservative Motherland wing and is in charge of relations with the EU, declared that the hackers were "anti-EU elements" and, if the state was involved in any way, it had committed "a grave crime". *Aydinlik* claims that the e-mails prove beyond doubt that Mrs Fogg had organised "a secret network" whose "strategic goal" was to promote Kurdish separatism, unravel the secularism bequeathed by Kemal Ataturk and generally "destroy Turkey".

Whatever her aims or deeds, the beleaguered ambassador's language has raised nationalist hackles across the political spectrum. Such idioms as "let sleeping dogs lie", translated literally into Turkish, have provoked rage among

many who, egged on by Aydinlik, believe she was comparing Turks to canines. Women's groups, bar associations and other civic groups have filed complaints with prosecutors across Turkey seeking Mrs Fogg's instant expulsion and an investigation into the activities of Ismail Cem, Turkey's foreign minister and a committed Europhile, for having "collaborated" with her, presumably in describing the mail burglary as "an ugly crime". One ultra-nationalist columnist, describing Mrs Fogg as an "ugly old cat", went as far as to suggest that her life was now at risk, and rightly so.

At that the EU growled, insisting that the Turkish authorities must protect its ambassador and her staff. If not, said Mr Prodi, the EU "reserves the right to take all measures deemed necessary for the security of the delegation staff, and its communications, for itself." At last, a mission for the European rapid-reaction force?

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Turkey should allow Kurdish education - deputy PM

Reuters February 20, 2002

ANKARA - Deputy Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz, who oversees relations with the EU, said on Wednesday Turkey should allow some Kurdish-language education and that lifting the ban would not erode national unity. The European Union, which Turkey wants to join, has urged Ankara to improve cultural rights for its 12 million Kurds, but authorities fear greater freedom could encourage restive Kurds to demand more autonomy.

"People should be able to learn their parents' language if they want to," Yilmaz said in an interview with NTV television. "If it's by private means outside of official (schools), the state shouldn't block this and shouldn't forbid it."

He added, however, that Turkish should remain the official language in state schools. Under current laws, Kurdish cannot be taught in private language schools or community groups. Yilmaz's remarks, made in an interview with NTV television, differed sharply with those by Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, who has said Kurdish instruction is "unacceptable" and blamed separatists for organising a campaign for the ban be lifted. Last month police detained hundreds of parents and students who signed petitions calling for Kurdish teaching.

The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) has waged an armed struggle for self-rule that has claimed more than 30,000 lives since 1984. Violence dropped off sharply with the 1999 capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, who ordered his followers to withdraw from Turkey and seek cultural rights for Kurds. Asked whether separatists were using the Kurdish-language campaign to divide Turkey, Yilmaz said: "I definitely don't believe this, I do not share these fears."

"I believe just the opposite. By blocking it without any good reason you serve the PKK's propaganda. When we make this free, very few people will take advantage of it," he said.

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ANAP rules out any alliance with HADEP

Turkish Daily News February 27, 2002

After repealing Article 25 of the Constitution, which ruled that laws legislated after the September 12, 1980 military coup could not be claimed to contradict the Constitution, the Constitutional Court will discuss on Thursday the first request to cancel a Military Coup Law, the Anatolia news agency reported yesterday.

The Constitutional Court will meet on Thursday to inspect the application of the Camardi Court of First Instance requesting that the top court cancel the Pecuniary Damages and Monthly Pay Assignment Law, one of the laws legislated after the 1980 military coup. The top court recently postponed the first inspection of the suit because of Article 25, which forbids the court from inspecting the constitutional harmony of laws legislated during the military government. As Article 25 has recently been repealed, the Pecuniary Damages and Monthly Pay Assignment Law would be the first military coup law to be annulled by the top court, if the court agrees to cancel it. The aforementioned law regulates the pecuniary damages and monthly pay allowances given to Turkish security staff in case of death or injury while on duty.

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PM: Kurdistan as a Model for Future Iraq Kurdistan

Newsline (PUK) February 26, 2002

Sulaimani In an address to the cadet graduates of a course organized by the Peshmerga High Command, the Kurdistan regional Prime Minister Dr. Barham Salih stated that the experience of self-governance in the Kurdistan region is successful and fruitful such that it can serve as a model for a future Iraq. In his remarks the PM referred to possible dramatic developments in the region, which require from all sides to be fully prepared with a unified Kurdish political platform to safeguard national interest in order to achieve permanent and comprehensive peace through fulfilling all the obligations undertaken in the Washington Peace Agreement.

Dr. Salih added that strengthening the Kurdistan governance model, especially in the economic sphere and the building of civic institutions to provide public services to the citizens, would demonstrate to the world that our people of Kurdistan are fully capable of governing themselves under the rule of law. "This will surely be a suitable model for future democratic Iraq", he said.

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The northern Iraq quandary

Feb. 26, 2002 Hürriyet (from TDN Press Scanner)
by Sedat Ergin

Disclosing his impressions of a recent visit to northern Iraq, Hugh Pope, head of the Istanbul office of the Wall Street Journal, indicates that the Kurds in northern Iraq do not exactly favor a potential U.S. military intervention in northern Iraq. Massoud Barzani, the most powerful figure in northern Iraq, explains the reason in the following manner: "We cannot be a party to any project that would endanger our acquisitions to date."

Iraqi Kurds have a significant condition to support such a scenario: An official nature must be given to the existing de facto autonomous structure. Pope writes that the United States is not making that concession to the Iraqi Kurds because Turkey is opposing that. Iraqi Kurds are obviously happy with the status quo since it enables them to "protect and enhance their acquisitions." The central Iraqi government's failure to rule over northern Iraq, Saddam Hussein's sitting in Baghdad helplessly, serves the Iraqi Kurds' interests.

Turkey is upset by this process, seeing this as something leading to an independent Kurdish state. However, wary of alienating the United States, it cannot take steps to bring this process to a halt.

This deadlock enables the Iraqi Kurds to bolster the institutions they have created the way they like.

According to Pope, one of the major steps being taken by the autonomous Kurdish administration in northern Iraq is aimed at "defining the Kurdish culture." In this context, efforts are being made to unify the various dialects of Kurdish. Karwant Akray, a Kurdistan Satellite TV channel executive, says, "For the first time, all Kurds are able to understand one another."

Last year alone, 250 books were reportedly published in Kurdish in the region. Meanwhile, "A Dictionary of Administrative Terms" has been prepared. This is a hitherto unneeded kind of terminology.

