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THE SUCCESS OF PRESIDENT BARZANI'S DIPLOMATIC TOUR, DEVOTED TO THE RECOGNITION OF FEDERATED KURDISTAN

NO sooner had the Constitution establishing federalism in Iraq been adopted than the Kurdish President, Massud Barzani undertook a diplomatic tour of the United States and Europe. He first went to Washington in response to an official invitation from the US President, who wanted to thank him for

the crucial role he had played in the process of drafting and adopting the Iraqi Constitution, in particular by acting as mediator between the Sunni and Shiite Arabs. On 25 October he was warmly welcomed at the White House by George Bush. Massud Barzani's arrival at the White House in traditional Kurdish dress and George Bush's

use of the word "President" when addressing him and the use of the Kurdish language aroused many comments. The Kurds, regardless of their leanings, were delighted at this diplomatic recognition of Kurdistan, of its language and of its President, while some saw there a sign that Washington was giving its blessing to the creation of a separate Kurdish entity in Iraq. However, the US President wanted to sound reassuring about the unity of an Iraq shared between Kurds,

Sunni and Shiite Arabs by adding that the Constitution, approved on 15 October and the elections, planned for December, would allow everyone to "make their voices heard on the country's future". For his part, Mr. Barzani expressed, to President Bush, his "sympathy" for the families of American soldiers killed in combat in Iraq for "liberating other peoples". In the course of his four-day visit to Washington, Mr. Barzani had a number of other high level meetings with Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defence Ronald Rumsfeld. The American, Kurdish and Near Eastern media gave considerable coverage to this highly symbolic visit.

The Turkish press acted as a sounding board of the Ankara authorities' fears. In an editorial in *Turkish Daily News* headlined "A Peshmerga in the White House" Yusuf Kanli considered that this the point is "a demonstration of the strong political determination of the United States to favour Kurdish aspirations to have their own State". Washington is "rewarding" the Kurdish leaders for their "loyalty" and their "cooperation" in the war in Iraq. The United States, Yusuf Kanli regrets, has given "Presidential treatment" to an the Iraqi Kurdish leader "who has unceasingly repeated that he dreamt of creating and independent Kurdish State". He stressed that "Kurdish flags have replaced the Iraqi flag even at the Habur border post" with Turkey, that Barzani's administration seems "determined not to authorise the Iraqi flag to fly in the region under Kurdish control". An the editorial writer recalled, in a few words,

the very uncomfortable position of Ankara in this case: *"Still trying to find a real Iraqi policy, Turkey is trying to show its solidarity with the United States and, at the same time, to keep up an image of independence to attack the Americano-sceptics in Europe, the Arab world and others; but a Turkey that hopes, nevertheless that the adoption of the new Constitution would 'open the way' for all the communities in Iraq, and that the future Parliament will be a reflection of all the components of the country. Authorities in Ankara, finally, who warn that their patience is exhausted so leaving it to be understood that they could resort to unilateral action against the terrorists in Northern Iraq"*.

The famous columnist Mehmet Ali Birand agrees, in his column in the same paper, that the Bush-Barzani meeting "marks the beginning of a new historic process". "A new page has opened in the history of the Kurdish problem. The most important thing, at present, is to find out what Turkey is going to write on this new page", stresses Mr. Birand.

After this very notable visit to Washington, President Barzani was welcomed to 10 Downing Street on 31 October by Tony Blair. The latter congratulated Mr. Barzani, remarking that it is easier to work in peace and live in Kurdistan, and that the region was in advance on the socio-economic level. It also was an example to the whole region, adding that "it is a demonstration of what the region could be like in peace". President Barzani also met the British Defence Minister before flying off to Germany where he had a long meeting with Mrs. Angela

Merkel. The latter assured Mr. Barzani of her country's support for the process of democratisation in Iraq and for the development of Kurdistan.

On 14 November it was Pope Benedict XVI who received the President of Kurdistan, Massud Barzani, in audience, even as he had received, on 10 November, the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani. Mr. Barzani presented the pope with a tapestry showing Jesus Christ, which had been specially woven in Kurdish workshops. The Pope thanked him and expressed the Vatican's gratitude at the Kurdistan authorities' exemplary treatment of the Christian minorities. The day before, President Barzani had met the Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi.

At the end of this fruitful journey, President Barzani's delegation, which included the Kurdistan Prime Minister as well as the Iraqi Minister of planning, Berhem Salih, and a member of the leadership of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) returned to the Kurdish capital, Irbil. There it reported back to the Kurdish Parliament and to the Kurdish political parties as a whole the results of this tour, described as historic by the Kurdish media.

Following this visit, the United States, Great Britain, and Italy have decided to open consulates in the Kurdish capital, Irbil, "as soon as possible". They will probably be followed by Sweden, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, South Korea and Russia,

Moreover, the Senegalese President sent a special envoy to Kurdistan to

invite President Barzani to Senegal with a view to establishing diplomatic and trade relations between the two countries.

Senegal is the first country in Africa to thus commit itself to opening diplomatic relations with Kurdistan.

JALAL TALABANI IN IRAN: THE FIRST VISIT BY AN IRAQI PRESIDENT IN FORTY YEARS

THE Iraqi President is devoting himself to taking up the threads of dialogue with neighbouring countries and obtaining their support for the stabilisation of the situation in Iraq. He undertook a three-day visit to Iran, where he was met by his opposite number there, Mahmud Ahmadinjad, who assured him that Tehran supported the democratisation process in Iraq. *"An independent, developed people's Iraq would be the best friend of the Iranian nation. We totally support the political process that Iraqis experiencing and which will guarantee its territorial integrity, its independence and its progress"*, declared the Iranian President. *"I am certain that the Iranian party will provide us with all the help needed to eradicate the terrorism"* striking at Iraq, indicated Mr. Talabani following his meeting with Mr. Ahmadinjad. *"We discussed the policy of economic and security cooperation"*, stressed the Iraqi Head of State, mentioning exchanges of gas and oil, a possible rail link between Basra, in the South of Iraq and Khorramshar in Iraq as well as the easing of travel for Iranian pilgrims to the holy sites in Iraq. Iran, the second greatest oil producer in OPEC *"is prepared to make its experience in the fields of oil, gas petrochemicals and electricity available to Iraq"* Mr.

Ahmedinjad had replied when greeting Mr. Talabani.

The next day, Jalal Talabani met Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Guide of Iraq, who urged the Iraqi President to seek to obtain a timetable for the withdrawal of American troops from Iraq, stating that the American presence harmed the country. Following his meeting with his Iranian equivalent, President Talabani stated that he had received a commitment that Iran would help put an end to the terrorism striking his country. The Iraqi President, who was accompanied by the Iraqi Ministers of Electricity and of Planning, also met several other Iranian leaders and explained that his visit was aimed at strengthening political and commercial relations between the two neighbours. Accompanied by his Security advisor, Muaffak al Rubai, the Iraqi President declared that he was certain of securing Iran's cooperation in the area of anti-terrorist struggle.

However, questions of security affecting Iraq remain a sensitive subject in relations between the two countries. Several Iraqi leaders, backed in this by the United States and Britain, accuse Teheran of interference in Iraqi affairs, in favour of those laying bombs. In 21

November, while visiting Moscow, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Hoshyar Zebari, thus *"asked Russia (...) to use its authority to help us find an agreement with certain of our neighbours to settle a series of questions connected with security"*.

Elected in April, Jalal Talabani is the first Iraqi Head of State to make an official visit to Iraq since that of Abdel Rahman Aref, President of Iraq between 1966 and 1968. The Iraqi Prime Minister, Ibrahim Jaafari, had visited Iran in July. Mr. Ahmadinjad's predecessor at that time, Mohammad Khatami, had then described the visit as *"a turning point in the historic relations of the two countries"*, which should make it possible *"to dress the wounds and repair the damage caused by Saddam to their mutual cooperation"*. He was referring to the war between Iraq and Iraq between 1980 and 1988, which had caused about a million deaths, according to a generally admitted estimate. Relations between the two countries have markedly improved since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, and even more so since the success of the Kurdish and Shiite lists in the January 2005 general elections in Iraq, since several of the present Iraqi leaders have spent several years of exile in Iran.

Furthermore the Iraqi Head of State was in Vienna on 14 November, where he opened a conference on *"Islam in a Plural world"*, which was attended, in particular, by his Afghan opposite number Hamid Karzai. Along with the General Secretary of the Islamic Conference Organisation, Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, a Turk, several special-

ists of inter-religious dialogue between Christians and Moslems, took part in the conference. The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew I, the spiritual head of Orthodox Christianity, the Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, the American Rabbi Arthur Schneier and the

Ministers of religious affairs of Egypt, Mahmud Zakzuk and of Morocco, Ahmed Tawfiq, were also present. Before the start of the conference, Mr. Talabani visited the Catholic monastery of Heiligenkreutz, to the South of Vienna, accompanied by his wife, Hero.

ideology can justify these murders", he declared.

Kofi Annan's visit follows on an independent enquiry led by Paul Volcker on the management of the *Oil for Food* programme, which had allowed Saddam Hussein's Iraq to buy essential goods. The report accuses over 2.200 firms and influential political public figures throughout the world of having benefited from the 1.8 billion dollars that the Iraqi regime had embezzled in the context of the programme, aimed at counter-balancing the effects of the embargo imposed after the first Gulf War in 1991.

Renault VI, Peugeot and nearly 180 firms established in France are accused by the Volcker Commission of having, knowingly or not, paid tens of millions of dollars in backhanders to the Saddam Hussein regime, in violation of the international embargo on Iraq prior to the war in 2003. According to documents secured by the investigators into the *Oil for Food* programme, the Renault VI (later renamed Renault Trucks and now a Volvo subsidiary) is said to have paid over 6.5 million dollars in backhanders. The car builder Peugeot, for its part is suspected of having illegally paid nearly 7 million dollars.

Following the conclusions of this report, the Indian Foreign Minister, Natwar Singh, accused of having benefited from the Oil for Food swindle, lost his portfolio. Natwar Singh and the Congress party, in office at the time, are cited as "*non-contractual beneficiaries*". An Indian Commission, chaired by R.S. Pathak, a former Indian and Inter-

KOFI ANNAN MAKES HIS FIRST VISIT TO IRAQ SINCE SADDAM HUSSEIN'S OVERTHROW

ON 12 November, as the Iraqi General Elections approach, the UN General Secretary, Kofi Annan, made a surprise visit to Baghdad to meet there the Iraq leaders and to call for national "*reconciliation*". Kofi Annan, who was making his first visit to Iraq since the overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime, met the Prime Minister, Ibrahim Jaafari, the Deputy Prime Minister, Roj Nuri Shawesh, the former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, political and community leaders as well as UN staff. Kofi Annan used his journey to express his support for the conference on national reconciliation that the Arab League proposed organising in Cairo. "*Reconciliation is absolutely vital in Iraq*", declared the head of UNO, pointing out that his organisation had supported all efforts aimed at bringing peace to the country. However the Shiites reaffirmed their reservations regarding a conference to which all the Sunni groups would be invited. Thus the head of the principal Iraqi Shiite party, Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, explained to Kofi Anna that his organisation did not wish the pres-

ence of those who were formerly close to Saddam Hussein, members of the former regime and the radical Sunni religious movements suspected of supporting the suicide bomb attacks targeting civilians in the country. Other Shiite and Kurdish leaders, who distrust the Arab League and fear that it would favour the Sunni Arabs, have already expressed this position. Indeed, the majority of the Arab country are essentially Sunni, which is not the case in Iraq, where 60% of the population is Shiite — and half the Sunni Moslems are Kurds, not Arabs. For his part, Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari told Kofi Annan that the Iraqi authorities hoped that UNO would help them organise the elections on 15 December, thus promoting democracy and "improving the effectiveness of the Iraqi security forces" in their struggle against the Sunni Arab insurgents.

Mr. Annan expressed his indignation at the pursuit of violence in the country, mentioning the bomb attack that morning, which had killed four women in a market place and wounded forty civilians. "*No*

national Court of Justice Judge, has been formed to enquire into the involvement of the Minister and of the Congress Party in the scandal. The UN Commission accused Congress of having benefited from 4 million barrels of oil in another transaction. Another Indian oil company, Reliance Petroleum, is also said to be involved.

After Iraq, Mr. Annan visited Kuwait, as part of a tour of the region which also took him to Jordan, which was hit by a bloody triple

suicide attack claimed by the Iraqi branch of the al-Qaida terrorist network. Mr. Annan's visit to Baghdad came just after that of the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, come to plead for the participation of all Iraqis in the political process, and particularly that of the Sunni Arabs, just five weeks before the General Elections. British Foreign Minister, Jack Straw, had preceded Mrs. Rice to Baghdad and had also brought his country's support to the Iraqi authorities, who have to face daily acts of violence.

bomb. According to the Ministry of the Interior, four police were amongst the dead, along with women and children. Five police were also wounded. The victims had to be buried separately to avoid providing a collective target for other suicide numbers. On 2 November, a civilian was killed and nine others wounded in a car bomb attack in a residential quarter of Kirkuk, mainly inhabited by Christians and Kurds. *"A car bomb exploded at 15.45 (12.45 GMT) as an American convoy was passing through the Almaz quarter, causing one death and nine injured amongst the passers by. The convoy continued on its way unharmed"*, declared the police General, Moanes Ishak. Several small shops were destroyed by this attack, which took place in the Northern part of the city.

KHANAQIN: THE FAYKI KURDS HARD HIT BY TWO SUICIDE-BOMB ATTACKS, MASSUD BARZANI AFFIRMS THAT THE KURDS WOULD DECLARE THEIR INDEPENDENCE IF A CIVIL WAR WERE TO BREAK OUT IN IRAQ

ON 18 November, the bloodiest attack aimed at Shiite Kurds, called Faylis, was perpetrated in the town of Khanaqin, where two suicide bombers blew themselves up during the Friday prayer. Particularly murderous, the attacks caused 74 deaths and hundreds of wounded, according to Kamran Ahmed, director of the Khanaqin general hospital. One of the witnesses indicated that the terrorists had mingled with the congregation and set off their bombs during the sermon, at intervals of four minutes. The two mosques targeted, the Husseynia al-Mazraa and that of Mehdi suffered serious damage. The roof of one collapsed onto the congregation. There were no special security measures in force round either of the mosques. Shortly before the attacks, a car bomb exploded near

the Khanaqin bank, according to a Ministry of the Interior source. These terrorist attacks, that have plunged Kurdistan in mourning, also provoked many reactions abroad, particularly in Washington and London. For its part, France reacted to these attacks against mosques by speaking of *"odious attacks"*. Paris *"condemns with the greatest firmness these terrorist acts"* stressed a Foreign Ministry spokesman in a communiqué.

Elsewhere, a suicide bomb attack caused 22 deaths and 26 injured in the evening of 22 November in the city of Kirkuk. A veritable trap had been set for the police. Rushing to a busy shopping street following a first explosion and the murder of a colleague, the police were taken by surprise by a suicide attacker who drove through the crowd in a car

On 18 November, the President of Iraqi Kurdistan, Massud Barzani, stated in an interview with the Turkish TV news network NTV that the Kurds would have no other choice but to proclaim their independence if a civil war were to break out in Iraq. Questioned in Rome on the eventuality of independence for the Kurds of Iraq, Mr. Barzani replied: *"may God preserve us" from civil war, "but if others fight one another and there is a break-up (of Iraq) then we would have no other option"*. Stressing that the right to independence is a *"natural and legitimate right"* of the Kurds, Mr. Barzani nevertheless considered that, for the moment, his people had no other demands than that the new Constitution be applied to advance towards a *"democratic, federal and plural"* Iraq.

IRBIL: AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE DEMOCRATISATION OF THE MIDDLE EAST

ON 19 to 20 November, the Paris Kurdish Institute, in partnership with the Kurdistan Ministry of Culture and the Regional government of Iraqi Kurdistan, organised a conference round the question of the "Democratisation of the Middle East: problems and perspectives". This took place in Irbil, at the Iraqi Kurdistan Parliament. Apart from the Speaker of the parliament, Mr. Adnan Mufti, and the Kurdish Minister of Culture, Mr. Sami Shores, many eminent Arab and Iraqi Kurdish public figures and about fifty intellectuals, academics, journalists and politicians from Middle Eastern countries and Europe took part in this debate, sub-divided into several themes. Simultaneous translation, a first ever in Kurdistan, was provided in Kurdish, Arabic, French and English — as well as, for some individuals, in Turkish and German — enabled this cosmopolitan assembly to communicate and exchange their views,

The conference took place some weeks after the referendum on the draft Iraqi Constitution and was aimed at allowing those who, on various grounds, were concerned with the democratisation of the Middle East, to exchange their opinions, to inform themselves directly about the political process taking place in Iraq and to establish contact with its actors. It also aimed at responding to the thirst for exchange and discussion of

ideas amongst Kurdish and Iraqi intellectuals. The conference took place for two whole days, and brought together over 400 participants. The local and foreign media — Kurdistan TV, the BBC, France-Culture and even the Quebec daily, *Le Devoir* — all gave considerable coverage to the event.

The conference was inaugurated by an opening speech from Mr. Adnan Mufti, Speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament, who welcomed the programmed speakers and described the composition of the Parliament elected on 31 January 2005. The Kurdish Minister of Culture, Mr. Sami Shores, then made a speech welcoming all the participants and outlined the expectations the conference had aroused. Kendal Nezan, for his part, outlined the situation and expressed the hope that it would draw the attention of Western public opinion to the democratic experiment in Kurdistan by making an inventory of the overall situation in the Middle East.

The first round table, on the "*Question of democracy in the 21st Century*" — was chaired by Dr. Khalid Salih, a Kurdish academic from Sweden, and included Dr. Awat Asadi, of the Centre for Kurdish Studies, *Navend*, based on Bonn, Germany; Mr. Bastiaan Belder, Dutch Member of the European Parliament (MEP); Dr. Hamit Bozarslan, historian and sociologist at the *Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales*; Professor

Andreas Buro, a German academic and Mrs Juliette Mincez, a sociologist and specialist on Islam. The speakers developed the relationship of peace to democratisation and assessed the present situation.

The Kurdistan Minister for Human Rights, Dr. Mohammed Ihsan, chaired the second round table of the morning entitled "*the role of civil society and the media*". A German journalist, Jurgen Hoppe, a specialist on the Kurdish question, and Christian Rioux, a journalist on the Quebec daily *Le Devoir*, expounded their views on the relation between the authorities and the media and of the place given to freedom of expression and of the press in democracy. These points were developed by Mr. Yavuz Onen, President of the Turkish Foundation for Human Rights, who described his experience in Turkey. The discussion was widened by Mrs. Eva Weil, psychologist and former director of the Sigmund Freud Library in Paris, who spoke of trauma and transmission and who, basing herself on her own work on the after WWII period, wondered about the case of the extermination of Jews: "*should we wait till all the witnesses, both victims and executioners, have died or be on the point of dying, before History can be built?*". She concluded by stressing that "*for the survivors, the recognition by society of what they had experienced also represents the authentication or, indeed, the proof, of the truth of what had happened*".

The third round table was called "*The role of democracy in plural societies, or how to manage diversity in a*

democracy", and was initiated by Professor André Poupart, a Quebec constitutionalist. He made a comparison between the two constitutions, since the Kurds often cite the Canadian experience as a federal example to be followed. "*Failing a solution, foreign experiences can serve as models, more or less adapted to the Kurdish experience*" he declared. This contribution was further developed by Mr. Aureli Argemi Roca, Director of the International Centre for ethnic minorities and the study of nations (CIEMENS) who described the Catalan experience. Dr. Mirella Galleti, an Italian historian, for her part, explained the workings of the Italian system of regions and their autonomy and Mrs. Gülten Kaya, a music publisher, spoke of the place accorded to diversity in creative activities in Turkey.

This first day concluded with a round table on "*the role of diasporas*". Dr. Ilhan Kizillhan, a psychologist and lecturer at Constance University, in Germany, was in the chair. He first highlighted the interaction and influence of the Kurdish diasporas in Europe on the development and democracy in Iraq, and then gave the floor to various representatives of Kurdish organisations in Europe. Mrs Aso Agace, Director of Hinbun, the International Centre for information and education of women, in Berlin, Mrs. Lily Baravi, Director of the Kurdish Institute of Montreal, in Quebec, Mrs. Keya Izol, former President of the Federation of Kurdish Associations, in Sweden, Mr. Akil Marceau, Vice-

President of the Department for Human Rights of the Paris Kurdish Institute, in France and Mr. Mozafar Shafei, former Director of the Kurdish Cultural Centre, in England, all took part in the discussion.

The next day the discussions were structured round four round tables. The first was chaired by the French journalist marc Kravetz, brought together on the subject of "*The Middle East*" Mehmet Ali Aslan, former President of the Workers' Party of Turkey, Mr. Salah Badreddin, a Syrian politician, Dr. Magnus Norellem an expert of the Swedish Agency for research on Defence. The second round table, entitled "*The political process in Iraq*" brought together, under the chairmanship of Dr. Najmaldin Karim, President of the Washington Kurdish Institute, Mrs. Nasreen Barwar, Iraqi Minister for Local Councils and Public Works, Dr. Khaled Salih and the Chaldean Philosopher Dr. Ephrem Isa Yusif.

"*The experience of Iraqi Kurdistan*" was expounded by a third round table chaired by Dr. Fuad Hussein, Vice-President of the Paris Kurdish Institute. Two members of the Kurdish government spoke, Mr. Yonan Hozaya, Minister for Industry was able to explain the situation of Christians in Kurdistan and Mr. Abdul Aziz Taieb, Minister of National Education drew a picture of education in Kurdistan, which was further developed by the President of Salahaddin, Dr. Mohammed Khosnaw, and Dr. Nebez Majid,

President of Koya University. Mr. Kharki Alti Parmak, a member of the Kurdistan National Assembly was also able to explain the situation of the Turkomen and Dr. Nuri Talabani, a member of the National Assembly rounded off the discussion on the Kurdistan experience in the legislative and constitutional areas. He also raised the still unsettled question of Kirkuk, The particularly rich discussions of this round table enabled the foreign guests to be better informed on the realities of Kurdistan from the best sources.

The last round table was "Western democracies and the democratisation of the Middle East", chaired by the President of the Paris Kurdish Institute, Dr. Kendal Nezan. Other members of this round table were Mrs. Lotta Hedstroem, Swedish Member of Parliament, Mrs. Nina Larsson of the Swedish Liberal Party, Mr. Munther al-Fadhal, an Arab member of the Iraqi Parliament, the French journalist and specialist on the Kurdish question, Chris Kurschera, Mr. Harry Schute, an American expert on security matters and Mr. Pierre Serne, representing the French Green Party.

Throughout the course of this conference, exchanges between the audience and the members of the round tables were broadly able to take place. The participants from abroad were invited to a dinner by the Kurdistan Prime Minister before meeting President Barzani the next day.

THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY PASSES A RESOLUTION AUTHORISING THE MAINTENANCE OF THE AMERICAN-LED MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE IN IRAQ TO THE END OF 2006 WHILE VIOLENCE PERSISTS



THE month of November was a particularly bloody one in Iraq, with an increase of almost 50% in the number of Iraqi deaths in these acts of violence. This total passed from 407 in October to 666 in November. The overwhelming majority of the victims (548) are civilians. The number of wounded is also higher than in October, rising from 520 to 734, according to the figures of the Ministries of Health, Interior and Defence. In the course of this month, the authorities noted 24 car bomb attacks, 30 by explosives and mortar bombs, 58 by assorted weapons of varying calibres and 3 by suicide bombers with explosive belts.

In October, 27 car bomb attacks were recorded and two by suicide bombers. The number of insurgents killed in November was 273 and there were 1,364 arrests as against 282 killed and 493 arrests in October. Since 1 January 2005, 5,446 Iraqis (3,862 civilians, 1154 police and 430 soldiers) perished through acts of violence in the country, according to the statistics issued by the three Ministries. Furthermore, 1,662 insurgents have been killed by the security forces since the beginning of the year. Faced with the persistence of violence, US President George W. Bush declared, on 30 November, his opposition to any timetable for the

withdrawal of American troops present in Iraq (100,000 today) thus earning himself sharp criticisms from the Democratic opposition. During a planned speech at the Annapolis Naval Academy, President Bush stressed that the level of American troops in Iraq depended on conditions on the spot. In a document distributed by the National Security Council, the White House limited itself to envisaging a possible alteration of the level of troops in the course of 2006, depending on the progress of the Iraqi forces' ability to control their country. *"Some people demand a timetable for withdrawal (...) But I think they are wrong"* the President said. *"I will be satisfied by nothing less than complete victory"*. The mission will be ended *"when the Iraqi security forces can ensure the security of their own citizens and when Iraq can no longer be a refuge for terrorists preparing fresh attacks against our country"* he added.

Another sign of the persistence of violence: five Westerners were kidnapped on 25 and 26 November, whereas kidnappings of foreigners had declined recently. The Qatar television *Al-Jazira*, broadcast, on Tuesday, a short video, dated 27 November, shot by a group calling itself the Brigade of the Sword of Law, which shows two Canadians, a Briton and an American, working for the Christian NGO Christian Peacemaker Teams. The German

public TV channel, ARD, indicated, for its part, that its Baghdad office had received a cassette claiming the kidnapping of a German archaeologist, Suzanne Osthoff, 43 years of age, and her Iraqi chauffeur.

Furthermore, according to a UN report published on 14 November, over 30,000 civilians have been killed in Iraq since the beginning of the conflict in March 2003. According to this five-page report, drawn up by the UN Aid Mission in Iraq, chance murders and terrorist actions have killed or wounded 26,000 persons since 2004. In addition, 23,394 people are detained in Iraq, 11,559 by the international force, according to this document, that cites *"open sources"*. The enquiry, that covers the period from 1st September to 31 October, explains that the UN had several times raised the question of imprisoned doctors and the occupation of medical centres during military operations carried out in October in Anbar province. *"Such activities are contrary to international law regarding armed conflicts and in any case a breach of the laws guaranteeing human rights"* state the writers of this report. They also suggest that the American armed forces indulge in an excessive use of force during their operations. The price paid by the civilian populations during these operations must lead to *"fresh thought about the nature of the conflict and on the proportionality of the use of force"* they stress.

On 8 November, the UN Security Council unanimously passed a resolution authorising the maintenance of the American-led "Multinational Force" in Iraq to the end of 2006.

The Iraqi government had requested the 15 members of the Council to approve this resolution, needed to prolong the mandate of this 1788,000 strong force beyond 31 December 2005, at which date the new democratically elected government is due to come into office in Baghdad. The resolution passed authorises the Iraqi government to put an end to this foreign military presence whenever it so wishes. The Security Council can also reverse this decision any time during 2006. The Iraqi authorities, for their part, must continue to pay their oil revenues into a fund managed by an independent organisation. This fund and the accompanying supervisory organisation were

created in May 2003 by the Security Council to guarantee that the foreign forces on the spot could not divert the Iraqi oil resources to their own benefit.

On 14 November the US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Daniel Fried, declared for his part that Germany and the other European countries that opposed the war in Iraq should contribute more to the stabilisation of that country and support its new democratic institutions. The United States does not demand that Germany sent troops to Iraq, pointed out Daniel Fried. Europe should, however, give more support to "one of the most democratic regimes" in the Near East, he added.

THE HAGUE: A DUTCH TRADER ON TRIAL FOR WAR CRIMES FOR HAVING SUPPLIED SADDAM HUSSEIN'S CHEMICAL WEAPONS ARSENAL

ON 21 November, The Hague court began the trial of a trader in chemical products, Frans van Anraat, accused of complicity in genocide for having supplied as from 1984, chemicals used by the Saddam Hussein regime, in particular during the massacre of Kurds in Halabja in 1988. Frans van Anraat invoked his right to silence when the judges tried to question him on the case. "It is not a matter of disrespect to you or this court, but I invoke my right to remain silent" he declared. Frans van Anraat is on trial for war crimes and genocide. He is accused of having delivered the chemical products needed by the Saddam

Hussein regime to manufacture chemical weapons. Aged 63, and arrested in December 2004, he is the first person to be tried for this massacre. "He is accused of having delivered the raw materials needed for the making of chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein. The use of these weapons by the Baghdad regime led to the death of thousands of people in Iran and in Iraq", declared the Public Prosecutor Fred Teeven, at the start of the trial. "He is an accomplice of serious international crimes", he added.

In a preliminary move, the defence asked the Court to declare itself incompetent and so release its client, arguing that the trial is not

equitable and that the principal suspect in this case, Saddam Hussein, should be tried on the basis of the same charges in Iraq. "The fact that two courts are trying such a crime could lead to a juridical doubt. From a practical point of view, the Netherlands court could rule that the accusations are well founded while the Iraqi Special Court could rule to the contrary", stated the defence lawyer, Jan Peter van Schaik. The Judges rejected this request. "It was simply something I did as a side-line. It was not central to my business", he had declared during the Dutch TV broadcast that brought his case to public attention. "I only learnt later, but it was already too late", he pointed out. "The pictures of the gas attack on the town of Halabja were a shock. But I did not give the order to do this. How many chemicals, how many bullets, for example, do we make in the Netherlands?" had stated Frans van Anraat in an interview to the Dutch magazine "Nieuwe Revu" in 2003.

The Halabja massacre, which caused 5,000 deaths in a single day, is on the list of crimes of which Saddam Hussein is accused, but for which he has not yet been formally tried. The former Iraqi President and seven other leaders of his regime have been on trial since 19 October for the murder of 143 Shiites in the village of Dujail (North of Baghdad) in 1982.

In addition to Halabja, he is accused of being the accomplice of several gas attacks in Iraqi Kurdistan, in the villages of Giktapa and of Birjinni, but also in Iran, for which he is answering charges of war crimes. The UN inspectors

described Frans van Anraat as one of the most important of Saddam Hussein's intermediaries for procuring chemical weapons. F. van Anraat does not deny the sale of these chemicals but insists that he was unaware of their final usage. *"Without any scruple, the accused delivered the chemicals even after 1984* (Editors Note: after the ban on exporting these products to Iraq) *in quantities that excluded any normal usage"*, declared the Prosecutor Fred Teeven during the preliminary hearing. According to the Prosecutor, even after the attacks on Halabja, which were widely covered by the media, van Anraat continued his exports to Iraq of material intended for the manufacture of chemical weapons. The prosecution states that the businessman was at the head of eleven firms, based in different countries, which supplied ingredients for making mustard gas and other gases having harmful effects on the nervous system.

Pinpointed by an American enquiry, he was arrested in 1989 in Italy, then fled to Iraq where he remained till the attack by the American-led coalition in 2003, at which date he sought refuge in Holland. In 2000, the Americans abandoned their demand for his extradition, without any explanation. The accused was arrested on 7 December 2004 in Holland, just as he was preparing to flee. He has several times been refused release on bail. The Netherlands Court can charge van Anraat for genocide in Iraq, since a ruling by the Netherlands Supreme Court gives Dutch Courts universal jurisdiction in cases of war crimes and genocide pro-

vided that the accused is resident in the Netherlands. The trial is expected to last three weeks, which is unusually long for Dutch proceedings, which does not usually hear witnesses during the hearings. In this case, many witnesses are being called, as well as some victims who will evoke in court the

sequels that were produced by these gas attacks. The verdict is expected to be handed down on 23 December. Moreover, several Iranian and Iraqi victims of chemical attacks also intend to demand up to 10,000 euros damages each. Frans van Anraat risks a life sentence.

DAMASCUS: THE SYRIAN PRESIDENT TRIES TO IMPROVE HIS COUNTRY'S IMAGE BY PARDONING SOME 200 POLITICAL PRISONERS

ON 2 November, Syrian President Bachar al-Assad, granted pardon to 190 political prisoners so as to counter the hostile campaigns against Syria and improve his country's image and *"in the context of global reforms, which aim at consolidating national cohesion, which is fundamental for the social fabric and national interests"* of Syria, according to the official news agency, SANA, which announced that *"new measures in this direction will be taken later"*. Amongst those released are members of *"islamist organisations"* including Azzam Ghareib of the Moslem Brotherhood (banned since 1980), the President of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, Mohammad Raadoun, and the writer Ali Abdullah, a member of the political forum the "Atassi salon", both incarcerated in May. The latter, who pointed out, last March, that 232 detainees had been released in two waves by Presidential decree, makes the point that

about a hundred Moslem Brothers are amongst those pardoned. Thirteen Moslem "salafists", six members of the Party of Islamic liberation, 20 former members of the Iraqi Baath Party and 20 Palestinians also benefited from this pardon.

According to Anouar al-Bouni and Ammar Kourbi, the spokesman of the Arab Organisation for Human Rights, at least a thousand other political detainees are still rotting in Syrian jails. *"This is a step in the right direction, but it is insufficient and must be completed by the liberation of all the remaining political detainees, the lifting of the State of Emergency, the return home of political exiles, the dissolution of the Superior Court, a sort of Damocles sword, the settlement of the case of the Kurds deprived of their Syrian nationality"*, stated the Human Rights activists. *"We hope for a radical reform to finally close the case of all political prisoners, including repeal of law 49 that imposes the death sentence for membership of the Moslem Brotherhood, the amendment of Article 8 of the Constitution, that invests the Baath Party with the role of leader of the*

State and of society", stressed Mr. Kourbi. This Human Rights activist, hostile "to cosmetic measures" urges "a unifying national congress to achieve national reconciliation".

However, the human rights activist, Anouar Bouni, announced that the Syrian police arrested, on 13 November, a dozen people who were protesting in front of the State Security Court, an emergency law court, in Damascus. The people arrested were part of a group of about a hundred Kurdish and Syrian demonstrators protesting before the court that was trying their relatives. They shouted slogans in support of "national unity" and "denouncing special courts" and "the emergency decree" that has been in force since 1963. Meanwhile, Amir Holilo, a member of the Democratic Unity Party (a banned Syrian Kurdish party) was sentenced by the State Security Court to two and a half years jail for "membership of a secret organisation" indicated Mr. Bouni. On the other hand, the court postponed the trial of fourteen others "accused of membership of a salafist (ultra-islamist) organisation". All these people come from the region of Outaibah, 20 kilometres East of Damascus. Mr. Bouni denounced "the violations of civic rights" as well as the "savage behaviour" of the police towards the people gathered before the Courthouse.

Enjoined by Security Council resolution 1636 to cooperate with the UN Enquiry Commission into the Assassination of Rafic Hariri in Beirut, where Damascus' influence was, at the time, paramount, Syria has promised its cooperation while denouncing the "unjust" character of the resolution.

Ankara and Teheran have not failed, however, to display their support for Syria. The Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, began a surprise visit to Damascus on 16 November. "Turkey cannot remain indifferent to developments in the region", the Minister stressed in a communiqué. Mr. Gul had discussions with the Syrian President, Bachar al-Assad. During his meeting with the president, he urged Syria fully to cooperate in the enquiry on the Hariri case. The Syrian government has been under pressure ever since the UN Security Council unanimously demanded, last month, that it fully cooperate with the enquiry into the death of Hariri, killed by a bomb on 14 February in Beirut. "In Damascus, our Minister concentrated essentially on the necessity of fully conforming to the UN decision", pointed out the Turkish Foreign Ministry. The United States share the same objective as Turkey on the Syrian question, declared on the same day the Assistant spokesman of the State Department, Adam Ereli, reacting to this surprise

visit. "It is a visit that was decided, organised and undertaken by the Turkish government" Mr. Ereli let it be understood during a press interview. "Our point of view is that Turkey and ourselves share the same objective regarding Syria", which is that Syria should cease its "reprehensible" acts going from supporting the insurgents in Iraq to interfering in the internal affairs of the Lebanon, stressed Mr. Ereli.

On 14 November it was the turn of the Iranian Foreign Minister, Manoushehr Mottaki, to go to Damascus to discuss with President Bachar al-Assad "events in the Near East". Mr. Mottaki, for whom this is the first visit to Syria since his appointment this summer, also met Prime Minister Mohammad Naji Otri and the Foreign Minister, Faruk al-Shareh. His discussions in Damascus covered "bilateral relations between the two friendly countries and dangerous events that are taking place in the Near East" indicated the official Syrian news agency SANA.

ZAKHO: THE INAUGURATION OF THE FIRST OIL TEST-DRILLS IN IRAQI KURDISTAN



THE first test drills in Iraqi Kurdistan began in November, giving this region hope for a strengthening of its economic autonomy. The inauguration of the wells, located to the East of the town of Zakho, took place on 29 November, in the presence of the Prime Minister of Kurdistan, Nechirvan Barzani. The Kurdish Prime Minister spoke of this "his-

toric" project, "For the first time, we are looking for oil in Kurdistan" he declared during the official ceremony. "This project will take part in the economic growth of Kurdistan and in its reconstruction", he stated. "The hour has finally come when the Kurdish people is no longer oppressed and when it benefits from its natural wealth", Mr. Barzani considered. "We all know that the oil revenues were used to buy the weapons and gas that were used

against Iraqi towns and villages, and we will never again allow this", insisted the Prime Minister. Mr. Barzani also thanked Turkey that had eased the passage of the Norwegian company's equipment through its territory towards Kurdistan.

The Norwegian oil company, DNO, announced at the start of the drilling of well Tawke 1, which is expected to take 60 days to reach a depth of 3,000 metres in an area believed to contain three oil deposits. An official of DNO, Magnus Normann, indicated during the inaugural ceremony, that the crude in this region was expected to be good quality "light oil". According to the company, the block operator, with a 40% share in the operation, these are the first drillings under the Production Sharing Agreements (PSA) signed with the Kurdish authorities in June 2004. The PSA are contracts whereby foreign companies are called upon to finance the investment enabling the drilling and extraction of oil resources in a particular zone in exchange for a share of the future production of that zone. An official of the Kurdistan Oil Company, Serbaz Horami, noted "the importance of this project for the economy of Kurdistan". He pointed to other oil projects, "in particular with Turkish oil companies". According to him, a mixed American-Turkish company is due, soon, to start a new drilling programme and a similar one has been signed with a mixed British-Portuguese company.

The activation of these agreements comes after the adoption of the Iraqi Constitution, which gives the

Kurdistan authorities the right to explore and exploit the natural resources of their region and to control their revenue.

Kurdistan claims the incorporation of the oil producing city of Kirkuk. But, since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, its oil plants have been the target of repeated attacks, which has disturbed its oil exports to Turkey and even its deliveries to Iraqi oil refineries. No less than 290 acts of sabotage have been aimed at the plant and the pipelines in the region, causing losses of several bil-

ions of dollars. The average production for these deposits is between 500,000 and 650,000 barrels/day (b/d) as against 700,000 to 800,000 b/d before the American invasion. The most recent act of sabotage, on 20 October, targeted a grouped network of 16 oil and gas pipelines, which provoked a total stoppage of pumping. A new 1 metre diameter pipeline is being built North of Baili. This pipeline will be buried several metres underground so that no explosive device can reach it. The present pipelines run alongside the roads and are in the open.

TURKEY-E.U.: THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S FIRST REPORT ON TURKEY SINCE THE OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS, ACCUSES ANKARA OF HAVING SLOWED DOWN ITS REFORMS IN THE AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS

ON 9 November, a little more than a month after the historic opening of negotiations for Turkey's membership of the European Union, the European Commission presented its report on Turkey's progress. In its stage report on the process of Ankara's joining the European Union, the Commission accused Turkey of having slowed down its reforms in the areas of Human Rights and of judicial reform. Brussels considers that "the pace of reforms slowed down in 2005". "If the violations of Human Rights have diminished, they are continuing and it is urgent to put into practice the legislation already passed and, in certain areas, to take still fur-

ther legislative measures", the Commission continues.

The European executive calls on Turkey to "redouble efforts" so that the authors of tortures and ill-treatment "no longer remain unpunished". "The rights of women enjoy increasing attention, but violence against them remain a matter of great concern", the Commission also notes. The Commissioner in charge of the enlargement, Olli Rehn, urged Turkey, in the course of a press conference, to work so that all forms of torture be abolished in the course of the next two years in the context of the "short term priorities" suggested by Brussels.

Concretely the Turkish authorities are urged to act in a more decisive

manner against torture, which continues to be rife in the country, especially towards extreme left activists and Kurds. The European Commission has repeatedly criticised the obstacles to freedom of expression, the legal proceedings undertaken against journalists and intellectuals. The European Commissioner for the Enlargement, Olli Rehn particularly called for the cancellation of the proceedings against the writer Orhan Pamuk. He demanded that Turkey amend its legislation if this led to the writer being found guilty for his stand on the fate of the Armenians at the beginning of the 20th Century. The reference to cultural rights in the Commission's report covers the authorisation of Kurdish language teaching and radio and television broadcasts. Ankara has already modified its legislation in this respect, but Brussels calls for more. The report sets Turkey some 150 short term objectives towards the country's being able, eventually, to join the E.U.

Furthermore, the European Commission considered that Turkey could be considered to have a "*viable market economy*", on condition that it continued its economic stabilisation and its reforms. This decision, even though qualified, is an important stage for Ankara and a *sine qua non* condition for joining the European Union. "*Turkey can be considered as endowed with a viable market economy so long as it continues to keep on the course of its recent stabilisation and its achievements with respect to reform*", indicated Brussels in its report.

By opening its doors to Turkey as well as to the Balkan countries, the European executive thus wants to

send a strong signal to the euro-sceptics and does not intend to stop the enlargement trend, despite the French and Dutch NO to the European Constitution. "*The enlargement is not a leap in the dark*", declared the European Commissioner for Development, Louis Michel before the meeting. "*The alternative is the death of Europe as an idea*". The report will be examined by the Twenty-five during the December summit in Brussels.

Thus, on 8 November the Turkish Minister for the Environment, Osman Pepe, declared that Turkey must invest some 35 billion Euros (41 billion Dollars) in environmental protection projects to reach the standards of the European Union. A research study on the state of environmental protection measures has concluded that "*Turkey must make investments of the order of 30 to 35 billion euros to be able to become a full member of the European Union*", pointed out the Minister in a television interview. Mr. Pepe declared that Ankara had set itself the goal of fully meeting the environmental standards of the E.U. by 2023-24. The hardest to settle in the process of harmonisation covers the management of effluent water and industrial gas emissions he added. "*Ours is a country that throws 65% of its waste into the sea and discharges 65% of its effluent waters without any treatment*", he continued.

Furthermore, Turkey announced a drastic series of tax reductions in the hope of attracting foreign investments in a context of heightened rivalry between emerging countries. "*The lowering of rates of taxation will help Turkey better to face up to competi-*

tion from its neighbours and European Union countries for international investments" declared Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan on 29 November during a meeting of his Justice and Development Party (AKP). Some economists had welcomed this measure, which is due to come into force in 2006, stressing that it would strengthen Turkish firms in the face of competition and that it should not compromise the latest plan for economic stimulation adopted by the country to the tune of 10 billion dollars with the backing of the International Monetary Fund. Mr. Erdogan pointed out that the taxes on these companies would be reduced from 30% to 20% — a greater drop than had been expected, and that the maximum tax rate for income tax would be dropped to 30% as against the present rate of 40%. The minimum rate of the latter would be maintained at 15%. As for taxation of foreign investments, it would be reduced to 28% in all, as against 37% at the moment, added the head of the government. The Turkish Prime Minister contributed to bringing the country out of a serious financial crisis in 2001. The Turkish economy is now more vigorous than it has been for several decades, with a rate of growth that should reach 5% this year as against 10% in 2004. Inflation has fallen to under 10% for the first time in a generation, domestic consumers are more confident and the privatisations have recommenced. The OECD expects Turkey to achieve a growth rate of about 6% in 2006 and 2007 following renewed confidence, inside as outside the country following the opening of negotiations for membership of the E.U. on 3 October.

SEMDINLI: THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES IN A BOMB ATTACK ON A KURDISH BOOKSHOP

TENSION increased in Hakkari, a Province on the borders of Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran, following a bomb attack that took place on 9 November against a bookshop in Semdinli. Located in a shopping complex, this bomb attack is considered by many to be the work of members of the security forces and caused one death and several injured.

Three people — two gendarmes and a Kurdish security forces' informer — were arrested after the attack. The Semdinli Public Prosecutor, Harun Ayik, confirmed that one individual in detention, after escaping being lynched by the crowd that suspected him of having placed the bomb, was a gendarme intelligence agent. The Prosecutor added that two gendarme NCOs, suspected of taking part in the attack, were being questioned by the police and that a third will be for having fired in the air during the incidents. Three machine guns were found in the car wrecked by the angry crowd as well as other weapons and documents — a sketch of the bookshop and a list of names, including that of the shop owner, according to the press.

Two of the four people taken in for questioning during this clash have been charged with murder and attempted murder. Nearly 10,000 people assembled in this town on 11 November to attend the funeral of

the man killed by the explosion of the bomb in the bookshop and of the man shot during the clash with the police. Local representatives of pro-Kurdish political parties called on the population to remain calm and no major incident was reported during the funerals. Shouts of "Assassin State!", "Terrorist State!", were nevertheless shouted by the crowd. The inhabitants set up barricades in several streets using electric pylons to prevent the expected deployment of police from neighbouring localities. Furthermore, clashes occurred the next day in Van between hundreds of demonstrators protesting against the events in Semdinli. The windows of several shops were broken by the crowd that also set fire to a car.

In the night of 1 and 2 November, a bomb attack attributed by the authorities to the PKK had already hit the town. A car filled with explosives had blown up near the local gendarmerie, causing 23 wounded. The force of the explosion had caused considerable material damage to the 67 flats and shops nearby and blew in the windows of several public buildings. Many wounded, mostly by flying glass, were treated in the Semdinli hospital. Furthermore, one person was killed and another wounded during a pro-Kurdish demonstration in Mersin, that now has a substantial Kurdish community, according to a report on the *NTV* television chan-

nel on 21 November. About a hundred demonstrators had gathered to protest at the death of two other people on 15 November, in Hakkari Province. One of them was killed by gunfire during clashes between demonstrators, who were throwing stones. This death brings to six the number of persons killed during the virtually daily confrontations between demonstrators and police since the bomb attack on the Semdinli.

In the course of a visit to Hakkari on 21 November, the Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, was greeted by demonstrators' hostile slogans. The Prime Minister's whose visit (accompanied by the Ministers of the Interior and Justice) was not announced in advance, urged the population to be calm. On the evening of 20 November he had visited the neighbouring province of Van and in the morning Semdinli, a township of about 15,000 inhabitants, from which he went on to the near-by village of Yuksekova. "*I appeal to all my fellow citizens to act with moderation. We cannot gain anything by hatred and violence*", declared Mr. Erdogan in speech made in square before several hundreds of inhabitants of Semdinli and broadcast live on television. Mr. Erdogan reaffirmed that his government was determined to clear up this bomb attack. "*We will pursue this case to the end (...) all will be brought to light*", he promised during his visit surrounded by important security measures. The Turkish government finally proceeded, on 23 November to the transfer of the governor of Hakkari, after riots had multiplied in his dis-

trict. Governor Erdogan Gurbuz was appointed to the province of Tokat (North) where he replaced Ayhan Nasuhbeyoglu, who was transferred to Hakkari.

Since the Semdinli attack the Turkish Army has launched operations to repress demonstrations what have aroused sharp feelings throughout the Kurdish provinces. These acts of violence underline the rising tensions in a still disadvantaged Kurdistan, after a period of relative calm following the announcement of the PKK's unilateral cease fire, maintained from 1999 to 2004.

Some members of Parliament and news papers have draw a parallel between the events in Semdinli and a scandal that occurred at the end of the 90s, that had revealed the extent of the collusion between the security forces fighting the Kurds, local clan chiefs and politicians and the mafia. The members of the security forces indulging themselves in summary extra-judicial executions, kidnappings and trafficking in arms and drugs. Coming to Semdinli to calm the population, the mayor of the neighbouring village of Yuksekova, Salih Yildiz, a member of the People's Democratic party (DEHAP – pro-Kurdish) attributed the bomb attack to a loose conglomeration, fighting the Kurds on the fringe of the State's official activity. *"An event occurred here that resembles that at Susurluk"* the local councillor according to CNN-Turk TV channel. This is a reference to that scandal, exposed near the town of Susurluk, which had revealed the extent of the links between the security forces, the

extreme-Right political groups and the mafia. *"Provocative Bombs"* headlined the daily paper Radikal, taking up the accusations made by the opposition member of Parliament Esat Canan, of the Republican People's Party (CHP), who evoked the possibility of a bomb attack perpetrated by the *"deep State"*, an

expression, in Turkey, that describes a collusive relation between the secret service and the mafia. The President of the Parliamentary Commission on human rights, Mehmet Elkatmis, for his part, indicated that a delegation of members would visit Semdinli to conduct an enquiry.

