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## IRAQI KURDS PREPARE FOR THE POST-SADDAM ERA

**W**HILE all eyes are focussed on the Israel-Palestine conflict and an American military intervention in Iraq seems decreasingly probable, the Kurds are preparing for the post-Saddam era and increasing their discussions with American leaders. Thus, on 1st April, a US State Department delegation, led by Ryan Crocker, Under Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, went to Kurdistan for a four day visit. The

US delegation met the KDP chief, Massoud Barzani, at his headquarters in Salahuddin as well as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) chief in Suleimaniah. "*The US delegation stressed (Washington's) commitment to continuing its humanitarian support for the Iraqi people in Kurdistan*", the communiqué added. The American delegation promised the Kurdistan regional government an improvement in the working of the

UN agencies in Kurdistan and a better management of the 13% of the oil revenues the Kurdish region receives under the Food for Oil programme. The delegation also reiterated its support for the process set up under the Washington agreement between the KDP and the PUK, stressing that the objective was the complete administrative unification of the two Kurdish regions and the meeting of a unified Kurdish Parliament following General Elections to be organised as soon as possible.

The Arab daily *Asharq al-Awsat* in its 20 April number reported that American representatives and the chiefs of the two Kurdish organisations that control Northern Iraq had met "secretly" this week near Berlin to prepare strikes against Iraq "before the end of the year". According to this paper, Jalal Talabani, chief of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and Massoud Barzani, chief of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) took part in this three day meeting which ended near Berlin with the participation of officials of the American Army, the State Department, and the Intelligence Services (CIA).

According to the London-based *Al-Zaman* newspaper in its 24 April, issue, the Kurdistan Democratic Party has prepared a draft constitution for Iraq to be circulated for approval by Kurdish and Iraqi opposition political parties. The newspaper said that the draft constitution proposes "the establishment of a federal, republican, pluralistic and parliamentary system in Iraq, that may be called the Federal Republic of Iraq".

Quoting sources in Irbil, the newspaper said the KDP had circulated copies of the draft constitution to Kurdish and non-Kurdish parties in Iraqi Kurdistan.

According to the proposal, Iraq will comprise two federated regions: a Kurdish, in the North and an Arab

region in the South. The future Constitution ensures "the national rights of minorities living in Iraq which should be enshrined in the constitution, within the framework of a federal union between both regions, which are to be delimited on a national and geographic basis" said *Al-Zaman*.

The Northern Federal region would comprise Dohuk, Arbil, Sulaymaniyah and Kirkuk Governorates, on the basis of the administrative boundaries of the governorates, as drawn up before 1968. It would also include Kurdish administrative and subadministrative districts which are now situated in Ninawa and Diyala Governorates, such as Sinjar, Shekhan, Zimmar, Mandali, Khanaqin, Jalawla and Miqdadiyah.

Quoting the source, *Al-Zaman* said that the KDP had submitted the proposal to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan during their meetings, and that "the two parties' views are close regarding the general content of the draft proposal".

The proposed draft also stresses the need for the Kurds' participation in the central government in Baghdad as its main partner, on the basis of the ratio of the Kurdish population, said *al-Zaman*.

Meanwhile, the Iraqi regime is continuing, in a systematic manner, its policy of enforced Arabisation of Kurdish regions. According to the Kurdish daily *Brayati* (Brother-

hood) of 22 April, the Iraqi authorities have desecrated graves in the cemetery of Dibaga Sub-administrative District, by engraving Arabic names on the graves instead of the Kurdish names. The newspaper reports that in order to hide this act, "the [Iraqi] regime has lately been preventing the Kurds from visiting the graves of their relatives."

Dibaga, located South-West of the Kurdish capital of Irbil, was the scene of a campaign of population expulsion in 1988, in the course of the so-called Anfal campaign of massacre and displacement of Kurdish civilian populations.

The Iraqi authorities, in the past few years, have intensified their policy of displacement of Kurds and other non Arab communities, with the view of Arabising the Kurdish region they control, particularly the oil-rich governorate of Kirkuk. In another development, the weekly *Khabat* said on 26 April that "140 villages in Kandinawa and Qaraj areas have been completely Arabized and all their original inhabitants have been deported".

According to non official estimates, more than 200,000 Kurds have been expelled from the Iraqi-held Kurdish areas to the region under the Kurdish administration, in the past ten years. A campaign which the Kurds name Iraqi ethnic cleansing policy.

## BULENT ECEVIT DESCRIBES THE ISRAELI OPERATION AGAINST THE PALESTINIANS AS "GENOCIDE"

**O**N 4 April, the Turkish Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, for the first time described the Israeli Army's operations as "genocide" by declaring "*the Palestinian people is a victim of genocide under the eyes of the whole world*".

The Turkish opposition in Parliament had, on 2 April, sharply called on the government to cancel an arms contract of a value of \$ 668 million signed a month earlier with Israel for the modernisation of 170 M-60 A1 heavy tanks. The Turkish press had also rallied to demand the suspension of this contract to show Ankara's lively disapproval of Ariel Sharon's policy.

Mr Ecevit's statements have aroused an uproar in the US Jewish community which, up to now was

very active in lobbying in support of this "*Moslem country allied to Israel*".

The many subsequent apologies of the Prime Minister were unable to soften their indignant reactions, as demonstrations of solidarity with the Palestinian people have turned into a campaign of anti-Semitism in Turkey. On Saturday 13 April, over 5,000 people marched in Istanbul in response to the call of the Islamist Saadet (Happiness) Party, burning the Israeli flag and carrying banners reading "*I understand Hitler better, now !*". The procession was led by a banner reading "*Revivo go home !*" (Editor's note: Revivo is N° 10 in the Fernerbahçel Football team). No arrests were made even though the Turkish daily *Hurriyet* of 14 April headlined "*The've over-stepped the mark !*".

Democratic Party (KDP), which condemned the attack in the strongest possible terms. The authorities are more inclined to suspect fundamentalist circles such as the Jund-al-Islam the Ansar Al-Islam, commanded by Mala Ali Abdul-Aziz, linked to both the Al Qaida networks and certain Iranian secret services.

This attempt aroused a wave of indignation in Iraqi Kurdistan and abroad, where the young Prime Minister had long served, particularly in Washington, and been appreciated. Observers note that this attack took place during a stay by a high ranking American delegation, and that some of those involved were already being sought for having taken part, in February 2001, in the assassination of François Hariri, the Christian governor of Irbil, and one of the top men in the KDP.

## SULEIMANIAH : AN UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE THE KURDISH PRIME MINISTER BARHAM SALIH

**O**N 2 April, Barham Saleh, Prime Minister of the Suleimaniah Kurdish regional government, controlled by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), narrowly escaped an assassination attempt that cost seven lives.

The driver of the car carrying the aggressors, who opened fire on Mr. Saleh's home, was arrested by the

local authorities. The attackers opened fire with machine guns and assault rifles, provoking return fire from the Kurdish leader's bodyguard, five of whom were killed in the attack. Two of the aggressors were also killed in the shoot-out. In addition, explosives were found in the aggressors' vehicle.

Mr. Saleh discarded any possibility of involvement by the Kurdistan

## JONATHAN RANDAL IN ISTANBUL FOR THE TRIAL OF HIS BOOK

**O**N 3 April, the American journalist, Jonathan Randal, appeared before the Istanbul State Security Court, without being heard, for the trial of one of his books, banned in Turkey, whose publisher is being charged with "separatist propaganda". "*We are doing all we possibly can to avoid the imprisonment of the Turkish publisher*" declared J. Randal, author of "*After such Knowledge, what forgiveness ? — my encounters in Kurdistan*". He

deplored the fact that the State Security Court had not daigned to hear his evidence as he was not, himself, being charged.

The book, translated into Turkish after having already been published in Kurdish, Arabic and Persian, was seized by the police in January 2002. The publisher, Abdullah Keskin, who runs the Avesta publishing house, faces 3 years imprisonment and a fine of 3 billion Turkish lire (about 2,500 euros).

*"What I have heard leads me to think that things will go all right, at a time when Turkey is trying to join the European Union"* judged Jonathan Randal who travelled to Turkey to attend the hearing. *"Censoring books and jailing publishers is quite unacceptable"* the American journalist further considered. The trial, to which the US Consul and the association for the defence of journalists, *Reporters sans frontières*, was adjourned to 7 June next.

The Turkish authorities accuse the book of using words that are tabooed in Turkey, such as *"Kurdistan"*, although the author does not denounce Turkish policy towards its Kurdish population as such, nor is he sparing in his criticisms of the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), which laid down its arms thirty months ago. The charge sheet states that *"the book mentions the existence of a distinct Kurdish nation and of a Kurdistan within the Turkish Republic, thus conducting propaganda against the integrity of the country and*

*nation"*. Abdullah Keskin, questioned on 3 April by the English language Turkish paper *Turkish Daily News* declared that *"(J.Randal) is a credible journalist to the whole world ... For example, before coming to Istanbul ... the International Criminal Court on ex-Yugoslavia, at the Hague, had asked to hear him as witness because of his reports on Bosnia*

*and Kosovo. The writer who has just appeared before the State Security Court has still the dust of the Hague on his shoes"*. *"After the American intellectual Noam Chomsky, it is the turn of the American journalist Jonathan Randal find himself in the dock in Turkey"* ironically remarked Gul Demir, staff journalist on *Turkish Daily News*.

## THE EUROPEAN HUMAN RIGHTS COURT FINDS TURKEY GUILTY FOR HAVING BANNED THE PRO-KURDISH "HEP" PARTY



ON 9 April, Turkey was fined 40,000 euros by the European Human Rights Court for having banned the Working People's Party (HEP — pro-Kurdish) accused of endangering the nation's unity.

In July 1993, the Turkish Constitutional Court had ordered the dissolution of HEP on the grounds that its activities *"endangered the territorial integrity of the State, and the unity of the nation"*, Thje HEP was accused, in particular, of *"seeking to divide the integrity of the Turkish nation into two parts, with the Turks on one side and the Kurds on the other, so as to found searate States"* and to *"seek to destroy the*

*national and territorial integrity"* of Turkey.

The European Court considered that Turkey, by deciding the dissolution of this party, had violated the rights to freedom of assembly and freedom of association, guaranteed by Clause 11 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

*"Seeing the absence of any practical projects by HEP of a character to undermine the democratic regime in the country and/or the absence of any incitement or justification of the recourse to force for political ends, its dissolution cannot be reasonably considered as responding to an "imperious social neecessity"*" the Court considered.

## THE PKK CHANGES ITS NAME AND BECOMES KADEK

**F**OLLOWING its 8th Congress, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) announced a change of name and strategy: the movement, henceforth called KADEK (Congress for Freedom and Democracy in Kurdistan) abandons violence in favour of peaceful struggle for more rights for the Kurdish minority. "Armed struggle is ended" declared Riza Erdogan, European spokesman for the new KADEK. "We have no intention of changing the borders of the countries in which live the Kurdish people" he added, explaining that KADEK does not intend to struggle for separation from Turkey, but for improving the rights of the Kurdish people in that country as well as in Iraq, Iran and Syria. KADEK will not be a political party as such, but will help parties and organisations supporting a "democratic solution to the Kurdish question". The Kurdish rebel chief, Abdullah Ocalan, jailed on the Turkish island-prison of Imrali, was named President of KADEK, the spokesman specified. According to him, "KADEK is the sole legitimate heir of the PKK". It does not want to "dethrone" those states but "to seek to make them undergo a democratic change" in the framework of a vast "Democratic Union of the Middle East". "The 20th Century system" based on "nationalism, divisions and partitions" is "out of date" and is "the prime source of present day conflicts" in KADEK's view.

The abandoning of armed struggle is confirmed and KADEK

recommends "peaceful political uprisings". The PKK armed activists will continue to form a "self-defence" force, belonging to KADEK and renamed "people's defence units" — they will only act in the event of attacks on the Kurds the KADEK spokesman stressed. These activists "will join the civilian movement at the right time", specifically when the Turkish State will have abolished the death sentence and recognised Kurdish cultural rights, he stressed.

Their transformation into a political force under a new name is unlikely, however, to change the situation or soften the position of the Turkish State regarding them. The powerful Turkish Army had already rejected their unilateral cease fire after Abdullah Ocalan's arrest, describing it as a "manœuvre". The Turkish authorities immediately reacted by stating that these decisions changed nothing.

The Turkish Foreign Minister, Ismail Cem, at a Press Conference at the end of a meeting of the Turkish-E.U. Association Council in Luxemburg, judged that the PKK's change of name "does not alter its nature". "I do not think that a change of name alters the PKK's nature. For the moment, in my opinion, there is no change at all in the situation at all" he declared. "A change of name is not important ... What counts is that the pay for what they have done in the past", stressed Defence Minister Sabahattin Cakmakoglu. "Whether the PKK changes its name or its

form, it still remains a terrorist organisation for us" said Industry Minister Ahmet Kenan Tanrikulu.

According to Professor Dogu Ergil of the Ankara University Faculty of Political Science, "the PKK is entering now into a new field. It will be a test for Turkish democracy". "The Turkish government is very much afraid lest it become a political force. Its mentality is built round the struggle against terrorism. They do not know how to deal with a political organisation. So they try to block this attempt" he considered.

In the view of Nihat Ali Ozcan, expert on terrorism at the Centre for Eurasian Strategic Studies "the PKK realised as from the 1990s that it could not reach its aims by force and began searching for a new field, a trend accelerated by Ocalan's capture. And, since 11 September, continuing to pursue political ends by terrorism and violence has become very dangerous". "They needed to move onto a fresh field where they could be recognised by the international system and where they could be stronger than the State and that is the political area" he continued. But, he considered that "Turkey will never accept them as interlocutors (for the settlement of the Kurdish question)". Mr. Ozcan specified that "no one will make any concessions just because the PKK has taken these decisions. Turkey will, no doubt authorise publications and radio/TV broadcasts in Kurdish, but not because of the PKK but because of the evolution through which it is going, linked to its application for membership of the European Union".

Furthermore the spokesman of the People's Democratic Party (HADEP), that is struggling for Kurdish cultural rights, Mutlu Cdiviroglu, judged these decisions "positive" and hoped that the Turkish State would "take concrete measures and act for democratisation and for Kurdish rights".

However, Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, heading a liberal government that will be presiding over the E.U. as from 1 July, stated, in Copenhagen on 17 April that the PKK's change of name "in no way changed its nature",

maintaining his wish to have the ex-PKK placed on the E.U.'s list of terrorist organisations. "In my view, it is not the name but the content that counts" he stressed. Mr. Rasmussen recently showed that he wanted the E.U.'s list to be aligned on that of the USA, provoking a controversy in the Centre/Left opposition in Parliament, critical of this will to align Copenhagen on Washington. The head of the Government reminded everyone, moreover, that he was on a special E.U. Committee to decide which organisations and individuals should be on these lists.

Turkey, represented by its Foreign Minister, Ismail Cem, is trying to secure a date for the start of negotiations : it hopes for a signal from the Seville summit next June and an approximate or specific date at the Copenhagen summit in December.

• **AMERICAN AIR RAID ON IRAQ FROM THE AMERICAN AIR BASE IN TURKEY.** On 19 April, American and British planes patrolling the air exclusion zone over Iraqi Kurdistan bombed Iraqi anti-aircraft batteries in response to shots from AA batteries, according to American officials. The bombs were dropped after Iraqi shots were fired at an air patrol East of Mossul, the American Command in Europe specified. American planes take off from the American base at Incirlik, in Turkey.

These are the first air raids in Northern Iraq since February and the third since the beginning of the year, the American officials stated, as many were asking themselves if Iraq was going to be the USA's next target in the context of what the Bush Administration describes as a struggle against terrorism.

Washington let it be understood that a military campaign could be launched against Saddam Hussein if the latter persisted in refusing to allow the UNO disarmament inspectors to return. They have been kept out of Iraq since 1998. Discussions between Iraq and UNO on the return of the inspectors should have begun mid-April, but Iraq asked for postponement of the meeting arguing that they would be dominated by the Israel-Palestinians conflict if they took place at that date.

## AS WELL AS ...

• **ANKARA SENDS A AN EMISSARY TO SADDAM HUSSEIN.** Anxious to avoid any US intervention in Iraq, a Turkish Secretary of State, Tunca Toskay, visited Baghdad on 2 April to meet Saddam Hussein and give him a personal message from Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit, asking him to take "steps to avoid developments that might have an impact on us all". 130 Turkish firms are in Baghdad to take part in a trade fair of Turkish products.

Elsewhere, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) announced on 4 April, that a US State Department delegation, led by Ryan Crocker, Under Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs had met Kurdish leaders in Iraqi Kurdistan. The US delegation met the KDP chief, Massoud Barzani, at his headquarters in Salahuddin as well as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) chief in Suleimaniah. "The US delegation stressed

(Washington's) commitment to continuing its humanitarian support for the Iraqi people in Kurdistan", the communiqué added.

• **LUXEMBURG: THE COUNCIL OF ASSOCIATION BETWEEN TURKEY AND THE E.U.** On 16 April, the Council of Association between Turkey and the European Union (EU), meeting in Luxembourg, encouraged Turkey to develop freedom of expression. Gunter Verheugen, European Commissioner responsible for its enlargement, declared that negotiations for membership could begin if Turkey conformed to the Copenhagen criteria. Mr. Verheugen also stressed the concern of the E.U. regarding Turkey's Human Rights record, adding that Ankara ought to go further in the area of ethnic minority rights. The E.U. also asks for the abolition of the death sentence and limitations on the Turkish Army's political influence.



• **13 KURDS KILLED BY STARVING WOLVES IN VAN.**

According to the Kurdish daily *Brayati* of 17 April, 13 bodies left in the open country have been found at Noblen, in Van Province — all Iraqi Kurds trying to emigrate. According to the Turkish authorities, 418 Iraqi Kurds who were trying to cross the Irano-Turkish border on 15 April were attacked by starving wolves who killed 13 people.

• **THE CHINESE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO ANKARA OVERSHADOWED BY THE UIGOUR QUESTION.** Zhu Rongji, the first Chinese Prime Minister to make an official visit to Ankara for 16 years, was widely questioned about the Province of Xinjiang, mainly inhabited by Turkic speaking Moslems, like the Uigours, and which Turkey describes as "Eastern Turkistan". Husnu Yusuf Gokalp, Minister of Agriculture and Tunca Toskay, Under-Secretary of State, both members of the National Action Party (MHP — neo-fascist) even arrived very late for the ceremonial signing of four bi-lateral Sino-Turkish agreements as a sign of protest against Chinese policy regarding the Uigours.

In the course of a Press Conference on 16 April, the Chinese Prime Minister asked Turkey not to support groups carrying on separatist activities in Xinjiang — about a hundred yards from an anti-Chinese demonstration by a handful of Turkish Uigours.

Ankara, that prefers to ignore the 15 plus million Kurds and refuses to allow the word "*Kurdistan*" to be pronounced, feels no shame is trying

to give lessons in minority rights and the right of peoples to self determination.

• **THE FORMER PRESIDENT OF HADEP SENTENCED TO 10 MONTHS JAIL FOR ONE OF HIS SPEECHES.** Ahmet Turan Demir, former President of the pro-Kurdish People's Democratic HADEP party was sentenced to ten months jail for "*endangering the unity of the country*" by the Ankara State Security Court.

The sentence is linked to a speech he made during a Party Congress in November 2000 which, according to the charge sheet "*aimed at attacking the unity and indivisability of the State*". The Turkish authorities regularly attack members of HADEP, accused of "*separatism and organic links with the PKK*". HADEP, which argues in favour of a peaceful solution to the Kurdish question and for cultural rights for the Kurds, rejects these accusations. But it is being threatened with banning by the Constitutional Court.

• **A KURDISH DRIVER SENTENCED TO 45 MONTHS JAIL FOR HAVING LISTENED TO A KURDISH CASSETTE IN HIS MINIBUS.** On 9 April, a Kurdish driver was sentenced to 45 months jail, for having played out loud a cassette of Kurdish songs in his minibus. The State Security Court of the State of Diyarbakir considered that Selahaddin Onen was guilty of "*helping an armed organisation*" for having played that cassette in 1999 in his minibus while transporting passengers between Diyarbakir and the nearby town of Cinar.

The Court considered that playing songs in Kurdish amounted to supporting the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK). "*But the Court granted a stay of execution, taking into account the fact that my client had no previous record*" added Mr. Sedat Yurttas. "*The stay of execution means that Onen must not repeat the same crime again in the next five years or he will go to prison to serve this sentence*".

This sentence comes at a time when Turkey, a candidate for membership of the European Union, is asking itself whether or not to allow radio and TV broadcasts in Kurdish — a cultural right that the EU is demanding of it. The authorities fear that broadcasts in Kurdish would revive the aspirations for independence of the Kurds, although the clashes in South-East have diminished since the PKK announced it was ending armed struggle in 1999.

• **A TURKISH FARCE : KURDISH FIRST NAMES ON TRIAL — BY A JUDGE WHO, HIMSELF, HAS A KURDISH NAME.** The first hearing before the High Court in the small town of Dicle, in Diyarbakir Province, of a case referred to it by the Dicle gendarmerie on 21 December 2001, demanding that 21 Kurdish children, of between 18 months and 15 years, be obliged to "Turkify" their first names, gave rise to a disconcerting and ludicrous spectacle. The Presiding Judge, who would have had to give a ruling on the question at issue, himself had an unquestionably Kurdish first name : Sirvan Ertekin. Sirvan means "milkman" in Kurdish ... The Turkish daily *Radikal*, in its 19 April issue headlined the news "*Sirvan*

tries Berivan" (i.e. "The milkman tries the milkmaid").

The Public Prosecutor, Alpaslan Karabay, had demanded, despite repeated legal precedents to the contrary, (ruling on Berfin 1989/1520 and ruling on Rojda 1992/1351) that the following first names be disallowed and altered : Berivan, Zilan Rojda, Baver, Velat, Serhat, Kendal, Zilan, Hebun, Baran, Rojhat, Agit, Zelal, Zozan. Defence Lawyer Firat Anli, asked the Court, in view of the legal precedent of previous rulings, that the Court dismiss the case as inadmissible. The hearing was postponed pending a decision by the Academy of the Turkish Language, to which the Court had applied for a ruling as to whether these first names "conformed to the national culture, morals and customs" of Turkey.

• **"63 MAJOR ARMAMENT PROJECTS BEING PROGRAMMED IN TURKEY" ACCORDING TO THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE.** On 14 April, the Turkish Minister of Defence, Sabahattin Cakmakoglu declared that the Turkish Army had the ambition of taking part in 64 armament projects in the context of its restructuring. "Turkey must be equipped with the most modern systems existing in the world. This includes missiles, helicopters and tanks. At the moment, 64 projects are under way, coordinated by the Ministry of Defence" he added.

• **THE DANISH PRIME MINISTER DESCRIBES THE PKK AS A TERRORIST ORGANISATION.** On 9 April, the Danish Prime Minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, expressed the

wish that the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) be placed on the E.U.'s list of terrorist organisations — because it is on the United States' list... Answering the press after a Cabinet meeting, Mr. Rasmussen also indicated that the Government did not intend closing the offices of the PKK political Branch, the "National Liberation Front of Kurdistan" (ERNK). "We have a tradition, in Denmark, of attacking the criminal actions of associations, but not freedom of association" he stressed.

The Danish Liberal/Conservative government wants the European list to be, as much as possible, in line with that of the United States so that "terrorist organisations" be unable to escape the economic vice that Europeans and Americans are trying to set up together, he explained. The Centre/Left opposition considers that the government has "no mandate to work to ensure that the E.U. list be identical to that of the U.S.". The spokesperson of the Radical Party, Elisabeth Arnold, stressed, moreover, in a statement to the centre-left daily Politiken, that there were "doubts about the terrorist character of certain organisations on the American list, which, moreover, omits some Irish organisations that are on the E.U. list".

Last December, the Fifteen adopted a list of 12 groups and 30 individuals, described as terrorist, whose properties have been frozen because of their actions or support for terrorism.

• **A TURKISH GENERAL RECOMMENDS HANGING OF EXTRAVAGANT MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT.** Retired General

Osman Ozbek, who had declared a week ago, in the course of a meeting of the Association for Kemalist Thought at Zonguldak that "Members of Parliament who have spent 70 billion Turkish lire for medical treatment should be hanged in the gardens of the National Assembly" has been openly criticised by some M.P.s including Mehmet Elkatmis, head of the Turkish parliament's accounts control.

"Law N° 4375 of 1998 allows all public servants to have medical treatment abroad. This law was drawn up for one particular person. General Ozbek was then still on duty. If, instead of insulting the Prime Minister, he had spoken about the person for whose benefit the law had been drafted, I would have congratulated him. The law was drafted for one of his colleagues, a General" (**Editor's Note** : the law in question was drafted for the benefit of Admiral Guven Erkaya, former Commander in Chief of the Turkish Navy) stated Mr. Elkatmis, adding that "Parliament works under the control of the people. In Turkey there are, unfortunately organs that are controlled by no one. In fact, it were better to control them".

The Turkish General Staff riposted the next day by declaring that the Member of Parliament's statement aimed at the Turkish Armed Forces had been examined closely and that "people who have such points of view will not be able to shake our nation's confidence in the Turkish Army because they will never have the power to do so".

• **THE TURKISH PRESIDENT VETOES A SECOND LAW TO**

**AMNESTY THE AUTHOR OF THE ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION OF THE POPE — BUT EXCLUDING POLITICAL PRISONERS.** On 27 April, Turkish President Ahmet Necdet Sezer vetoed an amnesty law which would benefit Mehmet Ali Ağca, extreme Right activist who had attempted to kill Pope John-Paul II in Rome in 1981.

Ali Ağca, who had spent nearly 20m years in jail in Italy for his action, is at present detained in Turkey, under a 17 year sentence for murdering a journalist and a burglary in 1979, for which he has been sentenced to 17 imprisonment. He has already served two years of this term and could be freed in five years time, if amnestied, according to his lawyer, Can Sevkett Ozbay.

The amnesty law was approved by parliament on 25 February but the President criticises it, in particular for granting drastic reductions of sentence without taking into account the prisoner's behaviour while in custody and because it was passed by a simple majority and not a 60% majority as should be the case for exceptional amnesties.

Under this law the majority for those serving sentences — *except political prisoners or those sentenced for their opinions* — could be freed ten years early.

Parliament must, therefore, review its position. If it passes the same Bill again, without alteration, the President is obliged to sign it — but could ask the Constitutional Court to annul it.

#### • THE TURKISH CONTI-

**NGENT IN COMMAND IN AFGHANISTAN.** The Turkish contingent will have to run the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) for the next six months. Washington *"will strongly support Turkey's directing role in the ISAF and will work closely with the Turkish government, the Interim Afghan authority and others to ensure the success of the force under Turkish command"* declared the State Department's spokesman, Richard Boucher.

Turkey has already sent 267 soldiers to Afghanistan and has announced that it could send more to join the ISAF, which totals 4,500 men. The only Moslem member of NATO, it takes over from Great Britain at the head of this force. Turkey has said it was ready to take command, provided it secured clarification on its composition, on the scope of its mandate and financial backing from the Allies. Discussions between Turkish, American and British military and civilian officials regarding Turkey's direction of the ISAF took place in March in the Turkish capital.

Yilmaz Karakoyoglu, ministerial spokesman for the Turkish government, stated, after a cabinet meeting, that an aid of \$ 228 million (260 million euros) that the Bush Administration intended to submit to Congress for approval, would be enough to help Turkey meet the cost of the operation. Ankara also demanded that the United States supply it with cargo transporter planes and that Great Britain, after its departure, leave behind certain installations that it had built near Kabul for the force's use. The

interim Afghan Prime Minister, Hamid Karzai, arrived in Ankara on 4 April to discuss the transfer and Turkish contribution to the reconstruction of Afghanistan.

**• THE TURKISH CONTINGENT IN COMMAND IN AFGHANISTAN.** The Turkish contingent will have to run the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) for the next six months. Washington *"will strongly support Turkey's directing role in the ISAF and will work closely with the Turkish government, the Interim Afghan authority and others to ensure the success of the force under Turkish command"* declared the State Department's spokesman, Richard Boucher.

Turkey has already sent 267 soldiers to Afghanistan and has announced that it could send more to join the ISAF, which totals 4,500 men. The only Moslem member of NATO, it takes over from Great Britain at the head of this force. Turkey has said it was ready to take command, provided it secured clarification on its composition, on the scope of its mandate and financial backing from the Allies. Discussions between Turkish, American and British military and civilian officials regarding Turkey's direction of the ISAF took place in March in the Turkish capital.

**• READ IN THE TURKISH PRESS : THE KURDISH LANGUAGE'S TORTUOUS COURSE THROUGH MINE-FIELDS.** Can Dundar, a staff journalist on the Turkish daily Milliyet, returned, in his 7 April column to the vicissitudes of the

Kurdish language, subjected to the whims of the Turkish authorities, but also to the ??? far from the realities of the Turkish politico-media circles. Here are extensive extracts from his article.

*In 1980, two young men from Hakkari, taking a stroll in Aksary, met a fellow countryman, Frkat Baskale (Editor's note : a Kurdish musician from the same region).*

*Baskale was a revolutionary musician whose voice was similar to that of Sivan Perwer (Editor's note : the most popular of Kurdish musicians). At F. Baskale's invitation they went to the hotel where he was working...*

*These young men had such a strong longing for Kurdish music that ...*

*Firat, looked around suspiciously to see if there was anyone around ... "If anyone hears us, we'll be denounced and our lives won't be worth a light" he warned them. Then he led them to a dark and tiny room in the hotel cellars and picking up his guitar sang in Kurdish.*

*A few minutes later these two young men, certainly as frightened as if they had been taking part in an illegal demonstration, felt as happy as if they were back in their native mountains.*

*On of these youths was none other than Yilmaz Erdogan (Editor's note : a popular Kurdish comedian). As for the other, he was Mohsin Kizilkaya, who, some years later mentioned this incident in his biography of Erdogan.*

*When this paper Milliyet (on 5 April 2002) carried the front page headline "A Kurdish song in the barracks" this made Mohsin think back.*

*The news item said that the Bitlis gendarmerie had sung the song "Zeyno" in Kurdish and that the officers had joined in and applauded.*

*In Istanbul, there were posters advertising Sivan Perwer's latest album.*

*And the National Security Council (MGK) had the question of broadcasting in Kurdish on its agenda.*

*Those who, for nearly a century had denied that such a language even existed, who persecuted those who spoke that language, who had arrogated to themselves the right to pedantically assert that "if we gave them the right to speak that language they wouldn't understand it" now, whether pushed by an "outside dynamic" or thanks to the ending of terrorism, all of a sudden were recognising the "Kurdish reality".*

*In fact it was seen that, of the 500,000 people who danced at the Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakir, barely 500 bought books in Kurdish. Books in Kurdish by Mehmet Uzun sell 2,000 copies at most. But, nevertheless Kurdish-Turkish dictionaries are coming out ... spelling books are being prepared ... After the debate about Kurdish language broadcasts the question of teaching in Kurdish is now being discussed.*

*Last week Muhsin Kizilkaya raised another problem, in the course of a conference in Vienna : "Who will be put in charge of Kurdish broadcasting ? Who will teach Kurdish ? Are there any experts ? Are there any teachers or professors ? There is a Department of Sumerian at University, but not of Kurdish. A Turkish intellectual may be able to speak Russian, but has no interest in Kurdish, which is, nevertheless, spoken by millions of people in his own country".*

*Ferhat Tunç (Editor's note : a Kurdish musician) who has just brought out his latest album, tells how he was taken into detention for singing in Kurdish in Kayseri ...*

*Where have we come from ? From being listened to secretly in the cellars of a hotel in Aksaray, Kurdish has passed through the interrogation chambers to barrack concerts ...*

*Yilmaz, one of the two young men from Hakkari who listened in secret to Kurdish songs is today Turkey's best loved humourist ...*

*As for Mohsin, who learnt Turkish by having it beaten into him at school, and learnt his mother tongue in prison, during the defence of the Association of Revolutionary Clubs of Eastern Culture (DDKO), he is one of the most famous Turkish language writers ...*

*If we want to live in real brotherhood, we must respect and understand one another's language — there is no other solution".*

## TROIS QUESTIONS À... KENDAL NEZAN

**1** Directeur de l'institut kurde de Paris, qu'attendez-vous des négociations sur l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'UE ?

Il s'agit d'une bonne occasion pour l'Union européenne de montrer qu'elle a des principes. Dans la mesure où elle négocie avec la Turquie à propos de la question chypriote, nous voudrions obtenir pour la minorité kurde de Turquie un traitement égal à celui proposé par Ankara pour la minorité turque résidant du côté grec de Chypre. Par ailleurs, la Turquie défend la diversité culturelle en Moldavie et en Bulgarie pour la minorité turque résidente. L'Europe doit insister auprès des dirigeants d'Ankara pour qu'ils regardent chez eux.

**2** Etes-vous pour l'intégration de la Turquie dans l'Union ?

L'intégration va favoriser le développement démocratique et

une certaine prospérité économique en Turquie. Mais nous ne voulons pas d'une intégration au rabais qui consisterait à accepter la Turquie en prétendant qu'elle est au début du chemin et que l'on verra après... La Turquie a besoin de l'Europe et non l'inverse. Le pays est au bord de la banqueroute et les 16 milliards de dollars [près de 17,75 milliards d'euros] accordés en février par le Fonds monétaire international lui donnent un sursis. Aujourd'hui, 60 % des échanges économiques s'effectuent avec l'Union. Les hommes d'affaires turcs sont pour une solution pacifique du problème kurde.

**3** Que vous inspirent les déclarations du secrétaire général du Conseil national de sécurité, le général Tuncer Kilic, qui a mis en cause l'opportunité d'une adhésion de la Turquie à l'UE ?

La diplomatie turque pratique la politique du bord du gouffre qui consiste à faire monter les enchères tout en menaçant de « faire un malheur si nous ne sommes pas écoutés ». Tant que la Turquie n'a pas clarifié le rôle de l'armée et le droit des Kurdes, elle devra rester dans l'antichambre de l'Europe. L'effondrement du Parti des travailleurs kurdes (PKK) aurait été une bonne occasion pour mettre en place une politique de la main tendue. Mais l'institut kurde d'Istanbul vient d'être fermé, 600 pré-noms kurdes sont interdits des listes d'état civil pour les nouveaux-nés. Le salut démocratique ne viendra de l'Europe que si Bruxelles n'adopte pas une attitude mercantile et opportuniste face à la Turquie.

Propos recueillis par  
Nicolas Bourcier

## De nouvelles réformes pour se rapprocher des Quinze

## ISTANBUL

de notre correspondante

Après des semaines de délibérations, l'Assemblée nationale turque a finalement adopté le 26 mars un paquet de réformes démocratiques prévues dans son programme national pour l'adhésion à l'Union européenne (UE).

Une modification de la loi sur les partis politiques rend plus difficile leur dissolution et offre, à la place, la possibilité de les priver d'aide publique en cas de violation de la Constitution. Dans le but de décourager l'usage de la torture, une mesure a été adoptée, forçant les fonctionnaires responsables à payer eux-mêmes les compensations fréquemment octroyées aux victimes par la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme.

Dans la législation sur la presse sont ajoutés des « délits contre Atatürk et ses réformes » à la liste des crimes pouvant entraîner la suspension d'un journal. En revanche,

la période maximale de fermeture d'une publication est réduite d'un mois à quinze jours.

Ces réformes ne répondent pas entièrement aux attentes de l'UE. Le vice-premier ministre, Mesut Yilmaz, responsable des affaires européennes, a admis que la Turquie avait encore beaucoup à faire, mais il a souligné que « notre



« Notre détermination est évidente. Les étapes franchies jusqu'à présent ne doivent pas être sous-estimées »

MESUT YILMAZ

détermination est évidente, et les étapes franchies jusqu'à présent ne doivent pas être sous-estimées ».

Quant à l'abolition de la peine de mort, condition sine qua non d'adhésion à l'UE, les trois partis de la coalition ne sont pas parvenus à un accord. Le Parti d'action nationalis-

te (extrême droite) insiste sur le maintien de la peine capitale tant que le dirigeant du Parti des travailleurs kurdes (PKK), Abdullah Öcalan, n'a pas été exécuté.

Entre l'adoption de nouvelles lois et leur application, il y a un pas que la Turquie ne franchit pas toujours, d'où le scepticisme qui a accueilli ces révisions législatives. « Bien sûr, certains de ces changements sont positifs. La nouvelle règle sur la torture est une bonne chose, par exemple. Mais dans le domaine de la liberté d'expression, les contradictions demeurent », affirme Selahattin Esmer, membre de l'Association turque des droits de l'homme (IHD). « Modifier un mot ou deux dans les lois n'est pas suffisant. C'est la mentalité qui doit changer. » Selon les chiffres de l'IHD, des procès pour crimes politiques ont été intentés contre 1 552 personnes au cours des trois derniers mois.

« Jusqu'à la révision de la loi antiterroriste [en 1991], l'article 8 était le plus souvent invoqué. Ensuite les procureurs ont utilisé l'article 312 du Code pénal. Il a été révisé [en février de cette année] et nous voyons maintenant apparaître l'article 169 du code pénal », affirme M. Esmer.

Sur les droits culturels des Kurdes, la situation est encore floue. Bien qu'un amendement constitutionnel ait été adopté en octobre 2001, les lois demeurent vagues sur le droit de publication et de diffusion en langue kurde.

Certaines publications en kurde sont tolérées par les autorités, mais leur distribution est interdite dans les provinces du Sud-Est, encore soumises à l'état d'urgence.

La possibilité d'autoriser des émissions en kurde sur les chaînes de télévision et radio nationales a été évoquée par le Conseil national de sécurité, mais aucune position officielle n'a été prise. Ces dernières semaines, des centaines de personnes ont été arrêtées pour avoir signé une pétition réclamant le droit à l'éducation en kurde – une campagne que les autorités affirment être dirigée par le PKK.

L'appui de l'Europe est crucial pour accélérer les réformes. Guenter Verheugen, responsable de l'élargissement de l'UE, déclarait récemment que la Turquie « a entrepris un programme de réformes économiques et politiques très approfondi ». Il a également constaté que ces progrès n'auraient vraisemblablement pas été enregistrés « sans la stratégie d'adhésion à l'UE ».

N. P.

## Le patronat s'impatiente

Les critiques sur la lenteur du processus de démocratisation n'émanent pas seulement des milieux des droits de l'homme. Tuncay Ozilhan, le président de la Tusiad, qui représente le patronat turc, souligne que « l'abolition de la peine de mort, l'octroi de libertés individuelles et de droits culturels sont des points d'importance vitale ». Les milieux des affaires, conscients que politique et économie sont inextricablement mêlées, insistent sur les réformes démocratiques. « Même si nous savons que l'adhésion n'est pas pour demain, a déclaré le ministre Kemal Dervis, responsable de l'économie, l'ancrage à l'Union européenne rétablirait un degré de confiance que nous ne pouvons pas offrir tout seuls. »

# 150 prisonniers poursuivent une grève de la faim en Turquie

Les violations des droits de l'homme constituent l'un des principaux obstacles à l'adhésion d'Ankara à l'Union. Cinquante prisonniers politiques ont déjà succombé au mouvement de jeûne commencé en octobre 2000

## ISTANBUL

de notre correspondante

Massant ses pieds douloureux avec des glaçons, les chevilles crispées en une crampe permanente,

## ■ REPORTAGE

### Auprès des grévistes au quartier populaire de Gazi, une banlieue grise

Fikret Lüle, 29 ans, affirme calmement qu'il poursuivra sa grève de la faim jusqu'à la mort. « *Nous ne sommes pas des militants aveuglés, nous ne sommes pas fous. Nous aimons la vie, mais les circonstances nous ont forcés à prendre cette décision* », affirme Fikret, qui n'a pas mangé depuis 327 jours et survit grâce à de l'eau sucrée et à des tisanes. « *Nous ne pouvons pas abandonner notre identité politique, ce serait nous abandonner nous-mêmes.* »

Membre lui aussi d'un groupuscule marxiste-léniniste, Deniz Bakır en est à son 74<sup>e</sup> jour de jeûne. Hospitalisé de force après plusieurs mois de grève en 2001, Deniz, âgé de 23 ans, a été relâché pour raisons de santé après six ans de détention, mais il a repris sa grève en janvier. « *Nous continuons à l'extérieur, parmi les masses, pour faire entendre la voix des grévistes à l'intérieur des prisons*, explique-t-il, assis sous les portraits de dizaines de militants décédés. *Nous continuerons jusqu'à la mort du dernier homme.* »

Leur discours est ponctué d'« *impérialisme* », de « *lutte populaire* » et de « *fascisme* », des termes appartenant au vocabulaire d'un communisme radical et désuet, mais leur force de conviction est indéniable. Les graffitis sur les murs témoignent de la sympathie des habitants de ce quartier populaire de Gazi, une banlieue grise d'Istanbul.

Alors que l'Association turque des droits de l'homme (IHD) soumettait, le 1<sup>er</sup> avril, à l'Assemblée nationale une pétition signée par 17 000 personnes demandant au gouvernement de mettre fin au mouvement meurtrier, Meryem Altun, âgée de 26 ans et membre du

Parti révolutionnaire de libération du peuple (DKHP-C), succombait à son jeûne après une lente agonie dans un hôpital d'Istanbul, devenant ainsi la 50<sup>e</sup> victime de la grève de la faim. Les prisonniers avaient entamé leur mouvement en octobre 2000 pour protester contre les conditions de détention dans les nouvelles prisons, plus modernes, mais où les détenus sont logés dans des cellules d'une ou trois personnes. Les détenus affirment que l'isolement les rend plus vulnérables aux mauvais traitements.

Les autorités avaient catégoriquement rejeté un retour à l'ancien système de dortoirs insalubres et souvent incontrôlables, dans lesquels les groupes politiques pouvaient imposer leur loi à une centaine de prisonniers. Une proposition lancée fin 2001 par les barreaux de plusieurs villes a permis de clarifier les exigences des grévistes. L'initiative « *Trois portes, trois clés* » envisage l'ouverture, durant la journée, des portes de trois cellules contiguës dans des corridors fermés aux deux extrémités.

Cette suggestion a reçu l'appui des groupes d'extrême gauche, qui ont offert de mettre fin à la grève si elle était acceptée. « *Bien qu'elle ne réponde pas à tous nos besoins, nos représentants avaient décidé de l'ac-*

*cepter parce que nous voulons une solution* », explique Fikret Lüle. Le ministère de la justice a rejeté cette initiative, proposant à la place cinq heures d'activités communes par semaine.

« *Trois portes, trois clés* » est une bonne formule. Elle permet aux autorités d'éviter les problèmes liés à l'ancien système tout en donnant aux prisonniers plus de contact », affirme Selahattin Esmer, secrétaire général de l'Association des droits de l'homme. Pour l'instant, l'impasse continue. Aux militants morts de faim s'ajoutent les 32 victimes, qui incluaient deux membres des forces de sécurité de l'intervention paramilitaire qui avait eu lieu en décembre 2000 dans 20 prisons de Turquie et avait permis aux autorités de transférer les prisonniers politiques dans les nouveaux pénitenciers. En novembre 2001, quatre personnes avaient trouvé la mort lors d'un raid policier dans un quartier d'Istanbul où étaient réunis plusieurs grévistes.

Mais les morts ne sont que le sommet de l'iceberg : si le nombre des grévistes en prison est en dessous de 150, c'est que plusieurs centaines d'entre eux, très affaiblis physiquement, ont été discrètement relâchés

en vertu de l'article 399 du Code pénal qui permet la libération pour raisons de santé. L'Association des droits de l'homme (IHD) affirme que 330 détenus au moins ont ainsi quitté les pénitenciers, beaucoup d'entre eux souffrant de séquelles irréversibles suite à leur jeûne prolongé.

« *Nous ne sommes pas des militants aveuglés, nous ne sommes pas fous. Nous aimons la vie* »

Mehmet, dont le procès pour « *appartenance à une organisation illégale* » se poursuit, est l'un d'entre eux. Il souffre de troubles de l'équilibre, d'amnésie et il a de la peine à s'exprimer. « *Ils l'ont hospitalisé et soigné de force* », explique son camarade Ünal. A côté de Mehmet, une jeune femme tremble comme si elle était affectée par la maladie de Parkinson. Semiray avait été hospitalisée, dans le coma, en 1996, après

avoir participé à un mouvement de grève similaire. Après deux semaines de traitement, elle avait été renvoyée en prison avant d'être finalement libérée il y a quelques mois. Mehmet et Semiray sont, parmi plus de 400 anciens grévistes, sous traitement médical auprès de la Fondation turque pour les droits de l'homme (TIHV).

Ces militants souffriront des conséquences de leur action pour le reste de leur vie, pourtant ils n'ont rien perdu de leur militantisme. « *Que pouvions-nous faire d'autre ? Bien sûr que je soutiens le mouvement de grève* », affirme Semiray. Les familles sont souvent déchirées entre le désir de sauver leurs enfants et celui de respecter leur choix. « *Nous ne voulons pas que nos enfants meurent, mais ils sont confrontés à une forte pression* », affirme

Gülsah Taraç, dont la fille et le gendre, grévistes, ont récemment été libérés. Son fils, en prison depuis sept ans, est seul dans une cellule de la prison d'Edirne, près d'Istanbul. « *Mes enfants ont été condamnés, ils purgent leur peine. Tout ce qu'ils veulent est d'être traité de façon humaine.* »

Nicole Pope

Le Monde

5 avril 2002

# Le train sifflera encore trois fois

par James Woolsey

**P**ARIS, Berlin et Bruxelles ont un problème avec les Américains.

Le ministre français des affaires étrangères, Hubert Védrine, a qualifié de « *simpliste* » l'appellation « *axe du Mal* », appliquée par le président George W. Bush à l'Irak, l'Iran et la Corée du Nord.

Le ministre allemand des affaires étrangères, Joschka Fischer, a déclaré que les Etats-Unis traitaient les Européens comme des « *satellites* ».

Quant au commissaire européen pour les relations extérieures, le généralement très avisé Chris Patten, il a parlé d'« *absolutisme* » et d'« *accélération unilatérale* » à propos de l'approche de George Bush.

A l'exception de M. Patten, nous avons en réalité affaire, pour l'essentiel, à des membres de l'élite européenne, généralement de gauche, dont le gosier délicat s'accommode mal d'un parler direct et sans équivoque. Ils s'étaient étranglés lorsque Ronald Reagan qualifia l'Union soviétique d'« *empire du Mal* ». Les voilà qui s'étranglent de nouveau.

Il est malaisé de comprendre la réticence des Européens si l'on se penche sur le détail du comportement des régimes qui gouvernent l'Irak et la Corée du Nord par la torture et l'assassinat et, dans le même temps, développent des programmes de fabrication d'armes de destruction massive et de missiles balistiques, en violation complète de leurs engagements internationaux. Dans ces régimes, on ne trouve quasiment rien qui ne relève pas du mal.

Le cas de l'Iran est plus complexe parce qu'il existe, dans le pays en général et au sein d'une partie du gouvernement, un authentique mouvement réformiste, mais le pouvoir national reste exercé – et le recours au terrorisme soutenu – par un petit groupe de mollahs criminels dont le comportement n'a rien à envier à celui de leurs pairs en Corée du Nord et en Irak.

Le mot « *axe* » peut être tenu pour légèrement excessif : l'Allemagne, le Japon et l'Italie furent dans le passé passablement plus alignés que le groupe ici désigné, bien qu'existe une coopération certaine en matière de missiles entre l'Iran et la Corée du Nord, et un passé de coopération entre

l'Iran et l'Irak, pour ce qui est du terrorisme.

Et, bonté divine, comme pourrait dire le secrétaire à la défense, Donald Rumsfeld, quelle est cette absence de consultation de la part des Etats-Unis ? M. Bush revient d'Asie, où il a consulté. Le vice-président se rend au Moyen-Orient, pour consulter. Le secrétaire d'Etat est en consultation permanente.