One of the leading publishers, Badran Hasib, says: "The language is gaining more depth and becoming more beautiful. Now we are not as scared as we were in the past. We are laying down the foundations of a state."

At this point, Ankara is faced with yet another quandary. Ankara is worried about all these developments in northern Iraq. Ankara thinks that the status quo is taking shape in favor of the kind of formation the continuation of which Ankara does not desire. At the same time, Ankara is trying to persuade the United States not to stage a military operation against Iraq's Saddam Hussein. Yet, seen from the opposite direction, it is obvious that the United States' remaining idle in the face of Saddam Hussein, too is causing a continuation of the status quo. This dilemma is clearly putting a strain on Ankara.

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International Herald Tribune
Monday, February 25, 2002

Any strike on Iraq by U.S. may be a year away

By Walter Pincus
and Karen DeYoung

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON: Despite rhetoric from the Bush administration indicating that a military move against Iraq could be imminent, the military reality is that it could take a year before the United States is ready to launch a coordinated assault likely to destroy Iraq's potential for weapons of mass destruction and replace Saddam Hussein.

According to testimony and interviews with senior administration and Pentagon officials, foreign diplomats and nongovernment analysts, depleted arms stocks, demands on ships and aircraft in the Afghan campaign, severe strains on active-duty and reserve forces over the last five months, and the need to obtain regional basing and command-center agreements have imposed an unavoidably lengthy delay.

Pentagon planners say it will take six months to produce enough joint direct attack munitions, the precision systems that guided 1,000-pound (450-kilogram) bombs to Taliban and Al Qaeda targets, to contemplate an attack on Saddam's Iraq.

Despite its tough verbal offensive, and remaining divisions between Pentagon and State Department leaders, sources said, the White House believes that complete success in any campaign against Iraq is far more crucial than the need to act quickly.

Beyond the resource demands of the military, conditions inside Iraq and the surrounding region are still far from optimal. And much of the rest of the world, including countries whose support is seen as critical, remains skeptical or openly hostile to a direct attack.

In recognition of these realities, the administration has developed a strategy of short- and long-term

actions designed to ensure that all the elements it sees as necessary for success eventually will converge.

Many of the initial military steps are well under way, based on a working assumption that an attack would begin with a massive air assault on Iraqi anti-aircraft defenses and known weapons sites, ideally guided by friendly forces on the ground. This would be followed by the entry of major units of U.S. troops, equipped to withstand chemical or biological weapons attacks.

"Our objectives in Iraq can only be met with forces on the ground," said an official inside the Pentagon with long experience on policy and planning issues. "We can't inspect chemical weapons facilities from the air."

In addition to accelerated weapons production, planners are immersed in assessing manpower and equipment and basing needs, factoring in variables including the Afghan operation and the possibility that new crises, at home or in places such as the Middle East, the Philippines and Colombia, could divert attention and resources.

On the diplomatic front, the administration is working with Russia and other Security Council members to adjust United Nations sanctions to mute criticism that they are too harmful to the Iraqi people. It is also orchestrating increased pressure on Saddam to comply with a range of UN resolutions, including allowing UN inspectors to examine suspected chemical, biological and nuclear weapons sites.

The assumption is that either Saddam will acquiesce, something the administration views as unlikely, or his continued refusal will help convince the world that peaceful options have been exhausted.

Vice President Dick Cheney's tour of 11 countries in the region next month is designed so that he can listen to the concerns of government leaders, assure them that no precipitous action will be taken, demonstrate that the United States is putting in place a comprehensive, workable plan and ask their advice and assistance while emphasizing the seriousness of U.S. intent.

Virtually every country in the region has publicly opposed a U.S. military attack on Iraq. Their leaders say privately they would be happy to wake up one morning and find Saddam gone. But many recall that they have been recruited into past, half-hearted U.S. efforts that not only left him in place, but

made things worse.

Even as they acknowledge the truth of these complaints, U.S. officials are sometimes exasperated.

"Cheney wants to hear them out, and tell them what's going on," said a senior official. But such discussions, he said, "are always a challenge. If we say we want to listen to what they think, they accuse us of having no plan. If we give them a plan, they complain we never consult them."

Cheney's hosts are likely to point out the absence in the administration's planning of any clear idea of what would replace the Saddam regime. The White House has instructed a long-skeptical State Department and CIA to step up contacts with leading Iraqi opposition groups.

So far, that effort has proceeded on a somewhat less energetic timetable than other aspects of the strategy.

The expatriate-led Iraqi National Congress, the Kurds in northern Iraq and the Shiite population in the south are nominally allied under a broad opposition umbrella. But Kurdish spokesmen have said in recent weeks that they are reluctant to signing on to a U.S. plan without absolute assurance of success, and that no one has yet asked them to. The head of the London office of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the only credible armed group among southern Shiites, said that nothing had changed in their arms-length relationship with the United States.

Although a long-testy relationship between the Iraqi National Congress and the State Department has improved in recent weeks, the administration has continued to reject the group's demands for military training and money to begin operations inside Iraq. Both U.S. and Iraqi National Congress officials, however, said that a conference of former Iraqi military officers living in exile, planned for March in Washington, was a sign of progress.

Meanwhile, the CIA has continued its long-term covert operations to undermine Saddam and foment a coup from inside the military, a plan agency officials say is enhanced by increased UN pressure combined with the ongoing buildup of U.S. forces in the area.

La Turquie perd sa Mère Courage

L'éditrice turque Ayché Nour Zarakolu est décédée le 28 janvier, emportée par un cancer à l'âge de 56 ans. Après avoir surmonté bien des épreuves, cette femme d'exception a été vaincue par la maladie : elle laisse un grand vide dans le petit monde des intellectuels turcs qui ont fait de la défense des droits des minorités leur combat quotidien.

Fondatrice avec son époux Ragip de l'Association des droits de l'Homme de Turquie, Ayché Nour Zarakolu ouvre sa maison d'édition dès sa sortie de l'Université. Au travers de plus de 400 titres, elle luttera pour faire connaître la vérité en Turquie, que ce soit sur les persécutions subies par les Kurdes d'Anatolie ces dernières années, ou sur le sort réservé aux Arméniens au début du 20^{ème} siècle.