IRANIAN KURDISTAN A PREY TO POLICE AND LEGAL REPRESSION



THREE Kurdish activists were sentenced to heavy prison sentences for *"membership of counter-revolutionary groups and activities against the regime of the Islamic Republic"* the Iranian papers reported on 27 November. The Iranian Supreme Court confirmed these sentences delivered by the Mahabad Court against Reza Amini, Halmet Azarpur and Abdollah Mohammadi. The first was sentenced to 20 years imprisonment and the two others to 15 years. The three men were found guilty of *"membership of the Iranian Kurdistan Democratic Party (IKDP), banned in Iran, and of propaganda against the Islamic Republic"*. The date of their arrest was not given.

Furthermore the Iranian border guards killed a Kurdish fighter and captured another after having wounded him, in the course of fresh clashes in the Province of Western Azerbaijan (the official name for the Northern part of Iranian Kurdistan), according to a report dated 12 November by the student news agency Isna. Mohammad-Sadegh Mohsenpur, governor of the provincial capital, Urumiyeh, stated that

the two fighters belonged to PEJAK, a group linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) that for their part, had found asylum in the Kurdish border region where Iran, Turkey and Iraq meet.

The Kurdish provinces of Iran, essentially divided between the provinces of Kurdistan, Kermanshah, Western Azerbaijan and Ilam have experienced several months of disturbances following the death of a young man hunted by the police and shot down in July 2005 during his arrest, according to the police. Ton the morning of 20 November, the old historic city of Mahabad, capital of the short-lived Kurdish Republic, experienced new disturbances after a policeman shot and killed a young Kurd, who was alleged to be attacking another policeman with a knife. A hundred and twenty policemen were killed and 64 others injured in clashes in less than six months, according to Hojatoleslam Akbar Feyz, Chief Justice of Western Azerbaijan Province.

On 25 November the Iranian journalists announced an impending visit to Turkey of the Iranian For-

eign Minister, Manouchehr Mottaki—the first visit of a senior Iranian official to Ankara since the Election of Mahmud Ahmedinjad.

Turkey and Iran, which accused one another of supporting one another's opponents

AS WELL AS ...

• **TEHERAN: THE IRANIAN PRESIDENT DISOWNED BY HIS OWN PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY AS HE WAS CARRYING OUT A PURGE OF THE ADMINISTRATION AND THE BANKS.** On 23 November, the Iranian Parliament placed the president in a embarrassing position by rejecting his third candidate for the post of Minister of Oil. Mohsen Tasaluti, who has worked in the petrochemical industry since the age of 11 but is not well known on the political scene, was criticised for his lack of experience of directing a Ministry that controls an industry that generates 80% of Iran's public revenue. This is the first time since the Islamic Revolution in 1979 that the Majlis has rejected three proposals and the reverse is all the more bitter for President Ahmedinjad that the national Assembly is dominated by the ultra-conservatives of his own camp. The two first candidates were close to the President: Ali Saidlu, rejected in August for lack of experience and General Sadegh Mah-suli, chief of the Revolutionary Guards lack of experience in oil. Meanwhile the Ministry of oil is being run by Kazem Vaziri, Deputy Minister under the previous President, Mohammad Khatami.

Moreover, for the first time, one of the top personalities of the Islamic

regime has come to the fore to denounce the "purges" being carried out by the new president. Former President Akbar Hashem Rafsanjani, at present president of the Council of Judgement and one of the most influential Iranian leaders, clearly indicated, on 16 November, that the purges taking place were playing into the hands of "enemies" of the Islamic Republic — a serious charge in the official rhetoric vocabulary. "Some people today (...) are calling into question actions made in the past, they are carrying out a policy of purges, they have started a policy of general banishment and of pushing aside competent public figures", declared this former President of the Republic from 1989 to 1997, despite the call to order of the President's critics issued by Iran's top-most leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei two days earlier. "The government must be supported", the Supreme Guide had declared before the imams who lead the Friday prayers in Teheran. "I have heard unjust criticisms made against the government and the president", Ayatollah Khamenei had indicated in an unprecedented intervention so soon after the installation in office of a new chief executive. "The president must be given time and be supported so that he can accomplish his task" the Guide stressed, welcoming the "revolutionary" identity of a "blessed" government.

Three months after taking office, on 3 August, Mr. Ahmedinjad is thus still unable to complete his government and impose his authority over Parliament. A conservative member of Parliament, like Elias Naderan, openly accuses the President of being more concerned with personal likings than individual competence and of recruiting his assistants in the ideological army (the Guardians of the Revolution), from which he has emerged, from Teheran municipality, of which he was the Mayor, or from the University where he was a lecturer.

Voices are increasingly being raised increasingly criticising the President for giving more priority to Islamic and revolutionary purism than to realism. The idea announced of bringing down to a single figure all the bank rates of interest as the returns on investments caused a shock. Officials are worried at a flight of capital that some say is unprecedented since the Revolution. The Teheran stock exchange is steadily falling. The President is carrying out a massive reshuffle of the administration that is taking on the aspects of a purge. He has changed the heads of the six public banks, replaced the provincial governors and recalled dozens of Ambassadors. Iran has 98 diplomatic representatives abroad and 15 Consulates, according to its Foreign Ministry. It is thus being said that at least a third of the Iranian foreign missions will be changes in the next few months. The Iranian Embassies to Paris and London have confirmed the departure of their heads, officially appointed by Mr. Ahmedinjad's predecessor.

• **COPENHAGEN: A DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVE AGAINST ROJ-TV, THE KURDISH TELEVISION CHANNEL BROADCASTING FROM DENMARK.** According to the Danish daily *Berlingske Tilden* (conservative) dated 21 November, the United States have sharply urged Denmark to close down a Kurdish television that broadcasts from its territory — considered by Turkey to be a PKK mouthpiece. Ankara has several times called on the Danish authorities to act against *Roj-TV*, which broadcasts its programmes to Europe and the Near East from Copenhagen. It accuses the channel of being linked to the PKK, which is on both the European Union's and Washington's lists of terrorist organisations. *"We vigorously call on the Danish government to close down Roj-TV, Mesopotamia-TV and MBMG (which cooperates with them) and freeze their assets"*, indicates a confidential note addressed to the Foreign Ministry, whose contents the *Berlingske Tilden* has revealed.

Roj-TV, which has been broadcasting from Danish soil since March 2004, recently nearly caused a diplomatic crisis between Copenhagen and Ankara after the Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan refused to take part in a press conference in Copenhagen because of the presence of one of the channel's journalists. The head of the Danish Government, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, invoking the freedom of the press, had refused to exclude *Roj-TV*, *"which has not infringed any Danish laws"* from this press event. However, the police are

investigating any possible links between the channel and the PKK.

Using the same argument as Ankara, the American note to Copenhagen stresses that Denmark must not be *"a refuge"* for such a channel. In Washington's opinion, Turkey's problems with the PKK are due to the support this movement receives in Europe. *"Whereas the bulk of the PKK attacks take place in Turkey, the PKK is deeply dependent on European sources for financing and organisational support, for recruitment and propaganda operations"* insists this note. *"In the light of the threat that the PKK represents for our allies in Turkey and in other parts of Europe, we would like to cooperate with the Denmark and the Turkish government to fight this problem"*, Washington continues.

On 5 November, Turkey had violently criticised Denmark's refusal to withdraw its authorisation of the Kurdish TV channel. *"They (the Danes) do not ban a channel that gives its support to ethnic terrorism"*, the Turkish Minister of Justice, Cemil Cicek, had declared in Stockholm. *"This is contrary to the European Union's legislation. No one should play at three wise monkeys"*, the Minister had added.

At the beginning of the year, the Danish Radio and Television Supervisory Council had concluded that the channel's broadcasts contained no incitement to hatred and asked the police to enquire into any possible links between the channel and the PKK. Turkey has, in the past, succeeded in having banned two European-based television channels: *MED-TV*, whose authorisation

to broadcast was withdrawn by Great Britain and its successor, *MEDYA-TV*, that France refused to authorise.

• **HUNDREDS OF IRANIAN KURDISH REFUGEES RE-HOUSED IN IRAQI KURDISTAN, WHILE LONDON IS RENEWING THE EXPULSION OF IRAQI KURDISH REFUGEES.** Iranian Kurdish refugees, the forgotten victims of the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988) have been re-housed in Iraqi Kurdistan after fleeing the insecurity and destitution of a makeshift camp in the Sunni Arab province of Al-Anbar. *"Some families fled from the Tash camp, on the Iraqi-Jordanian border, without the United Nations realising it"*, pointed out Dindar Zebari, responsible for co-ordination with international organisations for the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). *"They have been brought together in Suleimaniyah"*, under Kurdish administration and *"have been settled in the region"*, headed. Other refugees have been sent to Irbil where a camp was opened on 10 November to receive them. *"In all, 350 people coming from Tash have been found places in a camp called Kawa"* South of Irbil, the official stated.

In the tented camp located in the plane South of Irbil, 84 people have been settled in tents supplied by the UN High Commission for Refugees (HCR). *"Owing to the deterioration in security conditions in Iraq since the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime in April 2003, our life in Tash had become a hell"*, said one of the new arrivals. *"In two years, about twenty refugees were killed by armed men and the camp inhabitants were not spared from raids"*

by the American Army", stated Askar Wali, aged 29 years. "We were also the targets of armed men who did not hesitate to strip us of our poor possessions. I myself lost an eye in an explosion in Ramadi (the capital of Al-Anbar province) where I had gone to find work", added another refugee of 25. These two were some of the thousands of Iranian Kurds who fled the fighting between Iraq and Iran. After the fall of the Iraqi dictator, some returned to Iran while others tried in vain to go to Jordan, and found themselves caught at the border, in the desert that separates the two countries.

To prevent any attacks on the refugees, the Kurdish police has set up a police post at the entrance to the camp, near Irbil. "The post was set up as soon as the camp was opened to protect the people here and to resolve any conflicts that might arise between them", stated a policeman, Mamend Hussein Khadr. According to the Kurdish official responsible, Dindar Zebari, the United States and the HCR have helped in settling in Iraqi Kurdistan the Iranian refugees who fled the province of Al-Anbar. "The decision to settle them here was justified by humanitarian considerations and approved by the Council of Ministers" in Baghdad, he pointed out.

In the new camp, many of the refugees dream of finding asylum in a European country, as have 220 of them who left Tash camp for Sweden after the Swedish government had accepted to receive them in December 2004. For the moment the Kurdish authorities say that they intend to settle 2,000 of them

in Irbil province and 1,500 in that of Suleimaniyah.

Elsewhere, the British Home Secretary (Minister of the Interior) announced that fifteen Iraqis, refused the right of asylum in Great Britain, were sent back to Iraqi Kurdistan on 20 November. "The government announced its intention to begin forced return to Iraq in February 2004" stated a Home Office spokesman. "All those displaced have been informed in advance of this action and have received assistance to help then settle in Iraq and allow them to contribute to the reconstruction of their country". On 17 November, Channel 4 television, quoting Home Office documents reported that about fifteen refugees would be sent to the Kurdish city of Irbil. London decided, in February 2004, to resume forcible repatriation but this decision has not yet been carried out because of the situation in Iraq, considered too dangerous. There are some 7,000 Iraqi asylum seekers in Great Britain. So far their return has been on a voluntary basis.

• **THE TURKISH WRITER, ORHAN PAMUK, PROSECUTED IN HIS OWN COUNTRY FOR "DELIBERATE INSULTS TO TURKISH IDENTITY" IS AWARDED THE "PRIX MEDICIS" FOR HIS LATEST NOVEL.** On 7 November, the Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk received the "Prix Medicis" for foreign novels for his novel "Snow. This prize is one of the two principal French distinctions awarded for a foreign novel. "Snow", at once a novel of suspense and a political book, is a plea for

secularism, a reflection on the identity of Turkish society and on religious fanaticism. This work of fiction, which appeared in Turkey in 2002, tells the story of a young Turkish poet-journalist, Kerim, leaving his German exile to conduct an enquiry in the small town of Kars into "several cases of suicide of young women wearing the headscarf". In this town, full of turmoil at the approach of crucial elections, Kerim starts his enquiry. Until the evening when the staging of a play against Islamic fundamentalism turns into a military putsch and becomes a blood bath. "With Orhan Pamuk, a writer is being honoured who, more than any other contemporary poet, is following the historic footprints of the West in the East and of the East in the West" as the Association of German booksellers put it. He has written, in particular, "The House of Silence", "The White Castle", "The Black Book" and "My Name is Red", subtle reflections on the confrontation between East and West in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 16th Century.

Proposed for the Nobel Prize, Orhan Pamuk, whose writings have been translated into over twenty languages, is being charged before an Istanbul court for "deliberate insults to the Turkish identity" for remarks made in a Swiss magazine about the massacre of Armenians in 1915. His trial is due to start on 16 December. He faces between six months and three years imprisonment according to his Turkish publisher *Iletisim*. This also threatened with another trial for having harmed the Army's image in an interview with the German daily

Die Welt in October. Born in 1952, in a pro-French middle class Istanbul family, Orhan Pamuk, a fervent defender of Turkey's membership of the European Union, has received several foreign prizes, including the prestigious German booksellers' Peace Prize in October 2005.

The European Commission, which published an equivocal stage report on Turkey's preparations for joining the E.U. cited the case of Orhan Pamuk. In a very diplomatic style, the Commission nevertheless didn't mince its words in demanding, purely and simply, "an amendment [to the Turkish Penal code] to preserve freedom of expression in Turkey". Brussels recalls that five other intellectuals were found guilty in 2005 of "insulting the nation" and pinpoints article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code that, according to Brussels, "would seem to be misinterpreted by certain judges and Public Prosecutors". An interpretation that runs counter to Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

• **THE DANISH LIBERAL PARTY AWARDS THE "LIBERTY PRIZE" TO AN IRAQI KURDISH WOMAN MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT.** Samia Aziz Mohammed, a Kurdish woman elected to the Iraqi Parliament in January 2005, and formerly a refugee in Denmark, has received the "Freedom Prize" of the Danish Liberal Party (at present in office) its initiators announced during the party's annual assembly in Odense on 28 November. Samia Aziz Mohammed, 58 years of age, has been a member of the Iraqi National Assembly since the elections last

January. She was a refugee for 14 years in Denmark, where she obtained Danish nationality. In her speech the prize-winner thanked "the Danish troops (deployed in Iraq) that are supporting us and are contributing to establishing peace and democracy".

The President of the selection jury, Carl Holst, for his part, underlined "the particular character of the recipient, inspired by ideals of freedom and democracy, who has chosen to leave her very safe life in Denmark to return to Iraq and an unsettled life".

The 2004 Prize had been awarded to the Dutch Member of Parliament of Somali origin, Ayaan Hirsi, the script writer of the film, critical of Islam, "Submission" by the film director Theo van Gogh.

• **IRAN REFUSES TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE EUROPEANS UNDER THE THREAT OF ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAMME CASE BEING SENT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND INSISTS ON MAKING NUCLEAR FUEL ON ITS OWN SOIL.** On 29 November, Javad Vaidi, chief Iranian negotiator, declared in an interview to the Press agency *Mehr*, that Iran was refusing to negotiate with the Europeans under the threat of its nuclear programme case being sent to the UN Security Council. Mr. Vaidi also insisted that negotiations with the Europeans should only cover the conditions of the enrichment of Uranium in Iran itself, according to this semi-official agency politically close to the conservatives. "If, during the next meeting of the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency

(IAEA) the threat is raised of sending the Iranian case to the Security Council, negotiations would become meaningless", declared Mr. Vaidi. "So long as the 24 September resolution of the Board of Governors (which leaves the door open for reference to the Security Council) is maintained like a sword (of Damocles) over Iran's head, the pursuit of negotiations has no benefit" he insisted.

Meeting in Vienna over 24 to 25 September, the IAEA Executive decided to defer the possible sending of Teheran to appear before the Security Council to give a chance for Russian mediation whose object would be to enrich the Uranium in Russia. But, as Mr. Vaidi recalled, "Iran will only accept a plan that guarantees Iran the right to made nuclear fuel on its own soil". He added that Iran would reject any plan that aims at "totally or partly depriving it of the nuclear fuel cycle". Outside this meeting, some diplomats and officials of intelligence services affirmed that Iran was preparing to renew the activity of its Natanz plant that had been suspended since the beginning of negotiations with the Europeans in 2003. Iran had only revealed the existence of this underground enrichment plant at Natanz after opponents in exile had revealed it in August 2002.

On 28 November, some European diplomats in Berlin indicated that there was a "readiness" in principle on the part of the European Union to start "exploratory discussions" with a view to a possible new phase of negotiations, but on condition that Iran abstained from any unilateral measures. The United States and

the European Union suspect Iran of seeking to endow itself with a nuclear arsenal under cover of a civilian programme — which is denied by Teheran. The Islamic Republic affirms that it only wants to produce electricity.

• **CAIRO: THE ARAB LEAGUE IS ORGANISING A MEETING PREPARATORY TO THE CONFERENCE ON IRAQI NATIONAL DIALOGUE.** On 19 November, the Arab League brought together for three days about a hundred Iraqi leaders in Cairo to prepare for holding a “conference for inter-Iraqi understanding” in Baghdad in 2006. But the stormy atmosphere was a reflection of the deep lying tensions in Iraq. Some hours after the beginning of its work, the Shiite and Kurdish delegates walked out slamming the door on the meeting, infuriated by the remarks of a Christian delegate, Ibrahim Menas al-Youssefi, a former Baathist. The latter had denounced, from the platform, the other Iraqi representatives of being in the pay of the United States and also denounced the political process in Iraq as illegitimate and orchestrated by Washington. The Arab Foreign Ministers present, in particular the Saudi Minister, Saud al-Faisal, were obliged to intervene to convince the Kurdish and Shiite delegates to return to the meeting, which resumed work an hour after the incident, following excuses from the Christian delegate.

Opening the meeting, the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani had, straight away warned that members of the insurgency and Saddam Hus-

sein loyalists could not be included in the political process. “*Every Iraqi outside that little circle is a partner in the new Iraq. Everyone must have the same chance of contributing to the reconstruction and to the forming of its democracy*”. For his part the General Secretary of the Arab League, Amr Mussa, called on the countries of the region and to the rest of the international community, to “*protect Iraq from the danger of a slide to sedition or civil war is in the Arabs’ interest*”. “*No one will win from transforming Iraq into a battle field of regional and international conflicts and tensions*”, added the head of the Arab League. However, even before the start of the meeting, Amr Mussa had warned that one should not expect excessive advances, and against “*too high or exaggerated expectations*”.

The head of the largest Shiite party, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), Abdul-Aziz al-Hakim, indeed, refused to go to Cairo and sent here a low level delegation. Deputy Prime Minister Ahmed Shalabi also refused the invitation to go to Cairo, as did the Speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly, Hashim al-Hassani, a Sunni Arab. From the start the Shiites, who dominate the transition government, showed themselves very sceptical about the conference of reconciliation. The Shiite majority distrusts the Arab League, the majority of whose 22 members had opposed the American military intervention in Iraq in March 2003 and has since avoided taking any part in the political process. The organisation is accused by the Shiites of being biased in favour of the

Sunni Arab minority. The month before Amr Mussa had been sharply criticised by the Shiite leaders, who accused the Arab League of delaying acting and of not sufficiently condemning the bomb attacks carried out by the insurgents.

The Shiites refuse to see, in Cairo, Sunni Arab leaders who came from ex-President Saddam Hussein’s regime or from groups that favoured the Iraqi insurgents. The Arab League accepted to exclude those involved in atrocities against Iraqis from those those invited, including representatives of four key Sunni Arab parties.

• **THE PARTY FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY (DTP) TAKES OVER FROM THE PEOPLE’S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (DEHAP).** On 9 November, a new pro-Kurdish party registered its rules at the Turkish Ministry of the Interior. The Party for a Democratic Society (DTP) brings together many Kurdish politicians and should benefit from DEHAP’s heritage and electorate, the latter being subjected to judicial procedures aimed at banning it. The founding members of this new organisation, the 49th in the country, met on 10 November to elect its leading bodies. The party has two joint presidents, Ahmet Turk, former member of Parliament for Mardin and of the Party for Democracy (DEP — banned) and Mrs. Tugluk, a lawyer known for having been part of Abdullah Ocalan’s defence team. “*We will work for peace*”, declared Mrs. Tugluk. “There is a Kurdish conflict that currently exists in our country. The DTP attaches great

importance to settling this question through dialogue”, she also said to journalists in front of the Ministry of the Interior.

Two of the four ex-Members of Parliament of the Party for Democracy (DEP) who have served ten years imprisonment for “*collaboration with the PKK*” are amongst the founders. The work of creating the party had begun after their liberation. Mrs. Tugluk explained that four public figures, including Mrs. Leyla Zana, an activist for Kurdish rights, were subject to a ban on any political activity and that Hatip Dicle and Selim Sadak had become founders “*to see of legal proceedings would be taken against them*”.

• **STRASBOURG: THE EUROPEAN COURT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS FINDS TURKEY GUILTY OF VIOLATION OF THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, OF THE INEQUITABLE TRIAL OF A LAWYER AND OF VIOLATION OF THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION OF A POLITICAL LEADER.** On 22 November, the European Court for Human Rights ruled that Turkey had violated the freedom of expression of a lawyer, sentenced in 1997 for “*spreading separatist propaganda by means of the press*”. The Court considered that Ankara had violated Article 10 of the European Convention on human rights and granted the petitioner 7,500 euros damages.

In April 1995, in the context of an interview for the review *Medya Günesi*, Eren Keskin had described the actions of the Turkish authorities in Kurdistan as “war” and “barbarity”, the Court recalled in its rul-

ing. Two years later she was sentenced to a year and four months imprisonment by the Istanbul State Security Court — a sentence finally reduced to a year, a month and ten days. In 1999 the public Prosecutor suspended execution of the sentence because of the new law on press offences. “*The motives accepted by internal jurisdictions cannot, in themselves, be considered sufficient to justify interference in the right of the petitioner to freedom of expression*” the Court ruled. “*The sentence is disproportionate to the intended objectives and, as such, unnecessary in a democratic society*”, the Court continued. It also found Turkey guilty of “*inequitable trial*” because of the presence of an army judge on the bench of the State Security Court that had tried the petitioner.

Furthermore, the European Court for human rights found Turkey guilty for having inflicted two years imprisonment on a local political leader accused of “*incitement to hatred*”. On 8 November the Court considered that Turkey had violated Article 10 (freedom of expression) of the European Convention on human rights and awarded 3,000 euros to the petitioner, Haydar Kaya, president of the Ankara country section of the Labour Party at the time of the events. In 1997 he had made a public political statement condemning the Turkish State’s policy and accusing certain political and Army public figures, whom he described as “*putschists*” and “*gangs*”. A sentence “*disproportionate to the intended objectives and, as such, unnecessary in a democratic society*” in the view of the Strasbourg judges.

• **THE SECOND HEARING OF SADDAM HUSSEIN’S TRIAL UNDER IMPORTANT SECURITY MEASURES.** On 28 November, the Iraqi High Criminal Court that is trying Saddam Hussein and seven of the top brass of his regime adjourned the trial to 5 December. The Court announced this when hearing resumed in the afternoon, after having been suspended for about an hour. Saddam Hussein’s defence collective had announced, the day before, its intention of asking for proceedings to be adjourned. Saddam Hussein and seven of his regime’s top leadership are being tried for the massacre of 148 Shiites at Dujail at the beginning of the 80s.

This second hearing since the trial began on 19 October before this Court, which is sitting in the highly protected Green Zone of Baghdad, had begun at 12.17 (9.17 GMT). All the accused and their defence team were present as well as the international Juridical advisers, including former US Secretary of Justice, Ramsey Clark. The fallen dictator was the last of the accused to enter the courtroom. He was dressed in Western style costume and held a Coran in his hand. He greeted his fellow accused, who, however, were wearing the dishdasha, the traditional Arab robe and had their heads covered with a keffiah. The principal co-accused are Taha Yassin Ramadan (former Vice President), Barzan Ibrahim al-Hassan al-Tikriti (his half brother), Awad Ahmad al-Bandar (former revolutionary court judge and assistant head of Saddam Hussein’s inner cabinet). The four others are former

Baath Party leaders in the region of Dujail, Abdullah Kadhem Rueid, Mazhar Abdallah Rueid, Ali Daeh Ali and Mohammad Azzam al-Ali.

The High Court is sitting in the former Baath Party Headquarters and is presided over by Judge Rizgar Amin. The latter has indicated to a German weekly that he had thought of delocalising the trial to Kurdistan, where security could better have been ensured. "I asked myself if the Court ought not have been moved to Kurdish territory" said the Kurdish judge in the 28 November issue of the magazine *Focus*. "A trial must take place in the most normal conditions of security possible but the situation in Iraq in recent times are not normal", he insisted. He also insisted that he was not motivated by "anger", whereas some people have accused him of wanting to settle his scores and those of the Kurdish people with Saddam Hussein in the course of this trial. "We are a court (...) there is no anger of any sort in us", affirmed Rizgar Amin.

Draconian security measures were enforced on all people (magistrates, lawyers or journalists) entering the building. The journalists could not carry anything other than a notebook "without metallic components" — even the pencils were supplied by the court. The lawyers for the defence were amongst the first to arrive in the courtroom. Khalil alDulaimi, the former dictator's principal lawyer, leads the defence collective. Following the assassination of two of them since the opening of the trial on 19 October, the defence lawyers had decided to boycott the court, before going back on

this decision. The trial continues to arouse strong feelings amongst both the adversaries and partisans of the former dictaor.

At Dujail, some 200 inhabitants demonstrated calling for the execution of Saddam Hussein. The demonstrators, including many relatives of the victims, carried photos of assassinated inhabitants and banners proclaiming "Cursed be Saddam and Baathism!" and "We call for the execution of Saddam the Dictator". Several Iraqi security barricades had been set up at all the entries to Dujail. In contrast, at Tikrit, bastion of the overthrown dictator, several dozen people demonstrated to demand his liberation. The demonstrators, mostly students, brandished photos of the former dictator and shouted slogans hostile to Ibrahim Jaafari's government: "God is Greatest! O Arabs the trial is unjust". Saddam Hussein and his co-accused face the death sentence by hanging following their trial at the High Criminal Court specially set up in December 2003 to try him and the leaders of his regime for crimes against humanity, for genocide and also for embezzling State property.

• GERMANY SELLS 298 SECOND HAND TANKS TO TURKEY. On 8 November a German Defence Ministry spokesman announced that Germany had sold Turkey 298 tanks of the Leopard 2 type, at the moment belonging to the German army. The sales contract, for an undisclosed amount, was signed by both parties on that same day, the spokesman pointed out.

This sale has, up to now, been strongly opposed because of the Human rights situation in Turkey. The Greens, coalition members of the outgoing government, have, in the past, vetoed delivery of tanks to Turkey mainly because of the situation in Kurdistan and the fear that already delivered tanks were being used against the Kurdish population. Germany wants to sell 850 of its 1,200 Leopold 2 tanks as part of a programme to modernise its Army.

• THE PKK DEMONSTRATES TO DEMAND THE LIBERATION OF OCALAN AND PEACE IN KURDISTAN EVEN AS THE FIGHTING CONTINUES. According to the police, on 29 November, some 500 Kurdish activists demonstrated in front of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, to demand the liberation of Abdullah Ocalan, sentenced to life imprisonment in Turkey. Coming from Alsace, but also from Germany and the Netherlands, they met peacefully in the morning then demonstrated in the afternoon before the Council of Europe behind banners demanding "Peace in Kurdistan" and "Freedom for Ocalan".

Lat May, the European Human Rights Court had confirmed its condemnation of Turkey for an inequitable trial of Abdullah Ocalan and recommended a retrial. Sentenced to death in 1999, the sentence of the boss of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) for "treason and separatism" had been commuted to life imprisonment on 2 October 2002. The Ministerial Committee of the Council of Europe holds

its last meeting of the year in November to supervise the carrying out of the rulings of the European Court covering several hundreds of cases. To enjoy a retrial the condemned person must apply for it. The man most concerned in the case has repeatedly indicated, through his lawyers, that he would refuse to be retried in Turkey so long as the impartiality of its courts could not be guaranteed.

In Erevan, nearly thousand Kurds of Armenia demonstrated on 9 November to demand the liberation of Abdullah Ocalan and to protest against Ankara's policy towards the Kurdish people. The demonstrators marched through the centre of the Armenian capital with slogans "*Freedom for Ocalan*" and "*Peace in Kurdistan*" before ending their action in front of the offices of the UN representative in Erevan. "*We are very concerned at the fate of our leader in prison (...). We also condemn the policy of Turkey (towards the Kurds) and we want our action of protest to draw the attention of the international community (...). We have often knocked at UNO's doors but we never receive anything but promises*", pointed out Therkez Rach, the leader of the Kurdistan Committee of Armenia, who leads a community of estimated at some 60.000 to 80,000 people. In Cyprus, on the same day, a Kurd tried to set himself alight in front of the European Commission offices to demand justice for Abdullah Ocalan. The man, 42 years of age, suffered 2nd degree burns over 18% of his body. Some 150 Kurds took part in this demonstration to demand a fair trial for their leader Ocalan and to denounce

the violations of Human Rights in Turkey. The demonstrators handed in a petition to an official of the UN office in Cyprus.

In Diyarbakir, about ten people were injured, on 13 November, in clashes between the police and demonstrators at the end of a rally of 10,000 people to urge a peaceful solution to the Kurdish problem. The demonstration, organised by local NGOs and pro-Kurdish parties round the theme of "*democracy and peace*", took place under strict security controls in a square in the city centre. The demonstrators in Diyarbakir shouted slogans in support of Abdullah Ocalan. The anti-riot police used tear gas and truncheons to disperse a group of several hundred people who wanted to organise a march at the end of the rally. Ten people were injured in the clashes and the police carried out a dozen arrests.

The Turkish authorities have, for several weeks past, prevented the PKK leader's lawyers from having any access to their client. According to Mrs. Aysel Tugluk, the authorities have "*put forward feeble excuses such as the bad weather or other things*" to refuse the lawyers requests to visit Imrali by boat — the only means of access to this island jail where Ocalan is the only detainee. The lawyers have not been able to meet Ocalan since 1 June last. At first it was the defence lawyers who had given up going to the prison in protest at the "*undemocratic*" practices of the authorities who tape-recorded their talks with Ocalan. "*But we have decided to talk to our client to discuss his defence*"

explained Mrs. Tugluk. For the first time in two months, A. Ocalan received a visit from his sister and his brother.

The instability in Kurdistan has increased following the announcement by the PKK in June 2004 that it was putting an end to its five-year unilateral truce. Four gendarmes were wounded by the explosion of a remote controlled mine in Sirnak province, the *Anatolia* press agency announced on 26 November, quoting local security sources. The mine had been placed by the side of a road, 8 Km from the gendarmerie garrison of the small town of Maden. The day before presumed Kurdish fighters are said to have attacked a police outpost in Idil (Diyarbakir Province) with anti-tank rockets. On 10 November a PKK Kurdish fighter was killed by the explosion of a mine that he is said to have tried to lay, in Tunceli province, according to the Governor of Tunceli, Mustafa Erkal. In the night of 1 November, two Turkish gendarmes, an Army auxiliary and a Kurdish fighter were killed in an attack of a gendarmerie position in Sirnak province. Four other troops were wounded during the attack, carried out by the PKK near the town of Uludere, pointed out these sources, adding that a vast security operation was taking place to hunt down the fighters.

On 1 November, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, evoked a "new era" with the United States in the struggle against the Kurdish fighters from Turkey, who have taken refuge in the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan. "*I can announce to*

you that we have begun a new era", he said when asked, during a press conference, whether the American ally had accepted to act against the PKK in the face of sharp criticisms from Ankara. Without wishing to give further details, the Minister promised that the results of this cooperation would soon be made public. "We can straight away harvest the fruits of cooperation against terrorism", he added. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan had recently warned that Turkey was at the end of its patience and launched a new appeal to the United States and Iraq for them to control the PKK, which was attacking Turkey from mountains in Kurdistan. Ankara has several times threatened to make incursions into this area to crush the armed PKK activists that have found refuge there. To Ankara's great displeasure, Washington has refused to take military measures against the PKK in Kurdistan, advancing the argument of the instability in the region.

• THE RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN IRAQ UNDER THE CLOSE SCRUTINY OF UNO AND THE NGOs.

A UN Supervisory Council has recommended that the United States reimburse Iraq some 208 million dollars for apparently excessive invoices paid to a subsidiary of Halliburton. The International Supervisory Council for the Development of Iraq has carried out an audit on the supply of oil products and the rehabilitation of oil infrastructures in Iraq by Kellogg, Brown and Root, a Halliburton subsidiary. It has opposed billings to the extent of 208 million dollars, about which

the Army's auditors had already expressed reservations. In a statement published on its Internet site on 5 November, the Council "*recommended that the amounts paid to the firms whose justification cannot be proved be promptly reimbursed*". Cathy Mann, the Halliburton spokesperson, pointed out that the audit cast doubt on the quality of the documents supporting the invoices, not the invoices as such. "*It would thus be totally false to say or insinuate that any of the costs incurred by the client are excessive*", she stressed.

The Supervisory Council is empowered to make recommendations but they have no compulsive force. The Iraqi oil account, called the Iraq Development Fund was, like the Supervisory Council, set up by the UN Security Council to supervise the management of Iraq's natural resources under the regime civil administration by the US. The Council of Supervision's mandate was extended after the taking of office by the Iraqi provisional government on 29 June 2004. In May, the Council noted "*with regret*" that the Pentagon's auditors had tried to hide over 200 million dollars of apparently excessive invoices concerning contracts paid with money from Iraqi oil and attributed, without prior tender, to Halliburton, a company of which Vice President Dick Cheney had previously been chief executive. The Pentagon's auditors had handed over to the Council documents fundamentally reworked, explaining that they had suppressed passages to protect trade secrets. The subsequent disclosure of a version that had not been reworked showed that the sup-

pressions had been effected to hide questionable invoices. In its recent statement the Supervisory Council indicates that "*the process of justification of these expenses is continuing*".

A report drawn up by American and British activists and published on 22 November, states that the multinationals will continue to plunder Iraq's oil resources if the Iraqi population does not protest against such practices. Oil is exploited in Iraq under an Agreement of Shared Production (ASP), encouraged by Washington and London, generates a substantial return on investment to the oil companies but deprives Iraq of 194 billion dollars, according to the report headed "*The Plundering of the Iraqi Oil Wealth*". "*Under the influence of the United States and of Great Britain, some politicians and powerful technicians in the Iraqi Oil Ministry are applying pressure to grant unexploited oil fields to the multinationals so that they can be exploited under the Agreements on Shared production*", states Greg Muttitt, the author of the report. Greg Muttitt is a research worker in the Platform collective, a London-based organisation that studies the social and environmental consequences of oil extraction.

Some ASPs have been in force for years in countries like Russia, Nigeria, or the United Arab Emirates, that allow the oil companies to make substantial profits. In his report, supported by humanitarian associations and think tanks, Muttitt estimates that the first motive of the "energy security" policy pursued by the United States and Great Britain in Iraq is to assure

them control of this oil supplying Gulf country. According to the report, the losses to Iraq caused by the ASP is of the order of 2,800 to 7,400 dollars per inhabitant over the 30 years life of such a plan. In comparison, the Iraqi GNP is 2.100 dollars per person. The report recommends that Baghdad resort to direct investments by the government, of borrowing from banks and multinational agencies to obtain foreign investment via more flexible and equitable contracts. But many analysts also consider that the ASPs, the contract most sought after in the oil industry, will allow Iraq to develop its immense oil reserves (the third largest in the world, after Saudi Arabia and Iran) more rapidly while accelerating the reconstruction of the country and return to investors. According to them, these contracts are the only ones liable to attract foreign experts in view of the country's instability. As might be expected, Muttitt's report has aroused the anger of Iraqi and Western leaders in the oil industry. "This is worthless" storms a Western leader. "The ASPs are a widespread means of protecting the producer country and creating the optimum conditions for the host government and the international oil companies".

Furthermore, the United Nations Programme for the Environment brought held the fourth meeting of donors involved in the project to rehabilitate the marshlands of Southern Iraq. This meeting, which lasted till 8 November, was aimed at making an assessment of progress co-ordinating the actions to follow. Monique Barbut, Director of the

Technology Division of the UNPE, three Iraqi Ministers and representatives of local authorities of the South of the country, took part in this meeting, chaired by the UNPE Executive Director Klaus Topfer.

Thanks to the action undertaken at the beginning of 2004, water has begun to return over 40% of the marshland area, which had been 90% dried out by the Saddam Hussein regime after the Shiite uprising in the region in 1991, Mr. Topfer pointed out. Efforts will now concentrate on access to the water, filtering it and making it drinkable, as well as sanitary installations so as to enable the population to return and resettle in the marshlands from which they had fled. According to the Iraqi Minister for water resources, Latif Rachid, about 70,000 people, who had sought refuge in the towns or neighbouring Iran, had returned to the region. "But it is impossible for us to encourage others as we have no infrastructure to provide for them: neither roads, nor water supply nor electricity nor health services" he explained. The drying out of the marshes by the Baathist regime, which had carried out massive drainage programmes and built dams on the Tigris and the Euphrates had reduced the marshland area from 9,000 Km² in the 70s to 760Km² when the regime fell in 2003.

For its part, the Japanese government decided, on 24 November, to cancel about 710 billion yen that was owed by Iraq. This represents about 80% of Baghdad's debt to Tokyo. This decision corresponds to the Paris Club agreement, made

in November 2004. It was made public on the occasion of a meeting in Tokyo between the Japanese Foreign Minister and his Iraqi opposite number Hoshiyar Zebari. The two Ministers exchanged notes on this Japan-Iraqi agreement, based on the Paris Club declaration of November 2004, which recommended 80% reduction of Iraqi debts. Members of the Paris Club hold about a third of Iraq's debts. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates the global amount of the Iraqi debt at about 120 billion dollars, excluding reparations due to Kuwait for the 1990 invasion and the 1991 Gulf War.

• **THE IFFA FACED WITH TURKISH INTOLERANCE AND FANATICISM.** On 28 November, the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) denounced a reference to the Kurdish language in the Section of Turkey in the 2006 Almanac of the International Federation of Football Associations (IFFA) and demanded that it be suppressed. The new almanac presents Kurdish as one of the two "official languages" of Turkey, according to a communiqué from the Federation. The document recalls that the Turkish Constitution only recognises a single official language — Turkish. "Reacting immediately to this edition, the Turkish Football Federation sent a letter to the President of the IFFA, Mr. (Joseph) Blatter, demanding a correction of this mistake, which is a vital question concerning (Turkish) national unity", the communiqué pointed out. The President of the TFF evoked an

"error" by the IFFA that had to be corrected.

The IFFA has also opened an enquiry into the hateful welcome given to the Swiss team during an encounter on 16 November in Istanbul. Video pictures on the tapes contained in the surveillance cameras at the stadium show scenes of punch-ups in the tunnel leaving to the changing rooms of the Istanbul stadium. The Swiss press, which talks of one of the "mist shameful matches between nations that are not at war", openly accuses the Turkish trainer, Fatih Terim, some leaders of the Turkish Football Federation and Mafiosi of deliberately organising it. The IFFA is going to demand that the Turks hand over these tapes, and if they have disappeared the penalties will be all the more severe. The events occurred after the whistle had blown to end the match, which decided qualification for the 2006 World Cup. The Swiss players had to dive into the tunnel leading to the changing rooms to avoid the missiles being thrown by the Turkish supporters. Photos published in the Turkish press showed the assistant trainer of the Turkish team, Mehmet Ozdilek, tripping up the Swiss midfielder player, Valon Behrami, on the field at the end of the match, followed by a kick at the official by the Swiss Benjamin Huggel. On 22 November the Turkish Federation announced the resignation of Mehmet Ozdilek, one of the two

assistant trainers of the Turkish Football team, following his involvement in the incidents. The TFF, its president Levent Biçalçı and Fatih Terim remain under fire from the critics. The Minister of Sport, Mehmet Ali Sahin announced that the inspectors attached to the Prime Minister's Office would be opening an enquiry into the Federation and, if necessary, he would fire the President.

According to the Swiss press, Fatih Terim, hired to ensure Turkey's qualification, used all his contacts to achieve qualification for the World Cup. During a decisive meeting on 13 November at Istanbul's Konrad Hotel, in the presence of the Deputy chief of the Istanbul police, it was decided to destabilise the Swiss from the moment they arrived at the airport.

Another leader of the Turkish Federation, Davut Disli, ensure the collaboration of two somewhat shady businessmen, linked to the head of the Turkish mafia, Sedat Peker. Red badges, giving access to the changing rooms were given to two men, Aydin and Kiratli, today accused of having violently attacked, or organised the attack on the cameramen present in the "tunnel of shame". The cameramen, who are afraid of giving evidence today, reported that the Turkish trainer and goalkeeper, Volkan, broke down the door to the referees room and tripped up the Swiss ref., Grichting, before kicking him in the testicles.

In an interview in 20 November issue of *Matin Dimanche*, the Turkish Ambassador to Switzerland, Alev Liloç, declared that he was "ashamed" when he saw the Swiss footballers fleeing into their changing rooms after the Swiss-Turkey match and that he expected "more hospitality" of the Turkish people. He also criticised his country's press. The Turkish Ambassador to Berne was disappointed to see hostile banners displayed at Istanbul Airport — an attitude he described as "shameful and unacceptable". Asked what he thought of the Turkish press that claimed that the first goal had been won on at the Airport he replied "That's filthy. A match is won on the playing field". The diplomat, however, did not feel that Turkey should make official apologies.

For its part, the Swiss Federal Councillor (member of the government) Micheline Calmy-Rey pointed out to *Matin Dimanche* that if the IFFA enquiry were to show that Turkish officials were involved in the excesses at the match then "she would commit herself officially". The Swiss Foreign Minister had not sent a note of protest nor summoned the Turkish Ambassador to Berne. She had written to her Turkish opposite number to express her astonishment and her concern following the incidents at the arrival of the Swiss team at Istanbul Airport.



3 NOVEMBRE 2005

Les avancées démocratiques de la Constitution inquiètent les Etats de la région.

Irak, entre urnes et terrorisme

Par KENDAL NEZAN président de l'Institut kurde de Paris.

Les Irakiens se sont approprié le processus politique mis en place par les Américains au lendemain du renversement de la dictature de Saddam Hussein. Pour la deuxième fois en un an une forte majorité d'entre eux a bravé les menaces terroristes pour se rendre aux urnes. Le référendum constitutionnel organisé avec le concours de l'ONU est incontestablement un succès. Il s'est déroulé sans incidents majeurs et le scrutin a été dans l'ensemble honnête. Le taux d'approbation de 78 % est considérable dans un système démocratique.

Elaboré par une assemblée élue représentant toutes les sensibilités politiques et religieuses et toutes les nationalités du pays acceptant le libre jeu de la démocratie, le texte constitutionnel est un compromis âprement négocié. Il ne satisfait pas entièrement l'électorat kurde qui réclamait un Etat clairement laïc et garantissant au peuple kurde le droit à l'autodétermination, même si la Constitution consacre le principe d'un fédéralisme, inspiré des modèles canadien, indien et suisse, et fait de la langue kurde l'une des deux langues officielles de la république dans tous les domaines de la vie et dans toutes les institutions. Mécontents, près d'un tiers des électeurs kurdes, notamment des jeunes et des femmes, ont malgré les appels de leurs dirigeants, boycotté le référendum.

Les chiïtes, dans leur majorité, rêvaient d'un Etat irakien où l'islam serait la source principale du droit. Au finale, l'islam est reconnu comme «*l'une des sources principales du droit*» et «*aucune loi ne peut contrevenir aux règles incontestées de l'islam*». Mais à la demande des élus kurdes et laïcs, il est stipulé aussitôt qu'aucune loi ne peut «*contrevenir aux principes de la démocratie*» et aux droits et libertés garantis par la Constitution, dont la liberté de croyance et de culte pour les non-musulmans. La possibilité d'organiser, par l'association de deux ou plusieurs provinces, leur propre gouvernement régional doté de vastes pouvoirs a convaincu les chiïtes de voter massivement en faveur de la Constitution.

Il en va tout autrement de la minorité arabe sun-

nite représentant moins de 20 % de la population. Gouvernant le pays depuis sa création par les Britanniques au nom du nationalisme arabe, elle s'accroche à l'idée d'un Etat unitaire centralisé dont plus de 80 % des Irakiens ne veulent plus entendre parler. Après avoir boycotté les élections de la Constituante, une bonne partie de ces sunnites réalisant l'inanité de la politique de la chaise vide a décidé de participer au processus. Une organisation, le Parti islamique, a même appelé à voter en faveur de la Constitution.

Restent les irréductibles baasistes qui se considèrent comme «*l'avant-garde révolutionnaire*» autoproclamée de la nation arabe et récuse toute idée de démocratie, invention occidentale qui, selon eux, sous prétexte de consulter les masses in-

La Constitution ne satisfait pas entièrement les Kurdes qui réclamaient un Etat clairement laïc et garantissant le droit à l'autodétermination.

cultes divise les rangs de la nation.

Leurs alliés islamistes radicaux du Comité des oulemas et de la branche irakienne d'Al-Qaeda considèrent, eux, les chiïtes et les Kurdes comme des «*ennemis de l'islam véritable*» au même titre que les «*croisés*» (chrétiens) et les sionistes. A défaut de satisfaire tous les Irakiens, la Constitution approuvée par la grande majorité d'entre eux, leur offre pour la première fois dans leur histoire un cadre institutionnel respectueux de leur diversité culturelle, linguistique et confessionnelle, garantissant les libertés fondamentales, et les droits des minorités et ceux des femmes qui incluent notamment un quota minimal de 25 % des sièges dans les assemblées et conseils élus.

Elle comporte aussi des contre-poids sérieux en accordant au Parlement le pouvoir de confirmation ou de rejet des nominations aux plus hauts postes civils et militaires. Primauté du pouvoir civil sur les militaires, Parlement doté de pouvoirs étendus, très large décentralisation de l'Etat, reconnaissance du caractère multiculturel, multiethnique et multiconfessionnel de la société et sa traduction politique en termes de droits, ce

sont là quelques-unes des avancées démocratiques de la Constitution irakienne qui, faut-il le rappeler, sont sans équivalent dans le monde musulman. Les minorités assyro-chaldéennes et turkmènes vont avoir des écoles et des médias dans leur langue, leurs partis et leurs institutions; les Kurdes, leur gouvernement régional et leur parlement, alors que dans les pays voisins (Iran, Turquie, Syrie), les quelque 30 millions de Kurdes, mais aussi les Azéris, les Baloutches, les Arabes, et les Turkmènes iraniens en sont privés. C'est dire combien l'exemple irakien suscite de vifs espoirs dans les populations du Proche-Orient et inquiète les gouvernements. Ces derniers réagissent par des moyens souvent inavoués pour faire échouer l'expérience irakienne. La Syrie accorde un soutien logistique quasi ouvert aux insurgés baasistes et jihadistes. L'Iran, engagé dans un bras de fer avec les pays occidentaux sur la question de son programme nucléaire, maintient plusieurs fers au feu. Ayant expurgé son Parlement de ses voix réformistes et dissidentes, cadencé les médias, l'Iran est, avec «*l'élection*» à la présidence d'un ex-chef des gardiens de la révolution, désormais prêt à donner toute la mesure de sa capacité de nuisance. La Turquie entretient à grands frais un front turkmène censé faire pièce aux ambitions kurdes et réactive le conflit avec le PKK pour se donner des prétextes à intervention en Irak.

Dans ce contexte régional hostile, on peut s'attendre à ce que les avancées du processus de reconstruction politique de l'Irak tardent à se traduire par des progrès de la pacification du pays. La transition des régimes totalitaires vers la démocratie dans les pays ex-communistes a pris une quinzaine d'années. Dans le cas de l'Irak, vu les enjeux stratégiques et l'hostilité du voisinage, l'enfantement de la démocratie risque d'être encore plus douloureux. ◀

Libérés de la tutelle de Bagdad depuis 1991, les Kurdes rêvent d'avoir leur Etat.