Non, ce qui émeut les Européens, en réalité, n'est absolument pas une quelconque inadéquation des propos du président ni une carence américaine dans la recherche de collégialité. C'est plutôt leur adhésion perverse au principe qui veut que nulle bonne action américaine ne doive rester impunie. De nombreuses personnes, parmi les élites de l'Europe – au sein desquelles le premier ministre britannique Tony Blair et quelques autres fidèles font figure de voyantes exceptions –, persistent dans une vision du monde hargneuse et délibérément aveugle à la réalité dont le ressort central est que tout ce qui suscite une certitude ou un enthousiasme de l'Amérique est, au mieux, hautement suspect.

Cette attitude découle largement de leur choix de mener la belle vie, de maintenir des services sociaux généreux, de prendre de longues vacances et de laisser les Etats-Unis porter le fardeau principal consistant à préserver la paix dans le monde. Il n'est pas de mépris plus caustique que celui qui naît de la culpabilité.

La vie imite ici l'art – l'œuvre d'art étant en l'occurrence le classique western *Le train sifflera trois fois*, tourné il y a un demi-siècle.

Dans ce film, le shérif (Gary Cooper) d'une petite ville nommée Hadleyville vient de quitter son poste et de se marier. Au moment où il s'apprête à quitter la ville avec sa jeune épouse (Grace Kelly), il apprend que le chef des bandits qui dominèrent jadis la ville en y semant la terreur vient d'obtenir la grâce du gouverneur de l'Etat et arrivera dans un peu plus d'une heure, par le train de midi, celui qui siffle trois fois, afin de retrouver ses anciens complices et de reprendre le pouvoir.

Après quelques minutes d'hésitation, le shérif décide de revenir en ville, contre l'avis de sa femme, qui a de fortes convictions pacifistes, son successeur n'arrivant que le lendemain. Il entreprend alors d'organiser un groupe de volontaires pour protéger la ville.

Mais, alors que midi approche,

il devient de plus en plus évident que les braves citoyens de Hadleyville, qui, quelques années auparavant, avaient aidé le shérif à nettoyer la ville, ne sont désormais capables que d'aligner une kyrielle de bonnes excuses : « *Si le shérif n'est pas là, il ne se passera rien ; c'est juste une affaire personnelle entre lui et Miller* » (le bandit libéré), ou : « *Ce sont les politiciens, là-haut, dans le Nord, qui sont responsables de ce bazar ; qu'ils viennent le régler, maintenant* », etc.

Particulièrement poignante est la scène entre le shérif et son loyal adjoint de toujours, qui finit par se retirer lorsque midi approche, parce qu'il est inquiet pour ses jeunes enfants. « *Rentre chez toi t'occuper de tes gosses, Herb* », dit le shérif, qui sort alors affronter seul les bandits.

Seule l'épouse du shérif, qui avait commencé par le quitter, revient au dernier moment lui prêter main-forte, et il l'emporte, contre toute attente. Pour une petite dame quaker qui déteste les armes à feu, elle fait un beau score : un mort, une participation active à une autre mort.

Lorsque les habitants de la ville se rendent compte qu'il a gagné et sortent pour le féliciter, le shérif les regarde impassiblement, ôte son étoile qu'il laisse tomber dans la poussière, puis sa femme et lui prennent la route et s'en vont.

Dans la version de cette même histoire qui fait aujourd'hui la « *une* » des journaux, la production d'armes de destruction massive que mènent des Etats soutenant par ailleurs le terrorisme, c'est le train de midi qui approche inéluctablement et sifflera trois fois. Le gouvernement français et les compagnies pétrolières françaises décrocheraient sans problème l'Oscar du meilleur remake pour leur interprétation collective, pour de vrai, de l'employé de l'hôtel qui ne voit qu'une chose : avec le retour en ville des bandits, les affaires du saloon vont être florissantes.

Bien d'autres Européens trouveront dans le film d'excellents modèles pour les aider à perfectionner les excuses à leur non-intervention et leur condescendance à l'égard de leur protecteur. Fred Zinnemann, le réalisateur du *Train sifflera trois fois*, avait une bonne connaissance de ce territoire moral. En tant que réfugié d'Europe centrale, il avait entendu tous les arguments pour justifier les stratégies d'apaisement, ainsi

que les conséquences fatales du refus d'attaquer les régimes mauvais sans attendre qu'ils soient en mesure de provoquer un désastre total.

« *Tiens, diront sans doute les Européens antiaméricains en lisant ce point de vue, voyez comment les Américains idéalisent le cow-boy de l'Ouest sauvage, sa nature impulsive et son rapport unilatéral au monde. Quelle naïveté ! Ils sont comiques.* »

Deux ripostes rapides viennent à l'esprit. Les cow-boys sont des gens normaux ; certains sont impulsifs, d'autres sont des solitaires, d'autres encore ne sont ni l'un ni l'autre. Mais ce que vous êtes en train de rejeter, ce n'est pas une version moderne du cow-boy, mais plutôt la version moderne du shérif.

Or les shérifs sont différents. Eux et leurs homologues, les GI par exemple, ont fait le choix d'une vie consacrée à la protection des autres, quel que soit le prix à payer. Ce qui n'est pas être impulsif – c'est décider d'être un berger plutôt qu'un mouton.

La seconde est que, tout comme les Etats-Unis aujourd'hui en agissant contre l'axe, le shérif du film s'efforçait vraiment d'être multilatéral – il cherchait désespérément à rassembler une petite troupe. Simplement, il n'a pas trouvé d'amateurs. Il refusait une chose, le shérif : renoncer à faire son devoir sous le seul prétexte que tous les autres trouvaient des excuses pour rester en dehors du combat.

Rentrez chez vous vous occuper de vos gosses, Européens. Rentrez chez vous vous occuper de vos gosses, et puis faites vos prières pour que, lorsque tout sera fini, nous ne rendions pas notre étoile en la laissant tomber dans la poussière.

Traduit de l'anglais (Etats-Unis)  
par Françoise Cartano  
© The Wall Street Journal Europe



## Le journaliste américain Randal défend son livre interdit pour séparatisme



ISTANBUL, 3 avr (AFP) - 15h40 - Le journaliste américain Jonathan Randal, spécialiste des Kurdes, a tenté de défendre mercredi devant un tribunal d'Istanbul un de ses livres, interdit en Turquie et dont l'éditeur turc est poursuivi pour propagande séparatiste, sans être entendu par la Cour.

"Nous faisons notre possible pour éviter la prison à l'éditeur turc", a expliqué à l'AFP l'auteur de l'essai "After such knowledge, what forgiveness? - my encounters in Kurdistan" (Sachant cela, quel pardon? Mes rencontres au Kurdistan), déplorant que la Cour de sûreté de l'Etat n'ait pas daigné entendre son témoignage, lui-même n'étant pas poursuivi personnellement.

L'ouvrage, traduit en turc après le Kurde, l'arabe et le persan, a été saisi par la police en Turquie en janvier.

L'éditeur, Abdullah Keskin, qui dirige la maison d'édition Avesta, risque jusqu'à 3 ans de prison et 3 milliards de livres turques (2.500 euros environ), a précisé à l'AFP son avocat maître Hasip Kaplan.

"Ce que j'ai entendu me laisse penser que tout cela se terminera bien, à un moment où la Turquie cherche à faire partie de l'Union européenne", a estimé Jon Randal, qui a fait le déplacement en Turquie pour assister à l'audience.

Le procès, auquel ont assisté des représentants du consulat américain et de l'association de défense des journalistes Reporters sans frontières, a été ajourné au 7 juin prochain.

"Il est inacceptable que des livres soient censurés et que des éditeurs soient emprisonnés", a encore regretté le journaliste américain.

Le livre utilise le mot -- tabou en Turquie -- "Kurdistan" sans pour autant dénoncer la politique de la Turquie vis-à-vis de sa population kurde, ni même épargner ses critiques envers le mouvement rebelle du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan PKK, qui a déposé les armes il y a 30 mois.

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## La Turquie demande à l'Iran l'extradition d'un commandant du PKK



ANKARA, 3 avr (AFP) - 14h47 - La Turquie a demandé à l'Iran d'extrader un dirigeant du parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie), Cemal Bayik, a déclaré mercredi l'ambassadeur turc à Téhéran Selahattin Alpar à l'agence turque Anatolie.

Indiquant disposer d'"informations officielles" sur la présence sur le sol iranien de Cemal Bayik, M. Alpar a précisé que les démarches nécessaires avaient été faites auprès des autorités iraniennes pour sa "livraison à la Turquie en raison des crimes commis dans le pays".

L'ambassadeur turc a souligné qu'il ne savait pas si Bayik avait été interpellé ou pas par les autorités iraniennes.

Selon la télévision privée NTV, il serait détenu en garde à vue à Ouroumieh, près de la frontière irano-turque.

Une source officielle iranienne a confirmé mercredi que Cemal Bayik se trouvait bien en Iran, en compagnie d'Halil Atac, autre dirigeant du PKK, pour "des raisons médicales". Tous les deux, "en attendant une décision", ont été placés sous surveillance policière à Ouroumieh à la "demande du gouvernement d'Ankara qui a demandé leur extradition", a précisé la même source.

"La partie iranienne devrait nous donner une réponse dans les plus brefs délais, nous l'attendons. S'ils ne répondent pas, nous les contacterons au moment approprié, mais je ne pense pas que nous aurons besoin de le faire", a fait valoir M. Alpar.

La demande d'extradition a été déposée le 30 mars, selon NTV.

Bayik, membre du conseil de la présidence du PKK, fut un proche adjoint du chef du mouvement, Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort par la justice turque en 1999 pour séparatisme et trahison pour les 15 ans de rébellion armée de son organisation, considérée comme "terroriste" par Ankara.

Après la capture d'Ocalan au Kenya en février 1999 il avait été perçu comme son possible successeur. Mais le PKK avait décidé de ne pas changer son chef.

Selon la presse, Bayik s'est opposé à l'appel d'Ocalan, lancé après sa capture, de déposer les armes et de se retirer du territoire turc.

Bayik s'était réfugié depuis longtemps en Irak du nord, qui échappe au contrôle de Bagdad depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991, où se sont retranchés quelque 4.000 rebelles du PKK après l'appel de leur chef. Il voyagerait fréquemment en Iran, accusé par Ankara de "fermer le yeux" sur ses activités, selon les médias turcs.

M. Alpar a souligné par ailleurs que les relations avec l'Iran avaient enregistré d'importants développements, notamment dans la coopération contre le PKK.

L'ambassadeur d'Iran à Ankara, Mohammad-Hossein Lavasani, a indiqué la semaine dernière à la radio iranienne que l'Iran et la Turquie ont qualifié pour la première fois les Moudjahidine du peuple, mouvement iranien d'opposition armée basé en Irak, et le PKK de "terroristes".

L'Iran a été accusé dans le passé d'abriter des camps du PKK, mais Téhéran a toujours rejeté cette accusation.





په‌کێتی ی نیشتمانی ی کوردستان  
PATRIOTIC UNION OF KURDISTAN  
BUREAU FOR INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

April 2, 2002

## Kurdistan Regional Government Prime Minister Dr. Barham Salih unharmed after assassination attempt.

At 16:10 Local Time in Suleimani, two armed terrorists opened fire outside the residence of the KRG Prime Minister Dr. Barham Salih. The resulting shootout left a few members of Dr. Salih's security killed. When Dr. Salih's security returned fire, both of the terrorists were killed.

The cowardly terrorists had used a Red Volkswagen Passat disguised as a taxi to carry out the attempted assassination.

This is not the first time that a member of the leadership of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan has been targeted for assassination. The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan does not fear these cowardly attempts to undermine the democratic secular achievements that have been made in Iraqi Kurdistan.

In order to achieve the successes for the Kurdish people, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan has had to endure the martyrdom of many of its leadership cadres but we shall continue to stand strong in what is right for the people of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan will not falter in its attempt to capture those responsible for this cowardly attack and will bring to justice all those that are behind trying to destabilize our region.

## Sept personnes tuées dans un attentat visant un dirigeant kurde



DUBAI, 4 avr (AFP) - 18h49 - Le chef du "gouvernement" régional kurde dans le nord de l'Irak a échappé cette semaine à un attentat, qui a fait sept tués, a-t-on appris jeudi auprès de l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK).

"L'enquête se poursuit (pour connaître les instigateurs) de l'attaque perpétrée mardi contre le domicile de Barham Saleh, un membre du bureau politique de l'UPK" dans la ville contrôlée par l'UPK à Sulaymaniya, a déclaré à l'AFP Latif Rashid, depuis la Suède.

M. Rashid, représentant à Londres de l'UPK, a ajouté que le conducteur du véhicule où se trouvaient les agresseurs qui avaient ouvert le feu contre le domicile de M. Saleh, avait été arrêté par les autorités locales qui l'interrogent en ce moment.

Le Kurdistan irakien s'était soulevé contre le régime au pouvoir à Bagdad dans la foulée de sa défaite dans la guerre du Golfe en 1991 et échappe depuis au pouvoir central irakien.

Les tireurs ont ouvert le feu contre la maison de M. Saleh à l'aide de mitrailleuses et de fusils d'assaut, ce qui a entraîné une riposte des gardes du corps du responsable kurde, dont cinq ont été tués dans l'attaque.

Deux des agresseurs ont été également tués dans la fusillade. M. Saleh est indemne, a ajouté M. Rashid, dont le mouvement est dirigé par Jalal Talabani.

Il a affirmé que des explosifs avaient été trouvés dans la voiture des agresseurs.

M. Saleh a écarté une possible implication du Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK), de Massoud Barzani .

Le PDK et l'UPK se disputent le contrôle du nord de l'Irak.

Il a affirmé à ce propos que les rapports entre le PDK et l'UPK étaient actuellement "bons".

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## Kurdistan PM, Dr Barham Salih, is safe, after an attack

02/04/2002 KurdishMedia.com

Sulemani-Kurdistan (KurdishMedia.com) 02 April 2002: Around 3.00 pm local time, unidentified gunmen opened fire on Dr Barham Salih, the Kurdistan Prime Minister – PUK and killed five of his bodyguards. The Prime Minister is safe.

In an exchange of fire between them, two of the gunmen were also killed and unconfirmed reports suggest that one of them has been captured.

At the same time, Mr Jalal Talabani, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) General Secretary, was in Sulemani Palace Hotel, less than a mile away from the incident.

After the incident both, Mr Talabani and Dr Salih, appeared on TV and said that they know who is behind the attack.



Whoever KurdishMedia.com talked to in Sulemani this afternoon accused the Islamic fundamentals of Jund Al-Islam or/and Ansar Al-Islam, splinter gangs from the main Islamic fundamentalists of Mala Ali Abdul-Aziz. This cannot be confirmed at this early stage.

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## Une délégation du Département d'Etat rencontre des responsables Kurdes en Irak



DUBAI, 4 avr (AFP) - 22h30 - Une délégation du Département d'Etat américain a récemment rencontré des dirigeants kurdes dans le Kurdistan irakien, nord de l'Irak, a annoncé jeudi le Parti Démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) dans un communiqué.

La délégation américaine était dirigée par Ryan Crocker, vice-secrétaire d'Etat adjoint pour les affaires du Proche-Orient, selon le communiqué, dont une copie est parvenue à l'AFP.

"Les entretiens ont porté sur la situation politique en Irak et dans la région" du Proche-Orient, selon le texte.

La délégation américaine a rencontré le chef du PDK, Massoud Barzani dans son quartier général à Salahuddin ainsi que Jalal Talabani, chef du parti rival l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK), à Sulaimaniya, a ajouté le communiqué.

Les deux factions se disputent le contrôle du Kurdistan irakien (nord), qui échappe totalement au pouvoir central de Bagdad depuis la guerre du Golfe en

"La délégation américaine a souligné l'engagement (de Washington) à poursuivre sa protection et son soutien humanitaire au peuple irakien dans le Kurdistan", a ajouté le communiqué, qui ne donne aucune autre précision.

M. Crocker s'était rendu en décembre dernier dans le Kurdistan irakien où il avait rencontré des responsables des deux factions kurdes rivales.

M. Talabani avait affirmé à la mi-mars que "les Etats-Unis n'ont pas discuté avec nous d'une frappe (contre l'Irak) et ils ne nous ont pas demandé d'y participer".

Le Kurdistan irakien s'est soulevé contre le régime de Bagdad après la guerre du Golfe et, depuis, les provinces d'Erbil, Souleimaniyeh et Dohuk sont contrôlées par le PDK et l'UPK. Le PDK contrôle les zones les plus proches de la frontière turque, l'UPK celles proches de la frontière iranienne.

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International Herald Tribune  
Thursday, April 4, 2002

MEANWHILE ■ By Ramesh Thakur

## Iran's vibrant society surprises a visitor

TEHRAN

**A**lthough separated today by Pakistan, India and Iran are ancient civilizations with intertwined histories. The influence of Persian art, architecture, poetry and philosophy, even in quintessentially Indian icons like the Taj Mahal, is part of my cultural heritage as an Indian.

So my first visit to Iran was tinged with excitement and anticipation. But there was also an undercurrent of trepidation. This was an official visit, coming shortly after the inclusion of Iran in the Bush administration's "axis of evil," along with Iraq and North Korea.

Iran is seen by some as the font of Islamic revolutionary fervor spewing hate against the United States and Israel, where the mullahs hold sway and terror is an instrument of choice by the state for eliminating dissidents at home and threatening enemies abroad.

Yet the delights of Iran overwhelmed my anxieties. The vibrancy of civil society and the political contest came as a surprise.

The local newspapers report daily on parliamentary proceedings, which include robust questioning of government ministers by lawmakers.

The judiciary is clearly independent of the government, and sometimes acts as the arbiter between a more tolerant and liberalizing government and the remnants of the old theocratic regime. Along with Bangladesh, Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan and Turkey, Iran offers a useful antidote to the claims that Islam is inimical to democracy.

**Iranian women insisted that the revolution had liberated them.**

Young Iranians are emerging as the main force for change. They are remarkably politicized. Plugged into the world via the Internet, they are aware of international cross-currents and eager to engage foreigners in animated debates.

The residual anger and bitterness toward Iraq stemming from the eight-year war does not negate their opposition to any U.S. attack on Saddam Hussein.

Yet many say that they would gladly migrate to the United States and Canada if given the chance. This apparent vote of no confidence in the future of Iran should concern the authorities.

Hard-line Iranian conservatives denounce the U.S. government for allegedly having hijacked the war on terrorism to legitimize the Bush presidency after it so narrowly sneaked into office, impose U.S. hegemony and push through the agenda of the Zionist lobby in the Middle East.

But mainstream concern is more like Europe's: apprehension about a superpower out of international control. Ordinary Iranians are also fiercely critical of Israeli brutality against Palestinians and the inability of America, and the international community through the United Nations, to rein in Israeli leader Ariel Sharon.

The biggest surprise for me was the women.

All, including foreigners, must wear a head scarf. This applies even in Iran Air's international flights (as does the no alcohol rule: the eleven hours from Tokyo to Tehran were an eternity).

Yet the Iranian women I met insisted that the revolution liberated them from the household, gave them broader access to education and the workplace and allowed them to assume public roles that previously had been off limits.

Many women in Tehran hold positions of authority. They join discussions with confidence and poise.

The reality of Iran is clearly different from what it is sometimes reported to be.

*The writer, vice rector of the United Nations University in Tokyo, contributed this personal comment to the International Herald Tribune.*

A promising breakthrough ■ By Alfred H. Moses

## After 40 years, a united Cyprus may soon be a reality

WASHINGTON

**W**ith the world's attention focused on the U.S. war against terrorism, scant attention is being given to a potential breakthrough in the longstanding conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims on Cyprus. The Cyprus problem is a microcosm of the larger ethnic conflict that extends across much of Europe and Asia.

Since early this year the Turkish Cypriot leader, Rauf Denktash, and his Greek counterpart, President Glafcos Clerides of Cyprus, have been quietly meeting face to face three mornings a week negotiating the details of an agreement to end the ethnic conflict that broke out after a shrinking British empire pulled out of Cyprus in 1960. The breakthrough occurred after Denktash agreed late last year to meet with Clerides to try to end the impasse.

A year before, Denktash had scuttled United Nations-led "proximity talks," insisting on international recognition of the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus before face-to-face negotiations could begin. This was not the first time Denktash (with Turkey's support) had pulled the rug out from under UN efforts to solve the Cyprus problem.

Denktash, the leader of the Turkish Cypriots for more than 40 years, enjoys hero status in Turkey, where he is seen as the savior of the Turkish Cypriots on an island where Greeks outnumber Turks by more than four to one. When Denktash pulled out of the UN-led talks in November 2000, he was supported by Turkey's prime minister, Bulent Ecevit, and its influential military.

This might have been business as usual in the long-playing Cyprus saga, but for the fact that Turkey is now a candidate for European Union membership. When Denktash said "no" this last time, voices in Turkey proclaimed "enough." Media, business leaders and, for the first time, responsible politicians realized that the unresolved Cyprus problem stood in the way of Turkey's larger strategic interests in moving toward the West. As they saw it, the Cyprus tail was wagging the Turkish dog. They realized that, for Turkey, the road to the EU runs through Nicosia, Cyprus's capital.

With Cyprus's own accession to the EU expected in December, Denktash and his supporters in Turkey were faced with a hard choice. Either they abandon

hope for a political solution and allow Cyprus to enter the EU, with the Turkish northern third of the island left behind, or they come to an agreement with the Greek Cypriots before Cyprus slipped away. With few cards left to play, Denktash reversed course, leading to the negotiations now under way.

Major hurdles remain. Territory in the north will have to go back to the Greek side. Property claims on both sides need to be settled. Security arrangements must be put in place and a new government for a unified Cyprus agreed to.

That said, there is a genuine basis for optimism. Both Denktash and Clerides realize this is their last hurrah. These venerable leaders, one 78, the other 83, have been at it for more than four decades. Neither can see anyone on the horizon to take their place. The next generation will not have known a time when Greeks and Turks lived peacefully together as neighbors. Moreover, if agreement is not reached this year,

Cyprus will slip away and the division on Cyprus is likely to become permanent. If that happens, the northern third of the island, which is not self-sustainable, will look to join Turkey, making Ecevit's threat to annex real, scuttling Turkey's EU ambitions.

If Denktash and Clerides are serious about a united Cyprus that protects the fundamental interests of the two sides, it can happen now; and if Muslims and non-Muslims can live together on Cyprus, it could turn out to be the harbinger of peace in the larger conflict that affects the world. Having set the stage for the present talks, the United States and others should stand back and quietly encourage both sides to reach agreement.

*The writer, who was the U.S. special presidential emissary for the Cyprus problem from 1999 to 2001, contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.*

LE FIGARO JEUDI 4 AVRIL 2002

**TURQUIE** *Le PKK veut devenir un parti politique classique*

## Les Kurdes tentés de renoncer aux armes

Cologne/Istanbul :  
Éric Biegala

Le problème kurde serait-il en train de se résoudre en Turquie ? Le PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan) est sur le point de devenir un parti politique comme les autres et le régime turc d'autoriser la langue kurde à la télévision... mais, sur le terrain, la répression reste vive et les rebelles n'ont pas lâché leurs armes.

L'annonce, amplement relayée la semaine dernière dans la presse turque, que le PKK avait changé de nom a été platement démentie par Osman Öcalan, frère du chef historique des rebelles kurdes emprisonné en Turquie et sous le coup d'une condamnation à la peine capitale. Un communiqué des rebelles indique toutefois que « les changements préparés vont au-delà d'un changement de nom, nous préparons une nouvelle structure ». Depuis quelques mois, le PKK a annoncé vouloir se fondre dans le combat politique classique et renoncer aux armes.

Pour Yasar Kaya, président du « Parlement kurde en exil »

basé à Cologne, ces développements sont cohérents : « un changement de nom est normal ; c'est la suite logique de la fin de la lutte armée ». Le PKK a rompu le combat en 1999, après la condamnation à mort de son chef. Les militants armés se sont repliés en Irak du nord et pratiquement aucune opération n'a plus été menée en Turquie depuis deux ans et demi. L'armée turque en revanche continue de leur faire la chasse : des chasseurs-bombardiers F16 auraient ainsi attaqué des bases rebelles à l'occasion du Newroz, le nouvel an kurde, le 21 mars.

Du côté des rebelles, le passage de la lutte armée à la lutte politique ne va pas non plus de soi. Confortablement installé à la terrasse d'un restaurant de Cologne, juste en face du Rhin en crue, Yasar Kaya plaide pour une approche pacifique, assortie toutefois de quelques précautions : « Ce ne sont plus les armes qu'il faut faire parler aujourd'hui... mais les militants refuseront d'abandonner complètement leurs fusils tant qu'il n'y aura pas de solution au problème kurde ».

Les rebelles ont averti qu'ils repartiraient à l'attaque au cas

où leur chef emprisonné serait exécuté, mais l'ordre du jour ne semble pas à la reprise des hostilités. « Je pense que les militants pourraient même se rendre, à condition de pouvoir bénéficier d'une véritable amnistie », estime l'infatigable activiste de la cause kurde, dont l'engagement remonte aux années 60. Un groupe de 12 rebelles qui s'étaient rendus aux autorités turques en 1999 « a été condamné à 24 ans de prison », remarque encore Yasar Kaya...

Du côté du régime, le ton n'est guère conciliant, même si on assiste à quelques timides avancées. Le gouvernement prépare une loi permettant aux repentis de bénéficier d'une peine allégée, mais on reste très loin d'une amnistie. Par ailleurs, la Turquie mène actuellement campagne pour que l'Union européenne revise sa liste des organisations terroristes et y inclue les rebelles kurdes.

Les autres demandes de l'Union concernant le « respect du droit des minorités » ont été traitées à l'avenant. D'ici à 2004, la Turquie doit ainsi avoir libéralisé ses textes pour permettre l'apprentissage de la

langue kurde. Cette perspective a été pour le moment platement écartée. En revanche, la possibilité de diffuser des émissions de radio et de télévision en kurde a été remise à l'ordre du jour. Le Conseil de sécurité nationale, dominé par les militaires, a indiqué vendredi dernier que « les activités de la télévision d'État pourraient être élargies ».

En clair, il s'agirait d'autoriser une heure d'émission en langue kurde par jour sur le réseau public.

Si elle se concrétise, cette mesure serait l'une des plus importantes en matière de libéralisation depuis l'autorisation de la langue kurde en 1991... Pour juger, il faudra attendre les modalités d'application. Si les publications en kurde sont effectivement autorisées depuis dix ans, leur diffusion est régulièrement interdite dans les régions à majorité kurde. Quand aux noms kurdes eux-mêmes ils sont souvent soumis à l'arbitraire administratif. Le gouverneur des provinces sous état d'urgence vient par exemple de bannir certains prénoms kurdes, au motif qu'ils étaient également utilisés par les militants du PKK.

## La Turquie va commander l'ISAF en Afghanistan

ISTANBUL. A l'occasion de la visite à Ankara du chef du gouvernement intérimaire afghan, Hamid Karzaï (photo), la Turquie a annoncé avoir donné son accord de principe pour prendre le commandement de la force internationale de paix en Afghanistan (ISAF), à la suite du commandement britannique. Washington a récemment offert 228 millions de dollars d'aide à son alliée de l'OTAN pour financer ce commandement. Lors de sa visite en Turquie, M. Karzaï a une nouvelle fois rappelé son souhait que le mandat de l'ISAF soit étendu « à tout le pays ». Si cette éventualité n'a toutefois pas été retenue par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU fin mars, celui-ci s'est en revanche prononcé pour prolonger, sans doute jusqu'à la fin de l'année, le mandat de l'ISAF censé expirer en juin. - (Corresp.)



REUTERS

LE MONDE / DIMANCHE 7 - LUNDI 8 AVRIL 2002

### Deux dirigeants du PKK en garde à vue

Iran. Les autorités iraniennes ont placé en garde à vue, dans le nord-ouest de l'Iran, deux dirigeants du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, opposition kurde illégale en Turquie), a-t-on appris hier auprès d'une source officielle à Téhéran. L'Iran et la Turquie avaient décidé récemment de considérer comme "terroristes" les Moudjahidine du peuple, mouvement iranien d'opposition armée basé en Irak, et le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan. Cette décision a été prise à l'issue d'une réunion sur la sécurité frontalière, tenue en mars entre des responsables de haut niveau des deux pays. L'Iran a été accusé, dans le passé, d'abriter des camps du PKK. Mais Téhéran a toujours rejeté cette accusation. (AFP)

metro  
JEUDI 4 AVRIL 2002

## Turk chief calls siege 'genocide'

### Pope sets prayer day as protests continue

From news reports

**LONDON:** Turkey's prime minister Thursday accused Israel, a crucial regional military ally, of "genocide" against Palestinians, and protesters marched in Muslim nations and other countries as Israel vowed to pursue its drive to root out suicide bombers.

With fighting reported Thursday in Bethlehem near where Christians believe Jesus was born, Pope John Paul II called for a world day of prayer Sunday for peace in the Middle East "to change the hearts of even the most obstinate men."

At the Vatican, the pope said he hoped the prayers on Sunday would reach out "to those who have the responsibility and power to take the necessary steps" to lead to an agreement "that is just and dignified for all."

There had been growing criticism of the United States for not doing enough to halt the violence and President George W. Bush on Thursday urged the Israelis to halt their military offensive and said he was sending Secretary of State Colin

Powell to the region next week.

Most of the street protests have been directed at Israel.

"The whole of the Palestinian state is being destroyed step by step," Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey told Parliament. "A genocide against the Palestinian people is being carried out before the eyes of the world." "Not only Yasser Arafat, but the Palestinian state is being destroyed step by step," Ecevit said, referring to the Palestinian leader.

In Brussels, the European Commission president, Romano Prodi, also said that Israel was systematically destroying Arafat's Palestinian Authority and the situation in the Middle East was deteriorating "at frightening speed."

Ecevit blamed both Israel and Palestinian radicals for the violence and urged both sides to resume talks, offering Turkey as a meeting place. Muslim Turkey and Israel cooperate in a range of security areas and only last month, Turkey signed an accord for an Israeli state defense firm to upgrade aging Turkish M-60 tanks.

But public protests against Israeli action have grown in Turkey. In a third day of demonstrations, about 2,500 people gathered amid a heavy police presence in central Ankara, shouting "Damn Israel" and "Murderer Israel," witnesses said.

In Lebanon, tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets to denounce Israel's raids on Palestinian towns and its siege of Arafat at his offices in Ramallah. About 20,000 demonstrators marched through the main streets of

the southern port city of Sidon, carrying pictures of Arafat, chanting "Sharon you pig" and burning Israeli flags.

Thousands more Lebanese and Palestinians from refugee camps demonstrated in the northern city of Tripoli.

In Jakarta, about 2,000 Indonesians marched, calling for an end to Israeli military action, in the third straight day of protests in the world's most populous Muslim nation. Thousands of protesters gathered outside the office of the United Nations in central Jakarta shouting slogans in support of the Palestinians.

Outside the Muslim world, about 100 people demonstrated peacefully against Israel in Bern, the Swiss capital. The police stopped about 25 people who tried to approach the Israeli Embassy.

But Saudi Arabia, home to Islam's holiest shrines, reminded its people of a ban on public demonstrations after an impromptu protest by 150 angry citizens in support of the Palestinians, the Saudi Press Agency said.

The Moroccan government granted schoolchildren early spring holidays in a bid to prevent possible violent Palestinian street protests, a government official said.

But the secretary-general of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, said Thursday that contacts with Israel's government had proved "useless" in restraining Israeli actions. "We are all convinced that Mr. Sharon is bound to do what he wants to do, because he believes he's above the law and he is protected by other powers," Moussa said in an interview on CNN. (Reuters, AFP)

■ IRAQ

**U.S. envoys meet  
Kurdish leaders**

A U.S. State Department delegation met with Kurdish leaders in the breakaway enclave of northern Iraq this week, a Kurdish party said Thursday in Ankara.

The Kurdistan Democratic Party, one of two factions that wrested control of northern Iraq from

Saddam Hussein after the 1991 Gulf War, said the U.S. team had met its leader, Massoud Barzani, on Wednesday.

The visit was made at a time when President George W. Bush has sounded increasingly antagonistic toward Iraq, which he has described as part of an "axis of evil."

Both parties have said they oppose Saddam's government but are wary of the spreading of Washington's war on terror to Iraq. (Reuters)

Europe vs. America ■ By Philip H. Gordon and Michael O'Hanlon

## Tony Blair has a chance to bridge the gap on Iraq

WASHINGTON  
Prime Minister Tony Blair, like every other postwar British leader, has sold his country's "special relationship" with the United States as a means of enhancing British influence in Washington. By broadly backing the United States on global issues ranging from NATO to missile defense to Iraq, London claims to get a special hearing from the Americans, an opportunity to whisper in the president's ear in a way that no other European can.

Blair in particular has made this argument to his European counterparts, insisting that through his close relationship with President George W. Bush he can make sure Europe's voice is heard, and act as a bridge across the Atlantic. This thesis will be put to a severe test when Blair arrives in Texas this weekend for his "war summit meeting" with Bush on Iraq.

While Blair has taken a hawkish line on Iraq and seems to support U.S. threats to use force to remove Saddam Hussein, other European leaders are deeply skeptical. They fear that an attack on Iraq would destabilize a Middle Eastern region already in flames because of the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, and they insist on proof that Saddam was involved in the Sept. 11 attacks before accepting the need to remove him.

Thus if Blair simply returns to Europe with the message that the Americans are determined to use force and that Europe needs to fall into line, he will meet stiff resistance, and the basic logic of the special relationship will have been severely discredited.

Can Blair bridge the gap between Americans determined to overthrow Saddam and Europeans who fail to see the need to do so? That will not be easy, but a trans-Atlantic deal is possible and Blair is perhaps the only one who can persuade both sides to sign on.

In essence, the deal would be this: Americans agree to give strengthened United Nations weapons inspections a chance to succeed if Saddam Hussein agrees to let inspectors back in, and Europeans agree to support the use of military force to change the regime in Iraq if he does not.

At first glance, neither Blair's American nor European partners will be enthusiastic. Many in the Bush administration see inspections as a failed policy. They fear that even if Saddam Hussein agrees under

the threat of force to allow the inspectors back in, Iraq will begin a new cat-and-mouse game of hiding its weapons and insisting that certain sites are off-limits. The inspectors will fail to find much, the international community will oppose the continual "harassment" of Iraq, and eventually calls to lift sanctions on Iraq will be made, leaving Saddam in possession of weapons of mass destruction and in position to develop more.

To convince the Americans that this all-too-plausible scenario will not come about, Blair will need to persuade them that Europeans will no longer permit Saddam to play games with the inspectors. A new UN Security Council resolution with European support would remind Iraq of its obligation to immediately account for and destroy its nuclear, biological, chemical, and missile programs. More notably, it would state that the failure to do so would lead to an international use of force to change the regime.

Europeans will also hesitate of course. They know that the chances are high that Saddam will either refuse inspections in the first place or that he will seek to cheat once they recommence, and that if they have threatened use of force they will have to follow through.

But the Europeans must also realize that failing to insist on serious, unfettered inspections linked to military force will only enhance American skepticism about the inspections route, and lead to the very American invasion they seek to avoid.

The bottom line is this: If Saddam really believes that a U.S.-led coalition is poised to unseat him, he will probably give up his weapons of mass destruction rather than lose his hold on power — or his life.

If the major Western allies can make their military threats credible, and stick together, they will therefore probably not have to carry them out. But if they waffle or disagree, we will get one of two bad outcomes: a dangerously armed Saddam or war against Iraq. The Blair-Bush summit meeting this weekend may be the most important yet.

The writers, senior fellows at the Brookings Institution, contributed this comment to the International Herald Tribune.



Saddam's offensive ■ By William Safire

International Herald Tribune  
Tuesday, April 9, 2002

# Al Qaeda terrorists target Iraqi Kurds

WASHINGTON

Sixty Islamic terrorists, trained in Afghanistan by Osama bin Laden, are holed up in the town of Biyara in northern Iraq, guests of Saddam Hussein. Their assignment is to infiltrate the no-flight zone and to kill the Kurdish leaders, who Saddam assumes will be allied with the United States in his overthrow.

This is the same assignment that Al Qaeda performed for the Taliban last Sept. 9, when a terrorist suicide team murdered the most popular Afghan leader, Ahmed Massoud. That assassination was intended to weaken anti-Taliban forces if the United States responded to the Sept. 11 attacks by hitting bin Laden's base in Afghanistan.

Ten days ago, a suicide team of three terrorists was dispatched by Saddam's Qaeda affiliate into the Kurdish area of Iraq protected by the U.S. and British air forces. A Kurdish leader, Jalal Talabani (no kin to the Taliban), was meeting in Sulaimaniya with two U.S. diplomats, Ryan Crocker and David Pearce.

With that meeting guarded by scores of Kurdish pesh merga fighters, the terrorists

up the most dependable indigenous ally in any coalition to overthrow Saddam.

President George W. Bush constantly evokes Saddam's poison gas attack in 1988 on the Kurds in Halabja, which killed many thousands of innocents, as evidence of the dictator's willingness to use weapons of mass destruction.

Understandably, neither Bush nor Colin Powell wants to recall the elder Bush's blunder that allowed Saddam to keep his gunships and slaughter Kurds who trusted the United States to support their uprising after the Gulf War victory. Ever since that debacle, America has protected the Kurds and they are grateful for U.S. air cover.

As a result, they have built the only democratic government and rudimentary free-enterprise system in the Middle East since the birth of Israel. Contrast the Kurds' recent progress with that of Palestinians — a people burdened with corrupt leaders, kept in squalid refugee camps for generations by Arab despots and fed a diet of hatred.

Afflicted by tribal tensions at the start of their decade of freedom, the two Kurdish factions have come together. After Sad-

dam's recent assassination attempt, the urbane Jalal Talabani was embraced by Masoud Barzani, as 100,000 Kurds marched through a heavy rain at the murdered guards' funeral.

Kurds now dream of an autonomous region within a democratic Iraq, which would be acceptable to Turkey with its large Kurdish minority.

If Bush is serious about overthrowing Saddam before that avatar of arrogance gets the power to obliterate Washington, he cannot count on a colonels' coup or a coat-holding coalition of craven caliphs. America has already had to begin abandoning its bases in Saudi Arabia. Joining in liberating Iraq will be the British, Turks and Kurds.

The Kurds, though fierce fighters, cannot be provided with modern arms and trained to use them overnight. Saddam, allied with bin Ladenesque cadres, has begun his offensive — diplomatic at the United Nations, economic with oil-embargo threats, terrorist to his north.

Time is short for a counterattack.

The New York Times

## Time is short for a counterattack

targeted the home of Barham Salih, 41, the pro-Western regional prime minister. Their grenades and gunfire missed his appearance at his front door by 10 seconds. Five Kurdish guards were killed and two of the assassins died in the return fire.

The third terrorist was wounded and caught. "I came to kill and be killed," he pleaded, but the pesh merga — many of whose relatives were ambushed, captured and beheaded by Saddam's Islamic surrogates two months ago — saved him for interrogation. He is the source of the intelligence about the 60 Qaeda terrorists in Biyara carrying out Saddam's assassination plans.

That intelligence seems of little interest to the Central Intelligence Agency, which failed to inform members of the National Security Council of this incident until my query last week.

Maybe it has no agents on the ground (though U.S. diplomats were); maybe its director is distracted by his high-visibility diplomatic chores; maybe it is sulking because the journalist Jeffrey Goldberg of The New Yorker went where no spook had gone before.

Whatever the excuse, it's unlikely that one dollar of the \$30 billion intelligence budget (which includes covert operations) has gone to provide one automatic rifle, one mortar, or one anti-tank rocket to the 70,000 Kurdish fighters who would make



# Iran juggles AIDS fight and Islam

## Doctors urge 'moral' behavior and avoid the word 'condom'

By Neil MacFarquhar

The New York Times

**TEHRAN:** How to teach teenagers about safe sex without even whispering the word condom is one of the delicate questions facing the Islamic Republic as it grapples with a surge in AIDS cases.

Even the pamphlet designed for adolescents by the Iranian Center for Disease Control says, "The best way to avoid AIDS is to be faithful to moral and family obligations and to avoid loose sexual relations. Trust in God in order to resist satanic temptations."

"As officials, we cannot talk about things that are opposed to our culture, opposed to our religious beliefs," said Dr. Mohammed Mehdi, a specialist in infectious diseases who runs the Center for Disease Control, which is trying to check the country's small but rapidly growing number of AIDS cases. "Premarital sex is inappropriate and un-Islamic. So we can't say things to teenagers like, 'Use a condom.'"

Yet he is among a small group of activist doctors spurred on by the disease's spread and an official order from the supreme religious leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, to fight it.

At the end of January, Iran had identified 3,438 people who had the human immunodeficiency virus, which causes AIDS. An overwhelming majority of those people are male drug addicts. So far, 350 patients died and an additional 35 have developed AIDS. The Center for Disease Control estimates there are 19,000 HIV-positive Iranians; other

sources give larger figures. Although the numbers are small in a country of 70 million, the potential is deadly, particularly considering the widespread needle-sharing among the 1.2 million confirmed drug addicts.

The anti-AIDS organization here recently provoked outrage — and an official rejection — when it suggested that the prisons start needle exchanges. The idea was officially rejected as encouraging addiction. But the organization persuaded a few wardens to try it because the method has reduced the incidence of the disease in other countries.

Government hospitals freely give AIDS patients the \$1,000-a-week cocktail of drugs that suppresses the disease, Mehdi said. But prisoners cannot get the same treatment because the drugs must be taken on a strict timetable and doctors say inmates in the country's overcrowded prisons cannot follow it.

In the infectious diseases ward at Imam Khomeini Hospital, where AIDS patients are treated, a 30-year-old released prisoner recalled how he became addicted to injecting heroin during a nine-year sentence and caught the disease.

"I don't remember anybody knowing anything about the disease," the emaciated man said. "We only had a concept that it was like a nuclear bomb, that an AIDS patient was more dangerous than a nuclear bomb. I had no idea that AIDS could come to Iran; it seems ridiculous. I thought Africa was very far away and it could never come here."

Much of the problem begins with

policy-makers' squeamishness about any frank discussion. Until a few months ago, although the word condom had been introduced to AIDS pamphlets for adults, it continued to be banned on radio and television.

Condoms are available in pharmacies. But, "the policy-makers think if you talk about something it will encourage the activity," said Dr. Minoo Mohraz, one of Iran's first AIDS specialists, who put her foot down a few months ago about the ban on broadcasting the word condom. "I said if they won't let me talk about condoms and sexual behavior, I won't come on the program. So they said I could talk."

That attitude is largely supported, even by conservative clerics, who say Iran has to confront the disease. Rather than rely solely on Western experience, however, some experts contend that the Islamic republic should employ its singular traditions in the fight.

Mohammed Abai Khorassani, a cleric and member of Parliament, suggests that the religiously sanctioned practice of temporary marriage might help. "AIDS is a result of lust," Khorassani said. "Even temporary marriage brings more commitment between couples, and young men would not chase prostitutes."

## Iraq suspends oil exports but no allies join in

By Brian Knowlton

International Herald Tribune

**WASHINGTON:** Iraq on Monday suspended its oil exports to protest the Israeli incursions into Palestinian territory, and President Saddam Hussein said the move would last 30 days or until Israel withdraws its forces.

Saddam said that the action, announced after a meeting of his Revolutionary Council, was taken "against the Zionist entity and the American aggressive policy and not against anyone else."

The Iraqi decision was expected to have little or no long-term impact on oil markets. Members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries have not followed Iraq's

lead and producers are expected to intervene, if necessary, to offset the loss of Iraqi shipments. Russia was likely to join them.

The Turkish state-run pipeline company BOTAS, which transports Iraqi oil, confirmed Monday that the flow had stopped.

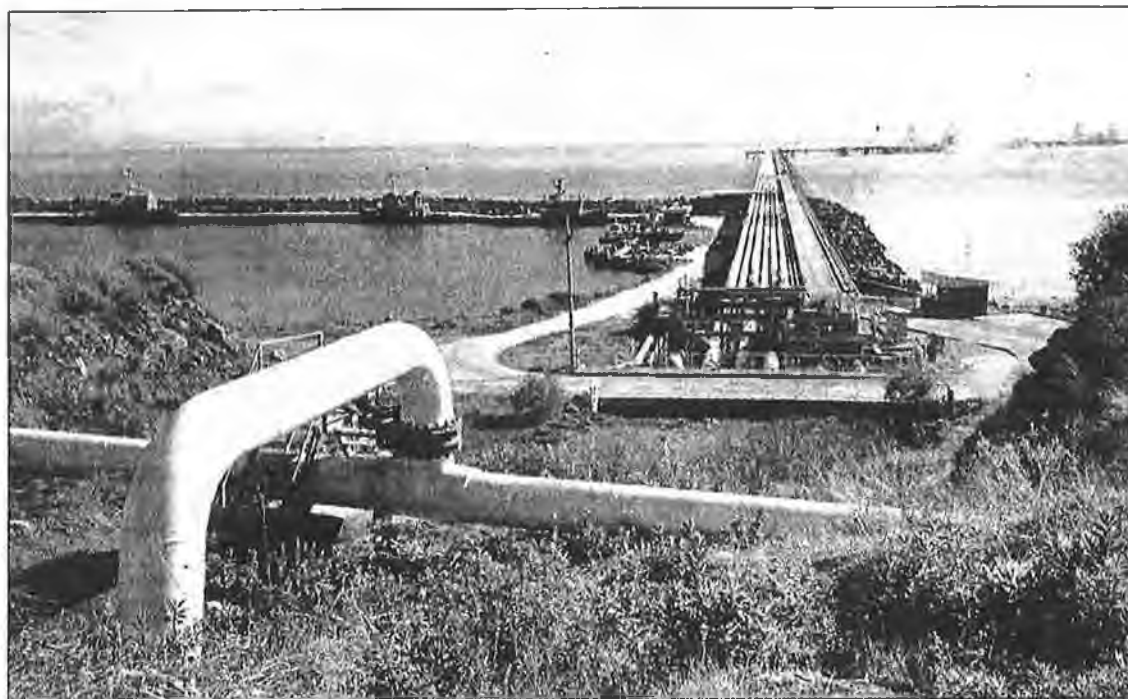
The announcement caused a temporary spiking of oil prices in London, leaving May contracts of the benchmark North Sea Brent crude at \$26.98, or 99 cents higher than at the close Friday.

On the New York Mercantile Exchange, contracts of light, sweet crude for May delivery jumped to \$27.20 before easing back to \$26.54 a barrel, up 33 cents from Friday.

The United States buys more than half of Iraq's oil exports; taken as a group, European countries are the second-largest buyer. As a whole, Middle East producers account for about 12 percent of the U.S. oil supply.

Saddam's action appeared to play to Arab public opinion more than anything else. Still, the Iraqi decision was the most dramatic wielding of the "oil weapon" since the latest Israeli-Palestinian crisis began, coming amid growing uncertainty in the region, extraordinarily high emotions on all sides and at a particularly delicate time for struggling world economies.





The Associated Press/1996

**Iraq, which has announced it will stop exporting oil for 30 days or until Israel withdraws from Palestinian lands, moves part of its oil from the Kirkuk fields to the Turkish oil facility of Yumurtalik, above, on the Mediterranean.**

It also was announced on the eve of a planned one-day national strike against the state-owned oil producer in Venezuela, a major petroleum exporter.

Libya and Iran gave verbal support to the Iraqi action, although it was not clear if they would join in the effort. They had vowed to support an embargo, but only if it were backed by all Arab producers.

Two of the largest oil exporters, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, have rejected the use of oil as a political weapon.

OPEC, which includes Iran, Iraq and Libya, produces about one-third of the world oil supply; Iraq's share is about 4 percent.

"I don't think there'll be absolutely any support for him," Karen Matusic, editor of Oil Daily, said of Saddam. And OPEC can draw from about 5 million barrels a day of unused production capacity, if it chooses, she said on CNN.

Walid Khadouri, editor in chief of the Middle East Economic Survey, said he did not expect the Iraqi move "to impact the supplies in the world market."

The Iraqi announcement came amid continuing sharp rises in U.S. gasoline prices, pushed by the approach of the traditional summer season of high consumption and fears that both the Middle East crisis could spread and the United States might attack Iraq.