C'est ainsi que sera publié par les époux Zarakolu la traduction en langue turque de l'ouvrage de Franz Werfel, "Les 40 jours du Moussa Dag". Cette initiative unique en Turquie sera suivie au milieu des années 90 d'un pari encore plus audacieux : éditer le premier livre en turc sur le génocide arménien. Ce sera "Les Arméniens, histoire d'un génocide" d'Yves Ternon, qui sera publié sous un titre ô combien évocateur : "Le tabou arménien". Ce livre toujours interdit en Turquie, vaudra à Ayché Nour Zarakolu un nouveau séjour en prison, où son combat en faveur des minorités la conduira plusieurs fois. Là elle connaîtra les pires traitements, "sans que ces mesures n'entament son opiniâtre volonté" rappelle la FRA Dashnaksoutioun-Europe Occidentale, qui salue la mémoire de cette femme d'exception.

Un hommage partagé par l'ADL-Ramgavar, qui rappelle "la bravoure" dont a fait preuve Ayché Nour Zarakolu "en soutenant en Turquie la cause des opprimés". Pour l'UCFAF, "c'est avec des femmes et des hommes de sa trempe que la Turquie connaîtra un jour la démocratie".

Celle que les médias français avait surnommé "la Mère Courage turque" avait noué des liens



Ayché Nour Zarakolu près de son mari Ragip

étroits avec le président du CRDA, lors de sa venue en France avec son époux et dans le cadre de conférences organisées notamment en Allemagne. "Cette enfant d'Anatolie, Turque d'origine, a sauvé par son courage l'honneur et la conscience de son peuple" estime Jean-Claude Kebabdjian. "Mais pas celui de son pays qui refuse la reconnaissance officielle du crime passé" déplore-t-il.

Ayché Nour Zarakolu faisait partie de cette petite frange de l'intelligentsia turque qui estime qu'admettre la vérité rend plus fort, et que pour avancer et progresser un peuple a besoin d'être en paix avec son passé. Son engagement en faveur de la mémoire arménienne, les risques qu'elle prendra pour faire connaître au plus grand nombre la réalité du génocide, n'auront peut-être pas été appréciés à leur juste valeur par la diaspora, peu habituée aux gestes de bonne volonté en provenance de Turquie. Les livres édités par Ayché Nour Zarakolu ont pourtant incontestablement ouvert une brèche et depuis les initiatives en faveur du dialogue arméno-turc se sont multipliées.

Et comme un clin d'œil à son engagement, ses obsèques ont eu lieu le 1^{er} février dans la mos-

quée située juste en face de l'Hôpital arménien Sourp Perguitch d'Istanbul.

● NATACHA ZORTIAN

Message de Jean-Paul Bret, Député-Maire de Villeurbanne

A l'occasion du 50^{ème} anniversaire de la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'Homme, je l'avais reçue à l'Assemblée nationale en compagnie de son mari, Ragip, militant comme elle. Je me souviendrai longtemps de la réunion que j'avais organisée dans l'enceinte du palais Bourbon entre des représentants de la communauté arménienne de France et Ayché Nour et Ragip Zarakolu, couple courageux, engagé sur le territoire turc pour la reconnaissance du génocide arménien. J'avais eu le sentiment de vivre un temps hors du commun marqué par l'amitié, l'espoir, la simplicité des échanges, l'humilité de cette femme et de cet homme pas comme les autres. Nous perdons aujourd'hui un compagnon d'espérances.

Relations France-Turquie

Il y a un an, la Turquie considérait quasiment la France comme son ennemi n°1 pour avoir reconnu le génocide des Arméniens. Depuis, la realpolitik et quelques satisfactions diplomatiques l'ont ramenée à de meilleures intentions.

france arménie numéro 219 février 2002



Le ministre de la Défense Alain Richard aux côtés de son homologue turc Sabahattin Cakmakoglu

Chantage à la force européenne

Si le gouvernement turc a vite compris qu'il n'était pas dans son intérêt de se brouiller durablement avec l'un des membres les plus influents de l'Union européenne et bien en cour auprès des grands argentiers internationaux, il a la rancune tenace et trouve matière à titiller encore Paris à travers un des grands dossiers communautaires, la force de réaction rapide de 60 000 hommes qui doit être mise en place à partir de 2003. Les Quinze souhaitent utiliser la logistique de l'OTAN, ce que les Turcs, membres de l'Alliance atlantique, refusent d'accorder systématiquement. Ils exigent un examen des missions au cas par cas, ce qui lui permettrait de disposer d'un droit de veto sur les décisions militaires de l'Union sans en faire partie : Une attitude jugée "contre-productive" au quai d'Orsay et qui a fortement déplu à Hubert Védrine : "La Turquie ne devrait pas tenter de ralentir la mise en place de la politique européenne de défense et devrait employer des moyens plus européens pour défendre ses thèses". Ankara finira par lâcher à la veille du sommet européen de Laeken les 14 et 15 décembre, non sans avoir obtenu la garantie d'être plus largement consulté sur la question.

Le pouvoir militaire turc avait aussi pu constater avec satisfaction au fil des mois que l'Etat français maintenait ses distances avec la loi du 29 janvier (ni Jacques Chirac, ni aucun ministre de l'équipe Jospin n'emploient le mot "génocide" dans leurs discours). Les conditions semblent réunies pour renouer avec la France. Dès le 4 décembre, le sous-secrétariat aux industries de Défense reprend contact avec Thalès pour l'équipement de neuf avions de patrouille maritime espagnols CN-325 Casa. Le projet d'installation de système de navigation sur 80 chasseurs américains F-16 est également relancé. Mais c'est Alcatel, particulièrement malmené il y a un an, qui décroche le 2 janvier le premier contrat de l'après-crise en obtenant d'Aycell, filiale de téléphonie mobile de Turk Telecom, l'extension et l'amélioration de son réseau GSM. Les entreprises hexagonales sont à nouveau les bienvenues, mais Ankara n'a pas résisté au plaisir de se payer la tête des Français une dernière fois en annulant définitivement le marché sur les F-16... 48 heures après la visite d'Alain Richard. La Turquie pardonne peut-être, mais n'oublie pas vite. **CHRISTOPHE DIREMSZIAN**

(1) Source : Service d'expansion économique de l'ambassade de France en Turquie.