L'indépendance au cœur des Kurdes irakiens



Erbil envoyé spécial

Y penser toujours, mais n'en parler jamais. Ou le moins possible. Les dirigeants kurdes irakiens savent que le thème est très sensible, mais l'indépendance reste plus que jamais le souhait de la quasi-totalité des 4 millions d'habitants de ce territoire échappant depuis 1991 à la tutelle de Bagdad. La nouvelle Constitution irakienne relance le rêve. «Affirmer que l'indépendance est notre but à long terme signifierait qu'il y a un plan pré-établi. Mais dire que c'est notre droit est simplement rappeler une évidence», souligne prudemment Fuad Hussein, chef de cabinet de Massoud Barzani, le président du gouvernement régional du Kurdistan irakien. «La création d'un Etat reste l'objectif de tous les partis kurdes. Mais le rêve peut tourner facilement au cauchemar si l'on précipite les choses. Il nous faut donc être réalistes et comprendre quels sont les réels rapports de force», reconnaît Safeen Dizayee, cadre du PDK (Parti démocratique du Kurdistan), le mouvement de Massoud Barzani. L'autre grand parti kurde, l'UPK (Union patriotique du Kurdistan) de Jalal Talabani, l'actuel président irakien, développe peu ou prou le même argumentaire. Nul ne peut oublier les contraintes de la géopolitique régionale, alors que l'émergence progressive d'un Etat kurde en Irak inquiète aussi bien la Turquie que



A Erbil, un drapeau kurde à l'entrée d'un magasin, le 25 janvier, avant les premières élections libres en Irak.

l'Iran ou la Syrie, où vivent de fortes minorités kurdes. **Ebauche.** Le rêve s'affiche sur les murs des bureaux officiels où l'on voit souvent la carte d'un «Grand Kurdistan» s'étendant de la Méditerranée, au sud de la Turquie, jusqu'au golfe Persique, en territoire iranien. Ecartelés entre quatre pays, distincts de leurs voisins par la langue et vivant sur un territoire continu, les quelque 25 millions de Kurdes n'ont jamais, dans leur histoire, eu leur propre Etat. Le «Kurdistan du Sud» – c'est-à-dire le Kurdistan irakien –, comme l'appellent ses habitants, en est la première ébauche avec ses institutions politiques, ses lois et ses propres forces de sécurité, intégrées seulement formellement dans celles de l'Irak. «Nous bénéficions depuis 1991 d'une semi-indépendance. Mais il s'agit d'une si-

tuation de fait. La nouvelle Constitution irakienne va nous permettre pour la première fois de légaliser cet acquis, aussi bien au niveau irakien qu'au niveau international», explique Safeen Dizayee. Le nouveau texte affirme ainsi que «le gouvernement du Kurdistan est le seul gouvernement officiel dans le territoire qu'il administre». Les lois votées par le Parlement régional ont, au niveau local, la suprématie sur celles de Bagdad. Le contrôle des frontières est assuré par les combattants kurdes et aucun soldat irakien n'est déployé dans la région. Partout, on ne voit que le drapeau kurde. Le kurde obtient le statut de deuxième langue officielle du pays mais, de fait, reste la seule langue utilisée dans la région dans l'administration, l'enseignement ou sur les chaînes de télévision locales.

Repoussoir. Soutenue par les autorités kurdes, la nouvelle Constitution n'a pourtant guère suscité l'enthousiasme, notamment dans l'intelligentsia et parmi les jeunes. «Ils ont grandi après 1991 dans un territoire libre et ils regardent vers l'Europe ou les Etats-Unis. Pour eux, toute mention d'un lien avec Bagdad a un effet repoussoir certain», explique l'écrivain Ferhad Pirbal, qui, comme beaucoup d'autres, a préféré s'abstenir plutôt que de voter un texte «bien en retrait par rapport à nos espoirs». Il faisait partie du comité qui, en janvier, avait organisé, parallèlement aux premières élections libres en Irak, un référendum informel sur l'indépendance. Il y avait eu près de 80% de votants et 98% de suffrages favorables à un Etat indépendant.

Députée régionale de l'UPK, Khaman Asaad est, elle aussi, sceptique sur le texte constitutionnel. «Certes, il instaure un Etat fédéral, mais nombre des principes proclamés, notam-

ment le rôle de l'islam comme source de la législation irakienne, sont à l'opposé de nos valeurs, ce qui crée le risque de conflits permanents entre les juridictions nationales et régionales», souligne la jeune femme, qui regrette que les Kurdes aient dû finalement renoncer à une mention noir sur blanc de leur droit «à l'autodétermination». «Le

●●● mot ne figure certes plus dans le texte de la Constitution, mais il est stipulé très clairement que si ces normes (démocratiques) ne sont pas appliquées, l'unité de l'Irak n'a plus lieu d'être et chacune des parties a le droit d'aller de son côté», rétorque Safeen Dizayee. Il évoque notamment le cas de Kirkouk, revendiqué par les Kurdes comme leur capitale mais placé par l'ancien régime hors de la zone kurde, afin de garder le contrôle du pétrole. La Constitution prévoit ainsi le retour des Kurdes chassés par Saddam Hussein, le départ avec indemnisation des Arabes installés là, puis un référendum local sur un rattachement à la région kurde. Si l'Irak continue dans le processus de démocratisation, les Kurdes en seront partie prenante, tout en profitant de la situation pour construire progressivement un quasi-Etat. «Mais si, au contraire, des forces antidémocratiques, islamistes ou nationalistes arabes prennent le dessus, nous suivrons alors notre propre route», insiste le chef de cabinet de Barzani, convaincu que, pour la première fois, «les Kurdes ont en main un jeu gagnant». ◀

MARC SEMO

UN Council demands Syria's full cooperation

By Warren Hoge

UNITED NATIONS, New York: The Security Council passed by a unanimous vote Monday a resolution ordering Syria to give full cooperation to the UN investigation that has identified high-ranking Syrian security officials as suspects in the assassination of a former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik Hariri.

The sponsors of the resolution — Britain, France and the United States — obtained the 15-to-0 vote by agreeing at the last minute to drop the threat of sanctions against Syria in the original text.

The step was agreed on in negotiations before Monday morning's vote in order to gain the support of Algeria, China and Russia, which had signaled their intention to abstain if the sanctions clause remained in the text of the resolution.

The vote was given added weight by the fact that the session was a "ministerial" one, with foreign ministers of the 15 Security Council member states sitting in the ambassadorial chairs around the horseshoe-shaped panel and personally casting their countries' votes.

The vote forcefully stepped up international pressure on Syria's embattled president, Bashar al-Assad, and deepened his government's struggle to ward off increasing isolation.

The resolution orders Syria to take into custody and make available to the investigators people they suspect of involvement in the killing.

That provision in particular could pose a problem for Assad, a relatively inexperienced leader perceived as weak and vulnerable in the power politics of the Middle East.

Among the suspects are his brother, Maher Assad, and his brother-in-law, Asef Shawkat, the chief of military intelligence, who is considered the most powerful man in the country aside from the president.

The resolution calls on all states to impose a travel ban and asset freeze on anyone who is designated a suspect in the Hariri slaying. A committee made up of all 15 Security Council member states would be established to oversee these individual penalties and to rule on approving exceptions in such cases as religious travel.

The expected censure of Syria comes at a time when Assad's government has

been thrown on the defensive by a deeply incriminating report on the Hariri killing that was delivered Oct. 20 by Detlev Mehlis, the German prosecutor who leads the United Nations investigation.

Hariri, an opponent of Syrian domination of Lebanese politics, and 22 others were killed Feb. 14 when a bomb detonated in a Beirut street as his convoy passed. The murder was followed by large and angry demonstrations in Beirut against Syria, which had been obliged by a Security Council resolution last September to withdraw its troops and intelligence agents from Lebanon and end its 29-year control of Lebanese public life.

Washington has been keeping pressure on Damascus, accusing it of allowing insurgents to cross its border into Iraq and demanding that it close the of-

fices of militant Palestinian groups in Damascus and cease its longtime support for anti-Israel militant groups like Hezbollah.

Although the Middle East has been rocked by the war in Iraq and leaders there fear that turmoil in Syria could spill over into their countries, none of its neighbors have come to Syria's defense over the investigation into the Hariri killing.

This inability of Syria to enlist vocal defenders is reflected at the United Nations, where even countries on the Security Council that have trouble with some provisions of the resolution have not disagreed about the need to send Syria a stern message about its responsibility to cooperate with the investigation.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and other American officials have said they do not seek "regime change" in Syria but rather "behavior change." As an example, they point to Libya, where Colonel Muammar el-Qaddafi decided in 2003 to admit the existence of his weapons programs, agreed to dismantle them and thereby start to shed his country's pariah status.

Even for those wishing to see the removal of Assad, there is a fear that his successor could come from either one of his relatives or cronies in his regime of Alawites, a minority Muslim sect, or from the extremist Muslim Brotherhood, the most popular organization among Syria's majority Sunnis.

"For the first term of his presidency, the Bush administration had a long list of complaints about Syria that got longer after Iraq," said Flynt Leverett, a Middle

East specialist at the Brookings Institution who worked in the White House at the start of the Bush presidency.

"Since the second term started, I think they've been moving toward an undeclared policy of regime change, as long as it doesn't require too much effort by the United States," Leverett added. "It's regime change on the cheap."

In Damascus, Syrian officials complain that the United States has broken off communication with the country, pulling out its ambassador and generally not responding to Syrian concerns.

That silence has Syrian officials concerned that the American goal is to pull down the government, not to resolve the crisis. "What do you do if the other party won't talk?" Bouthaina Shaaban, the minister of expatriates, said Saturday.

To cope, Syria is conducting a campaign on several fronts.

It has reached out to the international community, including Arab leaders, trying with little success to promote the idea that it had nothing to do with Hariri's death. In that connection, Syria sent its deputy foreign minister, Walid al-Mualem, on a tour of Gulf states on Sunday.

On Saturday, Assad announced that he would set up a judicial commission to conduct Syria's own investigation into the assassination.

In another announcement, he said border agents would be more cautious about whom they permit into the country, a reference to Arabs who do not need visas and may be intent on infiltrating Iraq.

The New York Times

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune
November 1, 2005

L'ENTREVUE

Le conseiller québécois des Kurdes

En conseillant les Kurdes d'Irak au cours des tractations constitutionnelles pour fonder la fédération irakienne, André Poupart les a fait profiter de l'expérience du Québec au sein du fédéralisme canadien.

ANTOINE ROBITAILLE

Les Québécois, bientôt, envieront-ils les Kurdes d'Irak? Sur un strict plan constitutionnel, *«peut-être»*, s'amuse le juriste André Poupart, professeur de droit retraité de l'Université de Montréal.

Car, dans la nouvelle constitution fédérale, sur laquelle les Irakiens voteront en référendum samedi

qui vient, le 15 octobre, la «région» — équivalent de nos «provinces» — du Kurdistan, a obtenu un statut intéressant. André Poupart, qui, depuis 2001, a conseillé les Kurdes au cours de leurs tractations constitutionnelles et qui s'est rendu au Kurdistan irakien à plusieurs reprises, entre autres pour y enseigner le droit, se dit lui-même *«surpris»* du statut que cette minorité, terriblement opprimée jadis par Saddam Hussein, a pu décrocher.

Un des aspects intéressants, c'est selon lui sur le plan du *«partage des pouvoirs»*, qui détermine les champs dans lesquels chacun des paliers de gouvernement pourra agir. Au Canada, ce sont les célèbres articles 91 et 92 de la Constitution de 1867 qui fixent ce difficile partage; dans notre Dominion, le gouvernement central détient la part du lion.

En Irak toutefois, les régions ont réussi à mettre la main sur un élément important: le *«pouvoir résiduel, lequel, au Canada, appartient au fédéral»*. Autrement dit, toutes les juridictions non mentionnées par la constitution irakienne appartiennent aux régions. Texte à la main, André Poupart souligne que les régions ont aussi obtenu que, sur le plan des *«responsabilités partagées»* — comme l'éducation et les services sociaux —, *«la législation des régions aura préséance sur celle du gouvernement central»*. En somme, *«les régions kurdes ont plus de pouvoir que les provinces canadiennes»*, dit André Poupart en faisant remarquer qu'on aurait pu mettre fin au contentieux constitutionnel canadien en modifiant ainsi le partage des pouvoirs. Autre aspect intéressant pour les Kurdes: les ressources naturelles — autres que le pétrole... on aurait pu s'y attendre — *«deviennent propriété des régions»*. Notamment les rivières, que les Kurdes pourraient à terme exploiter, note Poupart.

Beaucoup à perdre

Le professeur se réjouit de ce nouveau statut des Kurdes. Surtout qu'ils avaient beaucoup à perdre. À la fin de la première guerre du Golfe, les Améri-



JACQUES GRENIER LE DEVOIR

André Poupart

cains les avaient laissés tomber, ce qui avait laissé le champ libre à Saddam Hussein pour commettre des pires exactions dans les rangs kurdes. Mais par la suite, avec la mise en place de la *«no fly zone»* (l'interdiction de voler au nord du 36° parallèle, mise en place par la communauté internationale), ils avaient vécu une expérience de *«totale indépendance de facto»*, dit André Poupart. Certes, ils n'étaient pas reconnus internationalement et leurs frontières se trouvaient bouclées, mais leur situation n'avait jamais été meilleure *«en 4000 ans»*, selon ce qu'écrivait le ministre de la Reconstruction, Nasreen M. Sadeek en 2002, dans le *Wall Street Journal*. *«Cette liberté [provisoire], les Kurdes d'Irak en ont tiré le meilleur parti, malgré des voisins qui ont tenté de les diviser et de leur nuire par tous les moyens»*, écrivaient dans nos pages, en août 2002, André Poupart et sa conjointe, la politologue Anne Legaré, de l'UQAM.

Les Kurdes ont en effet organisé des élections nationales et établi leur Parlement à Erbil, *«malgré une guerre civile et la division subséquente du territoire»*. Poupart ajoute que les Kurdes ont travaillé à améliorer leurs universités, ce qui donne à ce *«pays»* un air *«relativement moderne»*. En 2003, les Kurdes ont soutenu l'invasion américaine tout en s'accrochant à l'espoir que les Américains ne les trahiraient pas une deuxième fois. À défaut d'obtenir l'indépendance, une bonne partie d'entre eux revendiquait, avant même la chute de Saddam Hussein, que l'Irak devienne une fédération.

C'est ce qu'ils ont obtenu avec la constitution actuelle. Leur statut est officialisé et ils ont conservé pour l'essentiel les acquis de la période 1991-2003. De toutes les communautés kurdes, dont le malheur est d'être dispersées dans quatre pays (Syrie, Turquie, Iran, Irak), *«ils sont maintenant les mieux traités»*, note même Poupart. La division de l'Irak en trois pôles majeurs — sunnite, chiite et kurde — leur a en définitive permis de tirer leur épingle du jeu. *«En Irak, ils n'affrontent pas seulement une autre communauté et ils ne sont pas non plus dispersés dans le territoire»*, comme les Kurdes de Turquie par exemple.

Bagdad comme Ottawa

Mais rien n'est parfait. Sur le plan linguistique, d'abord, *«la solution actuelle n'est pas très avantageuse pour les Kurdes»*. Le kurde est bien reconnu comme

«langue nationale», mais le Kurdistan sera une «zone bilingue», alors que le reste du pays sera unilingue. «En plus, reste en suspend le statut linguistique de Bagdad: les Kurdes devraient réclamer que Bagdad soit un district bilingue. Comme Ottawa. Ça fait partie des choses non encore réglées.»

André Poupart a d'autres inquiétudes. Par exemple que, malgré tout, la constitution conduite à terme à l'édification d'une «dictature chiite». Comme on le sait, c'est là la communauté la plus peuplée en Irak, formant plus de 60 % de la population. «Or, une très grande majorité des décisions, une fois la constitution approuvée par référendum, vont se prendre à la majorité simple. Et les Chiites détiennent la majorité simple.» Pour l'instant, la division au sein des chiites permettra peut-être d'y échapper, dit-il.

Ensuite, une chose va atténuer de beaucoup la décentralisation du nouveau pays: le fait que le contrôle du pétrole soit entre les mains du gouvernement central. Soit, la constitution établit «des mécanismes pour distribuer la richesse du pétrole en fonction de la population, de la richesse des régions et aussi du traitement que chaque région a reçu à l'époque de Saddam». Malgré tout, «celui qui contrôle le pétrole contrôle le nerf de la guerre. C'est sans doute l'élément qui permettra au gouvernement central d'exercer une influence déterminante».

En outre, le statut de la ville pétrolière de Kirkouk, où Saddam Hussein mena plusieurs opéra-

tions de nettoyage ethnique pour la «dé-kurdiser», demeure imprécis. «Il va devoir y avoir un référendum pour déterminer si elle est kurde. Qui sera majoritaire à ce moment-là et comment pourront se faire les élections?» s'interroge Poupart. «Les Kurdes font tout actuellement pour ramener les personnes déplacées sur place, en leur offrant des logements et des conditions plus avantageuses.»

Il fait remarquer qu'un autre problème se posera avec le caractère fédéral du nouvel Irak: «les élites kurdes vont être partagées» entre Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan irakien et Bagdad, capitale fédérale. «Ils connaîtront une situation comparable à ce qu'on a vécu ici avec René Lévesque et Trudeau. Certaines élites seront à Bagdad, où elles diront que l'Irak est "le plus beau pays au monde" et qu'il faut collaborer avec le gouvernement central. D'autres, à Erbil, rêveront d'autonomie accrue.»

Charia

Enfin, André Poupart, qui a étudié ces dernières années le droit musulman, craint la place accordée à la charia dans la constitution irakienne, où elle est définie comme un «élément fondamental». Ce n'est «pas le seul élément fondamental reconnu, mais on se demande comment ça sera compatible avec un autre élément de la constitution qui est de réserver 25 % des postes de l'Assemblée nationale aux femmes», dit-il.

Le Devoir

Un scandale dans un orphelinat émeut les Turcs

TURQUIE

Un film diffusé sur la chaîne Star TV montre les brutalités subies par des enfants de moins de 6 ans dans un établissement de Malatya, au sud-est de la Turquie.

Istanbul

LES IMAGES tournées en caméra cachée et diffusées par la chaîne Star TV ont choqué les téléspectateurs turcs. On y découvrait une vingtaine d'enfants âgés de moins de 6 ans, brutalisés par leurs éducateurs dans un orphelinat de Malatya, au sud-est de la Turquie.

Les enfants terrorisés étaient frappés, projetés contre des meubles, condamnés à des punitions arbitraires et humiliantes.

Dès la fin du programme, plusieurs centaines d'habitants de Malatya scandalisés se sont rassemblés devant l'orphelinat, exprimant spontanément leur colère. « Qui va démissionner ? », interrogeait le quotidien *Hürriyet*, quelques jours plus tard. Dans le même temps, les ténors de l'opposition donnaient de la voix, appelant Nimet Çubukçu, la ministre chargée des Questions féminines également responsable du dossier de l'aide sociale, à se démettre. Au fil des jours, l'affaire

est donc devenue éminemment politique.

La partie émergée de l'iceberg

Pour l'opposition, le scandale de l'orphelinat de Malatya offre la triste illustration de la tentative de mainmise du gouvernement AKP islamo-conservateur qui, depuis son accession au pouvoir, il y a tout juste trois ans, n'aurait eu de cesse de placer ses amis, quitte à recruter des éléments sans qualifications : « Des directeurs dépendants de l'administration des services sociaux et de la protection de l'enfance (SHCEK) ont été démis de leurs fonctions et remplacés par des proches de députés, de direc-

teurs régionaux ou de conseillers ministériels sortis des écoles religieuses », accuse un rapport publié par le principal parti d'opposition (CHP) à l'issue d'une enquête menée à l'orphelinat de Malatya. Et de conclure : « Nous pensons que l'événement de Malatya n'est que la partie émergée de l'iceberg. » Le témoignage du directeur des services sociaux de Malatya, Yakup Güler, interrogé par le quotidien *Milliyet*, vient corroborer cette thèse : dans cette interview, le directeur confesse que deux députés de l'AKP lui ont proposé le poste qu'il occupait jusqu'à la semaine dernière, avant sa mise en accusation. Il té-

moigne : « Dans le passé, deux garçons sont morts à Malatya. Mais l'affaire n'a jamais été rendue publique... »

Pas question de démissionner

Le premier ministre, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, qui a concentré ses attaques contre la presse, accusée de vouloir faire justice elle-même, assure que les responsables seront sévèrement punis. Jusqu'à présent il est resté solidaire de sa ministre, Nimet Çubukçu, qui estime avoir agi « conformément à ses responsabilités » et assure qu'il n'est pas question pour elle de démissionner. Cependant, une nouvelle affaire vient d'être

rendue publique : elle concerne cette fois un pensionnat de jeunes filles de Sanliurfa. Plusieurs adolescentes, qui accusent leur directeur de harcèlement et de violences, assurent que la ministre a visité leur pensionnat le mois dernier, qu'elles se sont plaintes auprès d'elle des mauvais traitements subis... mais que leurs doléances sont restées lettre morte. Ces nouveaux témoignages donnent encore plus de poids à ceux qui ne cessent d'envoyer des messages d'alerte sur les progrès considérables à accomplir, en Turquie, dans le domaine des droits de la personne.

MARIE-MICHÈLE MARTINET

Barzani in Washington:

Turning point in Kurdish foreign relations



US President George W. Bush speaks to the press with Massud Barzani, president of the northern Iraqi Kurdish regional government, in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. AFP PHOTO/JIM WATSON

By Mohammed A. Abdulqadir
The Globe

“Recognition of current reality in Kurdistan”

Arbil- In an unprecedented event, Kurdistan Region President Massoud Barzani met with the US president George W. Bush in the Oval Office last Tuesday. Barzani headed to Washington two days before the meeting at the top of a high ranking Kurdish delegation.

The visit was done at the official invitation of the US government. During his 4 days stay in Washington, Barzani met with a number of US high ranking officials including Vice-president Dick Cheney,

State secretary Condoleezza Rice, and Defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld.

Bayan Sami Abdurrahman, KRG's representative to the UK, described the purpose behind Barzani's visit to Washington and London as "to strengthen the friendship between Kurdistan and the US and to discuss the situation in Iraq and how to go forward."

In a joint press conference after their meeting, Bush described Barzani as a "man of courage" and "a man who stood up to a tyrant." Barzani praised Bush's decision to wage the war against Iraq in 2003 as a "brave decision". "You have liberated a people from a dictatorial regime that has hurt a lot of the people," added Barzani

who wore his traditional Kurdish outfit and spoke in Kurdish. During the press conference, held after their meeting, Bush referred to Barzani as "President of Kurdistan Region."



Bayan Sami Abdurrahman

ional Government"; something that angered the Turkish government to the extent that

they called the American embassy's charge d'Affair in Ankara asking her to offer a formal explanation as to "whose president" Barzani is, the Turkish Daily Newspaper reported.

To the Kurdish observers the visit by president Barzani to Washington and his meeting with the high ranking US officials was more than an ordinary event. "This is recognition of the current reality in Kurdistan and its political institutions by the world's only super power," said Bukhari Abdulla, a professor in Arbil's college of politics. "This visit will put all those who believe in an iron-fist solution policy to Kurdish question in a serious crisis. It sends a clear message about the role and weight of Kurds in the regional politics."

Asked if this is not a

beginning set by the American government to establish a Kurdish state as some analysts argue, Bukhari replied "it shouldn't be interpreted that way and it doesn't mean that a Kurdish state should necessarily be an internationally-recognized political boundary in today's concept of state in the world, if you have an entity, no matter it's political, cultural or economic, you are a state."

He also described the visit as "historic" saying that "Mr. Barzani had visited Washington several times before, but this time he was officially invited as the President of Kurdistan Region."

Skepticism among people

People had different feelings about the meeting. "It made us very happy and excited and

showed that our struggle was not wasted," said Hemin Burhan, a university student. He also regarded the visit as the beginning of a new era for Kurdish diplomacy.

But others had a more skeptical view of the meeting and American policies toward Kurds. "We can not naively believe in America, because they have also betrayed us in the past for several times," said Rebaz Sa'eed, a shopkeeper from Arbil who believes Kurds need to get assurances from Americans about the future of their relations. "We have been left alone for several times by the west in the middle of the conflict, like 1975 and 1991, and should be more careful in establishing relations with them."

Jamal Ekhtiar contributed to this report

Troops in Iraq till violence ends

Kurdish President Mas-soud Barzani was in London Monday where he held talks with the British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Barzani who arrived directly from talks in Washington said that "any weakness" towards the insurgency

would endanger the whole region.

"If there is any weakness in dealing with this war, then the war will come to our doorsteps," Barzani said who also acknowledged that there were those in Britain, the

United States, and within Iraq itself who opposed the war.

Speaking after Downing Street talks with Barzani, Blair said multinational forces could leave the country tomorrow if the insurgency ended.

"If the violence stopped today, the multinational force could leave tomorrow. It is the violence that keeps us in order to support the political process," Blair said adding that the British troops will stay in Iraq until the insurgency ends.



National

Kurds unified in election

All main Kurdistan parties will participate in the upcoming election in Iraq using the same list of the last election of January except Kurdistan Islamic Union.

The Kurdistan parliament Speaker, Adnan Al-Mufti stated Thursday that the main Kurdistan parties will participate in the next election in Iraq via one list except the Kurdistan Islamic Union. "The Kurdistan list includes KDP, PUK, Communist Party, Turkmen parties, and Assyrian parties, and most of the other Kurdish parties," Mr Mufti said. "The next election scheduled at mid December, is very important since Sunni parties will participate heavily."

Kurdish president stated in Salahaddin Summer resort last week that the Kurdis-



The Kurdistan parliament Speaker, Adnan Al-Mufti stated Thursday that the main Kurdistan parties will participate in the next election in Iraq via one list except the Kurdistan Islamic Union.

tani list will take part in the election as previous election and rejected any cooperation with any list or party. "Perhaps the Kurdistan list will make cooperation with Iraqi parties," Mr Barzani said.

The Kurdistan Islamic Union declared last week that it will participate in the next election via an independent list and separated from the Kurdistan list. "The two main Kurdish parties KDP

and PUK neglected us and provided us with no ministry post in the Iraqi government in Baghdad," the statement of the party about this issue reads.

The Globe

Sistani will not support any political bloc

Media sources reported that Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the Shiite supreme spiritual leader will support no political wing in the upcoming elections in Iraq, PUK media reported Saturday. A representative of Al-Sistani in Friday mass prayer speech announced that the Shiite leader supports no political group in the upcoming elections next December.

Abdalmahdi Karbalayi, the representative, urged the Iraqis to participate actively in the elections, during his speech in the mass prayer in Karbala (about 120 km southern Baghdad) Friday. These releases



come at a time when the political parties and groups are preparing to participate in the next election in Iraq.

The Shiite spiritual leader supported the Shiite list in the last election and this won the list the majority of the seats in the Iraqi parliament in addition to the post of the prime minister.

The Globe

Time for the Kurds to unite together

By Baqi Barzani
The Globe

The Turkish government has deepened its imprint on the political and social fabric of Kurdistan, buying influence in the new Iraqi government, running intelligence-gathering networks and funneling money and arms to Turkish militant groups. Recep Tayyip Erdogan is openly interfering in the sovereign, internal affairs of a state, namely Kurdistan, in fomenting and instigating unrest and conniving with neighboring forces to suppress Kurdish movements in Kurdistan which, whether he likes it or not, exists as the country's legal representative. Sheer arrogance and hypocrisy would appear to be the two words best chosen to describe the attitude and external policy of Recep Tayyip Erdogan's of Turkey, a country which sees fit to export food unfit for human consumption and banned inside the Turkey

to Kurdistan and a country which says one thing and does another.

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan repetitive bullying to launch military strike under the pretext of dislodging PKK militants in Northern Iraq is sustaining evidence that the adjacent countries do not respect the acts of non-interference in internal affairs of another country explicitly in total contradiction with the principles of International laws.

Recep Tayyip recently asked the United States and Kurdish political leaders to take action against the PKK, or Kurdistan Worker's Party, which he and his government hold responsible for claiming 37,000 lives since 1984. It sounds too absurd! Had Turkey abandoned her repressive policies against Kurdish population, the PKK would never resort to militancy to fight for their national rights. Kurdish residents in southwest Turkey (Northern Kurdistan)

still live in sub-inhuman conditions, perpetual persecution and intense pressure. Turkey needs start dialogue with PKK representatives and solve this issue through peaceful and democratic means. Being incapable of unraveling the disarray within, does not justify Recep Tayyip to send threatening messages to Kurdish leadership. Iraqi President's proposition of "general amnesty" by Ankara for Turkey's Kurdish PKK members is the first step onto addressing that specific drawback.

We can perceive how defiant our antagonists are! It is tremendously relevant for us not to underestimate these threats, stay knowledgeable and improve our preparedness counter to any foreign encroachment. And the best defense is the creation of a robust and durable harmony among all Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan. The national unity should hold precedence than the interests of any individual, group or

political party in Kurdistan. It is time to leave behind our long-standing rivalries, discrepancies and disputes and direct our meditations only on constructive strategies to further achieve state propagation. Now that Southern Kurdistan has been liberated by infinite sacrifices and genuine efforts of all Kurdish compatriots, we should not let it wither away. Our envious enemies are busy weaving conspiracies how to impose a civil war and cause more bloodshed among Kurdish masses.

The enemies resorted to all modes of techniques including: nefarious propaganda, hypocrisy and fabrication but did not succeed in their ultimate goals i.e. take away our existing liberty, convince the Kurds to bear arms against their Kurdish brethren and lastly to see us under hegemony.

The international community has a responsibility to act against Turkey's intervention in the internal affairs of Kurdistan.

How will the international community deal with the region



Globe Chronicle

*While Iran and Syria under pressure by international community, Kurds in Iranian and Syrian Kurdistan have been active for their national-democratic rights. Kurdish people in Mahabad participated in a demonstration in their thousands to condemn the death sentence of a Kurdish detainee held by Iranian authorities. Since July this year hundreds of people are arrested, executed, or killed in Kurdish dominated cities by Iran Security forces. Syrian Kurdish parties have demanded the Syrian government to exert genuine and practical efforts to reform the current law for political parties and granting the Syrian nationality to Kurds. Thousands of Kurds were deprived of their Syrian nationality in 1962.

made a surprise visit to Damascus to defuse tension between Syria and the US. Egypt along side with Saudi Arabia is one of the close US allies and power broker in the region.

*At a conference on Wednesday entitled 'The World without Zionism' the Iran President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, called for Israel to be 'wiped off the map'. Ahmadinejad's remarks were condemned by the UN Security Council and states across the world. Having faced condemnation by the UN Iran's Foreign Ministry moved quickly to confirm that Iran has no intention to attack on Israel. 'The Islamic Republic of Iran is committed to its engagements based on the UN charter and has never resorted to, nor threatened to resort to force against another country', the foreign ministry stated. Ahmadinejad reiterated that 'we only repeated the words of the last 27 years which were the stance of the Imam, and the supreme leader and Islamic nation. It was very clear'. He further stated that 'today, under the pretext of the Gaza pullout, they want to force a few countries to recognize this [Israel] country. The ones who do that must know that they are standing in front of Islamic nations and that it is an unforgivable crime.'

*As the UN Security Council engaged in possible sanctions against Syria over Hariri murder, the Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister, Waleed al-Mualem was touring the Gulf on Sunday to secure Arab support. An investigation completed by the UN indicated the high ranking Syrian officials in the assassination of Lebanon's ex-premier, Dettlev Mchlis, leading the UN investigation, urged Syria to set up its own probe and to cooperate fully with international investigators. Syria denies any involvement in the murder and dismisses Mchlis's report as politicized. However, due to intense pressure by international community, Syria on Saturday announced that it was setting up its own enquiry into the assassination of Hariri. According to Reuters, a source from Syrian Foreign Ministry told that Syria would cooperate with the UN and UN investigators in Hariri murder case. As pressure increased by the US, Britain and France co-sponsored resolution threatening Syria with economic sanctions, the Egyptian President Hosni Mubarek

Iran's president remarks can be interpreted as accelerating those radical Islamic organizations resorting to violence in the region against both Israel and the US. Iran in order to defuse the US pressure on itself would likely to see the US to be further engaged in Iraq against insurgents and failure of Palestinian-Israeli peace settlement. This is why Iran's president downplays the importance of Israel's Gaza pullout in his remarks.

KRG urges EU to support new post-referendum Iraq



An Iraqi looks at a banner that reads: "No for a constitution that consolidates the foreign hegemony," in the city of Tikrit, north of Baghdad. AFP PHOTO/ DIA HAMID

Burhan Jaf, Kurdistan Government Representative to the EU in Brussels, hailed the referendum result in favour of the constitution. Mr Jaf said, "This is the first time in Iraq's tragic history that all the communities have taken part in the political process and decided on the future of the country."

Mr Jaf also welcomed the support given to the referendum result by Javier Solana, High Representative for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy. Mr Jaf added, "Now that a clear majority of Iraqis have voted in favour of the new federal, democratic constitution, which sets the framework for a federal, democratic Iraq, we hope that the EU and

the member states will accelerate their economic aid and political support for Kurdistan and the whole of Iraq."

Mr Jaf believes "that the time has come for the EU to have a Commission Office in Erbil, the capital of Kurdistan, as UN agencies and several European member states have already established consulates and offices there.

The constitution formalises the powers that the Kurdistan Government has exercised since 1992, when Kurdistan's political parties held an internationally-monitored election for seats in their regional parliament.

The Kurdistan Government views the constitution as a guarantor of the Kurds' autonomy

and ensures protection of their human rights. Under the former Ba'ath regime, the central government ruled most of the country through violence and repression, resulting in the mass graves that are being unearthed today. This constitution will hold Iraq together because it is based on a voluntary union, peaceful coexistence and mutual recognition between the different religious and national groups that live in Iraq. This, rather than the forcible centralised control of the old regime, will guarantee the unity of Iraq.

The President of the Kurdistan Region, Masoud Barzani, rallied the support of Sunni Arabs by agreeing to allow future amendments once

general elections are held in December and by accepting that Arabic would be an official language in Kurdistan.

Voters in Erbil, Duhok and Suleimani, the three provinces that form the Kurdistan Region, voted overwhelmingly in favour of the constitution.

Voters in the city of Kirkuk, which had been ethnically cleansed of Kurds by the Ba'ath regime, voted 'yes' by 63 percent.

Overall, 78 percent of Iraqi voters backed the charter and 21 percent opposed it. The turnout for Iraq as a whole was 63 percent of registered voters, more than the 58 percent turnout for national elections in January.

KRG



Chronicle

The Women of PKK

By Rebwar Karim Wali
The Globe

I had heard a lot about the women guerrillas in the PKK (Kongra-Gel) but never had a chance to talk to them. I was present at a press conference held by the PKK on the first anniversary of the end of their five-year ceasefire a few months ago.

What attracted my attention before the press conference began, was a large number of women guerrillas, an armed group regarded as a terrorist organization by both the United States and Turkey.

Turkey is continuously asking the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to expel this group from the Iraqi territory. Our visit to the PKK started in the Sargar district, a town near Ranya.

There was a giant picture of the former the PKK leader and its current spiritual leader Abdullah Ocalan fixed on a cliff, 15 kilometers outside the Sangar district. There were guerrillas on the road dressed in uniform. The PKK territory started there. Since we had no idea where we were going we were escorted by a car. Soon we were driving off road and past checkpoints manned by smiling PKK fighters.

At one point two women stopped our car and searched us. After a short break the guards apologized to us for the inconvenience and we continued onwards to the small village of Lewzheim the shadow of the Qandil mountain. The village was a PKK compound, which was decorated with another picture of the jailed leader, know lovingly by his followers as Apo.

The camp was staffed by an equal number of men and women, something quite rare

in Kurdistan given that politics is mostly a field run by men.

"Please come in," said one member. They took us to a room where there were two Iranian-made samovars. It was a tearoom. A small hall was alongside it. Beside the primitive tools there was a TV and a satellite net. A generator provided electricity. The NTV Turkish channel was on. Some guerrillas were listening to the news. There was a report about changing punishment laws in Turkey. The PKK members present in the room were watching the program carefully. They were also listening to some other news about their leader in prison.

I asked one of them Ghazal, why they listened to the Turks. She said with a smile, "We have no way out. Those guerrillas do not understand anything but Turkish. There are some who understand Arabic and Persian but it is important for us to know what the Turks are saying about us."

We had breakfast and then moved out of the room. We saw some small houses made of mud and surrounded by a big fence. A garden was also there. Some members of the group sat in the shade of the trees discussing the revolutionary theories of Apo.

Other journalists and I tried to hear what they were talking about. We approached one of them who seemed eager to talk to the press. For

him Apo was still the leader.

The 25-year-old man is from Kalar and, according to him, had no choice but to join the PKK. I was not interested too much in his theories. For a person like me, I was looking for news carrying around my camera. I was interested in the women.

Why and how do the PKK women live?

The guerrillas, men and women, dressed in guerilla uniform, exercised on a platform in the compound.

I wanted to talk to a woman but two other women gave her a gesture to be silent. I managed to speak to two other women nicknamed 'Barxodan' and 'Tekoshin.'

One of them, Barxodan, had a lot of white hair. The skin of her face was wrinkled. She seemed to be a 40-year-old, child-bearing woman although she said she was 29-years-old. She did not have the beauty of the urban women I know.

I asked her why she became a guerrilla. She said she was affected by her friend's funeral in Mardin in 1993, who was killed by the Turkish army. Her story was simple. I found later that they all had similar stories and they all fought in the name of freedom. I look at Tekoshin, was a 27-year-old short girl from Afrin. I did not ask her why she became a guerrilla since I assumed she was going to give me the same answer. What was important for me to know was how why she gave up getting married and raising children. Why did she choose to struggle for the freedom of Kurdistan.

Looking closer at her I noticed she had trimmed her eyebrows and used makeup. I asked her why she was paying attention to her beauty. She said Apo told them to keep themselves beautiful in order to like the surroundings. I asked her whether she felt like a woman. She did not understand my question. She smiled and said, "My hair is long so I am female." I answered that her guerilla uniform is for men and that she looked like a man.

She said she was a guerilla. She said she fought for the freedom of women. I could not stop from telling her what I thought: I told her, "You are female You

are living among men. How can you keep from not having sex?"

She seemed shy and turned red. She looked down and then looked at her friend. They both smiled. Their smiles had many meanings for me. In order to avoid making them feel embarrassed, I changed my question and I said they needed to have a family and make children.

"If we make families we cannot keep struggling, we do not follow our counterparts to live in the cities and look after children," she said. I asked her if it is possible for them to have a family in the mountain. She said any women who have children cannot join the PKK.

While she was talking to me, she kept an eye on her gun. I asked her if she could kill a person. She stopped for a while and hesitated. She seemed to not know how to answer the question

"If I see a friend of mine killed I can kill the murderer. I do not think I have killed anyone despite my participation in some fighting," she said.

I did not like to keep asking them questions because I noticed a young man standing by us. Tekoshin looked at him several times.

The conversation continued despite his presence. She said she did not follow a formal education because, in her country the classes were in Arabic.

"I would have liked to study in Kurdish," she said in answer to my comment that struggle can be also be done through the power of a pen and not only a gun. I asked her why she did not study in Kurdistan where study is in Kurdish language. She said she was studying in the compound every morning.

I felt she got tired of this long conversation and did not like my questions. She was in a hurry to get back to her friend so she shook my hand and left me.

The press conference was about to start. I moved slowly and passed by an Arab woman sweating and breathing heavily. In my broken Arabic I asked her if she thought this place was nice.

"It is nice No electricity and No Americans," she said.

”

I asked one of them Ghazal, why they listened to the Turks. She said with a smile, "We have no way out. Those guerrillas do not understand anything but Turkish. There are some who understand Arabic and Persian but it is important for us to know what the Turks are saying about us."

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A number of women guerrilla fighters march in this file photo. Turkey is continuously asking the Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Regional Government to expel this group from the Iraqi territory. Our visit to the PKK started in the Sargar district, a town near Ranya.

TIR GROUPÉ DE L'ONU SUR LA SYRIE

Une résolution votée hier à l'unanimité force le pays à coopérer à l'enquête sur la mort de Rafic Hariri.

est désormais placée devant un texte qui non seulement lui fixe des obligations mais in-

La résolution oblige la Syrie à placer en détention les personnes suspectées par la commission d'enquête.

New York de notre correspondant

Tout faire pour obtenir l'unanimité. La France, les Etats-Unis et la Grande-Bretagne ont rallié hier l'ensemble des quinze pays membres du Conseil de sécurité à leur projet de résolution exigeant de la Syrie une coopération «inconditionnelle» à l'enquête sur la mort de

l'ancien Premier ministre libanais Rafic Hariri. La formulation des menaces de sanctions économiques a été atténuée pour convaincre la Russie, la Chine et l'Algérie de l'approuver, mais le message reste «fort», pour reprendre le terme martelé par les onze ministres des Affaires étrangères présents lors du vote.

Le texte s'appuie sur les conclusions de l'enquête confiée par l'ONU au procureur allemand Detlev Mehlis, qui implique des responsables syriens dans l'assassinat de Rafic Hariri et soupçonne, dans une version préliminaire, des membres de la famille du chef de l'Etat Bachar el-Assad. La semaine dernière, Detlev Mehlis, plus tranchant que dans ses conclusions écrites, a

déclaré devant la presse que l'assassinat «avait été organisé par des officiels de sécurité syriens et libanais». Dans son rapport, le procureur allemand déplorait l'obstruction de la Syrie à son enquête. La résolution adoptée hier oblige la Syrie à placer en détention les personnes suspectées par la commission d'enquête et à les rendre «pleinement disponibles» pour des interrogatoires. La commission doit être libre de questionner toute personne de son choix, à l'intérieur ou en dehors du pays. Le texte interdit

aux suspects de voyager à l'étranger et exige le gel de leurs avoirs.

La résolution se place sous le chapitre 7 de la Charte des Nations unies qui prévoit des sanctions économiques si un pays incriminé ne remplit pas ses obligations. Une référence précise à ces sanctions a été retirée du texte, la formulation s'en tenant à la menace de «considérer des actions supplémentaires», mais l'allusion est claire. A la demande de l'Algérie, la résolution reconnaît en outre l'intention récemment exprimée par la Syrie de «coopérer à présent avec la commission».

Pour les Etats-Unis et la France, l'essentiel était d'éviter l'abstention de certains pays. «On a travaillé tard dimanche avec les Russes, les Chinois et les Al-

gériens, raconte Douste-Blazy, ministre des Affaires étrangères, présent hier à New York. *L'accord s'est fait par touches successives. Rien de ce qui était pour nous au-delà de la ligne rouge n'a été enlevé du texte.*» Rendez-vous est pris le 15 décembre, a dit le ministre, lorsque Mehlis achèvera la nouvelle étape de son enquête. L'adoption de la résolution démontre le succès du tandem franco-américain dans la gestion ce dossier. Le processus s'est effectué en deux temps. Les deux pays, soutenus par la Grande-Bretagne, se sont d'abord mis d'accord sur un projet de texte équilibré, la France réussissant à contenir les ardeurs américaines et les Etats-Unis imposant un rythme rapide de négociation. La deuxième étape s'est précisée dimanche soir, avec le ralliement de tous les pays. La Syrie

carne la volonté de l'ensemble de l'ONU, y compris son allié traditionnel, la Russie, et un pays arabe, l'Algérie. Réagissant au vote devant le Conseil de sécurité, le chef de la diplomatie syrienne, Farouq al-Shara, a assuré que la coopération de son pays à l'enquête était «complète» et a déploré que la résolution s'appuie sur le rapport Mehlis qui repose selon lui sur la «présomption» de la culpabilité syrienne. Il a ensuite accusé les services secrets américains, espagnols et britanniques de ne pas avoir prévenu leurs populations des attentats qui se préparaient sur leurs sols, s'attirant des répliques outrées de ses homologues occidentaux. ◆

LAURENT MAURIAC

Joseph Maïla, spécialiste du Moyen-Orient, détaille l'impasse politique dans laquelle se trouve le président Assad:

«A moyen terme, les chances de survie du régime vont s'affaiblir»

Joseph Maïla est politologue, spécialiste des questions du Moyen-Orient et de l'Islam. Il dirige actuellement le Centre de recherche sur la paix, à Paris. **Comment expliquez-vous que le régime de Bachar el-Assad ait pu commettre un tel acte, l'assassinat de Hariri, alors qu'il subissait déjà de fortes pressions de la part de la communauté internationale?**

Il y a eu de la part du régime

une erreur d'appréciation majeure. Il s'est dit que lors des précédents assassinats politiques, tout était rentré dans l'ordre. Depuis la seconde guerre du Golfe, il n'a pas très bien compris que les Etats-Unis n'étaient plus une puissance occidentale mais une puissance proche-orientale. En même temps, Hariri le gênait énormément. Non seulement, il s'opposait au renouvellement du mandat du président libanais Emile La-

houd, mais surtout il pouvait, de par les rapports qu'il entretenait avec différents dirigeants occidentaux, influencer la prise de décision internationale. Ce qui était inadmissible pour la Syrie.

Pensez-vous que Washington veuille la tête de Bachar el-Assad?

Jusqu'à présent, il y a une thèse qui dit: ne touchons pas à la Syrie parce que le fondamentalisme va déborder et parce

que l'Amérique est déjà présente en Irak. Elle ne peut pas se battre sur deux fronts. En même temps, les Américains montrent de plus en plus de nervosité. Beaucoup de néo-conservateurs pensent qu'il faudrait privilégier l'option d'un changement de régime, que la Syrie n'est pas réformable. Voilà des années que Bachar el-Assad promet des réformes et ne fait rien. A propos de la mort de Ghazi Kanaan, le ministre de l'Intérieur syrien qui se serait suicidé il y a deux semaines, il existe une hypothèse qui dit que ce général préparait un complot. Effectivement, il aurait pu participer à un coup d'Etat. Mais je ne sais pas s'il aurait pu en être

le bénéficiaire, il lui manquait une véritable assise populaire. Le problème, pour les Etats-Unis, c'est que si l'on renverse ce régime, on ne sait pas par quoi le remplacer.

Quelle stratégie peut adopter Assad ?

Sa marge de manœuvre est extrêmement réduite. S'il persiste dans son attitude de dénégation et choisit de ne pas réellement coopérer, nous sommes dans un classique du baasisme: la refondation de la légitimité sur l'intransigeance. Mais cette stratégie présente des risques: la Syrie serait encore plus isolée sur la scène internationale. Elle ne peut pas se le permettre. Pendant longtemps, le président libyen

Khadafi avait pratiqué la stratégie du bunker. Il a fini par céder. Etant donné le contexte international de lutte contre la terreur, je ne vois pas ce que Bachar peut offrir d'autre qu'une reddition en rase campagne.

Quelles sont les chances de survie du régime syrien ?

A court terme, elles sont grandes. On ne voit pas par qui il pourrait être remplacé. Mais, à moyen terme, sur un an, un an et demi au maximum, ses chances de survie vont s'affaiblir. D'une part, il entretient des rapports difficiles avec ses voisins, que ce soit l'Irak, la Turquie, la Jordanie ou le Liban. D'autre part, il ne peut plus exploiter les divisions de la scène

internationale comme il l'avait fait pendant des décennies. Enfin, la carte palestinienne est désormais peu jouable, les groupuscules radicaux qu'il abrite étant peu représentatifs. Sur le plan interne, entamer des réformes, c'est risquer un éclatement de tout le système. Si la Syrie entreprend une réelle ouverture, la première chose que demanderont les opposants, qui sont par ailleurs en train de s'unir, c'est l'instauration du multipartisme. A partir de là, on entre dans un engrenage difficilement contrôlable. Cela rappelle une partie d'échecs où le roi meurt, car il n'a plus de possibilité de bouger. ◀

Recueilli par ISABELLE DELLERBA

Comment le régime syrien soutient la rébellion sunnite en Irak

Après avoir laissé pénétrer des combattants étrangers en Irak, la Syrie a renforcé son contrôle à la frontière. Mais les Américains fustigent toujours le double jeu de Damas.

De notre envoyé spécial à Damas

LES SYRIENS jurent avoir pris « toutes les dispositions » pour sécuriser leur frontière avec l'Irak. Faux, répondent les Américains qui dénoncent les « demi-mesures » de Damas. Qui dit vrai ? Les 700 kilomètres de désert entre les deux pays sont une passoire depuis longtemps. A la contrebande de cigarettes exploitée par les tribus, s'est ajouté depuis la guerre en Irak le passage des armes et des combattants étrangers. Juste après le conflit, les infiltrations avaient pour théâtre la région d'Abou Kamal sur l'Euphrate.

« Les djihadistes utilisaient le lit du fleuve pour entrer en Irak, y compris avec des véhicules », affirme un observateur. Côté syrien, jusqu'à la fin 2004, aucune présence humaine n'était notée dans le secteur. De leur côté, les Américains se limitaient à une surveillance électromagnétique, insuffisante pour repérer les passages clandestins. Aujourd'hui, du côté syrien de la frontière, la sécurité a été renforcée, mais la barricade de fils de fer barbelés reste insuffisante. A certains endroits, elle est aplatie, à d'autres, elle est arrachée

ou engloutie dans le sable.