Saddam has not allowed UN weapons inspectors to return to the country because, the Bush administration contends, Baghdad is trying to develop weapons of mass destruction.

Even before the Iraqi announcement, Bush administration officials

were talking with some anxiety that rising oil prices could dampen the nascent economic recovery.

The U.S. Energy Department on Monday forecast an average nationwide price of \$1.46 per gallon for regular unleaded gasoline this summer, the third-highest summer price in U.S. history.

But on Monday administration spokesmen expressed little concern about the Iraqi action, although they referred to it as an illustration of the need to increase U.S. oil independence.

"There often is a difference between rhetoric and the reality of oil production and oil distribution," said Ari Fleischer, the White House spokesman.

He added that the boycott was "a reminder about the need for America to have an energy policy that is independent of such threats."

And he also called the boycott action just "another sigh that Saddam Hussein is willing to starve his own people."

Iraq's external trade is restricted by UN sanctions imposed after it invaded Kuwait in 1990.

The UN, however, allows Iraq to sell unlimited amounts of oil to buy food, medicine and other humanitarian supplies and is believed to have earned enough to survive a month without income from oil sales.

The U.S. Senate is debating administration energy proposals this week, including a controversial call to open drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in northern Alaska.

The Iraqi move appeared likely to have more political than economic effects.

Israel has suggested that it might withdraw its forces from the West Bank before the U.S. secretary of state, Colin Powell, arrives there later this week.

Saddam, who has championed the Palestinian cause, charged Monday that Israeli intended to "break the Arabs' and Palestinians' will, and force them to surrender with humiliation to the Zionist-American alliance."

An OPEC decision on raising export levels was expected Tuesday, after ministers confer by telephone.

OPEC said: "OPEC does not support Iraq's oil embargo as it goes against the organization's objective, which is to bring about stability and harmony to the oil market. OPEC would like to distance itself from the political decisions of member countries."

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait already have already rejected a repeat of the 1973 Arab oil embargo that led to a quadrupling of oil prices, triggering a severe economic recession in the West. Since then, wealthy nations have created the International Energy Agency to stockpile oil reserves that would serve as a cushion against any similar disruption.

## Un Kurde condamné à la prison avec sursis pour diffusion de chanson kurde



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 9 avr (AFP) - 17h14 - Un chauffeur kurde a été condamné mardi à 45 mois de prison avec sursis pour avoir diffusé une cassette de chansons en kurde dans son minibus de transport, a annoncé son avocat à l'AFP.

La Cour de sûreté de l'Etat de Diyarbakir a reconnu Sulhaddin Onen coupable "d'aide à une organisation armée" pour avoir passé cette cassette en 1999 dans son minibus de transport de passagers entre Diyarbakir et la ville proche de Cinar, a expliqué Sedat Yurttas.

La Cour a estimé que jouer des chansons en kurde revenait à soutenir le Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui a mené pendant quinze ans une guérilla armée pour obtenir une autonomie kurde dans le sud-est de la Turquie à majorité kurde, selon M. Yurttas.

"Mais la Cour a donné un sursis à exécution en tenant compte du fait que mon client n'avait pas de casier judiciaire", a-t-il ajouté. "Le sursis signifie qu'Onen ne doit pas commettre le même crime une nouvelle fois dans les cinq ans à venir, sinon il ira en prison purger sa peine."

Cette condamnation intervient au moment où la Turquie, candidate à une adhésion à l'Union européenne, s'interroge pour savoir si elle va autoriser une radio ou une télévision en kurde, droit culturel que lui réclame l'UE.

Les autorités craignent que des émissions en kurde ne réveillent les aspirations indépendantistes des Kurdes, alors que les affrontements dans le sud-est ont considérablement diminué depuis que le PKK a annoncé un arrêt des combats en 1999.

## Copenhague veut placer le PKK sur la liste des groupes terroristes de l'UE



COPENHAGUE, 9 avr (AFP) - 18h02 - Le Premier ministre danois Anders Fogh Rasmussen a souhaité mardi que le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), un mouvement séparatiste kurde de Turquie, soit placé sur la liste de l'UE des organisations terroristes, car il figure sur la liste des Etats-Unis.

Lors d'un point de presse à l'issue du conseil des ministres, M. Rasmussen a aussi indiqué que le gouvernement ne comptait cependant pas fermer les bureaux au Danemark de la branche politique du PKK, le Front de libération nationale du Kurdistan (ERNK).

"Nous avons pour tradition au Danemark de nous attaquer aux actions criminelles des associations mais non à la liberté d'association", a-t-il souligné.

Le gouvernement libéral-conservateur danois veut que cette liste de l'Union européenne (UE) soit dans la plus large mesure possible conforme à celle des Etats-Unis afin que les organisations terroristes ne puissent pas échapper à l'état économique que les Européens et les Américains tentent de mettre en place ensemble, a-t-il expliqué.

L'opposition de centre-gauche a estimé que le gouvernement n'avait "pas de mandat" pour oeuvrer à ce que "la liste de l'UE soit identique à celle des Américains".

La porte-parole du parti radical Elisabeth Arnold a en outre souligné, dans une déclaration au quotidien Politiken (centre-gauche), qu'il y avait "des doutes sur le caractère terroriste de certaines associations placées sur la liste américaine où en revanche ne figurent pas des organisations irlandaises qui se trouvent sur la liste de l'UE".

Les Quinze avaient adopté en décembre dernier une liste de 12 groupes et 30 individus désignés dont les avoirs devaient être gelés en raison de leurs actions ou leur soutien au terrorisme.

## La Turquie condamnée pour l'interdiction d'un parti politique pro-kurde



STRASBOURG, 9 avr (AFP) - 16h42 - La Turquie a été condamnée, mardi à Strasbourg, par la Cour européenne des droits de l'Homme pour avoir interdit un parti politique pro-kurde, accusé d'atteinte à l'unité de la nation.

La Cour constitutionnelle turque avait ordonné, en juillet 1993, de dissoudre le Parti du travail du peuple (HEP) au motif que ses activités portaient atteinte à l'intégrité territoriale de l'Etat et à l'unité de la nation.

Le HEP était accusé en particulier de "chercher à diviser l'intégrité de la nation turque en deux, avec les Turcs d'un côté et les Kurdes de l'autre, dans le but de fonder des Etats séparés" et de "chercher à détruire l'intégrité nationale et territoriale" de la Turquie.

La Cour européenne a jugé que la Turquie, en décidant la dissolution de ce parti, avait violé le droit à la liberté de réunion et d'association, garanti par l'article 11 de la Convention européenne des droits de l'Homme.

"Eu égard à l'absence de projet politique du HEP de nature à compromettre le régime démocratique dans le pays et/ou à l'absence d'une invitation ou d'une justification de recours à la force à des fins politiques, sa dissolution ne peut raisonnablement être considérée comme répondant à un +besoin social impérieux+", a estimé la Cour.

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Turkish Daily News

.....9 April 2002

KDP and PUK agree for joint fight against terrorists

## **Iraqi Kurds: Attacks won't halt drive for democratization and civil society**

Ilnur Cevik

The recent attacks and assassinations in northern Iraq will not deter the Iraqi Kurds from implementing their plan for setting up a civil society and democratization in the area, a leading Iraqi Kurdish official told the Turkish Daily News.

Speaking in Ankara to the TDN over the weekend, Barham Saleh, the head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan's (PUK) regional government in northern Iraq, said the recent attack on him in Suleymaniye by suspected Islamic extremists would not stall their efforts for major reforms, and had actually united all the Kurds in the fight against terrorism and extremism.

Seven people were killed in a fierce gun battle after suspected Islamic militants opened fire on Saleh and his entourage.

Two gunmen and five of Saleh's bodyguards were killed in the clash, while one of the assailants managed to get away. He was captured 14 hours later by PUK security. A score of people who provided logistic support for the attackers were also caught.

A PUK security official speaking to the TDN on condition of anonymity said the captured attacker had started to "sing like a bird" after remaining silent for a couple of days. He said the gunmen belonged to a group called Hamas el-Tevhid, a militant Islamic group. He said it was too early to point the finger at anyone, but it was meaningful that the attack came just as Saleh was to meet with Ryan Crocker, a U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state who was visiting the region.

Saleh told the TDN that tens of thousands of people had turned up at the funeral of the five security guards and there has been an incredible outpour of support for the PUK in the fight against terrorism.

Saleh also told the TDN that the Kurdistan Democracy Party (KDP), which runs a rival administration in northern Iraq, was prompt in condemning the attack and offering all out help to the PUK to fight terrorists. "KDP leader Masoud Barzani was the first person to condemn the attack and we were very pleased when he offered a joint fight against the terrorists and extremists. The attack has united all Kurds and has shown to friends and foes that all sides in northern Iraq are committed to enhancing the quality of life."

Saleh said he met Barzani just before he came to Ankara and had "extremely friendly and fruitful talks. Barzani also sent his top people Horsher Zebani and Fadil Mirand to Suleymaniye for security talks with the Jalal Talabani, leader of the PUK.

The PUK and the KDP have reportedly agreed to work together in the fight against terrorism.

"We want to establish a self governing democracy in northern Iraq," said Saleh and added that the attack was designed to halt this. "We shall remain on course of realizing this project and nothing will affect this. That is why, despite the attack, I have continued with my previous plans to fly to Washington via Ankara for consultations with the U.S. administration."

In Ankara, Saleh also met with Turkish Foreign Ministry and military officials over the weekend.

Asked if there were any Iranian links with the religious terrorists, Saleh said the PUK has excellent relations with Iran and Tehran and would not want to hurt such ties. He said Iran was prompt in condemning the attack and offering condolences.

Saleh flew to Washington on Monday for a series of meetings with U.S. officials.

## **Randal book trial postponed**

Turkish Daily News April 4, 2002

The trial of Avesta Publishing House owner Abdullah Keskin began yesterday with an early morning hearing at Istanbul's State Security Court (DGM) No. 5. The trial concerned the translation and publication of a book, "After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness? – My Impressions of Kurdistan," written by Jonathan C. Randal. Keskin was charged with inciting separatism by publishing the book. The trial has been postponed until June 9.

If convicted of using the press to engage in separatist propaganda in order to destroy the integrity of the Turkish Republic and nation, Keskin could be sentenced to prison for anywhere from six months to three years.

Randal, a world famous and well-respected journalist who has spent many years as a war correspondent for the Washington Post, arrived in Istanbul late Tuesday and attended the trial in support of his book and the publisher. Among other Keskin supporters at the hearing were Nadire Mater, Ragip Duran, Hugh Pope, Jessica Lutz and Nicole Pope. Keskin pointed out that he believed Randal's book was the best book written on the topic of the Kurds and Middle East politics. He pointed out that before appearing in Turkey, the book had been published in the United States, Britain, Italy, Iran and a number of Arab countries without any problem. "We are being tried for his book, for trying to benefit from his experiences. I think that this book ought not be treated this way," he added.

Keskin's lawyer then requested that Randal be permitted to speak for the defense, but after a break in the hearing, the court refused the request. The case was postponed until June on the grounds that the dossier on the case was not complete. After the hearing was over, Randal stated that he was quite happy at having come to the court to support Keskin and his book. He said, "I believe that a democratic result will come out of this court case in which freedom of thought is being tried."

Randal's book is based on the author's years of moving among the Kurds and inquiring into their affairs. He has written an account of diplomacy and politics in the Middle East and an adventure story about being a war reporter in the 1990s.

After Randal arrived late Tuesday at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport and visited the Avesta Publishing House, Keskin hosted him at a dinner held in the Yakub2 restaurant in Beyoglu. Present at the dinner were lawyers Hasip Sabahat Kaplan and Malni Sagnic, Ragib Duran, Cengiz Candar, Umit Firat, Hugh Pope, Jessica Lutz, Ertugrul Kurkcu, Nadire Mater, Muhsin Kizilkaya, Esra Dogru Arsan and Gul Demir. They had gathered to show their support for Keskin.

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## **United Nations says Iraq oil suspension will exacerbate financing of humanitarian aid program**

Associated Press April 9, 2002

UNITED NATIONS - Iraq's decision to suspend oil exports until Israeli troops withdraw from Palestinian territories will exacerbate the financial problems facing the U.N. humanitarian aid program in Iraq, the United Nations said.

Halting exports will result in a revenue loss of an estimated dlr 1.3 billion for the oil-for-food program, which is funded by Iraqi oil revenues, the U.N. Office of the Iraq Program said Tuesday. The program was already facing a revenue shortfall this year as Iraqi oil exports slumped by about 25 percent due to what Iraqi officials say is a controversial pricing policy instituted by the U.N. committee monitoring sanctions on Iraq.

Iraq announced Monday that it was halting its oil exports through the oil-for-food program for 30 days or until Israel pulls out its troops and tanks. As a result of the announcement, the U.N.'s Iraq Program projected total revenue generated by oil sales during the current six-month phase of the oil-for-food program at dlr 4.2 billion, down from an early estimate of dlr 5.5 billion. The current phase ends May 30.

Because of the expected loss of revenue, the oil-for-food program is now dlr 3.6 billion short of funds to pur-

chase humanitarian goods already ordered by Iraq, the U.N. program said. The oil-for-food program was created in 1996 to help ordinary Iraqis cope with U.N. sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Under an exemption to sanctions, the program allows Iraq to sell unlimited amounts of oil to buy humanitarian goods for its civilians.

According to the most recent U.N. figures, Iraqi oil exports have averaged about 1.5 million barrels per day over the past month, down from a more normal average of about 2 million barrels a day.

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## **Expert Says Encouraging Iraqi Civic Participation Can Spread Hope**

Washington File

By Stephen Kaufman April 08, 2002

Washington -- There exists an "untapped resource" of Iraqi civic participation which, if activated, can encourage a message of hope to counter the fear spread by the regime of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, according to Laith Kubba, senior program officer for the Middle East at the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

Laith Kubba, a graduate of the University of Baghdad, has devoted the last eight years to promoting the development of civil society and education in Iraq. During the past three years, he has been instrumental in implementing a \$100,000 NED initiative to develop civic groups in areas of Iraq that are not under the control of Saddam Hussein.

"The key to reviving Iraq, even during the Saddam era, is to stimulate meaningful civic participation and provide space and assistance for civic groups and civic activities," Kubba said in a recent speech to broadcasters and journalists at Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty in Washington. The prevailing belief among Iraqis, according to Kubba, is that, despite their widespread hatred of Saddam Hussein, he is too powerful to be opposed.

"Saddem Hussein has infected their minds with not only fear, but also with a lot of mistrust and apathy and helplessness. By that he keeps the millions of people paralyzed, and he has a free hand to run the rest of the country with a few agencies," he said.

Kubba explained that Saddam's physical control over the country is minimal. "Today, Saddem Hussein has very, very little physical power in the country. He does not control cities, he does not control streets. The country has holes all over the place. But yet, he is still in command of people's minds."

The Iraqi leader "rules by symbolism," rather than actual presence, said Kubba. "To him, the real power is to deter people," he said.

For example, Kubba said that Saddam's portrait is omnipresent not because of sheer megalomania, but rather as "a means of controlling the minds of people."

Kubba maintains that there is an "Achilles heel" in Saddam Hussein's power structure that has been overlooked, and that is the absurdity of how the Iraqi leader has been able to "paralyze" his 22 million subjects.

He says the international community has failed to realize the potential effect of a re-activated Iraqi civil society, and that efforts should be made to encourage participation, rather than to focus upon the regime itself.

"My concern is nobody is doing it. The opposition tries to make the point that Saddam is evil and bad and horrible, rather than try to target and think of how to reach the minds and hearts of Iraqis and get them to move in and do something. This is the most untapped resource -- the millions of Iraqis who are standing by watching," said Kubba.

He said that many of the Iraqis living outside the country are highly educated, with a strong sense of civic identity. They could play a role in sending messages to their countrymen over the airwaves, or develop civic initiatives in areas such as northern Iraq, where Saddam Hussein's influence is minimal, he said.

Profiles should be made of the views and concerns of the average Iraqi citizen through polling the population, and then developing credible messages to encourage hope and participation, said Kubba.

"Tell them not to go to the streets to kill, but to do something meaningful and show them what that meaningful thing is and how it can be done," he said. Eighty percent of the Iraqi people still desire "the rule of law, a stable place," said Kubba. "They just want the normal things that everybody else wants. And if you were to tell them that they can do these things without the big complication of big politics and strong agendas, they will be very happy to do it," he said.

The various populations of Sunnis, Shias, Chaldeans, Kurds and others may hold different perceptions of what their nationalism means to them, but they "are all strongly attached to this land, to Iraq, so they all have strong ties," he said. "If there was a movement that can spark, that can deliver a message that will get the Iraqis to get involved, that can create ... avenues of participation for a number of movements, a number of initiatives -- I argue that that small success can easily lead to other initiatives inside Iraq," said Kubba.

As an example, Kubba pointed to the success of very modestly funded programs conducted in northern Iraq as part of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED).

NED gave a grant of \$54,000 to the American Society for Kurds, which funded educational courses for police officers, judges, student leaders and women's organizations in order to develop a network of human rights activists and to produce a human rights advocacy newsletter.

It also provided the Iraqi Institute for Reform and Democratic Culture with \$30,000 to build a specialized library and run youth seminars to disseminate literature on democracy and democratic ideals to cultivate the interest of Iraqi Kurdish youth those principles.

Both NED programs had an "excellent response" from the population, according to Kubba, which should encourage more resources, training and assistance towards similar initiatives. "They succeeded and they are on the increase. The fact that the first program succeeded provided a model for others, and it was copied fairly quickly. You can imagine if you were to put a million dollars into that program, what impact this would have on the country," said Kubba. Civic life in the main cities of northern Iraq is flourishing, he told the audience, with a growing free media and more participation by the people.

Expatriate Iraqi communities, plus those in northern Iraq add up to at least 5 million people who, Kubba says, can be encouraged through civic development programs and the media. "We're talking about 25 percent of people who are fully accessible, who interact with their families and relatives with the rest of Iraq, who send money, and do things.... We're talking about all the airwaves that Saddam Hussein does not control in the country, and his weakened grip over the country. We are talking about accessible people, but no message and no modalities of trying to reach out and trying to shift that mindset and mobilize them into some form of civic activity," said Kubba.

Kubba stressed the importance of taking the initiative now, even while Saddam Hussein's regime controls most of the country.

"We do not want suddenly on the day after to leave a vacuum, and to have the country be filled by ethnic and tribal leaders, who do not have a strong sense of national identity," said Kubba. The Iraqi national identity "has been marginalized and weakened over the last 30 years, and I argue that it is critical to invest in it and try to help it now," said Kubba. Along with strengthening the damaged sense of national identity, using the advanced technology now available in media would also provide a message of hope and "can lead Iraq at this difficult moment," he told broadcasters.

"Hope is as contagious, as infectious, as fear is, and Saddam Hussein did not take every single person into a cell to instill fear in them, but he spread fear. And I think hope can spread equally fast, and in an effective way," said Kubba.

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), which employs Kubba is a private, nonprofit organization created in 1983 to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts. The Endowment is governed by an independent, nonpartisan board of directors. With its annual congressional appropriation, it makes hundreds of grants each year to support pro-democracy groups in Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union.

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## **With a Word, Israeli-Turkish Strain Surfaces**

The New York Times April 10, 2002 by Douglas Frantz

Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit of Turkey told a gathering of his political party last week that Israel's military raids into the West Bank were genocide.

Israel might have ignored the statement had it come from another Muslim leader, but Turkey is Israel's best friend in the region. So Mr. Ecevit's choice of words set off protests that heightened strains in a relationship of strategic importance to both countries and to the United States.

"We have some common interests in the Middle East, but whether we can sustain the relationship with what is happening now in Palestine is a question," Ilter Turkmen, a retired Turkish diplomat and foreign minister, said today.

Pro-Islamic politicians in the opposition have called for a re-evaluation of Turkey's ties with Israel, and mainstream politicians and newspapers have joined in condemning what they describe as Israeli aggression.

As much as Turkish politicians may want to criticize Israel, however, they are restricted by deep military and economic bonds. While other governments in the region have kept Israel at arm's length, the Turks have embraced it.

Turkey recently awarded Israel a \$670 million contract to modernize 170 M-60 tanks. Israel already was upgrading Turkish warplanes in a deal worth nearly \$1 billion. Turkey also provides airspace for Israeli military exercises, and the countries share intelligence and military technology.

Bilateral trade topped \$1 billion last year, and long-running negotiations are continuing for Turkey to sell Israel \$50 million to \$75 million worth of water annually. Israelis are among the most numerous tourists on Turkey's Mediterranean coast.

"We live in the same region, and we face the same reality," said David Sultan, Israel's ambassador to Turkey.

The friendship has multiplied Turkey's influence in Washington. The pro-Israeli lobby argued Turkey's case for increased international financial aid. American Jewish organizations have lobbied on Turkey's behalf against attempts by Armenian-Americans to have the killing of Armenians between 1915 and 1921 in Turkey declared a genocide.

"We have put a lot of effort in on behalf of Turkey," said Barry Jacobs, director of strategic studies in Washington for the American Jewish Committee. So his organization and other American Jewish groups were stung and angered when Mr. Ecevit said at a party meeting in Ankara that "genocide is being committed" against the Palestinians.

Nine organizations, including B'nai B'rith and the Anti-Defamation League, fired off a letter telling the Turkish leader that his remark was "absolutely wrong as fact and offensive as comment." Israel also lodged diplomatic complaints.

The next day, Mr. Ecevit downplayed his statement, saying his words only reflected concerns felt in the region and Turkey.

Other Turkish officials hurried to repair the damage by assuring Israeli and American diplomats that Turkey's basic policy remained unchanged.

"Turkey's relations with Israel are based on sound foundations," a senior Turkish government official said today. "We believe these relations will play an important role in ensuring peace in the region."

The Israelis had no desire to fan the flames either. Mr. Sultan said Israel was satisfied with Mr. Ecevit's clarification.

\* \* \* \*



## European rights court fines Turkey for closing Kurdish party in 1993

BBC Monitoring Service 9 April 2002

European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) decided on Tuesday [9 April] that Turkey violated the right to organization of the European Convention on Human Rights, upon the complaint of former administrators of banned People's Labour Party (HEP).

The court did not find it necessary to examine the applications made related with Article 9 regulating freedom of thought, article 10 regulating freedom of expression, Article 6 regulating the right to a fair trial, and article 14 regulating the ban of discrimination.

ECHR fined Turkey to almost 40,000 euro financial compensation in this case.

Feridun Yazar, Ahmet Karatas and Ibrahim Aksoy, the former administrators of HEP, applied to ECHR in 1993 after the Constitutional Court had decided to close down their party on charges of trying to harm national unity.

\* \* \* \*

## 45 months in prison for listening to Kurdish music

Turkish Daily News April 11, 2002  
by Serdar Alyamac

While Kurdish broadcasting is constantly featuring in the news in Turkey, an event in Diyarbakir has brought a different dimension to the issue. Sulhattin Onen, a minibus driver transferring passengers from Diyarbakir to the Cinar district of the city, has been sentenced to 45 months in prison for listening to Kurdish music in his minibus.

Sedat Yurtdas, the lawyer of Sulhattin Onen, talking to the Turkish Daily News, quoted the story of Onen. "In 1999, Onen bought a Kurdish music cassette, which was not prohibited and had a legal tax label, on the side of the road in Diyarbakir, while returning to Cinar he played the cassette. During his trip, a Gendarmerie sergeant dressed in civilian clothes heard Kurdish music and stopped the minibus at the first checkpoint on the highway, and the Gendarmerie later wrote a report about Onen. After the report was sent to the prosecutor, Onen was arrested and kept in custody for three days. When the case went to court in 2000, he was sentenced to ten months in prison and fined, but the court postponed Onen's sentence because of his clean background.

However, Onen applied to the Supreme Court in order to cancel the verdict of the court. At this point the case turned into nightmare for Onen, as the Supreme Court decided that Onen had been judged under the wrong law. According to the Supreme Court, Onen should have been judged under Article 169 of the Penal Code, and Onen, who had only listened to Kurdish music, was accused of assisting the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), and was sentenced to 45 months in prison," Yurtdas said.

The cassette in question was by a group's cassette called "Welat ve Zozan," and the song that had caused Onen to be punished was called "Sozu Feleki" (The promise of destiny). The cassette is not prohibited and is published by the Aydin Record Co.

Kurdish broadcasting and education are major issues in Turkey's attempts in its National Program to adapt to the EU accession criteria. In this respect, such an event has been seen to be very unusual while the government is prepared to broadcast Kurdish on national TV.

Yurtdas said: "It is difficult to understand this verdict. Onen only listened to a Kurdish music cassette that can be found everywhere, but he was sent to court accused of assisting the PKK. According to the verdict of the court, listening to Kurdish music means assisting the PKK. For example, if they play a Kurdish music in a cafe, the people in that cafe have committed a crime and assisted the PKK. This verdict makes listening to Kurdish music a crime, while Kurdish broadcasting and education are being discussed in the frame of Turkey becoming a full member of the EU. This verdict will cause a problem, I have tried to explain this to the court, but they have made this verdict."

\* \* \* \*



**IRAK** Bagdad a suspendu ses exportations de pétrole par solidarité avec les Palestiniens, alors que les Etats-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne menacent le régime de nouvelles frappes

# Saddam Hussein et la stratégie du pire

Les Etats-Unis et la Grande Bretagne viennent de réitérer, à l'occasion de la rencontre Bush-Blair, le week-end dernier, leurs menaces de frappes contre l'Irak accusé de développer des armes de destruction massives. L'ONU, de son côté, cherche à imposer à Bagdad un retour sans condition des inspecteurs chargés de vérifier la réalité de ces programmes d'armement. L'Irak continue à observer une attitude de défi à l'égard de la communauté internationale et vient de suspendre ses exportations de pétrole en solidarité avec les Palestiniens.

**Bagdad :**  
de notre envoyé spécial  
Charles Lambroschini

« A la mémoire des soldats de l'Armée des Indes tombés pour leur roi et leur patrie... » Ces mots gravés sur la stèle blanche, qui émerge des herbes folles, sont la seule explication des dizaines de tombes alignées au bord d'une avenue passante de Bagdad. Dans le petit cimetière ombragé, ils semblent bien oubliés ces héros qui, il y a 85 ans, arrachèrent l'Irak à l'Empire ottoman.

Parti de Bassorah en avril 1915, le corps expéditionnaire britannique ne s'empara de Bagdad qu'en mars 1917. Conseillés par l'état-major prussien du maréchal Von der Goltz, les Turcs livrèrent une bataille d'usure qui se solda pour « l'envahisseur » par 50 000 morts. A écouter Tarek Aziz, les GI, que George W. Bush veut lancer à l'assaut, auront autant de mal à vaincre la Garde républicaine de Saddam Hussein que, naguère, les « tomrries » de Sa Majesté face à la 6<sup>e</sup> armée ottomane. Interrogé début mars par *Le Figaro*, le conseiller diplomatique de Saddam Hussein avertissait : « Les Américains se trompent s'ils croient faire une promenade militaire. Chaque village irakien deviendra une autre jungle du Vietnam. »

En dénonçant comme un même « axe du Mal » l'Irak, l'Iran et la Corée du Nord, George W. Bush veut passer à la « deuxième phase » de sa guerre contre le terrorisme. Après avoir vengé, en Afghanistan, les victimes des attentats du 11 septembre, le président américain

entend assurer la sécurité des démocraties face aux « Etats voyous ».

Puisque l'ONU, dont les inspecteurs ont été chassés en décembre 1998, ne peut plus garantir que l'Irak a abandonné son projet nucléaire, les Etats-Unis se jugent en état de légitime défense. Il y a d'autres tyrans dont Washington s'accommode et plusieurs gouvernements qui, dotés de la « bombe » comme Israël, se révèlent fréquents. Mais le « Staline de Bagdad » fait peur parce qu'il est toujours prêt aux coups de dés les plus fous.

La stratégie de la dissuasion qui préserva la paix entre les Etats-Unis et l'URSS, surarmés mais rationnels, serait donc inapplicable à l'Irak. Accepter que Saddam Hussein possède l'arme nucléaire c'est courir le risque qu'il s'empare du pétrole de la région pour imposer à l'Occident un chantage permanent.

Malgré l'embargo qui empêche les achats de matériels étrangers, l'Irak, affirme Tarek Aziz, « a gardé suffisamment d'armes pour se défendre ». C'est une partie de cet arsenal que les diplomates en poste à Bagdad furent invités à voir défiler le 31 décembre 2000 : un millier de chars, des dizaines de missiles et, au-dessus de fantassins bombant le torse, des Mirage vendus par la France quand l'Occident espérait que l'armée de Saddam abattrait l'Iran de Khomeini.

Il faut aussi compter avec un arsenal chimique que l'ONU n'aurait pas réussi à détruire complètement. Notamment le gaz moutarde de 14-18 que Saddam recycla contre les Kurdes à Halabja. Enfin, l'Irak disposerait de 20 à 30 Scud de moyenne por-



tée, capables, comme en 1991, d'atteindre Israël.

Directeur général du ministère de l'Information, Odaï al-Tayy renchérit : « Depuis 1998, les avions américains et britanniques ont effectué 37 000 sorties contre notre pays. Mais nous tenons toujours. Pendant la guerre du Golfe, les bombardements occidentaux ont représenté sept fois Hiroshima. Mais nous n'avons pas cédé. Onze ans d'embargo n'ont pas non plus entamé la détermination nationale. Et si Washington déclenche une nouvelle guerre, les Irakiens résisteront parce qu'ils ont derrière eux 9 000 ans de civilisation. »

La réalité est tout autre. Les troupes de Saddam Hussein n'ont pas le moral. Constituée pour l'essentiel de civils en uniforme, l'armée est le reflet d'une société épuisée par l'embargo et deux guerres en vingt ans. La population est abrutie de misère. L'élite n'a plus d'espoir. A l'image de ce directeur de ministère qui, ayant pris sa retraite en 1990, avec une pension mensuelle équivalant à 3 000 dollars, ne touche plus au-

jourd'hui que deux dollars. Les enfants de la bourgeoisie ne rêvent que de fuir à l'étranger. Alors pourquoi se faire tuer pour un dictateur qui, après avoir terrorisé son propre peuple, a perdu le mandat du ciel ?

Saddam, dont les gros bataillons totalisent 400 000 hommes, ne peut compter que sur le quart de ces effectifs : essentiellement la Garde républicaine. La guerre du Golfe l'a bien montré : sous le matraquage de 110 000 sorties aériennes, les conscrits se sont effondrés alors que la Garde républicaine a tenu jusqu'au bout. Si les Américains attaquent, ils s'inspireront de leur stratégie afghane : mobilisation d'alliés locaux, campagne aérienne, intervention sur le terrain. Pour déstabiliser le régime de Bagdad, les Etats-Unis mènent déjà une guerre psychologique. Avec l'aide des Britanniques qui, depuis l'époque de Gertrude Bell, l'équivalent féminin pour l'Irak de Lawrence pour l'Arabie, connaissent bien la mosaïque locale, ils travaillent à acheter les tribus en offrant plus d'argent que Bagdad.

Washington s'efforce aussi de

séduire les Kurdes, au nord, et les Chiïtes au sud. Même si ces deux groupes attendront pour s'engager que la victoire soit certaine car ils ont été échaudés par leur expérience de 1991. Poussés à la révolte par Washington qui espérait abattre le régime de l'intérieur, ils furent abandonnés à la vengeance de la Garde républicaine.

Ensuite, les opérations aériennes. Elles nécessiteront un millier d'avions qui frapperont les états-majors de l'armée irakienne, les centres de communication, les axes de déplacement.

Dernier volet : l'action terrestre. Les troupes américaines voudront contrôler très vite le

pays utile : les champs pétroliers du sud, dans la région de Bassorah, qu'il serait logique d'attaquer depuis l'Arabie Saoudite ou le Koweït, et les gisements du nord, autour de Kirkouk, pour lesquels la Turquie serait une base de départ idéale. Effectifs prévus : 300 000 hommes.

Quant à Saddam, il répondra sans doute par la stratégie du pire. N'ayant d'autre alternative que d'être jugé comme Slobodan Milosevic ou de mourir en combattant, il choisira le « martyr ». Se réclamant de Saladdin, le chef arabe, originaire de la même ville de Tikrit, qui jeta les croisés à la mer, il lancerait alors ses missiles contre tous les alliés de l'Amé-

rique : Israël, l'Arabie Saoudite et la Jordanie. Un expert israélien avoue : « S'il tire des engins chimiques sur Tel-Aviv, l'impact de 1991 sera multiplié par 300. Il y aura 10 000 victimes dont 50 % de morts. »

En même temps, comme l'a annoncé Tarek Aziz, Saddam transformera chaque ville irakienne en forteresse. Avec en première ligne une Garde républicaine fanatisée qui, contre les Américains, livrera des combats de rues très coûteux en hommes.

Au Sommet de Beyrouth, fin mars, l'Irak, a cherché l'appui des Etats arabes en se réconciliant avec le Koweït. Pourtant George W. Bush, qui avait ignoré

les prédictions d'enlèvement dans le borbier afghan, croit avoir une bonne raison de rester inébranlable. Celle-là même qu'avance un observateur étranger de Bagdad : « Publiquement, les Arabes demanderont à l'Amérique de rester l'arme au pied. Mais en privé, ils ont hâte d'être débarrassés de Saddam. »

LE FIGARO MERCREDI 10 AVRIL 2002

Un entretien avec le président de la Commission de contrôle, de vérification et d'inspection du désarmement des Nations unies

# Hans Blix : « Bagdad doit convaincre le monde »

Ancien directeur de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie, le Suédois Hans Blix préside la Commission de contrôle, de vérification et d'inspection du désarmement de l'Irak (Unmovic), qui a succédé à l'Unscm. Avant la deuxième rencontre, prévue les 18 et 19 avril à New York, entre le secrétaire général des Nations unies, Kofi Annan, et le ministre irakien des Affaires étrangères, Waji Sabri, le docteur Blix s'est entretenu avec *Le Figaro*, dans son bureau de l'ONU, à propos de l'éventuel retour des inspecteurs en Irak.

Propos recueillis à New York par Jean-Louis Turlin

**LE FIGARO.** - D'après vos sources, pouvez-vous conclure que l'Irak dispose aujourd'hui d'armes de destruction massive ?

**Hans BLIX.** - Non. Les seuls moyens de vérification qui nous permettraient de nous prononcer sont les inspections, menées de manière approfondie ; et pour l'instant, nous ne pouvons y procéder. Dans le même temps, il serait naïf de prétendre que l'Irak ne s'est pas réarmé depuis le départ des inspecteurs de l'Unscm, en 1998.

Parmi les demandes soumises par les Irakiens lors de la reprise des pourparlers, à la mi-mars à New York, une question portait sur le risque que, parmi les inspecteurs, se glissent des espions américains.

Notre personnel est sous la bannière exclusive de l'ONU. Si un membre quelconque se présente

avec deux casquettes, il sera exclu. Evidemment, même la CIA ne peut jurer qu'elle est exempte de taupes. Tout ce que je peux dire, c'est que je mettrai dehors quiconque se livre à des activités d'espionnage, y compris au service de l'Irak.

**Quid de la demande irakienne qu'aucun Américain ne figure parmi les inspecteurs ?**

C'est hors de question. L'Unmovic est un corps des Nations unies ; tout le monde peut en faire partie.

**Comment évaluez-vous vos chances d'obtenir le retour des inspecteurs en Irak ?**

Nous constatons que les Irakiens ont quelque peu modifié leur position sur les inspections. Il y a un an, ils les considéraient comme un chapitre clos. Plus tard, on les a entendus dire que si des inspections du même type, portant sur les armes de destruction massive, étaient conduites dans d'autres pays de la région, notamment en Israël, elles pourraient alors être acceptées en Irak. Je ne suis pas sûr que cette

demande ait disparu, mais maintenant, je les vois se concentrer sur la durée de ces inspections d'une part, sur le nombre de sites à inspecter de l'autre. Ni l'une ni l'autre de ces demandes n'est compatible avec les résolutions du Conseil de sécurité. Celles-ci stipulent, en ce qui concerne les sites, que le nombre en est illimité, et l'accès sans restrictions ni conditions.

En ce qui concerne la durée des inspections, j'ai indiqué que dans des conditions optimales, et avec la pleine coopération des autorités irakiennes, nous serions en mesure de fournir en moins d'un an notre rapport, qui constituerait la base d'une décision du Conseil de sécurité sur la suspension éventuelle des sanctions. J'ajoute qu'en 1991 les inspections auraient pu être bouclées en un an, et elles ont traîné jusqu'en 1998. Tout dépend donc de la coopération irakienne.

**Quel a été l'élément déterminant dans l'évolution de la position de Bagdad, la pression de la menace militaire américaine ou votre propre force de persuasion ?**

Nous sommes déterminés à mettre sur pied des inspections efficaces. Des inspections cosmétiques sont pires que rien. Il est dans l'intérêt des Irakiens de convaincre le monde qu'ils n'ont pas d'armes de destruction mas-

sive. Ils ne convaincront personne en se contentant de déclarer qu'ils ont fait ce qu'on leur demandait. S'ils autorisent des inspections approfondies et sont

en mesure de persuader les inspecteurs de leur bonne foi, ceux-ci seront crédibles aux yeux du Conseil de sécurité. Mais si les inspections sont superficielles, les inspecteurs perdront toute crédibilité, tout comme les Irakiens. Les uns comme les autres ont intérêt à démontrer l'éradication des armes interdites.

**Compte tenu de l'expérience passée de l'Unscm, agirez-vous différemment ?** J'ai toujours dit que l'efficacité était le critère absolu des inspections. Mais je ne considère pas qu'il entre dans notre fonction de harceler ou de provoquer l'Irak. Cela ne fait pas partie de la tâche de l'ONU. J'ai dit aussi que nous n'envisageons pas d'utiliser des écoutes électroniques ou téléphoniques. J'entends appliquer les mêmes méthodes professionnelles qu'à l'Agence internationale de l'énergie.

**Les Irakiens ont un choix clair : accepter le retour des inspecteurs ou provoquer une attaque militaire américaine...**

Ce n'est pas à moi de juger le dilemme auquel ils sont confrontés. Mais il m'apparaît que les inspections et la coopération des Ira-

kiens restent la seule issue valable pour eux. Ils auraient d'ailleurs pu sortir du tunnel où ils se sont enfermés dès 1991.

Un exemple de leur manque de coopération : l'Irak avait déclaré à l'Unscm avoir fabriqué 8 500 litres d'anthrax sans fournir aucun registre de production. On ne peut pas se contenter d'une simple déclaration. En exami-

nant les capacités de fermentation et de culture bactériologique, notamment, les inspecteurs ont conclu que la capacité irakienne de production était bien supérieure au chiffre annoncé.

Ensuite, Bagdad a révélé qu'une partie de l'anthrax avait été utilisée dans des armes, mais que tout avait été détruit l'été 1991,

sans présenter aucune preuve. Il appartiendrait aux inspecteurs de prouver qu'on ne leur dit pas toute la vérité, et, s'ils ne peuvent le faire, ils devraient prendre ce qu'on leur dit pour argent comptant ! En réalité, c'est à l'Irak qu'il appartient de fournir des gages de confiance.

**Pour une partie de l'Administration Bush, mieux vau-**

**draît en finir avec Saddam...**

Nous nous en tenons aux déclarations officielles des Etats-Unis, qui exigent le retour des inspecteurs. Il y a apparemment des gens, à Washington, qui doutent de l'utilité des inspections, mais il n'y a que la position officielle américaine qui compte pour nous.

Le Monde VENDREDI 12 AVRIL 2002

# Reprendre les inspections en Irak

par Scott Ritter



VEC la brusque réapparition de l'Irak sur le devant de la scène, la question du programme d'armement de destruction massive de Saddam Hussein est une fois de plus à l'ordre du jour pour les responsables politiques des Etats-Unis et de l'ONU. Au centre des préoccupations, le retour en Irak des inspecteurs de l'armement.

L'ombre de la suspicion et de la méfiance plane sur la question de ces inspections depuis avant même le départ d'Irak en 1998 de la Commission spéciale des Nations unies (l'Unscm) aujourd'hui défunte - accusations d'espionnage et de manipulation de la part des Etats-Unis, d'obstruction et de dissimulation de la part de l'Irak. Ce climat a rendu problématique depuis lors le retour des inspecteurs dans ce pays.

A ce jour, l'Irak paraît prêt à discuter, sans conditions préalables, du retour des inspecteurs des Nations unies. Cette perspective effraie, semble-t-il, tout autant les hommes politiques que les experts, qui, en dépit de l'appel collectif lancé par eux depuis 1998 en faveur précisément de ce type d'action, sont aujourd'hui apparemment plus prompts à dénigrer des inspections qu'ils qualifient d'inefficaces. Or le fait est que les inspections ont été efficaces, et qu'elles peuvent l'être encore si on leur donne une chance. Le très périlleux processus d'inspection de l'Unscm a fort bien fonctionné quand ses missions s'effectuaient selon les directives techniques et scientifiques strictes fixées par les résolutions du Conseil de sécurité. Même lorsque l'Irak a fait obstacle à leur travail, les inspecteurs ont gardé l'avantage en ne cédant pas aux interventions politiques de

l'Irak, du Conseil de sécurité et de ses Etats membres.

J'ai participé à tous les aspects de l'action de l'Unscm en Irak de 1991 à 1998, avec à mon actif plus de quarante inspections, dont quinze comme chef de mission. Ce sont les inspecteurs qui ont découvert les programmes de missiles de l'Irak, signalé et éliminé son arsenal d'armes chimiques, relevé les contradictions dans les déclarations de ce pays jusqu'à ce qu'il soit contraint de reconnaître posséder un programme d'armement biologique, rassemblé enfin les preuves médico-légales qui ont conduit à la découverte de la fabrication par l'Irak du redoutable agent VX. Ce sont les inspecteurs encore qui, armés de leurs solides connaissances techniques et scientifiques, ont surveillé l'énorme infrastructure industrielle du pays, afin de s'assurer non seulement que l'Irak n'avait plus la capacité de fabriquer des armes interdites, mais qu'aucune tentative n'était faite pour reconstituer le potentiel qui avait été détruit. C'est le travail sans relâche des inspecteurs qui a permis de mettre fin au plan de dissimulation de l'Irak, forçant le gouvernement à admettre qu'il avait cherché à tromper le monde entier quant à

**SCOTT RITTER** est ancien inspecteur de l'armement de l'UNSCOM.

la vraie nature des efforts déployés par lui pour acquérir et entretenir son arsenal d'armes illicites. Je sais cela : j'ai participé au processus, et il a fonctionné.

Les inspections n'ont pas été parfaites, loin de là. Je peux personnellement témoigner des difficultés qu'il y a à désarmer l'Irak. Mais à ceux qui raillent le processus d'ins-

pection qu'ils considèrent comme une imposture, je dirai que les faits parlent d'eux-mêmes : l'Unscm choisissait l'heure et le lieu des inspections, définissait la mission à mener et les méthodes employées, elle fixait pour l'essentiel le rythme des opérations. Il y a eu des retards et des obstructions, mais au bout du compte l'Unscm a toujours eu le dessus. Sans exception, elle a fini par obtenir l'accès à chaque site désigné. Et, du fait des capacités d'investigation très pointues qui sont les siennes dans le domaine médico-légal, il y a peu de risques que des matériaux chimiques, biologiques ou nucléaires aient pu être évacués avant l'arrivée des inspecteurs. Un système imparfait, mais le plus efficace de l'histoire du contrôle de l'armement - un système auquel il faut donner sa chance, étant donné notamment les alternatives.

Dès lors que le président Bush ouvrirait la porte à un possible retour en Irak des inspecteurs des Nations unies, les hauts fonctionnaires et les experts de l'administration ont tout fait pour claquer cette porte. Ils ont multiplié les déclarations et les analyses simplistes qui ont déformé la réalité des faits sur la nature et les résultats du programme d'inspection passé. L'opinion publique semble appuyer l'idée que les inspections de l'armement ne sont véritablement pas possibles en Irak. Un point de vue entretenu par ceux qui, en Amérique, sont favorables à un départ de Saddam Hussein du pouvoir plus qu'à tout autre solution. Le fait est que, pour eux, les inspections ne sont appropriées qu'aussi longtemps qu'elles jouent en faveur de l'élimination définitive du régime. Or, pour être viables, ces inspections doivent porter la promesse d'une levée des sanctions. Aux yeux

des partisans de l'élimination du régime, l'idée est inacceptable. Cela lève le voile sur la réalité - et l'hypocrisie fondamentale - de la politique américaine en Irak.

La législation internationale, telle que la formule la résolution du Conseil de sécurité, exige la levée des sanctions économiques une fois que les inspecteurs des Nations unies auront constaté que l'Irak se conforme à l'obligation de désarmement. Les inspecteurs sont aujourd'hui prêts à retourner dans ce pays. Les Etats-Unis ne doivent pas faire obstacle à leur retour. Mon expérience me porte à croire que de nouvelles inspections, correctement menées et gérées, peuvent efficacement achever la mission de désarmement en Irak. Si l'Irak refuse de pleinement coopérer, et retourne une fois de plus à son ancienne pratique de l'obstruction et de la dissimulation, alors les Etats-Unis auront toutes les raisons de riposter de façon décisive, jusques et y compris par un renversement du régime.

*Traduit de l'anglais (Etats-Unis)  
par Sylvette Gleize.*

## European Court head: Broadcasting in Kurdish will not divide Turkey

Associated Press April 10, 2002

European Court of Human Rights Chairman Luzius Wildhaber said that broadcasting in mother tongue would not divide Turkey. Attending a live interview hosted by Mehmet Ali Birand on Turkish news channel CNN-Turk, Wildhaber made comments on the Turkish government's agreement on broadcasting in the Kurdish language.

Stressing that the agreement was good news, Wildhaber noted that this would also provide a great contribution to the court. "It is possible for the member countries to file an application with our court in every official language. We are seeing cases in 37 languages. In this respect, it is normal for the languages to be reflected in the media. Of course, that does not mean that equal communication is provided. For instance, in my country there is a language that only 1 percent of the population speaks. This should be taken into notice for this reason. But basically this is wonderful news," he said.

When asked whether broadcasting in five or six languages would harm the integrity of the country, Wildhaber said that did not pose a threat to the integrity of the country. "On the contrary, if minorities can express themselves, they will be more relieved," he added.

Responding to a question whether this situation was positive in terms of the European Convention of Human Rights, Wildhaber noted that the cases brought to the court were not related to the use of minority languages in the past, adding that they had heard cases regarding the TV monopoly. He emphasized that they were supporting pluralism on television.

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## That Song Was Not Sung for Nothing

Turkish Daily News April 9, 2002  
by Mehmet Ali Birand

The 'singing' incident at the Bitlis garrison intensified the confusion the civilian segment of society has been suffering from. It seemed difficult to decide whether the Kurdish speakers were the enemy or friends. In the end, the military too stopped resisting. Turkey has overcome yet another psychological obstacle

Turkey has cleared yet another extremely important psychological obstacle. According to a CNN TURK report, the General Staff's adopting a more flexible stance regarding Kurdish broadcasting, means that this country has taken yet another realistic step in the right direction on the Kurdish issue.

This may not change much in practice. The outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party's (PKK) MED TV and Barzani's Northern Iraq-based TV channel have already been broadcasting in Kurdish. Playing Kurdish songs has been free anyway. Seen from this angle, the steps that have been taken may not be seen as something very significant. However, these steps have a major symbolic value.

With these steps, the Turkish Republic indicates that it has rid itself of its "complexes" regarding the Kurdish language, that it now has more self-confidence than in the past. Until now, we have not been able to come to terms with the Kurdish language. We just could not decide whether Kurdish speakers would be friendly or hostile if they got the right to broadcast TV programs in Kurdish.

We were divided on this issue. Some of us shuddered whenever we heard the word "Kurd" because they saw this as a threat directed against the country's unity and integrity. Some other members of our society, meanwhile, saw that "being of Kurdish origin" and "speaking Kurdish" was a person's natural right. They believed that more restrictions would be imposed on this issue, the greater the reaction might be in the long run.