Cette fois, la glace a presque complètement fondu. Le ministre de la Défense Alain Richard en est convaincu, de retour de son déplacement à Ankara les 24 et 25 janvier dernier où il a notamment rencontré le Premier ministre Bülent Ecevit. Son alter ego turc, Sabahattin Cakmakoglu, l'en a persuadé : "Cette visite est destinée à améliorer les choses après la période de stagnation et de retards que nous venons de traverser". Formule toute diplomatique pour résumer l'année noire des marchands de canons français en Turquie, mis sur la touche, comme d'autres secteurs, sur décision d'autorités furieuses de la reconnaissance du génocide de 1915. Un comportement plus proche de la tartuferie que la conséquence d'une vraie blessure d'orgueil.

Officiellement, la bouderie est terminée depuis décembre. Sur le plan diplomatique, elle n'avait véritablement duré que quatre mois. Aussitôt le vote du 18 janvier acquis au Parlement, l'ambassadeur turc à Paris, Sonmez Koksali, reprenait l'avion pour Ankara pour consultations. Il fera discrètement le chemin inverse dès le 11 mai. Premier signe de détente. Mais il reste les rétorsions commerciales : des dizaines de contrats avec Alcatel, Thalès, Bouygues et GIAT-Industries suspendus ou dont les appels d'offres ont été subitement annulés. Démonstration de force d'un colosse... aux pieds d'argile. En décembre 2000, la

Turquie plongeait dans la pire de ses crises financières depuis l'après-guerre : le PIB a dégringolé de 11,8 % au premier trimestre 2001, la production industrielle est en chute libre, le système bancaire, très lié aux partis politiques, est malade et la livre ne vaut plus rien. Le pays est contraint de se serrer la ceinture et de réduire les gros projets. Pour ceux envisagés avec la France, la loi sur le génocide a fourni dans certains cas un bon prétexte.

Les industriels français, cinquièmes clients et fournisseurs mondiaux de la Turquie, s'inquiètent de la tournure des événements. Les chiffres corroborent leurs craintes : les Turcs importent 28,7 % de moins de produits hexagonaux au premier semestre 2001 par rapport à la même période de 2000 (1). Il est donc urgent de refaire ami-ami avec de gros clients potentiels, d'où la venue du 12 au 14 juillet à Ankara d'une délégation de patrons emmenée par le président du MEDEF Ernest-Antoine Sellière et Louis Schweitzer, le PDG de Renault, implanté depuis 32 ans en Turquie. Ils servent d'éclaireurs à la première visite politique de haut niveau depuis la crise, celle d'Hubert Védrine les 26 et 27 juillet. C'est le tournant symbolique, mais il restera sans effets immédiats. Le ministre turc des Affaires étrangères, İsmail Cem, a prévenu : "Il existe une décision gouvernementale (sur les sanctions envers les achats d'armes françaises) et elle ne changera pas".

WHAT WILL TURKEY TOLERATE?

As it promotes global harmony, the country faces deep internal conflicts over freedom of expression

By MARYANN BIRD

FOR TURKEY, A COUNTRY THAT HAS long prided itself on being a bridge between East and West, the clash of civilizations begins at home. Two gatherings in Istanbul last week, held about a kilometer apart, again brought into sharp juxtaposition the external role that Turkey craves and the internal realities of a country struggling to improve the quality of its democracy. Both meetings, in their own way, emphasized the duality of a nation that desperately wants to be accepted into Europe, yet finds itself rebuffed time and again—in large measure because of its notoriously poor human-rights record.

On the grounds of a former Ottoman palace overlooking the Bosphorus, member nations of the European Union and the Organization of the Islamic Conference met in the first-ever O.I.C.-E.U. Joint Forum, initiated by Turkey in the aftermath of Sept. 11 “to promote understanding and harmony among civilizations.” Some 70 nations took part, including Iran and Iraq, two points on Washington’s “axis of evil.” As Turkish officials led their guests in discussing tolerance, appreciation of cultural diversity and the understanding of different perceptions and values, the nearby State Security Court was hearing the latest freedom-of-expression cases on its docket.

There, in a trial that vied with the forum for global attention, the 22-year-old proprietor and editor of the Aram publishing house, Fatih Tas, stood accused of disseminating propaganda against the unity of the Turkish state. The charge is often leveled against those who question Turkey’s treatment of its estimated 12 million Kurds (among a total population of 65 million). Tas’ “crime” was to publish material critical of Turkey in *American Interventionism*, a collection of essays by Noam



Chomsky, the renowned American linguistics professor and longtime thorn in the side of U.S. policymakers. Tas avoided conviction and a year in prison, observers agree, mainly because Chomsky had flown into Istanbul to stand by his side, prompting the prosecutor—in the glare of negative publicity—to throw in the towel.

There’s a growing belief that the Turkish judiciary itself is now on trial. If the political leadership, which has been flirting with reform, avoids setting strict criteria for positive change, many feel, judges will be left to interpret the laws as they see fit—and not necessarily in ways that will help

Turkey on its path to E.U. membership. “Law is not local anymore,” says Vahit Bicak, who lectures on human rights at the Ankara Police Academy. “We are part of an international legal system and must have respect for global values.”

Earlier this month, Turkey’s multiparty parliament amended key articles of the criminal code whose purpose, civil-rights advocates have long argued, was to limit legitimate freedom of expression. Approved despite the fierce objections of conservative legislators, the changes include reduction of sentences for insulting branches of the Turkish state (including the courts and the military). The changes also make it



EXPERT WITNESS U.S. foreign-policy critic Noam Chomsky, above, provides moral support for accused publisher Fatih Tas, foreground. The charges against Tas were dismissed

DISSENT STIFLED With human rights a highly charged issue in Turkey, the authorities are quick to break up any unauthorized protest marches, left

more difficult to prosecute cases under article 312 of the penal code, under which it is an offense to incite hatred based on class, race, religion or region. That catchall clause has been used to pursue anyone expressing pro-Kurdish or politically Islamic views. Excluded from the legal revisions, however, are the implementation of such highly sensitive steps as allowing Kurdish-language broadcasting and abolishing the death penalty for terrorism and treason.

Human-rights activists and others believe the new legislation merely reflects Turkish officials’ attempts to conform to E.U. norms without changing the spirit of

how laws are applied. There is a prevailing sense in Turkey that laws exist to protect a "sacred" state from irrational individuals, rather than to protect individuals from possible arbitrary actions by the state. "It's up to the courts to interpret the laws in accordance with Turkey's commitment to join the European Union and to abide by the European Court of Human Rights," says Jonathan Sugden of Human Rights Watch. That view appears to be shared, unofficially, by E.U. diplomats. While seeing Tas' acquittal as a positive step, Sugden is not sure whether judges will now routinely refuse to convict in freedom-of-expression cases. For Turkey, that would be a big step on the long road to Europe.