Au cours des mois qui ont suivi la prise de Bagdad par les Américains en 2003, Damas a d'abord fermé les yeux sur les infiltrations de combattants étrangers depuis son territoire. Politiquement, le dossier est alors confié à l'ancien numéro 2 du régime, Abdel Halim Khaddam, un sunnite qui noue des contacts avec les tribus sunnites d'Irak, vivier de la rébellion.

En même temps, Damas abrite des responsables baasistes irakiens en fuite, qui vont alimenter l'insurrection en hommes ou en argent. Juste avant la guerre, les Syriens s'étaient réconciliés avec leurs frères ennemis, pour les utiliser comme une carte contre des Américains qui haussent le ton contre Damas. Le service des renseignements militaires, dirigé par Assef Chaoukat, beau-frère du président Bachar el-Assad, s'appuie sur deux réseaux d'agents en Irak. Le premier est dirigé par un tandem constitué de Mohammed Younés al-Hamad, l'un des chefs de la guérilla qui va et vient entre l'Irak et Damas, et de Fawzi al-Rawi, un Irakien réfugié en Syrie depuis trente ans pour cause d'opposition à Saddam Hussein. Le second réseau, plus autonome, est regroupé autour des partisans de l'ancien numéro deux du régime de Saddam, Ezzat Ibrahim al-Douri, dont le fils est un des principaux inspirateurs de l'insurrection anti-américaine en Irak.

Pendant ce temps, à l'aéroport de Damas, les djihadistes arrivent d'autant plus facilement des pays arabes qu'ils n'ont pas besoin de visa d'entrée en Syrie. A Alep, un imam radical encourage les fidèles au djihad.

Gros poissons expulsés

« Ce cheikh était en fait payé par un service de renseignement auquel il fournissait le nom des jeunes qui partaient en Irak », affirme un expert qui expose le double jeu de Damas. « Ceux qui revenaient en Syrie se faisaient arrêter par les Syriens, qui pouvaient dire ainsi aux Américains : regardez, on fait des efforts. »

Tous les djihadistes qui s'infiltrèrent en Irak ne sont pas sous commande syrienne. Peu à peu, Damas découvre qu'à leur retour, certains ramènent clandestinement des armes. En Syrie, d'autres reçoivent un appui logistique d'islamistes, ennemis jurés du régime. Celui-ci redoute la déstabilisation interne. Les menaces américaines redoublant, Damas durcit le ton. Fin 2004, les gros poissons du régime Saddam sont priés de trouver une nouvelle terre d'asile. De leur côté, des centaines de djihadistes vont être appréhendés (à ce jour, 1 046 ont été renvoyés dans leur pays). A cette époque, un muret est édifié le long de la frontière, et un nouveau dispositif de sécurité est mis en place. Officiellement, aujourd'hui, 10 000 gardes-frontières sont dé-

ployés face à l'Irak, et 541 positions ont été établies. Ces chiffres sont sans doute grossis.

« Ils ont environ 3 000 hommes », affirme un expert qui a recensé 82 positions, tous les deux kilomètres, entre Abou Kamal et la zone dite des trois frontières, un autre lieu de passage des djihadistes, aux confins de la Jordanie, la Syrie et l'Irak. Manque de moyens ou nouvelle preuve de duplicité ? Les gardes-frontières, qui sont quatre par position, ne disposent d'aucun équipement de transmission.

« Le double jeu syrien existe, reconnaît un diplomate occidental, mais sans doute pas autant que les Américains le prétendent. » Sous pression, les Syriens ont demandé des caméras de visions nocturnes aux Américains et aux Britanniques, mais le matériel sensible leur a été refusé. De la même manière, ajoute ce diplomate, « les Syriens ont raison de dire que les Irakiens ne font rien pour contrôler leur côté de la frontière ». Les bataillons syriens évacués du Liban n'ont pas été redéployés dans le désert face à l'Irak. Au préalable, Damas voudrait que les Américains reconnaissent leurs efforts antiterroristes. « Les services syriens pensaient qu'en jetant de l'huile sur le feu en Irak, ils pousseraient les Américains à négocier avec eux », explique un Irakien réfugié à Damas. Ils se sont trompés », conclut-il.

GEORGES MALBRUNOT

LE FIGARO

1^{er} novembre 2005

A diplomatic victory in the warning to Syria

It was wise of the Bush administration to choose multilateral diplomacy over divisive belligerence Monday in the UN Security Council's vote on Syria. As a result, the council sent a strong and unanimous demand that Damascus stop stonewalling the inquiry into last February's murder of the former Lebanese prime minister, Rafik Hariri.

The resolution also set up a mechanism for applying future international pressures on those charged with complicity in the Hariri killing until the case has been fully resolved. These pressures, in the form of asset freezes and travel bans, would not start automatically but would be

considered by council members as they became appropriate.

That was part of the price that the United States and its co-sponsors, France and Britain, had to pay for the votes of Russia, China and Algeria. Those countries can show their good faith by not using the review process to shield further Syrian intransigence.

The killing of Hariri and 22 others was an act of international terrorism and a blatant intervention in the political life of a sovereign state.

Last month's report by a UN investigating committee makes it clear that all the available evidence points toward high-level Syrian involvement in the Hariri murder and that

Syrian officials, while pretending to cooperate, have been deliberately misleading the investigators. The Security Council resolution echoes and endorses these themes.

Council members must now follow through on the logic of these findings. Syria's president, Bashar Assad, cannot relish the thought of bringing Hariri's murderers to justice. Given the narrow nature of the Syrian dictatorship, the guilty parties most likely include his top political associates, probably even members of his own family.

Only concerted international pressure, backed, if necessary, by sanctions against the Syrian regime itself, will force Assad to stop obstructing the investigation. All 15 members of the Security Council know that. They should be prepared to increase the pressure as required to bring Hariri's killers to justice.

Iraq calls for former officers to rejoin army

By Edward Wong

BAGHDAD: The Iraqi government issued a broad call Wednesday for the return of officers from the disbanded army of Saddam Hussein. The move was a major step aimed at trying to drain the insurgency of military recruits and bolstering the nascent Iraqi force being trained by the Americans.

The Defense Ministry said in a written statement that all former officers who had held the rank of major or lower could go to recruitment centers in six cities across Iraq throughout November.

The ministry has been quietly recruiting ex-officers for more than a year, but the announcement marks the first time it has put out a widespread call for the return of former soldiers.

American and Iraqi officials say a core part of the insurgency, which has grown stronger and more sophisticated since the start of the guerrilla war, is made up of members of Saddam's military.

The move by the Defense Ministry is also the most public repudiation yet of the American policy to disband the old Iraqi Army, which was instituted by L.

Paul Bremer 3rd, the American proconsul, within days of his arrival in Iraq in May 2003. Many American commanders and military analysts have said that the dissolving of the 400,000-strong Iraqi Army fueled the insurgency and deprived the country of a force that could help restore order.

The move is a repudiation of the U.S. policy on the old army.

In its statement Wednesday, the Defense Ministry said it "calls on the officers in the former Iraqi Army who wish to return to service in the new Iraqi Army to serve their precious country."

A Defense Ministry spokesman, Saleh Sarhaan, said in an interview that the ministry needed the expertise of former officers. "We're trying to carry out big operations against the terrorists, such as sealing the borders of Iraq," he said.

In recent months, many American of-

ficers have acknowledged that it will be years before the Iraqi Army is capable of fighting the insurgency on its own.

General George Casey Jr., the top American commander in Iraq, told the Armed Services Committee of the U.S. Senate in September that only one Iraqi battalion was able at the time to fight and operate without the aid of the American-led forces.

The government's call came during a surge in violence at the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. Officials said at least 30 Iraqis died in attacks across the country, the deadliest in the town of Musayyib, where a suicide bomber in a minivan packed with explosives killed at least 19 people and

wounded 61 near a Shiite mosque.

The U.S. military announced the deaths of four troops, two in a Marine helicopter crash in western Iraq that may have resulted from insurgent fire. The helicopter, an AH-1W Super Cobra, went down near Ramadi, 95 kilometers, or 60 miles, west of Baghdad and the capital of hostile Anbar Province.

Colonel Dave Lapan, a Marine spokesman, said the cause of the crash

was unclear. But there were strong indications that the helicopter had been brought down by insurgents: A Marine Corps F-18D fighter jet dropped two 225-kilogram, or 500-pound, bombs on "a reported insurgent command center" just 500 meters, or 1,640 feet, from the helicopter crash site, said Captain Jeffrey Pool, another Marine spokesman.

The other two American deaths announced Wednesday, those of a marine and a sailor, occurred Tuesday in Ramadi, when insurgents attacked an American vehicle with a roadside bomb, the military said.

The car bombing in Musayyib, south of Baghdad, took place near a Shiite mosque that was attacked by a suicide bomber last July. The earlier attack killed at least 71 people and stirred outrage across Iraq, especially among Shiites.

The explosion Wednesday occurred as Iraqis were going home to celebrate the start of Id al-Fitr, the three-day festival that marks the end of Ramadan.

The New York Times

Dexter Filkins, Qais Mizher and Ali Adeeb contributed reporting.

L'Iran procède à un vaste remaniement diplomatique

Celui-ci intervient alors que les tensions se multiplient au sujet de son programme nucléaire

ALORS que s'approche l'échéance de la réunion, le 24 novembre, du conseil des directeurs de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA), qui pourrait décider d'un transfert du dossier du nucléaire iranien au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, les échanges entre Téhéran et les capitales occidentales se sont faits, mercredi 2 novembre, encore un peu plus acrimonieux.

Après avoir créé le scandale, il y a une semaine, en appelant à « rayer Israël de la carte », le président iranien ultraconservateur, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a commencé à procé-

der à un remaniement des représentations diplomatiques de l'Iran dans de nombreux pays, dont la France et la Grande-Bretagne. Ces deux pays, aux côtés de l'Allemagne, tentent, en vain, depuis des mois, de convaincre Téhéran de renoncer à un programme d'enrichissement d'uranium, en échange de propositions économiques. Une quarantaine d'ambassadeurs et de chefs de mission diplomatique iraniens seront rappelés à Téhéran d'ici mars 2006, a annoncé le ministre iranien des affaires étrangères. Si l'information n'a pas surpris les

chancelleries occidentales, qui s'attendaient à des changements de personnel après la prise de fonctions, en août, du nouveau dirigeant iranien, elle confirme la crispation du régime des mollahs dans ses rapports avec le monde extérieur.

INJONCTIONS EUROPÉENNES

Dans le dossier du nucléaire, Téhéran a manifesté un nouveau refus de céder aux injonctions des Européens, en faisant savoir, par une déclaration auprès de l'AIEA, que les équipes iraniennes commencent prochainement de nouvelles

activités de conversion d'uranium sur leur site d'Ispahan. L'Iran a parallèlement voulu envoyer un signal plus coopératif, en autorisant, depuis quelques jours, des visites d'inspecteurs de l'AIEA sur un site militaire à Parchine. Toutefois, on estimait, de source française, que ce geste iranien ne changeait pas fondamentalement la donne, les modalités de ces visites étant encore peu claires, et d'autres sites sensibles demeurant interdits d'accès.

La France a réitéré, mercredi, que, faute de coopération satisfaisante de la part de l'Iran, une saisine du Conseil de sécurité pourrait intervenir. Cette mesure peut en principe – à condition d'avoir l'assentiment de la Russie, fortement impliquée dans le programme nucléaire iranien – ouvrir la voie à des sanctions contre Téhéran. Mais, du point de vue français, le recours au Conseil de sécurité, s'il a lieu, doit en priorité consister à donner plus de poids aux démarches de l'AIEA, et non à déclencher un mécanisme de sanctions. Le ministre français des affaires étrangères, Philippe Douste-Blazy, a déclaré mercredi, devant l'Assemblée nationale, que, le 24 novembre, « il y aura de la part de la France à la fois une fermeté, mais également une recherche de l'unité de la communauté internationale ».

Le premier ministre britannique, Tony Blair, a affirmé, le même jour devant la Chambre des Communes, que « personne ne parlait de menace militaire ni d'invasion » de l'Iran. Téhéran, a dit M. Blair, « doit réaliser que la communauté internationale ne peut tolérer un comportement qui soutient le terrorisme », ou des programmes visant à doter le pays de l'arme atomique.

A Téhéran, un engin explosif de faible puissance a explosé, mercredi, devant des locaux de compagnies britanniques. C'est le deuxième incident de ce type depuis août.

Natalie Nougayrède



VAHID SALEMI/AP

Manifestation antiaméricaine à Téhéran

DES MILLIERS d'étudiants et d'écoliers se sont rassemblés, mercredi 2 novembre, devant les anciens bâtiments de l'ambassade des Etats-Unis à Téhéran. Ils ont célébré le 26^e anniversaire de la prise d'otages

de 52 diplomates américains, après la prise d'assaut de leur ambassade, le 4 novembre 1979. Les otages furent détenus pendant 444 jours par des « étudiants » islamistes se réclamant de l'imam Khomeiny.

L'Irak fait appel aux ex-officiers de Saddam Hussein

BAGDAD. Dans un communiqué publié, mercredi 2 novembre, à la veille de l'aïd Al-Fitr, la fin du ramadan, le ministre de la défense, Saadoun Doulami, un sunnite, a invité les commandants, capitaines et lieutenants de l'ancienne armée irakienne à rejoindre les forces de sécurité. L'armée de Saddam, démantelée par l'administrateur américain Paul Bremer en 2003, comptait 400 000 hommes. La nouvelle armée est aujourd'hui forte de plus de 100 000 hommes et a besoin de se renforcer face à l'insécurité croissante.

Vingt et un irakiens ont été tués, mercredi, dans un attentat antichute, à Moussaïeb, à 55 km au sud de Bagdad. Il s'agit du troisième attentat en cinq jours. Un minibus a explosé à proximité d'une mosquée chiite et d'un marché avant la prière marquant la rupture du jeûne. L'explosion s'est produite à l'endroit même où un autre attentat avait fait, le 16 juillet, 83 morts et 150 blessés. Un kamikaze s'était fait exploser alors près d'un camion-citerne transportant du gaz domestique. Au total, 66 personnes ont été tuées au cours des trois derniers attentats antichutes. L'armée américaine a annoncé que quatre de ses soldats avaient été tués depuis mardi à l'ouest de Bagdad, dont deux marines, mercredi, dans le crash de leur hélicoptère près de Ramadi. Ce qui porte à 2026 le nombre de GI tués depuis le début de la guerre. – (Reuters, AFP.)

Tassos Papadopoulos, président de la République de Chypre

« Une Turquie orientée vers l'Europe vaut mieux pour nous qu'une Turquie qui lui tournerait le dos »

Mais son adhésion à l'UE ne doit pas se faire « au rabais », estime le dirigeant chypriote grec

Qu'attendez-vous de la visite que vous effectuez à Paris à partir de ce jeudi 3 novembre ?

Beaucoup de gens pensent que ce qu'on appelle le problème de Chypre doit être vu à travers les lunettes de la Turquie. Et beaucoup considèrent aussi, parce que la Grande-Bretagne était ici la puissance coloniale, que les Britanniques sont des experts de la question. Nous n'aimons pas être traités comme étant dans la sphère d'influence britannique. Sur bien des sujets nous nous trouvons sur la même ligne que la France, par exemple pour les perspectives financières [de l'UE] 2007-2013. Nous n'aimons pas l'insistance mise par certains pour changer radicalement la politique agricole commune.

Jacques Chirac a toujours été très favorable à l'adhésion de la Turquie à l'Union. Avez-vous été surpris par la déclaration du premier ministre, Dominique de Villepin, qui a affirmé le 2 août qu'il ne lui paraissait « pas concevable » d'ouvrir des négociations avec un pays qui ne reconnaîtrait pas tous les membres de cette Union ?

Il n'y a pas de contradiction. Le règlement futur des relations entre les Chypriotes grecs et la Turquie – je dis exprès la Turquie parce que les Chypriotes turcs sont des otages de la Turquie – et les problèmes entre la Grèce et la Turquie, dépendent du rapprochement entre la Turquie et l'Europe, si la Turquie remplit ses obligations.

C'est pourquoi une Turquie orientée vers l'Europe vaut mieux pour nous qu'une Turquie qui lui tournerait le dos. Mais à une condition très importante : la Turquie doit respecter pleinement ses obligations envers l'UE et donc envers Chypre. Quand M. de Villepin a dit qu'il était « impensable » que le processus s'engage, c'était une surprise parce qu'on ne s'y attendait pas. L'ambassadeur de France m'a expliqué qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'une déclaration de circonstance mais qu'elle avait été concertée avec le président de la République. Après on a dit que la France nous avait laissé tomber en ne bloquant pas l'ouverture des négociations avec la Turquie, ce n'est pas vrai.



Le président de la République de Chypre, Tassos Papadopoulos, a entamé, jeudi 3 novembre, une visite de trois jours en France. Il devait rencontrer Jacques Chirac, jeudi, à Paris.

Personne ne m'a jamais dit que la France mettrait son veto si la Turquie ne reconnaissait pas Chypre. Ce qu'on m'a dit est la chose suivante : la France va essayer de

convaincre ses partenaires européens mais elle ne veut pas d'une crise avec la Turquie. C'est elle qui a pris l'initiative qui a conduit à la déclaration européenne sur les obligations d'Ankara vis-à-vis de la République de Chypre.

Après la victoire du non au référendum d'avril 2004 dans la partie grecque de Chypre, le plan Annan de réunification est-il définitivement mort ?

J'ai vu passer beaucoup de projets, d'idées, de plans. Aucun n'a jamais complètement disparu. J'ai dit au premier ministre turc : ça m'est égal que le plan s'appelle Annan 6 ou Erdogan 1 pourvu que les préoccupations des Chypriotes grecs soient prises en compte et que les prochaines étapes soient bien préparées. Si nous recommandons des négociations avant d'avoir de bonnes chances de réussite, le signal qui serait envoyé au monde serait que le problème de Chypre est insoluble.

L'invitation de Mehmet Ali Talat, le « président » de Chypre du Nord, par la secrétaire d'Etat américaine, Condoleezza Rice, vous paraît-elle utile ?

Non. Absolument contre-pro-

ductive. Parce que le but de la Turquie n'est pas la reconnaissance diplomatique de la soi-disant République turque de Chypre du nord, avec l'entrée de Chypre dans l'UE, les Chypriotes turcs sont devenus des citoyens européens, on leur a distribué 45 000 passeports, son but est de lui voir reconnaître tous les attributs d'un Etat, sauf la reconnaissance internationale. En recevant M. Talat, les Américains encouragent cette politique.

Pourquoi empêchez-vous le commerce direct entre Chypre du Nord et le reste du monde ?

Ce n'est pas une question économique mais politique. Ce que vous appelez le commerce direct serait aussi un moyen de rehausser le statut de Chypre du Nord.

Mais ce refus bloque l'aide européenne de 259 millions d'euros qui a été promise aux Chypriotes turcs après leur oui au référendum.

Nous avons accepté et même proposé cette aide, à condition qu'elle soit déconnectée de ce que vous appelez le commerce direct. Les Britanniques ont refusé.

D'ici dix ou quinze ans, le temps des négociations avec la Turquie, il n'y aura pas d'échéance poussant Ankara à accepter un règlement de la question chypriote...

Je n'accepte pas cette idée de

quinze ans parce que cela voudrait dire que la situation se serait solidifiée. Pendant les négociations d'adhésion de la Turquie à l'UE, l'ouverture et la fermeture des 35 chapitres de l'acquis communautaire exigeront un vote à l'unanimité des Vingt-cinq. A chaque fois, Chypre pourra faire valoir ses droits.

Si vous imaginez l'île dans une dizaine d'années, vous pensez plutôt à une réunification à l'allemande ou à un divorce de velours à la tchécoslovaque ?

Ni l'un ni l'autre. Je pense que beaucoup des provisions du plan Annan, inacceptables pour nous, pourront trouver une solution au sein de l'UE. Ce ne seront plus des problèmes chypriotes mais des problèmes européens, par exemple la monnaie commune ou la politique économique.

Il est donc important que la Turquie rejoigne l'UE...

Oui, mais pas à n'importe quel prix, pas au rabais, ce qu'ont jusqu'à maintenant accepté les Européens.

Vous avez votre mot à dire.

Parfois le veto est plus efficace quand il n'est pas utilisé que quand il l'est.

Propos recueillis par Daniel Vernet



All Yussef/Agence France-Presse

Iraqi police officers guarding the coffin of one of their colleagues who was killed in an attack by insurgents in Baquba on Friday.

16 killed in attacks by Iraqi insurgents

By Edward Wong

BAGHDAD: Insurgent attacks across central Iraq, including one in which the guerrillas disguised themselves as women, left at least 16 people dead Friday as Shiite Arabs across the country began celebrating the end of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

In the deadliest assault, insurgents dressed in women's clothing attacked a police checkpoint in the town of Buhruz, 55 kilometers, or 35 miles, north of Baghdad, killing at least 6 police officers and wounding at least 10 others, American and Iraqi officials said.

The guerrillas, traveling in five cars, were armed with Kalashnikovs, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars, an Interior Ministry official said. The police killed at least two of the gunmen, he said.

Major Steven Warren, a spokesman for the 3rd Brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division, which is charged with controlling western Diyala Province, said it was unclear whether the insurgents had been wearing the full-length black robes known as abayas that are popular among conservative women or had been wearing more liberal clothing.

The area around Buhruz and Baquba, the capital of Diyala Province, has been plagued by a string of insurgent attacks. On Oct. 29, a suicide car bomb exploded in a market in the predominantly Shiite village of Huwaider, killing at least 25 people and wounding 30.

Major Dean Wollan, an intelligence

officer for the 3rd Brigade, said in an interview that he had expected an increase in violence toward the end of Ramadan.

"There's a tension that's going on here because of the end of Ramadan," the major said.

Jihadists consider Ramadan an especially auspicious time for martyrdom. Dying during this month supposedly expedites the ascent to heaven and bestows greater rewards in the afterlife.

Jihadists consider Ramadan an auspicious time for martyrdom.

Sunni Arabs began Thursday the three-day celebration known as Id al-Fitr, which marks the end of Ramadan. Shiite Arabs began the celebration on Friday, as did Shiites in Iran. Many Iraqis in Baghdad have chosen to stay home rather than drive in the streets to visit relatives, as they traditionally do, because of the rampant violence in the capital.

In the other attacks Friday, a roadside bomb explosion killed five members of a commando unit called the Raad Brigade and wounded five in the town of Tuz Khurmato, near the northern oil city of Kirkuk, police officials said. The commandos were guarding a convoy of 20 fuel tankers on their way to Baghdad. The explosion set fire to one of the guard vehicles and those in it, said Col-

onel Ali al-Obeidi, a Kirkuk police official.

In Dora, a southern suburb of Baghdad, a roadside bomb explosion killed three civilians and wounded six, an Interior Ministry official said. A minivan also crashed into an American tank in that suburb in the morning, killing at least three civilians and injuring at least six, the Interior Ministry official said.

West of the capital, near Abu Ghraib prison, a mortar round landed on a village home and killed a child and wounded the mother and another child, The Associated Press reported. Gunmen shot and killed a former colonel in the Iraqi Air Force as he drove through Baghdad. After sunset, a series of explosions resounded through Baghdad, but there was no immediate word on the cause.

The American military said a soldier from the 1st Corps Support Command died Thursday in a noncombat incident near Tallil. At least 2,038 American troops have died in the war.

The military also said it had killed five senior members of Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, the militant group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, in an airstrike in the western town of Husaybah on Oct. 29. The military said three safe houses had been destroyed in the strike.

The military said one of those killed was a North African militant known as Abu Asil, who was involved in smuggling arms and fighters across the Middle East. The military's report could not be independently verified.

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Herald Tribune

Roger Cohen

Globalist

Iran's behavior offers test for world's mettle

NEW YORK

It has been easy enough to condemn Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent statement that Israel "must be wiped off the map." What is more difficult is to come up with a coherent strategy to prevent a state with views like that acquiring the nuclear arms to make this objective feasible.

"The Ahmadinejad statement is outrageous, extraordinarily vicious," R. Nicholas Burns, the U.S. under secretary of state for political affairs, said in a telephone interview. "And it builds the case for more pressure on the nuclear issue. Iran must sit down and negotiate with the European Union and abandon its dream of a nuclear capability."

How times have changed. The Bush administration, having put Iran in the axis-of-evil club and pooh-pooed

European diplomacy during its first term, now defers to Europe on an issue that is a major international security threat. That, at least, is the American position for now.



Ahmadinejad

This pragmatic response to Iranian belligerence reflects several realities. The first is that Iraq has stretched U.S. military capabilities to the limit. There is no appetite for further conflict, especially against another Muslim state.

The second is that Iran is needed in Iraq even though it is playing a double game there. Iran has provided help, including sophisticated explosives, to insurgents fighting the American and British presence, but it has also given critical support to an American-instigated democratization process likely to cement a fellow Shiite power in Baghdad. The political transition is too delicate to risk outright Iranian ire.

The third is that, with oil prices at current levels and Iran earning some \$200 million a day from exports, leverage over Tehran is limited. Who needs Western investment and trade — the carrot in the nuclear talks — when there's plenty of cash to throw at social problems?

"You can't solve the nuclear issue with Iran until oil prices come down," said James Dobbins, the director of

the international security and defense policy center at the Rand Corp.

The fourth is the ascendancy of a school of multilateralist engagement in the State Department, led by Condoleezza Rice. Alliances and planning are in, hubris and saber rattling out. Even John Bolton, the hawkish neocon now serving as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, has changed his tone.

Serge Vinçon, the president of the Foreign Affairs committee of the French Senate, met with Bolton this week, along with a delegation of French members of Parliament. He could not believe his ears.

"Bolton could not have been pleasanter, thanking France for helping to pressure Syria," Vinçon said. "As for Iran, Bolton was amazingly pragmatic, saying there might not be much point in referring the nuclear issue to the Security Council at this stage because of the likelihood of a Chinese and Russian veto."

The notion of a nicer Bolton expressing gratitude to the French is intriguing, but niceness will not go very far in Ahmadinejad's Iran. The extent to which the election of this former Revolutionary Guards member has shifted Iran in a hard-line direction is not easy to say, but the signs are scarcely encouraging.

The annihilate-Israel remark was just the latest in a series of inflammatory declarations and moves since Ahmadinejad was elected president in June. He has accused the United States of practicing "nuclear apartheid," a clear enough suggestion that Iran should have the right to build a bomb if Israel has one. He has begun a wholesale replacement of Iranian ambassadors suspected of moderate views. He clearly sees Iran as the centerpiece of Islamic resistance to the westernization of the Middle East.

Of course, his power in Iran is by no means uncontested; the more populist rhetoric may reflect the extent of the struggle to run the country. Both Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, and former President Ali Akhbar Hashemi Rafsanjani have shown signs of displeasure with Ahmadinejad.

This tussle gives the West some much-needed leverage in the bid to resume the stalled nuclear talks. These broke down after Iran resumed uranium conversion — but not enrichment — this year. In September, the International Atomic Energy Agency con-

demned Iran for "noncompliance" with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

Tehran insists it is legally permitted to develop uranium conversion and enrichment technologies for peaceful purposes under the terms of the treaty. This position has technical merit but ignores the fact that nobody now trusts that the program to develop fissile material production is exclusively peaceful in nature.

So what now? Burns reckons Iran has 15 days to show it's willing to resume negotiations with Britain, France and Germany — a group known as the EU-3 — or face the prospect that an IAEA meeting in the second half of this month will decide to refer the matter to the UN Security Council, a move that could lead to sanctions.

"We believe the world community, not just the Europeans, but Russia, China and Brazil, need to coalesce to convince Iran to reject a nuclear-weapons future," Burns said. President George W. Bush will be in Brazil and China this month to press that point.

Of course, there is no guarantee that China, with its voracious appetite for oil, and Russia, with its lucrative contracts in Iran, can be brought around. But Burns is right: only diplomatic

U.S. pragmatism toward Iraq reflects several realities.

toughness will sway a cash-rich Iran that has shown an appetite to acquire not only enriched uranium but also missiles to carry nuclear warheads.

Kofi Annan, the UN secretary general, on Friday canceled a previously planned visit to Tehran next week. After Ahmadinejad's vow to wipe out a UN member state, the cancellation of that trip was a show of resolve by the United Nations.

It is sometimes said that the winner of the war in Iraq is already clear: Iran. That's a good line, but not yet altogether true. With Iran now thought to be three to five years from a nuclear-weapons capacity, the broader question is this: Will the country with the largest military and economy in the Muslim world be allowed to win the broader ideological struggle for the Middle East?

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Un pari sur l'avenir

Les Kurdes d'Irak donnent le Québec en exemple, évoquant notamment sa capacité de résistance culturelle et linguistique

LOUISE BEAUDOIN



Ancienne ministre des Relations internationales, l'auteure est professeure associée au département d'histoire de l'Université du Québec à Montréal.

La plaine de Gaugemèle, à une centaine de kilomètres d'Arbèles, l'Erbil d'aujourd'hui : c'est ici, à l'est du Tigre, en 331 avant notre ère, qu'eut lieu la bataille décisive entre Alexandre le Grand et Darius, ouvrant à Alexandre la voie vers la Perse et l'Inde. Habitée sans interruption depuis 8000 ans, la ville d'Erbil, une des plus vieilles villes du monde avec Jéricho, est la capitale actuelle du Kurdistan irakien qui recouvre seulement une partie du territoire historique du Kurdistan. Kirkouk et sa région pétrolière, notamment, échappent au contrôle du gouvernement régional.

Quatre millions d'habitants, 17 % de la population irakienne, un peuple qui rêve de son indépendance mais qui ne peut la réaliser — même si, dans un référendum consultatif récent, 95 % de la population

donne un fort taux d'abstention (30 %) de la part de jeunes, clairement indépendantistes, qui reprochent à leur élite politique d'avoir accepté une constitution qui ne reconnaît pas aux Kurdes le droit à l'autodétermination, et de la part de femmes aux yeux desquelles ce document — dont une des principales sources d'inspiration est l'islam — constitue un net recul par rapport à leurs droits antérieurs.

Les Kurdes d'Irak espèrent que les frontières bougeront un jour ; ils souhaitent que la carte du Moyen-Orient soit refaite et cette fois à leur avantage. En attendant, ils se réjouissent, ouvertement et sans complexe, de la « libération » de l'Irak. De l'inculpation aussi de Saddam Hussein qui a voulu littéralement les exterminer en gazant des villages entiers, tuant des centaines de milliers de Kurdes. Ils se réjouissent d'autant plus qu'il n'y a pas au Kurdistan de troupes d'occupation comme ailleurs en Irak, que leur propre armée (les peshmergas) défend leur territoire et que les attentats y sont rares. Ils peuvent donc, relativement à l'abri, reconstruire leur pays que Saddam a systématiquement cherché à détruire.

Pas dupes, les Kurdes

Mais ils ne sont pas dupes, les Kurdes. Ils savent bien qu'ils ne peuvent compter que sur eux-mêmes. En 1991, après les avoir incités à se rebeller — ainsi que les

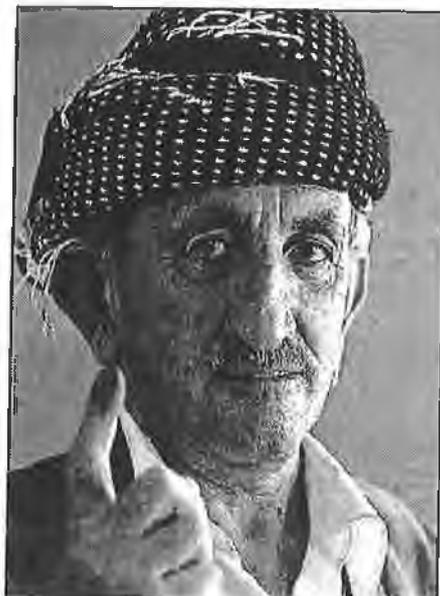


PHOTO SAFIN HAMID. AFP ©

Un Kurde montre son doigt taché d'encre après avoir voté lors du référendum sur le projet de constitution, en avril dernier.

Les Kurdes sont conscients que la tension extrêmement vive entre sunnites et chiïtes peut dégénérer, si ce n'est déjà le cas, en guerre civile et que les chiïtes sont sous forte influence radicale islamiste iranienne. Mais ils veulent jouer le jeu, profiter des circonstances qui leur sont favorables et croire que cette constitution n'est pas un leurre même si certains partis sunnites — en échange d'un vote positif lors du récent référendum — ont obtenu de revenir à la charge, dans quelques mois, avec des amendements qui, s'ils étaient adoptés, contrecarreraient la nature fédérale du pays. Il est difficile de prédire aujourd'hui si ce pari sur l'avenir sera gagné ou perdu.

En marge du référendum du 15 octobre, nous étions, Jean-Yves Du-thel et moi, invités au Kurdistan irakien par l'Institut kurde de Paris. D'autres Québécois nous avaient précédés, dont André Poupart, de l'Université de Montréal, et Anne Legaré, de l'UQAM. Nous avons été agréablement étonnés de la connaissance qu'avaient du Québec plusieurs de nos interlocuteurs dont le ministre des Relations internationales et le premier ministre Barzani qui nous ont expliqué avoir donné aux Américains, et particulièrement à Paul Bremmer, le Québec en exemple, évoquant notamment sa capacité de résistance culturelle et linguistique, son développement économique, son ouverture sur le monde.

Les Kurdes sont conscients que la tension extrêmement vive entre sunnites et chiïtes peut dégénérer, si ce n'est déjà le cas, en guerre civile et que les chiïtes sont sous forte influence radicale islamiste iranienne.

s'est prononcée pour le OUI — parce que ni la Turquie, ni la Syrie, ni l'Iran, ni l'Irak (...ni les Américains), n'accorderont aux trente millions de Kurdes répartis dans ces quatre pays la possibilité, du moins pour l'instant, de former leur propre pays.

Le 15 octobre dernier, les Kurdes irakiens ont pour l'heure choisi de voter à une immense majorité (98 %) en faveur de la nouvelle Constitution. Avec cepen-

chilites — George Bush père les a trahis et a laissé Saddam Hussein les bombarder jusqu'à ce que les Nations unies décident, enfin, d'interdire le survol d'une partie de l'espace aérien du Kurdistan. Ainsi, malgré une incompréhensible guerre civile qui a fait beaucoup de morts, les Kurdes ont pu respirer et surtout réclamer aux Américains rien de moins que l'autonomie de fait acquise pendant les quatorze années suivantes.

180 sociétés françaises accusées d'avoir enrichi Saddam Hussein

NEW YORK (Nations unies)
de notre correspondant

Renault VI, Peugeot, et près de 180 autres entreprises implantées en France sont accusées par la commission Volcker d'avoir, sciemment ou non, versé des dizaines de millions de dollars de dessous-de-table au régime de Saddam Hussein, en violation de l'embargo international qui frappait l'Irak avant la guerre de 2003. Selon des documents obtenus par les enquêteurs, dans le cadre du programme « Pétrole contre nourriture », l'entreprise Renault VI (Renault véhicules industriels, devenu Renault Trucks, désormais une filiale de Volvo Group) aurait à elle seule payé plus de 6,5 millions de dollars de pots-de-vin. Le constructeur Peugeot est de son côté soupçonné d'avoir illégalement versé près de 7 millions de dollars.

Le programme humanitaire avait été mis en place en 1996, pour atténuer les sanctions. Il permettait à l'Irak de vendre du brut dont l'argent, contrôlé par l'ONU, servait à acheter des biens de première ses ont payé. Selon les documents de la commission de Paul Volcker, chargée par l'ONU de faire la lumière sur l'affaire, Renault VI a obtenu 39 contrats d'une valeur de plus de 167 millions de dollars. Ils portaient

sur la vente de véhicules industriels, de camions réfrigérés, de camions de pompiers, de camions-citernes, de bennes à ordures, de pièces détachées de tracteurs... Plus de la moitié de ces contrats, portant sur près de 78 millions de dollars, auraient fait l'objet de paiements illicites d'un total d'environ nécessité. Très vite, Saddam Hussein en a fait un outil de contournement de l'embargo. A partir de 1999, le régime a illégalement perçu de ses fournisseurs une taxe censée payer le transport des marchandises depuis le port d'Oum Qasr, dans le Golfe. En 2000, s'est ajoutée une prétendue « taxe de service après-vente » de 10 % du montant des contrats, souvent versée en liquide, sur des comptes en Jordanie, ou au Liban, ou auprès de sociétés de transport écrans.

Beaucoup d'entreprises françaises ont versé 7 millions de dollars. Renault aurait aussi payé des « taxes de transport intérieur », d'un montant non spécifié. Les enquêteurs disent avoir saisi des preuves précises, dont certaines sont des données financières des ministères irakiens.

AMBULANCES ET MINIBUS

De son côté, le constructeur Peugeot aurait au total obtenu 14 contrats, d'une valeur de 169 mil-

lions de dollars environ, pour des ambulances, des voitures, des minibus, des remorqueuses et des pièces détachées. Quatre de ces contrats, d'un montant de plus de 77 millions de dollars, auraient, selon le rapport, fait l'objet de 7 millions de dollars de dessous-de-table. Dans ce cas précis, les montants des pots-de-vin ont été « estimés » par les enquêteurs à partir d'éléments généraux, attestant de la « politique uniforme du gouvernement irakien, qui était de réclamer des pots-de-vin à certaines périodes ».

Au cours de dix-neuf mois d'investigation, les enquêteurs ont eu accès à de nombreuses sources d'information onusiennes, commerciales, bancaires ou nationales (Paul Volcker a salué la coopération des autorités françaises). Selon eux, ces sources se recoupent souvent. La commission admet toutefois que rien ne prouve que les entreprises mises en cause aient approuvé les paiements illicites ou en aient eu connaissance. « Beaucoup d'entreprises ont librement accepté les demandes irakiennes. D'autres ont fait des paiements à de tierces parties ou à des intermédiaires, tout en tenant pas compte de l'objectif probable de ces paiements, ou peut-être involontairement », indique le rapport, publié le 27 octobre.

Toutes les entreprises mises en cause ont été contactées par la commission et ont été invitées à se défendre. La plupart ont choisi de ne pas répondre. Ce fut le cas, selon le rapport, de Renault VI et Peugeot comme de beaucoup d'autres, parmi lesquelles figurent Irrifrance, qui a fourni du matériel d'irrigation et aurait versé près de 3 millions de dollars de pots-de-vin, Franco pétrochimique, qui aurait vendu des pièces pour l'industrie pétrolière, en payant au passage plus d'un million de dollars, Air Liquide Engineering, qui aurait versé 34 272 dollars, Pierre Fabre santé, qui aurait payé 15 895 dollars, Saint-Gobain des Jonquères, qui aurait versé 151 184 dollars, ou Sides, qui aurait payé 497 193 dollars.

D'autres ont répondu et sont classées dans la catégorie des entreprises qui ont admis que des paiements auraient pu être effectués, mais pensaient qu'ils étaient légitimes. C'est le cas, selon le rapport, d'Urgo laboratoires, 238 643 dollars sur des ventes de bandages. Gerflor Taraflex, accusée d'avoir payé 12 930 dollars de dessous-de-table ou Francexpa, qui aurait vendu du lait pour bébés et versé 9 109 dollars, ont répondu aux enquêteurs, mais sans prendre de position ou en demandant que leur réponse demeure confidentielle. Il ne s'agit là que d'un échantillon, puisé parmi les 180 entreprises implantées en France et accusées d'avoir illégalement enrichi Saddam Hussein.

Philippe Boloïon

La France était un exportateur privilégié, mais la corruption était généralisée

NEW YORK (Nations unies)
de notre correspondant

Le problème ne fut pas uniquement français. Selon la commission Volcker, près de 2 200 entreprises originaires de 66 pays ont payé à Saddam Hussein des dessous-de-table, correspondant à 10 % du montant de leurs contrats dans le cadre du programme « Pétrole contre nourriture ». L'Irak aurait ainsi prélevé, en violation de l'embargo, près de 1,5 milliard de dollars sur ses achats dans les domaines de la santé, de la médecine, de l'équipement, de l'industrie pétrolière ou de l'agro-alimentaire. Bien plus que les « surcharges » sur les ventes de pétrole, qui lui ont rapporté près de 229 millions de dollars, le régime irakien s'est enrichi sur la fourniture des biens dits « humanitaires »

De grands noms comme Siemens, DaimlerChrysler ou Volvo CE sont mis en cause dans le rapport final de Paul Volcker. Mais l'entreprise ayant le plus exporté vers l'Irak entre 1997 et 2003 fut AWB Ltd, un vendeur de blé australien, qui a fourni dans le cadre du programme près de 7 millions de tonnes de blé, pour un montant total de 2,3 milliards de dollars. Selon les enquêteurs, AWB aurait payé près de 222 millions de dollars de dessous-de-table, soit 14 % du total des sommes illégalement perçues par le régime irakien. Dans ses contacts avec la commission d'enquête, l'entreprise a affirmé n'avoir pas été au courant de la nature illicite de ces paiements.

Considérée comme une « amie » du régime irakien, la France a joui de privilèges. Derrière celles de la

Russie et de l'Égypte, les entreprises hexagonales furent au troisième rang des principales bénéficiaires du programme onusien, devant la Jordanie et l'Australie.

Le système était parfaitement rodé. A partir de l'automne 2000, le régime a exigé une « taxe de service après-vente », d'un montant de 10 % du contrat

A elles seules, les entreprises russes et françaises ont fourni un cinquième des importations irakiennes (soit 6,8 milliards de dollars). Les États voisins de l'Irak – la Jordanie, la Turquie, le Liban, la Syrie et l'Arabie saoudite – ont exporté pour 7,1 milliards de dollars de marchandises. Les Emirats arabes unis et l'Égypte ont vendu pour 5,2 milliards de dollars. La Chine et le Vietnam furent aussi d'importants fournisseurs. Ensemble, ces pays ont représenté plus de 70 % des importations irakiennes, dont le montant total fut de 37 milliards de dollars entre 1997 et 2003.

A l'origine du programme, entre 1997 et la première moitié de 2000, la France était en tête des exportateurs. Mais lorsque le système des pots-de-vin s'est généralisé, entre la seconde moitié de l'année 2000

et la première moitié de 2003 (où le programme a pris fin), la France est tombée à la neuvième place – une tendance similaire a été notée par les enquêteurs sur les achats français de pétrole irakien. Selon les données du rapport, Peugeot et Renault VI font toutefois partie des 25 compagnies ayant payé les dessous-de-table les plus substantiels.

Toutes les entreprises du programme « Pétrole contre nourriture » n'ont pas commis des activités illégales. Sur près de 440 entreprises françaises ayant participé, moins de la moitié, environ 180, sont accusées d'avoir versé des pots-de-vin. Diverses filiales françaises d'Alstom ont ainsi obtenu pour près de 145 millions de dollars de contrats, sans attirer les soupçons des enquêteurs. Il en est de même pour Alcatel CIT France, qui aurait obtenu 10 contrats pour près de 80 millions d'euros, et qui ne figure pas au nombre des suspects.

Parmi les entreprises implantées en France et montrées du doigt, un certain nombre sont des filiales de compagnies étrangères, qui ont profité de leur vernis français pour obtenir des marchés en Irak. Dans une lettre aux autorités irakiennes, un responsable français avait, selon le rapport, exprimé en octobre 1998 « les inquiétudes de [son] gouvernement (...) concernant l'augmentation du nombre d'entreprises britanniques et américaines, de même que d'autres, qui exploitent la décision des dirigeants irakiens de faire des affaires en priorité avec des

compagnies françaises en signant des contrats avec l'Irak à travers leurs bureaux en France ».

Le système de corruption irakien était parfaitement rodé. A partir de l'automne 2000, le régime a exigé de ses fournisseurs une « *taxe de service après-vente* » d'un montant de 10 % du contrat, versée en marge de tout contrôle. Ces pots-de-vin étaient versés selon trois modalités différentes : soit en liquide auprès des ambassades irakiennes et envoyés à Bagdad par valise diplomatique, soit transférés sur des comptes contrôlés par l'Irak en Jordanie ou au Liban, soit versés à des sociétés-écrans. Souvent, les entreprises se remboursaient en

gonflant artificiellement de 10 % le prix de leurs livraisons, qui étaient payées par des débits du compte séquestre de l'ONU, alimenté par les exportations de pétrole.

Était-il possible de commercer avec l'Irak après 2000 sans tremper dans la combine ? « *Il aurait été extrêmement difficile d'avoir une exception. En principe, tout le monde devait payer* », affirme Marc Pieth, qui est, avec Paul Volcker, un des trois dirigeants de la commission d'enquête. Les entreprises savaient-elles ? « *C'était très clair pour le volet pétrolier. Côté humanitaire, c'est moins clair. Mais selon nos informations, les Irakiens*

ne laissaient pas de doutes à leurs fournisseurs quant au fait qu'ils devaient payer », ajoute-t-il.

Les activités des entreprises françaises ne sont pas présentées en détail dans le rapport – « *Nous avions déjà tellement de compagnies et de personnes françaises côté pétrole, et le contexte politique est tellement délicat, que nous avons pris le parti de ne pas trop nous concentrer sur un seul pays* », avoue Mark Pieth. Le rapport se penche donc sur d'autres. Daimler Chrysler AG, le constructeur automobile allemand, aurait ainsi « *sciemment* » payé un pot-de-vin de 7 134 dollars sur la vente d'une Mercedes blindée – ce que l'entre-

prise conteste en partie.

Le géant allemand Siemens AG, à travers ses filiales en France, en Turquie et aux Emirats arabes unis, aurait obtenu près de 124 millions de dollars de contrats de fournitures électriques, sur lesquels, selon le rapport il aurait aussi « *sciemment payé des pots-de-vin* » – une accusation réfutée par l'entreprise. Au total, près de 3 600 entreprises ont participé au programme « Pétrole contre nourriture ». Plus de la moitié, 2 200, sont accusées d'avoir payé des pots-de-vin.

Ph. Bo.

L'ONU plongée dans l'embarras

Alerté par des rumeurs de scandale dans la presse, Kofi Annan a nommé en avril 2004 une commission dirigée par l'ancien patron de la Réserve fédérale américaine, Paul Volcker, pour faire la lumière sur le programme « Pétrole contre nourriture ». Au terme de 19 mois d'une enquête ayant coûté 35 millions de dollars, il a rendu, fin octobre, le cinquième et dernier volet de son volumineux rapport.

Ses enquêteurs ont révélé la corruption de certains à l'ONU et l'inaptitude du Conseil de sécurité et de Kofi Annan à gérer convenablement la plus grande opération humanitaire de l'histoire. Selon Paul Volcker, si le programme « Pétrole contre nourriture » a rempli son objectif principal, assister la population irakienne, il a aussi mis en lumière un urgent besoin de réformes. L'argent de la corruption du programme n'a toutefois représenté qu'une fraction des 11 milliards de dollars détournés par Saddam Hussein, grâce à la contrebande de pétrole, au su et au vu de tous. La probité de Kofi Annan n'a pas été entachée, mais son fils Kojo a été mis en cause. – (Corresp.)

Saddam's soldiers

It is late in the day, but Iraq's ruling coalition of Shiite and Kurdish parties, and their American patrons, are finally showing some realism. The latest sign was last week's plea to mostly Sunni Arab junior officers of Saddam Hussein's disbanded military to enlist in Iraq's new national army. It was a historically stunning move, but one the Baghdad government had to make if there is to be any hope of making the Iraqi army strong enough to break its dependency on the American forces.

It could not have been easy for the Shiite and Kurdish politicians, whose communities suffered terribly at the hands of Saddam and the army. But the rash 2003 decision by the American occupation administrator, L. Paul Bremer 3rd, to disband the entire Iraqi Army was one of the worst of Washington's many blunders. It made creating a new national military much harder, and broke the U.S. promise that soldiers who did not fight the invading forces would be taken care of.

It supplied vast cadres of armed and aggrieved ex-soldiers to the developing Sunni-based insurgency, and undermined the legitimacy of the emerging Iraqi authorities by leaving them completely dependent on large numbers of American troops.

With the country so divided and the insurgency so powerful and entrenched, it will be extremely hard to make sure that former officers who have gone over to the insurgents do not infiltrate the new army. But it still makes good sense to try to undo as much of Bremer's disastrous decision as possible, as one element in a broader effort to reintegrate the deeply estranged Sunni Arab community.

Another costly legacy of the occupation was spelled out last week by the U.S. special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction. In a report to Congress, he showed how poor project coordination and monitoring, contracting abuses and astronomical security costs had allowed a substantial part of the \$30 billion spent on

American-financed reconstruction programs to dribble away without producing visible improvements in Iraqi life. These failures are inexcusable, but the truth is, no broad-gauge reconstruction can happen without significant gains in security, accompanied by progress on social and political issues.