Society was confused on this issue as well as on its individual members. The echoes of the Kurdish song sang at the Bitlis gendarmerie garrison last week, made that confusion all too clear. Part of the media displayed their astonishment, carrying the kind of headlines that boiled down to the following: "Oh my God, a song was sung in Kurdish even on the garrison premises!" It was as if they were saying, "Despite the fact that it is so dangerous, the Kurdish

language has managed to penetrate even the garrison!" There were even those who predicted that the garrison commander would not likely be promoted to a higher rank in the future.

The astonishment was so great that the Bitlis governor created the impression that we are faced with some major event, something very shameful. He insisted that no song was sang in Kurdish, and that the song had been in the Azeri dialect. Anxious officials made such hasty statements as if they were trying to cover up an "error" they have made. This strange attitude stemmed from the gap between the official policy and what the society considers to be normal. It Would Be Easier if We Did Not Make This Such a Big Issue

For the society, there is no "Kurdish language" problem anymore.

The problem is in Ankara's mind.

However, opinions cannot be freely put forth, because of the fear that these will go against the official policy.

Here, I want to refer to the media attitude as well.

The big media has adopted the kind of attitude that renders the resolution of the problems more difficult rather than facilitating that. When you declare, in big bold headlines that the "The People's Democracy Party (HADEP) mayor sings in Kurdish, and deputies applaud him," that gives people the impression that there is something unnatural about this incident. And, when you add, at the end of that news report, the sentence, "The district governor did not react to that," you undertake the role of a judge. Thus an incident which should be seen as something natural, gains new dimensions. People become confused.

If the society and the authorities relaxed, the Kurdish problem would be eased. It would be easier to find solutions.

During the Sept. 12 period, being Kurdish was almost considered a crime. Children could not be given Kurdish names. Village names were changed. Kurdish songs could not be heard.

What happened?

The Kurdish problem is not over. In fact it continues to grow.

During the Ozal period, Kurdish speaking and listening to Kurdish became free.

What happened?

The Kurdish problem did not grow.

Now, Kurdish broadcasting will become free and you will see that Turkey will not be split up. On the contrary, the relations will ease further. In this respect, the Turkish Armed Forces' abandoning their rigid old stance in favor of a more flexible approach, constitutes an extremely realistic step in the right direction.

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## **Police launch an investigation into Kurdish song playing in police auto**

Turkish Daily News April 13, 2002

Deputy Police Chief and Police Organization spokesman Feyzullah Arslan said that they have launched an investigation into the listening of Kurdish music by police officers in an automobile belonging to the police in Hakkari. Holding a regular weekly press conference, Arslan noted that they have appointed a deputy police chief to investigate the incident, adding that the Hakkari Governor's Office had launched the investigation.

Arslan stated that they would decide whether to open an inquiry against the police officer when the investigation report was complete.

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## **STATE DEPARTMENT DELEGATION VISITS NORTHERN IRAQ**

RFE/RL IRAQ REPORT Vol. 5, No. 9, 12 April 2002

A U.S. State Department delegation completed a four-day visit to northern Iraq on 4 April, Reuters and AP reported. The delegation, headed by Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Near East Ryan Crocker and North Gulf Affairs Director David Pearce, visited leaders from the KDP and PUK in early April. Crocker and Pearce first visited the PUK leadership.

Accordingly, they were likely in or around Sulaymaniyah during the 2 April assassination attempt on PUK Prime Minister Dr. Barham Salih. Five of Salih's bodyguards were killed in the ambush outside his house (see "RFE/RL Iraq Report," 5 April 2002), including Salih's cousin and personal secretary. According to a 7 April e-mail from a source in Sulaymaniyah, Salih left this week for a working visit to Europe and Washington.

Crocker and Pearce also met with KDP leader Mas'ud Barzani on 3 April, according to a KDP statement quoted in Reuters on 5 April. According to the statement, Barzani and Crocker discussed bilateral relations, KDP-PUK rapprochement, the UN oil-for-food program in which the Kurdish north receives 13 percent of Iraq's legal oil exports, and "regional policies."

A source in Irbil remarked by e-mail on his/her surprise that the State Department officials did not appear better briefed on the backgrounds of various Iraqi generals whose names have been forwarded as possible successors to Iraqi president Saddam Husseyn.

As AP reported from Cairo on 12 March, Danish authorities are poised to investigate former Iraqi Chief of Staff General Nizar al-Khazraji for alleged liability in Iraqi chemical weapons strikes against Iraqi Kurds in 1987 and 1988. Al-Khazraji, who is currently seeking asylum, vehemently denies the allegations, telling AP that only Saddam and his family members controlled the chemical-weapons stockpiles.

According to a source in the Dahuk Governorate, the State Department officials also toured the strategic area surrounding Fish Khabur (Pish Habur). Fish Khabur is strategically on the eastern bank of the Tigris and is the KDP's only connection to Syria. Syria has long opposed building a bridge and so trade is minimal.

Nevertheless, Fish Khabur remains the main point of entry (by motorboat) into northern Iraq for journalists and employees of nongovernmental organizations. The eight kilometers of territory held by the KDP along the Tigris separates Iraqi government forces from the Turkish frontier. The area -- largely populated by Yezidis and Assyrian Christians -- is the site of a proposed direct border link between Turkey and the Iraqi government. Currently Turkey's trade with Baghdad must traverse either KDP or Syrian territory, both governments of which impose tax and customs duties.

The "Turkish Daily News" reported on 3 January that Crocker had expressed his opposition to Turkish plans for a second border gate in a meeting with Serra Erarslan, head of the department for Iraq, Gulf Countries, and the Organization of Islamic Conference in Turkey's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Any Iraqi military seizure of the Fish Khabur region would mean an Iraqi military bridgehead on the eastern side of the Tigris River, their first in the Iraqi Kurdish areas. (Michael Rubin)

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## **Medes Air International commences operations**

April 12, 2002

Source: [www.kdp.pp.se](http://www.kdp.pp.se) News and Reports [KurdishMedia.com](http://KurdishMedia.com) - By R. M. Ahmad

London ([KurdishMedia.com](http://KurdishMedia.com)) 12 April 2002: Medes Air International started its operations when its first flight on 7th of this month took place from Orumiyeh in Iran to Dusseldorf in Germany and back to Orumiyeh. Passengers, from and to Kurdistan in Iraq on Medes Air, get transit visa immediately from Iranian authorities. The Air Line operates a bus shuttle to carry passengers from and to Kurdistan.

Medes Air International founded during 2001 after very open, friendly negotiations and the cooperation and unders-



tandings of the highest Authorities of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The aim is to provide a direct flight connection between Western Europe and North Western Iran with the possibility of onwards flights to the major N.W. cities if Iran and Kurdistan in Iraq. Very soon, it starts direct flights from London to Orumiyeh. Now the flight is once a week on Sundays but it will be increased to three per week soon. The web site is [www.medesair.com](http://www.medesair.com).

Medes Air couldn't commence its first two flights for using a Russian Passenger Plane, which was not licensed in European Space because of its noise. Medes Air also hasn't been saved from criticism unfairly by Turkish Authorities.

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## **The unknown future of the forcibly displaced Kurds**

April 2002 Iraqi Kurdistan Dispatch

By Ashley Gilbertson reporting from the area

Binaslawah camp for displaced people, Arbil suburbs, Iraqi Kurdistan, 12 April 2002

The Iraqi policy of Arabization and displacement of Kurds and other minorities from the Kurdish regions which are under Iraqi control, continues to raise serious political, social and humanitarian concerns in the Iraqi Kurdish-ruled region.

"I am a Kurd, why should I change my ethnic identity?" exclaims Ibrahim Jamal Sayid about Saddam Hussein's attempt at Arabizing him and his family. His refusal to submit has led him to where he talks to me from now - a small damp tent which he has been sharing with his wife and seven children for the last six months since being forced out of his town in the oil rich, Iraqi controlled-area in Kirkuk Governorate. Their tent is but one of hundreds here in the muddy suburbs skirting the city of Arbil, the regional capital of the autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan, under the Kurdish rule since 1991.

Ibrahim was requested by the Iraqi ruling Ba'ath party to sign a document changing his Kurdish identity to Arabic; a document officially called "Form of Correction of Nationality", distributed on non-Arab communities in the Kurdish regions which are under Iraqi control. When Ibrahim refused to abide, his house was promptly surrounded by Iraqi forces and he and his family were forced to leave to the Kurdish autonomous region, leaving his land and properties to be confiscated by the Iraqi government.

Tens of thousands of Kurdish families have been forcibly displaced from Kirkuk Governorate and other Kurdish regions in the past twenty years, within the framework of an Iraqi plan to displace original inhabitants of this Kurdish region and settle Arab families in the place of the expelled Kurds and other minorities, who refuse to "officially" become Arabs; a policy which the Kurds call Arabization. In the past few years, this campaign has dramatically become intensified.

Mr. Salah Dalo, the official in charge of the third region of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, KDP, which runs Binaslawah camp, says, Saddam Hussein's continued efforts to 'Arabize' the region aims at gaining a definitive Iraqi ownership and continue to pump securely what is today 60 per cent of Iraq's oil wealth.

Zahir Rojbayani, the head of the Arbil-based Kirkuk Cultural Centre, and who originally comes from Kirkuk, explains that Arabization, though only formally named in 1981 in a decree passed by Saddam Hussein's administration, has actually been, gradually, implemented since 1934, by successive Iraqi governments. He claims that the recent policy is targeting the Kirkuk region not only because of its abundant oil, but also fertile plains and major strategic military importance. He feels that Saddam's scheme is working.

"I feel that Arabization is in its final stages," he says, "if the expelled people are not allowed to go back, within one year, the Arabized towns will lose their national Kurdish characteristics, and, we will lose Kirkuk."

"The reason is that the expelled people who have been forced here have been and will, in time, settle down and have jobs," he reasons, "the second generation would not have so much enthusiasm to return".

It is for this reason that Arif Tayfur, chairman of the Higher Committee for Confronting Arabization in Kurdistan,

is setting programmes for the expelled Kirkukis against being "assimilated here among the people - so they don't forget the issue of return." Arif explains the committee's various actions in combating Arabization, though it seems the only method which could produce any fruit, is presenting legal documents, figures, testimonies and studies on the Arabized areas to the United Nations and international institutions to provide evidence on the Iraqi policy and establish that these regions were Kurdish.

Arif has plans, and he looks into the past to foresee the future - in 1991 when the Kurds liberated Kirkuk after the Gulf war, the Arab settlers left within 24 hours, voluntarily, he says. He hopes that events may provide the opportunity for "our people to return to their Kurdish land".

Until then, the most fortunate displaced people will live in poorly constructed collective towns that surround the major cities, miles from Kirkuk and other Iraqi-controlled Kurdish areas. They are deprived of running water, electricity or sewage. Their less fortunate counterparts have to do with tents, flattened sheets of metal, and homes made of mud brick, providing housing.

The collective towns, or Mujamma', were built by the Iraqi authorities as early as 1975, specifically for purposes of resettlement of forcibly displaced Kurds, or for Arabization schemes. Since 1991 when the Gulf War allied forces imposed a 'No-Fly Zone' over southern and northern Iraq, Saddam's building stopped in the Kurdish-administered areas but his Arabization programme continued, and even intensified.

The United Nations and two local NGOs are sole relief agencies attempting to curb the rising demands for food and housing. With daily arrival of new families forced out of Kirkuk and other Iraqi-controlled Kurdish regions, and existing requirements already overwhelming, observers and officials alike say they cannot cope .

"The UN oil-for-food programme [commonly known here as the '986 programme'] has its shortcomings, and the [lack of a programme for the] displaced people is one of them." says Hoshiyar Siwaily, deputy minister of humanitarian aid and cooperation in the KDP-led Kurdistan regional government. "The 986 programme provides only emergency aid and this is not adequate ... there is no consolidated program to resettle the displaced people, and the [lack of] coordination [between relief agencies] has led to poor distribution of aid" says the deputy minister.

For nearly two years, Adil Ahmed Mohammad and his family of twelve have lived without housing or sufficient support in Binaslawah camp. It was almost two years ago when he was received his "notice of expulsion" from the Iraqi authorities, and today he pores over it again. Faded and torn, Adil may have read it a thousand times. From the document, my translator makes out the few belongings Adil was allowed to take - three gas bottles, a stove, pots and pans.

Adil was a farmer. He owned fifty seven sheep and a plot of land. He was first expelled in 1991, after the Kurdish uprising and lived one year with his family in refugee camps in Iran before "secretly" returning to Kirkuk area to work in the countryside. He did not inform the central government of his return. Eventually, the military began harassing his family, and he was forced to work for Iraqi officers without pay "all to make me leave". He received official instructions to depart Kirkuk on the 3rd of September 2000, since then he has lived in a tent.

Like the majority of the displaced people, he cannot find a job. Of his eleven children, one has found work when he became a Peshmarga, member of Kurdish armed forces, but his salary provides for only one.

Sadly, Adil's story is not unique. People here have no income and for survival rely on the 986 programme which supplies food baskets monthly, consisting mostly of wheat-flour and rice.

"I expect the [Kurdistan Regional] government and the United Nations will help one day," Adil says quietly "but now, our future is unknown".

With no real concern by the international community, Saddam Hussein's forcibly displaced people remain waiting for their unknown destiny, and like most of the Iraqi Kurds, in the event of the various possible scenarios of the US expected intervention in Iraq, they do not know if they have to hope for the better or expect the worst.

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## **Iranian ambassador: "certain elements" trying to harm ties with Turkey**

IRNA 8 April 2002

Iran's Ambassador to Turkey Mohammad Hoseyn Lavasani here Monday [8 April] said certain elements are trying to harm Tehran-Ankara relations by bringing up media reports on the arrest of a Turkish opposition member in the Islamic republic.

In a meeting with the leader of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AK Party) Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Iranian envoy stressed that Iran and Turkey currently have good relations, and reiterated that Iranian officials have rejected the reports.

Lavasani said Iran and Turkey have been cooperating in different fields which include the project to transfer Iranian gas to Turkey, and branding the Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization (MKO) and Kurdistan's Workers Party (PKK) as terrorist organizations.

Erdogan, for his part, voiced pleasure at the good level of relations between Iran and Turkey and called for measures to diversify bilateral relations in all enterprises.

He said Iran and Turkey's mutual campaign against their opposition groups has reinforced solidarity among the two countries, which will consolidate regional peace and stability.

Iran had earlier on Sunday rejected as "baseless" reports in the Turkish media that Iran has arrested a leading PKK member, stressing the reports were meant for propaganda purposes.

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## **Saddam is not waiting**

April 12, 2002 Washington Times by William Hawkins

During their Texas meeting, President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair discussed "all the options" to get rid of Saddam Hussein, but had "no immediate plans to conduct military operations" against Iraq.

The Iraqi dictator, however, is not sitting back waiting for an Anglo-American force to make the first move. He is taking action to forestall or frustrate any attempt to oust him. Saddam is paying the families of Palestinian suicide bombers. The defense of Baghdad starts on the West Bank. During the 1991 Gulf war, Saddam tried to cast his aggression against Muslim-Arab Kuwait into a jihad against Israel by launching Scud missiles at the Jewish state. Israel was persuaded not to retaliate, as the U.S. moved to silence Iraqi's military.

Today, Israel has no option but to retaliate against the wave of suicide attacks and to move on its own to silence the terrorist militias on the West Bank. The logic is the same used to send American troops to Afghanistan. As Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told a town hall meeting at the Pentagon last month, "There is no way to defend against terrorist acts, because a terrorist can attack at any place at any time using any technique. The only way it can be done is to take the battle to those people who are determined to try to kill large numbers of human beings."

The situation, however, allows Saddam to whipsaw the Bush administration.

Attempts to "cool" tensions by restraining Israeli retaliation will prolong the conflict by keeping the Palestinian Authority in the hands of a terrorist regime. So long as the pot boils, Washington will find it difficult to build a coalition to support a forceful regime change in any Arab state.

One way out would be if Saddam was ousted by the Iraqi people. Crown Prince Abdullah left the door open for Saudi support in this case when he met with Vice President Dick Cheney. Washington has been working with opponents of the Baghdad regime since the end of the Gulf war, but the insurgents have made little progress. The success in Afghanistan, where local forces supported by U.S. airpower and special forces were able to drive the Taliban from

power, has renewed thoughts about an armed uprising. Unfortunately, the Kurds and Iraqi National Congress are a long way from having the military capabilities of the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan.

After brutally suppressing a coup attempt in 1996, Saddam sent the Republican Guards and secret police into the northern Iraq "safe haven" and routed the opposition. With an army of 400,000 troops well armed with heavy weapons, Saddam is far stronger than the Taliban. And that is not counting his arsenal of chemical weapons which he has used against the Kurds before.

Furthermore, Saddam has his own group of Kurds in action. A radical group known as Ansar al-Islam is said to operate in the northern region. A recent article in the New Yorker magazine suggested that the group is the creation of Iraqi intelligence working with top officials in Osama bin Laden's al Qaeda group. The group uses an anti-Western Islamic message to discredit pro-Western Kurds and the INC as traitors. A number of al Qaeda fighters fleeing Afghanistan are thought to have joined up with Ansar al-Islam.

On the economic front, Iraq has continued to undermine U.N. sanctions, and not just by massive smuggling. On April 6, Iraq signed an agreement with Lebanon to expand trade and economic ties. Signed in Beirut, the pact calls for free trade between the two countries. Iraq has recently signed similar pacts with Jordan, Egypt, Turkey and Syria. Two days later, Iraq suspended all oil exports for a month or until Israel withdraws unconditionally from the West Bank. Saddam clearly wants to show that his country remains strong enough to use economic pressure too.

The United States continues to send mixed signals about maintaining sanctions. Assistant Secretary of State John Wolf signed an agreement in Moscow March 29 he said was "designed to make clear that the international community is interposing no barrier on goods going to Iraq's civilian economy but it is determined to keep rigorous control over things that Iraq could use to resuscitate its military capabilities." The State Department is still operating as if U.S. policy was merely to contain Saddam, not remove him.

Yet, the "rigorous control" of goods flowing to Iraq has not been effective containment. Mr. Rumsfeld told the Sunday Times of London March 21, "The fact remains that the sanctions [leak] and that things are getting in under dual-use, under the guise of dual-use that are being immediately turned to military advantage." Expanded trade will only increase the flow of resources to Saddam. Domestic discontent will be eased. The presence of foreign capitalists will add legitimacy to the regime while creating more vested interests in the status quo.

Every day Saddam is given is used to strengthen Iraq's ability to resist American pressure. He continues to pursue weapons of mass destruction as the ultimate trump card. CIA Director George Tenet told a Senate Armed Services Committee last month that he suspects Iraq is developing a range of weapons. "Baghdad is expanding its chemical industries" said Mr. Tenet, "We believe Baghdad continues to pursue ballistic missile capabilities. We believe that Saddam never abandoned his nuclear weapons program."

Only decisive military action - including enough American ground troops to capture Baghdad, will stop the "doomsday clock" before Saddam gains the power to plunge the region into a long, dark night.

William R. Hawkins is senior fellow for National Security Studies at the U.S. Business and Industry Council.

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## **Saddam may be trying to preempt any coup attempt Attempted assassination of key Kurdish leader could be effort to foil US 'regime change' plans**

By Ed Blanche The Daily Star (Beirut) April 15, 2002

On April 2, seven people were killed in a gun battle in the Kurdish-controlled city of Sulaymaniyah in northern Iraq. Two of them were suspected Islamic extremists who had planned to assassinate Barham Salih, a pro-Western leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), one of the two main Kurdish nationalist groups that have controlled the region, with US and British air support, since the end of the 1991 Gulf War.

Salih, a member of the PUK's politburo and the head of its provincial government in Sulaymaniyah, is a key fig-

re in the region and would in all likelihood play an important role in any Iraqi government comprising opposition leaders that might replace Saddam Hussein. It would seem that, as the Americans make their plans for getting rid of Saddam once and for all, the Iraqi tyrant may be making some moves of his own to eliminate key people in the opposition.

William Safire, The New York Times' acerbic right-wing commentator and a vehement advocate of launching an all-out assault against Saddam, has likened the attempt to kill Salih to the assassination of anti-Taleban leader Ahmed Shah Massood. That was allegedly carried out by Osama bin Laden's Al-Qaeda several days before the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, in what may have been an effort to weaken Afghanistan's Northern Alliance in advance of the anticipated US retaliation.

Linking the attack on Salih to Islamic extremists allegedly harbored by Saddam bolsters the claims that the Iraqi leader is in league with bin Laden and is actively involved in terrorism, further justification for the Bush administration to go after him as a global threat. That remains in question. Saddam has no shortage of his very own thugs to do his dirty work, as he has demonstrated many times. But who knows? All things are possible in the netherworld of terrorism.

Whatever, Salih was luckier than the legendary Massood. The Kurdish leader was only seconds from leaving his home when the gunmen struck. Five of his bodyguards and two assailants were killed. The attackers' driver was captured and three other suspected Islamists were later arrested. According to PUK officials, the attack was carried out by a group known as Jund al-Islam whose members they say had trained in Al-Qaeda camps in Afghanistan before the Americans launched their post-Sept. 11 military campaign.

The driver is reported to have divulged during interrogation – and that was undoubtedly conducted with little concern for legal niceties – that some 60 Islamic extremists were based in nearby Halabja, a town south of Sulaymaniyah that is a symbol of Saddam's barbaric efforts to crush the Kurds. In March 1988, with Kurdish fighters allied with Tehran during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, his forces bombarded the town with poison gas that killed thousands of men, women and children.

There have been reports that Islamic militants had circulated leaflets in the region in March threatening Salih and other PUK officials who they claimed were American puppets and "hostile to Islam." Significantly, the attempt to assassinate Salih took place as a US State Department team was in the Kurdish enclave meeting PUK leader Jalal Talabani in Sulaymaniyah and Massoud Barzani, leader of the other main Kurdish group, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), at his headquarters in Salahuddin, 140 kilometers northwest of Sulaymaniyah.

The team was led by Ryan Crocker, deputy assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs and an experienced Middle East hand, and included David Pearce, director of northern Gulf affairs. Crocker, who had been in the region last December, was "reassured of the commitment of the PUK-KDP leadership ... to work together, confront terrorism and support Iraq's territorial integrity and seek a democratic, pluralistic and federal Iraq," according to a joint statement by the two groups. They have both fought against Saddam for decades seeking to establish an autonomous Kurdish homeland in northern Iraq, but they also fought each other with equal ferocity over the years until a 1998 peace agreement brokered by Washington. Both leaderships are wary of George W. Bush extending his war against terrorism to Iraq, with good reason.

The Kurds have been the pawns of the US and regional powers, such as Israel, Iran and Turkey, for decades and have been repeatedly betrayed as political realities shifted. Memories of American betrayals, in particular, still rankle. Like the majority Shiites in southern Iraq, the minority Kurds rose up against Saddam after his defeat in the Gulf War amid exhortations by Bush's father, who was then the US president. The Baghdad regime crushed those revolts with horrific savagery since the US made no effort to help them.

In 1995, Saddam sent armored units of his Republican Guard into the Kurdish enclave, where the Central Intelligence Agency was running operations aimed at destabilizing Saddam's regime. The CIA teams fled, taking with them hundreds of Kurds who had worked with them. But they also left thousands more behind, most of whom were slaughtered by Saddam's troops or rounded up and imprisoned. Again, the Americans did nothing to prevent Saddam's actions.

This is why Kurdish leaders are reluctant to sign up with the Americans again, unless Washington guarantees that this time they won't be abandoned and left to the tender mercies of Saddam's Republican Guard and his infamous intelligence services. Air cover alone is not enough to do that. The US would have to deploy a sizeable ground force, with tanks and artillery, to defend the Kurdish enclave, and that remains highly problematical.

For a long time, the Americans have been loath to commit themselves to military action to back the fractious Iraqi opposition. That may be changing. Certainly Washington is taking these groups more seriously and is intensifying its contacts with the Iraqi National Council (INC), the main umbrella group for the disparate opposition forces. But what is really needed to convince the opposition groups that they should set aside their perpetual feuding is a firm and unequivocal commitment by the US at the highest level that this time around Washington is serious about getting rid of Saddam and replacing him with a democratic government in which all Iraqis are represented. So far this has not been forthcoming.

The support of the PUK and KDP would be crucial for any US plan to muster anti-Saddam groups into a cohesive fighting force. The Kurdish groups between them can mobilize some 70,000 Peshmerga, or Those Who Face Death, many of them seasoned veterans of the long war against the Baathist regime in Baghdad. They also control territory in Iraq that could be used as a springboard for an offensive against Saddam. But, like other opposition groups, they lack heavy weapons and armor and rely on US and British combat aircraft based in southern Turkey to keep Saddam's forces at bay. As late as March 15, the urbane Talabani, who has led the PUK for decades, insisted that the Americans had not sought Kurdish participation in a campaign to topple Saddam. "We're in the dark," he said. "We don't know what the Americans' plans are." Nonetheless, there have been reports that a 40-strong team of US Army officers and intelligence agents spent 10 days recently inspecting positions and airfields in the Kurdish enclave, presumably to assess the situation should Washington opt for military operations.

Encouraged by the Bush administration, the INC is intensifying its efforts to form a united front against Saddam Hussein and is recruiting dissident army officers who have defected in recent years to bolster their military capabilities. The INC hopes to gather more than 200 of the estimated 1,000 former officers, including several generals, at a conference somewhere in Europe in the next few weeks. Meantime, the Bush administration has allocated \$5 million to sponsor a conference in Washington of opposition groups and figures to map out a blueprint for how Iraq would be governed once Saddam is removed.

But promoting officers who were once Saddam's henchmen and were probably involved in his regime's brutal repression of the Iraqi people may not be the way to go. One such officer who has been accused of such atrocities is Lieutenant General Nizar al-Khazraji, Saddam's chief of staff from 1986 to 1990 and who defected in 1995 and is now seeking political asylum in Denmark.

Authorities there turned him down after an Iraqi refugee from Kurdistan accused him of massacring thousands of Kurds in 1989. Khazraji has been allowed to remain in Denmark while authorities investigate whether he should face charges of war crimes. The general claims he is innocent and that the allegations were planted by Baghdad to discredit him. Be that as it may, many officers have defected because they had fallen out of favor with Saddam, as appears to have happened with Khazraji, rather than because their consciences had been pricked by the excesses of a brutal regime.

The INC and others have long insisted that Saddam could be toppled by a popular insurrection, even though he has survived countless coup and assassination plots since he seized power in 1979 and even though Iraq's 22 million people have been lobotomized for so long it is questionable whether they would risk joining a revolt. The CIA has long supported the palace coup option, even though that has been discredited time and again.

The critical element has always been how the army would react if an armed insurrection by the opposition erupted. One plan drawn up in recent years envisaged rebel forces, backed primarily by US air power, seizing three zones in the north, west and south of Iraq. These rebels, so the plan goes, would be joined by defecting army units, with the combined forces closing in on Saddam and eventually bringing him down as the regime crumbles and implodes.

This would seem to be the way the Americans are thinking now. If that is the case, the opposition forces are going to need to be given a lot of weapons and training by US personnel if they are to be effective. That will take time and Saddam, who has shown in the past how he is able to penetrate these groups, will likely have ample warning that trouble is brewing. The attempt to eliminate Salih may just be the beginning of a Sharonesque assassination campaign.

\* \* \* \*

DU 11 AU 17 AVRIL 2002



◀ "L'axe du bien arrive sur nous !"  
Dessin de Chappatte paru dans l'International Herald Tribune, Paris.

■ **Précautions**  
Le Pentagone a préparé un plan détaillé pour transférer son poste de commandement militaire d'Arabie Saoudite au Qatar au cas où les autorités saoudiennes fermeraient leurs portes aux Etats-Unis, rapporte *The Washington Post*. Ce projet de remplacer éventuellement la base aérienne de Prince Sultan a pris une nouvelle urgence avec la perspective d'une action militaire contre l'Irak. L'armée américaine a également commencé à améliorer des pistes d'atterrissage au Koweït, à Bahrein, aux Emirats arabes unis et à Oman.

## Attaquer l'Irak, un rêve devenu une priorité

Le désir de George Bush de faire tomber Saddam Hussein se heurte cependant à de nombreux obstacles, comme la crise israélienne et les opérations d'Afghanistan.

THE PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER  
Philadelphie

**L**e président Bush peut certes souhaiter renverser Saddam Hussein, mais les Etats-Unis ne sont pas encore prêts à déclencher une guerre contre l'Irak. Interviewés à ce sujet, des législateurs tant républicains que démocrates ont rappelé que Bush n'avait pour l'heure encore avancé aucun argument susceptible de prouver au Congrès et au peuple américains que la guerre contre l'Irak était justifiée. D'après Henry J. Hyde, représentant républicain de l'Illinois et président de la commission de la Chambre sur les Relations internationales, Bush se verra accorder toute liberté d'agir contre Saddam Hussein si les services de renseignements américains démontrent que le leader irakien a l'intention d'utiliser des armes meurtrières contre les Etats-Unis. Mais le président devra établir sans ambiguïté que les frappes américaines répondent à une provocation avérée, prévient Hyde. "Je pense qu'il obtiendrait le soutien du Congrès et de tout le monde. Mais

cherche à se doter d'armes de destruction massive. "Il est fort possible qu'il faille attendre deux ans avant d'être à même de se charger des Irakiens", avance Daniel Goure, analyste militaire de l'institut Lexington, une organisation conservatrice d'Arlington, en Virginie.

Le principal frein à toute action prématurée contre l'Irak n'est autre que la guerre en Afghanistan, laquelle est loin d'être terminée, reconnaissent les responsables américains. En réalité, le conflit entre dans une phase d'usure plus difficile. Avec l'arrivée du printemps, le climat est plus propice aux combats. George Tenet, le directeur de la CIA, a averti le Congrès à la fin du mois dernier qu'avec le début de la saison traditionnelle des combats, au printemps, on pourrait assister à des coups de main menés par des talibans et des terroristes d'Al Qaida survivants contre les forces américaines et alliées, et contre le gouvernement provisoire afghan. "Une guerre de type insurrectionnel est tout à fait envisageable", a déclaré au Congrès le vice-amiral Thomas il lui faudra nous répéter que c'est une chose à laquelle nous sommes contraints et que nous ne sommes pas les fauteurs de quelque guerre que ce soit."

Bush peut apparemment compter sur l'appui des Américains. Selon les sondages, ces derniers approuvent son désir de renverser Saddam Hussein dans le cadre de la guerre contre le terrorisme. Mais ils semblent également penser que les Etats-Unis auront besoin d'encore plus de temps et d'efforts avant de pouvoir s'attaquer à cet impitoyable dictateur qui, affirme Bush,

R. Wilson, chef de la Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). "C'est à cela que l'armée doit se préparer dans les zones urbaines, rurales, partout où elle opère en Afghanistan."

Certains officiers généraux ont prévenu qu'ils ne disposaient pas d'effectifs suffisants pour gérer à la fois leurs missions régulières en Afghanistan et une offensive sur l'Irak. Si l'on ne recense que 5 300 soldats américains déployés en Afghanistan, ces hommes sont soutenus par des dizaines de milliers d'autres dans la région et ailleurs, ce qui fait peser une lourde charge sur les moyens humains, les équipements et les fonds de la défense américaine. Les combats en Afghanistan obligent le Pentagone à opérer au maximum de ses capacités pour déployer du personnel, des munitions intelligentes, des bâtiments, ainsi que des vecteurs de renseignements, de sur-

veillance et de reconnaissance dans le monde.

Par ailleurs, l'armée américaine est également engagée dans d'autres opérations contre le terrorisme sur la planète, bien qu'à une échelle plus modeste que celle d'une éventuelle intervention contre Bagdad. Dans les Philippines, quelque 660 militaires américains, dont 160 membres des forces spéciales, prennent part à des opérations qui, en six mois, devraient aider le gouvernement à écraser Abu Sayyaf, groupe extrémiste islamique lié à Oussama Ben Laden. Au Yémen et dans l'ancienne République soviétique de Géorgie, le Pentagone participe à la formation et à l'entraînement des troupes pour lutter contre des éléments d'Al Qaida. En Indonésie, Bush veut proposer un entraînement à la lutte antiterroriste non létale pour les officiers. Et, en ce qui concerne la Colombie, le Congrès et le

président devraient finir par accorder une assistance militaire pour renforcer les unités locales dans leur guerre contre les rebelles de gauche.

Bush doit en outre rassembler ses alliés européens, puisque même le plus fidèle d'entre tous, le Royaume-Uni, manifeste quelques réticences. Il doit enfin trouver comment atténuer les violences entre Israéliens et Palestiniens s'il veut pouvoir compter sur l'appui d'autres dirigeants arabes avant d'agir contre Bagdad, comme le vice-président Cheney s'en est aperçu lors de son récent voyage au Proche-Orient. Les dirigeants arabes lui ont affirmé qu'ils craignaient les représailles de leurs propres populations s'ils emboîtaient le pas aux Etats-Unis contre l'Irak, alors que leurs concitoyens pensent, eux, que Washington soutient l'Etat hébreu contre les Palestiniens.

Steven Thomma et Jackie Koszczuk

## COOPÉRATION

# L'après-Saddam Hussein... avec Poutine

■ Mi-mars, alors que le vice-président américain Dick Cheney entreprenait une vaste tournée au Moyen-Orient, la commission interparlementaire russo-irakienne étudiait, à Moscou, les plans d'une coopération bilatérale pour les dix années à venir. "La situation aurait pu paraître absurde, commente l'hebdomadaire russe *Kommersant-Vlast*, si la Russie n'avait pas bon espoir de voir se réaliser ces plans avec un nouveau gouvernement irakien." Pour le magazine moscovite, la tournée de Dick Cheney aurait en effet servi à préparer le terrain pour l'opération visant à renverser le régime de Saddam Hussein. Attaque militaire de grande envergure ?

Renversement du régime avec l'aide des forces d'opposition, notamment les Kurdes ? Elimination physique de Saddam Hussein ? Pour l'instant, Washington hésite encore sur la méthode et le calendrier (printemps ou automne). En attendant, rappelle *Vlast*, l'opinion internationale est plutôt défavorable. La Russie a fait valoir aux Etats-Unis qu'elle subirait de lourdes pertes économiques si l'Irak était attaqué. En effet, Moscou est le premier partenaire de Bagdad dans le cadre du programme "Pétrole contre nourriture" et a signé récemment un accord de coopération portant sur des dizaines de projets d'investissement. Par ailleurs, l'Irak doit

entre 7 et 8 milliards de dollars à la Russie. Les Américains ont donc proposé un marché aux Russes : si Moscou ne les empêche pas de mener leur opération (à savoir, si Moscou ne bloque pas les décisions du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU au cas où Washington tente d'y faire passer sa résolution ou bien si Moscou ne demande pas la réunion du même Conseil au cas où Washington décide de lancer une opération sans le consentement de ce dernier), ses intérêts économiques en Irak seront préservés et tous les accords maintenus pour l'après-Saddam Hussein. "Poutine n'a pas donné de réponse, mais il n'a guère le choix", conclut *Vlast*.

International Herald Tribune  
Saturday-Sunday, April 13-14, 2002

## Iraq puts off talks with UN on arms

From news reports

**UNITED NATIONS, New York:** Iraq on Friday postponed talks next week with the United Nations on the return of arms inspectors, saying it wanted to keep the world's focus on the Middle East crisis.

No new date has been set, but Baghdad's ambassador to the world body, Mohammed Douri, said he expected the delay would be short, perhaps only until the end of April.

"We don't want to divert public atten-

tion from the Palestinian problem for a relatively small issue of a dialogue with the United Nations," he said.

U.S. officials have been doubtful all along about the potential for the UN talks. One said Friday: "The Iraqis know one thing they are supposed to do: tell the secretary-general and the council when the inspectors will be allowed back in."

A British diplomat said, "Iraq was wrong if it imagined the heat is off" because of the Middle East crisis.

"We remain very serious about addressing this issue: the Iraqis need to show they are serious, too," she added, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The talks between the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, and Foreign Minister Naji Sabri of Iraq were set for April 18 to 19. The officials were to discuss, for the second time this year, the return of inspectors. They last spoke on March 7.

The UN arms inspectors left on the eve of a U.S.-British air strike in December 1998 that was meant to punish Baghdad for not cooperating with the weapons experts.

They have since been barred from returning to check if Baghdad has any weapons of mass destruction programs, a key requirement to lifting UN sanctions that were imposed shortly after Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

President Saddam Hussein of Iraq has been trying to curry favor in the Arab world, presumably to win support against the United States, which has threatened to topple his government, although such action does not appear imminent.

He recently increased the cash bounty he would pay families of suicide bombers who attack Israel to \$25,000 from \$10,000. (Reuters, AP)



## Dead but still in the dock

A publisher has been ordered to answer charges in court two months after her death, one of many Turkish cases with a whiff of Kafka. Owen Bowcott reports

**Saturday April 13, 2002**  
**The Guardian**

Ayşe Nur Zarakolu died of cancer in hospital on January 28 and was buried within two days. Two weeks after the death of this internationally renowned publisher, a letter arrived from No 1 state security court, ordering her to appear at 9am on March 21. "We have opened a case against you, in absentia," the summons warned. "If you do not come, you will be arrested."

After her son was arrested for his funeral oration, the trial date arrived. The lawyers assumed their positions and proceedings began. "It was like something out of the pages of Kafka," says her widower, Ragıp Zarakolu. "Everybody was there: the prosecutor, advocate, judges, correspondents, friends. Only the place of the accused was empty."

The pursuit of a deceased, former librarian may be an extreme example of Turkish legal pedantry, but it is typical of how Ankara curtails free speech in the name of defending political unity.

Zarakolu's alleged crime involved publication of a work entitled *The Song Of Liberty* by Hüseyin Turhalı, an exiled Kurdish lawyer. She is also being summonsed from her grave to answer charges that she published *The Culture Of Pontus*, an anthropological study by Ömer Assan examining the ancient Greek heritage of the region around Trabzon on the Black Sea.

The cases are active. Her death has not, so far, convinced the prosecuting authorities to relinquish their grip: the Pontus book remains banned and under investigation. The court awaits a death certificate from the registrar confirming that she is now an ex-publisher and the trial is postponed until June 4.

The prosecution - some might say persecution - of Zarakolu illustrates the republic's enthusiasm for gagging charges and an enduring sense of national vulnerability when confronted with public debate about Turkey's historical identity.

Zarakolu's case is one of those highlighted this month in a campaign launched by the English branch of the writers' association, International PEN, which has become "alarmed" at the numbers of authors, journalists and publishers appearing before the courts. More than 100 await trial.

The elected government in Ankara, eager for EU membership, had attempted to reduce the number of such "causes célèbres" by reforming its criminal statutes. But politicians and prosecutors, under the vigilant eye of the military-dominated national security council, remain sensitive to perceived threats against the state's territorial integrity.

"Though it welcomes the initiative to improve legislation in line with EU accession requirements, International PEN is deeply

disappointed by the limited changes to laws used to penalise freedom of expression in Turkey," the organisation says. "In some cases penalties have been increased, and the scope of repressive legislation widened."

Among cases due before the courts this month is the prosecution of author Selma Kociva and her publisher, Muammer Akyüz, under article 312 of the Turkish penal code. Her book, *Lazona: The Reality Of The Laz People*, is a study of a Turkish ethnic minority. Article 312, open to a broad spectrum of interpretations, states that: "A person who incites the people to hatred or hostility on the basis of a distinction between social classes, races, religions, denominations or regions shall, on conviction, be liable to between one and years' imprisonment".

Turkey's punitive anti-terror legislation, developed during 15 years of warfare against Kurdish separatist guerrillas, is also repeatedly deployed to define Kurdish cultural activity as support for terrorism. "Written and spoken propaganda, meetings, assemblies and demonstrations aimed at undermining the territorial integrity of the Republic of Turkey or the indivisible unity of the nation are prohibited," states article eight of the anti-terror law.

Another publisher, Abdullah Keskin, this month faced charges for his firm's translation of *After Such Knowledge, What Forgiveness?*, a book by Washington Post journalist Jonathan Randal. Published in the US and Britain several years ago, it is an eyewitness account of the establishment of the western-protected safe haven in Northern Iraq. The Turkish authorities have taken exception to use of the word "Kurdistan" in several passages.

Occasionally international opinion dissuades Turkish courts from banning foreign books. Earlier this year, the US political critic Noam Chomsky appeared in an Istanbul court to lend support to Fathi Tas, the 23-year-old publisher of the Turkish edition of his selected works.

The prosecutor eventually conceded that "the author was presenting his personal views and scientific assessment" and "there was no evidence the defendant acted with the purpose of dividing the state". Fiona Mackay, of the London-based Kurdish Human Rights Project, attended the hearing and was surprised at its sudden informality under the glare of western media. "A few minutes later, word came round that the defendant had been acquitted, though no judgment was given in open court."

The dead cannot respond to courtroom interrogation, but Zarakolu, who was jailed four times for publishing, left behind prison-cell statements. "I am here today," she wrote in 1993, "since thought has been deemed a crime, indeed a terrorist crime."

Born in Antakya in 1946, Zarakolu studied sociology before entering publishing. Her interest in ethnic minorities set her on a collision course with Turkey's generals. An investigation into whether the 1915 Ottoman massacre of Armenians was a planned genocide earned her a suspended prison sentence.

The Belge publishing house, which she established in an Istanbul basement, was firebombed in 1995. Numerous titles



were confiscated and destroyed. At one stage she faced more than 30 charges, attracting international support including a "Freedom to Publish" award at the 1998 Frankfurt book fair. Zarakolu was unable to collect it as authorities withheld her passport. Earlier this year, a distinguished cast of writers from English PEN - including Margaret Drabble, Lady Antonia Fraser, Sir Tom Stoppard and David Lodge - faxed a petition Bulent Ecevit, Turkey's president, calling for the charges against her and Omer Asan to be dropped.

In Turkey's defence, there have been improvements in freedom of expression since the military coup of the early 1980s when dozens of writers were jailed. Many of those charged now are spared prison sentences. PEN believes that only one writer, Fikret Baskaya, is being held in prison specifically for his writing. "Yet the aim is to suppress those who criticise while avoiding the scrutiny of the outside world,"

the organisation says.

The fate of a bus driver who played Kurdish music to his passengers has triggered an even more curious test case. The trial of Sulhattin Onen shows just how widely article eight of anti-terror law can be stretched. He was given a 45-month prison sentence for playing music which the authorities claim contains "separatist propaganda". He says the tape, entitled *The Words Of Heaven*, bore an official seal and came from a local music shop.

His misfortune was to have an army sergeant as his last passenger. The NCO asked to be dropped off at the local security directorate where he arrested Onen, claiming that he had forced passengers to listen to the music more than 20 times. The court found him guilty of "aiding and abetting an armed organisation" but later suspended the sentence.

## U.S. probed record of UN arms inspector

### Pentagon had sought to avoid hurdles to any attack on Iraq

By Walter Pincus and Colum Lynch

The Washington Post

**WASHINGTON:** In an unusual move, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz asked the CIA early this year to investigate the performance of the Swedish diplomat Hans Blix, chairman of the new United Nations team that was formed to carry out inspections of Iraq's weapons programs.

Wolfowitz's request, involving Blix's leadership of the International Atomic Energy Agency, illuminates the behind-the-scenes skirmishing taking place in the Bush administration over the prospect of renewed UN weapons inspections in Iraq.

The government of the Iraqi president, Saddam Hussein, is negotiating with the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan, on the return of arms inspectors, although Iraq asked Sunday for a postponement of talks scheduled for next week. Iraq's representative to the UN said Baghdad did not want to divert attention from the Israeli-Palestinian crisis.

Saddam has given no indication about whether he will agree to new inspections. But senior Pentagon civilians such as Wolfowitz and their allies elsewhere in the Bush administration fear that a go-ahead by the Iraqi leader could delay and possibly fatally under-

mine their overall goal to start a military campaign against Iraq.

The inspection issue has become "a surrogate for a debate about whether we go after Saddam," said Richard Perle, an adviser to Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld as chairman of the Defense Policy Board.

Officials gave contradictory accounts of Wolfowitz's reaction to the CIA report, which the agency returned in late January with the conclusion that Blix had conducted inspections of Iraq's declared nuclear power plants "fully within the parameters he could operate" as chief of the Vienna-based agency from 1981 to 1997.

A former State Department official familiar with the report said Wolfowitz had "hit the ceiling" because it failed to provide sufficient ammunition to undermine Blix and, by association, the new UN weapons inspection program.

An administration official, however, said Wolfowitz "did not angrily respond" when he read the report because he ultimately concluded that the CIA had given only a "lukewarm assessment." The official said the CIA played down U.S. criticism of Blix in 1997 for closing the energy agency's books on Iraq after an earlier UN inspection program discovered Baghdad had an ongoing weapons development program.

The request for a CIA investigation underscored the degree of concern by Wolfowitz and his civilian colleagues in the Pentagon that new inspections — or protracted negotiations over them — could torpedo their plans for military action to remove Saddam from power.

"The hawks' nightmare is that inspectors will be admitted, will not be terribly vigorous and not find anything," a former U.S. official said. "Economic sanctions would be eased, and the U.S. will be unable to act."

A former member of the previous UN inspection team said the Wolfowitz group was "afraid Saddam will draw us in to a diplomatic minuet."

"While we will have disputes, they will be solved at the last minute and the closer it comes to the 2004 elections the more difficult it will be to take the military route," the former official said.

Secretary of State Colin Powell and his associates at the State Department, who have been more cautious about a military campaign against Iraq, take a different view. They "see the inspection issue as a play that buys time to enlarge a coalition for an eventual move against Saddam," according to a former White House foreign policy specialist.

State Department officials contend that Saddam will inevitably create conditions for the failure of the UN inspections, by setting down unacceptable terms or thwarting the inspectors inside Iraq so they have to withdraw.

Blix's inspection organization, the UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, has inherited the mandate from the UN Special Commission on Iraq. The special commission was established after the 1991 Gulf War to eradicate all of Iraq's proscribed weapons before UN sanctions against Baghdad can be lifted. It was disbanded eight years later after the inspectors were withdrawn.

In its resolution establishing the new commission, the UN Security Council offered to suspend sanctions on Iraq if it cooperated with the inspectors.

"The expression of full compliance is not used in the resolution," noted Rolf Ekeus, the former executive chairman of the special commission. "It states there shall be cooperation in all respects."

Determining the level of cooperation required will be done by Blix based on a list of "key remaining disarmament tasks," according to the resolution. Among those tasks will be seeking to determine whether Iraq is continuing to develop the VX nerve agent, whether it has continued its medium- and long-range missile program, and searching for documents that could provide insight into Iraq's efforts to develop chemical and biological warheads.

Even if cooperation by Iraq led to suspending some sanctions, Baghdad would still be subject to UN monitoring of its weapons programs. Sanctions would not be formally lifted until it persuaded the Security Council, where the United States has veto power, that it had abandoned its prohibited weapons programs.

# Le PKK se saborde et devient le Kadek

**Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, PKK, a annoncé, mardi 16 avril, qu'il "cessait toute activité" et qu'il se baptisait désormais le Kadek, Congrès pour la liberté et la démocratie au Kurdistan, selon un porte-parole, à l'issue du 8<sup>e</sup> congrès du mouvement d'extrême gauche kurde, connu pour sa résistance à la Turquie enclenchée en 1984. Le mouvement d'"Apo" Ocalan, condamné à mort en Turquie et qui a été désigné président du Kadek, n'a cependant pas convaincu les autorités turques sur son changement stratégique. İsmail Cem, ministre des affaires étrangères turc, a déclaré, que le PKK "ne modifie pas sa nature".**

Le 8<sup>e</sup> congrès du PKK, le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, risque fort de marquer l'histoire du mouvement de libération du Kurdistan turc. Après plusieurs jours de débats intenses entre les différentes sensibilités du PKK, le congrès, qui s'est tenu à Bruxelles – où l'implantation kurde est forte –, a décidé de cesser toute activité clandestine et terroriste contre la Turquie et de se baptiser désormais le Kadek, Congrès pour la liberté et la démocratie au Kurdistan.