According to the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey, scores of people were convicted in freedom-of-expression cases last year. Twenty-eight television and 32 radio stations were obliged to cease broadcasting for a total of 3,786 days. The day before Chomsky arrived in Turkey, a local radio station in Diyarbakir, capital of the southeastern Kurdish region, was ordered off the air for a year for playing Kurdish music that had an ideological content. Fifty books were removed from store shelves in 2001, and a number of Kurdish musical cassettes were banned. (While a constitutional amendment allowing Kurdish broadcasts was approved in October, relevant laws have not yet been rewritten.)

In most freedom-of-expression cases, the alleged offense was more flagrant than the Chomsky text that propelled Tas into court. In that March 2001 lecture, entitled "Prospects for Peace in the Middle East" and delivered in Toledo, Ohio, the U.S. academic referred to Turkey's crackdown on its Kurdish population as "one of the most severe human-rights atrocities of the 1990s, continuing in fact." Chomsky also laid much of the blame for the deaths of tens of thousands of Kurds and the destruction of their villages—in "massive ethnic cleansing"—at the feet of the U.S., which provided Turkey with the military wherewithal to suppress the Kurds.

With the world's television cameras trained on them as their country hosted the forum on harmony among civilizations, the three-man state-security tribunal accepted Tas' defense—that he had intended only to "contribute to academic debate." In Turkey, that is no small victory. —*Reported by Andrew Finkel/Istanbul*

HUNGER STRIKES

"Death Is the Only Solution"

When Bobby Sands and nine other Irish hunger strikers starved themselves to death 21 years ago, they caught the attention of much of the world. The first of the Irish republicans to die in the seven-month protest over conditions inside their Northern Irish prison, Sands had refused food and medical attention for 66 days. Although the grisly deaths led to heightened political tensions back in 1981, historians say the hunger strikes also helped to pave the way for the emergence of Sinn Féin as a major political force in Northern Ireland—and for the current peace process.

But what will the deaths of Cengiz Soydas and his—so far—44 Turkish comrades come to mean? Soydas died last March, on the 150th day of a prison "death fast" begun in October 2000. A 29-year-old university student who had been sentenced to 15 years in prison for membership in a violent leftist organization, Soydas was the first to die. Other

Istanbul Bar Association: "Both sides have decided that death is the only solution." Local journalists say the public has lost heart and lost interest in the "death fast" and its cultish embrace of morbidity. The strikers appear to have mastered the science of dying, taking liquid and vitamins at a rate that permits them to waste away at an incredibly slow rate. As death approaches, supportive "carers" comfort them and encourage their families to accept the legitimacy of the protest tactic.

The strike began in opposition to the proposed transfer of prisoners accused or convicted under Turkey's antiterrorism law from large, dormitory-style facilities to new single- or triple-bunk cells. The authorities reasoned that they could better maintain order and discipline by reducing the exposure of supporters of the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front—known as the DHKP/C—to other inmates and to each other. However, the prisoners expressed fear of being moved to smaller

cells, even in new, more comfortable buildings. The relative isolation, they argued, would leave them at the mercy of their jailers, who could more easily bully or torture them. There is safety in numbers, the inmates said, and they were prepared to die to protect themselves in a prison system riddled with injustice.

That decision foreshadowed a series of violent, related incidents, including the security forces' quashing of protests throughout the prison system and the forcible transfer of inmates to the new "F-type" facilities. In the worst clashes, in December 2000, 30 prisoners and two guards were killed. In other incidents,

two former inmates blew themselves up in suicide attacks on police, while family members and other sympathizers joined the "death fast." With the toll of fatalities inching upward and no resolution in sight, the government ponders its options as it continues to pursue reforms that it hopes will please the E.U. "People don't have a right to die," says Justice Minister Hikmet Sami Turk, who is responsible for the country's prisons. Like many in Turkey, he sees the hunger strikes themselves as a kind of terror. —*M.B. and A.F.*



VICTORY? Hunger striker Hulya Simsek, one of 45 protesters who have died in the two-year standoff

prisoners and some outside supporters joined him in protest and, later, in death. According to the Turkish Justice Ministry, slightly more than 100 people are now on hunger strike in a dozen prisons.

In contrast to the Irish situation, many potential peacemakers are themselves filled with despair. "There is so much ill will that neither side believes compromise is possible," says Orhan Pamuk, a prominent novelist who had offered his services as a negotiator in late 2000. Echoed Yucel Sayman, head of the

En 1991, les Etats-Unis n'avaient pas osé renverser le maître de Bagdad. Mais aujourd'hui, les conditions géopolitiques sont réunies pour une intervention.

Bush prêt à «châtier» Saddam

par FRANÇOIS LAFARGUE

Voici onze ans, arrivée aux portes de Bagdad, l'armée américaine avait épargné Saddam Hussein, pourtant qualifié par George Bush père de «nouveau Hitler». Un argument juridique fut invoqué par Washington, les résolutions des Nations unies n'autorisaient pas le renversement du despote irakien. Cette mansuétude américaine répondait surtout à des impératifs stratégiques. Aux yeux des Etats-Unis, la partition de l'Irak constituait une sérieuse menace pour leurs intérêts dans la région. Et seul Saddam Hussein était en mesure de maintenir l'intangibilité des frontières de son pays.

La population de l'Irak est divisée en trois composantes principales, les Arabes sunnites (20 %), les Arabes chiïtes (55 %) et les Kurdes (25 %). Les Kurdes, qui se soulevèrent en février 1991, poursuivaient alors l'idée de proclamer un Etat indépendant au nord de l'Irak. Une modification frontalière loin d'être anodine. Situé au nord de l'Irak, ce Kurdistan aurait englobé d'importants gisements de pétrole (notamment les puits de Mossoul et de Kirkouk). Une manne financière qui aurait permis de financer et d'aider les autres mouvements kurdes qui combattent dans la région, principalement dans la partie orientale de la Turquie. Le virus de la fragmentation risquait de se propager dans ce pays. L'intégrité territoriale de la Turquie méritait aux yeux de Washington de sacrifier ces rêves d'un Etat kurde. La Turquie, première armée au sein de l'Alliance atlantique après celle des Etats-Unis, constitue une alliée militaire indispensable (ce pays contrôle les accès de la mer Noire, mais également offre à l'Amérique des bases militaires comme celle d'Incirlik et les stations d'écoute en direction du Caucase).