Re-enlisting former midlevel and lower-level Sunni army officers is a good place to start. But national reconciliation only stands a chance if it offers full professional and economic opportunities, including government service, to the skilled and educated Sunni doctors, lawyers and teachers. They should not be subjected to discrimination for having risen through the lower ranks of the former Baath Party, which used to be required for professional survival.

We can only hope that the encouraging shift that produced last week's plea to ex-soldiers lasts long enough to divert Iraq from imminent civil war toward constructive nation-building. With sufficient wisdom and a lot of good luck, it is not necessarily too late for Iraqis to salvage something positive from their long ordeal of dictatorship, war, invasion and occupation.

IRAK

Le président Talabani, ses cigares, son sourire, sa diplomatie

AN-NAHAR
Beyrouth

Sur la route qui nous mène du Kurdistan à Bagdad, le trafic est dense et imprégné de nervosité. A tout bout de champ, des barrages où des militaires arrêtent les voitures pour des fouilles, provoquant des embouteillages et ajoutant à l'inquiétude des passagers. Car les attaques contre les voyageurs sont nombreuses dans cette région. Mais notre trajet se passe bien et nous voici à Bagdad, nous dirigeant vers la Zone verte [le quartier ultraprotégé de Bagdad où se trouvent le gouvernement irakien et l'ambassade des Etats-Unis]. "Nous devons voir le président", dit le chauffeur au soldat de garde à l'entrée. Celui-ci répète dans son talkie-walkie : "Des invités du président !" Puis d'autres soldats passent la voiture au crible à la recherche d'explosifs avant de nous laisser pénétrer dans cet endroit coupé du monde par des fils barbelés qui évoquent des casernes soviétiques ou nord-coréennes.

Devant nous, un alignement de palais comme autant de forteresses. Tous avaient auparavant été occupés par Saddam Hussein ou par ses proches du parti Baas. Les demeures des anciens ministres et des députés sont aujourd'hui occupées par leurs successeurs, celui-ci habitant dans la maison de Tarek Aziz [l'ancien vice-Premier ministre], celui-là dans celle de Saadoun Hamadi [l'ancien président du Parlement], les Américains occupant le palais de Saddam Hussein. Quant au nouveau président, Jalal Talabani, il vit dans la villa qui hébergeait naguère Barzan Al-Tikriti [le demi-frère de Saddam Hussein]. Les bâtiments voisins sont occupés par ses proches, des conseillers, serviteurs et gardiens, presque tous kurdes. D'immenses bâtisses renfermées sur elles-mêmes dans lesquelles les occupants se barricadent contre les dangers du monde extérieur. La Zone verte, en plein cœur de Bagdad, ressemble ainsi à une colonie implantée dans un milieu hostile. Comme si les Kurdes voulaient prendre leur revanche pour les années durant lesquelles Bagdad leur a fermé ses portes, ne les ouvrant que pour les juger, les condamner et les envoyer en exil.

On nous amène dans un bureau où des conseillers sont en train de s'installer, éparpillant leurs affaires sur le sol. L'un d'eux, un ancien étudiant en journalisme en ex-URSS, se met à parler au téléphone en russe avec sa femme. Il l'a laissée avec ses enfants à l'étranger, en Suède, faisant comme la plupart des nouveaux responsables, dont les familles vivent souvent en Europe et qui ressemblent plus à des expatriés venus en Irak pour la durée d'un contrat de travail qu'à des citoyens de leur propre pays.

A chacun des déplacements de Jalal Talabani, une impressionnante escorte de gardiens irakiens et américains, au sol et dans les airs, fait trembler la terre. Car le président est un homme très occupé. Chaque matin, il se lève à 9 heures pour se rendre à son bureau. Puis, à midi, il revient chez lui pour le déjeuner et une sieste. L'afflux de visiteurs est ininterrompu. Invités ce jour-là à sa table, nous constatons que tous les convives sont kurdes, réunissant des représentants du Parti communiste du Kurdistan, d'un parti maoïste kurde et du parti islamiste kurde.

Jalal Talabani laisse s'installer une ambiance joviale et la nourrit de son optimisme inébranlable. Habile diplomate, il cherche à se positionner comme le centre de gravité des autres éléments de la scène politique irakienne : Kurdes, Arabes, Turkmènes, Chaldéens, Syriques, Assyriens, etc. Il s'efforce de ne pas apparaître comme le président des seuls Kurdes, mais de tous les Irakiens, ni comme le chef du seul parti UPK, mais comme un homme d'Etat au-dessus des clivages partisans. Sa préoccupation pour Kirkouk, explique-t-il à tout le monde, ne l'empêche pas de se soucier de Bassorah [ville chiite]. Et les dons qu'il prodigue dans toutes les régions, en puisant dans sa fortune personnelle, sont là pour consolider cette image d'impartialité.

Il est assis dans son bureau, où il passe son temps à recevoir du monde pour discuter, argumenter et plaisanter, avec sa volubilité légendaire, sa présence d'esprit inégalée et sa mémoire infailible qui lui permet de rappeler des faits, de raconter des anecdotes, de jouer de ses connaissances personnelles et de faire part de sa longue expérience en politique. Avec tout cela, il ne se départit jamais d'un sourire juvénile, à l'innocence presque enfantine. Voilà qu'entre Adel



▲ Jalal Talabani.
Dessin de Morin
paru dans The
Miami Herald,
Etats-Unis.

Abdel Mahdi, le vice-président, qui ressemble plus à un camionneur qu'à un homme d'Etat. Jalal Talabani pose son prestigieux cigare cubain sur un non moins prestigieux cendrier et accueille son hôte avec exubérance, l'empoignant des deux mains et le serrant dans ses bras, comme s'il allait le porter. Et aussitôt, la conversation s'échauffe, Talabani se lance dans un monologue exalté qui ne s'interrompt qu'au départ d'Abdel Mahdi, apparemment convaincu mais surtout épuisé. Quant à Talabani, il reprend son cigare, un sourire de satisfaction aux lèvres.

Nizar Aghri

OUVERTURE

Des Kurdes

"pragmatiques"

■ "Il y en a qui accusent les Kurdes de sécessionnisme. C'est le résultat du chauvinisme de certains, qui voudraient faire du Moyen-Orient une région ethniquement homogène", écrit Massoud Barzani dans *Al-Ittihad*. Rival historique de Jalal Talabani sur la scène kurde, Barzani ajoute à propos de l'avenir : "Nous ne sommes pas les seuls aujourd'hui à demander que les sociétés du Moyen-Orient s'ouvrent à la diversité linguistique, religieuse et culturelle. Dans le nouvel Irak, le rôle des Kurdes sera de constituer des ponts. Et, contrairement à nos ennemis, nous autres Kurdes sommes pragmatiques et modérés. Rien ne nous obligeait à réintégrer le Kurdistan dans l'Irak. Les Américains, par exemple, demandent-ils aux Kosovars de réintégrer la Serbie ?"

"Cause toujours, Ahmadinejad"

La menace du président iranien de "rayer Israël de la surface de la Terre" révèle l'ampleur du conflit au sein du régime islamique de Téhéran, explique Ha' Aretz.

HA'ARETZ
Tel-Aviv

Quiconque reconnaît Israël se consumera dans le feu de la colère de la nation musulmane. Reconnaître le régime sioniste, c'est reconnaître la défaite du monde musulman." Voilà le programme politique énoncé par le président iranien Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, lequel en a profité pour affirmer qu'Israël était une "tache infecte" qui devait être "rayée de la surface de la Terre". Ahmadinejad devrait consulter un atlas afin de prendre la mesure du nombre d'Etats musulmans promis à la destruction, sans parler des pays occidentaux impies, d'ores et déjà assurés de plonger dans les flammes de l'enfer. La liste est longue : la Jordanie, les Territoires palestiniens, l'Egypte, la Tunisie, le Maroc, le Qatar et la Turquie devraient être les premières victimes. Après viendraient Oman, l'Arabie Saoudite, la Libye, la Syrie, le Pakistan, l'Afghanistan et tous les autres Etats musulmans qui n'ont pas noué de relations diplomatiques avec Israël mais reconnaissent de facto le régime sioniste et sont disposés, sous certaines conditions, à établir des rapports politiques. Dans ces conditions, il apparaît que le président iranien entend rien moins que plonger l'entièreté du monde sunnite et fourbe dans les flammes de l'enfer vu que le seul Etat musulman à ne pas avoir reconnu de facto l'Etat sioniste est l'Iran chiite.

Ce trouble obsessionnel compulsif, qui, chaque fin de ramadan et à l'occasion du Jour de Jérusalem, voit les dirigeants iraniens proférer une litanie d'exécration à l'encontre d'Israël, ne laisse pas d'étonner. Pourquoi donc l'Iran continue-t-il à entretenir d'étroites relations avec des pays musulmans qui n'ont aucune intention de rompre avec Israël ? L'Iran tente de renouer des relations complètes avec l'Egypte. Téhéran a des relations commerciales avec la Turquie à hauteur de 1 milliard de dollars par an. Le contrat conclu avec l'Inde et le Pakistan sur la construction d'un gazoduc d'un coût de 4 milliards de dollars est en passe d'être finalisé. L'Iran vient de signer un pacte de sécurité avec l'Arabie Saoudite, laquelle est à l'origine de la dernière initiative de paix au Moyen-Orient. Et ce ne sont là que quelques exemples.



▲ Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.
Dessin de Petar Pismestrovic, paru dans Kleine Zeitung, Autriche.

UNE GESTION DÉFAILLANTE ET LE RÉGIME S'EFFONDRE

La véhémence du discours prononcé par Ahmadinejad s'explique en fait par les tensions idéologiques et les rapports de force au sein de la République islamique. Les dirigeants iraniens ont depuis longtemps compris que, sans relations économiques, le régime islamique n'a aucune chance de survie. Si l'Iran n'a pas de clients à qui vendre son pétrole et son gaz, s'il ne parvient pas à créer 4 millions d'emplois d'ici cinq ans comme promis et si le chômage des jeunes – qui représentent 60 % de la population – ne passe pas sous la barre des 30 %, alors ce régime n'a aucun avenir. Si ce n'était pas assez clair, il suffit d'observer les actes posés par le guide spirituel conservateur du pays, Ali Khamenei, lequel a placé dès septembre dernier les décisions du gouvernement nommé par Ahmadinejad sous la supervision du Conseil de discernement (une sorte de Conseil d'Etat chargé de veiller à l'intérêt général). Or ce Conseil est désormais dirigé par nul autre que Hachemi Rafsandjani, celui-là même qui perdit le second tour de la présidentielle de juin face à Ahmadinejad. De toute évidence, Ali Khamenei sait qu'une gestion défailante de la politique économique et de la diplomatie risque de déboucher sur l'effondrement du régime.

L'Iran, qui a depuis longtemps

■ Divergences à l'Iranienne

L'ancien président iranien Mohammad Khatami a critiqué les propos de son successeur, sans le nommer. "Nous ne sommes pas là pour transformer le monde et œuvrer à l'instauration de gouvernements qui nous conviennent."

compris qu'une révolution khomeyniste (et encore moins une révolution chiite) ne faisait plus rêver les sociétés musulmanes, a également tiré les leçons économiques de la dernière décennie quant à l'importance de maintenir de bonnes relations, non seulement avec les Etats musulmans, mais aussi avec l'Union européenne, la Fédération de Russie et la Chine.

LE RÉGIME IRANIEEN NE SEMBLE PAS REDOUTER DES SANCTIONS

Tout cela amène une deuxième question : pourquoi tant d'Etats à même d'exercer de fortes pressions sur l'Iran ne haussent-ils pas le ton ? En d'autres termes, pourquoi l'Iran ne semble-t-il pas devoir redouter des sanctions ? Parce que les pays susceptibles d'exercer des pressions sur la République islamique sont aussi ceux qui ont le plus à perdre en réduisant leurs échanges commerciaux avec l'Iran. La Russie a gagné 1 milliard de dollars avec le réacteur nucléaire de Bushehr. La Chine a un besoin vital du pétrole iranien, le Japon aussi. Des hommes d'affaires allemands, français, italiens et espagnols profitent astucieusement des sanctions imposées par les Etats-Unis. Et, maintenant, ce sont les Américains eux-mêmes qui redoutent d'avoir à intervenir en Iran comme ils l'ont fait en Irak. Tout cela explique pourquoi les diplomaties étrangères marchent sur des œufs quand il s'agit du régime iranien. Grâce à cet "équilibre de la terreur" du pauvre, Ahmadinejad peut continuer longtemps à invoquer les flammes de l'enfer.

Tzvi Barei

L'Union européenne s'inquiète pour la liberté d'expression en Turquie

Le procès de l'écrivain Orhan Pamuk pour propos insultants envers la nation sera suivi avec attention par Bruxelles.

LE DERNIER rapport sur les progrès réalisés par la Turquie en vue de son entrée dans l'Union européenne, dont *Le Figaro* a eu connaissance, est l'un des plus optimistes que la Commission n'ait jamais rédigé depuis 1998. Malgré une année peu glorieuse, marquée par des procès en sorcellerie contre des écrivains, des affaires de mauvais traitement dans des asiles et des orphelinats, la Commission dresse un bilan globalement positif des derniers mois. Saluant les réformes entre-

prises, Bruxelles propose même d'octroyer dès que possible le statut d'économie de marché à Ankara. Cette vision optimiste d'une réalité répond à une logique politique : après quarante ans d'attente, et des incertitudes de dernière minute, la Turquie a commencé ses négociations d'adhésion à l'Union, le 3 octobre dernier.

« Torture et mauvais traitement »

Dans ce contexte historique, la Commission ne pouvait pas se montrer trop sévère, au risque d'avoir l'air de se dédire. Longue de 150 pages, couvrant tous les chapitres économiques et politiques de l'acquis communautaire, sa cartographie de la Turquie

en 2005 dénonce, sans trop s'y attarder, « les violences contre les femmes », les « cas de torture et de mauvais traitement », impunis ou instruits « avec trop de lenteur » par la justice turque, préférant mettre l'accent sur un problème plus emblématique, dénoncé à Londres et à Berlin : les menaces sur la liberté d'expression.

Le document de la Commission revient en détails sur l'affaire Orhan Pamuk, un écrivain turc à succès, traduit dans quarante pays, menacé de prison par un procureur d'Istanbul pour avoir tenu, dans la presse suisse, des propos jugés « insultants » pour la patrie. « On a tué chez nous 30 000 Kurdes et 1 million d'Armé-

niens, mais personne, sinon moi, n'ose en parler », a déclaré Orhan Pamuk en février 2005. En avril, le sous-préfet d'une province d'Ana-

tolie a ordonné la destruction de ses livres. Poursuivi sur la base de l'article 301 du Code pénal turc révisé, l'écrivain est convoqué au tribunal le 16 décembre à Istanbul.

Critique du système judiciaire

Ce procès d'un autre âge sera suivi avec attention par les capitales européennes, Bruxelles en tête. Dans son rapport, la Commission rappelle, inquiète, que cinq autres intellectuels, journalistes ou éditeurs ont été condamnés en 2005 pour « insulte » à la nation. « L'article 301 du Code pénal turc est mal interprété par certains juges et procureurs », estime l'exécutif européen. « Cette interprétation n'est pas en accord avec l'article 10 de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme », ajoute le document. « Si cet article du Code pénal continue à être interprété de manière restrictive, il faudra demander un amendement pour pouvoir préserver la liberté d'expression en Turquie. » Jamais la Commission n'était allée aussi loin dans sa critique du système judiciaire en Turquie, indépendamment du pouvoir politique, et toujours aux mains des nationalistes. Comme l'armée et la haute administration, la vieille garde de la magistrature en Turquie est hostile à l'alignement des lois du pays sur des normes européennes, considérées trop laxistes.

A. B.



Olli Rehn, commissaire Européen à l'élargissement, et Orhan Pamuk (à gauche) lors de leur rencontre du 8 octobre à Istanbul. L'écrivain, traduit dans quarante pays, dénonce le déni du génocide arménien dans son pays. AP

LE FIGARO 7 novembre 2005

Nucléaire : Téhéran persiste

IRAN. La République islamique a fait part hier de sa volonté de convertir de nouvelles quantités d'uranium. « Nous avons déclaré à l'Agence internationale à l'énergie atomique (AIEA) que nous allons injecter de nouvelles matières premières dans la chaîne de production » de l'usine de conversion d'Ispahan, a affirmé à la télévision d'Etat Javad Vaïdi, un responsable du Conseil suprême de la sécurité nationale. Il s'agit d'une fin de non-recevoir à la communauté interna-



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. AP

tionale qui presse l'Iran de suspendre toutes ses activités liées à l'enrichissement d'uranium. Le 24 novembre, une réunion des gouverneurs de l'AIEA pourrait décider de saisir ou non le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU. D'ici là, la crispation risque d'aller croissante, d'autant que Téhéran vient, selon la presse locale, d'autoriser la recherche d'investisseurs pour mener à bien ses activités nucléaires ultrasensibles sur un autre site, celui de Natanz.

Hier soir, peu après ce durcissement de ton, les agences de presse iraniennes rapportaient que Téhéran avait formellement demandé à l'Union européenne (UE) la réouverture des négociations sur le nucléaire. Elles avaient été rompues en août, après l'élection du président de la République, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. A Vienne, siège de l'AIEA, un diplomate de l'UE a rejeté la proposition iraniennne.

Kickbacks aren't just for the poor nations

Iraq-UN oil-for-food scandal exposes illicit practices even in rich countries

By Doreen Carvajal

PARIS: As government investigators around the world ponder whether to charge business executives in Iraq's oil-for-food scandal, there is one tawdry lesson from the globalization of kickbacks: The rich nations are just as susceptible to temptation as the poor.

Many prominent companies that were cited in the independent inquiry into the flawed United Nations program for Iraq had headquarters in wealthy Western countries that had toughened laws against bribery, eliminating tax deductions for kickbacks.

Finland, for example — with a state-owned energy company accused in the report issued last week of paying special "surcharges" to the Iraqi regime — had just been ranked by Transparency International as the least corrupt country in the world.

Finland was part of a new international anti-corruption accord that also included Russia and France, where companies received outsized shares of contracts from Iraq and were accused of making kickbacks.

Presiding over this new convention was the United Nations, which the report chided for lack of management discipline.

"This is incredible," said Peter Eigen, chairman of Transparency International, a corruption watchdog organization based in Germany. "It should be a wake-up call to the world that they have to take enforcement against their nationals more seriously." But many experts doubt that this scandal, with almost 2,400 companies paying \$1.8 billions in kickbacks through oil surcharges or "after sales service fees" on humanitarian goods will lead to many prosecutions.

Before the report was released, French investigators were already scrutinizing at least 11 people in France suspected of corruption within the UN program that was created in 1996 to allow Iraq to sell oil in exchange for medicine, food and other humanitarian products.

Since the report exposed massive corruption in the program, there has been a wave of announcements from countries from Germany to Jordan that they are trying to determine whether to file charges.

In Switzerland, the Economics Ministry announced a criminal investigation of four people involved in the program in Iraq and froze some bank accounts. But no charges have been

filed and the government did not name the suspects.

Sweden's public prosecutor, Christer van der Kwast, also announced that he was investigating claims that companies like AstraZeneca, Atlas Copco and Volvo had paid bribes.

"I'm still reflecting and reading the report," he said, noting the difficulties of prosecuting companies that used third-party intermediaries to pay the kickbacks.

Until six years ago, most countries considered it a crime to bribe domestic

public officials, but winked at foreign kickbacks by allowing companies to take tax deductions for such payments. In 1999, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's anti-bribery convention took effect; today it has a total of 36 participating countries, including the United States, France and Germany. The international agreement was considered a watershed step at the time because the intent was to dry up the flow of bribes to foreign officials by focusing on people who make payments.

As a result, countries rewrote their own national laws to eliminate tax deductions for kickbacks. And the terms of the convention spelled out that a kickback is an act of bribery, whether it is paid directly or through intermediaries.

Sweden, ranked one of the least corrupt nations in the world by Transparency International, also signed on to the accord. In 2003, Sweden established van der Kwast's special bureau, the National Anti-Corruption Unit, partly in response. But despite Sweden's relatively pristine reputation, monitors from the

The effort to stamp out corruption has resulted in more bright promises than convictions.

Cooperation and Development group have also criticized the country and many other nations because companies are rarely held liable for employees' behavior. Lately, though, van der Kwast has stirred controversy by confronting Swedish companies for practices that remain standard practice in other European countries.

Last month, he started an investigation of the leading fashion chain Hennes & Mauritz to determine whether it

broke bribery laws when it paid the expenses of journalists to go to a New York fashion show. He also stirred unease in the Stockholm business community when he used bribery laws to investigate a gala organized and abruptly canceled by executives of TeliaSonera, a telecommunications company, which invited 200 business leaders and civil servants for a buffet dinner and an Abba musical, "Mamma Mia!"

"I think he's using these cases to send a message to other businesses," said Orjan Berner, chairman of Sweden's national chapter of Transparency International. "Publicity can have an impact."

If that is the case, a number of companies are squirming under the pressure to clarify and defend past business practices in a very public way.

Some like Siemens, the German electronics giant, disputed the report's accusations, saying its own internal investigation had found no evidence that it had authorized or had been aware of payments to Iraqi officials. Vitol, one of the top four oil traders that dealt with Iraq, also issued a terse denial from its Swiss headquarters after the report disclosed that through a Malaysian intermediary, Mastek, it had paid the single largest oil surcharge of more than \$10 million on a purchase of 33 million barrels.

"We categorically reject the allegation that we knowingly paid surcharges to the Iraqi government," Vitol said in a two-sentence statement.

Other companies have expressed more ambivalent positions, vowing internal reviews of their own and expressing surprise at damaging documents and information uncovered by investigators. And some companies, chided by the report for not cooperating fully by making their employees available for interviews, are now speaking out.

The Weir Group, a Scottish engineering services company with 8,000 employees, did not issue a formal statement after the report accused one of its sales managers, Andrew Macleod, of signing four agreements to pay more than €714,000, or \$856,000 in surcharges on oil-pumping equipment parts, including a document that promised payment "in cash or through a mechanism, which is agreed to by both sides."

According to the report, Weir declined to allow Macleod to be interviewed, but reached by telephone Macleod spoke briefly before halting the conversation on the advice of his lawyer. "I worked for the company and I did as I was told," he said to an investigator, adding he "knew it sounded like a soldier's excuse, but I'm sure you understand I did what was required in Baghdad."

A spokeswoman for Weir said the company had started an internal review in light of new documents and would decide whether to take disciplinary action. "The company," she said, "was disappointed that the committee had identified documents on a small number of low-value contracts with their valve business, which requires further investigation."

Volvo Construction Equipment, a

Brussels subsidiary of Volvo in Sweden, acknowledged that it was possible that payments had been made in some form, but characterized the charges as a cost of doing business in Iraq. According to the report, Volvo paid \$317,000 in special fees to Iraq on a \$6.4 million con-

tract for construction equipment.

"We take these accusations very seriously, and we are looking into this," said Klas Magnusson, a spokesman for Volvo. "We had an agent who was working for us in Iraq, which was quite common for big businesses at the time. We

are aware that this agent has accused us of being aware of this."

International Herald Tribune

UN renews mandate for U.S.-led Iraq force

By Warren Hoge

UNITED NATIONS, New York: The Security Council on Tuesday unanimously adopted a one-year renewal of the United Nations mandate for the U.S.-led multinational force in Iraq.

The resolution, sponsored by Britain, Denmark, Japan, Romania and the United States, extends the mandate until Dec. 31, 2006, but calls for a review of the decision by June 15, 2006, and allows for the termination of the mandate at any point if Iraq requests it.

The review clause was added as a compromise with the demands of France and Russia, which initially asked that the term be extended only six months, rather than a year.

The drawing-up of the measure was remarkably free of disputes on an issue that two years ago deeply divided the Security Council and threw relations between the United Nations and United States into turmoil.

Commenting outside the Council chamber after the vote, John Bolton, the United States ambassador, said, "We thought the manner in which the resolution was adopted in a constructive, cooperative, and very rapid fashion was a good sign." Samir Shakir Sumaidaie, the Iraqi ambassador, said, "We note with satisfaction the manner in which this resolution was passed in an environ-

ment of harmony and agreement."

Bolton said the 15-0 vote "expressed the clear desire of the international community to support the evolving democratic process in Iraq."

The U.S.-led coalition's mandate for Iraq was established by the Security Council in June, 2004, and would have expired with the end of the country's transitional government, which occurs with national elections in December.

The United States sought an early adoption of the renewal to spare the incoming elected government the burden of having to make a request for international military assistance so early in its existence and to forestall the possible resurgence of any Security Council disagreement or the exit of any of the countries still participating in the coalition.

The measure also extends arrangements for depositing oil and natural gas profits into the Development Fund for Iraq and for overseeing the fund by the International Advisory and Monitoring Board.

"Addressing these issues now will facilitate continued international support for Iraq's security, and it will give the newly elected Iraqi government time to assume office, address constitutional

questions and consolidate its authority before confronting issues such as those addressed in this resolution," Bolton

Council members.

He also noted that under the terms of the resolution, the new government could act on its own at any time.

The resolution had its origins in a request of the Security Council from Ibrahim al-Jaafari, the Iraqi prime minister. In a letter on Oct. 27, he said that Iraq needed the continued support of the multinational force because its own forces were not yet ready to take on the responsibility of establishing "lasting peace and security."

In a letter two days later, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told the Security Council that the United States was committed to helping Iraq achieve that capability. Both letters were annexed to the resolution.

In other developments Tuesday, bomb attacks aimed at Iraqi security forces killed at least nine people, Reuters reported.

In western Iraq near the Syrian border, Operation Steel Curtain entered its fourth day, with U.S. marines and Iraqi troops pushing through the town of Qusayba in search of Al Qaeda insurgents. The U.S. military says it has killed 36 rebels and detained 180 in the operation and has lost one U.S. marine dead, according to Reuters.

The New York Times

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune
November 9, 2005

7 NOVEMBRE 2005
Operation

Nouvelle offensive américaine à la frontière irako-syrienne

L'armée américaine a lancé une vaste offensive dans l'ouest de l'Irak afin de priver les insurgés liés à Al-Qaeda de soutien extérieur et d'établir une présence militaire irakienne permanente dans cette région proche de la Syrie. Menée par 3500 hommes, dont un millier de soldats irakiens, cette opération est la cinquième depuis trois mois dans la vallée de l'Euphrate, qui court de la frontière syrienne jusqu'aux abords de Bagdad et constitue l'un des principaux axes d'infiltration de combattants étrangers. «Nous savons que si nous leur interdisons la frontière syrienne, ils auront moins de possibilités de mener des attaques en Irak», a expliqué hier le général américain Donald Alston. (AFP)

Soutien appuyé de Téhéran à la Syrie

L'Iran a réaffirmé hier à la Syrie, son principal allié au Moyen-Orient, un soutien inchangé après l'adoption, fin octobre par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, d'une résolution sommant Damas de coopérer à l'enquête internationale sur l'assassinat de l'ancien Premier ministre libanais Rafic Hariri. «Nous soutenons la Syrie sans aucun doute possible, la Syrie est notre amie. Les pressions sur la Syrie sont inacceptables, elles ont surtout des motivations politiques», a déclaré le ministère iranien des Affaires étrangères dans la première réaction officielle à l'adoption de la résolution 1636. Téhéran et Damas, visés par des sanctions américaines, sont soumis à un surcroît de pressions, l'Iran à cause de ses activités nucléaires; la Syrie, de son rôle présumé dans l'attentat contre Rafic Hariri. (AFP)

Un nouveau parti pro-kurde créé en Turquie



ANKARA, 9 nov 2005 (AFP) - 14h40 - Un parti pro-kurde a déposé mercredi ses statuts au ministère de l'Intérieur et espère lutter pour la "paix" en Turquie entre Turcs et Kurdes, a indiqué sa co-présidente Aysel Tugluk à l'AFP.

Le parti pour une société démocratique (DTP) rassemble de nombreux politiciens kurdes et devrait devenir le premier parti pro-kurde de Turquie.

Les fondateurs de cette nouvelle formation, la 49e du pays, doivent se réunir jeudi pour élire les instances dirigeantes.

Le parti a deux co-présidents, Ahmet Türk, un ancien député, et Mme Tugluk, une avocate du chef rebelle kurde Abdullah Ocalan, emprisonné à vie depuis

"Nous oeuvrerons pour la paix", a déclaré Mme Tugluk à l'AFP.

"Il y a un conflit kurde qui est d'actualité dans notre pays. Le DTP accorde une importance à un règlement de cette question par voie de dialogue", a-t-elle encore déclaré aux journalistes devant le ministère de l'Intérieur, cité par l'agence Anatolie.

Deux des quatre ex-députés du parti de la démocratie (DEP) qui ont purgé dix ans de prison pour collaboration avec le groupe séparatiste kurde armé PKK (parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan dirigé par Ocalan) avant d'être libérés l'an dernier, figurent parmi les fondateurs.

Les travaux de création du parti avaient débuté après leur libération.

Mme Tugluk a expliqué que ces quatre personnalités dont Mme Leyla Zana, une militante des droits des Kurdes, étaient frappées par une interdiction de politique et que Hatip Dicle et Selim Sadak étaient devenus fondateurs pour "voir si des poursuites seraient engagés contre eux".

Le DTP succède ainsi au Parti démocratique du peuple (Dehap) menacé d'une éventuelle fermeture pour des liens présumés avec la lutte armée kurde et pour falsification de documents lors des élections générales de 2002.

Turquie: des manifestants kurdes brûlent un poste de police dans le sud-est



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 9 nov 2005 (AFP) - 12h14 - Plusieurs dizaines de manifestants kurdes ont incendié jeudi un point de contrôle de la police à Semdinli, une ville du sud-est anatolien frappée par deux attentats mercredi et la semaine dernière, ont rapporté des sources locales.

Les manifestants, qui scandaient des slogans favorables aux rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), se sont réunis vers 08H00 devant le point de contrôle, qu'ils ont incendié après avoir constitué une barricade avec des poteaux électriques, ont affirmé ces sources.

La police n'est pas intervenue et aucun blessé n'a été déploré au cours de l'incident, ont-elles précisé, ajoutant que les forces de sécurité avaient établi des barricades dans la ville en proie à de fortes tensions, pour prévenir de nouveaux débordements.

Une personne a été tuée et six autres ont été blessées mercredi par l'explosion d'une bombe dans une librairie située dans un complexe commercial.

Des habitants de Semdinli, une ville aux confins de l'Iran et de l'Irak, ont tenté de lyncher une personne qu'ils accusaient d'avoir posé l'engin et qui a finalement été placée en garde à vue par la police.

Trois fusils-mitrailleurs ont été découverts dans sa voiture, sérieusement endommagée par une foule en colère qui s'est également attaquée aux forces de sécurité.

La police a tiré en l'air pour disperser les manifestants. Une personne a été tuée et une dizaine d'autres, dont le maire de Semdinli, ont été blessées lors de ces incidents, selon la presse de jeudi, qui s'interrogeait par ailleurs sur la nature de l'attentat.

"Des bombes de provocation", titrait le quotidien libéral Radikal, reprenant des accusations portées par le député d'opposition Esat Canan, du Parti républicain du peuple (CHP, social-démocrate), qui évoquait la possibilité d'un attentat perpétré par "l'Etat profond", expression désignant en Turquie une collusion entre les services secrets et la mafia.

Dans la nuit du 1er au 2 novembre, un attentat attribué par les autorités au PKK avait déjà frappé la ville. Une voiture bourrée d'explosifs avait explosé près de la gendarmerie locale, faisant 23 blessés.

Mustafa Erkal, le gouverneur de Tunceli, une autre province du sud-est anatolien, a par ailleurs affirmé jeudi qu'un rebelle du PKK avait été tué par l'explosion d'une mine qu'il tentait de poser dans sa province, selon l'agence de presse Anatolie.

Le sud-est anatolien, peuplé majoritairement de Kurdes, est le théâtre d'un conflit sanglant entre les forces de sécurité turques et les rebelles kurdes du PKK qui a fait près de 37.000 morts depuis 1984.

Le PKK, considéré comme une organisation terroriste par Ankara, l'Union européenne et les Etats-Unis, a multiplié ses opérations dans la région au cours des derniers mois après avoir observé un cessez-le-feu unilatéral de 1999 à juin 2004.

Le groupe a mis fin début octobre à une nouvelle trêve de six semaines.

Le frère du chef du Parlement aux mains de la sécurité kurde (responsable)



KIRKOUK (Irak), 11 nov 2005 (AFP) - 10h56 - Hatem al-Hassani, frère du chef du Parlement irakien, le sunnite Hajem al-Hassani, disparu depuis mardi à Kirkouk (nord), est entre les mains de la sécurité kurde, qui le soupçonne d'implication dans les violences, a affirmé vendredi un responsable kurde.

Le chef du conseil local de cette ville multiethnique, Razkar Ali, un dirigeant de l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK, du président Jalal Talabani), a affirmé qu'une "force spéciale de la police a arrêté Hatem al-Hassani et deux de ses gardes du corps, pour implication dans des activités extrémistes" à Kirkouk, à 250 km au nord de Bagdad.

Un de ses frères, le général Qais al-Hassani, a pour sa part affirmé que "le sort de Hatem est toujours inconnu", ajoutant que la police de la ville "nie qu'il ait été arrêté et détenu dans les locaux de la police". Il avait indiqué mercredi que son frère avait été "enlevé" la veille.

Il a répété qu'il pensait toujours que "la personnalité de Hajem al-Hassani, président du Parlement, et ses positions sont la raison principale de cet enlèvement, surtout avec l'approche des élections" législatives, qui doivent se tenir le 15 décembre.

Le général al-Hassani a réclamé la libération immédiate de son frère "un fidèle croyant qui aide les pauvres".

De source sécuritaire irakienne, on affirme que Hatem al-Hassani est considéré comme porté disparu. "Il a disparu avec sa voiture mardi en milieu d'après-midi", avait déclaré cette source qui s'exprimait sous le couvert de l'anonymat.

Hatem al-Hassani, un marchand de voitures habitant Kirkouk est l'un des trois frères du chef du Parlement. Agé de 43 ans, il est père de sept enfants.

La Turquie enquête sur un attentat suspect suscitant la colère des Kurdes



SEMDINLI (Turquie), 11 nov 2005 (AFP) - 17h35 - Le gouvernement turc a promis vendredi de faire la lumière sur un attentat à la bombe dans la bourgade anatolienne de Semdinli, où la population, à majorité kurde, est en colère à la suite d'allégations d'une implication des forces de sécurité.

Près de 10.000 personnes se sont réunies dans cette petite ville, située aux confins de l'Iran et de l'Irak, pour assister aux funérailles d'un homme tué mercredi par l'explosion de la bombe dans une librairie appartenant, selon les médias, à un ancien rebelle kurde, et d'une personne abattue lors de heurts entre la police et des manifestants à la suite de l'attentat.

"Etat assassin", "Etat terroriste", a scandé la foule, qui a aussi repris des slogans favorables aux rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK).

Les forces de sécurité étaient en état d'alerte pour parer aux risques de troubles lors du retour des deux corps, envoyés pour autopsie à Diyarbakir, à 630 kilomètres à l'ouest, et de leur inhumation.

Des habitants ont érigé des barricades dans plusieurs rues de la ville à l'aide de pylônes électriques pour empêcher le déploiement attendu de renforts de police en provenance de localités voisines.

Des représentants locaux de partis politiques pro-kurdes ont appelé la population au calme

A Hakkari, le chef-lieu de la province, cinq personnes dont un policier, ont été blessées dans des heurts avec la police qui a tiré en l'air et fait usage de gaz lacrymogènes pour disperser une foule réunie devant la mairie pour protester contre les incidents de Semdinli, a rapporté l'agence de presse Anatolie.

A Ankara, le Premier ministre Recep Tayyip Erdogan a réaffirmé que les responsables de l'attentat seraient punis. "Personne ne doit s'attendre à une protection ou un traitement particulier", a-t-il déclaré. "Nous ne laisserons personne ouvrir la voie à une confrontation entre l'Etat et son peuple".

Des députés et des journaux ont rapproché les événements de Semdinli d'un scandale survenu à la fin des années 1990, qui avait révélé des collusions entre les forces de sécurité combattant les séparatistes kurdes dans le sud-est anatolien, des chefs de clans locaux, des politiciens et la mafia.

Des membres des forces de sécurité avaient également été accusés de se livrer à des exécutions extra-judiciaires, aux enlèvements et au trafic d'armes et de drogue.

La Cour européenne des droits de l'homme a condamné la Turquie à maintes reprises pour des violations des droits de l'Homme lors du conflit qui a opposé le gouvernement d'Ankara aux séparatistes du PKK et a fait quelque 37.000 morts entre 1984 et 1999.

Les violences de Semdinli soulignent la montée des tensions dans le sud-est anatolien après une période de calme relatif consécutive à l'annonce par le PKK d'un cessez-le-feu unilatéral, maintenu de 1999 à 2004.

Dans un entretien publié vendredi par le quotidien Vatan, le procureur de Semdinli, Harun Ayik, a confirmé qu'un individu placé en garde à vue après avoir échappé à un lynchage par la foule qui le soupçonnait d'avoir posé la bombe était un agent de renseignement de la gendarmerie.

Le procureur a ajouté que deux sous-officiers de gendarmerie suspectés de participation à l'attentat étaient également interrogés par la police et qu'un troisième le serait pour avoir tiré en l'air durant les incidents.

Il a précisé que les armes et les documents - un croquis de la librairie et une liste de noms, dont celui du libraire, selon la presse - trouvés dans la voiture avec laquelle les trois hommes sont soupçonnés d'avoir tenté de s'enfuir, ne suffisaient pas à établir leur culpabilité.

M. Ayik n'a pas écarté la possibilité que l'attentat et les heurts qui ont suivi aient été orchestrés par le PKK pour discréditer les autorités.

Une commission d'enquête parlementaire et des délégations de députés mises sur pied par les partis d'opposition devaient arriver prochainement à Semdinli.

A mon commandement, corrompez !

MAIS non, voyons, ce n'étaient pas des vulgaires pots-de-vin : c'étaient des « taxes de service après-vente ». Saddam lui-même en avait fixé le montant à 10 %. Et des centaines, des milliers d'entreprises du monde entier (très exactement 2 200, a dénombré la commission Volker, qui a enquêté sur

la question) sont plus que fortement soupçonnées d'avoir craché au bassin. C'est ainsi que Renault et Peugeot, mais aussi Air Liquide, le labo Pierre Fabre, Urgo, etc. sont dans le collimateur. Et pas pour des petites sommes... Renault aurait payé 6,5 millions de dollars et Peugeot 7 millions. Evidemment, c'est beaucoup moins que les 222 millions versés par le vendeur de blé australien AWB, qui affirme sans rire avoir déboursé cette somme sans s'en être rendu compte. Pas moins de 180 entreprises françaises auraient ainsi payé sans broncher des dessous-de-table qui tombaient di-

rectement dans la poche de Saddam : ce qui lui permettait un train de vie très confortable, et assurait la survie du régime alors que l'Irak était sous embargo...

Admirable paradoxe de l'aide humanitaire : c'est dans le cadre du programme onusien « Pétrole contre nourriture », lancé en 1996, qui devait permettre au peuple irakien de ne pas trop souffrir des conséquences de l'embargo en autorisant des entreprises étrangères à vendre en Irak des biens de première nécessité, que s'est déroulée cette vaste entreprise de corruption. D'un côté, la « communauté internatio-

nale » punissait le méchant dictateur coupable de dissimuler des armes de destruction massive en frappant son pays d'embargo. De l'autre, les entreprises de cette même « communauté », incarnations de l'esprit d'initiative et de la foi dans un avenir meilleur, finançaient sans états d'âme ce même tyran moustachu. Et la France, grande amie de l'Irak, avait l'honneur d'en être le troisième fournisseur, après la Russie et l'Égypte...

La France, pays des droits de l'homme et des dictateurs...

Après l'assassinat d'un avocat, le procès de Saddam Hussein en sursis

IRAK

Les avocats de l'ancien dictateur veulent boycotter le procès après le deuxième assassinat de l'un des leurs.

LES AVOCATS DE SADDAM Hussein ont de nouveau menacé de boycotter le procès de l'ancien dictateur, après le meurtre de l'un des leurs mardi à Bagdad, le deuxième depuis le début du procès, le 19 octobre. Khalil al-Douleimi, qui préside le comité de la défense de Saddam, a annoncé qu'il considérait la prochaine session du Tribunal spécial irakien (TSI), prévue le 28 novembre prochain, comme « nulle et illégitime ».

M^r Douleimi a expliqué que les avocats de l'ancien dictateur et de ses sept coaccusés, qui doivent

répondre du massacre de plus de 140 habitants de la ville chiite de Doujaïl en 1982, étaient mis dans l'impossibilité de préparer leur défense en raison des menaces pesant sur eux et sur les témoins. « Ces menaces nous empêchent de nous rendre au tribunal et de nous entretenir avec des témoins », a-t-il dit. Le collectif de défense a aussi appelé la communauté internationale à agir pour déclarer le haut tribunal pénal irakien nul et non avenue et pour « libérer » Saddam Hussein.

La veille, en début d'après-midi, un commando de trois voitures remplies d'hommes en armes avait attaqué en plein Bagdad le véhicule où avaient pris place deux des avocats de la défense. Adel Abbas al-Zoubeidi, défenseur de l'ancien vice-président

irakien Taha Yassine Ramadan, est tué sur le coup dans la fusillade. Son frère Tamer Hammoud Hadi, avocat de Barzan al-Tikriti, le demi-frère de Saddam Hussein, est grièvement blessé.

Climat de peur

Ce nouvel assassinat est venu renforcer le climat de peur qui avait marqué le procès de Saddam Hussein dès son ouverture, le 19 octobre dernier. Malgré les mesures de sécurité exceptionnelles entourant le tribunal, installé dans l'ancien siège du parti Baas, au cœur de la « zone verte », la forteresse américaine du centre de Bagdad, quatre des cinq juges avaient refusé d'être filmés, et les premiers témoins n'avaient pas comparu par peur de représailles. Dès le lendemain,

un premier avocat, Saadoun Janabi, était enlevé et tué par ses ravisseurs.

Les nouvelles autorités irakiennes avaient alors accusé implicitement des partisans de l'ancien régime de Saddam Hussein, décidés à empêcher coûte que coûte le procès de leur ancien chef, ou à le faire transférer hors d'Irak, comme le réclament depuis le début les avocats de la défense. Mais des témoins avaient assuré que les ravisseurs appartenaient à des services du ministère de l'Intérieur. Certaines unités spéciales de la police, constituées de Kurdes et de chiites, sont fréquemment accusées de mener des campagnes d'assassinats ciblés contre d'anciens cadres du régime bassiste.

Le président irakien Jalal Tala-

bani a condamné hier ce nouveau meurtre, qui réduit un peu plus les chances de voir le procès de Saddam Hussein se tenir dans des conditions juridiques satisfaisantes. Il a aussi appelé le gouvernement de M. al-Jafaari à assurer une meilleure protection aux avocats, tout en enjoignant ces derniers à l'accepter malgré le peu de confiance qu'ils ont dans les unités de la police irakienne.

Justice de vainqueur

Quels que soient l'identité et les motifs des auteurs de ces assassinats, la mort de deux avocats de l'ancien dictateur et de ses coaccusés a aussi relancé les critiques sur le choix de faire siéger le TSI en Irak. L'insécurité qui règne dans le pays rend périlleux le moindre déplacement au centre même de Bagdad. Les autorités irakiennes refusent pourtant d'envisager le transfert du TSI à l'étranger.

Les autres cours pénales internationales chargées de juger les criminels de guerre ex-yougoslaves ou les auteurs du génocide rwandais, siègent aux Pays-Bas et en Tanzanie. Mais le TSI a volontairement été installé en Irak. Les nouvelles autorités de Bagdad espèrent ainsi renforcer l'image nationale de leur gouvernement, et permettre une éventuelle sentence de mort contre Saddam et ses coaccusés. En contrepartie, le risque est grand de voir le procès perdre totalement son sens, devant une cour terrorisée par la peur des représailles.

ADRIEN JAULMES
(AVEC AFP, REUTERS)

Bruxelles déplore un ralentissement des réformes à Ankara

TURQUIE

La Commission européenne a publié son rapport annuel sur les réformes entreprises par la Turquie en vue de son adhésion à l'UE.

De notre correspondant à Bruxelles

EN RENDANT PUBLIC, hier, son rapport annuel sur les progrès faits par la Turquie en vue de son adhésion à l'Union, la Commission européenne a insisté sur le « ralentissement » des réformes en 2005. « La Turquie continue à respecter les critères politiques de Copenhague, mais le rythme des réformes s'est ralenti », a déploré Olli Rehn, commissaire finlandais à l'Elargissement.

Lors de sa présentation, il a cité

cinq réformes prioritaires pour la Turquie à court terme. D'ici un ou deux ans, Ankara devra avoir achevé sa politique de « zéro tolérance » à l'égard de la torture. « La lutte contre l'impunité doit être intensifiée », a-t-il insisté, exigeant que les procureurs « puissent mener à bien leurs enquêtes » et que les « coupables soient condamnés ».

Alors que les poursuites judiciaires contre le romancier Orhan Pamuk pour insulte à la patrie ont défrayé la chronique, Bruxelles insiste sur la liberté d'expression et la liberté de la presse. « Il faut corriger la situation de ces personnes condamnées pour une expression non violente de leurs opinions », a indiqué Olli Rehn. La Commission exige également qu'une loi soit adoptée pour « corriger le traitement des non-musulmans ». Elle exige aussi la mise en œuvre d'une législation

garantissant le « droit des femmes, dans le Code civil et le Code pénal ». Enfin, Bruxelles rappelle que le « droit des syndicats » doit être respecté. Pour le reste, la Commission européenne se montre très élogieuse, estimant que la Turquie avait fait des progrès « essentiels » dans le domaine économique et méritait d'être considérée « comme une économie de marché viable ».

Dans l'ensemble, Bruxelles conforte la candidature de la Turquie, qui a ouvert ses négociations d'adhésion à l'Union dans un climat tendu, le 3 octobre. La question chypriote, soulevée cet été par la France, est traitée par Bruxelles sous un angle purement technique d'union douanière. Ankara se refuse toujours à reconnaître la République de Chypre et refuse l'accès à ses ports des bateaux battant pavillon chypriote,

privant Nicosie d'un marché ju-teux.

« Il n'y a pas de lien politique entre l'affaire chypriote avec l'ouverture des négociations avec la Turquie », a rappelé Olli Rehn. « L'Union européenne a tenu sa parole dans cette affaire. Elle a ouvert les négociations le 3 octobre sans poser de nouvelles conditions », a ajouté le commissaire.

« Maintenant, à la Turquie de respecter la sienne et d'ouvrir ses ports aux navires chypriotes, conformément à l'accord d'union douanière : cela ne se négocie pas, c'est un engagement. »

La question chypriote et la reconnaissance du génocide arménien, un sujet cher aux Français, empoisonnent de manière récurrente les relations entre Ankara et l'Union européenne.

ALEXANDRINE BOUILHET

Reforms slowing in Turkey, EU says

By Graham Bowley

BRUSSELS: Five weeks after the European Union began historic membership talks with Turkey, the European Commission warned that the pace of political reform in that country had slowed over the past year, and it raised concerns about human rights violations, including torture, persecution of religious minorities and treatment of women.

In an annual update on Ankara's progress, the commission granted Turkey the status of a functioning market economy, a classification that could increase foreign investment in the country. But it said that there were still problems with the application of Ankara's legal code and that the country had to do more to strengthen human rights. Overall, the report suggested that Turkey had a lot to do before it could become a full member of the Union, a final step that is not expected for about a decade.

Separately, the commission also recommended that the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, which came near to civil war four years ago, should be a candidate for Union membership, part of the EU's strategy for bringing regions of the Balkans within its borders.

Olli Rehn, the EU enlargement commissioner, said the EU, which grew from 15 to 25 nations last year, should press on to embrace more nations despite the political failure of the European constitution in referendums this summer.

Commission raises concerns about rights

The rejections of the constitution were in part the result of European

voters' disapproval of the previous enlargement, in which countries from Central and Eastern Europe entered the Union. The referendums have left the EU without a constitutional treaty, which was designed to help the Union function with 25 members or more.

Rehn said Wednesday that the EU's continuing enlargement was one of its most powerful policy tools and that it had helped transform societies by forcing countries to meet the Union's entry criteria.

He said it was the EU's "deepest essence, the power of transformation, of turning countries into stable democracies and stable countries."

Rehn said Macedonia still had much to do to meet the EU's entry criteria and gave no date for when entry negotiations could begin. The commission's recommendation must also be approved by all 25 EU heads of state and government, probably at a summit meeting in December.