## L'ARRESTATION D'"APO" OCALAN, DÉBUT DE LA FIN

*"Le PKK a accompli sa mission (...) et toutes ses activités sont terminées", a précisé son porte-parole. L'organisation marxiste-léniniste, qui a mené pendant quinze ans une guérilla armée pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant sur une partie de la Turquie, avait plus ou moins renoncé à la violence après la capture de son chef légendaire, "Apo" Ocalan, en septembre 1999, au Kenya. Déboussolée par l'arrestation, puis la condamnation à mort de son leader, la direction du PKK s'était quelque peu démobilisée devant les assauts de plus en plus nombreux de l'armée turque. La guerre au Kurdistan a fait, en quinze ans de conflit, plus de 36 500 morts, selon un bilan officiel, et des centaines de milliers de réfugiés ou déplacés. Soutenue par la communauté internationale dans sa lutte contre le terrorisme, la Turquie était parvenue à freiner la volonté des leaders indépendantistes kurdes d'internationaliser leur cause, en dehors d'un écho relatif à l'intérieur de l'Union européenne, qu'Ankara souhaiterait rejoindre dans les meilleurs délais.*

## LE RÉSEAU INTERNATIONAL DU PKK

Créé en novembre 1978 par une dizaine d'étudiants sous la direction d'Abdullah Ocalan, dit "Apo", emprisonné actuellement sur l'île d'Imrali, au nord-ouest du pays, le PKK a à son actif plusieurs centaines d'attaques et d'opérations terroristes contre la Turquie. Ankara, qui a mobilisé plus d'un tiers de son potentiel militaire dans les provinces orientales rebelles, s'est heurtée à une vive résistance car les combattants kurdes jouissaient du soutien d'une importante partie de la population kurde. Critiqué par de nombreux Kurdes pour ses pratiques arbitraires et combattu par les forces turques aidées d'une milice paramilitaire fidèle à Ankara, le PKK était parvenu à rassembler plusieurs dizaines de milliers de partisans et pouvait compter sur une force armée d'environ 10 000 hommes. Proche de partis kurdes établis dans les grandes villes turques, le PKK jouissait également d'un dispositif actif en Europe, notamment en Allemagne, en Belgique, en Grèce et en France, où les réseaux kurdes fondaient leur influence en partie sur le racket et l'intimidation auprès des commerçants d'origine kurde.

Au Proche-Orient, les ramifications du PKK gagnent la Syrie et le Liban. D'après certaines sources, Damas aurait collaboré avec le PKK durant des années contre l'hégémonie de la Turquie en matière de contrôle de l'eau. Les relations avec les Kurdes d'Irak et d'Iran représentent une autre caractéristique du mouvement kurde de Turquie.

## POUR UNE STRATÉGIE DE DROIT

En cessant toute activité militaire et en devenant le Kadek, la direction du PKK a donc choisi d'institutionnaliser sa cause. Le renoncement à toute action armée, même si le porte-parole s'est empressé d'ajouter qu'une force d'autodéfense du Kadek est maintenue en cas d'agression turque, place le mouvement kurde dans une action respectueuse du droit international. Pour Nihat Ali Ozcan, expert en terrorisme au Centre d'études stratégiques Eurasie, cette évolution semble normale. *"Le PKK, dit-il, a réalisé dès les années 1990 qu'il ne pouvait atteindre son but par la force et a commencé à chercher un nouveau terrain, mouvement accéléré par la capture d'Ocalan. Et, depuis le 11 septembre, poursuivre des buts politique par le terrorisme et la violence est devenu risqué."* *"Il avait besoin de se déplacer sur un terrain où il serait reconnu par le système international et où il serait plus fort que l'Etat, et c'est le terrain politique"*, ajoute-t-il. Le département d'Etat américain avait placé le PKK sur la liste des organisations terroristes après le 11 septembre, une décision qui a dû peser dans le changement d'identité du PKK.

Changement d'identité peut-être, mais pas *"de nature"*, semble préciser İsmail Cem, ministre des affaires étrangères turc, mardi 16 avril, à Luxembourg, lors d'une conférence de presse, à l'issue d'une réunion du conseil d'association Union européenne-Turquie avec ses homologues européens au Luxembourg. *"Qu'une organisation terroriste change de nom, ce n'est pas vraiment un sujet qui retient toute notre attention. Ce n'est pas la première de mes préoccupations en ce moment"*, a-t-il déclaré.

Gaïdz Minassian, avec AFP

International Herald Tribune  
Wednesday, April 17, 2002

# Rumsfeld questions Iraq inspections

## Remarks on UN arms commission spotlight split on Bush team

By Walter Pincus

The Washington Post

**WASHINGTON:** Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld says he is skeptical that a new United Nations arms inspection regime will build confidence that President Saddam Hussein of Iraq is not developing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons.

Rumsfeld said Monday that even when UN inspectors were in Iraq during the 1990s, "for the most part anything they found was a result of having been cued to something as a result of a defector giving them a heads-up."

Rumsfeld's remarks reflected sharp differences within the Bush administration over the prospect of resuming the UN inspections.

Senior Pentagon officials fear the inspections could complicate their goal of ousting Saddam by force, while the State Department has been pressing for Iraq to accept the new UN Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission and renew the inspections program that was abandoned in 1998.

A State Department spokesman, Philip Reeker, said Monday that the U.S. policy was to support the commission and the UN resolutions that

require Iraq to accept "full, unfettered, unconditional access" to suspected weapons sites.

"The weapons inspectors," Reeker said, "must be able to operate on an anytime, anywhere basis for inspections to meet the standards set by the UN Security Council."

Hans Blix, the UN panel's executive chairman, said in a meeting with Washington Post editors and reporters Monday that his approach would be to place the "burden of proof" on Iraq to demonstrate it is not developing weapons of mass destruction.

He noted several changes from previous UN efforts, including funding the commission from a surcharge on Iraqi oil sales and making the commission independent from pressure of countries that had before paid for the inspectors.

Another change, Blix said, was that in addition to inspecting and monitoring potential weapons production plants, the new commission would have the right to visit Iraqi military bases and facilities. There was no guarantee that Iraq would agree to the inspections.

Blix said that he would accept and depend on intelligence supplied to the UN inspectors by individual countries, but that "it would be a one-

way street." His predecessors were accused of using inspections to gather intelligence in Iraq.

There is no certainty that Iraq will agree to allow inspectors back into the country.

A meeting in March between the UN secretary general, Kofi Annan, and an Iraqi delegation was to be followed by another meeting this month, but Iraq last week canceled it. A UN spokesman, Fred Eckhard, said Monday that Iraq had suggested new dates for the meeting.

Meanwhile, Rumsfeld and Reeker commented, in response to questions about a Washington Post article that the deputy defense secretary, Paul Wolfowitz, had requested a CIA investigation in January into Blix's performance as head of the International Atomic Energy Agency between 1981 and 1997.

Reeker said that Blix "has our full confidence" and that the Swedish diplomat had told the United States that "his mandate is to conduct a thorough, no-holds-barred inspection of Iraq's compliance."

Rumsfeld said the Wolfowitz request, which he denied was an "investigation," was like many that take place every day "to look into this, amplify on that."

PERSONNALITÉS DE DEMAIN

HANDAN IPEKÇİ

Nouvelle vague turque



Son dernier long-métrage, *Grand homme, petit amour*, a été sacré meilleur film du festival d'Antalya, ce qui lui a valu d'être sélectionné par le ministère de la

Culture pour représenter la Turquie aux Oscars. Sauf que ce film, une production turco-gréco-magyare, qui met en scène la rencontre entre un magistrat jacobin et une orpheline kurde ne parlant pas le turc, n'a pas été très apprécié dans des milieux nationalistes. Tant et si bien que le film, pourtant sur les écrans depuis plusieurs mois, a été interdit et retiré de la candidature aux Oscars. Diplômée de journalisme, Handan Ipekçi incarne cette nouvelle vague du cinéma turc qui aborde sans complexe des sujets de

société sensibles. Cette cinéaste de 46 ans n'en est pas à son coup d'essai. En 1994, elle a abandonné le documentaire pour réaliser son premier long-métrage, *Papa fait son service militaire*, où elle évoquait déjà des questions politiques douloureuses. Face aux différents blocages, Handan Ipekçi avait alors organisé elle-même la diffusion de son film, projeté au festival de Berlin en 1995. *Grand homme, petit amour* a déjà été vu par des centaines de milliers de spectateurs.

(D'après Radikal et Yeni Safak, Istanbul)

## Le PKK cesse "toutes ses activités" et devient le KADEK



BRUXELLES, 16 avr (AFP) - 12h33 - Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (séparatistes kurdes de Turquie) a décidé de cesser "toutes ses activités" et de devenir le KADEK (Congrès pour la liberté et la démocratie au Kurdistan), a annoncé mardi à Bruxelles un porte-parole à l'issue du 8ème congrès du PKK.

Le chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan, détenu dans l'île-prison turque d'Imrali, a été désigné président du KADEK, a précisé ce porte-parole.

Selon lui, "le PKK a accompli sa mission (...) et toutes ses activités sont terminées". "Le KADEK est le seul héritier légitime du PKK", a-t-il ajouté.

La PKK a mené 15 ans de rebellion armée sanglante contre l'Etat turc pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le Sud-Est anatolien à majorité kurde.

L'arrêt de ses activités sous son ancien nom s'inscrit dans une stratégie de transformation en organisation politique légale, le PKK ayant arrêté la lutte armée depuis 1999 après la capture à Nairobi de son chef Abdullah Ocalan.

Le KADEK "préconise la résolution de la question kurde dans le cadre des frontières actuelles" des Etats où vivent des populations kurdes, assure un texte publié à Bruxelles par le nouveau parti.

Il ne veut pas "détrôner" ces Etats, mais "cherche à leur faire subir une transformation démocratique" dans le cadre d'une vaste "Union démocratique du Moyen-Orient", selon ce texte.

"Le système du 20ème siècle", reposant sur "le nationalisme, les divisions et les partages" est "caduc", et est "la source première des conflits actuels", estime le KADEK.

L'abandon de la lutte armée est confirmée, le KADEK prônant à la place des "soulèvements politiques pacifiques".

Les militants armés du PKK continueront de constituer une force "d'autodéfense", appartenant à la KADEK, qui n'agiront qu'en cas d'attaque contre des Kurdes, a souligné en outre le porte-parole du KADEK.

Ces militants "rejoindront le mouvement civil au moment opportun", notamment quand l'Etat turc aura aboli la peine de mort et aura reconnu les droits culturels des Kurdes, a-t-il précisé.

Le KADEK "attend que l'union nationale kurde se fasse au plus haut niveau et au sein du Congrès national kurde (CNK)", aux activités duquel "il prendra part", selon le texte publié.

Le KADEK entend enfin soutenir "le mouvement de libération de la femme", soulignant que les femmes représentent plus de 40% de ses effectifs.

## Ismail Cem: le changement de nom du PKK "ne modifie pas" sa nature



LUXEMBOURG, 16 avr (AFP) - 15h44 - Le ministre turc des Affaires étrangères Ismail Cem a estimé mardi à Luxembourg que le changement de nom du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie) "ne modifie pas sa nature".

"Je ne pense pas qu'un changement de nom modifie la nature du PKK. Pour l'instant à mon avis, il n'y a pas eu de changement de la situation du tout", a déclaré M. Cem lors d'une conférence de presse à l'issue d'une réunion du conseil d'association UE-Turquie avec ses homologues européens à Luxembourg.

"Qu'une organisation terroriste change de nom, ce n'est pas vraiment un sujet qui retient toute notre attention. Ce n'est pas la première de mes préoccupations en ce moment", a-t-il ajouté.

Le PKK a annoncé mardi à Bruxelles avoir décidé, lors de son 8ème congrès, de cesser "toutes ses activités" et de devenir le KADEK (Congrès pour la liberté et la démocratie au Kurdistan).

Le PKK a mené 15 ans de rebellion armée sanglante contre l'Etat turc pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le Sud-Est anatolien à majorité kurde.

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## Le PKK tente une mue politique sans convaincre l'Etat turc



ANKARA, 16 avr (AFP) - 14h41 - Les rebelles kurdes du Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan ont annoncé mardi l'arrêt de leurs activités et leur transformation en force politique sous un nouveau nom, ce qui ne devrait toutefois pas bouleverser la donne et assouplir la position de l'Etat turc à leur égard.

Le PKK est devenu le KADEK (Congrès pour la liberté et la démocratie au Kurdistan) en gardant comme président Abdullah Ocalan, condamné à mort en Turquie pour trahison et séparatisme, a annoncé à Bruxelles un porte-parole, rendant compte de son 8ème congrès.

Le KADEK ne sera pas un parti politique en tant que tel mais soutiendra des partis et organisations appuyant une "solution démocratique à la question kurde".

Il renonce à l'idée d'un Etat kurde indépendant pour agir "dans le cadre des frontières actuelles" des Etats où vivent les Kurdes (Turquie, Iran, Irak, Syrie) et les appelle "à abandonner leur politique de déni et destruction pour accepter les droits du peuple kurde".

Les autorités turques ont immédiatement réagi en affirmant que ces décisions ne changeaient rien.

"Un changement de nom n'est pas important", a souligné le ministre de la Défense Sabahattin Cakmakoglu.

"Que le PKK change ou pas de nom ou de forme, il reste pour nous une organisation terroriste", a renchéri le ministre de l'Industrie Ahmet Kenan Tanrikulu.

Le PKK a mené de 1984 à 1999 une rébellion armée pour un Etat kurde indépendant dans le sud-est anatolien à majorité kurde qui a fait plus de 36.000 morts, selon un bilan officiel.

Il a cessé les combats en septembre 1999 à l'appel d'Ocalan, capturé puis condamné à mort en juin de la même année. Ce dernier avait plaidé pendant son procès pour une "solution pacifique" au conflit.

La puissante armée turque avait déjà à l'époque rejeté ce cessez-le-feu unilatéral comme une "manoeuvre".

Selon le professeur Dogu Ergil, de la faculté de sciences politiques d'Ankara, "le PKK entre à présent sur un nouveau terrain, ce sera un test pour la démocratie turque".

"Le gouvernement turc a très peur qu'il ne devienne une force politique. Sa mentalité est construite sur la lutte contre le terrorisme. Ils ne savent pas comment traiter avec une organisation politique. Alors ils essaieront de bloquer cette tentative", estime-t-il.

Pour Nihat Ali Ozcan, expert en terrorisme au Centre d'études stratégiques Eurasie, "le PKK a réalisé dès les années 1990 qu'il ne pouvait atteindre son but par la force et a commencé à chercher un nouveau terrain, mouvement accéléré par la capture d'Ocalan. Et depuis le 11 septembre, poursuivre des buts politiques par le terrorisme et la violence est devenu risqué".

"Ils avaient besoin de se déplacer sur un terrain où ils seraient reconnus par le système international et où ils seraient plus fort que l'Etat, et c'est le terrain politique", poursuit-il.

Mais selon lui, "la Turquie ne les acceptera jamais en tant qu'interlocuteurs (à un règlement de la question kurde)".

Un porte-parole du parti de la Démocratie du peuple (HADEP), qui se bat pour des droits culturels pour les Kurdes, Mutlu Civiroglu, a jugé "positives" ces décisions et souhaité que l'Etat turc "prenne des mesures concrètes et agisse pour une démocratisation et des droits pour les Kurdes".

Toutefois, selon M. Ozcan, "personne ne fera de concessions juste parce que le PKK a pris ces décisions. La Turquie autorisera sans doute les publications et la radio-télédiffusion en kurde, mais pas à cause du PKK, à cause de l'évolution qu'elle connaît liée à sa candidature à l'Union européenne".

## Le changement de nom du PKK "ne change rien" selon le PM danois



COPENHAGUE, 17 avr (AFP) - 16h30 - Le Premier ministre danois Anders Fogh Rasmussen, a affirmé mercredi à Copenhague que le changement de nom du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatistes kurdes de Turquie) "ne modifiait en rien à sa nature", maintenant sa volonté de placer l'ex-PKK sur la liste de l'UE des organisations terroristes.

"Selon moi, ce n'est pas le nom qui importe, mais le contenu qui est important" a-t-il souligné à l'agence Ritzau, estimant que le PKK est encore une organisation terroriste.

Le chef du gouvernement libéral, qui assurera la présidence de l'UE au 1er juillet, a indiqué récemment qu'il voulait la liste de l'UE soit conforme à celle des États-Unis, suscitant une controverse au sein de l'opposition de centre-gauche au Parlement, critique à cette volonté d'alignement de Copenhague sur Washington.

Le chef du gouvernement a rappelé par ailleurs qu'il appartiendra à un comité spécial de l'UE de déterminer les organisations et individus qui doivent figurer sur cette liste.

Le PKK a annoncé mardi à Bruxelles avoir décidé, lors de son 8ème congrès, de cesser "toutes ses activités" et de devenir le KADEK (Congrès pour la liberté et la démocratie au Kurdistan).

Le PKK a mené 15 ans de rébellion armée sanglante contre l'Etat turc pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le Sud-Est anatolien à majorité kurde.

## IMF releases \$1 billion in aid to Turkey

From news reports

**ANKARA:** The lira rose Tuesday after the International Monetary Fund approved a \$1 billion loan payment to the country, citing government efforts to strengthen the economy amid Turkey's worst recession in more than 50 years.

The IMF said late Monday that Turkey would be allowed to draw the next installment from a \$16 billion loan program, saying the government had taken steps to reduce state control of the economy and spur growth. Expectations that the summer tourist season would bring dollars to Turkey also spurred demand for the lira, analysts said.

The IMF said Turkish fiscal policies were on track despite a 9.4 percent contraction in the national economy last year.

"The Turkish authorities have made considerable progress in implementing their ambitious economic reform program," the Fund's first deputy managing director, Anne Krueger, said. "In the past, financial indiscipline and structural weaknesses had prevented Turkey from realizing its economic potential and created an environment of highly volatile growth and inflation over several decades."



Burhan Ozbilici/The Associated Press

The IMF said Economy Minister Kemal Dervis and others in Ankara had put Turkey on the right track.

In afternoon trading, the lira was up 1.3 percent at 1,309,750 to the dollar.

The markets were focusing on the prospect of tourist inflows, said Paul McNamara, a fund manager at Julius Baer Investment Management in London, and the loan decision "adds to the Turkish feel-good factor."

IMF approval had been expected since Turkey followed through on promises to keep spending and inflation in check and to close 185 regional administrative offices. It also established an independent agency to monitor the awarding of government contracts. But Krueger warned that the economy still showed no signs of emerging from its recession. "The timing and strength of the recovery in output are as yet uncertain," she said, "and financial markets remain alert to the possibility of further shocks."

(Bloomberg, AFP)

## Clandestin mort à Sangatte: quatre personnes placées en garde à vue



BOULOGNE-SUR-MER (France), 16 avr (AFP) - 19h58 - Quatre immigrés clandestins du centre de Sangatte, près de l'entrée du tunnel sous la Manche (nord), ont été placés en garde à vue après la rixe qui a coûté la vie à un jeune Kurde lundi, a-t-on appris mardi de source judiciaire.

"Les deux jeunes kurdes irakiens hospitalisés depuis lundi après-midi ont pu être entendus par la police et ont été placés en garde à vue mardi en fin d'après-midi", a déclaré à l'AFP Gérard Lesigne, procureur de la République de Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Deux autres clandestins, Kurdes irakiens également, sont gardés à vue depuis lundi soir dans les locaux de la police judiciaire à Coquelles.

"Leurs témoignages font penser que les deux personnes hospitalisées pourraient être directement impliquées, en tant qu'adversaires, dans la bagarre qui a coûté la vie à un jeune homme", a précisé le procureur.

Un jeune Kurde de 25 ans, Ali Sharif, est mort lundi, des suites de ses blessures par arme blanche, après une rixe dans l'enceinte du centre.

"Nous avons pu établir que la victime était un passeur", a ajouté M. Lesigne.

La rixe "s'est produite au sein d'un groupe très restreint, dont les protagonistes en sont venus à s'expliquer au couteau. Il nous reste maintenant à déterminer les causes de cette dispute", a expliqué le procureur.

C'est la première fois qu'un clandestin meurt sur le site du centre de la Croix-Rouge qui abrite actuellement plus de 1.400 personnes, essentiellement des Kurdes d'Irak et des Afghans.

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## Sangatte: deux réfugiés victimes d'une "expédition punitive" de jeunes



CALAIS (France), 30 avr (AFP) - 10h57 - Deux réfugiés kurdes irakiens du centre de la Croix rouge de Sangatte (nord) ont été blessés par balle lundi soir dans le nord de la France par trois jeunes individus de la région, "ivres et qui voulaient faire une expédition punitive", a-t-on appris mardi de sources concordantes.

Le premier a été légèrement blessé d'une balle au pied vers 23h00 (21h00 dans le centre-ville de Calais, le second plus sérieusement d'une balle dans le dos devant la mairie de Sangatte 20 minutes plus tard. Ce dernier, âgé de 26 ans, a été hospitalisé.

Les trois auteurs présumés de l'agression circulaient en voiture, étaient ivres et "avaient décidé de faire une expédition punitive parce qu'ils s'étaient +frités+ avec un réfugié", selon le procureur du tribunal de Boulogne-sur-Mer (nord) Gérard Lesigne.

Agés de 24 et 25 ans et connus pour des faits de violence, ils étaient armés et ont tiré avec une carabine 22 long rifle.

En prenant la fuite, ils ont perdu le contrôle de leur véhicule et ont été interpellés. Ils étaient encore en garde à vue mardi matin au commissariat de Calais.

Des incidents graves entre réfugiés du centre de la Croix-Rouge ont déjà eu lieu mais c'est la première fois que des réfugiés sont pris pour cible par des gens de la région.

Le centre de Sangatte, ouvert en septembre 1999, abrite actuellement plus de 1.400 personnes, essentiellement des Kurdes d'Irak et des Afghans, qui cherchent à passer clandestinement en Grande-Bretagne via le tunnel sous la Manche.

Le 15 avril, pour la première fois, un réfugié --un jeune Kurde irakien-- est mort à la suite d'une rixe dans l'enceinte même du centre.



## **Kurdish Rebel Group Changes Name**

April 16, 2002 By PAUL AMES  
Associated Press

BRUSSELS, Belgium - The Kurdish rebel group that waged a 15-year war against Turkey announced a name change and shift in strategy Tuesday, saying it now wants to campaign peacefully for greater Kurdish rights. "The armed struggle is over," said Riza Erdogan, European spokesman of the new Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress, or Kadek.

At a news conference, Erdogan said Kadek would replace the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan had called a cease-fire after his 1999 arrest, but the Turkish government rejected it and fighting continues, though it has decreased considerably in recent years.

Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit, in a weekend television interview, said the PKK continued to pursue its separatist goals and still had armed rebels based in Iran and Iraq. "They tell foreign countries, 'We've finished with terror now,' but the aim of the terror was to divide Turkey, and that aim is still there," Ecevit told private NTV television. "Terror is waiting in the wings."

Turkish Defense Minister Sabahattin Cakmakoglu said Tuesday in Ankara that the name change "doesn't matter much. What matters is that they pay for what they have done in the past."

Erdogan said the PKK's armed wing would not disband unless Turkey granted an amnesty to its fighters and abolished the death penalty. However, the armed wing, renamed the People's Defense Units, would only act in self-defense, he said. Turkey has already denounced the widely expected move to rename the PKK as an effort to gain favor with the European Union (news - web sites), which is debating whether to include the group on a list of terrorist organizations.

The United States said last week a name change by the PKK would not enable it to escape penalties called for as an officially designated foreign terrorist organization.

Under U.S. law, Americans cannot provide financial help to groups on the foreign terrorist organization list. Members of such groups also are barred from entering the United States. Erdogan said the new organization would no longer seek to break away from Turkey, but instead struggle peacefully for greater rights for Kurds in Turkey as well as in Iran, Iraq and Syria.

"We have no intention of changing the borders of the countries where the Kurdish people live," he said.

Kadek called on Turkey and its neighbors to respect the rights of their Kurdish minorities. In a statement, it said Kurds would follow campaigns of civil disobedience and "peaceful political uprising" to secure their goals.

Erdogan said a congress of almost 300 PKK delegates approved the name change and elected PKK founder Ocalan as president of Kadek. Ocalan has been in a Turkish prison since he was captured in Kenya and is appealing the death sentence handed down by a Turkish court. Some 37,000 people, mostly Kurds, have died in nearly two decades of fighting between the PKK and Turkish troops. Turkey does not consider its estimated 12 million Kurds an official minority and outlaws the use of the Kurdish language in schools, official events and broadcasts other than music.

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## **New party to replace PKK, says Ocalan's brother**

Reuters April 15, 2002

TUNCELI, Turkey - The Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) will cease activities and regroup under a new name, Osman Ocalan, the brother of the organisation's jailed leader, said on Monday, as the PKK seeks to avoid the terrorist label.

His comments follow indications that the European Union could include the PKK on its list of "terrorist" groups. The PKK launched an armed campaign for a Kurdish homeland in southeastern Turkey in 1984 and more than 30,000 people have died in the fighting.

But violence has tapered off since PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan was captured in 1999 and sentenced to death for treason.

After his arrest Abdullah Ocalan ordered his followers to withdraw from Turkey and seek greater cultural rights for its estimated 12 million Kurds through political means.

The move is seen by Turkish authorities as a ruse for Ocalan to avoid the noose and Ankara has vowed to track down and eliminate the PKK. "With the decision taken at the PKK congress, all of the PKK's activities have ended," Osman Ocalan, a senior PKK member, said on satellite television channel Medya TV, which acts as a mouthpiece for the rebels.

"After this, activities will be carried out under the roof of the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Party," Ocalan said, speaking live by telephone from northern Iraq – where the PKK has been holding a congress – in a rare interview.

Turkey has accused some European countries of providing PKK members with a safe haven and has pressed the EU to include the rebels on their terrorist list.

Sources close to the guerrillas, most of whom have fled to northern Iraq, previously said the PKK had launched a new political party, the Kurdistan Democratic Solution Party, that would seek a peaceful resolution of the Kurdish question. The U.S. State Department, which includes the PKK on its list of terrorist organisations, has said a name change would not affect the group's status.

"The European Union's putting the PKK on the terrorism list is a grave mistake," Osman Ocalan said, speaking in Turkish.

"Putting the PKK on this list would portray the Kurdish people as terrorists...and means the leaders of the Kurdish people are terrorists. "The European Union should certainly not accept this pressure from Turkey," he said. "Putting the PKK on this list means war is wanted, not peace."

Europe-based Medya TV, which broadcasts in Kurdish and Turkish and is viewed by many people in the mainly-Kurdish southeast of Turkey, broke into its programming to show the interview.

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## **Despite Turkish Apologies, Ecevit's Words Have Devastating Effect on Jewish Support**

California Courier Publisher

By Harut Sassounian April 18, 2002

More than two weeks have passed since that fateful day when Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit accused Israel of committing genocide against the Palestinians. Since then, he has come under such blistering criticism from both Israel and American-Jews that Ecevit and Turkish Americans have been busy trying to control the damage caused to Turkey's interests by profusely and repeatedly apologizing for that "indiscretion." Judging from various Jewish reactions, Ecevit's words will not be soon forgotten or forgiven!

On April 5th, one day after Ecevit's comments, nine major American-Jewish organizations sent a joint letter to the Turkish Prime Minister severely criticizing him and rejecting his "clarification" and apology. They said that his use of the term "genocide" to describe Israel's military operations in the West Bank is "absolutely wrong as fact and offensive as comment." The Jewish groups stated that the Israeli actions were "directly comparable" to the Turkish government's armed attacks on the Kurds in northern Iraq. In other words, Turkish actions could also be qualified as genocide. The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League, the B'nai B'rith International, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, the Hadassah, and the Orthodox Union concluded their letter by stating, "we register our profound disappointment with your comment." The representatives of

six major American-Jewish organizations, including AIPAC, met with Turkey's Ambassador Faruk Logoglu on April 9, to personally register their protest.

Ironically, only a few months ago, these same nine American-Jewish groups had sent a joint letter to Pres. Bush urging him to provide more US assistance to Turkey. They had stated that "Turkey's extensive relationship with Israel on social, economic, and military issues has wavered not one bit." I wonder if these Jewish groups now regret having made such a pro-Turkish statement. Would they be so eager to lobby on behalf of Turkey again?

The New York Times covered the Jewish reactions to Ecevit's accusations. In an April 10th article titled, "With a word, Israeli-Turkish strain surfaces," reporter Douglas Frantz quoted Barry Jacobs, the director of strategic studies for the American Jewish Committee, as saying: "We have put a lot of effort in on behalf of Turkey." The AJC and other American Jewish groups were reported to have been "stung and angered" by Ecevit's words. "Israel also lodged diplomatic complaints," The Times wrote. The Turkish Zaman newspaper reported the remarks of Alon Liel, a former official of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, who said that everything will be forgotten in the future except Ecevit's accusation of genocide. The Jewish people will never forget that. Israel will henceforth question Turkey's trustworthiness, Liel said.

Ecevit's statement may have also caused a serious rift in the joint lobbying efforts of Jewish and Turkish Americans at the grassroots level.

Here are the powerful words of a Jewish-American woman, Rachel Krespin of Fairfield, Connecticut, who wrote the following letter to Ecevit: "Today, I lived one of the biggest disappointments of my entire life, when I was informed of your recent remarks defining Israel's war against terrorism in pure self-defense as 'genocide.' I feel very betrayed and shocked. I am a Turkish-Israeli-American who spends her entire life in the fight against defamiation of Turkey, writing tens of letters every week, trying to counter the many virulent attempts of Greeks, Armenians, Kurds, etc., who all claim 'genocide.'" Ms. Krespin, describing herself as a member of the Turkish Forum (a pro-Turkish website), Daughters of Atatürk, the Assembly of Turkish American Associations, and the American Association of Jewish Friends of Turkey, wrote: "As members of these distinguished organizations in America, we do all we can, to better the image of Turkey in the world. And we do not do this alone. It is the help, support and firm stand of countless Jewish organizations that give us credibility and make our cause heard. We repeatedly quote Israel's Foreign Minister Shimon Peres' denial of the 'Armenian Genocide' when we make our case." Reiterating her total dedication to "vigorous anti-Armenian, anti-Greek, and anti-Kurd campaigns," she told the Turkish Prime Minister, "Israel and the Jewish people around the world have faithfully stood by Turkey through all her battles and campaigns, both military and political. And you, Mr. Ecevit, have betrayed Israel. And you betrayed me."

A potentially more damaging development for Turkey was disclosed in an upcoming editorial of the newsletter of the American Association of Jewish Friends of Turkey (AAJFT). Here are some excerpts: "By using the word 'genocide,' he [Ecevit] has destroyed the 80 years of slow and painstaking efforts on the part of the Sephardis to influence the majority of the Ashkenazic and Mizrahi American-Jewish organizations in favor of Turkey. Many of our members are questioning the continuation of our organization, the AAJFT, and frankly, we do not blame them."

The AAJFT editorial further stated that despite the persecutions of Jews in Turkey, such as "the sad episodes of the pogroms in Thrace, the Varlik Vergisi, the camp at Askala, the labor battalions, Éwe [Jews] stood up for Turkey whenever we couldÉ. We fought the insidious accusations against Turkey coming from the Greek, Armenian and Arab lobbies.É We wrote letters to the editors whenever the good name of Turkey was being vilified in the American press; we spoke up at political meetings when local Arabs, Armenians or Greeks wanted to pass anti-Turkish resolutions; we proudly marched at Turkish parades in the streets of New York with the Stars and Stripes surrounded by the red Turkish crescent flag on one side and the white Blue Star of David on the other; we testified at state hearings when anti-Turkish curricula were being debated. Mainly we influenced our fellow Ashkenazic and Mizrahi Jews in the United States who knew little about Turkey, or knew only what they heard from the anti-Turkish press. Our Sephardic goodwill ambassadors quietly and persistently continued this long uphill crusade to defend the good name of Turkey in our organizations, our synagogues, our local assemblies and everywhere we were present." The editorial concluded with the following drastic suggestion: "It pains us greatly to hear the word 'genocide' used in any other context except that of the genocide of the Jewish people, especially coming from Prime Minister Ecevit who has always insisted that there were no other genocides in the world. ÉPerhaps he did not realize the depth of the hurt of the Jewish people in hearing that word coming from the leader of a nation which we had always considered to be our friend. As president of our association, I call upon you

members to decide whether we should continue to have an American Association of Jewish Friends of Turkey."

Given these highly negative repercussions, the Turks did everything possible to minimize the damage. Within 48 hours of his statement, Ecevit was compelled to issue two separate apologies. When Turkey's Foreign Minister Ismail Cem was asked during an interview on the Turkish Kanal 7 Television if the Jewish lobby is "so important to us that following its reaction, Prime Minister Ecevit had to correct his remark about a genocide twice," he replied: "the Jewish lobby has always supported Turkey against any injustices that have been made or that were going to be made." Cem also acknowledged that the Jewish lobby has always supported Turkey in connection with the Armenian genocide issue. A prominent Turkish commentator, Mehmet Ali Birand, described Ecevit's remarks as a "big gaffe" and said that the Prime Minister had acted like "a bull in a china shop." Referring to the "certain connotations" of the word genocide, especially when used by a Turkish leader, Birand suggested that "those who live in glass houses should not throw stones!"

In a desperate attempt to appease the angered Jews, some Turkish-American activists even resorted to degrading their own Prime Minister, of course, from the safe shores of the United States. Here is a small sample of how they have characterized Ecevit. Prof. Yuruk Iyriboz wrote back to the "betrayed" Jewish-American woman, Rachel Krespin: "Ecevit's statement is not only devoid of the responsibility adhered to his position but also unintelligently augments other false claims in order to create myths provoking hatred among the peoples. As senility post-retirement is admissible, it is not compatible with leadership."

Mahmut Esat Ozan of the Turkish Forum wrote to Ms. Krespin apologetically: "Let me assure you, dear friend, there have been very few times in my whole lifetime when I was as much infuriated as I am now having heard about the utterly irresponsible bungling, blunder, slip-up, faux pas, folly, misjudgment and the miscarriage of justice all committed by one opinionated Turkish Prime Minister called Bulent Ecevit." Ergun Kirlikovali of the Turkish Forum wrote: "Turkish Forum urges Ecevit to apologize to Israel. Turkish Forum and the people of Turkey greatly value the special ties and the friendship with the Jewish people in Israel and elsewhere and is grateful for the continued support of all the Jewish-American organizations for our cause. We trust that Ecevit's ill-informed and unfortunate remarks, would not and cannot affect the strong Turkish-Jewish friendship."

Another Turk, Keenan Pars, took a more offensive tack in his writing to the president of the American Association of Jewish Friends of Turkey: "It is unfortunate that Turkey has to suffer through the senility of Ecevit. Israel has its own share of imbeciles and charlatans. Wasn't there a buffoon named Yossi Beillin [Israel's former Minister of Justice] who recently advocated that Israel should buy into the Armenian genocide scam and even teach it in schools? We don't get overly upset when scoundrels like Elie Wiesel, Noam Chomsky and other opportunists help perpetuate the hoax of the slick Armenian con artists. While these weasels may be 'experts' in the Holocaust matters, they have diddly-squat qualifications to speak about the Turk-Armenian conflict. They're in it to fatten their bank accounts. Just ask Elie Wiesel how much he charges the Armenians for a 'speaking engagement.'"

These frantic Turkish efforts to appease Israel and American Jews at all cost are a clear indication that Turkey is greatly dependent on the Jewish lobby to carry out its political agenda in Washington. The argument, therefore, that Israel's reluctance to recognize the Armenian Genocide is due to its concern about the Turkish backlash is groundless. Given the Turkish ingratitude for the numerous services rendered by American Jews to Turkey, the honorable thing for the Jews to do at this point is to discontinue these services and join with the Armenian American community in commemorating the Armenian Genocide on April 24.

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## **Get the Iraq vision right: First topple Hussein, then foster democracy**

Christian Science Monitor

By Siyamend Othman April 18, 2002

LONDON - Barring an unlikely volte-face by Saddam Hussein in allowing unhindered and intrusive UN-arms inspections, military confrontation with his regime seems inevitable. However, if past tragedies are to be averted, any military action this time must be accompanied by a clearly spelled out political vision for a new Iraq.

"Ejecting" Mr. Hussein from Kuwait was the professed be-all and end-all of the 1991 Gulf War. Once achieved with minimal loss of American lives, the United States purged itself of the "Vietnam syndrome" and began ticker-tape

parades back home. Meanwhile, in Iraq, Hussein's best Army units were left unscathed to fight another day - yet again, against their own people, who had risen against the dictator in their millions at the urging of the senior President Bush.

But if the political ramifications of the Gulf War were not thought through by the first Bush administration, President Clinton's policy was even more dangerously shortsighted.

It was called "containment" and purported to keep Hussein "in a cage." The piecemeal disintegration of Iraq, the suffering of its people under sanctions, and the fact that Hussein was freely roaming the world in pursuit of components for his weapons of mass destruction, did not seem to matter.

Then there was Sept. 11, and America woke up to realities that some of its politicians and bureaucrats had chosen to ignore. But if the argument over the menace that Hussein represents appears to have been finally settled in the US, another more ferocious debate has now gripped Washington: Who is to replace Saddam Hussein?

As related graphically by Seymour Hersh in *The New Yorker* last month, this is not a battle of ideas and competing visions. Alas, it bears all the hallmarks of the bureaucratic wrangling, turf-grabbing, and personal score-settling that has plagued US policy toward Iraq. Amid this spectacle, the people of Iraq have been reduced to helpless, apprehensive spectators.

Most Iraqis believe Washington is asking the wrong question. It is not so much who will replace Hussein, but what kind of government will take his place that matters most to them. Iraqis know there are no "obvious" successors to Hussein today. Hussein has made sure of that; he killed them all.

The assumption in certain quarters in Washington that there are generals with "a following" in the Army, let alone in the country, is self-deluding. During the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, Hussein killed his own brother-in-law, Adnan Khairallah, precisely because it was rumored that he had acquired some popularity among the officer corps. As every Iraqi officer and official knows, being popular can be extremely hazardous.

For almost 34 years, Iraq has been ruled by the Ba'th Party, the modern Arab version of the German Nazi Party. Hussein and his civilian and military goons are products of this ideology. It is based on racism, glorification of violence, and total submission to "The Leader." This is the true nature of Hussein's Iraq that so few in Washington seem to comprehend.

Iraqi society today is no less traumatized and dysfunctional than that of Germany after World War II. Just as Germany was de-Nazified after that war, Iraq needs the same process if it is to achieve peace and reconciliation. This can only be done within the framework of a democratic and federal state.

Such a vision would displease many in a region dominated by absolutist monarchies and hereditary republics. Orientalists who have made an industry out of telling us how incompatible democracy is with the region's "culture" would also ridicule it. But, then, how attuned was Japan's militarist culture to Western democracy in 1945?

While viewing these propositions sympathetically, many would wonder how they could realistically be attained. The brutal answer is: with overwhelming force and subsequent commitment to democracy, as in Germany. Only this time, nothing like the force that was needed then or during the Gulf War would be required.

It is not wishful thinking to believe that with the promise of a better tomorrow and guarantees of US resolve to go the distance - toppling Hussein and fostering democracy - the overwhelming majority of Iraqis, like the people of Afghanistan, would welcome American troops on their soil as liberators.

The rank and file of Iraq's mainly conscript Army will surrender faster than that of the Taliban. But first get the vision right - and proclaim it loudly.

• Siyamend Othman is an independent Iraqi analyst.

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## **Turkey launches military operation after PKK name change**

18 April 2002 Ozgur Politika (from BBC Monitoring Service)

In Botan [Hakkari] - Immediately after the declaration of the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Party (Kadek), Turkish army forces launched a comprehensive operation in southern Kurdistan [northern Iraq].

The Central Headquarters of the People's Defence Forces (HPG) announced that Turkish army forces conducted an operation in the rural sector of Sirnak and the Haftanin region. It was noted that on 15 April, Turkish army forces and village guards conducted an operation against Sirnak's Bestler, Avyan, Osyan, and Cakcako regions. Pointing out that a clash broke out between the HPG guerrillas and the soldiers on the first day of the operation, the HPG Central Headquarters reported that a village guard by the name of Ibrahim, who is said to be the team commander, was killed in the clash, while a village guard named Selim was wounded. It was learned that the soldiers received reinforcements from Sirnak by means of Sikorsky helicopters and the Turkish army forces withdrew partially on 15 April.

It was learned that at the same time, another similar operation was conducted encompassing the Elcan and Hezil valleys. No clashes were reported between the guerrilla forces and the soldiers in this operation. The soldiers are said to be deployed in areas near the border.

Meanwhile, mass arrests were reported in Guclukonak, Idil, and central Districts of Cizre on charges of aiding and abetting the guerrillas. Local sources said that the mayor of the Sindik township was also detained.

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## **32 Captured in Sirnak Operations Against PKK**

Anatolia April 19, 2002

DIYARBAKIR - Security forces captured a total of 32 people in operations launched in southeastern province of Sirnak on charges of aiding and abetting to the terrorist organization PKK.

Releasing a statement, the Emergency Rule Region Governor's Office said on Friday that security forces launched a series of operations against PKK in Sirnak and in surrounding townships. It said that a total of 32 people were detained on charges of aiding and abetting to the terrorist organization.

The statement noted that 15 of detainees were arrested while the remaining 17 were released to be tried without detention. Noting that a member of the terrorist organization surrendered to security forces, the statement added, "during the operations in southeastern provinces of Diyarbakir and Sirnak and in eastern provinces of Hakkari and Van, security forces seized 39 long-range weapons, 2 handguns, 35 grenades, a missile and 1,304 bullets in shelters belonged to the PKK."

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## **UN condemns Iraq on human rights**

By Emma Jane Kirby BBC 19 April, 2002

Iraq has been condemned by the United Nations' top human rights body for conducting a campaign of "all pervasive repression and widespread terror". A resolution sponsored by the European Union was adopted by the Commission for Human Rights.

Noting "with dismay" that there had been no improvement in the human rights situation in Iraq, the 53-member commission passed the EU proposal to condemn Iraq's human rights record. Twenty-eight members voted in favour of the resolution, four voted against and 21 states abstained.

The proposal accuses President Saddam Hussein's government of "systematic, widespread and extremely grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law".

It demands that Iraq should immediately put an end to its "summary and arbitrary executions... the use of rape as a political tool and all enforced and involuntary disappearances".

'Aggressive siege'

The head of Iraq's delegation addressed the commission shortly before the vote, asking members to reject the proposal. He said it turned a blind eye to the "aggressive...economic siege" Iraq had been suffering since the UN imposed sanctions on the country after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Friday's vote also secures for a further year the mandate of an independent investigator for human rights in Iraq.

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## **Bush Resumes Case Against Iraq**

Washington Post April 18, 2002 By Mike Allen

LEXINGTON, Va., April 17 -- President Bush today resumed building a case for ousting Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and said it is the duty of democratic countries to confront rogue states.

The Israeli-Palestinian violence has caused many potential allies for a U.S. strike against Iraq to withhold support out of fear that it could provoke unrest in the Arab world. But senior administration officials said Bush is continuing to plan an offensive against Hussein, although these officials stressed that no timetable has been set.

Bush cited the threat of a nuclear attack from the "axis of evil" -- which he did not name today but has previously identified as Iraq, Iran and North Korea -- as justification for building a missile defense system.

"A small number of outlaw regimes today possess and are developing chemical and biological and nuclear weapons," Bush told cadets at the Virginia Military Institute. "In their threat to peace, in their mad ambitions, in their destructive potential and in the repression of their own people, these regimes constitute an axis of evil and the world must confront them."

Bush did not name Iraq, but an aide said his comments were directed primarily at Hussein. In a speech billed as an update on the war on terrorism, Bush said military operations will continue in Afghanistan for the foreseeable future and said the al Qaeda terrorist network has not yet been vanquished.

"As the spring thaw comes, we expect cells of trained killers to try to regroup, to murder, create mayhem, and try to undermine Afghanistan's efforts to build a lasting peace," Bush said. "We know this from not only intelligence but from the history of military conflict in Afghanistan. It's been one of initial success followed by long years of floundering and ultimate failure. We're not going to repeat that mistake."

Bush, who as a presidential candidate condemned "nation-building," said the United States would remain involved in modernizing Afghanistan, likening his ambition to the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe after World War II. He said the United States was helping Afghanistan develop a stable government, train a national army and build a school system for boys and girls.

"We will work to help Afghanistan to develop an economy that can feed its people without feeding the world's demand for drugs, and we will help the Afghan people recover from the Taliban rule," he said.

Aides said his plans did not violate his pledge against nation-building because he will not use U.S. soldiers as social workers or police officers.

Bush was speaking to the ROTC Award Seminar of the George C. Marshall Foundation, named for Army Gen. George C. Marshall, a member of the VMI class of 1901 who became Army chief of staff and masterminded the postwar reconstruction of Europe as secretary of state. "Marshall knew that our military victory against enemies in World War II had to be followed by a moral victory that resulted in better lives for individual human beings," Bush said.



In Bush's warning about rogue states, he said he "will proceed with missile defenses to protect the American people" and said the United States "will take the necessary actions to oppose emerging threats."

Bush gave no indication today of how quickly he plans to proceed but suggested he was optimistic about building support for replacing Hussein. "We'll be deliberate and we will work with our friends and allies," Bush said. "As we do so, we will uphold our duty to defend freedom."

British Prime Minister Tony Blair is the most prominent allied leader to voice support for Bush's plans to confront Iraq. But after the rash of suicide bombings in Israel and the Israeli military's thrust into the West Bank, Blair delayed plans to release a written case against Hussein. Blair said while visiting Bush at his ranch in Texas earlier this month that the way to proceed "is a matter that is open."

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## **Free of Saddam, Iraq's Kurds build a new home**

Christian Science Monitor By Scott Peterson April 18, 2002

SULAYMANIYAH AND DAHUK, NORTHERN IRAQ - At the University of Suleimani's Internet cafe, standing-room-only crowds of news-hungry students and teachers surf around the world 12 hours a day.

At a sprawling supermarket in Dahuk, a city about 180 miles away, up to 2,000 shoppers a day snap up items ranging from ultra-high-tech plasma TV screens to American peanut butter and jelly - and check out at registers that read bar codes.

Can this be Kurdistan?

The snapshots of modernity and consumerism seem unlikely in a part of Iraq best known for being remote, embattled, and impoverished.

Surrounded by wary neighbors with their own restive Kurdish populations, the ethnic Kurds in this landlocked region of northern Iraq have been subject to periodic attacks by Baghdad for decades. Conflicts between Kurdish factions in the mid-1990s added to the violence.

But an inter-Kurdish peace agreement - and a tiny share of cash from Iraq's oil-for-food deal with the UN that softened economic sanctions against Iraq - are buoying recovery. Overhead, US air patrols, begun after Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein's brutal suppression of a 1991 Kurdish uprising, continue to guard this so-called "safe haven."

"People are feeling good, feeling stable," says a Western ex-UN official with long experience in northern Iraq. "Three years ago, they couldn't say that. People are feeling freer, and laughing."

In their exuberance, Kurds are juxtaposing old and new: Traditional singing and shoulder-to-shoulder dancing at the Nowruz spring festival this year were punctuated with the ringing of mobile phones, for example.

Kurdistan's surprising transformation is taking place within artillery range of Iraqi forces loyal to Baghdad. While many note that Kurds have never before enjoyed such liberty or extensive self-rule - and therefore might be reluctant to risk helping American forces in any future effort to topple Saddam Hussein - Kurds say that they are willing to play a key role.

"We are in a paradox," explains Hoshiyar Zabari, a senior leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party, one of two main rival Kurdish factions. "We are happy with what we have, and we don't want to lose it. On the other hand, it is insecure, and the only way to create a secure future is to remove the mortal threat of this [Baghdad] regime."

Few turnarounds have been as dramatic as that in northern Iraq. In 1991, more than 1.5 million Kurds - nearly half the population - fled across the border to Turkey and Iran. Fleeing Hussein's forces, Kurds left with only the clothing on their backs, and many perished in snow- and sleet-blasted refugee camps. Others died later during fighting among Kurds themselves.