Aux yeux des Etats-Unis, la partition de l'Irak constituait une menace pour leurs intérêts dans la région. Cette partition n'est plus à craindre.

delà des querelles théologiques entre sunnites et chiïtes, la différence principale sur le plan politique réside dans le rôle reconnu à l'Arabie Saoudite. Les chiïtes dans leur ensemble nient la légitimité de la famille Saoud qui se considère comme gardienne des lieux saints de l'Islam. L'Arabie Saoudite fut donc l'un des principaux

avocats en 1990 du maintien au pouvoir de Saddam Hussein.

Pourtant aujourd'hui, les philippiques de George W. Bush traduisent une profonde inflexion de la stratégie américaine. Simple rhétorique guerrière de l'Amérique? Ou bien les Etats-Unis sont-ils décidés à se débarrasser de Saddam Hussein? Et pourquoi maintenant? Pour le moment, l'opposition irakienne reste morcelée et n'offre guère d'alternative crédible. En outre, aucune preuve à ce jour n'a été apportée de l'implication du régime irakien dans les attentats de New York. Mais plusieurs éléments peuvent permettre de comprendre l'attitude de Washington.

En douceur, Saddam Hussein fait un retour sur la scène internationale. Si la tendance se confirme, cette année, l'Irak exportera une quantité de pétrole (560 millions de barils) correspondant aux deux tiers à la production de 1990. Certes, une partie de ces revenus est placée sur des comptes séquestres gérés par l'ONU, mais la machine de guerre se remet en état grâce aux exportations illicites d'hydrocarbure. L'embargo international n'a pas eu les effets escomptés. Ni les milliers de victimes, ni les sanctions commerciales n'ont fait fléchir Saddam Hussein. L'Irak sort à petits pas de son isolement. Washington profite de sa croisade contre «l'axe du Mal» pour rectifier son erreur.

La conjoncture politique au Moyen-Orient s'avère temporairement favorable. Le prince Abdallah en Arabie Saoudite, qui assure la régence, n'est pas en mesure actuellement de s'opposer à Washington. L'image du royaume dont étaient originaires quinze des dix-neuf terroristes a été suffisamment ternie par les attentats du 11 septembre. Pourtant, rien n'est plus incertain que l'évolution politique et dynastique de l'Arabie Saoudite. Dans quelques années, une opération militaire d'envergure contre l'Irak ne pourra sans doute plus être aussi aisément.

Depuis dix ans, l'opposition chiïte et kurde a été violemment réprimée. Aux milliers de morts du printemps 1991, s'ajoutent depuis lors les assassinats de dignitaires religieux. Ces deux communautés ont perdu une partie de leur force et de leur encadrement politique et religieux. Surtout, l'Irak irakien n'est plus vacillant comme au printemps 1991. Un successeur de Saddam Hussein, issu probablement des rangs de l'armée, aurait davantage de facilités à s'imposer auprès de la population exsangue et d'une armée désorientée. Au sein de l'administration Bush, les personnalités les plus modérées comme Colin Powell ont été marginalisées depuis la crise afghane. Les plus vindicatifs, comme Dick Cheney ou Donald Rumsfeld, ont sans doute achevé de convaincre George W. Bush que l'heure du châtime était arrivée ●

François Lafargue, docteur en géopolitique enseigne à l'université de Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines et au Paris Group School of Management. Auteur de «Irak, dix ans de chaos» (1999, Atelier de géopolitique).

Les Kurdes d'Irak restent prudents

CONFLIT Les dirigeants de la région autonome kurde, dans le nord de l'Irak, ne sont pas pressés de se soulever contre Saddam Hussein, échaudés par de précédents « lâchages » américains, en 1975 et en 1991



Mai 1991, camp de réfugiés kurdes dans le nord de l'Irak. Des milliers de civils avaient été tués par l'armée irakienne réprimant une révolte de la population kurde, beaucoup d'autres s'étaient réfugiés dans les montagnes.

Dans sa campagne contre « l'axe du mal » et en prévision d'une éventuelle attaque contre l'Irak, le gouvernement américain a envoyé en décembre au Kurdistan irakien une délégation de personnalités officielles. Washington ne peut pas négliger cette enclave quasi autonome dans le cas d'une éventuelle attaque contre Bagdad qui déstabiliserait son fragile équilibre.

Ce territoire du nord de l'Irak abrite aujourd'hui quelque 3,6 millions de Kurdes irakiens vivant *de facto* sous un régime d'autonomie depuis la guerre du Golfe. En mars 1991, après avoir été lâchement abandonnés par les États-Unis qui avaient poussé les populations ci-

viles à se révolter contre le régime de Saddam Hussein, ceux-ci connurent l'un des épisodes les plus dramatiques de leur existence. Quelque 4 000 villages furent rasés et des milliers de civils massacrés. Les survivants cherchèrent refuge dans les montagnes et vécurent dans des conditions dramatiques de froid et de famine jusqu'à ce que la communauté internationale leur vienne en aide.

Prise de remords, celle-ci a financé de 1991 à 1994 la reconstruction des infrastructures de cette région. Le Kurdistan irakien bénéficie aussi, depuis, de la protection aérienne anglo-américaine qui la met à l'abri de toute nouvelle tentative de bombardement par des ap-

pareils irakiens.

Enfin, depuis la mise en place début 1996 par les Nations unies du programme « Pétrole contre nourriture » par lequel l'Irak est autorisé à vendre son pétrole pour acheter des aliments et des médicaments, le Kurdistan irakien se voit allouer 13 % du produit de la vente de ce pétrole. « C'est l'âge d'or. La situation n'a jamais été aussi bonne pour les Kurdes depuis quatre mille ans », s'est récemment exclamée, euphorique, Nasreen Mustafa Sadeek, ministre de la reconstruction de la région kurde d'Irak.

Aujourd'hui, le Kurdistan d'Irak est une région stabilisée où les vieilles rivalités entre les deux leaders politiques kurdes, Massoud Barzani, leader du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan, et Jalal Talabani, dirigeant de l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan, se sont apaisées. Les Nations unies reconnaissent que des réalisations significatives ont été accomplies dans de nombreux domaines, et particulièrement la santé. La mortalité infantile a chuté, l'éducation publique s'étend dans le primaire et le secondaire, trois universités offrent des cours en arabe et en langue kurde dans un vaste domaine de matières. Le réseau Internet est largement développé, comme les chaînes de télévision.