"Four years ago, in 2001, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was on the brink of civil war," Rehn said. "Now in 2005 it is seriously knocking on the European Union's door. That is a major achievement."

Macedonia's prime minister, Vlado Buckovski, said his country had been

given a "one-way ticket" to the EU.

"Today, the question of whether Macedonia will become a member of the European Union has definitely been answered, and the answer is yes," he told reporters, Reuters reported. "The question now is when Macedonia will become a member. The answer is up to us."

The commission said Turkey would receive €600 million in aid from the EU next year to help pay for reforms; the country received €300 million in 2005.

But Rehn said that over the next two years Turkey must give priority to improving freedom of expression, women's rights, religious freedom, trade union rights and rights of non-Muslims.

On freedom of expression, he pointed to Orhan Pamuk, the Turkish novelist, who is to stand trial next month, accused of denigrating the state with comments about Turkey's role in the deaths of Armenians and Kurds.

Amanda Akcakoca, an expert on Turkey at the European Policy Center, a pro-integration research institution in Brussels, said that the granting of functioning market economy status was a welcome boost for Turkey's EU prospects.

"It is a positive sign for Turkey's movement toward the EU," she said. "It is extremely good for attracting foreign direct investment, which is Turkey's biggest problem at the moment."

International Herald Tribune

Une bombe humaine au centre de Bagdad

Les attentats suicides se multiplient contre les policiers et les soldats irakiens.



UNE « BOMBE HUMAINE » s'est fait exploser hier matin dans un restaurant bondé du centre de Bagdad, faisant plus de trente morts. L'individu est entré vers 10 heures du matin chez Kadbouri, un établissement situé sur l'avenue Abou-Nawas, non loin des hôtels Sheraton et Palestine. Plusieurs groupes de policiers, qui ont l'habitude d'y prendre leur petit-déjeuner, sont attablés dans la salle comble lorsque l'homme déclenche sa ceinture d'explosifs.

Dans l'espace confiné, la déflagration dévaste le restaurant,

tuant 35 personnes et faisant autant de blessés. Une heure plus tard, une voiture suicide s'est jetée contre une file d'attente à l'entrée d'un centre de recrutement de l'armée irakienne à Tikrit, tuant une dizaine de jeunes recrues et faisant le double de

blessés. Ces attentats suicide quotidiens prennent principalement pour cible les policiers et les soldats de la nouvelle Garde nationale irakienne.

L'attaque du restaurant a été revendiquée via Internet par la branche irakienne d'al-Qaïda, le groupe d'Abou Moussab al-Zarqaoui. « L'un de nos lionceaux s'est infiltré dans un rassemblement d'apostats des perfides forces Baïr (une milice chiite qui fournit beaucoup de policiers) et des gardes de l'hôtel Palestine... et leur a infligé de lourdes pertes », dit le communiqué, qui précise que « cette opération s'inscrit dans la campagne pour venger les sunnites d'al-Qaïm ».

Cette ville de l'ouest de l'Irak est depuis une semaine prise en

plein dans l'offensive « Rideau de fer » de l'armée américaine. Des marines et des soldats irakiens ont lancé une série d'opérations contre des bases de la guérilla arabe sunnite dans cette région proche de la frontière syrienne, découvrant plusieurs caches d'armes et d'explosifs.

Le groupe de Zarqaoui avait lancé mardi une campagne de représailles pour « venger les victimes » de cette offensive. Recourant à leurs tactiques de prédilection et au réservoir jusqu'à présent inépuisé de candidats au suicide, les insurgés arabes sunnites ont ainsi repris leurs attentats jusqu'au centre de Bagdad.

ADRIEN JAULMES
(AVEC AFP, REUTERS)

La Cour européenne valide l'interdiction du voile à l'université

TURQUIE

Une étudiante turque qui revendiquait le port du foulard islamique à l'université d'Istanbul a été déboutée par la Cour des droits de l'homme de Strasbourg.

De notre correspondante à Bruxelles

LA COUR EUROPÉENNE des droits de l'homme a rendu, hier, en appel, un arrêt contre le port du voile islamique en Turquie. Confortant les principes laïcs de la République fondée par Moustafa Kemal, les juges de Strasbourg ont rejeté, en appel, la requête d'une étudiante en médecine, qui contestait le règlement interne très strict de l'université d'Istanbul. La plaignante estimait que la circulaire de 1998 du recteur d'Istanbul, interdisant aux étudiantes le port du voile islamique, était contraire au droit à « manifester librement sa religion, en public ou en privé » tel qu'il est garanti par l'article 9 de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme. Partie poursuivre ses études à Vienne, où le port du voile

est autorisé dans l'enseignement supérieur, la jeune femme avait également porté plainte contre la Turquie pour « atteinte à la liberté d'instruction » et « discrimination religieuse ».

Les magistrats européens l'ont déboutée sur toute la ligne. S'ils reconnaissent que l'interdiction du voile constitue bien une « ingérence » de l'Etat dans la libre expression de la religion, ils estiment, en l'occurrence, qu'il s'agit d'une restriction « conforme à la loi, légitime et nécessaire ». Dans leur arrêt, les juges tiennent compte de l'histoire de la Turquie moderne, basée sur la laïcité stricte, mais aussi du contexte

actuel, notamment des risques posés par l'islamisme radical. La Cour rappelle que la laïcité version turque « interdit à l'Etat de témoigner une préférence pour une religion », mais vise aussi à « protéger l'individu contre des pressions extérieures émanant de mouvements extrémistes ».

A propos du voile, les magistrats évoquent le contexte particulier de la Turquie musulmane et laïque : « Dans un pays où la majorité de la population, manifestant un attachement profond aux droits de la femme et à un mode de vie laïc, adhère à la

religion musulmane, une limitation du port du foulard peut répondre à un besoin social impérieux. »

Cet arrêt aura un impact en France

Définitif, cet arrêt fera jurisprudence en Turquie, où il constitue une cinglante défaite pour les islamistes qui veulent revenir sur les bases laïques de la république. Il aura également un impact en France et dans tous les pays du Conseil de l'Europe où le port du voile dans les lieux publics crée un débat. Aujourd'hui, les pays du continent qui interdisent le port du voile dans les administrations ou les écoles sont minoritaires. L'arrêt de la Cour cite la France, la Turquie, l'Arménie et l'Azerbaïdjan. Plusieurs groupes de pressions, défenseurs des droits de l'homme, des minorités religieuses ou des islamistes, tentent de faire condamner la France ou la Turquie pour leurs lois restrictives sur le voile. Jusqu'ici, ils n'ont jamais obtenu gain de cause. La Cour européenne des droits de l'homme a toujours défendu bec et ongles le principe de laïcité, estimant qu'il s'agit d'un rempart efficace contre le fondamentalisme.

ALEXANDRINE BOUILHET

Suicide bomber kills 29 in Iraq

By Sabrina Tavernise

Baghdad restaurant packed with police

BAGHDAD: A man wearing a suicide bomb belt walked into a bustling breakfast restaurant in the heart of Baghdad on Thursday morning and blew himself up, killing at least 29 people and wounding 30, many of them police officers, officials said.

Al Qaeda in Iraq claimed responsibility for the attack, according to SITE, a group that tracks Islamic militant postings.

The attack was the most lethal in the capital in two months and occurred a day after three suicide bombings in Amman killed 57 people in a coordinated attack also claimed by Al Qaeda.

The suicide bombing was the worst strike in a day of violence in Iraq that left at least 35 dead and more than 50 wounded. Police officials also found 27 corpses in the southern city of Kut.

The bomber struck shortly after 9:30 a.m. in the Qadouri Restaurant, a small place known for its traditional dishes of eggs and meat. It is popular among police officers and on Thursday was packed with the usual breakfast crowd.

The bombing appeared to be retaliation for a military operation in the western Iraqi city of Husayba, where American and Iraqi forces have been battling insurgents for six days.

On Monday, Al Qaeda promised fresh attacks if the forces did not withdraw in 24 hours.

The explosion occurred as the British foreign secretary, Jack Straw, arrived in Baghdad for meetings with Iraqi government officials. Straw, who had come from Amman, called on Syria to tighten security on its border with Iraq.

American commanders say that Iraq's border with Syria — hundreds of miles of open desert — is the entryway

into the country for foreign fighters and suicide bombers, many of whom are affiliated with Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian terrorist who is the leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq.

"He still has the capability of recruiting suicide bombers, training them, and giving them munitions," Major General Rick Lynch, a spokesman for the American command, said of Zarqawi.

"That's what happened in Baghdad today and that's what happened in Amman yesterday."

The bombing Thursday stood out in the gruesomeness of its detail. When the bomb went off, the restaurant was so crowded that some patrons were standing, said Majid Ali, an engineer who left just moments before.

The bomber appeared to have detonated himself near the cashier; his body was severed at the torso.

"I saw bodies flying everywhere," said Uday Mohamed Hassoon, who manages the restaurant's parking and whose ears were still ringing from the



Scott Nelson for The New York Times

Soldiers, policeman and rescue personnel taking bodies from a Baghdad restaurant attacked by a suicide bomber Wednesday. Many of the dead were police officers.

blast. "Five of my close friends were killed."

The restaurant, popular among Iraqi police officers and soldiers, who are frequent targets of insurgents here, had recently been threatened and had closed for several months, said Mohamed Abdel Qadr, a relative of the owner, a Sunni Arab in his 70's, whose nickname is Qadouri, as in the name of the restaurant.

Cement flower planters had recently been put up to protect against car bombs.

Something seemed wrong on Thursday morning, Hassoon said. A man carrying a large bag walked into the restaurant but did not order anything. Hassoon searched his bag and found only a Koran inside. Hassoon said he suspected the man was working with the bomber.

Later, a group of police officers appeared to hesitate before coming inside. A lieutenant colonel and five other officers walked in the front door and, exactly at that moment, the bomb exploded, said Hassoon who, in a stroke of luck, had walked outside to avoid the din of the restaurant to make a phone

call.

"I cannot believe that I am still alive," said Ali, the engineer who also left the restaurant moments before the attack. "I should be at the forensic department now like the other people who were at the restaurant."

By late morning, rescue workers were gone and the area grew quiet. A man asked a police officer if his brother was among the dead. He walked off without a word when the officer answered yes.

On the wall inside, the only two things left hanging were a small sprig of fake red flowers, and a medallion that had the word, "God" in gold letters.

The New York Times

■ Pope sees Talabani

President Jalal Talabani of Iraq met with Pope Benedict XVI on Thursday and sought to assure him that the rights of Christians and other religious minorities are guaranteed under Iraq's new constitution, The Associated Press reported from the Vatican.

The Vatican has expressed concern about the constitution, which promises

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religious freedom for all, but says Islam is "a fundamental source" of legislation for Iraq.

The Vatican, which made public no details about the meeting, fears that any legal system based on Islamic law might not protect the rights of religious minorities.

An Iraqi bishop present at Talabani's

news conference questioned the president's assertions, saying that the issue of religious freedom under the constitution was problematic.

"It's very dangerous to say that the legal system must be compatible with Islamic law," said Bishop Louis Sako of the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk. "Either Islam or democracy. You have to

choose."

The bishop said Talabani had been "diplomatic" in describing the situation for the pope.

Christians number around 800,000 of Iraq's 26 million people. Most belong to the Chaldean Church, an Eastern-rite church that is loyal to the pope.

Syria asserts it is target of U.S.-led campaign

By Katherine Zoepf

DAMASCUS: President Bashar al-Assad of Syria said Thursday that the United Nations investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri on Feb. 14 is part of a campaign to turn Syria into a scapegoat for the ills of a whole region.

Assad also said that Detlev Mehlis, the German prosecutor who is leading the UN investigation, had refused Syria's invitation to come to Damascus to discuss Syria's cooperation, but he did not say whether he had decided to comply with Mehlis's request to send six high-ranking Syrian intelligence officials, including his brother-in-law Asef Shawkat, to Lebanon for questioning.

Assad said that Syria would nonetheless continue assisting the UN investigation, but, in a rare, televised public address delivered at Damascus University, he also struck a defiant note, telling Syr-

ians that they must remain strong in the face of "cultural and psychological warfare" that aimed to weaken Syrian unity.

Assad strongly suggested that Syria is the victim of an American-led conspiracy. "We must be steadfast in facing this foreign attack," he said. "We don't want to mention names, but you know who I'm talking about," Assad said, to loud peals of laughter from his audience.

Hunein Nemer, a member of Syria's Parliament, said the speech was calculated to shore up domestic support and to quell Syrians' growing sense of anxiety about the pressures their country is facing.

"The Syrian people are very anxious, and they are also very angry," Nemer said. "President Assad was telling the people that we know there is a campaign against Syria by the American administration, and that we reject this injustice that is being done to us."

In the hours before Assad's speech, many parts of Damascus were transformed into tableaux of carefully choreographed patriotism. At 7 a.m., all subscribers to Syriatel, the mobile phone network that is owned by the president's first cousin, Rami Makhlouf, received text messages asking them to attend rallies showing "love of country and the rejection of external pressures."

Outside the hall where the president spoke, thousands of demonstrators pumped their fists in the air in rhythmic motion, chanting, "Our blood and our

souls we sacrifice to you, oh Bashar!" Yet many Syrians said that they felt disappointed by a speech that, for all its passionate display, was mainly a reiteration of the Baathist regime's long-held positions. When the timing of the speech was first announced, on Tuesday, it was widely expected that Assad might announce major new reforms, in order to build popular support.

Assad announced in the speech that Syrian citizenship would at last be offered to thousands of stateless Kurds living in northern Syria, but he made no mention, for example, of a "party law" legalizing multiple political parties, which many activists had hoped he might announce at this time.

Marwan al-Kabalan, a political science professor at Damascus University, said that the announcement of citizenship for the Kurds was "welcome, but not a big enough gesture for this moment."

"Yesterday, everyone's hopes were sky high," Kabalan said.

"But the president didn't even talk about whether he has decided to hand over these six intelligence officers, and of course this is the single thing most on Syrians' minds."

The New York Times

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11 NOVEMBRE 2005



Pétrole en Irak : nouvelle mise en examen

Michel Grimard (ex-RPR) soupçonné d'avoir reçu de Bagdad l'équivalent de 400 000 dollars.

Un septième Français a été mis en examen mercredi soir par le juge Philippe Courroye dans l'enquête Pétrole contre nourriture. Michel Grimard, ancien membre du conseil national du RPR, est soupçonné d'avoir été allocataire, par Bagdad, de 12,5 millions de barils de pétrole dont il aurait tiré une commission d'environ 400 000 dollars. Le juge Courroye l'a mis en examen pour «trafic d'influence» et «corruption de fonctionnaire étranger». Cette dernière inculpation correspond au versement par Michel Grimard d'environ 50 000 dollars

à des officiels irakiens en échange de l'attribution de ces coupons de pétrole. Ces bons ont en effet été donnés en marge du programme de l'ONU Pétrole contre nourriture, qui prévoyait initialement que les recettes issues des ventes du brut irakien soient utilisées au bénéfice de la population locale.

En cédant, à un prix très avantageux, des coupons en marge de ce programme, Bagdad souhaitait à la fois percevoir des rétrocommissions, mais aussi remercier des personnalités œuvrant en faveur du régime de Saddam Hussein. Michel Grimard, qui a admis

avoir reçu cette somme en espèces, tout en niant son origine frauduleuse, dirigeait une association d'amitiés franco-irakiennes qui organisait, selon lui, des rencontres et des séminaires. Il s'est dépeint comme un proche de Tarek Aziz, l'ancien ministre irakien des Affaires étrangères, et a expliqué aux policiers que sa proximité avec Bagdad remontait aux années 70.

Cette mise en examen intervient après celles, courant octobre, de deux anciens diplomates, Serge Boidevaix, ex-secrétaire général du ministère des Affaires étrangères, et Jean-Bernard Méri-

mée, représentant de la France au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU entre 1991 et 1995. Tous ont été mis en cause par des documents découverts par les Américains lors de la chute de Bagdad.

Plusieurs autres personnalités françaises ont été citées par ces documents et pourraient être aussi convoquées par le juge Courroye: Charles Pasqua et Patrick Maugeain, un homme d'affaires corrézien proche de Jacques Chirac, même s'ils ont tous deux nié leur implication, Charles Pasqua estimant que son identité a été utilisée à son insu. ◆

F.Ta.

Bush assails Iraq critics as skewing war history

He rebuts attacks on intelligence gaps and his credibility

By Maria Newman

NEW YORK: President George W. Bush lashed out at critics of his Iraq policy Friday, accusing them of trying to rewrite history about the decision to go to war and saying their criticism was undercutting U.S. forces in battle.

"While it's perfectly legitimate to criticize my decisions or the conduct of the war, it is deeply irresponsible to rewrite the history of how that war began," the president said in a Veterans Day speech in Pennsylvania.

Bush delivered his speech as part of an effort to shore up his credibility as he faces growing public skepticism about Iraq and accusations by Democrats and others that he led the nation into war on false pretenses.

Those accusations seem to be making a dent in public confidence in him, as public opinion polls show more people questioning the president's honesty about Iraq and about whether American troops should remain in the fight.

The speech Friday by the president, which painted his critics as hypocrites and drew quick and angry responses from Democrats, came as part of a new strategy by the administration that will play out in the next few weeks in other presidential speeches and remarks by other leading Republicans, top senior administration officials said.

The president spoke at the Tobyhanna Army Depot near Wilkes-Barre.

He talked not only about why Americans are at war — "the terrorists are as brutal an enemy as we've ever faced, unconstrained by any notion of our common humanity or by the rules of warfare" — something he has mentioned in almost every speech, but also turned on his critics more directly than he usually does.

"The stakes in the global war on terror are too high, and the national interest is too important for politicians to throw out false charges," the president said. "These baseless attacks send the wrong signal to our troops and to an enemy that is questioning America's will."

Before going to war, Bush said, Democrats and Republicans alike were privy to the same intelligence that indicated that the former Iraqi leader, Saddam Hussein, had weapons of mass destruction.

"Some Democrats and antiwar critics are now claiming we manipulated the intelligence and misled the American people about why we went to war," he said. "These critics are fully aware that a bipartisan Senate investigation found no evidence of political pressure to change the intelligence community's judgments related to Iraq's weapons programs. They also know that intelligence agencies from around the world agreed with our assessment of Saddam Hussein."

The Senate's Democratic leader, Harry Reid of Nevada, said Bush had "resorted to his old playbook of discredited rhetoric about the war on terror and political attacks as his own political fortunes and credibility diminish."

"Attacking those patriotic Americans who have raised serious questions about the case the Bush administration made to take our country to war does not provide us a plan for success that will bring our troops home," Reid said.

"While the Bush administration continues to stonewall the Congress from finding the truth about the manipulation of prewar intelligence, Democrats will continue to press for a full airing of the facts."

In his Pennsylvania speech, Bush said the United Nations had passed more than a dozen resolutions that cited

Saddam's development and possession of weapons of mass destruction.

Bush mentioned Senator John Kerry, whom he defeated in the 2004 election, something he seldom did even during the campaign. Bush recalled that Kerry, a Democrat, also voted to go to war, and quoted him as saying that he had done so because Saddam had "a deadly arsenal of weapons of mass destruction in his hand" and that he was "a threat and a grave threat to our security."

The president said: "That's why more than a hundred Democrats in the House and the Senate, who had access to the same intelligence, voted to support removing Saddam Hussein from power."

Kerry responded in Boston, where he participated in ceremonies honoring veterans and active duty forces. "I wish President Bush knew better than to dishonor America's veterans by playing the politics of fear and smear on Veterans Day," Kerry said. "This administration misled a nation into war by cherry-picking intelligence and stretching the truth beyond recognition."

The president talked about the progress Iraq is making in transforming itself into a democracy, a claim many of his critics dispute as the violence seems to worsen and the American death toll recently surpassed the 2,000-casualties mark.

"By any standard or precedent of history, Iraq has made incredible political progress — from tyranny to liberation to

national elections to the ratification of a constitution in the space of two and a half years," he said. "I have said, as Iraqis stand up, Americans will stand down."

The New York Times

Richard W. Stevenson and David S. Cloud contributed reporting from Washington for this article.

■ Rice urges unity on Iraq visit

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice pressed for unity among Iraq's religious factions as she made an unannounced and heavily guarded visit Friday to the country, including one of its most ethnically divided regions, The Associated Press reported in Baghdad.

Rice made a personal appeal to Sunni Arabs to participate in new elections in December, but she sounded cool to an outside Arab attempt to foster political reconciliation. She also chided Iraq's Arab neighbors for being slow to send ambassadors to post-Saddam Iraq.

Rice met with Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari and with several prominent Sunni Arab leaders, including the vice president, Ghazi al-Yawer. And she traveled north to the ethnically divided city of Mosul.

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Le président syrien refuse de coopérer dans l'enquête sur le meurtre d'Hariri.

La bravade d'Assad

La confrontation semble désormais inévitable. A la communauté internationale qui, sous l'impulsion de Washington et Paris, exige de la Syrie une pleine coopération dans l'assassinat de Rafic Hariri, son président Bachar el-Assad a répondu, hier, par une fin de non recevoir et même une attitude de défi.

«*Bachar el-Assad ne sera pas celui qui plie*», a-t-il lancé lors d'un discours fleuve à l'université de Damas où une immense foule l'a ovationné. «*Nous sommes quasi certains que la Syrie est innocente. Il ne s'agit plus d'une question criminelle, ne perdons pas de temps là-dessus (...). Les résolutions [du Conseil de sécurité] et les rapports font partie d'une dynamique politique qui vise la Syrie. Ce qui se passe aujourd'hui n'a rien à voir avec l'assassinat de Rafic Hariri car ils sont en train de chercher une vérité falsifiée*», a-t-il accusé. Dans une critique voilée adressée à la France, il a feint ensuite de se demander «*pour quelle raison une commission d'enquête sur le décès du dirigeant palestinien Yasser Arafat [mort à Paris, ndr] n'a pas été créée*».

«**Faux témoin**». Toujours plus offensif, le jeune président syrien s'en est pris à la Commission d'enquête de l'ONU dirigée par le magistrat allemand Detlev Mehlis: «*Au lieu de chercher la vérité, elle s'appuie sur un faux témoin*». Une référence au transfuge syrien, Zuhair al-Saddiq, ex-officier de renseignement au Liban, aujourd'hui détenu en France sous l'inculpation de faux témoignage, et dont les révélations nourrissent le rapport du juge allemand. Dans une version confidentielle du rapport Mehlis, ce «*témoin*» avait indiqué que «*la décision d'as-*

sassiner Hariri avait été prise lors d'une réunion ayant regroupé Maher (frère cadet du président et chef de la garde présidentielle), Assef Chawkat (son beau-frère, et chef du renseignement militaire), Hassan Khalil (le prédécesseur de Chawkat à ce poste) et le chef de la Sûreté générale libanaise

«Ces gens, ou la plupart d'entre eux, sont des marchands de sang. Ils ont créé avec le sang d'Hariri un marché qui fournit de l'argent et des postes.»

Bachar el-Assad

Jamil Sayyed. Le juge Mehlis veut entendre ces responsables, mais Bachar el-Assad s'y refuse. Pour sa défense, il a affirmé dans son discours que le juge Mehlis avait rejeté une invitation à se rendre à Damas, ainsi que d'autres propositions de coopération. Plus inquiétante est l'attaque d'une rare agressivité lancée par le «*raïs*» contre le gouvernement libanais. «*Le Liban est devenu une voie de transit, une usine et un financier de ces conspirations*», a-t-il dénoncé, dans une allusion aux pressions américaines visant à faire fléchir Damas. Il a accusé le Premier ministre Fouad Si-



Bachar el-Assad, hier, à l'université de Damas.

niora – qui fut proche d'Hariri – d'être «*l'esclave de ses maîtres*», soit Washington et Paris, et de laisser les ennemis de la Syrie utiliser son pays. Et les partisans d'Hariri, qui forment la majorité parlementaire, d'exploiter son assassinat à des fins politiques: «*Ces gens, ou la plupart d'entre eux, sont des marchands de sang. Ils ont créé avec le sang d'Hariri un marché qui fournit de l'argent et des postes. Tout a un prix, chaque poste a un prix et chaque heure de télévision aussi*».

A travers son discours sont esquissées les futures lignes de défense de Damas. Pas question de céder aux injonctions du juge Mehlis. Pour une première raison: si Assad livre son beau-frère Chawkat ou son frère Maher pour des interrogatoires, le jeune raïs est nu. Et peut-être, selon des analystes, risque-t-il que ceux-ci se retournent contre lui. Seconde raison: l'enquête pourrait même remonter jusqu'à lui. Il le laisse d'ailleurs entendre: «*Quoi que l'on fasse et quel que soit notre degré de coopération, la conclusion qui sera tirée au*

bout d'un mois sera que la Syrie n'a pas coopéré (...)»

«**Sanctions**». Un tel discours a fait réagir Jacques Chirac lors du sommet franco-espagnol: «*Si véritablement le président syrien persiste à ne pas vouloir écouter ni comprendre (...), alors il faudra bien passer à un autre stade qui est celui des*

sanctions». Pour le politologue libanais Joseph Bahout, «*il est fort possible que Bachar ne cède pas. Par incapacité ou par crainte, et aussi, le rapport Mehlis ne l'exclut pas, parce qu'il est lui-même impliqué dans l'assassinat. C'est alors, à l'instar de son frère ennemi et siamois irakien, le régime tout entier, dans une sorte d'acte final crépusculaire, qui s'engage dans une ultime confrontation avec la communauté internationale*».

Lieu de la confrontation: le Liban. Celle-ci a commencé hier: les cinq ministres chiites et pro-syriens du gouvernement de Siniora se sont retirés d'une réunion pour «*protester*» contre l'examen du discours d'Assad. Et un magistrat libanais a inculpé six hommes accusés d'attentats sur ordre d'un responsable des services secrets syriens en poste au Liban. ♦

JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN

Nucléaire : Téhéran rejette un compromis proposé par Moscou

NEW YORK

CORRESPONDANT

A l'approche de la réunion, le 24 novembre à Vienne, de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA), qui pourrait saisir le Conseil de sécurité pour infliger des sanctions à l'Iran, la bataille diplomatique s'accélère. Téhéran a rejeté une solution de compromis proposée par Moscou et soutenue par l'AIEA. Elle consisterait à enrichir l'uranium, dont l'Iran a besoin pour faire fonctionner ses réacteurs en construction, en Russie. L'enrichissement « doit avoir lieu sur le sol iranien », a répondu, samedi 12 novembre, le porte-parole du ministère des affaires étrangères, Hamid Reza Assefi. La veille, le chef de l'Organisation

atomique iranienne, Gholamreza Aghazadeh, avait déjà refusé l'offre russe.

Les Européens, qui tentent vainement, depuis deux ans, de contrôler les ambitions nucléaires iraniennes, jouent aujourd'hui la carte de la diplomatie russe. Moscou a pour atout majeur d'être le principal fournisseur de technologie nucléaire aux Iraniens et de construire, notamment, la centrale de Bushehr, au sud du pays, qui devrait être opérationnelle à la fin 2006. Dans une ultime tentative, Mohamed ElBaradei, directeur général de l'AIEA, pourrait se rendre à Téhéran dans les prochains jours.

Dans le même temps, les accusations américaines contre les intentions de Téhéran se font plus précises. Les Etats-

Unis auraient fourni à l'AIEA des informations qui, « sans être définitives, suggèrent grandement que l'Iran a fait des progrès importants vers la fabrication d'une arme atomique », a indiqué un officier américain. D'après le *New York Times*, des responsables des services de renseignement américains ont présenté, en juillet, à des dirigeants de l'AIEA un ordinateur portable qui aurait été dérobé aux Iraniens. Il contenait plus d'un millier de pages de résultats de simulations par ordinateur et de rapports d'expériences qui, selon le *New York Times*, sont « les preuves les plus solides, aujourd'hui, que l'Iran tente de développer une tête nucléaire de petite taille pouvant être installée dans ses missiles Shahab, capables d'atteindre Israël et d'autres pays de la région ».

M. Assefi a qualifié ses informations de « naïves », ajoutant : « Nous n'avons pas l'habitude de transporter nos secrets dans des ordinateurs. » ■

ERIC LESER

L'opposition au régime syrien dénonce les limites de la grâce présidentielle

« Qu'est-ce que 190 prisonniers alors qu'il y a 2 500 détenus politiques et des milliers de disparus ? », se demande l'universitaire Ali Al-Atassi

BEYROUTH

de notre envoyée spéciale

Pour la fête du Fitr, qui marque la fin du mois de jeûne du ramadan, le président syrien, Bachar Al-Assad, a gracié, mercredi 2 novembre, 190 prisonniers politiques. Cette mesure a été présentée par les autorités comme faisant partie de « réformes globales visant à consolider la cohésion nationale ». Autrement dit, comme un premier pas dans une série d'autres ouvertures qui devraient suivre mais dont on ignore la teneur. Aucune précision n'avait encore été donnée, jeudi, sur l'identité des bénéficiaires, parmi lesquels il y aurait une centaine de membres de l'association des Frères musulmans. Le nom d'un seul de ces derniers était connu jeudi : il s'agit d'Azzam Ghraïeb. Mohammed Raadoun, président de l'Organisation arabe des droits de l'homme, et Ali Abdallah, membre du « salon » politique Al-Atassi, ont eux aussi été graciés.

Tous deux avaient été arrêtés en mai, le premier pour activisme en faveur des droits de l'homme et le second pour avoir simplement donné lecture du point de vue de l'association des Frères musulmans de Syrie, à l'occasion d'une réunion dudit « salon ». Ce forum était le seul encore autorisé parmi les multiples « salons » du même genre qui, à la faveur de l'accession à la prési-

dence en l'an 2000 de M. Al-Assad et de ses promesses de réformes, s'étaient ouverts à l'initiative d'intellectuels et d'hommes politiques, pour discuter des réformes qui s'imposent.

Quelques jours avant la grâce présidentielle, sept prisonniers kurdes,

membres du parti de l'Union démocratique kurde, avaient été remis en liberté. Dans la foulée, les autorités avaient annoncé que les Kurdes qui jusqu'à présent sont privés de la nationalité syrienne seraient naturalisés. Ils sont environ 200 000 qui avaient été exclus d'un recensement effectué en 1962 dans la région de Hassaké (Nord-Est), à majorité kurde. Elles avaient également annoncé l'activation de la loi sur le multipartisme, dont le principe, comme celui de la révision du recensement de 1962, avait été adopté en juin par le dixième congrès du parti Baas au

Damas annonce l'activation de la loi sur le multipartisme adopté en juin par le Baas

pouvoir. Les recommandations du congrès tiennent lieu de vecteur idéologique et politique du mode

de gestion du pays.

Toutes ces annonces, qui attendent d'être traduites en actes, sont faites au moment où la Syrie est soumise à de multiples pressions internationales, en raison notamment de la possible implication de certains hauts responsables dans l'assassinat de l'ancien premier ministre libanais Rafic Hariri. S'ils ne peuvent que se féliciter de la remise en liberté de prisonniers politiques, quel que soit leur nombre, des opposants au régime soulignent les limites des récentes initiatives.

« Cent quatre-vingt-dix prisonniers

politiques, c'est bien sûr mieux que la poignée de graciés des années précédentes, dont la remise en liberté était presque aussitôt suivie de l'arrestation d'autres opposants, commente l'universitaire Bourhane Ghalloun. C'est une ouverture au compte-gouttes, un message destiné à l'opposition, dans l'espoir de la dissuader de tenter d'exploiter la crise que traverse le pays pour faire pression sur le pouvoir. » Il n'est pas indifférent, selon lui, que ce geste soit survenu après l'appel à la démission du président de la République et du gouvernement lancé par le plus ancien et très respecté opposant syrien, Riad Turk, et une quinzaine de jours après l'appel lancé par une coalition de formations de l'opposition à « un changement national démocratique », progressif et pacifique. Les

signataires de cet appel avaient demandé aux membres du Baas partisans du changement à s'associer à leur démarche.

« Qu'est-ce que 190 prisonniers lorsque l'on sait, d'après les organisations de défense des droits de l'homme, qu'il y a quelque 2 500 prisonniers politiques ? » s'interroge de son côté l'universitaire et éditorialiste Ali Al-Atassi. « Sans compter les milliers de disparus depuis les années 80 et dont les familles ignorent toujours le sort », ajoute-t-il. « Alors que le pays a besoin de gestes forts et d'une véritable ouverture démocratique », cette grâce présidentielle ne peut être considérée, dit-il, comme un engagement sérieux dans le bon sens envers une « société qui se sent en danger » du fait des politiques officielles.

Mouna Naïm

Le Monde

5 NOVEMBRE 2005

Collapse of Kurdish Nationalism

Though most of the Kurdish nationalists and historians share the primordial paradigm of nationalism, there are growing numbers of scholars and historians on Kurdish history analyse the Kurdish nationalism within the perimeters of modernist theory of nationalism, writes Globe's Azad Aslan.

By Azad Aslan
Globe Political Editor

Any attempt on analysis of the history of Kurdish nationalism inevitably has to refer to the theory of nation and nationalism. The concept of nation and nationalism are far from to be simply defined, contrary there are various definitions and interpretations. However, for the sake of simplicity, these rich and often conflicting approaches to the concepts can broadly divided into two main categories, in effect, primordialism and modernism.¹ The essence of the debate between primordialists and modernists is about the question of the origin of the nation. For primordialist nation is a historical antiquity exists since time immemorial. Nation is not product of modernity, contrary it is a historic entity which has developed over the centuries and has its origin in the mists of time. Almost all nationalists more or less can be classified within this primordialist paradigm. Modernist on the other hand holds that nation and nationalism are intrinsic to the nature of the modern world and to the revolution of modernity. Nationalism is a product of the transformation of industrial society, providing a means of bringing a newly literate and displaced peasantry into a wider society, and giving legitimacy and meaning to the new state and society produced by industrialization. In modernist paradigm, in contrast to primordialism, the primacy of nationalism over nation is a prior, in other words, nation is an outcome, or an effect of nationalist politics which itself is a modern phenomena.

Though most of the Kurdish nationalists and historians share the primordial paradigm of nationalism, there are growing numbers of scholars and historians on Kurdish history analyse the Kurdish nationalism within the perimeters of modernist theory of nationalism.² Despite the growing interests and studies on Kurdish history and nationalism, 'serious scholarship', as Abbas Vali argued, on the origin of the Kurdish nationalism is scarce... The proliferation of historical and political discourse on the Kurds since the Persian Gulf War, within and out-

side Kurdistan, has done little to remedy this fundamental deficiency. Recent writings on Kurdish history and culture, with a few notable exceptions, have remained oblivious to the theoretical reading and evaluation of the his-

nationalism is defined as the dialectic combination of objective and subjective conditions albeit emphasise on subjectivity. By objective conditions it refers to a community who shares common cultural characteristics such as a

and external factors in the formation and development of nation and nationalism. The objective and subjective conditions mentioned above refers mainly to the internal factors, but they alone, isolated from external development

have included, in some measure, the breakdown or transformation of primary communities, urbanization, individualization of labour, intensification of the social division of labour, the emergence of new forms of government

ism inevitably became a worldwide phenomenon albeit in different forms and colours in various parts of the world. As Halliday argued one aspect of nationalism is its inevitability: 'it is universal and unavoidable: in this sense nationalism is necessary the world over, no region being exempt from it.'¹⁰ However, treating the development of nationalism 'as though it proceeded at a relatively even, incremental pace, and as though its full manifestation (itself an idealized and problematic concept) were dependent upon the completion of certain material changes that transform the inner workings of society and produced nationalist forms of political identity (...) run the risk of lapsing into historical determinism.'¹¹ Thus it would be necessary to consider the second aspect of the external factors, the political crisis. Most nationalist movements, as in the sequence of M. Hroch, begin as a handful of intellectuals who disseminates nationalist ideas which develop into political organisations with the full intention to mobilize people to seek independence, establishing nation-state. This sequence emphasize disproportionately on such internal factors and excluding external issues. Roshwald acutely notes in his study that 'the war [the First World War, my adding] created unusual opportunities and tremendous pressure that served to catapult the idea of national self-determination toward sudden realization across a wide range of societies. To be sure, the cultural, economic and political conditions in these various lands were extremely divisive; what these cases all have in common is that their transition to political systems based on the idea of national self-determination was very sudden, rather than the result of a steady, evenly paced process, and that it took place within the framework of a common, external contingency—a war that transformed the shape of global politics.'¹² This article, hence, approach to the concepts of nation and nationalism as a dialectical combination of objective and subjective conditions operating within a worldwide social, economical and political activities, developments and crisis



In one of the busiest roads in Hewler an advertisement on a black painted three floors wall proudly states: 'One country (nishi-man), one people (gel), one constitution: Iraq has no one except us'. Photo Wahid/Globe

torical argument on the origins and development of Kurdish nationalism.³ It is not the purpose of this article to contemplate on the origin of Kurdish nationalism, however, for the sake of clarification, it is necessary to infer that the origin of Kurdish nationalism goes back to the establishment of Kurdistan Teali Jemiyeti soon after the end of the First World War (FWW). Hence, classification of political, cultural and organisational activities of Kurdish intelligentsia of pre-war period, especially from the publication of first Kurdish newspaper, Kurdistan, in 1898 in Cairo, as nationalism would be inappropriate. This period, should, rather, be termed as Kurdish 'enlightenment'. Some scholars and historians on Kurdish history labelled this period as emergence of Kurdish nationalism, some others go even further by assuming 19th century uprisings in Kurdistan as the beginning of Kurdish nationalism.⁴ A. Hasanpour, for example, refers to the literary works of Ahmed-e Khani as manifestation of 'feudal' Kurdish nationalism. A. Vali, on the other hand, searches the beginnings of Kurdish nationalism in post-war period as respond to emergent nation-states in the ruin of the Ottoman Empire.⁵

In this article nation and

commonly used language, identification with a particular territory, shared history and myths. In other words, existence of an ethnic cultural community with a territory assumed as their natural possession. By subjective conditions it refers to political activities of conscientious human agency with a purpose to transform such a cultural community to a political community which is based on shared rights and duties.⁶ Nation is a politicized community hence nationalism is a sum of political activities oriented towards the state.⁷ As John Breuilly defined, nationalism has a categorically political nature: 'the term 'nationalism' is used to refer to political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments. A nationalist argument is a political doctrine built upon three assertions:

- a) There exists a nation with an explicit and peculiar character.
- b) The interests and values of this nation take priority over all other interests and values.
- c) The nation must be as independent as possible. This usually requires the attainment of at least political sovereignty.⁸

There is one important point that must be attached to the definition elaborated here, in effect: the internal

would be unattainable. By external factors, in relations to the nation and nationalism, two aspects are crucial: firstly world-wide social-economical transformation; and secondly, in combination with the first, the political -global and regional- crisis. Zubaida argued that processes of economic development and social transformation 'have occurred all over the world in the last two centuries or longer in relation or in response to European capitalist expansion. These processes have taken different forms and consequences under different structural and conjunctural conditions. Common features of these processes

and institutions, widening of education and literacy, technologies and networks of communications and transport, and new ideological formations, often significantly influenced by European ideas, especially in relation to political community and the state.'⁹

Without doubt nation and nationalism was/is a product of such worldwide social and economic transformation. Capitalism as a political, economical system is a European born but once born in Europe it became a worldwide phenomena, not a single place on earth that has not been affected and touched by it. Nationalism as well arising on capital-



Such a long introduction to the concept of nation and nationalism is imperative as to comprehend the current political crisis of Kurdish nationalism. The assumption here is that the recent political developments in Kurdistan, at least since the arrest of PKK leader, Abdullah Ocalan, and writing Iraqi permanent constitution without right to self-determination, indicates a mainstream political tendency which is drifting away from political nationalism towards pseudo-democracy and reductionism, in effect, reducing Kurdish national question, which is essentially a question of establishing an independent united Kurdistan and a Kurdish state, to the democratization of oppressive states. In other words, Kurdish political movement lost its nationalist character and gradually becoming a social movement oriented towards betterment of the existing four oppressive nation-states. Thus, it is not surprising to observe the popular discourse on democracy, globalism, and human rights among the Kurdish political organisations without making any reference to sovereignty.

In one of the busiest roads in Hewler an advertisement on a black painted three floors wall proudly states: 'One country (nîshîman), one people (gel), one constitution: Iraq has no one except us'. This unbelievable ad has been shown in the capital of Kurdistan federal region where in which raising Iraqi flag is forbidden. If there is one country, one people, and one constitution, why, then, all these fuss about Kurdistan? Is not Kurdistan a country? Are not Kurds constituted a nation? Nothing illustrates better than this ad the political contradictions prevalent in Southern Kurdistan.

The notion of 'Democratic Republic' which is essentially a Kemalist discourse within the context it has been put forward by Abdullah Ocalan who blames those who aspire for a Kurdish state as 'primitive nationalists', is another example of the Kurdish political crisis.

These indicate the trend among the Kurdish political movement towards Iraqification and Turkeyfication rather than being Kurdistan.

¹ A. D. Smith, Nationalism and Modernism. Routledge, London and New York, 1998

² See: M. van Bruinessen, Agha, Sheikh and State: On the social and Political Organisation of Kurdistan. PhD Thesis, Enroprint, Rijswijk, 1978;

H. Ozoglu, Nationalism and Kurdish Notables in the Late Ottoman-Early Republican Era, in International Journal of Middle East Studies, vol.33, no:3, August,2001, pp.383-410; R. Olson, The Emergence of Kurdish Nationalism and the Sheikh Said Rebellion, 1880-1925, University of Texas Press, Austin; A. Vali (ed), Essays on the Origin of Kurdish Nationalism, Mazda Publishers, Inc, Costa Mesa, California, 2003; M.Emin Aslan, Siyasete Netewi u Helsençandina Tevgera Netewi ya Kurd, Istanbul, Wesanen War, 2002

³ A. Vali, Introduction, in A. Vali (ed), op.cit., p.3

⁴ R. Olson, op.cit., pp. 1-26; W. Jwaideh, The Kurdish Nationalist Movement: Its Origins and Development, Syracuse University, PhD, 1960; Malmisanij, Yuzilimizin Baslarinda Kurt Milliyetçiligi ve Dr. Abdullah Çevdet, Jina Nu Yayinlari, Uppsala, 1986; C. Celil, Kurt Aydinlanmasi, op. cit., pp.13-95; B. Nikitin, Kurler: Sosyolojik ve Tarihi Inceleme, Deng yayinlari, Istanbul, 1991;

⁵ A. Hassanpour, Nationalism and Language in Kurdistan, 1918-1985, Mellen Research University Press, San Francisco, 1992, pp.49-68; A. Vali, Genealogies of the Kurds: Constructions of Nation and National Identity in Kurdish Historical Writing, in A. Vali (ed), ibid., pp. 59-105; A. Hassanpour, The Making of Kurdish Identity: Pre-20th Century Historical and Literary Sources, in A. Vali (ed), ibid., pp.106-162

⁶ M.Emin Aslan, Siyasete Netewi u Helsençandina Tevgera Netewi ya Kurd, Istanbul, Wesanen War, 2002

⁷ I categorically refuse the term of 'cultural nationalism' as it used by some scholars. For example H. Bozarslan claimed the period from late 19th century to the outbreak of the war as essentially cultural nationalism. See H. Bozarslan, Kurdish Nationalism in Turkey: From Tacit Contract to Rebellion (1919-1925), in A. Vali (ed), ibid., pp.163-190, p.167

⁸ J. Breuilley, Nationalism and the State, 2nd ed, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993, p.2

⁹ S. Zubaida, Islam, the People and the State. Routledge, London-New York, 1989, pp 128-9

¹⁰ F. Halliday, Nation and Religion in the Middle East, Saqi Books, London, 2000, p.29

¹¹ A. Roshwald, Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, Russia and the Middle East, 1914-1923, p.2

¹² ibid., p.3



The recognition of Kurdistan region by the US, however, did not come up without a price. It must be remembered that the Kurds were one of the main coalition partners of the US in its war against Iraq.

Giving birth to US Kurdish Policy

By Azad Aslan
Globe Political Editor

The president of Kurdistan region, Masoud Barzani's official trip to the U.S. was a historic one. It is historic not because Barzani was received by the US president but due to the fact that it was the first elected president of a part of Kurdistan to be received officially by a sovereign state. In other words, Mr. Barzani was at the Oval Office not as a leader of a Kurdish political party but as an elected leader of Kurdistan. This can be interpreted as official recognition of Kurdistan federal government which will strengthen the political status of Kurdistan region.

Given the fact that Kurdistan for the last 8 decades or so has been partitioned among four nation-states and their repressive and denial policies against Kurds and Kurdistan, an official recognition of even a small part of Kurdistan is

highly important. It is because of this fact that Kurdistan president's official trip to the US caused great anxiety in Turkey which categorically refuses the Kurdish national identity and geography of Kurdistan. Turkey has relayed its displeasure to the Washington over the manner in which Kurdistan president was received in the White House. The Charge d'Affaires for the US Embassy in Ankara was called to the Foreign Ministry and was asked to explain 'whose president' Barzani was welcomed as at the White House and was warned that such practices threaten the unity of Iraq. This in itself suggests the importance of Barzani's historical trip to Washington DC.

The recognition of Kurdistan region by the US, however, did not come up without a price. It must be remembered that the Kurds were one of the main coalition

partners of the US in its war against Iraq. Southern Kurdistan prior to the Iraqi war had its own parliament, security forces and functioning two governments. In other words Kurdistan provided for the US military a perfect launch point to attack Saddam's regime. Plus, contrary to the Iraq Arabs, both Shi'as and Sunnis, Kurds welcomed the Americans and appreciated them as 'liberators', something which the US administration desperately needed for its public who were highly critical of 'novelty' of the US war in Iraq.

These, however, were not the only price that Kurds paid for official recognition by the US. There is more than that. During the process of writing the Iraqi permanent constitution Kurdish leadership were pressured to step back from one of their principal demands, in effect, the right to self-determination. Indeed the writing of the constitu-

tion came to a deadlock on this very crucial issue. Both Shi'as and Sunnis ferociously opposed such right and it became obvious that unless Kurds gave up their demand on this issue the whole process of writing constitution would have been a complete failure. What would have happened then? The Arab dominated state formation, stability and security in Iraq would have been jeopardized. Failure in rebuilding a not very new state in Iraq, in turn, would have created a political vacuum which would have prolonged the US military presence in Iraq. These probable developments would have benefited Kurds alone in Iraq. Having faced pressure at home and the rising of military casualties the US is desperately seeking a way out of Iraq. In that sense Kurdish leaders' decision to step back from their self-determination principle, assuaged the US administration in its dealing

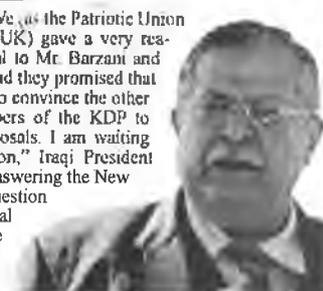
The Globe Tuesday, November 1, 2005 - No. 30



"This is unacceptable and their attitude towards Israel, their attitude towards terrorism, their attitude on the nuclear weapons issue isn't acceptable.

If they continue down this path then people are going to believe they are a real threat to our world security and stability," British PM reacting to Iranian President Ahmadinejad's harsh remarks against Israel.

"I don't know. We as the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK) gave a very reasonable proposal to Mr. Barzani and his leadership and they promised that they would try to convince the other politburo members of the KDP to accept our proposals. I am waiting for their decision." Iraqi President Jalal Talabani answering the New Anatolian's question on PUK KDP deal on a possible united Kurdish government.





Kurdish bookstore bombing triggers riots and disorder

Turkish press accuse security forces of involvement



A car belonging to the suspects was apparently discovered, with three Kalashnikov rifles, two grenades, police and army clothing, and a detailed map of the area that pinpointed the targeted bookstore.

By Vanessa Able
Globe Correspondent in Istanbul

The southeastern Turkish town of Semdinli has seen a week of violent unrest that has claimed the lives of three people and sparked a national controversy as to the role of the Turkish security forces in the troubles.

Situated in the province of Hakkari, Semdinli lies near Turkey's borders with Iran and Iraq.

The violence, which began last week with the explosion of a car bomb outside the town's security headquarters, injuring 23 people and devastating 67 shops, intensified last Wednesday when a bomb was detonated in a bookstore, reportedly killing one person and injuring five others.

Initial suspicions that the blast might have been caused by the PKK were treated with scepticism when it was reported that the bookstore owner, Seferi Yilmaz, had himself served a 15-year prison sentence for participating in PKK attacks.

Following the blast, Turkish newspapers were full of allegations that the three men being held in custody for the bombings were intelligence agents of the gendarmerie, the paramilitary force that operates under civilian supervision

to provide security in rural areas.