Today, says the former UN official, the rivalry between the Kurdish factions - the KDP, which rules in the western half of the safe zone and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), which rules the east - is close to resolution.

Kurds on both sides of the party divide voice high hopes for the future.

"That's where they are building the McDonald's," says a PUK guide in Sulaymaniyah, pointing out a half-finished building. In the KDP-controlled city of Arbil, an advertisement for McDonald's has been painted on a new stadium, though no franchise yet exists. The sense of moving forward - despite the possibility of a US-led war against Baghdad later this year, or in early 2003 - also inspires young Kurdish visitors from Europe and may help reverse the extensive emigration out of northern Iraq.

"I feel like I am being born again here," says Murat Mert, an aeronautical engineer living in Stockholm, and a Kurd of Turkish extraction who is considering a move to northern Iraq to help rebuild. "This is the only place where one can live like a Kurd." That means self-sufficiency for many Kurds - and not relying on help from wary neighbors like Turkey, Syria, and Iran, which have checkered histories in dealing with their own Kurdish minorities.

The bridges to independence include such projects as a small oil refinery launched in 1996 by the PUK, and made of cannibalized parts of abandoned factories. The operating motto, says Rashid Khoshnaw, technical director of the 3,000 barrels-per-day operation, is: "Where there is a well, there is a way."

"Before, there was nothing here. All you see here was once scrap," Mr. Khoshnaw says during a tour among the tangles of oil pipes. "That distillation tower was a pipe brought by the Iranians years ago for a road-works project. The steel plates on the boiler are from an old cement factory." Kurds say they hope their progress will serve as an example of change to their fellow Iraqis - one that can be applied everywhere in the country to change the current repressive regime.

Despite multiple setbacks, Kurdish leaders say they have matured in critical ways. "We have a clean government," says Sami Abdurahman, the septuagenarian deputy prime minister of the KDP's portion of northern Iraq, and a former guerrilla fighter who began "working for the cause" in the late 1950s. "Those who lead have spent their lives as partisans. They know how strenuously our people have suffered. We've all seen a friend fall beside us," Mr. Abdurahman says. "Some 200,000 people sacrificed their lives for this day."

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## **Kurds hold conference on Anfal campaign of genocide**

Iraq Press April 19, 2002

Arbil - Kurdish scholars ended this week a three-day conference on the Anfal campaign of genocide in which an estimated 180,000 civilian Kurds are reported to have perished. The conference, in which 20 research papers were presented, discussed the political, social, economic and religious aspects of the Anfal, a genocide which historians say has no parallel even in Nazi Germany.

The genocide took place in 1988 and is reported to have lead to the death of nearly 180,000 Kurds. Saddam's henchman and relative Ali Hassan al-Majeed executed the murderous campaign. The genocide would have almost passed unnoticed by the outside world but thanks to the more than eighteen metric tons of official Iraqi documents, some four million in all, that the Kurds captured and had sent to the United States in the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War over Kuwait.

Now the world knows the details of al-Majeed's efforts to exterminate an ethnic minority. Specialists sifting through the cache say in terms of documentation it surpasses the Nazi documents captured in 1945. The documents reveal that Anfal was carried out in eight stages with details on every assault. The participants in the Arbil conference on Anfal, the first in Iraqi Kurdistan, called on the international community to launch an independent investigation of the genocide and establish a tribunal to try the perpetrators.

The participants intend to hold a similar conference in Europe to draw international community's attention to the genocide.

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## **Turkey's Highest Court Bars Islamist From Parliament**

Los Angeles Times 20 April 2002 by Amberin Zaman

ISTANBUL The nation's top court on Friday barred Turkey's leading Islamist politician from holding a seat in parliament, dashing his hopes of becoming the next prime minister.

The ruling--the latest in a string of legal challenges hampering Recep Tayyip Erdogan's bid to govern Turkey--is widely seen as part of a broader campaign led by military leaders and the judiciary to stamp out Islamic political movements in this largely Muslim but officially secular nation.

Erdogan was stripped of his post as Istanbul's mayor and banned from politics for life in 1998 for reciting verses of a nationalist poem--taught in state schools--that were deemed to incite religious hatred. He served four months in jail for the reading, convicted under an article of the penal code that has been used to imprison scores of dissident politicians, journalists and academics of all political stripes. In January, the Constitutional Court ruled that Erdogan's conviction barred him from running for parliament. Publication of that ruling in Friday's Official Gazette put the court's decision into effect and closed off any appeal.

Only lawmakers in the 550-member parliament are eligible to become prime minister.

Erdogan, a former professional soccer player, had insisted that he was cleared of criminal charges under an amnesty law passed in 2000. He downplayed the impact of the court's decision on his Justice and Development Party.

"For us, it isn't that much of a difference," he said Friday. "It is out of the question that this will affect our leadership."

Murat Mercan, deputy chairman of the party, said he believes that parliament will amend the penal code article used to convict Erdogan, to bolster Turkey's long-running effort to join the European Union. "If we want to become a full-blooded Western-style democracy, such laws will have to change," he said in a telephone interview.

Many commentators here disagree.

Erdogan's "political career may not be over, but he will not become prime minister any time in the near future," said Rusen Cakir, a prominent author and commentator on Islamic politics.

For one thing, Turkey's ruling three-party coalition of conservatives, ultranationalists and leftists, which commands a majority in the parliament, is unlikely to change laws disqualifying Erdogan. Polls consistently show his bloc far ahead of each party that makes up the coalition, whose approval ratings have been battered by a yearlong recession. Turkey's generals, who see themselves as custodians of the secular ideals advanced by the nation's founder, Kemal Ataturk, remain bitterly opposed to Erdogan. They maintain that Islamic radicalism is the gravest danger facing the nation.

The armed forces have seized power three times in the last four decades and played a key role in unseating Turkey's first Islamic-led government in 1997 on charges that it was seeking to introduce religious rule. Necmettin Erbakan, who led that government and is Erdogan's mentor, was barred from politics for five years, and his Welfare Party was outlawed by the Constitutional Court.

The Islamists regrouped under the Virtue Party, only to have it banned last year for anti-secular activities.

Erdogan formed his own party and has distanced himself from the radical rhetoric of his Islamist predecessors, saying he does not believe in mixing religion with politics. But his attacks on birth control and calls during recent rallies for a referendum on whether to ban alcohol have strengthened critics' claims that he has not changed his fundamentalist views.

Earlier this week, an investigation was launched over a 1992 speech Erdogan made criticizing the army.

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The Economist April 20th 2002

## Turkey's Kurds

# No change?

ANKARA

**The former separatists have changed their tune. The government hasn't**

**T**URKEY has for years complained about the EU's failure to put the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) on its list of terrorist outfits. Allegedly—it's nonsense—this amounts to EU backing for a Kurdish state carved away from Turkey.

Now, just as the European Commission was at last ready to finger it for its past undoubted terrorism, the PKK said it had "fulfilled its mission" and been dissolved; its members had regrouped, with new aims, as the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress. Just a tactical ploy to escape condemnation, sniffed the Turkish government. Had not the new party elected Abdullah Ocalan, the rebel chief who led the PKK until his capture in 1999, as its chairman? Nay, added the Turks, it still keeps some 5,000 men under arms in Kurdish-run northern Iraq for "self-defence."

Yet behind their breezy dismissals Turkey's leaders are deeply worried by the rebels' shift. No longer do these talk of fighting for independence, and having unilaterally declared a ceasefire they have more or less stuck to it. Now, they say, they want the country's 12m-odd Kurds to be able to be taught, to publish and broadcast freely in their own tongue as full and equal partners in a "united and democratic Turkey." And an end to the death penalty, which still hangs over Mr Ocalan. In short, many of the things



**Ocalan captured, still behind bars**

the EU says Turkey must do before it joins the European club.

In Kurdish matters, the government is doing much the opposite. Hadep, the most popular pro-Kurdish party, is threatened with a ban for acting, supposedly, as the PKK's political arm. Within weeks of its launch in February, Hakpar, a new Kurdish party hostile to Mr Ocalan, was accused of promoting separatism, so also risked a ban. A bus driver this month got a three-year jail sentence for playing Kurdish tunes for his passengers. And in amendments to a media law now near a vote in parliament, the ban on Kurdish-language broadcasts is untouched.

## Jeune Afrique 22/Avril/02

### TURQUIE

## Le PKK est mort, vive le Kadek !

■ Le PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan) fait peau neuve : rebaptisé Kadek (Congrès pour la liberté et la démocratie au Kurdistan), il a annoncé, le 16 avril, une nouvelle « stratégie ». Exit l'indépendance nationale et le recours à la violence : « Nous n'avons pas l'intention de changer les frontières des pays où vit le peuple kurde », a souligné Riza Erdogan, porte-parole européen du mouvement kurde. Son objectif : l'amélioration de la condition des Kurdes dans leurs différents pays d'origine, une amnistie et l'abolition de la peine de mort. Mais Ankara reste sceptique face à cette évolution. Pour les Turcs, le changement de nom annoncé n'est rien d'autre qu'une opération de charme vis-à-vis de l'Union européenne. Et ce, malgré l'appel au cessez-le-feu lancé, lors de son arrestation en 1999, par le chef du PKK, Abdullah Öcalan. ■



Riza Erdogan (à dr.), porte-parole européen du Kadek, le 16 avril, à Bruxelles.

## **Saddam 'sends troops to help bin Laden men'**

Sunday Telegraph By Sarah Latham April 21, 2002

THE strongest evidence of links between Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden has emerged with reports that the Iraqi dictator is supporting former al-Qa'eda fighters who have established a Taliban-style enclave in Kurdistan.

Members of Saddam's Republican Guard have been seen in two villages run by militants from Ansar al-Islam inside Iraqi Kurdistan, an area which is otherwise controlled by anti-Saddam factions. They were sighted by Western military advisers on a reconnaissance mission. Any confirmed collaboration between Baghdad and bin Laden would be seized upon by President Bush to garner support for action to oust Saddam's regime.

Many members of Ansar al-Islam, a radical Islamic cell, are Arabs who fought with the Taliban and al-Qa'eda forces in Afghanistan. Their numbers are believed to have been boosted recently by men fleeing the US military's recent Operation Anaconda in eastern Afghanistan. The group was said last month by Kurdish military intelligence to have received about £200,000, plus weapons and Toyota Land Cruisers, from the al-Qa'eda network.

Surface-to-air missiles and other weaponry from Iraq are also said to have been delivered to the mountainous region near the town of Halabjah, in northern Iraq. The enclave was seized by the Islamic militants from territory controlled by the anti-Saddam Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). The Iraqi leader has reportedly dispatched some of his best troops to bolster Ansar al-Islam, despite a long-term hatred of Islamic fundamentalism, because the group is opposed to his enemies in the PUK.

"Five large trucks coming from Jalawla [in Baghdad-controlled Iraq] unloaded arms and weapons in the Halabjah area," said one witness. "They were taken to hides and caves in the mountains." The haul is said to have included machine-guns, anti-personnel mines and C4 plastic explosive.

Since the beginning of March about 750 Ansar al-Islam fighters have apparently amassed in the two villages, al-Talweera and Biyara, where television, music and portraits have been banned under rules similar to those imposed by the Taliban. Local people fear that the Republican Guards will be working with Ansar al-Islam, originally known as Jund al-Islam (Soldiers of God), to crush any uprising and foment unrest.

Hoshyar Zebari, a senior official of the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), which shares control over Kurdistan with the PUK, said there had been a change in Saddam's thinking in the past five years. "Ansar are local, home-grown Islamic terrorists, inspired by al-Qa'eda and bin Laden. They think the main enemy is the US and that Islam can't be free unless they get rid of blasphemous groups and infidels, which they consider the KDP and PUK to be."

Carole O'Leary, a professor of Middle Eastern studies at the American University in Washington, said Saddam's supporting Ansar al-Islam would be consistent with his desire to destabilise the Kurdistan regional government.

"It is very clear that this 10-year-old de facto autonomous region is a slap in the face for his leadership," she said. "What's more, it's linked with America in his mind because he sees the US footprint all over the region. By creating unrest, he can put a quarter of his population on notice that he is still pulling the strings and can act against them or not, depending on how they behave."

Ansar al-Islam was established last year after a number of splinter groups broke away from the more moderate Iranian-backed Islamic Unity Movement of Kurdistan (IUMK). They merged and declared jihad, or holy war.

The group's manifesto said that its members had spent the past few years preparing "to carry out the sacred duty of jihad by attending military and religious training camps and stockpiling arms and ammunition".

Links between Ansar al-Islam and Saddam were also alleged recently by Qassem Hussein Mohamed, who claims that he worked for Baghdad's Mukhabarat intelligence for 20 years. Saddam had clandestinely supported Ansar al-Islam for several years, he said. "[Ansar] and al-Qa'eda groups were trained by graduates of the Mukhabarat's School 999 - military intelligence."

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**Newsweek**

22 APRIL 2002

A showdown is brewing between Turkey and the EU. BY OWEN MATTHEWS

# Europe's Orphan

**O**N THE STREETS OF KABUL, TURKISH SOLDIERS GO ON patrol, side by side with the British, an Islamic star and crescent on the shoulder of their NATO-issue uniforms. In Ankara, Turkish officers take lessons in local Afghan politics before assuming command of the international peacekeeping mission this summer. Meanwhile, technicians at the Incirlik air base in southern Turkey work to upgrade their radar facilities—just in case they're needed for a U.S. air assault on Baghdad.

Quietly and without fanfare, the Turks are demonstrating that on the international stage, at least, they are a full member of the Western world's post-September 11 alliance against terror. The West tends to take that friendship for granted. It shouldn't. Turkey is heading for a major crisis in its relations with the European Union, and that could in turn trigger a major rethink of just who its real friends are—and where its best strategic interests lie.

Turkey certainly isn't about to sign up to the Axis of Evil, however bad relations with Europe might get. But as the EU crafts a new constitution governing its enlargement, and as it threatens to ignore Turkish objections by accepting just the Greek part of the divided island of Cyprus into its club, Ankara is understandably looking on with growing dismay. Before long, in fact, Turkey just may decide that the EU's demands for membership are too exacting, that Brussels is being too high-handed and that other regional allies might prove less troublesome and more rewarding. At bottom, the problem is that the EU is dealing with Turkey as though it were an impoverished Eastern European nation with no option but to go along with

Brussels's every whim. That's a big mistake. "You can't treat Turkey like Slovakia," says Karen Fogg, EU ambassador to Ankara. "You can't say, 'Let us show you how to become like us.'" Trying to do so, she believes, will only breed resentment.

Indeed, resentment is already festering. Just listen to the remarks of a powerful member of Ankara's ruling military, made recently with a calculated intent largely lost on Western capitals. "Turkey has never received any support or understanding from the EU," said Maj. Gen. Tuncer Kilinc after listening to an anti-EU speech at Ankara's War Academy. Voicing the bitterness of many among Turkey's political establishment over what they see as the EU's unfair and patronizing attitudes, he went on to say that "Turkey needs new allies. We should engage in a search which includes Russia and Iran." If ever there was a wake-up call, this was it. For Kilinc is nothing less than the secretary-general of Turkey's National Security Council, the joint military-civilian body that is the country's supreme de facto authority. Historically, as go the Army and the security council, so goes Turkey.

Ever since the days of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the Turkish Republic and a zealous modernizer, Turks have lived under the comfortable assumption that sooner or later they would join Europe, completing a westward journey the Turks began two millennia ago as Asian nomads. But now, as they've grown closer to Europe, many Turks are having second thoughts. Most still agree that they would be better off joining Europe. But they don't like being dictated to, and they aren't sure Europe wants them anyway. For their part, Europeans seem oblivious to the growing schism in relations. Preoccupied with enlargement to the East, diverted by the Balkans and the Baltics and the Middle East, they seem utterly unaware of the equally serious problem brewing on their Asian doorstep. Europe assumes that Turkey, like others before it, will wait patiently to join its club, dutifully making whatever social and political changes the grandees of Brussels deem to be appropriate. That may be far less true than it once was.

General Kilinc did not mean to imply that Turkey might cut its ties with Europe. That, says one leading pro-Europe parliamentarian, would be "as ridiculous as Mexico turning its back on the U.S." But between the extremes of a member of the club and a wayward ally, there's a lot of room for trouble. If it is rebuffed by Europe, it's not hard to imagine Turkey turning to other friends elsewhere, as Kilinc so bluntly warned. Patching up relations with Iraq, it could downscale its hitherto unquestioned allegiance to the United States and its NATO allies. Indeed, last week Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit warned Israel that its actions in the occupied territories amounted to a "genocide" against Palestinians. Could this be a disturbing new sign that Turkey might begin to reconsider its historical (and, in the Muslim world, almost unique) friendship with Israel? And if so, what would this mean for America's strategy of unseating Saddam Hussein, which it seems willing to support despite deep reservations? All these matters hang in the balance. And Europe, by mishandling and underestimating the challenge, could well blow it.

Turkey has been preparing to join Europe ever since the fall of the Ottoman Empire. "There are many nations, but only one civilization," Atatürk declared after the debacle of World War I, when victorious Allied powers occupied Istanbul and created the modern map of the Middle East. Almost singlehandedly, he dragged Turkey toward the West. He decreed that Turks abandon the fez for European fedoras. He





**NEW GEOPOLITICS:**  
Turkish troops  
patrol in Kabul

introduced the Latin alphabet, suppressed the wearing of the veil and moved Turkey's capital to Ankara, which he set about turning into a model European city—as well as imprisoning anyone who didn't want to be “progressive” and “enlightened.”

**N**OW THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT thinks it can use similarly autocratic methods to decree its way into the EU. But Ankara seriously underestimates the wholesale social and political change that Europe expects. Brussels wants Turkey to transform itself into a “functional democracy,” with all that entails in terms of throwing out repressive laws on freedom of expression, granting cultural rights to minorities like the Kurds and getting the Turkish military to abandon its de facto seniority to civilian governments. In short, Turkey thinks it can get away with piecemeal reforms; à la Atatürk, Ankara plans to order another change of hats. The EU wants to change what's inside people's heads.

Human rights will be at the heart of this discord. A recent flap highlights the gulf between the two sides. Last month the EU offered its support to Turkey's 12 million Kurds, who seek to broadcast in their mother tongue on nationwide radio. They also want the right to learn Kurdish in state schools. A storm of protest erupted, with Turkish nationalists accusing the EU of encouraging Kurdish separatism and interfering in the country's internal affairs. Ismail

Cem, Turkey's foreign minister, even accused Europeans of behaving like “colonialists”—and he's the most pro-EU politician in the country. In the end, the government promised to allow the state radio to air a few hours of Kurdish-language programs a day. For Turkey, it was a huge concession. For the EU, it was peanuts.

An even bigger controversy involves the governing role of the Turkish military. Turkey's General Staff still sees itself as a kind of big brother to the country's elected politicians. The Army has deposed four governments over the past 40 years—the last time in 1997, when it ousted Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan for being too Islamist. But there's a problem with challenging the Army's supremacy: almost no one inside Turkey wants to. The military is far and away the most revered and respected institution in the country, regardless of political stripe. Ahmed Dogan, a grocer in downtown Istanbul, speaks for almost everyone when he lauds the Army as the guarantor of Turkey's stability and future. “They are honest,” he says, “and think of the good of the country rather than themselves.” Yet to hear Europeans tell it, the Army is an “obstacle,” “old-fashioned” and “blinkered.” If Turkey is to join the EU, the Eurocrats say, the military's leading role must go.

Ultimately, Europe may be right. But that hasn't stopped Turks from asking another logical question: we may want to be in the EU, but are we willing to let Brussels dictate the character of *our* state? A recent

## ‘You can't treat Turkey like

opinion poll showed that 74 percent of Turks still favor joining the EU, but ask about individual steps necessary to get there and the picture is different, says Erol Manisali, professor of economics at Istanbul University and a prominent Euro-skeptic. “Most people are in favor of going to the moon,” he scoffs. “But that doesn't mean it's realistic.” Turks have been blind to the implications of joining Europe. Now, at long last, he says, “they are beginning to see what the EU means. The EU wants us to become like them. But Turkey is not Europe, it's not Asia, it's always been something else.”

Europe, too, has decisions to make. It has yet to fully debate whether it really wants Turkey in. It's one thing for Brussels to absorb the 10 candidates from Eastern Europe, where there is a widely shared culture. But admitting Turkey would challenge the very nature of the Union, which former German chancellor Helmut Kohl once described as a “civilization project”—and some Turks, like nationalist MP Sevtket Yahnici, fear is a “Christian club.” Within 15 years Turkey's population will be larger than Germany's, making it potentially the largest country in the EU and, according to new voting rules, the country with the most votes in the European Commission. The EU's borders would stretch to Iran and Iraq, meaning that Europe would officially begin farther east than Baghdad. The past two years have been a kind of honeymoon period for Turkey, with powerful voices (notably Germany's Chan-



**FACE OF THE NEW:**  
The late-night  
club scene



## Slovakia. You can't say, "Let us show you how to become like us".'

cellor Gerhard Schröder and Greece's dovish Foreign Minister George Papandreou) speaking in favor of Turkey's membership in the EU. But the conservative German chancellor candidate Edmund Stoiber speaks for many (if not most) in strenuously opposing it. Such sentiments, long suppressed, could come to the fore this summer, when Brussels must decide whether to admit Cyprus into the Union.

Some experts have likened the prospect to a "train wreck." Clearly, the geopolitical stakes are huge, not just for Turkey but for the region. Consider Iraq. Until the gulf war, it was Turkey's biggest trading partner. Ankara would like to restore strong ties with Baghdad, not just for business but also to sandwich the Kurds of southeast Turkey and northern Iraq and squash any secessionist moves. Culturally, Turkey may look to the west. But its economic and political interests are large to the east and north. Turkey's energy all comes from Asia—gas from Russia and Iran, oil from Iraq and soon from Azerbaijan through a new pipeline to be built from Baku to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. And Turks have been building economic and cultural ties with their ethnic cousins in the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union, which are dotted with Turkish supermarkets, hotels and universities.

America finds itself caught in the middle. The United States has backed Turkey's bid for the EU. But at the same time it has done little to ease Turkey's current economic cri-

sis by, for instance, raising quotas for Turkish exports like textiles. While Turkey values its U.S. alliance, it doesn't get a lot out of it. To the contrary, it lost an estimated \$50 billion in trade with Iraq after the gulf war. And last year the United States refused a \$700 million deal to upgrade Turkish tanks because Washington didn't trust the Turks to keep the technology secret. As a result, Ankara has turned to Israel for hardware, and agreed to joint exercises with the Russian Army—the nuts and bolts of a closer political relationship.

**C**OLD-SHOULDERING TURKEY would be shortsighted for both the United States and Europe. If the Bush administration seeks to drum up regional support for a war on Saddam, or a peace plan for Palestine, it will need Turkey onboard. It will also need all the leverage it can get to overcome Turkey's fears that a war will wreck its tourism industry and encourage Kurdish separatism. Turkey has already moved closer to the Arab fold than to the United States on Israel. Protests by Islamist and left-wing groups have erupted in Turkish cities, as elsewhere in the Muslim world, and have prompted Ankara to downplay (though not yet drop) its traditional support of Israel. It's worth noting that when Ecevit labeled the Israeli actions a "genocide," he was speaking not off the cuff but in a formal address.

Preoccupied with its own affairs, Eu-

rope hasn't come up with a coherent strategy for dealing with Turkey. Not only has Brussels failed to debate the challenges it presents, but it appears not to be fully considering the opportunities it offers. This is particularly evident in Germany, where 2 million Turks live as guest workers. Edmund Stoiber, among others, plays to a widespread anti-immigration sentiment in his campaign to unseat Schröder. Yet these same fears arose years ago, when Portugal, Spain and Greece joined the European Community. Then there was no mass labor migration. Indeed, Germans may come to wish there would be if Turkey joins, if only for demographic reasons. As everyone knows, Europe's working population is shrinking fast—and a decade from now cheap labor from places like Turkey will be desperately needed to keep the EU's economy humming.

As Europe's leaders gather in Brussels this year to debate a new constitution and enact the rules and regulations governing expansion, they might do well to rethink their all-or-nothing attitudes toward Turkey. The slavish fixation on insisting that every member conform to an idealized norm could be self-defeating. For the truth, ultimately, may well be that countries like Turkey can never be fully European.

Perhaps a more enlightened policy would be for Europe to soften its rules at the Union's edges, once the next round of expansion is done, and recognize that the periphery of Europe won't be just like the core. As it stands now, Turkey may officially be a candidate for European membership—but it receives no structural funds to help undertake reforms. It is in the European Customs Union and is therefore bound to open its markets to EU produce, like any full EU member. Yet it receives none of the subsidies that the poorer members of the Union receive, nor does it benefit from the EU's external trade deals, such as with North Africa or the United States.

If Europe comes up with a "third way," giving Turkey some of the benefits of membership and rewarding it for how far it has come, rather than constantly reminding it of how far it has to go, a crisis in relations might be averted. If not, the country might just decide, as Atatürk phrased it when he was fighting Allied occupiers after WWI, that a "Turk should be master in his own land"—and go its own way. Because unlike most aspirants to Europe, Turkey has other options.

With SAMI KOHEN in Istanbul



## **Saddam: Sentimental, terrifying and ruthless: Author crafts intimate portrait of Iraqi tyrant**

Washington Post April 23, 2002 By Peter Carlson

WASHINGTON Saddam Hussein is a charming man who tells funny, self-deprecating stories. He loved Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, and has written two novels himself, both of them romantic fables. He's a sentimental fellow who cries easily and has been known to weep for days after having an old colleague executed.

The Iraqi dictator rises early, works long hours and always keeps his desk immaculate. At 64, he exercises daily and eats a healthy diet of fresh fish, fruit and vegetables. He's a family man, married for more than 40 years, and a hands-on dad who used to take his two sons to his prisons, so they could watch his enemies being tortured and killed.

"He enjoys movies, particularly those involving intrigue, assassination, and conspiracy *The Day of the Jackal*, *The Conversation*, *Enemy of the State*," writes Mark Bowden in his extraordinary profile of Saddam in the May issue of *Atlantic Monthly*. "Because he has not travelled extensively, such movies inform his ideas about the world and feed his inclination to believe broad conspiracy theories."

Bowden, author of *Black Hawk Down*, interviewed many of Saddam's exiled former colleagues and produced an amazingly intimate portrait of the tyrant. Among tales of psychopathic dictators, this one is perhaps the best since Nikita Khrushchev's 1970 memoirs revealed what it was like to party down with Joseph Stalin.

Stalin, it turns out, is one of Saddam's heroes. In one chilling anecdote in Bowden's story, a Kurdish politician meets with Saddam early one morning in a tiny office in one of the dictator's many palaces. Saddam is in his bathrobe. There's a cot in the room. Next to the cot are a dozen pairs of expensive shoes. The rest of the room is filled with books every one of them about Stalin.

Bowden's article abounds with accounts of terrifying meetings with Saddam.

In 1996, for example, a group of top Iraqi military officers were summoned to meet with him. First, they were forced to strip to their underwear and wait while their clothes were X-rayed, laundered and sterilized. Then they got dressed, rode in a bus with blackened windows to a building where they were seated around a table and instructed not to interrupt Saddam or ask questions. Then they listened to a two-hour rant against America. No one else uttered a single word.

Why would they? They all knew the story of Omar al-Hazaa, an Iraqi general overheard speaking ill of Saddam in 1990. His tongue was cut out before he, and his son, were executed.

What about the warm, fuzzy Saddam? Well, he did donate blood a pint at a time for three years so a calligrapher could handcraft a 600-page copy of the Qur'an. It's now in a Baghdad museum, every word written in the dictator's blood.

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## **US seen moving to topple dictator**

By Bryan Bender Boston Globe 4/24/2002

WASHINGTON - The Bush administration remains determined to mount military operations against Iraq and is moving forward with a plan to topple Saddam Hussein, perhaps as soon as the end of this year, according to administration officials and private specialists.

Many officials and specialists believe that Washington must first help resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before proceeding with its plans for Iraq. But within the Bush administration there is a growing belief that removing the Iraqi dictator and creating a more representative government in Baghdad would help bring about a political solution in the Middle East, rather than make it more difficult.

Although President Bush has muted some of his anti-Iraq rhetoric as the White House has become more actively involved in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, other top administration officials have tried to link Hussein's regime to the recent Palestinian suicide attacks on Israeli civilians.

Earlier this month, as the Palestinian uprising and Israeli military retaliations intensified, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld singled out Iraq as leading a "culture of political murder" by supporting Palestinian terrorist groups and offering the relatives of Palestinian suicide bombers a monetary reward.

And Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, considered one of the administration officials most hawkish on Iraq, said last week that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is not necessarily an obstacle to solving the Iraq problem.

"It's not an accident that Iraq sees a great interest in fueling the Arab-Israeli conflict, because it certainly makes things more difficult, but I don't think it's either-or," Wolfowitz said in an interview with The New York Times.

Air Force General Richard B. Myers, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters at the Pentagon Monday that Iraqi forces in the past few days have moved additional surface-to-air missile batteries to the no-fly zones, which have been patrolled by US and British jets since the end of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

Myers also indicated that Iraq has been able to rebuild parts of its air defense network by connecting missile units through a fiber optic network with the help of Chinese companies. The network was damaged by a brief allied bombing campaign in February 2001.

"Strategically, the destruction of Saddam Hussein's regime is now more critical than ever," said Robert Pfaltzgraff, president of the Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis at Tufts University. "The current situation in the Middle East would be dramatically transformed by this. The eradication of Saddam would tip the balance in the region and facilitate the resolution or dampening of the conflict in the West Bank."

According to James Woolsey, CIA director from 1993 to 1995, bringing an acceptable end to the Israeli-Palestinian standoff must rely in part on the overthrow of the Iraqi regime. "If we can get democracy to start spreading in the Middle East, that is the only way you are going to get a Palestinian government that is willing to negotiate with the Israelis," he said.

In the meantime, the Bush administration appears to be moving toward its goal.

Last week, US officials reportedly met with representatives of the two armed Kurdish opposition groups in northern Iraq who would play a prominent role in the US plan to topple Hussein's government. In addition, Masoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, and Jalal Talabani, leader of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, met with US officials in Berlin to coordinate efforts to remove Hussein from power and to discuss plans for a future government to replace the Iraqi leader, according to the London-based Al-Awsat newspaper.

Diplomatic efforts are underway to bring regional allies over to Washington's view. Some of them - including Turkey, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia - have expressed reservations about military action against Hussein. But administration officials assert that public opposition to the US strategy does not always translate into opposition in private conversations between US officials and their Middle East counterparts.

"You should be careful in the assessment of what [Vice President Dick] Cheney did or did not achieve" when he visited the region last month, said another US official, who asked not to be named. "The issue of coalition support is not necessarily what it seems to be in public. We still have the support we need."

Besides, the kind of widespread support seen during the Gulf War would not be needed this time, according to military specialists.

"We do need Turkey and Kuwait," said Woolsey. "I think we'll be able to get those with the right package."

As for Saudi Arabia, he said, "I don't think their support is essential."

If Saudi Arabia, which is home to a US military air operations center, does not go along with an Iraq operation, US forces have been bulking up their facilities in nearby Qatar to use as a backup.

Still, from a practical standpoint the US military would not be in a position to mount an operation in Iraq until late this year or early next year because of continuing operations in Afghanistan, according to a recent study by retired Rear Admiral Stephen Baker, former chief of staff of US naval forces in the Persian Gulf.

For example, precision-guided weapons must be restocked from the war in Afghanistan, and several thousand troops would probably need to be deployed to the region.

"Any offensive would be an all-out, no-holds-barred war that would use overwhelming force and every conventional asset in the US inventory to assure success," Baker said. "Any action is likely to wait until at least the mid-fall of 2002, or, more probably, the spring of 2003."

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## Don't be diverted this time ■ By Charles Krauthammer No, keep the focus on Saddam

**H**AD the political capital gained in the Gulf War not been dissipated in the quicksand of the Arab-Israeli conflict but concentrated on bringing down Saddam Hussein, the region would have been changed immeasurably for the better.

Iraq might have served as the first example of an Arab democracy, spreading its influence and planting seeds in neighboring dictatorships. Its huge oil reserves could have offset Saudi dominance as OPEC's swing producer and helped the United States economically in times of need by increasing production to reduce prices.

Iraq might have contributed to resolving the Arab-Israeli dispute, allying itself with the moderate Jordanians, for example, instead of with the most radical anti-Western elements of the region and serving as paymaster for suicide bombers.

Eleven years later, America is back to the same question. It has scored another spectacular victory.

Afghanistan was even more psychologically important than the Gulf War because it was achieved under conditions widely perceived to be more difficult: fighting a shadowy enemy, far away, landlocked, determined, battle-

hardened, sporting the scalp of the Soviet empire and fueled by triumphant religious fanaticism.

The rout of the Taliban and Al Qaeda changed the psychological dynamic of the entire region. The government of Yemen, for example, is co-operating with Washington in the fight against Al Qaeda.

America is in danger now, however, of dissipating that capital once again in the Arab-Israeli dispute.

To be fair, the Bush administration never intended to plunge into it but was overtaken by events — the horrific escalation of suicide bombings in Israel leading to Israel's decisive counterattack. The administration's reaction to these events, however, threatens to take it into a cul-de-sac — and away from the first priority, the American war on terrorism.

The detour into the morass of Arab-Israeli diplomacy risks diverting America's diplomatic, political and military energies from its supreme national objective: fighting anti-American terror.

Time is running short. Saddam has weapons of mass destruction. He is working on nuclear weapons. And he has every incentive to pass them on to terrorists who will use them against America. U.S. self-defense cannot be

held hostage to the solving of a century-old regional conflict.

The idea that the United States cannot fight Iraq without a consensus of Arab states behind it is absurd. It needs two countries, Kuwait and Turkey. It is already moving command-and-control out of Saudi Arabia into Qatar. What exactly was Egypt's contribution to victory in the Gulf War? Or perhaps America needs those crack Syrian troops who watched it take Kuwait City.

There is nothing wrong with encouraging Arab-Israeli negotiations. The United States can talk and chew gum at the same time.

But it should stick to talk. The idea, floated by Zbigniew Brzezinski and being bruited in the State Department, of engaging American troops in Palestine to enforce a solution and thus, of necessity, control terror is quite insane. Nor should the president be risking his own unprecedented prestige by making demands of the Arab states, Palestinians and Israelis that he has no expectation of seeing fulfilled.

Above all, we Americans must not be diverted from our supreme national objective: defeating and destroying those who did Sept. 11 and those planning the next Sept. 11.

Washington Post Writers Group

### ■ WASHINGTON

## Death penalty sought in spy case tied to Iraq

Federal prosecutors have said that they will seek the death penalty if a retired air force master sergeant is convicted of trying to sell military secrets to hostile countries.

Officials said Friday that the

defendant, Brian Regan, intended to give Iraq information about U.S. satellites, which would make it easier to shoot down American planes.

Regan wrote President Saddam Hussein of Iraq that he wanted \$13 million put into a Swiss account for his services, the government says. Regan has pleaded not guilty. (NYT)

**IRAK** *Le conseil de sécurité des Nations unies exige toujours le retour de « ses » inspecteurs en désarmement chez Saddam Hussein*

# Washington accuse Bagdad de se réarmer

L'Irak et les Nations unies ont programmé du 1<sup>er</sup> au 3 mai une nouvelle série de pourparlers sur le retour des inspecteurs en désarmement onusiens, a annoncé, hier, le porte-parole de l'ONU. Chargés de vérifier le démantèlement des programmes irakiens d'armes de destruction massive, les inspecteurs n'ont plus le droit de revenir en Irak depuis 1998. Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU a exigé leur retour.

Les discussions de New York doivent réunir le secrétaire général de l'ONU, Kofi Annan, et le ministre irakien des Affaires étrangères, Naji Sabri. Elles auraient dû avoir lieu les 18 et 19 avril, mais Bagdad les avait annulées. Elles font suite à une première série de pourparlers, début mars.

Luc de Barochez

Le 7 juin 1981, huit chasseurs-bombardiers F 16 frappés d'une étoile de David surgissent dans le crépuscule au-dessus du désert irakien. Les avions israë-

liens lâchent leurs bombes. Le dôme de béton qui protège le réacteur nucléaire Osirak est détruit, son contenu pulvérisé. Le programme atomique irakien a subi un coup d'arrêt brutal.

Le 16 décembre 1998, les derniers inspecteurs en désarmement de l'ONU en Irak font leurs

valises. En sept ans et demi de travail, ils pensent avoir démantelé 90 à 95 % du potentiel irakien d'armes nucléaires, chimiques, bactériologiques et balistiques.

Les deux épisodes illustrent les méthodes antagonistes utilisées pour empêcher l'Irak de Saddam Hussein de se doter d'un arsenal de mort. La première est aujourd'hui remise à l'honneur par les États-Unis. Le président George W. Bush accuse l'Irak d'avoir repris ses programmes d'armement. Il le menace de frappes militaires.

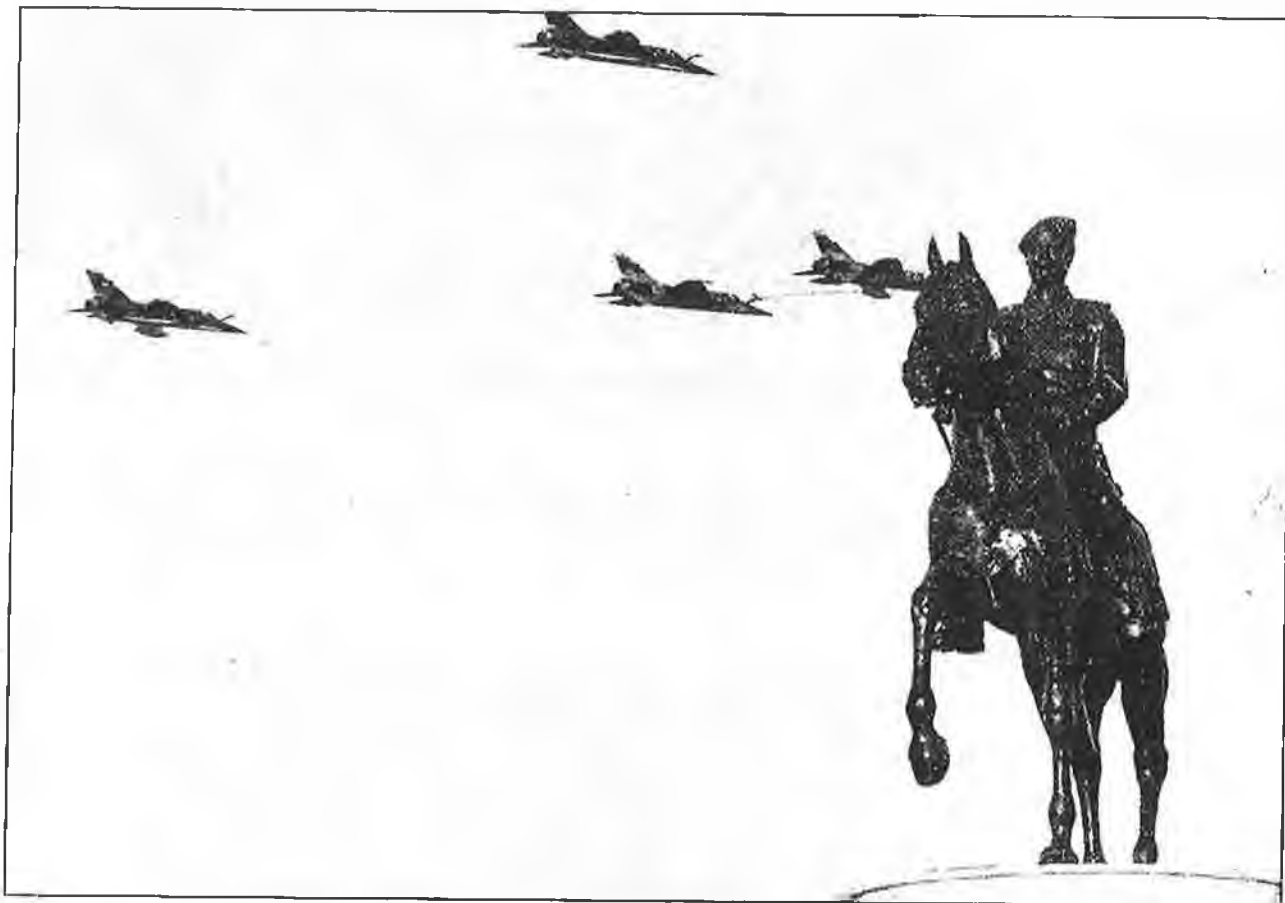
La méthode du bombardement est brutale et efficace. Elle n'a cependant pas résisté à l'épreuve du temps. Au moment de la guerre du Golfe en 1991,

soit dix ans après la destruction d'Osirak, Bagdad n'était plus qu'à six mois de la fabrication de la bombe A, selon des experts de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA).

Les inspections de l'ONU sur le terrain, dont le Conseil de sécurité exige la reprise, sont moins spectaculaires. Mais elles ont été les seules à avoir démantelé des programmes irakiens. Pendant la guerre du Golfe, les bombardements massifs américains ont épargné l'essentiel des installations irakiennes, à commencer par le centre de produc-

tion bactériologique d'al-Hakam, situé à 60 km au sud-ouest de Bagdad. Les États-Unis en ignoraient l'existence.

Après la guerre du Golfe, les



Parade d'avions irakiens dans le ciel de Bagdad. Les services de renseignement occidentaux croient savoir que l'Irak a reconstruit une partie considérable de son infrastructure de production chimique et bactériologique. (Photo AFP.)

Alliés ont imposé à l'Irak, dans les conditions de l'armistice, le renoncement à ses armes de destruction massive. Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU a entériné cette exigence, désormais inscrite dans la loi internationale. Selon le Conseil de sécurité, ce n'est que lorsque les inspecteurs de l'ONU auront certifié le démantèlement complet des programmes irakiens que les sanctions commerciales contre Bagdad pourront être levées.

De 1991 à son départ d'Irak en 1998, la commission spéciale de l'ONU pour le désarmement irakien (Unscm, aujourd'hui rebaptisée Unmovic) a supervisé la destruction de plusieurs dizaines de missiles et de lanceurs, d'ogives chimiques ou conventionnelles, de plusieurs milliers de munitions chimiques et de dizaines de tonnes d'agents chimiques ou bactériologiques.

Les inspecteurs se sont heurtés à la mauvaise volonté irakienne pendant leurs missions souvent mouvementées. Ils ont prêté le flanc aux accusations d'espionnage lancées par Bagdad. Un ancien inspecteur de l'ONU, l'Américain Scott Ritter, a affirmé que la CIA avait infiltré la commission dès sa constitution. Il a reconnu avoir lui-même échangé des informations confidentielles avec Israël lorsqu'il exerçait ses fonctions.

Bagdad a refusé le retour des inspecteurs depuis leur départ qui a coïncidé avec la campagne militaire américaine « Renard du désert » en 1998. Les Irakiens ont détruit les caméras vidéo installées dans les usines suspectes. En plus de trois ans, le régime de Saddam Hussein a eu le temps de relancer les programmes et de dissimuler tout ce qu'il pouvait.

Il serait d'autant plus naïf de croire que l'Irak est resté les bras croisés que Saddam Hussein a lui-même exposé sa politique, en termes imagés, le 12 juin 2000 à la télévision irakienne : « Nous détruirons toutes nos armes, à condition qu'eux-mêmes détruisent les leurs. S'ils ont un fusil et me disent, à moi, que je n'ai le droit d'avoir qu'une épée, je n'accepterai pas. Tant que le fusil nous permettra de défendre notre pays contre les malveillants, nous ferons notre possible pour acquérir ce fusil. »

Les estimations des experts divergent sur la réalité des programmes irakiens. Pour Scott Ritter, « lorsque nous sommes partis en 1990, l'Irak était désarmé à 90 ou 95 %. A

*l'époque, il n'y avait aucun signe que l'Irak cherchait à reconstituer son potentiel. Nous ne savons pas ce qui s'est passé depuis. Aucune preuve n'a été apportée pour appuyer les affir-*

*mations sur une reconstitution des arsenaux irakiens ».*

A l'inverse, l'ancien numéro deux de l'Unscm, Charles Duelfer, assure que « l'Irak détient des capacités d'armes de destruction massive dans tous les domaines à l'exception du nucléaire ». Les services de rensei-

**« Tant que le fusil nous permettra de défendre notre pays, nous ferons notre possible pour acquérir ce fusil »**

gnement occidentaux croient savoir que l'Irak a reconstruit une partie considérable de son infrastructure de production chimique et bactériologique, ainsi que des installations de fabrication de missiles, dont le complexe géant Al-Taji.

L'ONU a pu certifier l'élimination de 817 des 819 missiles acquis par l'Irak avant la guerre. Mais l'Irak a continué, depuis, à tenter d'acquérir de la technologie balistique, notamment auprès de l'Ukraine, de la Biélorussie et de la Roumanie.

Un défecteur irakien, Adnane Ihsan Saïd al-Haideri, a raconté en décembre 2001 aux services occidentaux qu'il avait participé, pas plus

tard qu'il y a un an, à la rénovation de sites liés aux programmes chimiques et bactériologiques militaires en Irak. En avril 2001, le chef du service de renseignement allemand (BND), August Harnig, a accusé des sociétés allemandes d'avoir fourni d'importants composants pour la production de gaz toxiques à l'usine de Samarra, en Irak.

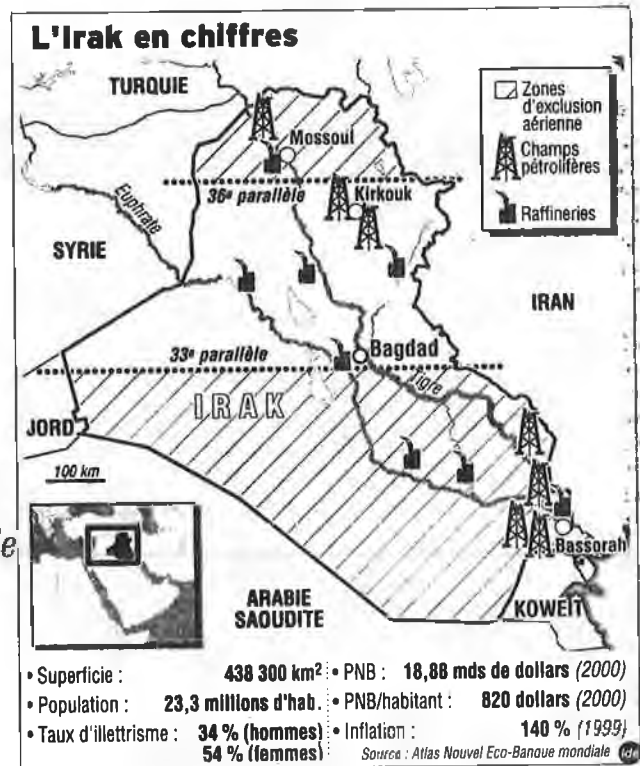
Selon un rapport du Centre d'études stratégiques internatio-

nales (CSIS) de Washington, les inspecteurs de l'ONU n'ont jamais retrouvé la trace de 300 tonnes de VX, un puissant neurotoxique, de 200 tonnes de gaz sarin et de 200 tonnes de gaz moutarde, ainsi que de plusieurs milliers de munitions capables de contenir des armes chimiques ou bactériologiques.

En revanche, pour le nucléaire, les experts pensent que les capacités irakiennes ont été fortement handicapées. L'Irak avait investi 10 milliards de dollars dans son programme secret, commencé en 1972 et qui a impliqué le travail de 10 000 spécialistes. En l'absence de matériel fissile pour le combustible, les experts irakiens, même s'ils maîtrisent partiellement la technologie, sont incapables de fabriquer une bombe atomique. En 1998 cependant, l'Irak a commandé auprès de firmes occidentales des détonateurs susceptibles d'être utilisés pour des bombes nucléaires. Khidir Hamza, l'ancien chef du programme nucléaire irakien

qui a fait défection aux États-Unis en 1994, a estimé au début de l'année qu'il ne faudrait plus « qu'un an ou deux » à Saddam Hussein pour détenir une bombe.