Le Kurdistan, entouré de la Turquie, de la Syrie et de l'Iran, est stratégiquement important si Washington veut y positionner de l'infanterie. Mais ce regain d'intérêt américain met les autorités locales mal à l'aise. « Nous ne participons à aucun projet qui mettra en danger ce que nous avons accompli », affirme Massoud Barzani.

« Cela fait onze ans que les Américains veulent se débarrasser de Saddam Hussein. On est pour l'ouverture de l'Irak, mais pas au prix du sacrifice de notre population », renchérit Saywan Barzani, représentant à Paris du gouvernement du Kurdistan irakien.

L'indépendance n'est même plus un souhait

Les Kurdes d'Irak ont encore en mémoire le coût payé par les leurs en 1991, mais aussi en 1975, lorsqu'ils abritèrent — déjà — les Américains qui appuyaient une tentative de soulèvement en Irak qui échoua. Ils ne se lanceront pas dans l'aventure sans l'assurance publique que les États-Unis, cette fois, iront jusqu'au bout. C'est-à-dire à renverser Saddam Hussein. Ils réclament aussi la promesse que les Américains les aideront à formaliser l'actuelle autonomie dont ils bénéficient. « Nous ne voulons pas l'indépendance. Nous voulons faire partie d'un Irak souverain, indépendant et démocratique, dans lequel nous serions une région fédérale », poursuit Saywan Barzani.

La défense, les affaires étrangères et les finances seraient réservées au pouvoir central.

En donnant satisfaction aux Kurdes d'Irak, les États-Unis prendraient le risque de fâcher leur principal allié dans la région : la Turquie. Ce qu'ils ne peuvent pas faire. Ankara ne veut pas entendre parler d'autonomie kurde à ses frontières alors qu'elle rechigne à reconnaître les droits culturels de sa propre population kurde, forte de 12 à 15 millions de personnes. Un régime d'autonomie donné aux Kurdes d'Irak ne risquerait-il pas de faire aussi tache d'huile en Iran et en Syrie, pays qui abritent une population kurde rêvant de séparatisme, et de déstabiliser tout le Moyen-Orient ?

« Le Kurdistan irakien est un paradoxe vivant », écrit Gérard Chaliand, spécialiste de cette région. « Il est internationalement protégé et se développe parce que le régime de Saddam Hussein, son pire ennemi, continue à exister. En effet, tant qu'il reste au pouvoir, la situation des Kurdes d'Irak sera stable. »

Agnès ROTIVEL

Saddam Hussein affirme vouloir mettre la science au service de l'humanité

■ Le président irakien Saddam Hussein a affirmé samedi que son pays ne cherchait pas à se doter d'armes de destruction massive. « Votre pays ne cherche pas à entrer dans le club (des États dotés) d'armes de destruction massive, a-t-il déclaré en recevant des responsables irakiens de l'énergie nucléaire. Votre pays cherche à mettre la science au service de l'humanité et à faire le bonheur de l'homme. » Le ministre saoudien de l'intérieur Nayef ben Abdel Aziz a exprimé, le même jour, l'opposition de son pays à une éventuelle frappe américaine contre l'Irak. Les États-Unis ont prévenu une nouvelle fois avant-hier que le statu quo actuel en Irak n'était pas acceptable, mais qu'une attaque mili-

taire américaine contre Bagdad n'était pas imminente. « Je peux vous assurer que le président (George W. Bush) n'a pris aucune décision quant au recours à la force contre l'Irak », a déclaré sa conseillère pour la sécurité nationale, Condoleezza Rice. Le président irakien Saddam Hussein « a attaqué ses voisins à deux reprises et gazé son propre peuple, a-t-elle expliqué. C'est un régime très mauvais et le monde se portera mieux et sera plus sûr lorsqu'il ne sera plus là. » Elle a confirmé que Washington comptait « absolument » resserrer le volet militaire du régime des sanctions économiques contre Bagdad, lors de l'examen de la question, en mai, par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU.

Interesting times are likely ■ By Gareth Evans

Iraq and the UN Security Council

SINGAPORE

Until very recently, war between states seemed a much less real threat than internal conflict. Interstate conflict had become rare and seemed likely to remain so. The ideology that saw virtue and nobility in war had all but disappeared in advanced countries.

Globalization was making national borders ever less important. And the united international response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait gave further pause to those thinking that territorial aggression might be cost-effective.

Recent events have made it impossible to be so optimistic. Just a few weeks ago, India and Pakistan were much closer to the brink of all-out war than has generally been recognized.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will continue to hover on the brink so long as resumption of serious political negotiations is made hostage to the last ex-

tremist on either side. And a number of other trouble spots, not least in East Asia, depend on the retention of very cool heads on all sides.

But a different phenomenon is now capturing most attention — war between states being waged for self-defense purposes, as permitted under Article 51 of the UN Charter in response to armed attack.

America's short and devastating campaign against Afghanistan for harboring Al Qaeda was a totally justifiable response of this kind, and not seriously controversial in the international community.

What will be extremely controversial, however, is any extension of that self-defense reasoning to justify war waged unilaterally against other countries perceived to be a threat to the United States or its allies.

That specter was raised by President George W. Bush's State of the Union address calling Iraq, Iran and North Korea "an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world."

Thus yoked together as immediate potential targets were three regimes which, however unlovely, are not alone in weapons proliferation or in sponsoring terrorism; are not a united axis in any obvious sense; are not equally culpable in their past actions; are not equally uncooperative in their present behavior; and do not require anything like the same unnuanced strategy to get them to behave consistently better in the future.

Immediately after this address came a presidential budget request for a defense spending increase of \$48 billion. The increase alone is larger than the total military budget of any other country in the world, and would bring U.S. military spending to 40 percent of the global total, double the U.S. share of global GDP.

This is a breathtaking, but not illogical, product of the new U.S. doctrine that assesses defense needs in terms of others' capability, not in terms of the actual threat they pose.

It is not surprising that international, and even domestic, applause for the new U.S. policy has been less than tumultuous. Nor that there has been something of a scramble in Washington recently to disentangle the three "evil axis" countries and make clear that it is only really Iraq that is in the gunights in the reasonably foreseeable future.

But in Iraq's case the prospect of major military action is very real indeed, and the international community will have to grapple with it very soon, as a test case for a kind of security issue that may recur in the years ahead.