The identity of the three men has not yet been released.

A car belonging to the suspects was apparently discovered, with three Kalashnikov rifles, two grenades, police and army clothing, and a detailed map of the area that pinpointed the targeted bookstore.

Subsequent allegations that the detained men were actually under the protection of the police forces triggered mass demonstrations in the town, as 1,000 people took to the streets, shouting pro-PKK slogans and throwing stones at police.

During the unrest, the town's administration building came under attack, as did the local governor and the car allegedly belonging to the bombers. One report also suggests that there was an attempted lynching of one of the men suspected of carrying out the bombing.

The newspaper Cumhuriyet reported that two people were killed and five others wounded during the demonstrations after police opened fire from inside a patrol car. The daily Aksam added that police had also fired their guns into the air and used tear gas in an

attempt to contain the mobs.

Another source has also reported allegations that the police are blocking a full investigation into the blasts, an accusation that has prompted many questions as to the nature of their role and the role of the security forces in the incident.

Foreign minister Abdullah Gul spoke on national television about the episode, vowing to bring justice to those responsible. He assured the Turkish public that, "This incident will not remain in the shadows. Everything will be brought to light, nobody should doubt that."

The newspaper Radikal declared Semdinli an arena of "dirty games", while Turkey's Hurriyet newspaper termed the situation "a dark incident".

Confusion over the incident highlights the complexity of the situation in the southeast of Turkey, where the battle between the insurgent PKK and the Turkish security forces continues.

This week's events in Semdinli cast a grim veil over the question of the causes of violence in the area, whilst exposing the need for greater understanding of the nature of the forces at work in the war.

Shemdinli riots

The complexity of the Kurdish issue in Turkey

Globe National File

Culprits of a bomb attack that killed one person in a book shop which mainly sales Kurdish books in a Kurdish town, Shemdinli, were uncovered to be members of a paramilitary group belongs to Turkish Security forces. The owner of the book shop, Seferi Yilmaz, had served 15 years of imprisonment for being member of PKK.

According to various sources and news reports perpetrators threw a hand grenade into the book shop and later tried to run away with a white car. People in the area responded quickly and tried to catch the three people who committed the crime. They also broke into the white car and exposed three Kalashnikovs, two bombs, and documents, a sketch of the bookstore and a list of people, including the store's owner. The car registered to a military unit but bearing civilian plates.

The three perpetrators believed to be intelligence agents of the gendarmerie, locally known as JITEM, a unit of Turkish Security Forces. Shemdinli prosecutor, Harun Aylik, confirmed in an interview that a man in police custody, who was caught by the people as linked to the bombing, was a gendarmerie intelligence agent Esat Canan, a deputy of the opposition Republican People's Party for the province of Hakkari, has blamed the security forces for carrying out the bombing. This may explain the reason why a public prosecutor and the deputy were examining the car alongside people who gathered there, were opened fire on them from another vehicle belonged to security forces in order to abrupt the investigation. Again one more person lost his life.

The high Turkish officials have promised that a full investigation will be carried out in order not to leave anything in the dark. Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan said 'I have ordered an administrative investigation into the affair. My colleagues and I will be following the progress of the investigation very closely. No matter who is involved, those responsible will be caught.' The Chief of Staff of Turkish Security forces in a written statement explained that all the necessary investigations will be carried out. However they did not contemplate on the alleged links of security personnel in the bombing attack. They inferred that the case is now in the hands of judicial and due to the secrecy of investigation any statements would be left to the judicial authorities. Some lawyers in Diyarbakir Bar interpreted the military statement as indication of covering up of military's role in the incidents.

The two people's bodies were



Turkish Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan said 'I have ordered an administrative investigation into the affair. My colleagues and I will be following the progress of the investigation very closely.'

sent back to Hakkari after initial autopsies in Diyarbakir. About 10,000 people gathered in Shemdinli for the funerals. During the funeral proceedings people chanted 'killer state' 'terrorist state' while security forces were on high alert as the bodies were brought to Shemdinli. People in Hakkari also protested the Shemdinli incidents outside the Mayor's office where police fired warning shots in the air and used tear gas to disperse the crowd. During the clashes four people and a policeman were wounded.

Mehmet Elkatmis, the chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Turkish National Assembly likened the Shemdinli incident to the infamous Susurluk incident. A major scandal in 1996 that uncovered links between security forces in active duty in Kurdish region, Sait Bucak, a big landlord and the head of a huge tribe which joined the village guard scheme in Urfa, high ranking politicians and organised crime. Osman Baydemir, mayor of Diyarbakir, said that he agreed with the statement describing the incident as a second Susurluk scandal and called for the facts to come out this time.

The Shemdinli incidents indicate clearly the nature of complexity of Kurdish issue in Turkey. As Turkey tries to join the EU as a full member, the new AKP government and civilian institutions attempt to reform some of the fundamentals of Turkish state on the Kurdish issue. Turkish Prime Minister's recent speech in Diyarbakir that admitting the recognition of Kurdish question in Turkey was seen as a huge step in that direction. However, since the establishment of Turkish Republic, on the fundamentals issue of Turkey, such as Kurdish question, secularism, and Cyprus, the final word is in the hands of Turkish Military, an institution which the EU intends to reform. The Shemdinli incident proves this is not going to be easy if ever possible.



Conference reiterates Kurdish support for independence

By Aiyob Mawloodi
Globe Correspondent

IRBIL— A green banner that read "Independence is the only way to Kurdistan Sovereignty" greeted the crowd as they came into the hall at the start of a conference on Kurdistan independence on November 10.

"It is a historic moment that we must decide the future of the Kurds," said Muhammad Siddiq Khoshnaw, Salahaddin University president, to the conference attendees. "We must secure a future for our families and our children."

About one hundred people came from Kurdistan and from as far as the United States to participate in the day-long conference entitled "Kurdistan Independence Conference: Kurdish Independence, Democracy and Regional Stability."

Kurdish National Congress of North America organized the conference that took place in Salahaddin University's Cultural and Social Center.

Saman Shali, KNC president, started his speech by explaining that the conference is designed to examine the idea of an independent Kurdistan and to discuss the challenges that Kurds will confront in obtaining their independence.

One after another, participants gave their speeches. Adnan Mufti, speaker of the Kurdistan Parliament, was the first to read his statement in which he reinforced his support for



About one hundred people came from Kurdistan and from as far as the United States to participate in the day-long conference entitled "Kurdistan Independence Conference: Kurdish Independence, Democracy and Regional Stability." Photo by Aiyob Mawloodi/The Globe

the KNC and any other organizations to express their views freely in Kurdistan.

Though Mufti recognized independence for Kurdistan as an undeniable right, as parliament speaker, he could not sway too far from the decision of Kurdish leadership to stay within Iraq.

"The Kurdistan Parliament has decided that the Kurds want federalism in a federal, democratic, pluralistic, and free Iraq thirteen years ago," Mufti said. "Independence is of course our right, it is for sure, but the Kurdish leadership will choose the policy that is possible and

applicable and one that coincides with the current internal, regional and international situations. We should take the interest of all parts into consideration. For now, federalism is the best choice."

Sa'adi Ahmed Pira from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said Iraqi Kurdistan was almost ready for independence, but it is not the best choice for them right now. Generally, people believe that independence is not possible in the present time due to the threat of the neighbouring countries such as Iran, Turkey and Syria who could point their guns

towards the Kurds in their own countries or close their borders.

"We have the bases and pillars of an independent state, in administration, in scientific institutions, in researching institutions in our universities, a tight security, government, presidency of Kurdistan Region, and, to some extent, international recognition. But for now we prefer to stay within Iraq," Pira said.

He believed that Kurds in all parts of Kurdistan have the problem of democratization. He said the problem of self-determination will be solved automatically if Syria, Iran, Turkey

and Iraq have a more democratic system.

Other participants in the conference included: Fazel Mirani from Kurdistan Democratic Party, Mustafa Hijiri from Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran and Abdullah Muhtadi from Komala.

The main issues under discussion in the conference included legal issues, roadmap to independence, youths in other countries including the United States, the strategy of the Kurds, and about the role of an independent Kurdistan in the Middle East



Kurdish Parliament Speaker
Adnan Mufti



S.U. President
Muhammed Khoshnaw



Sa'adi Ahmed Pira,
PUK official

Turkey slams Denmark over Kurdish TV station

Turkey on Saturday harshly criticized Denmark for failing to revoke the broadcasting license of a Kurdish television station that Ankara says is a mouthpiece of armed Kurdish rebels.

"They are not banning a television station that gives support to ethnic terrorism. They have

been procrastinating," Turkish justice minister Cemil Cicek was quoted as saying by the Anatolia news agency.

"This is against EU legislation," the minister charged while on a visit to Stockholm.

Turkey has long been asking Danish authorities to take action against Roj TV on the

grounds that the station is linked to the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), deemed by Turkey, the European Union and the United States to be a terrorist organization.

Ankara says that the station, which began broadcasting in March 2004, incites hatred and fear by expressing sup-

port for the PKK.

The Danish Radio and Television Board ruled earlier this year that the station's programs did not contain incitement, but said that it had asked police to look into alleged ties between Roj TV and the PKK.

Turkey has previously succeeded in ensuring the closure of two other

Europe-based Kurdish television stations. MED-TV had its license revoked in Britain while France refused to grant a license to its successor, MEDYA-TV.

Ankara's move against Roj TV comes at a time of increasing violence in mainly Kurdish southeastern Turkey.

PKK rebels have

stepped up attacks since calling off a five-year unilateral truce in June 2004.

More than 37,000 people have been killed since 1984 when the PKK launched an armed campaign for Kurdish self-rule in Turkey's southeast.

WILL IRAQ SPLIT APART? PERHAPS. BUT POWERFUL FORCES ARE KEEPING IT TOGETHER.

The Question of Kurdistan

CHRISTIAN PARENTI



Outside the violent city of Mosul lies the last checkpoint of the Kurdish militia, or *peshmerga*. The gunmen control a bridge where the dusty rolling land of the northern Mesopotamian plain tucks itself into a seam along the Al Kazir River. In a few months these fields will be green with winter wheat, but now they are wind-swept, pale and desiccated. The yellow late-afternoon sun casts long shadows.

From a hilltop redoubt, the *peshmerga* watch but do not control three majority-Arab villages clustered along the winding, silted river below. At the bridge they search cars for explosives and weapons and check the identities of Arab drivers headed east from the hell that is Mosul toward the secure enclave of Erbil, the Kurdish capital.

At the checkpoint there is no Iraqi flag flying, only the banner of greater Kurdistan, which nationalists say includes parts of Syria, Turkey, Iraq and Iran. "We are working for the future, not for now. We want an independent Kurdistan. We want to defend our real borders. And we want America to help," says the *peshmerga*'s commanding officer as we sip hot tea and lean into the wake of his desk fan.

All the outward signs at this checkpoint indicate that Kurdish independence is imminent and that Iraq will soon break apart. The new Constitution can also be read as hastening Iraq's end by allowing groups of provinces to create semi-autonomous

regions, possible mini-states. Many observers fear this will lead to massive intercommunal war—ending with an oil-rich Kurdistan in the north, an oil-rich Shiite state in the south and a badly wounded, festering Sunni-dominated rump of Iraq in the middle.

Some experts actually argue for such a break-up of Iraq, believing that creating three sub-states will avoid a wider war. The most prominent advocates of this position are Leslie Gelb of the Council on Foreign Relations and Peter

Galbraith, a former US Ambassador to Croatia. Over the summer Galbraith, an adviser to the Kurds who is highly critical of the Bush Administration's Iraq policy, laid out this case in a widely read piece for *The New York Review of Books*. Since then, among the chattering classes of the United States, something like a Galbraithian consensus has developed that sees the "invented" postcolonial nation of Iraq as inevitably headed for disintegration and Kurdistan as already de facto independent.

Yet on the ground in Kurdistan these assumptions begin to fall apart. The region's ties to Iraq are quite strong. At the same time, Kurdistan's internal divisions are surprisingly intense. Just as the Shiites in the south have been fighting among themselves—followers of Sadr versus the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq—so too is the political culture of Kurdistan defined by the fault lines of class, tribe, party and ethnicity; there is no monolithic Kurdish state ready to emerge. Most important, Kurdish leaders are keenly aware that the United States has not given them a green light to seek total independence. The Kurds, landlocked and surrounded by enemies, are candid about not wishing to alienate their new patron, Uncle Sam.

As the crisis in Iraq deepens, American policy has devolved from bold ideological vision into an ad hoc collection of emergency tactics aimed at containing the spiraling violence that now seriously hampers even basic petroleum production. US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad's frantic last-minute, technically illegal negotiations around the referendum on the new Constitution are a case in point. The compromises he brokered were all designed to keep the pieces together, to stave off greater chaos.

"We [Kurds] are more Iraqi than Saddam Hussein," says Sadi Ahmed Pire, one of the top Kurdish politicians. Pire, sitting in his party's huge fortified Erbil offices, says that all the high-level American generals and advisers he has spoken with "are committed to a united and democratic Iraq."

"In 2003 we could have declared independence," Pire explains. "But we went to Baghdad instead." When pressed, he and other Kurdish politicians note that full independence for their region would most likely be followed by secession of the Shiite-controlled south. And that, everyone acknowledges, would greatly enhance the already considerable power of Iran. Thus, the dream of an independent Kurdistan is held hostage to US fears of growing Iranian influence.

Economics is another important factor keeping Kurdistan in

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Iraq. As currently constituted, Kurdistan does not have much oil. The Kurdish economy survives almost entirely on oil revenue from the Iraqi central government. With a population of 4 million, the Kurds get an estimated \$5 billion from Baghdad annually. The main petroleum deposits of the north are in and around Kirkuk. But Kirkuk is a disputed city, by no means fully controlled by the Kurds and not included in the Kurdistan Autonomous Region. Complicating matters are Kirkuk's large Turkmen and Arab populations. A Kurdish annexation of the city and its environs would not be easy. Without the oilfields of Kirkuk, however, Kurdistan is not economically viable.

Iraq might be an "invented" nation made from three former Ottoman provinces, or *vilayets*, but geography and infrastructure have given that invention considerable economic and physical coherence. Consider the basic contours of trade: Most commodities consumed in Kurdistan are imported, and 70 percent of those arrive via the ports in Aqaba, Jordan, and Basra. Despite the war these goods are shipped by truck along the California-style highways of central and southern Iraq. Kurdish road-links to Iran and Turkey are simply too underdeveloped and clogged by tax-levying militias, mountains and hostile customs officials to reverse this pattern.

Kurdistan is also culturally linked to Iraq by its Turkmen, Assyrian and Arab communities. As one Turkmen activist put it: "We are the cement that holds the pieces together because our people are spread all across Iraq."

Back in Erbil the borderland tensions seem far away. Secret police and uniformed *peshmerga* keep the peace while oil money inflates the economy. Occasionally there are security glitches: The head of the counterterrorism unit in Erbil, Sheikh Zana, for example, was arrested in early summer and revealed to be the head of an Islamic ter-

rorist cell engaged in kidnapping and murder.

More typically, political life in Kurdistan is about power, patronage and corruption. Two secular nationalist parties rule Kurdistan: The western half of the region is controlled by the older, more conservative Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), run by Massoud Barzani, who inherited the party from his father and now monopolizes its key functions with his many Barzani clansmen. In the east the newer, formerly socialist Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) of Jalal Talabani is in charge. The PUK is the more secular and less clan-oriented of the two, but both groups draw on family and tribal ties and neither has a coherent ideology. A smattering of Islamic, leftist and minority ethnic parties also hold some seats in local and regional government.

From 1994 to 1999 the tension between the KDP and PUK erupted into fratricidal civil war. At its peak, Barzani even brought in Saddam Hussein's troops to overrun Talabani's PUK stronghold in Sulaimaniya. The war left rank-and-file Kurds deeply cynical about Kurdish leadership and organized politics in general.

Now all the important things in Kurdistan come in twos—one for each party. Each party has its own regional Cabinet.

All ministries are duplicated. There are two incompatible cell phone systems. Two sets of TV and radio stations, two party-controlled universities. Barzani heads the regional government, while Talabani takes the largely ceremonial post of Iraqi president in Baghdad.

What the parties do share with each other and most of the Iraqi political class is a culture of corruption. As in the rest of Iraq, oil money flows easily while bookkeeping is minimal: According to various audits, between \$5 billion and \$12 billion in oil revenue has simply gone missing from state coffers. No one really knows how much has been stolen in Kurdistan. But the signs of graft are everywhere.

At the KDP's Ministry of Economics and Administration I met the meek young Bashdar Habib, general director of planning and follow-up. His office has the feel of a tacky hotel suite—plastic flowers, gray-and-pink splatter-patterned wallpaper. There are no books or reports anywhere. He sits at his desk reading the KDP newspaper. He has been here for three months but cannot give me even the most basic or general numbers about the Kurdish economy because no one has given them to him. He has a bachelor's degree in finance and no experience in economic planning.

He is apologetic and takes me to meet the director of finance, the older, more commanding but still quite amateur Rasheed Hassn. In that office the story is the same: Little is happening, no numbers are available. Then there is a business interruption. A clerk has a bill for several hundred thousand dollars from a contractor, and it seems that the firm in question may have already been paid but maybe not. No one is sure. Meanwhile, Barzani's associates are investing huge sums in stadiums, empty shopping malls and luxury housing developments with capital from who knows where. These bizarre, mostly empty trophy projects surround Kurdistan's two headquarter cities, Erbil and Sulaimaniya.

But this corrupt order—in which clan, party, state and commerce all merge and overlap—is not without benefits for the average Kurd. Vying for the loyalty of common people, the two parties are engaged in a patronage-based cold war in which jobs, houses, pensions, generators, new schools and health clinics are used to win votes, influence and obedience. As one farmer explained it: "Sometimes the parties are judged by how they serve the people."

In the PUK-controlled village of Greda Boor, not far from the area where KDP influence starts, Akran Anwar Karem and his family are winnowing the chaff from seed onion. "We'll plant these again later," he says. Given that Saddam leveled this village during the Anfal campaign of the late 1980s, conditions could be worse. He points out a new school and clinic but complains that the promised electrical lines are a year late. He'd like some fertilizer as well.

If the petroleum-funded patronage system can serve a weird redistributive function, it also has a punitive side.

"We have mud houses that we build ourselves," says Nazwad Muhiadin, who farms cucumbers and tomatoes in a flat, hot KDP-controlled village north of Kirkuk called Sheran. "The KDP built those brick houses for its supporters. When we went to the other party to get a big generator, the KDP threatened to take it from us, so we don't have one."

The party patronage system has also served to stall the offi-

cial Kurdish agenda of neoliberalism—that is to say, the US occupation's program of mass privatization. Despite the free-market bromides mouthed by party hacks, they continue doing things the old-fashioned way. Many of the nonpetroleum sectors of the economy—cigarettes, cement, utilities and carpets—are still state-held. Education and healthcare are free. The government employs 35 percent of the workforce, and 60 percent of the population receives some sort of pension or government assistance. The land reform of the early 1960s has not been rolled back. All of this bolsters the power of the parties. It also means that the region lacks the truly grinding poverty marked by dump scavenging, begging and mass brigandage that plagues much of the global South.

"They declare they are for privatization, but they don't do anything," says a very disappointed Dr. Mihamad Riouf Saeed at Mostansary University in Sulaimaniya. "They don't privatize anything. We have no plan. There are no economic experts in government. So we eat and the administration goes on."

Kawkas is a big man with a wide, scowling face and baggy eyes. He is a *cocher*, a Kurdish nomad, and was named after a common Kurdish tree. He sits cross-legged on a carpet, at the opening of a tent made of woven reed mat walls and a black woolen mesh awning held up in dramatic peaks by six wooden poles. As he talks, Kawkas smokes and drinks tea from a small fluted glass.

Here in this tent is the quintessential heart of Kurdish culture, but the talk is not about nationalist dreams of independence—all Kurds united against Iraq. Instead, the grievances concern other Kurds, the rich and powerful ones.

"This life is like honey mixed with snake poison. It looks like freedom, but we rent this," Kawkas gestures to the rolling fallow cropland where his sheep graze and to the abruptly rising bare mountains beyond where they grazed a month ago. "Aga, the landlord, controls it all. And the parties, the mayor, they all serve Aga. Aga gives them gifts and they do what he wants."

Kawkas is angry, but the older man who owns the tent where we sit is scared. "Don't say this! Don't talk about these things in front of strangers." We have hit a nerve: class power in the countryside. Kawkas ignores his elder and tradition and continues enumerating his grievances. The old man gets up and starts pacing outside the tent.

Traditionally Kurdistan was controlled by a landlord class, the agas. Sometimes they were clan leaders, but always they were rich men acting as feudal lords, doling out favors, taking tribute, mediating disputes and imposing punishment. After 1958, when General Kassim overthrew the Hashemite monarchy established by the British, an extensive land reform sought to ruin the aga class, but it persisted. Under Saddam the agas ran pro-government Kurdish militias called the Jash, which hunted down and tortured the rebel *peshmerga*. Then pieces of the Jash switched sides. Now the agas are insinuating themselves into the politically confused networks of the KDP and PUK, using their capital and superior education to gain government jobs, party posts and contracts.

Nelwer Omar Abu Bakr is the KDP-appointed mayor of Degala, a town up the road from Kawkas's tent. Mayor Del-

Uwer, as he is known, is simultaneously suave and defensive; he has the intensity and dark good looks of a movie star and occasionally speaks of himself in the third person. But he won't say much. I appeal to his vanity, telling him he looks younger than 36 and asking him about himself. He smiles and soon, in a cryptic, typically Iraqi fashion, starts to confess.

"In my heart I hate the agas. They fought us," says the mayor, who was a *peshmerga* before studying law. "But they are more intelligent than simple people. They are patient and respectful. Simple people come in dirty and get angry. So the agas are more effective."

The mayor explains that despite formal land reform, some agas still control public pastures as private property and, in contravention of the law, still collect rents on these properties.

On a hill outside Erbil sits a big yellow house with tinted windows, armed security and a commanding view extending over miles of steep barren ridges. Inside lives Aga Adal Abu Shwara ("Adal with big mustache"), and indeed he has a preposterously large handlebar mustache. Under Saddam, Adal headed a Jash unit called the Special Emergency Squad. Everyone seems to know who he is, and they all say the same thing: He was one of Saddam's Kurdish thugs. Now Adal heads a United Nations security detail.

In his plush white-carpeted living room, surrounded by gold-colored drapes, ornate wood-framed couches and a huge plasma TV playing a Kurdish musical gala, Adal Abu Shwara sips Pepsi and explains the traditions of the aga.

"To be an aga is a job. We serve the people. We give people land, we find them jobs. All our cars have chains to help pull people out of ditches after accidents. That is why we built this house close to the road."

Critics charge that the parties use agas to mobilize votes. "Yes, we get the people to vote, but it would be rude for some-

one in Talabani's area to make his people vote for Barzani or the other way around. So there are limits."

Altun Kopri, located between Kirkuk and an oilfield to the northwest—beyond the formal borders of Kurdistan—has long been a majority Turkmen town with a Turkmen name, but in the past two years it has become majority Kurdish. The town sits mostly on a sloping island in the Little Zab River surrounded by fertile flood plains and sandbars. The population here has almost doubled over these two years as Kurds move down from the north and Turkmen move up from Kirkuk and east from Mosul to escape the escalating violence.

This area around Kirkuk and the oilfields is a demographic battleground. Whether or not the north becomes independent, Kurdish leaders want this terrain under their formal control as part of Iraq's Autonomous Region of Kurdistan. And in preparation for the planned 2007 referendum on Kirkuk's fate, Kurdish militants seem to be creating facts on the ground. Turkmen say that activists from the PUK and KDP are usurping all the civil service jobs and political power. Some charge that the Kurds are busing in people from the north and registering them to vote in Altun Kopri. Regular Kurds on the street and the local KDP deny this.

"In Altun Kopri it is only tense, but Kirkuk is a time bomb ready to explode," says Adnan Zada, head of the local Turkmen

Front. Despite Zada's claim that "we cannot have weapons because we are a minority," some of his men wear pistols tucked in their belts.

By most measures Kirkuk has already started to explode. A Turkmen house painter named Mohamed Ali (or, as he prefers, Chico) is headed home to Toronto after seeing family in Kirkuk. "There was shooting every night, car bombs. We just stayed inside for ten days," says the distraught Chico. "If I see a fire, am I gonna walk into it? No. I walk away. A lot of Turkmen are leaving." He says two high-ranking Turkmen policemen were assassinated while he was in Kirkuk and that there was one fairly big, unreported car bomb on October 1.

Worst of all for Chico was the night when men in police uniforms kidnapped his cousin and demanded \$40,000 in ransom but settled for \$20,000. He is convinced the abductors were cops from Sulaimaniya moonlighting as ethnic gangsters in Kirkuk. His brother had a house and a shop seized by armed Kurds. The brother moved to Istanbul, uncompensated.

Arabs are also under pressure in the area around Kirkuk. Just outside Altun Kopri lives Ahmed Hussein Ahmed, a Kurdish farmer who was driven out of his village in the 1980s and returned after the US-led invasion. "The Arabs who were brought here by

Saddam are gone now. They knew that it was not their land and left without violence," says Ahmed. He says that several Arab villages around Altun Kopri have been completely abandoned.

These simmering ethnic tensions can be read as a prelude to national breakup or merely as an attempt by the Kurdish parties to accumulate more power and resources within a united Iraq—a violent preparation for the Kirkuk referendum in 2007. But if Turkmen and Arabs start to resist Kurdish political muscle by force and the *peshmerga* in turn escalate, accusing the Arab and Turkmen populations of being insurgents, the simmering violence could boil over into a full-scale

war in the worst tradition of recent Iraqi history.

"We will use the Saddam plan," says Hameed Afandi, the KDP's Erbil-based minister of *peshmerga* affairs, when offering his solution to Iraq's security dilemmas. A guerrilla fighter since 1961, the lean short-haired chain-smoking Afandi speaks in forceful, heavily accented English as he insists that Kirkuk is Kurdish. His comments offer a glimpse of the possible worst-case scenario: "The Americans are too soft. We will kill terrorists in the middle of the street. We will destroy their houses and kill their families. We would be very hard with them!" ■

POLITIQUE

Un Kurde peut en cacher un autre

Répartis dans quatre Etats du Moyen-Orient, les Kurdes n'ont plus que leur revendication identitaire en commun. Une journaliste de La Vanguardia explique les principales divergences entre Kurdes turcs et Irakiens.

Les Kurdes de Turquie et ceux d'Irak ne sont pas seulement séparés par une frontière que traversent tous les jours des milliers de camions ; ils sont également séparés par leur idéologie et leur véritable statut. Les Kurdes turcs sont généralement proches de la gauche démocratique, ils regardent vers l'Europe et vivent dans l'Etat centralisateur fondé par Atatürk. De leur côté, les Kurdes irakiens – qui jouissent d'une semi-indépendance – sont traditionalistes, très conservateurs et vénèrent (du moins pour le moment) les Etats-Unis. Le procès de Saddam Hussein, qui a débuté le 19 octobre dernier, met en lumière les divergences politiques abyssales existant entre ces deux sociétés. Au Kurdistan irakien, l'homme de la rue estime que la peine de mort serait une peine clémente pour Saddam. Il aimerait plutôt l'enterrer vivant ou lui faire subir les souffrances qu'il a infligées aux Kurdes irakiens. Les politiques, à l'instar de la population, ne se posent pas la question de la légitimité du procès. Et, même s'ils soutiennent – à l'instar d'Adnan Mufti, le président du Parlement – qu' "on pourra abolir la peine de mort quand la démocratie aura été pleinement établie", ils estiment aussi que l'ancien dictateur doit être condamné à la peine capitale et exécuté.

A Diyarbakir, côté turc, on entend un autre son de cloche. A l'université Dicle, située sur une hauteur près du Tigre, les commentaires sur le procès sont unanimes. "Saddam est un criminel, un génocidaire. Il doit être jugé, mais pas par ce tribunal imposé par les Etats-Unis. Il mérite la reclusion à perpétuité", estime Nazli, un étudiant en philosophie. Ses camarades acquiescent. Et Serkan d'ajouter : "Il faut qu'il soit jugé par un tribunal international. Qui sont les Américains pour le juger ?"

"Tant qu'ils y sont, ils devraient juger Bush pour avoir envahi l'Irak", ajoute Mehtap. Selahattin Demirtas, président de l'Association pour les droits de l'homme de Diyarbakir, souligne que ces idées sont partagées par la majorité des Kurdes de Turquie "en raison de la grande influence du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK). Je ne crois pas qu'ils soient très influencés par l'islam radical."

A l'inverse, le Kurdistan irakien a oublié que Saddam Hussein avait été l'homme de Washington – en particulier face à l'Iran khomeyniste – et que l'Occident s'est empressé de regarder ailleurs, en 1988, lorsque le dictateur a bombardé le village kurde de Halabja à l'arme chimique. Aujourd'hui, les Kurdes irakiens acceptent l'aide des Etats-Unis, qui ont eux-mêmes un pressant besoin de leur soutien depuis qu'ils ont débarqué en Irak. Les Kurdes de Turquie, en revanche, se tournent vers l'Europe et attendent qu'elle oblige Ankara à respecter les droits concédés sur le papier (pour entamer les négociations avec l'UE). Ils

espèrent aussi des investissements dans leur région, l'une des moins développées de la Turquie. Les Kurdes de Turquie, par ailleurs, ne parlent déjà plus d'indépendance, ni même d'autonomie. Tout ce qu'ils veulent maintenant, c'est pouvoir exercer leurs droits culturels et démocratiques. Quant aux Kurdes d'Irak, ils jouissent déjà d'une semi-indépendance et ont imposé leur drapeau, leur langue et même leur propre armée.

Au fond, l'une des seules choses qui unissent encore les Kurdes est une sorte d'internationale du football, bien loin de toute référence politique. Dès que vos interlocuteurs apprennent que vous êtes espagnol, ils engagent sagement la discussion (et cela des deux côtés de la frontière) sur les qualités comparées des équipes de Barcelone et de Madrid. Reste aussi ce même vieux rêve d'un Kurdistan unifié et disposant de son propre Etat. Or ce rêve semble aujourd'hui s'évanouir face aux réalités du terrain.

Myrlam Josa, La Vanguardia, Barcelone



DU 17 AU 23 NOVEMBRE 2005

TURQUIE

Courrier
INTERNATIONAL

DU 17 AU 23 NOVEMBRE 2005

"Il ne faut plus avoir peur d'un Etat kurde indépendant"

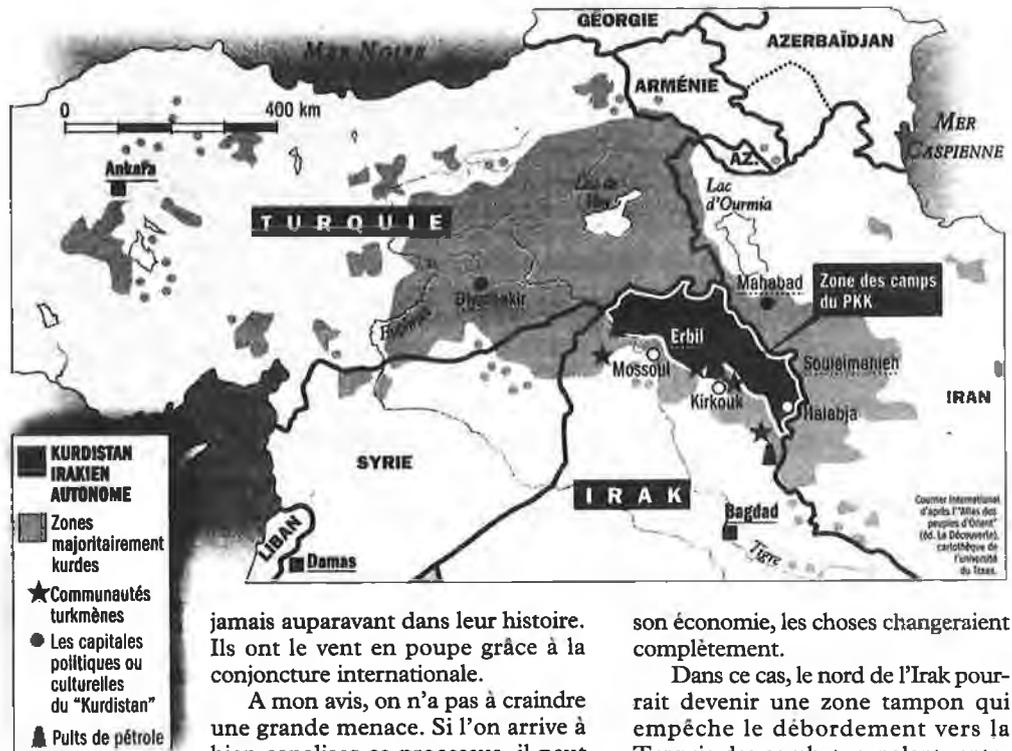
Pour l'éditorialiste Mehmet Ali Birand, la Turquie peut retirer de nombreux avantages de l'installation d'un Etat kurde dans le nord de l'Irak. Il est temps pour Ankara de changer son approche de la géopolitique régionale.

HÜRRİYET (extraits)

Istanbul

Ceux qui connaissent le passé des Kurdes du nord de l'Irak qualifient de "rendez-vous historique" la rencontre qui a eu lieu à la Maison-Blanche entre le chef kurde Massoud Barzani et George W. Bush. L'opinion mondiale et l'opinion turque y voient le feu vert de Washington pour la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant. Il y a, bien sûr, une part de vérité dans cette interprétation, mais Barzani a entendu à Washington bien d'autres choses aussi – à commencer par la nécessité de l'intégrité territoriale de l'Irak. Le président Bush a dit à son hôte que les Kurdes ne devraient pas conduire à l'éclatement de l'Irak pour obtenir leur indépendance.

Le deuxième avertissement concernait les sujets qui touchent de très près la sensibilité des Turcs, à savoir le PKK [mouvement kurde séparatiste et violent], les Turkmènes [d'Irak] et la "kurdisation" de la ville irakienne de Kirkouk [où vivent également des Turkmènes et des Arabes]. En Turquie, nous avons tous la hantise de voir les Kurdes nous arracher un jour notre région du Sud-Est [le Kurdistan turc]. On imagine que, avec la création d'un Etat kurde indépendant dans le nord de l'Irak, ses habitants inciteraient leurs cousins de Turquie à faire de même. Un tel scénario n'est pas seulement imaginaire, il comporte une part de plausibilité ; mais tout ce que nous avons fait jusqu'à présent pour le prévenir s'est limité à des mesures militaires. Nous avons commencé à mieux comprendre les réalités de la région au cours de ces dernières années seulement et nous avons cherché depuis à équilibrer cette politique avec des réformes économiques, sociales et culturelles. On peut dire que nous comprenons mieux maintenant nos concitoyens kurdes, mais nous continuons à regarder le nord de l'Irak en fronçant les sourcils. Chaque déclaration de Barzani nous énerve, surtout quand il parle de l'indépendance des Kurdes : il nous rend furieux. Il faut pourtant se rendre à l'évidence : les Kurdes d'Irak ont fait bien du chemin et se sont approchés d'un statut d'indépendance comme



jamais auparavant dans leur histoire. Ils ont le vent en poupe grâce à la conjoncture internationale.

A mon avis, on n'a pas à craindre une grande menace. Si l'on arrive à bien canaliser ce processus, il peut même renforcer la sécurité de la Turquie. D'abord, du point de vue économique, la Turquie est le cordon ombilical le plus fiable pour les Kurdes d'Irak, le moyen le plus commode pour eux de faire du commerce via ou avec la Turquie. Notre région du Sud-Est profite également de ce commerce. Si le poste frontalier de Habur ne fonctionnait pas, le nord de l'Irak comme le sud-est de la Turquie seraient condamnés à la misère. Deuxièmement, en matière de sécurité aussi le nord de l'Irak et la Turquie ont besoin l'un de l'autre. La plus grande menace pour les Kurdes du nord de l'Irak n'est pas la Turquie mais les chiites irakiens, qui souhaitent gouverner l'ensemble de l'Irak et se servir de tous les revenus du pétrole. Enfin, la Turquie ne peut pas envoyer des milliers de soldats dans le nord de l'Irak et déclencher une guerre pour empêcher une déclaration d'indépendance kurde favorisée par la conjoncture internationale et soutenue par les Etats-Unis et l'UE. Si Ankara se mettait à voir dans le nord de l'Irak non plus des ennemis mais une société qui a besoin de sa protection et qui sert

son économie, les choses changeraient complètement.

Dans ce cas, le nord de l'Irak pourrait devenir une zone tampon qui empêche le débordement vers la Turquie des combats sanglants entre chiites et sunnites. Les Kurdes irakiens peuvent en échange bénéficier de la protection et du soutien économique de la Turquie. Mais certaines conditions sont nécessaires pour qu'une telle coopération se réalise : il est indispensable que le nord de l'Irak soit débarrassé du PKK. Les Kurdes irakiens, eux aussi, sont gênés par cette présence indésirable, mais ferment les yeux au nom d'une identité ethnique commune. De même, il faudrait que les dirigeants kurdes respectent le droit des Turkmènes [en Irak]. La Turquie ne peut pas les abandonner à leur sort. Sous Saddam Hussein, ils ont beaucoup souffert sans qu'Ankara leur porte secours, et cela avait profondément blessé l'opinion publique turque.

Héritière d'un empire, la Turquie a une attitude hautaine non seulement envers les Kurdes, mais aussi envers tous les autres peuples de la région. Non seulement il faut abandonner cette attitude, mais il faut aussi résoudre nos problèmes avec nos propres citoyens kurdes si nous voulons avoir des relations harmonieuses avec le nord de l'Irak.

Mehmet Ali Birand

la Croix 15 novembre 2005

Le président irakien donne des assurances aux chrétiens

L'Église chaldéenne a tenu un synode spécial à Rome du 8 au 12 novembre au moment où le président de l'Irak était reçu par Benoît XVI

ROME

De notre envoyée spéciale permanente

Si le synode spécial de l'Église chaldéenne, qui s'est tenu la semaine dernière à Rome, devait porter sur des questions internes à cette communauté orientale catholique (réforme de la liturgie, adaptation du droit canon), il fut, en réalité, surtout question de la situation préoccupante des 300 000 chrétiens d'Irak. Les responsables chaldéens ont profité de la visite au pape, jeudi dernier, du président irakien Jalal Talabani, pour attirer l'attention internationale et tenter, avec le soutien discret du Saint-Siège, d'obtenir des garanties pour l'avenir de la petite communauté chrétienne (3 % de la population du pays).

Venu, avant les élections de décembre, chercher un surcroît de légitimité, le président irakien a donné quelques assurances à Benoît XVI. «*Je lui ai présenté le processus démocratique, je lui ai parlé de la Constitution*», a-t-il expliqué après sa rencontre. Selon Jalal Talabani, Benoît XVI lui a posé la question de l'application de la charia (loi islamique) en Irak, et «*aurait été satisfait*» de sa réponse. Quant à la liberté religieuse, et les droits des

minorités, le chef de l'État s'est voulu rassurant: «*Je lui ai dit que la Constitution concerne tous les Irakiens, y compris les chrétiens. Je lui ai assuré qu'en Irak toutes les libertés seraient garanties aux chrétiens.*»

Pour répondre aux journalistes, le président irakien a rejoint les évêques chaldéens à la maison Saint-Pierre, là où se tenait le synode chaldéen. «*Une manière de montrer sa bonne volonté à l'encontre des chrétiens*», glisse l'un des responsables chaldéens. Une manière également, pour les évêques, de prendre date. «*Nos relations avec le gouvernement sont bonnes, a tenu à assurer, aux côtés du président, le patriarche Emmanuel III Delly. Nous sommes tous de la famille irakienne.*»

Lors de ce synode, les évêques d'Irak n'ont pas caché leur inquiétude. «*Sur notre sol, nous avons vu s'installer depuis quelques années toutes les formes du terrorisme mondial*», confie Mgr Philip Najim, procureur du patriarcat chaldéen près le Saint-Siège. «*Aujourd'hui, aucun des besoins élémentaires n'est plus assuré: ni sécurité, ni eau, ni électricité, ni soins*», explique encore Mgr Najim, qui s'interroge: «*Si elles*

ne peuvent rien à la situation, la présence des troupes étrangères en Irak est-elle encore justifiée?»

Quant à la nouvelle Constitution, elle en laisse plus d'un sceptique, malgré l'unité de façade affichée jeudi avec le président. «*Une Constitution écrite sous la contrainte d'une force d'occupation peut difficilement être considérée comme un texte élaboré librement*», estime Mgr Najim, même si «*la population a montré sa bonne volonté en approuvant le texte*». Mgr Louis Sako, évêque de Kirkouk, est plus direct: «*Ce texte rétablit la charia, il donne aux femmes un statut mineur, rend impossible toute conversion de l'islam vers une autre religion et relègue les chrétiens*

Il fut, en réalité, surtout question de la situation préoccupante des 300 000 chrétiens d'Irak (3 % de la population).

au rang de minorité ethnique.» L'évêque compte sur la possibilité, prévue par le texte, d'une modification, après les élections de décembre.

«*Il faut absolument revenir à une conception de l'État sécularisé, en proposant une seule citoyenneté irakienne.*»

En attendant, les membres de la communauté qui le peuvent continuent d'émigrer. Autre sujet douloureux: «*le prosélytisme*» des nouvelles Églises évangéliques qui «*arrivent dans les bagages des troupes américaines et qui, grâce à l'argent de leurs donateurs, font une concurrence redoutable*», dénonce Mgr Sako. Selon lui, on dénombrait à Bagdad dix-sept Églises évangéliques, et trois à Kirkouk.

ISABELLE DE GAULMYN



Conférence de presse donnée par le patriarche Emmanuel III Delly (à droite) et le président irakien Jalal Talabani, le 10 novembre. Le chef de l'État a assuré qu'«en Irak toutes les libertés seraient garanties aux chrétiens».

Cheikh Latif al-Oumyem est l'un des chefs des insurgés dans la province d'Al-Anbar :

«En Irak, la guerre civile est déjà là!»

Amman envoyé spécial

C'est dans la vaste province d'Al-Anbar que la rébellion irakienne est la plus offensive, ce qui lui vaut de concentrer la majorité des grandes opérations américaines, dont la dernière, Rideau d'acier, se poursuit depuis dix jours le long de la frontière syrienne. C'est aussi dans cette province que le non au référendum a obtenu le meilleur résultat avec 97 % des votants. Chef de l'Assemblée du peuple d'Al-Anbar, l'un des principaux mouvements d'opposition armée, composé de guérilleros, de chefs de tribus, de religieux, et d'un bon nombre d'ex-officiers de sécurité de Saddam Hussein dans cette province, cheikh Latif al-Oumyem s'est réfugié à Amman (Jordanie). D'une famille originaire de Ramadi, la capitale de la province, ce religieux sunnite, auteur d'une quarantaine d'ouvrages sur le droit islamique, a été un proche de Saddam Hussein qu'il rencontrait fréquemment. L'ex-raïs lui avait confié la charge d'imam de la prière du vendredi à Bagdad, un poste politico-religieux de la plus haute importance. Dans une interview exclusive à un journal occidental, le chef des insurgés s'explique.

Quelle est la situation dans la province d'Al-Anbar ?

Très mauvaise. La plupart des villes sont encerclées par l'armée américaine. Sept *willayat* (districts) sont en état de siège, ce qui signifie que la population n'a ni électricité ni eau ni nourriture, qu'on y procède à des arrestations illégales et à des destructions de maisons. Un bombardement américain a tué 75 civils. A Haditha, la ville est coupée en deux par les soldats américains. Les habitants ne peuvent plus utiliser le pont sur la rivière pour se ravitailler et doivent entrer dans l'eau pour la traverser.

Quelle est la stratégie de la guérilla ?

D'abord, ce que nous ne comprenons pas, c'est la stratégie de l'armée américaine. On dirait qu'elle n'a aucun plan. Nous, nous attendons qu'elle finisse ses opérations et nous le faisons avec beaucoup de patience. L'armée américaine est un éléphant et nous sommes une abeille. Aucun ne peut détruire l'autre mais l'abeille peut faire du mal à l'éléphant. La province d'Al-Anbar est la seule à s'être vraiment dressée contre les Américains; dans d'autres provinces, on se bat aussi contre eux mais pas avec autant de détermination. Maintenant, nous avons compris que les Américains vont commencer à se retirer dès le printemps. Et, nous savons qu'il nous faudra alors nous asseoir à la table des négociations.

La rébellion est-elle divisée ?

Il n'y a pas de parrain pour guider notre mouvement. Il y a plusieurs centres de décision et c'est très bien. S'il y en avait un seul, l'ennemi pourrait soit l'affaiblir, soit le contrôler. Je dois dire que cela (*la division de la rébellion, ndlr*) est la meilleure stratégie pour combattre une superpuissance comme les Etats-Unis.

Est-ce que vous vous battez au nom de Saddam Hussein ?

Non, il n'est plus dans le jeu. C'est fini pour lui. La ré-

sistance est le fait de deux composantes, l'une nationaliste, l'autre religieuse.

Pas de conflits entre elles ?

Cela peut arriver. Pour le moment les conflits sont suspendus. Mais ils risquent certainement de s'intensifier à l'avenir. Quand ? Je ne sais pas.

L'Irak est-il menacé par la guerre civile ?

Mais la guerre civile est déjà là ! Avant les élections du 30 janvier, elle couvait. Maintenant, elle éclate en plein jour. Des centaines de sunnites ont déjà été tués en raison de leur appartenance communautaire. Regardez ce journaliste qui a été assassiné dernièrement. Il s'appelait Haroun, comme Haroun al-Rachid (*célèbre calife, contemporain de Charlemagne*) du même nom, et c'est pour cette seule raison qu'il a été assassiné.

Beaucoup de chiïtes sont tués également...

Pas autant que les sunnites.

Parce que ceux qui tuent les sunnites le font sous la protection du parapluie américain. Voilà la vraie question : pourquoi les Américains laissent-ils les chiïtes tuer les sunnites ? Il y a sur cette question une cer-

taine entente entre les Américains et les Iraniens.

Au référendum sur la nouvelle Constitution, quelle a été l'attitude de votre mouvement ?

Cela aurait été une décision stupide de le boycotter. Nous avons donc appelé à voter non. En fait, peu de partis sunnites ont choisi de le boycotter. Franchement, nous avons étudié soigneusement si on allait participer ou non. Nous avons hésité

mais il nous a semblé que nous n'étions pas en position de refuser une telle participation. Cela dit, il y a eu une énorme fraude. Je peux vous dire les chiffres exacts parce que nous avons des observateurs dans chaque bureau de vote. Dans la province d'Al-Anbar, 100 % des électeurs ont voté contre, pas un seul pour le oui. Dans celle de Salaheddine, le non l'a emporté avec 68 % et à 58 % à Ninive.

Quelles conditions avant des négociations avec Bagdad ?

Même si je dois être en désaccord avec moi-même, je suis prêt.

Quelle a été votre réaction en regardant le procès de Saddam Hussein ?

J'étais consterné. Tout dans ce procès est contraire à la loi internationale, à commencer par le tribunal. Il n'y avait pas la moindre justice. Il reflète ce qu'est

devenu l'Irak : une nation démantelée par les superpuissances qui ont tout détruit, à commencer par sa souveraineté. ◀

Recueilli par JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN



November 19th 2005

The Economist

Turkey and the Kurds Explosive

ANKARA

A bombing that is blamed on the Turkish security forces

WAS it the work of forces keen to sabotage Turkey's bid to join the European Union? Or was it, in the words of a general, just "a local affair"? A bombing allegedly perpetrated by Turkish security forces against a bookshop owned by a Kurdish nationalist in the town of Semdinli has sparked protests across the country's troubled Kurdish south-east. At least five civilians have died in clashes with police, despite pleas for calm by local leaders.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, has vowed to get to the bottom of the affair, promising that those responsible for the blast would be punished "no matter who they are". Yet, although Mr Erdogan says he has the backing of the country's chief of staff, General Hilmi Ozkok, he may back away from a showdown with the army—if that is where the trail of investigation leads.

Suspicious that rogue elements in the security forces were linked to the bombing surfaced when outraged locals pursued and then tried to lynch three men suspected of planting the bomb, which killed one person and wounded over a dozen. The suspects proved to be gendarmerie intelligence agents. Gendarmerie forces

have been blamed for previous human-rights abuses, including extra-judicial killings of Kurdish nationalists and the torching of villages in the 1990s, at the height of the insurgency led by PKK rebels.