Les capacités bactériologiques irakiennes sont les plus inquiétantes. L'Irak a reconnu avoir produit 8 500 litres de doses militarisées du bacille du charbon (*bacillus anthracis*),



## Les stocks irakiens d'armes de destruction massive

► **Nucléaire** : en acquérant suffisamment d'uranium ou de plutonium sur le marché noir, l'Irak pourrait fabriquer une arme nucléaire.

► **Bactériologique** : l'Irak pourrait toujours détenir 150 bombes R-400 et 25 ogives balistiques susceptibles de transporter des armes bactériologiques ou chimiques. Bagdad a l'expertise et l'équipement pour reprendre la production de bacille du charbon, de botuline et d'altatoxine.

► **Chimique** : l'Irak pourrait avoir plus de 2 000 bombes chimiques. 15 000 roquettes et 15 000 obus chimiques, ainsi que suffisamment de produits chimiques pour fabriquer plusieurs centaines de tonnes de gaz moutarde, de gaz VX et d'autres produits neurotoxiques.

► **Ballistique** : l'Irak pourrait toujours avoir plusieurs missiles al-Husseïn (Scud-B modifiés) d'une portée de 650 km. Les usines de production de missiles balistiques sont en cours de reconstruction. L'Irak possède aussi des dizaines de missiles d'une portée inférieure à 150 km, dont la détention est autorisée par l'ONU. L'Irak pourrait chercher à en augmenter secrètement la portée.

(Source : Centre d'études sur la non-prolifération de l'Institut d'études internationales de Monterey, Californie.)

une bactérie hautement infectieuse acquise légalement aux États-Unis, dans les années 80. Bagdad a également admis avoir produit 19 400 litres de botuline, l'une des substances les plus toxiques, ainsi que de l'affatoxine, un puissant cancérigène.

Contrairement aux autres programmes qui dépendaient de l'armée, le programme bactériologique était rattaché à un service secret, l'Organisation spéciale de sécurité (*Amn al-Khass*), ce qui a contribué à son opacité. C'est seulement en 1995, grâce à la défection du gendre de Saddam Hussein, le général Hussein Kamal

Hassan al-Majid, que les Occidentaux ont mesuré l'ampleur du programme.

Il y a d'autant moins de raisons de croire que Bagdad a renoncé à ces programmes que la détention d'armes de destruction massive s'inscrit dans la pensée stratégique irakienne. Charles Duelfer, l'ancien numéro deux de l'Uncom, a témoigné que les dirigeants irakiens lui avaient confié leur certitude d'avoir été sauvés, en deux occasions, par la détention de leurs arsenaux. Pendant la guerre contre l'Iran, dans les années 80, seule l'arme chimique (101 000 munitions utilisées) a

permis à l'Irak de contrer les vagues d'infanterie iranienne qui montaient au front. Pendant la guerre du Golfe, selon Duelfer, certains dirigeants irakiens ont été persuadés que, si les Américains n'ont jamais cherché à prendre Bagdad, c'est parce qu'ils craignaient les armes chimiques et bactériologiques irakiennes.

L'Irak a aussi utilisé l'arme chimique contre sa propre population en lançant des attaques au gaz moutarde et à l'agent neurotoxique tabun contre des villages kurdes, notamment en mars 1988 à Halabja (plusieurs centaines de morts). La reprise des inspec-

tions des Nations unies en Irak est aujourd'hui une question d'urgence.

*Jose Bustani est accusé d'incompétence et de mauvaise gestion par les Etats-Unis*

## Destitution du chef de l'organisation de contrôle des armes chimiques

Les Etats-Unis ont obtenu le départ du chef de l'organisme international chargé d'éliminer les armes chimiques. Accusé d'incompétence et de mauvaise gestion, le Brésilien Jose Bustani a été destitué lundi à La Haye par un vote de l'assemblée générale de l'Organisation pour l'interdiction des armes chimiques (OIAC). La motion présentée par Washington a été approuvée par 48 Etats pour,

7 contre et 43 abstentions, parmi lesquelles la France.

Le diplomate brésilien, qui dirigeait l'OIAC depuis sa fondation en 1997, a été remercié pour sa gestion, qualifiée par les Américains de « désastreuse », et pour ses « pratiques personnelles capricieuses et arbitraires ». Mais, derrière ces motifs, se profile aussi, selon Bustani, l'ombre du dossier irakien. Le directeur général avait

invité l'Irak, qui n'en est pas membre, à rejoindre l'OIAC. Selon les proches de Bustani, Washington pourrait avoir plus de difficultés à justifier son offensive militaire en préparation contre l'Irak si Bagdad acceptait de coopérer avec la communauté internationale pour l'élimination de ses armes de destruction massive.

Washington, qui avait animé la campagne pour l'élimination

de Bustani, s'est félicité de son issue positive. « *Les États-Unis sont satisfaits. Cette décision est un premier pas essentiel pour rétablir la stabilité et une bonne gestion de cette très importante organisation* », a déclaré une porte-parole du département d'État. Un haut responsable américain a démenti que la raison de l'élimination de Bustani ait été sa politique d'ouverture vis-à-vis de

l'Irak. Du côté européen, on reconnaît que le dossier irakien a surtout été un prétexte invoqué par Bustani pour essayer d'éviter sa destitution. Le 19 mars, Washington avait prié Bustani de démissionner. Le diplomate brésilien, soutenu par son pays, avait refusé. La plupart des pays européens, et notamment les quatorze partenaires de Paris au sein de l'UE, ont voté pour la motion américaine. Ils repro-

chaient à Bustani d'être trop favorable aux thèses des pays du Sud dans les discussions sur l'élimination des armes chimiques. La France a décidé de faire cavalier seul en s'abstenant. Elle a voulu marquer son souci de ne pas créer de précédent, jugeant que Washington en prenait un peu trop à son aise avec les organisations internationales.

(AFP, AP, Reuter)





## **Communiqué de presse** (24.04.02)

### **La mission du Kurdistan irakien auprès de l'Union européenne se réjouit de la l'avancée amorcée par le Parlement européen.**

La Commission des affaires étrangères, des droits de l'homme, de la sécurité commune et de la politique de défense, a adopté le projet de rapport, présenté par la Baronne Nicholson de Winterbourne, sur la situation en Irak 11 ans après la guerre du golfe.

Grâce à la coopération offerte par la rapporteur, la Baronne Nicholson de Winterbourne, membre du groupe des Libéraux, Démocrates et Réformateurs, et au soutien constant du groupe des Verts/AELE et du Parti Socialiste Européen; de nombreux amendements, concernant la situation au Kurdistan irakien, ont été adoptés :

- Pour la première fois, le Parlement européen prend acte des progrès réalisés, en matière de démocratisation, au Kurdistan irakien durant ces dix dernières années.
- Il reconnaît l'administration du Kurdistan et les efforts que celle-ci a fournis en vue d'établir une société démocratique et civique.
- Le rapport du Parlement européen 'demande au Conseil et à la Commission d'élaborer dans les plus courts délais une stratégie active comportant un soutien à l'expérience démocratique d'administration kurde dans le nord de l'Irak et des projets de développement de la société civile dans cette région autonome.'

Le chef de la Délégation du Gouvernement du Kurdistan d'Irak auprès de l'Union européenne, M. Burhan Jaf, se réjouit de ce vote.

« Tout en rappelant que la politique menée vis-à-vis de Saddam Hussein devait s'inscrire dans le cadre des Nations Unies, le Parlement européen a, pour la première fois, prit acte des progrès réalisés, par l'administration du Kurdistan irakien, en matière de démocratisation. Il reconnaît, d'autre part, l'entière coopération de cette administration avec la communauté internationale pour la mise en oeuvre du programme 'pétrole contre nourriture'.

Le Kurdistan irakien reste encore une jeune démocratie. Notre gouvernement aspire à instaurer, par des moyens pacifiques et par la négociation, un régime démocratique et fédéral pour l'ensemble de l'Irak.

Un tel soutien et une telle reconnaissance de notre travail sont vitaux pour que nous puissions atteindre nos objectifs et établir, en Irak, un véritable régime démocratique, fondé sur le respect des droits de l'homme.»

D'autre part, le Parlement européen demande à la Commission et au Parlement européen de 'mettre en place un programme d'aide en faveur de cette région'.

Sur ce point, Burhan Jaf a ajouté, « j'espère que ce rapport, si il est adopté par le Parlement européen lors de la session plénière du mois de mai, offrira de nouvelles opportunités pour approfondir la coopération entre l'Union européenne et le Kurdistan irakien ».

ENDS.



## **Press Release**    24 April 2002

### **Iraqi Kurdistan Mission to the EU welcomes Parliament Breakthrough**

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, Human Rights, Common Security and Defence Policy of the European Parliament has adopted the draft report presented by Baroness Nicholson of Winterbourne, on the situation in Iraq eleven years after the Gulf war.

Thanks to the cooperation of the rapporteur, Baroness Nicholson – from the Liberal ELDR group - and the full support of the Greens and the European Socialist Party (PSE), many amendments about the situation in Iraqi Kurdistan have been adopted.

- For the first time, the European Parliament welcomes the progress realised in the last ten years with regard to democratisation in Iraqi Kurdistan.
- It shows recognition of the Kurdish Administration and its efforts to establish a democratic civic society.
- The European Parliament report, 'calls on the Council and the Commission to set up in the shortest time possible an active strategy including the support for the democratic experience of the Kurdish administration in Northern Iraq and projects for the development of civil society in this autonomous region'.

The Head of the Iraqi Kurdistan Government Mission to the EU, Burhan Jaf, was delighted by the vote.

« As well as making sensible recommendations about working through the UN when dealing with Saddam Hussein – the European Parliament has for the first time noted the democratic progress made under the Iraqi Kurdish administration. It also notes the full cooperation with the International Community in the implementation of the 'Oil for Food' programme.

« Iraqi Kurdistan is still a fledgling democracy – our government aspires to a federal political future for the whole of Iraq brought about by peaceful means and negotiation.

« Such support and recognition of our work is vital to ensure that these objectives to create a true democracy in Iraq founded on human rights are fulfilled. »

The European Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission 'to set up a help programme directed towards that region'.

Commenting on this, Burhan Jaf added, « It is my hope that if adopted in the Parliament's plenary session in May, the report will open new opportunities for closer cooperation between the European Union and the Iraqi Kurdistan.»

ENDS.

For further information please call Olivier Bobichon on +32-2-513 72 28 OR GSM 0494 326638

# La Turquie s'enfonce dans la crise

**DETTE** - Cela fait plus d'un an que le pays est plongé dans une profonde récession malgré l'aide massive du FMI. Certains économistes préconisent un moratoire sur le remboursement de ces prêts.

MILLİYET  
Istanbul

L'économie turque n'a malheureusement pas pu atteindre le dynamisme espéré au premier trimestre de 2002, malgré le programme de redressement appliqué, avec le soutien du Fonds monétaire international (FMI), par la coalition au pouvoir. Dans cette période de récession qui se poursuit, l'inflation baisse, bien entendu, mais nous n'arrivons toujours pas à sortir des problèmes structurels pour retrouver enfin la croissance [malgré l'aide du FMI, qui a accordé au pays 39 milliards de dollars de prêt depuis 1999].

La crise de février 2001 a déclenché une récession comparable à celle des années de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Alors que l'économie s'est contractée de 11,8 % l'an dernier, il suffit de regarder le bilan annuel des entreprises pour prendre la mesure de la défaite historique des capitaux nationaux. A la fin 2001, les pertes cumulées des 275 entreprises cotées en Bourse, à l'exclusion des banques et des sociétés d'assurances, étaient évaluées à 910 trillions de livres turques. Il s'agit là d'un tableau plus désolant qu'une guerre. La Turquie, qui a enfilé sans hésiter la camisole de force du FMI et appliqué un programme qui mise tout sur la stabilité, se trouve entraînée dans une catastrophe totale. Les revenus du pays sont en train de fondre. Et ce qui tient encore debout est accaparé par les capitaux étrangers.

Jusqu'à la fin de l'an 2000, la seule issue paraissait être l'ancrage du cours de la monnaie au dollar. Les rares personnes qui s'y sont opposées ont été contraintes au silence par une "bombe de bruit", pour reprendre l'expression du professeur Erinc Yeldan, président de la faculté d'économie de l'université de Bilkent (Ankara). En février 2001, nous sommes passés au change flottant, mais nous avons déjà payé un très lourd tribut. [Pendant des mois, le gouvernement a déboursé

vainement des milliards de dollars pour tenter de soutenir sa monnaie, afin de répondre aux critères de rigueur imposés par le FMI. Mais, en février 2001, il a dû se résoudre à laisser flotter la livre.]

Le groupe des Chercheurs sociaux indépendants, dont fait partie le professeur Yeldan, évalue à 50 milliards de dollars la perte des revenus nationaux causée par la crise. Parallèlement à la fonte des réserves des entreprises, le PNB est passé de 200 à 150 milliards de dollars. Le revenu par habitant a, quant à lui, dégringolé à 2 100 dollars [- 27 %]. Ces chiffres ont une traduction sociale : le chômage et la corruption. Au dernier trimestre de 2001, le taux de chômage officiel atteignait 15 % dans les sec-

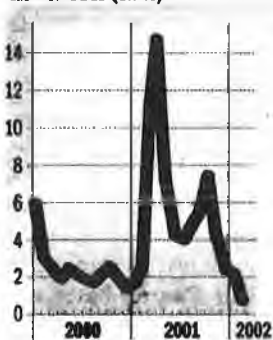
teurs non agricoles et 27 % chez les jeunes hautement qualifiés. Et plus d'un million de personnes ont perdu leur emploi dans cette récession.

Selon le professeur Yeldan, on doit tenir compte du fait que la crise est

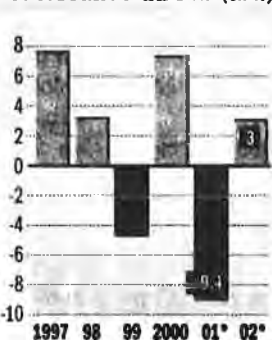
désormais structurelle ; il faut donc prendre d'urgence de nouvelles mesures pour surmonter cette situation de stagnation et de contraction de la demande, semblable à celle qui a affecté l'Europe de l'Est dans les années 90. L'une des solutions les plus radicales qu'il propose est d'établir un nouveau calendrier pour le remboursement du service de la dette extérieure. Il va même plus loin en suggérant un moratoire, comme celui qu'a décrété la Russie en 1998 !

Inflation ou croissance ? Faute de pouvoir sortir de ce dilemme, on en arrive à se demander si la vraie question n'est pas : "Un monde sans le FMI est-il possible ?" Une mondialisation inégale n'apporte pas le bonheur à tous les pays. Nous avons tous assisté au spectacle de ces opposants à la mondialisation qui se sont enchaînés aux buts lors du match de football entre le FC Barcelone et le Real Madrid [en mars 2002, à Barcelone]. Quitte à gâcher le plaisir du public massé sur les gradins, ils clamaient : "Un autre monde est possible". C'est maintenant aux intellectuels et aux scientifiques d'ouvrir le débat sur les modèles alternatifs. **Derya Sazakk**

Inflation (en %)



Croissance du PIB (en %)



La hausse des prix à la consommation n'était que de 1,2 % en mars, ce qui pourrait permettre d'atteindre l'objectif de 35 % sur l'année 2002.

Sources : gouvernement turc, Beder Sazakk, "Financial Times"

## CRIMINALITÉ

### Des chômeurs affamés et prêts à tout

**La politique d'austérité imposée par le FMI ne fait qu'aggraver la crise, estime Yonil Safak. Selon ce quotidien islamiste modéré, la population est au bord du désespoir.**

Un nouveau hold-up vient d'avoir lieu dans une agence bancaire. Istanbul devient une ville où ne règne plus la loi. La raison en est évidente : la crise économique a tué les emplois et les gens affamés sont prêts à tout. Ceux qui obligent le peuple à faire des sacrifices depuis des années pour, paraît-il, "faire baisser l'inflation", ceux qui appliquent un nouveau programme du FMI tous les deux ans et qui reviennent sur leurs décisions au bout de dix mois pour finalement tout reprendre de zéro en demandant aux citoyens de "se serrer encore un peu plus la ceinture" ont fini par faire perdre patience à tout le monde. Ce week-end, je me suis promené dans les supermarchés de quartiers comme Sarigazi, Cekme-

koy, Kurtkoy et Dolayoba. Les étagères étaient à moitié vides. Les responsables de ces magasins m'ont expliqué que les patrons ne voulaient plus renouveler les stocks car cela les obligerait à bloquer leur argent sur des produits qui ne seront jamais vendus. Ils ont ajouté que le nombre de vols à l'étalage avait considérablement augmenté. "Quand ils se font prendre, ils sont morts de honte, explique un vendeur. Mais ils font ça pour se nourrir car ils sont affamés."

Voilà les conséquences de la soumission au FMI. Dans la lettre d'intention qu'il a transmise à cet organisme, le gouvernement prévoit un taux d'inflation de 35 % pour l'an 2002. Et, pour pouvoir atteindre son but, il ne cesse de recourir aux mesures de contraction de l'économie. Peu importe si les entreprises font faillite, peu importe si les gens sont au chômage parce que les usines ferment, peu importe si les rues sont remplies d'une armée de chômeurs affamés...

Les gens n'ont plus un sou en poche et, puisqu'il n'y a pas de demande, les entreprises qui ont pu rester debout et qui luttent pour survivre ne peuvent plus produire. En raison du cours flottant, le dollar a baissé par rapport à la livre turque, et cette baisse a eu une répercussion négative sur les exportations. Les plans des Etats-Unis pour frapper l'Irak compromettent également les revenus du tourisme. D'ailleurs, dans sa lettre d'intention, le gouvernement prévoit déjà une chute de 2 milliards de dollars des recettes dans ce domaine.

Mais, vu du côté du FMI, tout va merveilleusement

bien. La Turquie atteindra l'objectif de 35 % d'inflation et la croissance démarrera. Son explication est la suivante : quand l'inflation baissera, les taux d'intérêt suivront le mouvement, et le remboursement de la dette publique sera facilité. Des prêts à la consommation se mettront en place, relançant la demande. Les usines seront incitées à produire, ce qui mettra l'économie sur la voie de la croissance et nous sortira de la crise...

Tout cela ressemble fort à l'histoire de Hodja Nasreddin\* qui rassure son créancier. "J'ai acheté deux agneaux pour te rembourser mes dettes. Ils vont grandir puis se reproduiront. J'aurai ainsi un

grand troupeau. Là, devant toi, je vais construire un enclos. Lorsque les moutons sauteront par-dessus la clôture, leur laine s'y accrochera. Je ramasserai cette laine, j'en ferai du fil à tricoter que je vendrai pour te rembourser." Face au créancier qui ne peut s'empêcher d'éclater de rire, Hodja Nasreddin conclut : "Te voilà déjà fou de joie à la vision de cet argent !" C'est ce qui nous arrive. Le taux d'inflation relativement bas de février a étonné aussi bien nos politiciens que les bureaucrates du FMI. Et ils rient de joie, alors qu'il faudrait plutôt pleurer sur notre condition.

Can Aksin, *Yeni Safak* (extraits), Istanbul

\* Conteur turc du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle.

## Réunion secrète entre Américains et Kurdes sur une frappe en Irak (journal)



DUBAI, 21 avr (AFP) - 9h04 - Des représentants américains et les chefs des deux formations kurdes contrôlant le nord de l'Irak se sont réunis "secrètement" cette semaine près de Berlin afin de préparer une frappe contre l'Irak "avant la fin de l'année", a rapporté dimanche le quotidien arabe Asharq Al-Awsat.

Citant une source kurde irakienne, le journal a précisé que la frappe, dont les Etats-Unis menacent le régime de Saddam Hussein en vue de le renverser, devrait être lancée à partir du Kurdistan irakien où "trois aéroports ont été développés pour servir de points de départ aux opérations" américaines.

Le nord de l'Irak, où la population s'est soulevée contre le pouvoir central à Bagdad à la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991, est contrôlée par deux formations rivales: l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK de Jalal Talabani) et du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK de Massoud Barzani).

MM. Talabani et Barzani ont assisté à la réunion de trois jours, qui s'est achevée près de Berlin avec la participation de responsables militaires américains, du département d'Etat et des services de renseignements (CIA), selon la même source.

La réunion a permis de rapprocher les points de vue de l'UPK et du PDK, en conflit pour le contrôle du Kurdistan, et "une rencontre prévue jeudi à Washington" entre les chefs des deux formations, dans le cadre d'une médiation américaine, "a été annulée", a ajouté la même source.

"La création d'une force militaire unifiée" entre les deux formations kurdes rivales a été évoquée en prévision notamment de la frappe contre l'Irak qui "devrait intervenir au plus tard avant la fin de l'année", selon la même source citée par Asharq Al-Awsat.

Les Etats-Unis ont menacé de lancer une opération militaire d'envergure, à une date qui n'a jamais été précisée, contre l'Irak, placé par le président George W. Bush dans "un axe du mal" et soupçonné de développer des armes de destruction massive.

## Kurdes : la mue du PKK

**D**époser les armes, pour une guérilla, n'est pas une mince affaire quand ses combattants ont prêté serment de lutter jusqu'à la mort. Mais, au terme d'une guerre civile au bilan désastreux (30 000 morts depuis 1984) et avec son chef sous les verrous, le PKK, le mouvement séparatiste kurde de Turquie, a décidé de faire peau neuve.

Sous le nom nouveau de Kadek, « seul héritier du PKK », les militants espèrent effacer l'étiquette de terroristes qui colle à leur peau. Et éviter que les capitales européennes, sous la pression d'Ankara,



Kurdes manifestant à Beyrouth ■

ne les classent sur la liste des groupes interdits. Sans oublier néanmoins de désigner à leur tête le dirigeant Abdullah Ocalan, détenu dans l'île-prison d'Imrali et condamné à mort. Depuis son arrestation, en 1999, par un commando turc au Kenya, ses fidèles battaient de l'aile. Dans les montagnes kurdes mais aussi dans les villes européennes, centres nerveux et financiers de leur mouvement, les peshmergas – les « combattants de la

mort » – donnaient des signes de fatigue. Est-ce la fin d'un rêve, la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant ? Ankara ne veut voir dans ce nouveau baptême du PKK qu'une ruse de plus pour échapper à ses rets ■ Olivier Weber

**Le Point**

| 25 avril 2002 |

## **KDP, PUK summit irons out differences**

Turkish Daily News April 24, 2002 by Ilnur Cevik

Kurdish leaders Masoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani have reached an agreement at a recent summit in Frankfurt, Germany to iron out their differences while cooperating and coordinating their activities in northern Iraq against terrorism, a highly placed source who attended the meeting told the Turkish Daily News on Tuesday.

The summit meetings were held in several sessions under the auspices of the Americans.

The source who asked not to be named said Kurdistan Democracy Party (KDP) leader Barzani and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) chief Talabani also briefly discussed the future of Iraq but vehemently denied that they had committed northern Iraq as a launching ground for a military operation against Saddam Hussein.

"As Iraqi citizens, the two leaders of course touched upon the future of our country but the main issue of discussion was the disagreements between the KDP and the PUK," the source said.

Pointing to the reports that appeared in the Arab press, the source said, these were gross distortions and were being leaked by circles who wanted to sabotage relations between the Iraqi Kurds and Baghdad.

"These reports claimed that the Americans would use three air bases in northern Iraq to attack Saddam's forces which is absolute nonsense. Such things were never discussed in Frankfurt. Both the KDP and the PUK is approaching the issue with utmost caution and did not discuss using northern Iraq as a staging ground for an anti-Saddam military operation," the source said.

He explained that there were still outstanding issues between the KDP and the PUK on what to call the regional parliament, elections and even revenue sharing.

The Turkish Daily News had reported two months ago that the summit to iron out these differences would be held in Washington. But the two sides did not want to go to Washington. They could not meet in northern Iraq so Frankfurt was chosen as a venue and Barzani traveled to Germany via Syria and Talabani flew to Europe via Iran. The American side was represented by Ambassador Ryan Crocker, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs.

Asked if the two sides had managed to iron out their differences, the source said they had managed to make serious headway in normalizing their relations but there were still a long way to go for the convening of the regional parliament or holding local elections.

He said the two leaders agreed that they were facing a common threat of terrorism and would cooperate and coordinate their anti-terrorism activities.

In early April, Islamic extremists tried to assassinate Barham Saleh, the head of the PUK regional government in northern Iraq, in Suleymaniye. Seven people were killed in a fierce gun battle after the militants opened fire on Saleh and his entourage. Two gunmen and five of Salih's bodyguards were killed in the clash, while one of the assailants managed to get away. He was captured 14 hours later by PUK security. A score of people who provided logistic support for the attackers were also caught.

The assailant who was caught was reportedly the brother of another Islamic extremist who assassinated the governor of Erbil last year. Erbil is the leading city in the area run by the KDP regional government. He had travelled to several Arab countries before the attack in Suleymaniye and was last seen in Yemen and Jordan. He was suspected of having links with the Al-Qaida terrorist group and had allegedly travelled to northern Iraq via Baghdad.

This meant Islamic extremists are targeting both PUK and KDP officials. So Barzani and Talabani took up the issue in Frankfurt. The source also said sides agreed that while the Americans, as the only superpower, were important for them they were located 5,000 miles away from northern Iraq and that Turkey and Iran were vital and they attached great importance to maintain and enhance relations with Ankara and Tehran.

Talabani dispatched Saleh to Ankara to brief Turkish officials about the summit meetings. The Americans also scheduled meetings with Turkish officials to evaluate the summits.

Meanwhile, Talabani himself will travel to Tehran to inform the Iranians about the Frankfurt meetings. Barzani on the other hand will travel to Damascus on his way back to northern Iraq and meet Syrian officials including President Bashir Assad.

Necirvan Barzani, the prime minister of the KDP regional government, has returned to northern Iraq via Turkey in recent days. The reports that he had shunned Turkey and returned home via Damascus proved to be wrong.

\* \* \* \*

## **Turk military wants Iraq fuel trade stopped paper**

Reuters By Steve Bryant April 24, 2002

ISTANBUL - Turkey's powerful military wants a complete stop to truck imports of crude and diesel from northern Iraq which it says help fund Kurdish rebels, a newspaper said on Wednesday. The trade across Turkey's southeastern border is a major source of money for a region battered by years of conflict with separatist Kurdish guerrillas but is opposed by major oil companies in Turkey who say the cheap imports are unfair competition.

The Milliyet newspaper said a confidential military report to Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit and other ministries had "pointed out the vital importance of completely stopping cargo of diesel and crude oil and the prevention of smuggling". Officials at Turkey's General Staff and prime ministry were not immediately available for comment on the veracity of the report.

Truck drivers and Kurdish officials in northern Iraq say the cross-border trade has fallen off dramatically recently, partly as a result of tighter Turkish border controls and levies. The report referred to Turkish state-controlled refiner Tupras's planned purchase of some four million tonnes of registered crude imports across the border in 2002 alongside around 200,000 tonnes of smuggled crude.

Legions of ramshackle local trucks that shuttle across the border carry food and other goods in northern Iraq and returning with loads of diesel and crude. The trade has been carried out in violation of U.N. trade sanctions against Baghdad since 1990's Gulf crisis, but it is largely condoned by the United Nations.

### **PROFITS GO TO REBELS**

The diesel is sold at below market prices while the smuggled crude is refined in "pirate" facilities around Turkey's southeast. The military report said many of the illegal refineries had been set up by converting tarmac and edible oil factories.

"In 2002 there will be illegal earnings of 200-250 trillion lira (\$150-188 million) from crude oil smuggling and of 86.26 trillion lira from smuggled diesel," the report said. Northern Iraq has been outside Baghdad's direct control since after the 1991 Gulf War and the fuel trade is run by Kurdish groups that govern the enclave although the fuel originates from oilfields in Iraqi government-controlled areas.

Turkey has long regarded the Kurdish enclave with suspicion and keeps troops there to attack Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebels who use the region as a base.

The military report said that the fuel smuggling and refining trade was mainly run by "PKK members in person or their allies" and used to fund Kurdish separatism. "(This trade) increases the financial resources of the organisation, widens the organisation, stains our people with the illegal transactions and undermines the prestige of the country," Milliyet quoted the report as saying. The PKK said this month it was renaming itself the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress or KADEK as part of a policy of abandoning armed struggle for peaceful political pressure.

Turkey says the name change are tricks and promised to pursue its campaign against a group it calls "terrorist".

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## **U.S. Postpones Conference on Post-Saddam Iraq**

Reuters April 24, 2002 By Jonathan Wright

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The State Department, thwarted by opposition in Congress to its Iraq policy, has postponed plans to hold a conference of Iraqi experts on the country's future after President Saddam Hussein.

Instead it will bring together smaller working groups of Iraqi experts to talks on subjects such as reviving the Iraqi economy and restoring the public health and education systems, a State Department official said on Wednesday.

"We have decided to postpone the conference. We are planning working groups of Iraqi experts... This would be the conference," said the official, who asked not to be named. The State Department had asked Congress for \$5 million for the Middle East Institute, a Washington-based nongovernmental organization, to organize the big conference in May at a European venue which was never decided.

But unidentified members of Congress used their authority to put a hold on the money, apparently because the conference would sideline the Iraqi National Congress (INC), the largest Iraqi opposition movement, officials said.

Sen. Jesse Helms, the conservative North Carolina Republican, had asked the State Department to give the INC all of the money appropriated for helping the Iraqi opposition. Supporters of the INC helped to scotch the State Department's plans by publicizing remarks critical of President Bush's policy by the president of the Middle East Institute, former assistant secretary of state Edward Walker, sources close to the Iraqi opposition said.

After Bush said in January that Iran, Iraq and North Korea made up an "axis of evil," Walker said, "We have complete apples and oranges here. To call them an axis is ridiculous."

### **TACTICAL SUCCESS FOR INC**

The decision to postpone the conference is a tactical success for the INC, which favors its own conference of former Iraqi military officers dedicated to preparing plans to overthrow the Iraqi government. The Bush administration is sharply divided over the value of the INC. Some see it as incompetent and irrelevant, others as a vital component in plans to achieving the administration's stated objective of getting rid of Saddam.

The State Department official said the Middle East Institute brought together a small group of Iraqis on April 9-10 to discuss the proposed conference but the institute will have at most a peripheral role in the future.

Officials at the Middle East Institute declined to discuss the conference but a source close to the institute said, "It was never scheduled and it's still under development."

One source close to the Iraqi opposition said the postponement of the conference reflected the ascendancy, possibly temporary, of those in the administration who distrust the State Department approach to Iraq and favor the more robust military strategy that the INC has long advocated.

The INC says it can play the role the Northern Alliance played in Afghanistan in 2001 when a U.S. air campaign enabled the alliance to drive the Taliban out of power.

But the INC's only forces on the ground are Kurdish fighters in the north, who have no appetite for attacking Iraqi government forces without watertight U.S. assurances.

The Kurds are skeptical of the resolve of the United States, which has let them down at least three times in the past 30 years, provoking massive Iraqi retribution.

A source close to the INC said it was confident its own conference of military officers will come off, though it too is running weeks behind the original schedule. The INC originally hoped it would take place in early April.

But analysts say the administration has put on hold its plans to overthrow Saddam because of its preoccupation with the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

\* \* \* \*



Turkish Daily News - 25 IV 2002

## The report: Obligatory migration one of the worst dramas in Turkey history

IZMIR - 25 April - by Serdar Alyamac

The Migrants Solidarity and Culture Association (GOC-DER) has prepared a report on obligatory migration, which revealed the dramatic realities of people who were forced to migrate to other cities leaving their land, houses and lives behind. The chairwoman of the GOC-DER, Sefika Gurbuz, stressed at the beginning of the report that in the societies that were economically and democratically less developed and could not provide peace at home, crime and rights violations were experienced, reaching "a point that threatened their right to live, and for that reason, many people were forced to leave their homes."

Gurbuz stressed, "The events in our country are no different than this, instead of solving the Kurdish problem in a democratic way, the preference for violence caused the distortion of domestic peace. According to official figures, 3,848 villages were vacated and millions of people were forced to leave their land and homes. Finally, this event turned into a tragedy." Pointing out that despite the decrease in conflict in the southeast, the State did not provide the opportunities for people to return to their villages, Gurbuz said that the people who created obligatory migration have turned this into an instrument to obtain undeserved income. "Human smuggling became a real economic sector. There are lobbies benefiting from this. These lobbies do not want Turkey to be a democratic country adopted to the European Union in order not to lose their benefits."

"We have prepared this report on obligatory migration after a two-year study. This report was prepared in Istanbul, Izmir, Mersin, Diyarbakir, Van and Batman which absorbed most of the people who were forced to migrate. The report concerns 17,845 people who were forced to migrate, and we have interviewed these people face to face. We can quickly say that the most important reasons for migration are, the security forces' application in the Emergency Rules Region (OHAL) and the plateau and food embargo. On the other hand, education, health, and difficult economic conditions are the indirect reasons forcing people to migrate," Gurbuz said.

Stating that most of the people who were forced to migrate were living under the poverty line and had no social security, Gurbuz said that the authorities have left these migrants to fend for themselves.

Gurbuz also pointed out that 88 percent of migrants did not receive aid from the authorities, and that those who did receive help were supported by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and municipalities, not by the State. Gurbuz emphasized that despite all of the problems, 98 percent of people who were forced to migrate want to go back to their villages without any interference. "The democratization of Turkey and her membership to the EU depends on the solution of the Kurdish problem; and solving the obligatory migration issue is the first step. The solution of obligatory migration also depends on clearing landmines in arable fields, annulling the rural guard system, lifting the plateau and food embargo, compensating the loss of villagers, and giving these people the opportunity to return freely to their villages," Gurbuz said.

The report, prepared by sociologist Mehmet Barut, stated that the obligatory migration implemented on the Kurdish people in the southeastern region was one of the worst dramas experienced in the 21st century, "This drama was experienced because Turkey, a candidate of the European Union, could not have a rebuilding of democratization and an administration based on humanistic values."

According to the GOC-DER research, the average migrant family interviewed consisted of eight members. Almost 99 percent of migrants were from the eastern and southeastern Anatolia regions, most of them villagers. "The migration from the eastern and southeastern regions occurred between 1991 and 2000. During this period, most of the migration from the villages was made to Diyarbakir, Batman, Van, Siirt and Hakkari. Among these cities, Diyarbakir was a

city that both received and created migration; Diyarbakir is also the city that received the most migration," the report stated.

"The age of the people forced to migrate was generally between 18-45, and these people had to live under the poverty line. Also, most of the family members were children between the ages of 0-14. These people have lost their ability to be productive because of unemployment. For that reason they are in a condition where they mostly consume. Some 18.1 percent of the 1,845 people interviewed were working, the rest, 82.9 percent, did not work. The percentage of those who cannot read or write is high."

The report underlined the reasons for migration and stressed that "The implementation of the OHAL, not accepting rural guard duty, the fear of losing their lives, vacating the villages because of armed conflicts and the plateau and food embargo were the main reasons people were forced to migrate. Health, education, and difficult economic conditions were others reasons." The report discussed these factors, stating that the migration had become massive and that the majority of people had migrated to cities where they had relatives. "The interesting thing was that the obligatory migration was not created according to any order or written notice. The people who had to migrate lost their main citizenship rights, such as ownership rights and settlement rights. Some of these people have appealed to the law to take back their rights, but they have not received any feedback.

"Furthermore, after this obligatory migration, the pressure on these people to migrate did not end. Approximately 36.3 percent of these people were arrested for political reasons. It came out that the people arrested could not properly use their right to defence."

The report emphasized that those who had been forced to migrate from their villages, now had to live in shantytowns in the cities where they migrated. "After the migration, nutrition problems emerged. They could not feed themselves properly."

"The majority of migrants still live in tents because of employment conditions. They set up their tents according to the working seasons. The obligatory migration caused these people to experience serious problems, such as adaptation to cities, economic concerns, education and health. Health problems especially, after migration became the main issue because of poverty and the absence of infrastructure. As a result, widespread health problems and contagious diseases threaten society's health as well.

"Among the migrant families, children aged 6-14 have been cut off from schools, so that most of the children do not know Turkish. Also, most migrant families prefer to speak Kurdish socially and at work. Furthermore, most of the women in these families do not understand the Turkish language. Due to these problems, the people who were forced to migrate could not find jobs and homes in the places where they migrated, and because of the differences in culture and mother tongue, they could not adapt. Young people also have problems with education and prejudice."

The report also stressed that the most important research finding was the migrants' aspirations to return to their villages. These people felt that they did not "belong to the place where they migrated because of cultural differences and they felt excluded. For that reason, if the structural problems causing obligatory migration were overcome and they were supported economically, they would return to their villages. Furthermore, most of them did not accept the central village project, and a few expressed that they would accept to live in central villages if they had no opportunity to return to their village."

The report emphasized that the problems resulting from obligatory migration could be solved if lingering social peace, and democratic and human rights were re-established. "However, the source of the problems and the new problems that have emerged with obligatory migration are political, social, cultural, economical and psychological, and for that reason the solution of the problem should be mostly political and social."

"The losses of these migrants should be compensated and in order not to experience such a drama again, the Constitution should be changed. OHAL and similar rules should be annulled and a general amnesty should be announced.

International Herald Tribune  
Saturday-Sunday, April 27-28, 2002

# Iran leader assails U.S. policies

## Khatami sees Bush influenced by 'warmongers'

By Joseph Fitchett

International Herald Tribune

**ALMATY, Kazakhstan:** Explaining Iran's objections to being targeted in an "axis of evil," Mohammed Khatami, the Iranian president, blamed President George W. Bush's inexperience in world affairs and the clout of pro-Israel factions in Washington for fostering an escalation of violence threatening to ignite the Middle East.

According to Khatami, the hardening U.S. tone toward Tehran, despite significant Iranian assistance to the anti-Taliban offensive in Afghanistan, reflects the influence of a "radical warmonger" group in Washington that wants to risk widening regional conflict in a bid to insert U.S. military power and help Israel.

"After the tragic Sept. 11 events, the United States abused world sympathy, and Israel activated its lobby and took advantage of Bush's lack of experience," Khatami said, adding that the Bush administration "fell victim to this trap, against U.S. interests." Khatami spoke Thursday in an interview with the International Herald Tribune hastily arranged during a media conference in Almaty.

It was the president's first extensive discussion with the Western media since the February speech in which Bush lumped Iran together with Iraq and North Korea as major threats to peace.

Khatami, the leader of reformists seeking more democracy in the Islamic republic, sustained a sharp setback for his political agenda from Bush's speech. The "axis of evil" comment damaged prospects for convergence between Tehran and Washington over shared U.S.-Iranian animosity toward the Taliban regime in Afghanistan. Iranian moderates had started to challenge the control over foreign policy enjoyed by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Sayed Ali Khamenei, only to see their efforts lose traction in recent weeks.

Addressing this issue indirectly, Khatami said U.S. threats had the effect of hardening "national solidarity" in Iran, a phrase that seemed to reflect his own reduced room for maneuver at home.

Khatami spoke intensely during the 45-minute interview but chose his words carefully, occasionally interrupting the interpreter to make soft-spoken corrections.

He contrasted the United States' confrontational attitude toward Iran with Tehran's warming relations with other parts of the world, notably the European Union, other Gulf states and the new states in Central Asia.

In tracing Iran's problems in Washington to pro-Israel factions in the Pentagon, Congress and elsewhere in the U.S. policymaking establishment, Khatami voiced a view shared even by many pro-Western Muslim and Arab leaders: that hardline Israeli politicians, including Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, see the U.S. war on terrorism as an opportunity to obtain Washington's cooperation in using military force, with scant room for political negotiation, as the basis for a



Misha Japaridze/The Associated Press

"After the tragic Sept. 11 events, the United States abused world sympathy, and Israel activated its lobby and took advantage of Bush's lack of experience," Khatami said.

strategic restructuring in the Middle East.

Khatami lashed out publicly in a speech here Thursday, accusing a U.S.-Israeli alliance of "exploiting the ominous phenomenon of terrorism as an excuse for creating war and domination." While he did not identify the two countries in his address, Khatami said in the subsequent interview that he meant the Bush administration and the Israeli government.

Khatami was speaking at a Eurasian media forum in Kazakhstan attended by journalists and officials from 63 countries, including Israel. Iran, he said, was trying to find ways of reconciling Islam and progress toward democracy, and combating Islamic terrorism of the sort promoted by Al Qaeda, which he described as a permanent foe of Tehran.

Iranian leaders have consistently rejected public assertions by U.S. intelligence agencies in recent months that the Iranian government had resumed terrorism by harboring Al Qaeda terrorists escaping from Afghanistan, selling arms to the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and providing funds for suicide bombings and other terrorist campaigns in Israel carried out by extremist Islamic groups such as Hezbollah. Khatami denied that Iran sustains

Hezbollah or other terrorists, and said that Iran would not interfere if the Palestinian leadership reached a deal with Israel.

Apparently anxious to maintain his distance from the immutable anti-Americanism of the hardline mullahs, Khatami reiterated Iranians' readiness for better U.S. relations if the Bush administration decided to move away from what he called "the language of evil."

Working to open Iran to once-suspicious neighboring countries, Khatami visited Almaty after a first-ever summit meeting of the five countries bordering the Caspian Sea — Iran, Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan — which have been wrangling over the sharing of its oil wealth.

Regional rivalry for influence between Tehran and Washington was highlighted, by coincidence, when Kazakhstan narrowly avoided the diplomatic embarrassment of having Khatami as a state guest simultaneously with Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. secretary of defense, due on a visit this weekend, only hours after Khatami's departure.

After providing logistical help for U.S. operations in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan is now starting to get some U.S. training for anti-terrorist forces.

International Herald Tribune  
Monday, April 29, 2002

# Pentagon sees attack on Saddam next year

## Up to 250,000 troops would be used for ground and air war

By Thom Shanker  
and David E. Sanger

The New York Times

**WASHINGTON:** The Bush administration, in developing a potential approach for toppling President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, is concentrating its attention on a major air campaign and ground invasion, with initial estimates contemplating the use of 70,000 to 250,000 troops.

The administration is turning to that approach after concluding that a coup in Iraq would be unlikely to succeed and that a proxy battle using local forces there would be insufficient to bring a change in power.

But senior officials now acknowledge that any offensive would probably be delayed until early next year, allowing time to create the right military, economic and diplomatic conditions. These include avoiding summer combat in bulky chemical suits, preparing for a global oil price shock, and waiting until there is progress toward ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Until recently, the administration had contemplated a possible confrontation with Saddam this autumn, after building a case at the United Nations that the Iraqi leader is unwilling to allow the kind of highly intrusive inspections needed to prove that he has no weapons of mass destruction.

Now that schedule seems less realistic. Conflict in the Middle East has widened a rift within the administration over whether military action can be undertaken without inflaming Arab states and prompting anti-American violence throughout the region.

In his public speeches, President George W. Bush still sounds as intent as ever about forcing out Saddam, who turned 65 years old on Sunday, making it clear that he will not let the Middle East crisis obscure his goal. But he has not issued any order for the Pentagon to mobilize its forces, and today there is no official "war plan."

Instead, policymakers and operational commanders are trying to sketch the broad outlines of the confrontation they expect. Among the questions they must address is where to base air and ground forces in the region.

Even before Bush's tense meeting Thursday with Crown Prince Abdullah ibn Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, the Pentagon was working on the assumption that it might have to carry out any military action without bases in the kingdom.

The planning now anticipates the possible extensive use of bases for American forces in Turkey and Kuwait, with Qatar as the replacement for the sophisticated air operations center in Saudi Arabia, and with Oman and Bahrain playing important roles.

As to any war plan itself, the military expects to be asked for a more traditional approach than the unconventional campaign in Afghanistan. Such an approach would resemble the Persian Gulf War in style if not in size and would be fought with more modern weapons and more dynamic tactics.

"The president has not made any decisions," a senior Pentagon official said. "But any efforts against Iraq will not look like what we did in Afghanistan."

In terms of diplomatic reaction from the region, Vice President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and their senior aides contend that Arab

leaders would publicly protest but secretly celebrate Saddam's downfall — as long as the operation was decisive — and that toppling him would actually ease the job of calming violence between Israel and the Palestinians. They believe that warnings of uprisings among Arab populations are overblown and compare them to similar warnings before the Gulf War, which proved unfounded.

"It has been the consistent drumbeat from our friends in the region that if we are serious, they will be with us," said one administration official in this camp.

But at the State Department and among some at the White House, counterarguments are posed that efforts to depose Saddam would be viewed by Arabs as a confrontation with Islam, destabilizing the entire region and complicating the campaign against Osama bin Laden and his network, Al Qaeda.

The reaction in Saudi Arabia is already critical.

The United States would need permission to use Saudi air space adjacent to Iraq, if not Saudi air bases, officials said, but it is unclear whether Bush took up that subject with Abdullah when the topic of Iraq came up. Rumsfeld, who met with the Saudi leader a day ahead of Bush, said access to bases "was not a topic at all" of his discussions.

Turkish officials said that no negotiations on basing American troops for a new campaign against Iraq had yet taken place; American officials confirmed that, calling such talks premature.

Kuwait's position, too, is uncertain. At an Arab League summit meeting in March, Iraq agreed to recognize Kuwait and pledged not to invade the country again in exchange for a declaration that an attack on Iraq would be considered an attack against all Arab states. But American officials said they could rely on Kuwait, whose very survival is owed to American military power after Iraq invaded the country in 1990.

Senior administration, Pentagon and military officials say that consensus has emerged that there is little chance for a military coup to unseat Saddam from within, even with the United States exerting economic and military pressure and providing covert assistance.

"There have been at least six coup attempts in the 1990s, and they consistently fail," said an administration official. In each instance, this official said, dissident Iraqi officers "sent signals to us, 'We're ready for a coup,' and the next thing you know these guys are murdered or it fails or people have cold feet at the end and leave the country."

"It's a horrific police state," the official said. "Nobody trusts anyone, so how can you pull off a coup?"

Similarly, officials say they do not believe that even an expanded version of the strategy used to remove the Taliban from power in Afghanistan would work. In that model, precision air strikes combined with indigenous armed opposition under the leadership of American Special Operations forces and the CIA did the job.

The parallel strategy in Iraq would involve the Kurds in the north and the Shiites in the south. But Saddam's military, while only one-third its pre-Gulf-War strength, is strong enough to defeat any confrontation by proxy, officials said.

Officials said the nascent plans for a heavy air campaign and land assault already included rough numbers of troops, ranging from a minimum of about 70,000 to 100,000 — one army corps or a reinforced corps — to a top of 250,000 troops, which still would be only half the number used in the Gulf War. Other than troops from Britain, no significant contribution of allied forces is anticipated.

The military requirements for changing the government in Baghdad would be vastly different than the Gulf War mission, which was to drive an entrenched enemy from a large occupied area, senior military officers said.

"We would not need to hold territory and protect our flanks to the same extent," one officer said. "You would see a higher level of maneuver and airborne assault, dropping in vertically and enveloping targets — less slogging mile by mile through the desert."

Even so, officers said, moving tens of thousands of troops to a region with access more limited than in the Gulf War could be a logistical challenge. The modern American military has never fought the kind of dangerous and complicated urban battles that might be needed to topple Saddam's government.

Dealing with Saddam's suspected chemical and biological weapons would require preemptive strikes by precision weapons, as well as an element of heavy deterrence.

# Iraqis dance in street to celebrate Saddam

## Country marks president's 65th birthday

From news reports

**TIKRIT, Iraq:** Iraq celebrated President Saddam Hussein's 65th birthday Sunday with an annual display of government-sponsored loyalty whose theme this year was defiance in the face of U.S. determination to topple the Iraqi leader.

As tens of thousands marched in Baghdad, state-run Iraqi media said Saddam's birthday marked the birth of an Iraq "free and victorious against U.S.-British-Zionist colonialism."

The Iraqi leader, who has opted for seclusion during recent birthday celebrations, was nowhere to be seen again Sunday.

At the biggest celebration, in Saddam's hometown of Tikrit, 160 kilometers (100 miles) north of Baghdad, schoolgirls performed traditional Arab dances and waved Iraqi and Palestinian flags. Singers praised Saddam as the symbol of "our dignity and pride."