It is certainly not unreasonable to paint Iraq as a potentially major threat not only to the United States but to international peace and security, given its track record in the production and use of

weapons of mass destruction, its known capability and its suspected intentions.

And it is high time to be demanding some better behavior of it. But the way to deal with the whole issue is through the United Nations Security Council, which exists, and is fully mandated, to deal with precisely such threats.

A big responsibility in this respect lies on those Security Council members who say they are committed to multilateral processes and who find deeply distasteful the U.S. tendency toward unilateralism (an understandable viewpoint). They need to put their money where their mouths are. They should support an ultimatum demanding the return of fully empowered weapons inspectors, and be prepared to follow it through.

If the evidence for strong Security Council action is compelling (and that's a big if), and if credible enforcement action can be identified that improves rather than worsens the overall security environment (a very big if), then that evidence should be acted upon, without the luxury of double standards.

If some major powers are not prepared to make the hard calls, then they will have to accept that others may make them unilaterally.

That is not good for the United Nations, but it is what we might have to live with in times ahead which, in terms of that old Chinese curse, look all too unhappily likely to be "interesting."

The writer, a former foreign minister of Australia, is president of the Brussels-based International Crisis Group. This comment was adapted by the International Herald Tribune from a Feb. 25 address to an Asia-Pacific security conference in Singapore.

Le Monde

28 FÉVRIER 2002

L'Irak cherche à renouer avec l'ONU dans la crainte de frappes américaines

Une rencontre est prévue le 7 mars à New York

NATIONS UNIES (New York)
de notre correspondante

Pour la première fois depuis un an, l'Irak serait prêt à renouer le dialogue avec les Nations unies. C'est aussi la première fois depuis cinq ans qu'un responsable irakien, chargé du dossier du désarmement, devrait accompagner la délégation irakienne attendue à l'ONU.

Selon un porte-parole de l'ONU, la rencontre entre le ministre irakien des affaires étrangères, Naji Sabri, et le secrétaire général de l'ONU, Kofi Annan, aura lieu le 7 mars, à New York. M. Annan espère, a précisé le porte-parole, que cette réunion « sera centrée sur les résolutions du Conseil de sécurité, dont celles portant sur le retour en Irak des inspecteurs du désarmement », retirés le 11 novembre 1998 à la veille des frappes américaines en Irak.

La précédente réunion entre l'ONU et les autorités irakiennes avait eu lieu en février 2001, mais elle s'était rapidement achevée, les Irakiens ayant exigé la levée des sanctions économiques, comme condition préalable à la poursuite du dialogue. Pour l'heure, seule la présence, au sein de la délégation irakienne, d'un responsable chargé

du désarmement « nous envoie un signal vaguement encourageant », a commenté une source proche de M. Annan. « Sa présence traduit-elle une volonté réelle des Irakiens de parler du retour des inspecteurs ? Impossible à dire. »

Par ailleurs, de retour à New York après un séjour de près d'un mois en Irak, le directeur du programme humanitaire de l'ONU – dit « pétrole contre nourriture » – a présenté, mardi 26 février, un rapport au Conseil de sécurité. Dans ce document, obtenu par *Le Monde*, Benon Sevan informe le Conseil que, malgré plus de 37 milliards de dollars de revenus pétroliers irakiens depuis 1997, « ce programme fait désormais face à une crise financière de plus en plus grave ». Crise qui, selon le rapport, serait due, entre autres, à « une baisse substantielle » des revenus pétroliers depuis quelques mois : « L'exportation du pétrole irakien dans la phase actuelle [de 6 mois] accuse une chute de 35 % par rapport aux dix phases précédentes. »

M. Sevan affirme également que le nombre de contrats « en attente » au comité des sanctions de l'ONU a augmenté de façon « extrêmement préoccupante » depuis quelques semaines. Au total,

2 089 contrats d'achat pour une valeur totale de 5,32 milliards de dollars sont ainsi bloqués.

A en croire une source informée, « la grande majorité des contrats bloqués par les Américains vise les sociétés russes ». « Je ne révèle aucun secret en vous disant que des produits, comme des ordinateurs, dont les contrats d'achat sont bloqués, sont très facilement disponi-

bles sur le marché irakien », souligne M. Sevan. « Ce qui est bloqué par le comité des sanctions est l'accès par l'Irak à l'argent placé sur le compte séquestre », ajoute-t-il.

Malgré des difficultés qui tiennent d'une part au refus des autorités irakiennes de délivrer des visas aux employés de l'ONU, et d'autre part au blocage de contrats par le comité des sanctions, composé des quinze pays membres du Conseil de sécurité, le programme « pétrole contre nourriture », en vigueur depuis 1996, a pu changer la vie quotidienne des Irakiens. « Je déclare sans aucune hésitation, dit M. Sevan, que malgré les critiques et accusations, ce programme "pétrole contre nourriture" a nettement amélioré le niveau de vie des civils irakiens et continue de le faire ». « Depuis ma première visite en Irak en novembre 1997, dit-il encore, je constate un océan de différences. »

Rappelant que le Conseil de sécurité avait adopté en 1995 la résolution 986 établissant la formule « pétrole contre nourriture » comme « une mesure temporaire », M. Sevan fait remarquer que ledit programme est entré dans sa sixième année.

2 089 contrats d'achat, d'une valeur totale de 5,32 milliards de dollars, sont bloqués

En six ans, il a « changé de nature », car « nous sommes désormais impliqués dans des projets substantiels de réhabilitation de l'infrastructure du pays, y compris celle de l'industrie pétrolière ». Tout en critiquant le gouvernement irakien, M. Sevan note que, depuis un certain temps, le travail du comité des sanctions est « presque paralysé » et juge « indispensable » que « ses méthodes de travail soient sérieusement révisées pour pouvoir faire face à des défis de plus en plus importants ».

« Si cette révision n'est pas entreprise, et de façon extrêmement urgente, tout le programme "pétrole contre nourriture" risque d'être interrompu », avertit-il. En conséquence, il lance un appel « urgent » pour la « sauvegarde de la nature humanitaire » du programme qui, dit-il, « est devenu, malheureusement, extrêmement politisé et se trouve mêlé à l'atmosphère politique actuelle ». « Il ne faut jamais oublier que toute décision prise aura des impacts sérieux sur la vie de tous les jours de la population civile en Irak », conclut M. Sevan.

Afsané Bassir Pour