Marchers in Baghdad carried posters of the president and Iraqi flags and shouted, "Saddam is our leader forever."

The nationally televised events capped days of state-sponsored festivities around the country. Held every year since 1985, the birthday celebrations show the extent of Saddam's control over the country.

In the past week, official newspapers have published letters from well-wishers congratulating the president and

pledging their allegiance.

State television has blared songs of praise and showed old footage of Saddam embracing children, talking to citizens and saluting cheering crowds.

In several provinces, crowds led by members of the governing Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party have taken to the streets, singing, dancing and wishing Saddam a happy birthday.

In a country where dissent is brutally suppressed and few public displays are spontaneous, it is difficult to judge how Iraqis feel about the birthday celebrations. To some, the occasion may simply be a respite from everyday hardships and a chance to eat birthday cake and other delicacies they cannot normally afford.

"I came here to celebrate Saddam's birthday because he is the only hero who can liberate Palestine from the Zionists," said Jamal Ali, 50, a Baghdad resident.

Many Arabs believe the United States favors Israel at the expense of Palestinians, and Saddam has cast himself as a crusader for Palestinian rights, ordering payments of up to \$25,000 for families of suicide bombers who attack Israelis.

President George W. Bush labeled Iraq part of an "axis of evil" in January, and administration officials say Bush wants Saddam out of power. Arab governments have warned the United States that attacking Iraq would further inflame anti-American sentiment in the Middle East.

Iraq, normally wary of foreign jour-

nalists, invited scores to witness the opulent celebrations, which contrasted with the poverty that grips most of the country.

Iraq blames the economic situation on the United Nations trade sanctions imposed after Saddam's 1990 invasion of Kuwait — and on the United States and other Western countries that insist the sanctions remain in place until they are satisfied Saddam has scrapped weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them.

An exception to the sanctions allows Iraq to buy food and other humanitarian goods with the proceeds from oil sales. The United States and its Western allies contend Saddam, and not the sanctions, is responsible for the plight of the Iraqi people.

The state-run newspaper Al Qadisiya said Sunday that the birthday celebrations represented "a cry by the Iraqi people against the unjust embargo and evil U.S. aggression."

Iraqi dissidents abroad denounce the celebrations as an expensive charade in which government officials insist that Iraqis participate by the thousands.

Last week, the Iraqi vice president, Taha Yassin Ramadan, said Saddam had demanded this year's celebrations be scaled down out of respect to Palestinian deaths in clashes with Israelis.

Saddam has governed Iraq since 1968. (AP, Reuters)



Saddam, in a photo distributed by the state-run media, greeting well-wishers at an undisclosed location on his 65th birthday Sunday. Agence France-Presse



courrier  
**ACAT**  
Pour les droits de l'homme en Turquie

Avril 2002, n° 224

# L'État s'essaie aux droits de l'homme

**TURQUIE : répression, torture... et impunité en 2001**

En visite à Paris, fin février 2002, Yavuz Önen, président de la Fondation turque des droits de l'homme à Ankara, a rencontré un représentant de l'ACAT ainsi que des membres du collectif Soigner et défendre librement les victimes de la torture en Turquie. Il leur a présenté le dernier rapport de la Fondation, qui confirme que la situation des droits de l'homme reste en 2001 inquiétante, malgré quelques actes positifs de la part du gouvernement !

**C**ourant 2001, le gouvernement turc a mis sur pied un Comité de surveillance des violations des droits de l'homme (sous la responsabilité du Premier ministre), ainsi qu'un Comité consultatif des droits de l'homme (sous la responsabilité du ministre d'État des Droits de l'homme).

Des amendements ont été faits à l'article 16 de la loi « anti-terror », en ce qui concerne les prisons : un conseil de surveillance a été créé, la période de détention réduite. Selon les chiffres officiels, 26 780 gendarmes et 21 000 fonctionnaires ont suivi des cours sur les droits de l'homme. Par ailleurs, en novembre, la Turquie a permis au Comité européen de prévention contre la torture de publier tous les rapports qui, les douze années précédentes, avaient été interdits. Notons également que l'abolition de la peine de mort est au programme, à la demande de l'Union européenne, ainsi que l'usage public de la langue kurde (sur les chaînes de télévision, dans des écoles privées...). À l'ordre du jour également : la révision du

Code pénal turc.

## Une adhésion difficile

En dépit de ces quelques points positifs, la politique d'État en ce qui concerne la sécurité du régime et le respect des droits de l'homme n'ont cessé d'être un problème majeur en 2001. En dépit des promesses faites dans le Programme national, en liaison avec la demande d'accession de la Turquie à l'Union européenne, et des demandes de démocratisation émanant de différentes parties de la société, cette année 2001 a été une des plus oppressives depuis longtemps.

**Partis politiques.** La répression contre certains partis politiques a continué. Les membres du HADEP (parti légal, pro-kurde) ont été soumis à des enquêtes, des procès, des poursuites, des arrestations et leurs publications ont été saisies, interdites. Un exemple : le 1<sup>er</sup> septembre 2001, Journée mondiale de la paix, le HADEP organise une manifestation pacifique : 877 personnes sont arrêtées dans tout le pays alors qu'elles tentaient de

rejoindre Ankara où devait avoir lieu le défilé.

**Société civile.** Des organisations professionnelles, des syndicats, des associations médicales, l'Association du barreau d'Istanbul, l'Association turque des droits de l'homme... ont été la cible des forces de sécurité et judiciaire. Ainsi, en novembre 2001, nous avons dû intervenir pour Eren Keskin, directrice de la section IHD (Association turque des droits de l'homme) à Istanbul, ainsi que pour un de ses collaborateurs, Saban Dayanan, tous deux sujets à des menaces et intimidations. Par ailleurs, chacune des cinq sections de la Fondation turque des droits de l'homme, qui s'occupe de la réhabilitation des torturés et fait appel à des médecins, a été « visitée » par la police qui a « emprunté » les ordinateurs, les fichiers.

**Liberté d'expression.** Les libertés d'expression et de communication ont été restreintes. De nombreux intellectuels, journalistes, universitaires, syndicalistes, défenseurs des droits de l'homme... ont été poursuivis et bannis au cours de cette année.

**Prisons.** Toutes les propositions pour mettre fin aux tragédies en liaison avec les prisons dites de type F ont été rejetées par le ministre de la Justice<sup>(1)</sup>.

**L'état d'urgence** a été étendu à quatre autres villes et provinces adjacentes. Or c'est là que sont commises les violations des droits de l'homme les plus inadmissibles.

**Déplacés.** On sait que trois millions de personnes ont été déplacées de force depuis l'Est anatolien jusqu'à la périphérie des principales villes de Turquie. En théorie, rien ne s'oppose à ce que

ces gens reviennent dans les ruines de leurs anciens villages. En pratique, c'est une autre histoire. Par ailleurs, des mines antipersonnel ont été largement répandues dans ces régions.

**Torture.** En comparaison avec les années 1992 à 1997, il y a moins de disparitions, moins d'exécutions extra-judiciaires, moins de meurtres, moins de déplacements forcés, moins de morts en détention. Mais la torture n'a pu être éradiquée et continue à être systématique.

Ainsi, vingt-huit enfants de neuf à seize ans ont été arrêtés en janvier 2001 dans le sud-est. Ils défilaient dans leur village en scandant des mots d'ordre du PKK. Ils auraient été battus, soumis à de mauvais traitements et auraient passé deux jours dans une cellule, sans lit ni toilette ni lavabo, et privés de boisson et de nourriture. Six d'entre eux, âgés de quatorze à seize ans, incarcérés dans une prison pour adultes de haute sécurité, doivent être jugés devant la cour de sûreté de l'État de Diyarbakir. Autres cas : Fehime Ete, femme kurde, a été arrêtée en octobre 2001, puis détenue. Nos informations font état d'actes de torture répétés. Sa fille de cinq ans, Sahadet, a été témoin des sévices infligés à sa mère.

**Impunité.** Quant aux procès intentés aux policiers et autres gendarmes, la plupart du temps ils n'aboutissent pas. Ainsi, en novembre 1997, Me S.Ö., à la suite de son arrestation, avait fait l'objet de tortures et de viols répétés par les policiers de Diyarbakir. Le procès de ses tortionnaires s'est ouvert le 30 janvier 2001, mais, menacée par la police ; elle redoutait que des représailles ne soient

exercées contre sa famille si elle témoignait devant le tribunal.

Depuis le 11 septembre 2001, nous dit Yavuz, « la lutte pour les droits humains est devenue de plus en plus difficile, mais aussi plus urgente que jamais ».

Comment sensibiliser la presse française sur les problèmes de la Turquie ? Comment, surtout, aider la Turquie à respecter les traités qu'elle a ratifiés ?

MARCELLE ADDÈS

1. Le 16 mars 2002, le 48<sup>e</sup> prisonnier décédait à la suite d'une grève de la faim, protestant contre l'installation des prisons de type F. Lire *Courrier de l'ACAT*, mars et juin 2001.

## La Turquie et les droits de l'homme

**A**u cours du mois de février, l'ACAT-France a adressé plusieurs fax au ministre de l'Intérieur pour des détentions au secret avec des allégations de torture au siège de la police de Diyarbakir (ou à celui de Bingöl) concernant des Kurdes :

- Cinq personnes, soupçonnées d'être liées au groupe armé d'opposition, le PKK, détenues au secret depuis le 9 janvier 2002 au siège de la police de Bingöl, courent le risque d'être torturées. Cela, d'après les dires de Siraç Budancir, un jeune de quinze ans, arrêté avec eux et libéré le 11 janvier. Celui-ci a déclaré qu'on lui avait bandé les yeux pendant sa détention, qu'on l'avait contraint à rester allongé dans la neige profonde, torturé à l'électricité et

aspergé d'eau sous haute pression (fax du 30 janvier 2002).

- Fehime Ete, femme kurde, interpellée le 21 octobre et inculpée de « soutien à une organisation illégale », pour qui nous sommes déjà intervenus (AU du 6 novembre 2001), a connu plusieurs prisons (Van, Bitlis et les locaux du siège de la gendarmerie de Diyarbakir où elle aurait été torturée). Il est médicalement établi que sa fille de cinq ans, Sahadet, aurait été en état de choc en entendant les cris poussés par sa mère à Diyarbakir (fax du 5 février 2002).

- Parce qu'il est détenu au siège de la police de Diyarbakir depuis le 3 février, nous craignons que Medeni Alpkaya, enseignant kurde, ne subisse des

mauvais traitements. Il a été arrêté pour avoir, comme membre d'un syndicat enseignant, dénoncé la politique de répression actuellement menée par les autorités contre les élèves qui demandent à bénéficier d'un enseignement en langue kurde (fax du 12 février).

- Toujours à Diyarbakir, trois membres du centre de la TIHV, Fondation turque des droits humains ont été l'objet de sanctions étonnantes. Parce que ce centre qui apporte des soins et des possibilités de réadaptation à des victimes de torture a été « ouvert sans autorisation », deux de ses médecins ont été mutés à distance, tandis que Sezgin Tanrikulu, juriste, a fait l'objet d'un procès (fax du 30 janvier 2002).

- Une mini-campagne « Turquie » a consisté, en février, à faire envoyer par le plus grand nombre d'adhérents un appel urgent adressé au Premier ministre français lui demandant de « prendre les mesures nécessaires au sein du Comité des ministres du Conseil de l'Europe afin de surveiller l'exécution de l'arrêt du 17 juillet 2001 de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme [...] », cet arrêt consistant à libérer quatre anciens députés kurdes condamnés à quinze ans d'emprisonnement par la Cour de sûreté de l'État d'Ankara et à leur accorder le droit de révision de leur procès devant un tribunal. La même demande sera faite aux députés français.



### Malgré...

La Turquie pourrait entamer les négociations pour son intégration à l'Union Européenne fin 2002 ou début 2003, à condition d'abolir la peine de mort.

Si le thème n'est pas nouveau, les dates se précisent...

Et ce, malgré la mort lente de 45 prisonniers grévistes de la faim protestant contre leurs conditions d'emprisonnement, malgré la répression accrue à l'égard des représentants du HADEP, malgré la détention depuis huit ans de la députée kurde LEYLA ZANA, malgré l'interdiction confirmée de toute formation "communiste", malgré....



# COMMENT ON DEVIENT SADDAM HUSSEIN

**Itinéraire Au moment où les Etats-Unis envisagent de frapper l'Irak, il est bon de revenir sur l'histoire vraie de celui qui est devenu leur bête noire. Car la question irakienne n'est pas seulement une affaire d'homme.**

**SADDAM HUSSEIN** Abd el-Majid Abd al-Ghafur al-Nasiri al-Takriti est né le 28 avril 1937 dans un petit village des environs de Takrit, à quelque 160 kilomètres au nord de Bagdad, au cœur de l'Irak musulman sunnite (1). Dans le pays, indépendant depuis cinq ans, l'instabilité politique chronique règne, que la jeune armée réprime dans le sang. Déjà. Les officiers sunnites qui la dominent depuis que les Britanniques en ont fait leurs auxiliaires contre les rébellions chiïtes récurrentes, pensent que c'est ainsi que naissent les nations : contre les factions tribales, religieuses et ethniques qui les divisent. Il y a là l'équation politique fondamentale de la politique irakienne. Saddam Hussein la portera à son paroxysme. Comme l'écrit Pierre-Jean Luizard, l'un des meilleurs spécialistes français de l'Irak : « Le régime de Saddam Hussein est l'aboutissement logique du système de domination confessionnelle et ethnique

fondé en 1920 par la puissance mandataire britannique » (2). Entendez la domination de la minorité sunnite... qui épousera bientôt le nationalisme arabe pour asseoir sa légitimité. Quoi de mieux, en effet, que de se réclamer de la vaste nation arabe pour échapper à son statut de faction minoritaire en Irak ? Et le nationalisme, Saddam en a été nourri dès l'enfance. Orphelin de père, le futur leader irakien passe en effet une partie de sa jeunesse chez son oncle maternel Khairallah Tulfah, un officier nationaliste acharné qui lui enseigne la haine

**Le "conseil de famille" avait fixé la sentence : "si quelqu'un trahit, il doit mourir"**

des Anglais (il avait été chassé de l'armée pour avoir participé, en 1941, à la préparation d'un coup d'Etat pronazi). A 20 ans, Saddam adhère donc au parti Baas. Fondé par le chrétien syrien Michel Aflaq en 1947, ce mouvement nationaliste arabe, laïc et révolutionnaire séduit alors les jeunes générations arabes. Le jeune homme est une recrue précieuse. Il y a en lui un militaire frustré de n'avoir jamais pu entrer à l'académie de Bagdad et qui aime visiblement faire le coup de feu, notamment contre les communistes. En 1959, il participe à un commando chargé d'assassiner l'homme fort du pays : le général Kassem, un officier nationaliste irakien qui a renversé la monarchie en juillet 1958 mais s'oppose au nationalisme arabe du Baas...

## L'ENFANT TERRIBLE DE TAKRIT

L'opération est un échec. Saddam fuit en Syrie, puis en Egypte. Il rentre en 1963, quand un coup d'Etat réussit à renverser Kassem avec la participation du Baas. Il intègre alors la direction du parti mais, très vite, celui-ci est de nouveau écarté du pouvoir et Saddam replonge dans la clandestinité. Après deux années passées en prison, il est élu secrétaire général adjoint du parti. Et entreprend de construire l'appareil de sécurité interne. A ce titre, il est l'un des principaux artisans du nouveau coup d'Etat qui, en juillet 1968, porte au pouvoir un groupe d'officiers baasistes. Son heure est venue. Notamment grâce à l'alliance politico-familiale que Saddam a nouée avec son cousin

Hassan al-Bakr, le patron du Baas : Saddam Hussein est bientôt le deuxième personnage de l'Etat. Dans un pays où l'armée est l'inévitable antichambre du pouvoir, ce partenariat était indispensable à la réalisation des ambitions de l'enfant de Takrit...

Takrit et, plus particulièrement, la tribu des Abul Nasir deviennent alors le centre du monde irakien. Au cœur d'un écheveau extrêmement complexe de relations croisées, se mêlent épouse et deuxième épouse, enfants, demi-frères, oncles, cousins et gendres, qui consolident la base sociale du pouvoir. C'est à eux que sont distribués les postes de confiance, et notamment les postes de sécurité.

Au total, la famille fait le pouvoir. Et le pouvoir fait la famille. L'alliance fondamentale entre Saddam Hussein et Hassan al-Bakr n'est-elle pas cimentée par les talents de marieuse de la femme de Saddam, sa cousine Sajida, qui arrange l'union de sa sœur et du fils du général ; deux filles de Bakr épousent par ailleurs deux frères de Sajida... Les affaires du parti deviennent des affaires de famille, et inversement. Au centre, Saddam trône, arbitre, distribue grâces et disgrâces. Difficile de dire, parfois, qui du président ou du chef de famille, gouverne l'Irak. Mais n'a-t-il pas déclaré : « Tout bon irakien est une partie de la grande famille de Saddam Hussein » ?

#### UNE BANALE CULTURE DE LA VIOLENCE

Sunnisme, nationalisme, parentèle. Tels sont donc les trois cercles autour desquels Saddam construit son royaume. Une méthode qui n'a rien de bien original dans un monde arabe où les allégeances traditionnelles servent de fondation au pouvoir. « De ce point de vue, Saddam est très représentatif de la région, souligne Philippe Droz-Vincent, spécialiste du Proche-Orient et professeur à l'IEP de Bordeaux. La plu-

part des régimes sont organisés autour de la *asabiya*, la loyauté à l'égard des groupes de solidarité traditionnels. Pour des raisons historiques, de coup d'Etat en coup d'Etat, dans ces sociétés-mosaïque où l'Etat-nation n'a jamais vraiment réussi sa greffe, les groupes qui ont pris le pouvoir y sont restés en jouant sur l'esprit de famille. C'est vrai

en Irak autour des Takritis, mais aussi en Syrie autour des Alaouites. » La brutalité légendaire du personnage s'inscrit ainsi dans la culture politique du Moyen-Orient où le pouvoir s'obtient et se garde par la force.

Dès 1968, Saddam dirige d'une main de fer la répression contre les opposants. En 1969, il devient ■■■

#### Anniversaire>

Des baassistes tendent dans Bagdad des portraits de Saddam pour fêter ses 62 ans. "Tout bon irakien fait partie de ma famille", disait-il.





#### **Guerre Iran-Irak>**

Bombardements sur la route de Bassora en octobre 1980. L'Irak est sorti vainqueur, mais exsangue. Par la suite, le régime s'est durci à l'extrême.

■ ■ ■ officiellement numéro 2. Il fomenta de faux coups d'Etat, en écrasa de vrais, et élimina au passage tous ceux qui pourraient lui faire de l'ombre. En 1979, il va jusqu'à écarter le vieil Hassan al-Bakr pour devenir numéro 1. Une nouvelle fois, le sang est versé : 500 exécutions ont lieu. « Saddam ne me paraît pas plus brutal que bien d'autres dans la région, rappelle pourtant Philippe Droz-Vincent. Est-on sûr que Hafez al-Assad l'était moins ? En tout cas, la violence est un élément central de la politique irakienne à partir des années 30. L'armée naissante commence par réprimer atrocement les chrétiens assyriens. Les témoignages que nous avons sur le renversement de la monarchie en 1958 sont à peine supportables. Saddam est le pur produit de cette culture politique. » L'itinéraire de Saddam Hussein, aussi haïssable soit-il, n'est donc certainement pas une histoire de fou. C'est bien davantage l'histoire d'une fuite en avant. Tout commence avec la première guerre du Golfe. L'Irak, à la fin des années 70, est un régime particulière-

ment autoritaire. Mais on y vit relativement bien si l'on n'a pas de velléités d'exprimer ses opinions politiques. Car les vaches sont grasses, alors, au bord du Tigre et de l'Euphrate. Tout au long de la décennie, l'opulence pétrolière permet en effet de nourrir l'Etat-providence et de pourvoir au bien-être matériel d'une grande partie de la population. L'armée et l'administration fournissent des emplois (le nombre de fonctionnaires est passé de 20 000 à 580 000 entre 1958 et 1977). L'éducation nationale, obligatoire et gratuite, vante les mérites du chef bien aimé. Et en Occident, certains vantent les mérites de ce « gaullisme arabe ». Quand, en 1980, Saddam Hussein déclare la guerre à l'Iran désorganisé

**La puissance de la répression réside précisément dans sa nature aléatoire**

par sa révolution, notamment parce qu'il craint l'effet de contagion sur les chiites irakiens, il est convaincu d'obtenir une victoire rapide. Il se trompe. La guerre dure huit ans ; l'Irak en sort vainqueur, mais son économie est exsangue, le pays a contracté 80 milliards de dollars de dette ; et le régime irakien s'est considérablement durci. La société s'est militarisée. Le pouvoir est centralisé à l'extrême. Sur fond de guerre, les islamistes, les communistes, les Kurdes sont sauvagement réprimés. Le Baas n'échappe pas aux purges : 500 de ses membres sont exécutés entre 1979 et 1982 ; et le parti subit une nouvelle répression massive après la fin du conflit ; la hiérarchie militaire est soumise au même sort entre 1989 et 1990. Le culte de la personnalité de Saddam ne connaît plus de limite. La machine infernale est en marche. Elle ne s'arrêtera plus. Car bientôt, Saddam envahit le Koweït. Avec l'idée que ce fric-frac pétrolier lui permettra de payer la facture de la guerre Iran-Irak. Mal lui en prend. Défait, il doit subir un embargo inter-

national qui laisse l'économie irakienne en lambeaux. Aujourd'hui, les entreprises publiques tournent au tiers de leurs capacités, les magasins d'Etat sont vides, la gratuité de la santé et de l'éducation ont disparu, chaque service administratif a un prix qu'il faut négocier. Le pacte social irakien est rompu. Le roi, désormais, est nu.

Dans une telle situation, la base du pouvoir se réduit comme peau de chagrin. Saddam concentre tous les pouvoirs et dirige en personne le gouvernement. Son cabinet cannibalise toutes les institutions. Il concentre ce qu'il reste de richesses et alloue notamment les ressources de la contrebande pétrolière (2 millions de dollars par jour). La brutalité et l'arbitraire du régime sont décuplés. Au lendemain de la guerre du Golfe, 76 officiers supérieurs sont exécutés. La rébellion chiite de 1991 est réprimée féroce. La répression prend aussi un tournant moral. On mutile les corps des déserteurs, on exécute en public certains « spéculateurs », on expose les têtes de femmes accusées de prostitution devant leur maison... Comme le remarquait récemment l'universitaire Hamit Bozarslan, « la force de cette coercition, organisée sous forme de campagnes de purification morale, réside précisément dans sa nature aléatoire, dans le fait que le prince est capable de la mettre à exécution, quand et où il la juge nécessaire ».

Quand à la « maison » Saddam, elle devient – en partie sous l'effet de la raréfaction des ressources financières à se partager – le lieu d'affrontements sans fin qui tournent à la tragédie shakespearienne. En 1995, les deux gendres de Saddam, Hussein Kamel et Saddam Kamel fuient avec femmes et enfants en Jordanie et demandent l'asile politique. Quelques mois plus tard, convaincus de rentrer à Bagdad et assurés du pardon de Saddam, ils

## Ne régnant guère que sur Bagdad, le régime encourage la tribalisation de la société

sont assassinés par les membres de la tribu. Un « conseil de famille » réuni à Takrit autour d'une centaine de personnes avait émis la sentence : « Si quelqu'un trahit le régime, il doit être mis à mort. » Aujourd'hui, l'étau s'est encore resserré, et la principale ligne de fracture semble passer entre les deux fils du patriarche : Uday et Qusay, le cadet qui cumule de plus en plus de pouvoirs et a visiblement la faveur de son père. L'écran idéologique, qui hier encore, pouvait encore colorer de « nationalisme », de « laïcité » et de « socialisme » la nature du régime, a volé en éclats. « Ce pouvoir ne représente plus ni le parti Baas, officiellement au pouvoir, ni les auteurs du coup d'Etat de 1968, presque tous éliminés, ni l'armée dont tout l'encadrement a été décapité, mais le cercle familial du président irakien, élargi aux oncles, cousins, gendres et demi-frères, accuse Pierre-Jean Luizard. Aucun irakien n'est dupe aujourd'hui de la véritable nature du régime, dont la base ne diffère finalement pas de celle de l'Arabie Saoudite... Ici les Takritis, là les Saoud. »

### LE MAUVAIS CALCUL DE GEORGE BUSH

Dans ces conditions, le régime semble avoir fait de la fuite en avant sa méthode de survie. « L'escalade permet à Saddam de se maintenir à moindre frais. L'embargo offre une justification à toutes les impasses du régime, souligne Philippe Droz-Vincent. C'est un jeu pervers. »

Intervenir en Irak pour renverser Saddam, comme semble l'envisager de

plus en plus clairement l'équipe Bush peut-il suffire à sortir du piège irakien ? Pas sûr. Car le pouvoir a remodelé l'Irak à son image. C'est l'ensemble de la société qui parie aujourd'hui en Irak sur les solidarités familiales et tribales. Ne régnant plus guère que sur la capitale – les Irakiens ont surnommé Saddam Hussein le maire de Bagdad – le régime, qui s'est accommodé de l'autonomie de facto du Kurdistan et de la guérilla de faible intensité dans le Sud chiite, s'est résolu à encourager la tribalisation de la société. Supprimée dans les années 70, la mention du nasab (lignage, lieu d'origine) dans les noms patronymiques a été rétablie. Et puis, face au tarissement de ses ressources, le pouvoir voit dans les chefs locaux d'excellents auxiliaires de police. Quant aux Irakiens, ils trouvent dans la tribu une solution aux défaillances de l'Etat. La pratique de l'arbitrage tribal se généralise ainsi pour remplacer un appareil judiciaire corrompu et inefficace. Comme l'écrit Pierre-Jean Luizard, « il y avait un pays qui s'appelait l'Irak. Il semble aujourd'hui ne plus y avoir que des clans, des familles et des tribus ennemies ».

Renverser Saddam ne résoudra pas le problème, car c'est la nation qu'il faudrait reconstruire. En focalisant son analyse du dossier irakien sur la personnalité de Saddam Hussein, psychopathe mégalomane dont la disparition pure et simple aurait pour son pays valeur de thérapie, l'administration Bush est dans l'impasse. Par-delà la personnalité de Saddam, triste caricature du despote oriental, c'est l'essence même du contrat politique sur lequel s'est construit l'Etat irakien qui est génératrice de violence. ■

SAMIRNE TOLOFTI

(1) Les sunnites sont alors légèrement minoritaires face aux chiites. Aujourd'hui, l'Irak compte environ 65 % de chiites.

(2) Voir la *Revue d'études du monde musulman et méditerranéen*, n° 81-82, 1996.

**24 heures**  
Vendredi  
26 avril 2002

**IRAK ■ MENACES D'UNE ATTAQUE AMÉRICAINE**

# Les Kurdes craignent de tout perdre

Après la guerre du Golfe, les Kurdes d'Irak ont réussi à reconstruire leur région détruite par l'armée de Saddam Hussein. Non reconnus mais semi-indépendants dans les faits, ils redoutent les conséquences d'une nouvelle attaque sur Bagdad.



A Sulaimaniya, une des deux «capitales» du Kurdistan d'Irak, l'Université a rouvert ses portes.

Keystone-a

## Les angosSES du Kurdistan irakien



### REPORTAGE AU KURDISTAN IRAKIEN IHSAN KURT / INFOSUD

**P**our pénétrer au Kurdistan d'Irak, on doit traverser la frontière iranienne, surveillée par des douaniers et des soldats. Comme dans un Etat souverain. A l'intérieur du pays, le drapeau kurde (celui de la République de Mahabad, seul Etat kurde indépendant dans l'histoire entre 1946 et 1947) flotte sur les bâtiments officiels. Aux frontières pourtant, seuls les drapeaux des deux principaux partis politiques — PDK (Parti démocratique du Kurdistan) et UPK (Union patriotique du Kurdistan) — sont visibles pour ne pas provoquer les pays voisins.

Le Kurdistan entretient une semi-indépendance informelle. En application de la résolution

986 des Nations Unies, plus connue sous le nom de «Pétrole contre nourriture», 13% des recettes pétrolières du régime de Saddam Hussein vont dans les caisses kurdes. Une manne bienvenue pour reconstruire et développer une région largement détruite par l'armée irakienne entre 1987 et 1991.

#### Parapluie militaire

«Pour le moment, nous sommes protégés par les Etats-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne, une protection qui nous maintient juste en vie», explique un dirigeant basé à Sulaimaniya, une des deux «capitales» du Kurdistan d'Irak. Placés sous un parapluie militaire occidental, les Kurdes vivent en marge des règles internationales. Sous la contrainte, Bagdad les laisse faire. Les pays voisins — l'Iran, la Turquie et la Syrie — refu-

sent de les reconnaître, mais entretiennent des relations politiques et commerciales.

«Nous ne voulons pas l'indépendance, mais un Irak fédéral et démocratique», déclare Adnan Mufti, vice-premier ministre du gouvernement de Su-

laimaniya, qui contrôle le sud de la région. «Nous ne voulons pas qu'une intervention américaine détruise tout ce que nous avons créé.» En effet, à chaque attaque étrangère, Saddam Hussein se retourne contre les Kurdes ou les chiites. En septembre 1998, le PDK et l'UPK ont signé l'accord de paix de Washington: une frontière divise en deux la région avec un engagement de non-agression. Quatre ans après cet accord, à la mi-avril, les deux leaders se sont retrouvés à Washington pour préparer une conférence

en Europe. Elle vient d'avoir lieu secrètement à Berlin, comme deuxième phase de l'accord de Washington.

#### Une pacification interne

Depuis 1996, les deux partis ont largement aplani leurs différends. Les deux gouvernements régionaux ont des relations avec leurs voisins. Jalal Talabani, le leader de l'UPK, a un lien vital avec l'Iran. Et Masoud Barzani (PDK) est pour l'instant en bons termes avec la Syrie et l'Irak. Talabani s'est rapproché récemment de la Turquie, qui préférerait auparavant Barzani. En outre, les taxes sur le pétrole irakien exporté par camion vers la Turquie sont encaissées par le gouvernement de Barzani. Actuellement, Arbil et Duhok, les deux principales villes du nord, s'éclairent grâce à l'électricité irakienne.

De très nombreuses ONG, scandinaves et britanniques principalement, reconstruisent et déminent. Les routes principales et les ponts sont terminés. Des centraux téléphoniques numériques fonctionnent depuis

deux ans. On atteint le Kurdistan en composant le 44, l'indicatif international de la Grande-Bretagne. Après celles de Sulaimaniya et d'Arbil, l'Université de Duhok a ouvert ses portes il y a trois ans.

#### Marché libre

Ici, on est loin des visions apocalyptiques d'un pays en guerre. Les vitrines des villes kurdes regorgent de produits occidentaux qui entrent via la Turquie: voitures de luxe, produits de beauté, vêtements griffés. Les industries du ciment, du tabac et du textile tournent bien. Tandis que pétrole, ciment et marbre s'exportent vers les pays voisins. Les gouvernements kurdes ont aidé à la création de plusieurs banques, mais elles sont encore privées de relations avec l'étranger. Le gouvernement d'Arbil a un compte

à l'UBS pour ses besoins extérieurs, tandis que celui de Sulaimaniya travaille avec des établissements de Dubaï. Au Kurdistan d'Irak, on utilise encore l'ancien dinar irakien, dont

les coupures sont imprimées en Suisse.

#### L'intervention américaine: oui mais...

Depuis le début de l'année, trois délégations américaines sont arrivées au Kurdistan. La dernière, début avril, a rencontré presque tous les partis politiques. «Washington voulait intervenir en juillet, mais le conflit israélo-palestinien l'a obligé à repousser cette décision», explique Younan Hozaya, le représentant du Mouvement démocratique des Assyriens (chrétiens orthodoxes) et ministre à Arbil, qui a rencontré les émissaires américains.

«Nous sommes pour le départ de Saddam Hussein. Quant à son remplaçant, il faut qu'on décide avec les Etats-Unis», estime, quant à lui, Cewher Namik Salim, membre du bureau politique du PDK. L'essentiel est de ne pas perdre l'acquis de ces onze dernières années. □

## Le jeu dangereux d'un groupuscule islamiste

**JIHAD** Soran Hassan Faton, alias mollah Krekar, a déclaré la guerre sainte à tous les partis politiques kurdes non islamistes

Soran Hassan Faton incarne la menace islamiste au Kurdistan. Plus connu sous le nom de mollah Krekar, il est député au Parlement d'Arbil en 1991. Par la suite, il reproche au PDK d'être laïc et pro-américain. En 1992, cet ancien réfugié en Norvège, dont il a la nationalité, gagne l'Afghanistan. Formé par les talibans, il revient en 2001 et crée Jund Al-Islam («Les soldats de l'islam»). «Il a déclaré le jihad à tous les partis politiques kurdes non islamistes en les accusant d'être pro-améri-

cains et pro-Israéliens», explique Assos Hardi, l'éditeur de l'hebdomadaire *Hewlati* à Sulaimaniya, qui l'a rencontré récemment.

En juillet dernier, ce groupuscule a tué François Hariri, ministre à Arbil. Le 23 septembre, il éliminait 43 soldats de l'UPK près d'Halabja, à la frontière iranienne. Suite à cette attaque, l'UPK a déclaré la guerre à ce mouvement qu'il tolérait auparavant. La ville d'Halabja était presque complètement tombée sous son contrôle. «Il y a six mois, aucune

femme ne pouvait sortir sans voile. Ils avaient interdit la musique et les télé», dit Mahmoud Schengawi, le responsable de l'UPK à Halabja. Le mouvement islamiste s'est maintenant rebaptisé Ansar-i-Islam («La victoire»). Le 4 avril, il a attaqué le domicile du premier ministre Behram Saleh à Sulaimaniya, tuant sept personnes. Schengawi affirme que le groupe est toléré par l'Iran. «Car Téhéran veut toujours avoir des cartes à jouer contre nous.» I. K. / Infosud



Soran Hassan Faton, alias mollah Krekar, incarne la menace islamiste au Kurdistan. Infosud



## Tribune

# Faut-il faire la guerre à l'Irak ?

● Par le général Michel Roquejeoffre\*

Dans son discours sur l'état de l'Union, le président George Bush a rangé l'Irak dans les pays de « l'axe du mal » et a demandé de « partir en croisade » contre les régimes les plus dangereux au monde, qui « menacent [les Américains] avec les armes les plus destructrices au monde ». Et certains de renchérir en pressant le président des Etats-Unis d'« achever ce que son père avait commencé pendant la guerre du Golfe », sous-entendant qu'en 1991 les forces alliées auraient dû poursuivre leur offensive jusqu'à Bagdad pour éliminer Saddam Hussein.

Pourquoi donc être resté au sud de l'Euphrate ? La réponse a été déjà donnée. La question étant récurrente, il faut de nouveau y répondre. Notre mission, prescrite par l'ONU, était d'obtenir par la force le retrait des troupes irakiennes du Koweït. Ce fut chose faite et bien faite. La France avait eu raison de s'engager ainsi pour la défense du droit international. Simplement, il aurait été difficile sinon impossible de faire voter par l'ONU une autre résolution nous permettant de poursuivre vers Bagdad.

Supposons cependant que nous ayons obtenu ce feu vert. Je rappelle qu'au moment de l'arrêt des hostilités Français et Américains uniquement étaient stationnés en Irak. Les coalisés arabes n'avaient jamais voulu y pénétrer, et il était hors de question de les entraîner dans une marche guerrière contre le peuple frère irakien. Alors seuls les Occidentaux de l'Alliance auraient appliqué cette résolution, s'engageant dans une opération vite taxée de « coloniale ».

Supposons encore que, malgré ce qui vient d'être dit, les Occidentaux se soient lancés dans cette aventure. Après des combats de loin plus meurtriers que pendant Desert Storm, face en particulier à une garde républicaine restée sagement au nord de l'Euphrate, nous aurions difficilement atteint Bagdad, d'où Saddam Hussein aurait fui depuis longtemps, pour nous retrouver vite en proie à une guérilla urbaine dans un pays où



■ Pour mettre un terme aux souffrances du peuple irakien, des frappes aériennes brutales ne sont peut-être pas la meilleure solution, estime l'ancien commandant des forces françaises pendant la guerre du Golfe. Ne faudrait-il pas plutôt prendre le risque de lever l'embargo contre Bagdad en exigeant en contrepartie l'application rigoureuse des résolutions de l'ONU par le régime de Saddam Hussein ? Quitte à recourir à la guerre si, une fois encore, la diplomatie échouait...

aucune opposition interne n'était susceptible de former un gouvernement.

J'ajoute qu'à l'époque la doctrine du « zéro mort » naissant de cette victoire sur les Irakiens n'incitait nullement les Américains à poursuivre l'offensive et qu'une opération

uniquement aérienne, de type Kosovo, n'était pas techniquement concevable. J'émetts d'ailleurs de sérieux doutes sur le bien-fondé et l'efficacité universelle de cette doctrine. Il était certainement sage et réaliste de rester là où le cessez-le-feu nous avait arrêtés.

Qu'en est-il plus de dix ans après ? Saddam Hussein est toujours présent, considéré par sa population comme une divinité intouchable mais aussi comme un monstre qui fait peur. Cette population, première victime d'un embargo, vit une véritable tragédie humanitaire : les conditions de vie et l'état sanitaire ont régressé de cinquante ans. Bagdad multiplie les fraudes pour accroître ses revenus financiers, la contrebande, le marché parallèle, la corruption enrichissent les riches et paupérisent encore davantage les pauvres. Le Koweït attend toujours des nouvelles de ses quelque 600 disparus ou prisonniers [l'équivalent de 60 000 personnes à l'échelle de la population française], et la fabrication d'armes de destruction massive a peut-être repris.

Faut-il pour autant, sous le prétexte justifié d'éradiquer le terrorisme, suivre le démocrate Joseph Lieberman, pour qui « il est impératif d'éliminer la menace irakienne et le plus tôt sera le mieux », certainement par des frappes aériennes brutales, à très haute altitude, en ignorant délibérément le nombre de victimes civiles qui en résulteraient ? Ne faudrait-il pas plutôt prendre le risque – et il existe – de lever a priori l'embargo, « entreprise sauvage à l'origine de la mort de centaines de victimes » (Jean-Pierre Chevènement), pour mettre un terme aux souffrances du peuple irakien ? Et dans le prolongement de cette décision courageuse, exiger que le régime de Bagdad applique les résolutions du Conseil de Sécurité. C'est le rôle de la diplomatie. Et si par malheur – une fois encore dans cette région – la diplomatie échouait, alors, mais alors seulement, il faudrait se résoudre à faire la guerre.

Mais avant d'en arriver à cette solution extrême, la France s'honorerait, au nom de la solidarité humaine, d'être l'instigatrice au sein de l'Europe de cette action courageuse de diplomatie. N'oublions pas que « la guerre n'est jamais que la diplomatie poursuivie par d'autres moyens lorsque cette dernière a échoué » (Clausewitz).

M. R.

(\*) Ancien commandant des forces françaises pendant la guerre du Golfe, aujourd'hui cadre de réserve.



LIVRES

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Un essai de Jean Bottéro

# Dans les cuisines de Babylone

● Par Jean-Pierre Vernant\*

En décryptant trois tablettes cunéiformes, l'auteur de « la Plus Vieille Cuisine du monde » a découvert d'antiques recettes. Il en a tiré, sur la gastronomie et la civilisation mésopotamiennes, un ouvrage merveilleux

**D**is-moi ce que tu manges et je te dirai qui tu es : de « la Plus Vieille Religion », publiée en 1998, à « la Plus Vieille Cuisine du monde », qui vient de paraître, on trouve chez Jean Bottéro la même érudition sans faille, la même rigueur philosophique associées pour notre plus grand plaisir à la clarté du style et à la justesse de la pensée. La cuisine que Bottéro nous sert aujourd'hui comble notre appétit de savoir dans un domaine dont on ignorait à peu près tout il n'y a pas si longtemps et dont, au début de son livre, il résume à grands traits l'histoire et la chronologie. Passionné, émouvant par l'affection un peu nostalgique que l'auteur porte à ceux dont il parle, ce livre savant nous touche et nous réjouit en même temps qu'il nous informe et nous fait réfléchir.

Contrairement à nos monothéismes, la religion polythéiste des hommes d'autrefois, tout entière immergée dans les actes quotidiens de la vie collective, impose sa présence et sa marque jusqu'au cœur de la cuisine. Le philosophe Héraclite, face à des visiteurs n'osant pénétrer chez lui par une porte donnant directement sur le fournil, les aurait, dit-on, invités à entrer par ces mots que les Babyloniens n'auraient sûrement pas recusés : « *Dans la cuisine aussi il y a les dieux.* » C'est que le manger et le boire, tels que la cuisine les implique, sont tout autre chose que se nourrir et se désaltérer, comme l'exige la nature. Ils ont une dimension proprement culturelle ; ils font corps, dans toutes les sociétés, avec les autres éléments qui, pour chacun de nous, établissent notre statut d'être humain civilisé. Pour les Grecs, les hommes se définissent par opposition aux bêtes d'une part, aux dieux de l'autre, comme ceux qui « *mangent le pain et boivent le vin* » ; de la même façon,

pour les Mésopotamiens, manger le pain, boire la bière sont les marques de la condition humaine.

Le mythe de Gilgamesh, dont Bottéro a si bien traité naguère, atteste que, pour les Babyloniens, le chemin de la civilité passe nécessairement par la cuisine. Enkidu, le jeune garçon sauvage, primitif et fruste, en route vers la ville d'Uruk pour y rencontrer Gilgamesh, doit auparavant abandonner sa façon habituelle de se

nourrir qui consiste à téter le lait des bêtes brutes dont il partage l'existence. Il lui faut goûter au repas – pain et bière – que des bergers lui offrent de consommer avec eux. Ce cap franchi, il n'est plus, quand il satisfait sa faim, rassasié comme un animal. Son visage s'éclaire, illuminé du bien-être que procure un vrai repas, préparé avec goût et pris en commun à la table des hommes.

Mais comment repérer, dans le détail des pratiques culinaires, les secrets du manger et du boire mésopotamiens dont des millénaires nous séparent ? La tâche eût été impossible sans la découverte, dans les archives de la Babylonian Collection conservée à l'université de Yale, de trois tablettes cunéiformes, datant d'environ 1600 avant J.-C. et rapportant, en 350 lignes, à la façon d'un manuel, une quarantaine de recettes de cuisine. Bottéro ne se contente pas de nous en livrer le texte traduit par ses soins et éclairé d'un commentaire savant. Sa longue fréquentation des écrits cunéiformes – il y a environ 500 000 tablettes exhumées – lui permet de situer ces recettes dans un cadre plus vaste, d'en suivre les prolongements, d'en marquer les implications pour dresser, à partir d'elles et au-delà d'elles, un tableau complet de ce que représente le repas dans la vie quotidienne des Mésopotamiens, dans leur société à ses divers étages, dans leurs goûts, leur religion, leur vision du monde et d'eux-mêmes. Au fil des pages qui décrivent de façon concrète et vivante tout ce qu'on peut savoir des locaux, du matériel, du feu, des foyers, du fourneau, du maître queux, de ses aides et de ses apprentis,

des modes de cuisson, des végétaux, animaux et poissons consommés, des assaisonnements, épices, condiments sélectionnés, l'orientaliste érudit, l'anthropologue et le gourmet parlent d'une seule voix.

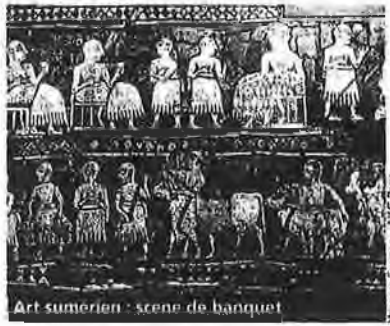
A la base de ce régime alimentaire s'impose



**Bas-relief du palais d'Assurbanipal à Ninive : guerriers prenant leur repas au campement.**

la prééminence des céréales sous toutes leurs formes, bouillies, galettes, pain, fermenté ou non. A cette omniprésence céréalière répond, dans le domaine de la boisson, la souveraineté de la bière, face au vin et au lait marginalisé. La cuisson revêt comme dans la plupart des civilisations deux formes contrastées, le bouilli et le rôti. Mais les Mésopotamiens semblent avoir, dans le cas de la nourriture humaine, utilisé presque exclusivement le bouillon et donné au contraire aux dieux des mets directement rôtis au feu. Cet écart est d'autant plus étonnant qu'en principe les dieux ne mangent pas autrement que les hommes. Leur table est chaque jour approvisionnée de victuailles qui ne diffèrent des nôtres que par leur quantité incroyable, mais strictement répertoriée dans les archives comptables. Quelques chiffres donnent une idée du montant des offrandes journalières qu'exige le service d'un groupe de quatre divinités : 486 litres de farine d'orge et 162 litres de farine d'épeautre, pour en cuire 243 galettes de pain. 450 litres de dattes, figues et raisins ; 18 moutons, un grand bœuf et un veau de lait. Que deviennent ces montagnes de victuailles déposées à l'intérieur des temples ? Elle n'étaient certainement pas perdues pour tout le monde. Le clergé, les servants du temple devaient récupérer cette manne nourricière, la redistribuer autour d'eux pour en faire bénéficier les humains.

Dans le sacrifice grec, toutes les chairs comestibles de l'animal immolé, rôties ou bouillies, reviennent aux humains pour leur



Né en 1914 à Vallauris, **Jean Bottéro** entre à 11 ans au petit séminaire de Nice, puis chez les Dominicains, à l'abbaye de Saint-Maximin en Provence. Il prend l'habit en 1932, apprend l'hébreu et l'allemand, s'initie à l'assyriologie et apprend l'akkadien. Il entre au CNRS, et effectue un premier voyage en Irak en 1952, sur les terres de l'ancienne Mésopotamie. Professeur à l'Ecole pratique des Hautes Etudes, il a publié de nombreux ouvrages, parmi lesquels « Naissance de Dieu » (1986), « Mésopotamie, la raison, l'écriture et les dieux » (1987) ou « la Plus Belle Histoire de Dieu » (1998).

repas. Que reste-t-il de la bête pour les dieux ? Les os longs, dénudés, immangeables et imputrescibles, que le feu réduit en cendres et dont seule la fumée montant de l'autel parvient jusqu'au séjour céleste des divinités. Le régime alimentaire grec souligne ainsi fortement la frontière infranchissable entre les *brotoi*, les

mortels (les humains) et les *ambrotoi*, les non-mortels (les dieux). Les dieux n'ont pas besoin de manger. Il leur suffit, dans le rituel du sacrifice, de humer les odeurs et on se les représente, dans le mythe, se régaland sur l'Olympe non de pain et de vin mais d'ambrosie et de nectar, nourriture et boisson d'immortalité. L'alimentation des hommes est faite de la viande d'une bête morte et de végétaux voués à terme au pourrissement. C'est pourquoi la vie humaine, celle qui circule dans le corps avec le sang et les humeurs, celle que la nourriture reconstitue pour un temps limité, apparaît marquée du sceau de la mortalité.

Qu'en est-il dans le cas des Mésopotamiens ? Si hommes et dieux partagent le même régime alimentaire, si la nourriture divine ne diffère de l'humaine que par la quantité absorbée, d'où vient que les uns meurent quand les autres jouissent d'une existence permanente ? Bottéro pose le problème ; il note qu'à défaut d'avoir été nettement formulée cette interrogation trouve dans la légende du sage Adapa et dans l'échec final de sa quête pour s'approprier la Nourriture et la Boisson de Vie, sinon la vraie réponse, du moins l'ébauche d'une solution. Au terme du livre, l'envie vous prend en tout cas de crier au public, comme Bottéro le fait chez lui à ses invités : à table, vite, le repas est servi !

J.-P. V.  
« La Plus Vieille Cuisine du monde », par Jean Bottéro, Editions Louis Audibert, 208 p., 22,80 €.  
(\*) Historien. Dernier livre paru : « Eve et Pandora », Gallimard.