Yasar Buyukanit, the hawkish land-forces commander, who is tipped to succeed General Ozkok next year, declared that he knew one of the suspects, who was "a good fellow". Two of the suspects, a sergeant and a non-commissioned officer,

were freed on November 13th, pending trial. The pair claimed they had stopped only to relieve themselves at a local mosque. The third suspect, a PKK rebel turned police informant who has been arrested and charged, said he was buying a lottery ticket at a kiosk nearby.

These claims of innocence have been dismissed by opposition deputies, who are conducting their own investigation. They claim that the suspects' car, parked near the scene of the crime, was registered to the local gendarmerie command and contained weapons and detailed maps of Semdinli, on which the bookshop was marked, as well as a list of 105 potential targets, including the bookshop owner and



Perpetrators unknown

prominent tribal chiefs.

Some pundits dismiss the notion that the bombing may have been part of a campaign to derail EU membership talks, by raising tensions between Turks and Kurds. It is more likely to have been the work of hotheads within the army who want to intimidate the PKK and its sympathisers.

Others point to parallels with a mysterious incident in 1996, when a car loaded with weapons crashed in the western town of Susurluk. A wanted right-wing hitman, a police chief and his girlfriend all died in the accident, which exposed links between the state and organised crime. A top general refused to testify before a parliamentary commission investigating Susurluk, and several politicians hid behind their parliamentary immunity. The scandal was covered up after the arrests of a handful of minor officials.

To ensure that Semdinli is not swept under the carpet too, Mr Erdogan may have to go there. This would help to quell the violence, as well as enhancing his stature with Turkish citizens and his EU interlocutors. And it would show those who take the law into their own hands that they can no longer do so with impunity. ■

IRAK VIOLENCES INTERCONFESSIONNELLES

Au moins 75 morts dans un double attentat

AU MOINS 75 fidèles ont été tués et 90 autres blessés, vendredi 18 novembre, lors de deux attentats-suicides perpétrés contre deux mosquées chiites au moment de la prière à Khaneqin, à 170 km au nord-est de Bagdad, près de la frontière iranienne. Il s'agit de l'une des attaques anti-chiites les plus sanglantes depuis la fin des opérations majeures en Irak le 1^{er} mai 2003. Les deux kamikazes se sont fait exploser dans deux mosquées chiites fréquentées par des Kurdes chrétiens appelés Faylis. Un des témoins a précisé que les kamikazes « se

sont mêlés aux fidèles et ont activé leurs bombes pendant les prêches », à quatre minutes d'intervalle. Les deux mosquées visées ont subi de graves dommages. Le toit de l'une d'elles s'est effondré sur les fidèles.

Auparavant à Bagdad, deux voitures piégées ont explosé à proximité immédiate de l'hôtel Hamra, fréquenté par des étrangers et des journalistes. Cet hôtel se trouve à proximité du centre de détention de Jadriyah appartenant au ministère de l'intérieur, à propos duquel un scandale vient d'éclater concernant des cas de torture

sur des détenus. Six personnes ont péri lors de ces attentats.

Les explosions ont ouvert une brèche dans le mur de béton protégeant l'hôtel, mais les véhicules n'ont pas pu le franchir. Déjà, le 24 octobre, des véhicules piégés avaient tenté de franchir le mur de protection érigé autour des hôtels Palestine et Sheraton, au centre de Bagdad, qui eux aussi abritent des étrangers et des journalistes.

Sur le terrain politique, une cinquantaine de personnalités politiques irakiennes de toutes tendances se réunissent à partir de samedi au Caire sous l'égide de la

Ligue arabe pour entamer une démarche de réconciliation nationale. Cette réunion, organisée à moins d'un mois des élections législatives prévues le 15 décembre à l'initiative d'Amr Moussa, secrétaire général de la Ligue arabe, doit durer trois jours. — (AFP, Reuters.)

Le Monde

Dimanche 20 - Lundi 21 novembre 2005

Secret prison adds to divisions in Iraq

Sunni Arabs furious over police torture

By Edward Wong and John F. Burns

BAGHDAD: As Iraqi investigators began sifting through a secret underground prison run by the Iraqi police in the heart of the capital, Sunni Arab leaders on Wednesday furiously denounced the Shiite-dominated government for supporting the torture of Sunni detainees there and called for an international investigation.

The discovery of the prison by the U.S. military has galvanized Sunni Arab anger and widened the country's sectarian divide just a month before elections for a full, four-year government.

The American general charged with securing Baghdad said Wednesday that Sunni leaders were supportive of the American raid on the prison, which began Sunday and ended Wednesday afternoon.

The commander, Major General William Webster of the Third Infantry Division, said his troops were prepared to investigate other credible complaints of torture by Iraqi security forces.

The American raid forced Ibrahim al-Jaafari, the Iraqi prime minister, to announce that the government would investigate instances of torture at the underground detention center, where many of 173 prisoners were found in weakened, malnourished states.

A former prisoner said in an interview Wednesday that he and other inmates, all Sunni Arabs, were regularly beaten and tortured, and he was left

blindfolded for the entire duration of his stay, more than three months. The prison was in the basement of a major operations center for the Interior Ministry, in the center of Baghdad, and was reportedly staffed by policemen belonging to a powerful Iranian-trained Shiite militia.

For many Sunni Arabs, the uncovering of the prison and Jaafari's announcement confirmed widespread rumors that Shiite policemen and soldiers were abducting Sunni Arabs and torturing or killing them. The investigation comes at a politically sensitive time here. American officials have been urging the former ruling Sunni Arabs not to boycott the elections, as they did in a vote last January, and to take part in the formation of the new government.

The Iraqi Islamic Party, a prominent Sunni political group, issued a statement Wednesday calling for the United Nations and human rights organizations to "condemn the violations of human rights that the Iraqi government perpetrated, and demand an international investigation to punish all those who were involved in these crimes."

The deputy interior minister for intelligence, Hussein Kamal, said any instances of torture in the prison were not done according to policy. The ministry had begun its own investigation, he said, and the prisoners had been moved to another location for "humane care."

He added that the prisoners were ac-

cused of crimes such as terrorism and kidnapping, and that they were arrested with court warrants.

Kamal said he did not know whether the police in the center were tied to a Shiite militia.

For three days, American troops threw a security cordon around the center, a two-story building that was built as a bomb shelter during Saddam Hussein's time. Webster ordered the troops withdrawn Wednesday afternoon after the building had been closely searched and large amounts of documents taken away.

American officers said the documents would be studied by the Iraqi-led inquiry that Jaafari appointed Tuesday, with instructions that its conclusions be reported back to the government within two weeks.

One senior officer familiar with the events that led U.S. troops to the center Sunday evening said the decision to move on the center came after a flow of reports reaching the Americans, including one from a woman missing her 15-year-old son, described the center as "a notorious address" where people were being held for long periods and mistreated.

Most of these reports, the officer said, came from Sunnis.

The officer said the missing boy was not among the 173 detainees found at the center, and he depicted the conditions there in somewhat less lurid terms than those used by some Iraqi officials who gave initial accounts of the place Tuesday.

He said the detainees appeared to have been held in a series of separate rooms, but that the rooms did not appear to have built as a detention facility.

"There were not dungeon cells or those kind of things," he said. "I didn't see any torture chamber."

He said that all the detainees had undergone medical checks, and that while some were taken to hospitals, the reports he had received indicated that none of them were held overnight.

The New York Times

November 17, 2005

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune

Thomas L. Friedman

Silence of the Sunnis

JERUSALEM

We are so bombarded with news of terrorism lately that we don't even notice anymore when a fundamental line has been crossed. The past few weeks was one of those times.

At the start of the Muslim holy month, Ramadan, a Sunni Muslim suicide bomber walked into a mosque in Hillah, Iraq, and blew himself up in the middle of a funeral.

Just after the close of Ramadan, a Sunni Muslim suicide bomber walked into the Radisson SAS Hotel in Am-

man, Jordan, and blew himself up in the middle of a wedding reception.

Terrorists willing to blow themselves up at funerals and weddings of their own faith are individuals who have become completely disconnected from humanity. They feel no moral restraints. And this is the real problem in the Sunni Muslim world today: There is no controlling moral authority. Any event can be a target: funerals, weddings, anything. Maybe next week the jihadists will blow up a maternity ward.

Yes, there is a civil war going on in the Sunni Muslim world today, a civil war between jihadist fundamentalists on one side and a generally moderate majority on the other. There's just one problem — only one side is really fighting this civil war: the jihadists.

The Sunni Muslim majority has been largely passive. Oh, yes, the Sunni Arab regimes arrest these jihadists when they can, but the Sunni regimes and the religious establishments they control rarely attack the underlying intolerant Islamist ideas

these jihadists propagate, namely that Christians, Jews, Shiites and Hindus are inferior to Sunni Muslims and can be attacked.

How many fatwas — religious edicts — have been issued condemning the Jordanian terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, who has already murdered hundreds of Shiite Muslims and others? Not many.

It was heartening to see Jordanians take to the streets to condemn the triple suicide bombings in their capital by the Zarqawi terrorists. That's rare. And King Abdullah of Jordan has been one of the few Arab leaders actually willing to take on the jihadists on the ideological-religious level, sponsoring an intra-Muslim dialogue for just that purpose.

But it was also dispiriting to listen to other Jordanian and Arab voices saying that they believe Israelis were behind the attacks in Amman, or telling the bombers: If you want to bomb someone, bomb the "occupiers" — code for Americans and Israelis. Why us?

But here's the protest call the world needs to hear from the Sunni Arab street: "Why anyone?"

Suicide bombing is an abomination. It is sick. You cannot build a healthy state from suicide bombers. Imagine what your national museum would look like: "Here's Ahmed — he blew up 52 Muslims at a wedding." "Here's Muhammad — he blew up 25 Shiites at a funeral."

So why don't more people in the Sunni world speak out against the Sunni Arabs doing this? In part, it's because feelings of powerlessness and humiliation are rife in Sunni Arab society, so there is some grudging respect for suicide bombers who are ready to give their lives to resist outsiders or the authoritarian regimes that Arabs blame for keeping them down.

It's also because the Sunni silent majority isn't all that upset when suicide bombers blow up Jews, Christians or Shiite civilians. The Saudi press often extols such suicide bombers as "martyrs" or "the resistance."

Since their societies tolerated such barbarism against civilians when it was used against others, the Sunni terrorists apparently figured it was just fine to use such tactics against their Sunni foes, too.

I am sure Zarqawi is mystified today by the protests against him in Jordan. He must be asking, What's the fuss? After all, no one protested recently when Muslim suicide bombers butchered Shiites in Iraq or Ahmedis in Pakistan or Christian tourists in Indonesia or Jews in Israel or Hindus in New Delhi.

The Sunni world would do well to

reread the famous poem by the Reverend Martin Niemöller, a German pastor imprisoned in World War II: "First they came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak up for me."

A civilization that does not delegitimize suicide bombing against any innocent civilian is itself committing suicide. And that is exactly what the Sunni Muslim world is doing when it does not consistently teach its children that suicide bombing against civilians is always wrong — and that all who engage in it do not go to heaven, but straight to hell.

Scores killed in Iraq as 2 mosques are hit

Attacks in north follow Baghdad carnage

By Edward Wong

BAGHDAD: A pair of suicide bombers detonated explosive belts Friday inside two Shiite mosques in the northern Kurdish town of Khanaqin, collapsing the buildings, killing at least 70 people and wounding more than 100. The attack came as worshippers were gathering for Friday prayers.

It was the deadliest coordinated bombing in Iraq in nearly three months, and came hours after two suicide truck bombs exploded outside a hotel in central Baghdad that houses many foreign journalists. Those blasts killed at least six Iraqis, wounded more than 40 and reduced a neighboring apartment building to rubble.

The well-organized assault at the Hamra Hotel, one of the most important expatriate centers and perhaps the most heavily populated outside the fortified Green Zone, was the latest strike in a growing jihadist campaign against virtually all foreign presence here. Closely resembling an attack last month on two other prominent hotels, it shattered any notion that journalists might have had about retaining a protected or neutral status in this war. At least a dozen major Western news organizations have offices and living quarters in the Hamra compound.

The collapse of the nearby apartment building sent a mushroom cloud above the Baghdad skyline. In the hours after

the explosion, two dozen firefighters and Iraqi soldiers struggled to get to people buried in a mound of rubble from the collapsed apartment, picking away at the debris with their hands. Women in black robes sat weeping along the metal-strewn street, surrounded by the charred hulks of cars that had burst into flame. Deep pools of water from ruptured mains covered the area. American Apache attack helicopters circled overhead.

The sectarian nature of the killings underscored the growing divide between ethnic and religious groups in Iraq, even as it moves toward elections in December for a full, four-year government.

The split between the majority Shiites and the former ruling Sunni Arabs widened this week after U.S. soldiers discovered 169 malnourished detainees, virtually all Sunni Arabs, in a secret police center in Baghdad that is operated by the Shiite-run Interior Ministry.

One witness to the American raid said that at least a third of the detainees had bruises or cuts on their faces and bodies. The senior United Nations human rights official, Louise Arbour, called Friday for an international inquiry.

The suicide bombings Friday, and one on Nov. 11 in a Baghdad restaurant that killed 29 people, have raised questions about whether the U.S. military has a coherent strategy for curbing such violence. The U.S. command points to a small dip in the number of suicide attacks from early summer to late summer. But some senior officers say in private that they still do not really know who carries out these bombings, and whether the military's heavy focus on rooting out foreign fighters is misguided. More doubts have emerged since the revelation that Iraqis were responsible for the



Shwan Mohammed/Agence France-Presse

Shiite Kurdish Iraqis gathered at the bombed Khanaqin Grand Mosque on Friday.

Herald ^{INTERNATIONAL} Tribune
November 19-20, 2005

recent suicide bombings in Jordan.

The explosions in Khanaqin took place around noon, at the start of prayers, and were followed by a smaller bombing outside a bank, an Interior Ministry official said. The Khanaqin

hospital overflowed with victims, and many of the wounded had to be rushed outside the town for treatment.

No group took immediate responsibility for the Khanaqin attack, but the operation resembled those carried out

by Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, the militant group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. Another group, Ansar al-Sunna, often strikes at Kurds with suicide bombings.

The New York Times

Le Monde 22 novembre 2005

LES COULISSSES DU POUVOIR IRANIEN

La croisade populiste du président Ahmadinejad soulève des polémiques et inquiète jusqu'à ses anciens protecteurs. Tout le pays est suspendu à la lutte d'influence qui se joue au sommet



Le président Ahmadinejad (debout à droite) sous le regard des trois hommes-clés du régime : (de g. à dr.) Rafsandjani, l'homme le plus riche d'Iran ; le réformateur Khatami et le Guide suprême, Ali Khamenei

lotti, est accusé d'avoir la double nationalité iranienne et américaine ; et sa fille, la nationalité britannique, ce qui est assez mal vu en ces temps de « remake » révolutionnaire.

Enfin, les déclarations récentes de M. Ahmadinejad sur la nécessité « de rayer Israël de la carte », autre vieux slogan révolutionnaire, ont suscité un vif agacement parmi les diplomates. « Qu'un leader charismatique comme l'imam Khomeiny dise de telles choses en pleine révolution, cela pouvait passer, mais pas un président de la République islamique élu de nos jours ! Ensuite, l'imam savait composer, rester prudent. M. Ahmadinejad, lui, lance des slogans, sans la réflexion de fond qui va avec, en plein débat nucléaire... », commente, accablé, Ibrahim Yazdi, qui fut le premier ministre des affaires étrangères du régime.

En un mot, quoi qu'il fasse, M. Ahmadinejad provoque polémiques et méfiance. Le ton est tellement monté que le Guide suprême, l'ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, s'est vu contraint d'intervenir, lundi 14 novembre, en faveur de son ancien poulain conservateur à la présidentielle. Du jamais vu jusqu'ici. Dans une déclaration devant l'Assemblée

des imams de la prière du vendredi réunis à Téhéran, M. Khamenei a demandé aux Iraniens de « laisser au gouvernement le temps de faire ses preuves » et d'éviter « toute attitude ou critique qui aggraverait la situation ».

Ce qui était aussi une manière subtile de reconnaître, disent certains analystes, les problèmes posés par M. Ahmadinejad, qui non seulement

met mal à l'aise certaines factions conservatrices qui l'ont appuyé et ont déjà pris du recul, mais indisposerait aussi le Guide, pris de court par ses initiatives. De même, des rumeurs, sans aucun fondement toutefois, circulent déjà sur une éventuelle motion en préparation au Majlis pour demander que le président soit « révoqué », selon une procédure prévue par la Constitution. Cette hypothèse semble peu probable, car outre le fait que M. Ahmadinejad a été élu avec 17 millions de voix – une réalité à prendre en compte, même si ses opposants parlent de fraude massive –, sa « chute » brutale ne manquerait pas d'affaiblir M. Khamenei, qui lui a servi de « parrain », à la surprise générale, aux élections.

Selon un ancien ambassadeur proche de l'entourage du Guide, ce dernier ne serait

Piques et chausse-trapes à Téhéran

TÉHÉRAN
ENVOYÉE SPÉCIALE

C'est presque un rituel. Tous les matins, la presse iranienne fait état des nouvelles « purges » du jour : une dizaine de gouverneurs de province changés d'autorité ; une quarantaine d'ambassadeurs rappelés ou en voie de l'être ; l'équipe des négociateurs du dossier nucléaire remerciée au moment le plus critique des discussions ; certains commandants des forces révolutionnaires déçus ; le patron de la Bourse encouragé à démissionner ; la plupart des dirigeants des banques et des entreprises d'État remplacés, et avec eux le personnel des ministères, voire de certains médias sous contrôle.

Tous les soirs, la radio ou la télévision prennent le relais et, parfois en direct, et souvent du Majlis, le Parlement iranien, arrive, en retour, la litanie des nouvelles critiques contre le gouvernement de l'ultraconservateur président Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Dans sa croisade

de populiste – et sans doute sincère – pour revenir aux premières aspirations sociales du début de la révolution, M. Ahmadinejad n'entend « rendre des comptes qu'au peuple ».

Emet-il le désir de tenir chaque mois une réunion de son cabinet dans une province différente pour « mieux être à l'écoute » ? Aussitôt relayées jusque dans la presse officielle, des voix s'élèvent pour dénoncer ce qui sera une perte de temps et d'argent. Rend-il hommage à des « Iraniens qui se sont distingués » dans le domaine des sciences et des arts que, à peine son discours fini, une lettre ouverte est lue en plein Parlement pour regretter que l'on n'ait honoré que d'illustres inconnus choisis selon des critères idéologiques.

Quant au gouvernement, dont quatre ministres ont été « recalés » au moment de l'entrée en fonctions du président, en août, il n'est toujours pas au complet. Le sort du troisième candidat au ministère du pétrole (le premier a été jugé incompétent, le deuxième s'est retiré) sera débattu cette semaine. Et rien n'est joué : le candidat, Mohsen Tasal-

pas fâché d'utiliser, au moins un temps, les initiatives du nouveau président pour affaiblir l'homme qui a le plus de pouvoir après lui en Iran : l'ancien président Ali Akbar Hachemi Rafsandjani, rival malheureux de Mahmoud Ahmadinejad aux élections, mais homme parmi les plus riches d'Iran et qui dirige le Conseil du discernement, rouage essentiel du régime.

De fait, depuis plusieurs jours, M. Rafsandjani et ses proches, pour la plupart aux postes de commande des grandes industries et entreprises du pays depuis vingt-cinq ans, se sentent visés par la campagne de « purification fondamentaliste » en cours. Dans un discours au pays, le président Ahmadinejad a fustigé, « les jet-set managers » et, prônant un retour aux valeurs islamiques, a annoncé comme aux premiers temps de la révolution « la chasse aux corrompus ».

Se sentant attaqué, M. Rafsandjani a violemment réagi. Dénonçant les « purges » en cours et la « mise à l'écart des personnalités compétentes », remplacées souvent par des gens sans grande qualification mais « irréprochables » sur le plan idéologique et religieux, il a accusé le gouvernement de « remettre en question les actions menées par le passé », avant de conclure : « Lutter contre la corruption, c'est bien, mais il ne faut pas soupçonner tout le monde et salir des per-

sonnalités à des fins politiques. »

Résultat : depuis l'élection présidentielle et les escarmouches quotidiennes contre le gouvernement, c'est comme si l'Iran vivait entre parenthèses. Toute décision est suspendue, rien ne bouge. « Même la censure annoncée sur les films ou les livres n'est pas vraiment effective », explique un écrivain d'opposition, certains éditeurs préfèrent ne pas publier en attendant de voir vraiment en quoi

consistent les restrictions annoncées. C'est la même chose dans tous les domaines : on attend, en redoutant le pire. » La Bourse, qui avait perdu 40 % après les déclarations contre Israël, chute ; des centaines de millions de dollars de capitaux iraniens sont partis vers le Koweït et les Emirats, les investisseurs étrangers prennent le large et les candidats à l'émigration ont doublé.

L'avenir ? Beaucoup doutent que le nouveau président ait les moyens de mener son ambitieuse politique en faveur des plus pauvres. « En fait, nous n'avons pas vraiment de président de la République, juste un pion, un executive manager, manipulé par l'entourage conservateur du Guide », dit encore cet ancien ambassadeur iranien.

D'autres s'inquiètent de la « militarisation » du régime à travers les récentes nominations dans tous les appareils de l'Etat d'anciens gardiens de la révolution ou de

volontaires des milices islamiques dont est issu M. Ahmadinejad. « S'il devait échouer, il y aurait un immense mouvement de déception populaire », note le sociologue Hamid

Reza Jalai Pour, mais ceux qui imaginent une sorte de « révolution orange » pacifique se trompent : ici, mobiliser les foules à nouveau sera difficile, et les forces armées ne resteraient pas les bras croisés. » En attendant, certains constatent que, malgré lui, M. Ahmadinejad a paradoxalement relancé un vrai débat démocratique au Majlis. Ils ne désespèrent pas de voir à terme s'allier les réformateurs de l'ex-président Khatami avec les soutiens de la politique « pragmatique » de M. Rafsandjani.

Et puis, conclut ce fin analyste qu'est l'écrivain Ehssan Naraghi, il faut compter avec l'héritage laissé par les huit années d'« ouverture » de M. Khatami : « Il a enseigné à son peuple à formuler clairement ses aspirations, il a été capable de supprimer la distance conventionnelle qu'il y avait entre la nation et l'Etat. Les Iraniens sont devenus d'authentiques citoyens revendiquant leurs droits, alors que jusqu'ici on ne leur parlait que de leurs devoirs. Et, là-dessus, il n'y a aucun retour en arrière possible. » ■

MARIE-CLAUDE DECAMPS

Turkish leader visits town fearful of police killings

The Associated Press

ANKARA: The Turkish prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, rushed to the Kurdish southeast and urged calm Monday after weeks of rioting, vowing that his government would investigate reports that security forces, and not Kurdish guerrillas, were behind a recent fatal bombing.

Allegations that undercover police officers carried out the bombing have raised accusations of state-backed summary executions and caused clashes in the southeast and then in Kurdish neighborhoods of Istanbul — violence in which four people have died.

"Hate will not bring anything to us," Erdogan told a crowd in Semdinli, the mountain town near the Iraqi border where the violence started. "What will happen to this region after that?"

For decades, southeastern Turkey has been treated as a backwater province, and the appearance of the prime minister was likely to help calm tensions.

"Our government will follow this issue until the end," Erdogan said, referring to the bombing. "Let's be calm in the face of these incidents."

Also Monday, Erdogan's ruling Justice

and Development Party announced that Parliament on Wednesday would discuss tensions in the southeast.

As Erdogan spoke, officers carrying M-16 assault rifles stood behind him and police snipers watched the crowd from the rooftops.

The bombing has raised the specter of security forces carrying out summary executions, a common practice in the early 1990s, when Kurdish rebels controlled large swaths of the southeast.

The EU agreed to start entry talks with Turkey last month and has been extremely critical of the country's human rights record. Many were not convinced that Erdogan would be able to press forward with changes once he returned to the capital.

Erdogan's party, which has its roots in the Turkish Islamic and not nationalist movement, is popular in the southeast, and many analysts say that he may gain both at home and in the EU by confronting the military.

The army is still an extremely powerful institution, and the generals are distrustful of Erdogan. Many fear he secretly harbors an Islamic agenda and could use incidents like that at Semdinli to promote his struggle with the

fiercely secular military. The authorities have detained at least one sergeant from the paramilitary police in connection with the Nov. 9 bombing.

The incident that sparked the protests began when a bomb went off in front of a bookstore in Semdinli owned by a convicted member of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, the rebel group that has been battling Turkish security forces since 1984. One person was killed. The bookshop owner and bystanders chased the suspected bomber to a waiting car. The sergeant later detained was allegedly one of two paramilitary police in the car.

The incident "bears the marks of an assassination," Amnesty International said, calling on the state to investigate whether the bombing was part of a state security services policy targeting political opposition figures in the region.

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LE FIGARO

20 novembre 2005

Carnage en Irak avant une réunion de réconciliation



L'explosion de Bagdad, qui a fait six morts, a pris pour cible des immeubles situés près du centre de détention de Jadriyah, au cœur d'un scandale de torture.

MOYEN-ORIENT

Plusieurs dizaines de personnes ont été tuées dans un triple attentat, alors que la Ligue arabe tente de relancer le processus politique.

NOUVELLE JOURNÉE sanglante en Irak : 83 personnes au moins ont été tuées et 85 blessées dans trois attentats, deux contre des mosquées chiïtes au Nord, et un à Bagdad. Le bilan pourrait s'alourdir, de nombreuses personnes étant restées sous les décombres. Ces attentats illustrent la surenchère de la violence qui s'est installée entre le gouvernement et l'aile jusqu'au-boutiste de l'insurrection sunnite, à la veille d'une réunion de réconciliation prévue aujourd'hui au Caire.

La première explosion, le matin à Bagdad, a détruit plusieurs immeubles et fait au moins six morts. Elle a eu lieu près de l'hôtel Hamra, fréquenté par des étrangers, mais aussi près du centre de détention de Jadriyah, dépendant du ministère de l'Intérieur. Cette prison souterraine est au centre d'un scandale qui continuait hier de prendre de l'ampleur. Dimanche dernier, l'armée américaine y a découvert 173 prisonniers, la plupart sunnites, portant

des marques de torture. Louise Harbour, haut-commissaire aux droits de l'homme de l'ONU, a estimé hier que cette découverte témoignait d'un « usage apparemment systématique de la torture » par le gouvernement irakien. Elle a exigé l'ouverture d'une enquête internationale.

Les attentats suivants ont visé deux mosquées de Khanaqin, près de la frontière iranienne avec l'Irak. Ce fut un carnage, les bombes ayant été déclenchées en pleine prière du vendredi. Les sanctuaires étaient fréquentés par des Kurdes chiïtes, les Faylis, une minorité de la communauté kurde, qui est en grande majorité sunnite.

Agressivité antichilite

La ville de Khanaqin, à population traditionnellement mixte, religieusement et ethniquement, est située à la lisière des provinces

kurdes, mais n'est pas revendiquée par ces dernières. Elle a été le théâtre d'un double mouvement de population.

Saddam Hussein en avait chassé les Kurdes en les remplaçant par des Arabes. Après la chute du dictateur, les Kurdes sont revenus et ont chassé les nouveaux occupants arabes, qui leur avaient pris leurs biens. En frappant des Kurdes chiïtes, les terroristes ont fait d'une pierre trois coups : ils se sont vengés d'une éviction violente ; ils ont frappé des Kurdes, amalgamés à leurs dirigeants politiques qui prônent un fédéralisme repoussé par les sunnites ; enfin, ils ont tué des chiïtes, la secte majoritaire désormais au pouvoir.

Les attentats de Khanaqin, non revendiqués hier, portent la marque de la mouvance djihadiste dure, dont les textes dénoncent en premier lieu, avant la présence

américaine, la mainmise des « hérétiques » chiïtes. Cette agressivité antichilite inquiète jusqu'à Ayman al-Zawahiri, l'adjoint d'Oussama Ben Laden, qui a demandé sur Internet à Abou Moussab al-Zarqawi, représentant d'al-Qaida en Irak, de cesser de s'en prendre aux civils chiïtes. Les violences d'hier pèseront sur la conférence internationale qui doit rassembler aujourd'hui au Caire, sous l'égide de la Ligue arabe, une centaine de personnalités irakiennes de toutes confessions, pour tenter de trouver un chemin vers l'intégration de la communauté sunnite.

PIERRE PRIER

Bomber kills 17 in Kirkuk

From news reports

BAGHDAD: A suicide car bomber attacked a police patrol on Tuesday in the northern city of Kirkuk, killing at least 17 people, and mortars landed near the U.S. ambassador to Iraq during a ceremony in Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

The attackers in Kirkuk lured the patrol to a busy commercial street by shooting a police officer; the suicide bomber struck as the authorities investigated the shooting, said Captain Farhad Talabani of the police. The bombing took place on a road out of Kirkuk, 290 kilometers, or 180 miles, north of Baghdad.

Kirkuk is a city with a mixed Arab, Kurdish and Turkmen population and has seen frequent episodes of violence, some the result of tensions between the separate communities. The communities all claim ownership of the city, which lies close to vast oil reserves.

Brigadier General Sarhad Qader of the police gave the casualty figure of 17

dead and 26 wounded but did not say how many of them were civilians.

Attacks on the security forces in Kirkuk are common. Insurgents there last week opened fire on a police patrol, killing three officers; a roadside bomb killed two more a few kilometers away.

The attack Tuesday came hours after insurgents fired two mortars at a complex of palaces built by Saddam in Tikrit, where the U.S. ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad, was attending a ceremony handing the palaces back to the Iraqi government.

No one was wounded in the blasts — the U.S. military said the mortars failed to detonate properly — but television pictures showed U.S. soldiers and Marines, and Khalilzad and other dignitaries, diving for cover during a panicked few seconds. General George Casey, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, was also attending the ceremony.

"This is a phenomenon existing in the country," Khalilzad told reporters. "We are used to it." (AP, Reuters)

INTERNATIONAL
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November 23, 2005

L'Europe démunie face à l'Iran

L'éditorial par Pierre Rousselin

LE FIGARO jeudi 24 novembre 2005



Pendant tout l'été dernier, la diplomatie européenne a menacé de transférer le dossier du nucléaire iranien au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, si Téhéran ne respectait pas ses engagements.

Trois mois plus tard, il n'en est plus question. Pourtant, rien n'a changé dans l'attitude iranienne. Les activités de conversion de l'uranium se poursuivent depuis le 8 août à Ispahan, au mépris de l'accord de Paris de novembre 2004, qui fixait les conditions de la négociation avec les Européens. Français, Allemands et Britanniques vont même reprendre leurs discussions avec l'Iran le 6 décembre, sans même exiger que Téhéran fasse semblant de se plier à la règle du jeu. Dans l'intervalle, le président Mahmoud Ahmadinejad s'est permis d'affirmer qu'« Israël devrait être rayé de la carte », ne suscitant que quelques réactions horrifiées dans les chancelleries.

On se consolera en se disant qu'en diplomatie, le ridicule ne tue pas. En espérant que le dialogue à tout prix avec Téhéran servira, au moins, à retarder le moment où la République islamique sera en mesure de se doter de l'arme atomique.

Si les Européens sont obligés d'avalier tant de couleurs, c'est tout simplement qu'ils n'ont pas les moyens de leur politique. Leurs interlocuteurs à Téhéran savent très bien que les décisions qui comptent sont prises par les Etats-Unis.

La médiation qui vient d'être proposée à Moscou n'a de chance de réussir que parce qu'elle a le soutien de

Washington. Il s'agit d'obliger les Iranais à effectuer en Russie l'enrichissement de leur uranium, qui sera ainsi étroitement contrôlé. En échange de quoi, ils seront autorisés à poursuivre à Ispahan la phase moins sensible du processus, celle de la conversion. Compte tenu des intérêts convergents des Russes et des Iranais, il n'est pas impossible que cette proposition aboutisse. La diplomatie russe aura réussi là où notre diplomatie, décidément inopérante, aura échoué.

Ce nouveau camouflet, s'il a lieu, ne doit pas pour autant condamner l'initiative européenne. Elle a eu le grand mérite, en 2003, d'établir le contact avec Téhéran sur le dossier nucléaire, au moment où Washington ne parlait que de « changement de régime » et de menaces militaires. Depuis, le programme iranien est beaucoup mieux connu. Les inspecteurs de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique ont accumulé des données sur toutes les activités que les Iranais avaient dissimulées depuis vingt ans.

Paradoxalement, les choses se sont compliquées, pour les Européens, à partir du moment où les Américains ont publiquement appuyé leur démarche, au début de cette année. Depuis lors, on a le sentiment que le vrai marchandage a lieu entre Téhéran et Washington et concerne aussi l'avenir de l'Irak, auquel l'Iran attache évidemment le plus vif intérêt. Il ne resterait plus, alors, aux Européens qu'à jouer leur rôle avec la plus grande humilité.

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune

November 23, 2005

Turkey ■ By John Tirman

The heavy price of censorship

TURKISH prosecutors in Istanbul have brought a criminal action against the publisher of a book I wrote eight years ago. The case, without the public uproar that accompanies a similar action against the famous Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk, could result in a jail term and hefty fine for the defendant, Fatih Tas. It is unfortunate for him, and it is costly for Turkey in ways the country does not seem to grasp.

The book, "Spoils of War: The Human Cost of America's Arms Trade," was critical of Turkey's sustained repression of Kurds and of the U.S. role in aiding and abetting that repression. For the Turkish military was acting largely with U.S.-supplied weapons, and I traced one system in particular, the Black Hawk helicopter manufactured in Connecticut, to the forced migrations and bloody battles of Turkey's southeast. That mountainous area, which was Kurdish long before Turks swept into Anatolia in the 12th century, has sustained several Kurdish uprisings over the last 80 years, including the formidable challenge of a Marxist-inspired guerrilla organization, the PKK. The war between 1980 and 1999 (when the PKK's leader was arrested and jailed) took 30,000 lives and drove one million Kurds from their villages.

It was a civil war in which both sides shared culpability and brutality. My point in the book was that the United States should have no part in supporting the widespread human rights violations that the Turkish state committed, violations that helped spark the war

— the longstanding prohibition on speaking Kurdish, for example — and that were part of the counter-insurgency policies.

The previous two paragraphs have eight statements that are being used in the trial. They are based on many first-hand accounts and widely accepted scholarship. These facts led me to be critical of the Turkish state, its founder, its army and its hyper-nationalism. And that is what has gotten Fatih Tas into trouble.

It is not the first time his business, the Aram Publishing Company, has been dragged into court for insulting this or that aspect of what it means to be Turkish. He is sympathetic to Kurdish grievances, and seeks to inform a remarkably clueless Turkish elite about what has occurred in their own country.

More clueless still are the members of the government seeking to enter Europe, and to overcome Europeans' most often-cited doubts about Turkey — its human rights record. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan seemed especially nimble as he navigated his country's European aspiration. But countenancing legal prosecutions like this one (how many others are there that we're not hearing about?) does not lend the impression that Western norms are in control, nor respected, and possibly not even tolerated.

The prosecution is all the more onerous because it apparently was requested by the Turkish General Staff, the politically controlling military that seems always to be but one boot step away from asserting its will. This is the army that has been in NATO for

more than a half-century. Many parts of my book described the militaristic foundations of Turkey, its Constitution, its nationalist ideologies and its politics. However obvious to historians, these points are insulting to the ever-sensitive generals, who are protected by law from any criticism.

It is widely rumored that the generals do not want to enter the European Union, because the human rights standards are not to their liking. One way to avoid such an inconvenience is to block it from occurring beforehand. So one suspects that the military, in asking for Tas's prosecution, as well as the much higher profile charges against Orhan Pamuk, is using loyal prosecutors to subvert the already shaky prospects of Turkey becoming a full-fledged EU member.

Virtually all countries have burdens from their past, massacres and pogroms, elements of nationalism that are violent and exclusionary, imperialistic treatment of other groups, and so on. To say that it is commonplace is not to excuse it, but most come to terms with the wrong-headed policies in their history. That is a mature democracy, however imperfect.

What the Turks are demonstrating, above all else, is an adolescent petulance. It comes with a price. It has always been very costly for its 10 million Kurds. Now it may be nearly so for all of Turkey.

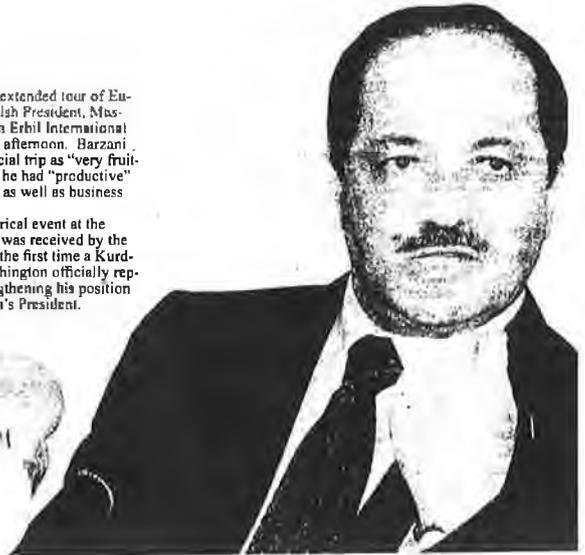
John Tirman is executive director of the Center for International Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Kurdistan is not part of the Arab world

Civil war would force Iraqi Kurds to exercise the "right" to independence

Coming back from an extended tour of Europe and the US, Kurdish President, Masoud Barzani arrived in Erbil International Airport early Saturday afternoon. Barzani, who described his official trip as "very fruitful" told reporters that he had "productive" talks with US political as well as business leaders.

Last month in a historical event at the White House, Barzani was received by the US President, making the first time a Kurdish leader entered Washington officially representing Kurds, strengthening his position as Iraqi Kurdish region's President.



Globe National File

"We have good support from both the US President George Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair," Barzani said without elaborating what the support included. He also in very strong words reiterated what he termed as "Kurds' right" of establishing their independent state saying they should no more "be scared" of speaking about independence.

"I think that after the late changes in Germany, that country will follow a more rational policy towards Iraq and Kurdistan."

Observers believe Barzani's trans-Atlantic tour should not be seen as mere courtesy visit by a regional leader. Given the circumstances and Barzani's own remarks after his meetings, some political analysts maintain that promises have been made to the Kurdish President which will boost the region's security, politically and economically.

"Extremely sad"

'Certainly I am happy to return home but I feel extremely sad because of the suicide attacks that targeted our brothers in two

mosques in Khanaqin," the president said referring to the two suicide attacks that killed Friday prayers in Khanaqin, 151 km north of Baghdad. The bombing resulted in large numbers of losses that according to the latest figures amounts to above 100 killed and 80 wounded, many of whom have critical injuries.

"This proves that the terrorists kill our people just because they are Kurds."

Unified Government

Despite political leaders repeated promises of reunifying the Kurdish administrations, the two ruling parties have been unable to set a definite date to implement the decisions that were made prior to Iraq invasion in regard to their unification. Kurdistan Democratic Party and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan established two separate local governments in the aftermath of the Civil War of 1994.

In 1998, the two party leaders, KDP's Masoud Barzani and PUK's Jalal Talabani signed an accord in Washington putting an end to their military rivalry.

Since then the two parties have started attempts to unify their separate lo-

cal governments. In the heat of the negotiations in



Amr Mousa

June this year some official sources indicated that the main protest was put forward by the PUK politburo ahead of the unification.

Last week KDP's Fazil Mirani speculated that a fusion was near saying it would most probably take place before the end of November.

"I will straightly go to the Parliament and will speak to the nation, if administrations are not unified," Barzani said who seemed frustrated by reporters repeated questions in regard to the unification process.

Amr Musa remarks

President Barzani slammed remarks by the Arab League Secretary General, Amr Mousa reportedly indicating "Kurdistan is part of the Arab world," in his recent trip to the Kurdish region. Barzani said he did not hear Mousa saying this.

"If it is so, then Mr Mousa has committed a big mistake since Kurdistan is not part of the Arab World and the Kurds are not part of the Arab nation.

Independence in case of civil war

In a televised interview from Rome Barzani told Turkish NTV Friday that in case of a civil war in Iraq, the Kurds will have no choice but to declare independence.

"May god save us from civil war, but if others start fighting among themselves and there is an outbreak, we will have no other alternative," he said.

Barzani who expressed strong support for the newly drafted Iraqi constitution said during the interview that the Kurds will back the constitution in line with establishing a democratic, federal and pluralistic Iraq.

Violence spread after Semdinli bombings

Public and politicians call on Turkish government to blow the lid on perpetrators

By Vanessa Able
Globe Correspondent in Istanbul

The aftermath of the 9th November Semdinli bookstore bombing and its subsequent riots, has sparked a political uproar in Turkey and initiated further protests in neighbouring towns that have ended in bloodshed.

3 people were killed last Tuesday in demonstrations in the town of Yuksekova, also in the Hakkari province. One person was killed when a car was overturned and another died from gunshot wounds, while at least ten other people, including four police officers, sustained injuries.

Two men have been charged with the 9th November bombing, and as details of their involvement with the security forces slowly leak out, the public, press and politicians are calling for a thorough investigation into the incident, and demanding that those responsible be brought to justice.

The two men charged to date are Turkish intelligence agent, Sergeant

Ali Kaya, and a civilian; a former PKK militant turned police informer by the name of Veysel Ates.

The duo charged have denied responsibility for the incident, claiming that they were only passing through Semdinli by coincidence at the time of the blast. However, the details of their testimonies are reported to have changed over the last few days.

The men were allegedly driving a car belonging to the Gendarmerie, which was found to contain weapons, explosives, and a map pinpointing the targeted bookstore.

Contentions of the security forces' involvement in the incident have caused nationwide outrage, prompting comparisons with the Susurluk scandal of 1999, which exposed links between the country's mafia, security services and politicians. Many Turks feel that the incident was never thoroughly investigated, and that those responsible were left unpunished.

Turkish Daily News columnist, Mehmet Ali Birand emphasised the

importance of an exhaustive and conclusive investigation into the Semdinli bombing, to restore the faith of the public in the country's security forces and ruling powers following the Susurluk scandal. He writes, "The republic of Turkey needs to utilise this opportunity and wipe away its bad sins".

The results of the investigations may not be known for some time, but it is clear that the incident is an occasion for the country's ruling party to restore the faith of public opinion, both at home and abroad, in a system that has long been suspected of unfair play.

The Republican People's Party deputy, Esat Canan, said in a statement made to the Turkish Daily News that he felt that Parliament needed to intervene, in addition to the judiciary. "If

this incident remains unresolved, the people there will have no incentive to look to the future with hope," he is quoted as saying.

Other opposition party politicians have voiced strong opinions around the

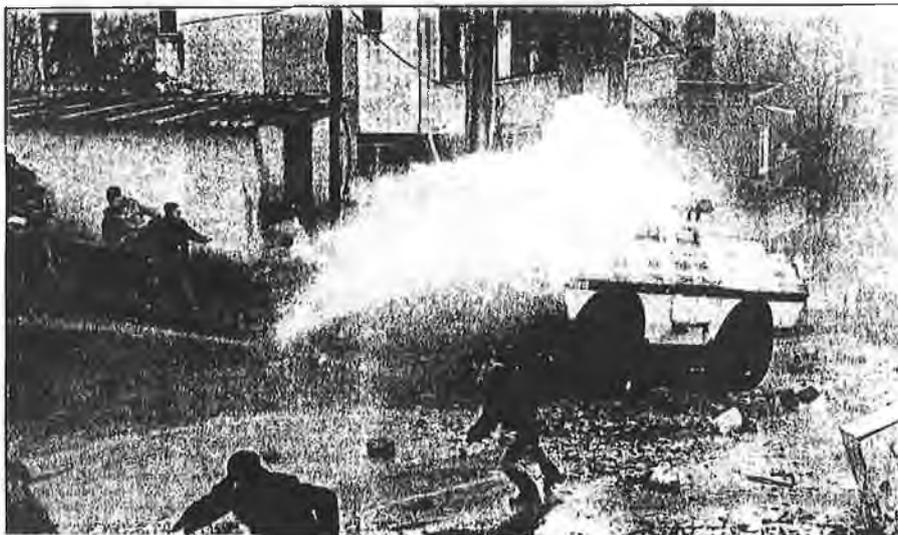
incident, including members of the pro-Kurdish Democratic People's Party, (DEHAP), who visited Semdinli in large numbers earlier last week.

Among them was party member and mayor of Diyarbakir, Osman Baydemir, who made a speech to the residents of Semdinli, speaking in a mixture of Turkish and Kurdish. He is reported to have said, "The people of Semdinli have given Turkey the possibility of a bright future. The people of Semdinli have done what they had to. We need to utilize this bitter opportunity. The prime minister, the interior minister and the chief of general staff need to utilise this opportunity."

Commentators have underlined the ruling Justice and Development Party's (the AKP) potential long-term gain in putting Turkey's security forces on the defensive. The army has always played a strong role in Turkish politics, but has seen its powers eroded over the last couple of years as a result of EU-related reforms in the country.

This so-called "deep state" is wary of the AKP's Islamic politics, and their prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has implemented many cultural reforms for the country's Kurds, including handing back language and broadcasting rights.

The AKP held a two and a half hour security summit last Wednesday to discuss the unfolding crisis in the southeast of the country. Prime Minister Erdogan assured the press after the meeting that Turkey was a state that respected laws, and that illegal moves carried out by some state officials would not be tolerated.



Group of youngsters with their faces covered by mask setting fire at a vegetable market tables during a protest against unrest in the mainly Kurdish province of Hakkari, 16 November 2005 at Gazi Mahallesi suburb of Istanbul, known as settling place for migrants of eastern Turkey. AFP PHOTO/STR



Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, a Kurd, shakes hands with his Iranian counterpart, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as he reviews an honor guard during a welcoming ceremony Monday. The two main organizations in Iranian Kurdistan Komala Party and KDP-I have gone into hibernation in Exile, heavily alienated from the Kurdish society in East they lack popular base, writes Behrooz Shojai.

The Iranian Kurdistan – lack of visions

Behrooz Shojai
Globe Political Desk

Eastern Kurdistan witnessed a period of riots and social movement during last summer. The riots were the result of the Kurdish people's tough reaction against the violent treatment of a Kurdish youngster who was detained and tortured to death by Iranian security forces. The incident per se was not unique in the history of the eastern Kurds; the uniqueness laid in the following reactions by the people. The reaction in this magnitude, which turned to popular uprising, was unprecedented in the history of the Kurdish movement in East. The evident clearly showed that the Kurdish population in east is not only politically mature but also possess the ability of social mobilization. Parallel to the Iranian society, the Kurdish society has advanced in many facets and now can by its inherent mechanisms lay the foundation of a strong civil society. What the Kurdish society in East lacks is an innovative, proactive and sensitive political leadership with great amounts

of political reason. The pro-PKK PJAK and the Marxist Komala organization of the Iranian Communist Party may have been active in the uprising, but lack of visions and absence of transparency in the policy of these two organizations cannot respond to the dynamic mechanism of the Kurdish society in East. KDP-I and the leftist Komala reacted with mixed feelings towards the incidents. They couldn't support it because they had not the initiative and they couldn't deny it because it had popular dimensions.

The two main organizations in East, i.e. Komala Party and KDP-I have gone into hibernation in Exile. Heavily alienated from the Kurdish society in East they not only lack popular base, but also are unable to realize the complex nature of the Kurdish question in Iran. The opportunist approach that a hidden hand (read USA) will overthrow the regime in Iran and they will march triumphant into the Kurdish cities is an ever Kurdish illusion with ominous consequences.

The Kurdish movement in East, particularly the

main two parties, should embrace an inclusive discourse. Accusing all legal efforts, especially the struggle of the Kurdish reformist within the confine of the legal system of Iran, for treason is not only counter-productive; it clearly shows the undemocratic nature of these organizations. The reformists are consisted of intellectuals, writers, former MPs, publishers with different backgrounds. They indeed possess legitimate support of the people. Some categories of the Kurdish reformist movement in Iran may have some connections to the Islamic regime, but we cannot afford to ignore the impact of this movement. The KDP-I and Komala should realize this fact. Without popular support and without embracing the social dynamics of the Kurdish society the establishment Kurdish groups will loose their historical legitimacy, which they so often refer to when talking about their policy.

The time is overdue for a visionary approach in which the Kurdish politics in East must be conducted with democratic methods. The legal system of

the Islamic Republic may create a set of obstacles, but a democratic struggle must be the foundation of all efforts for realizing the Kurdish national rights in Iran. The Kurdish politics in East must move from mountains and exile to the towns and cities in Kurdistan. The mechanisms of the civil society must be extended and the potential of it directed in the right direction. The political groups in East must work actively to bring about social cohesion, which is of immense importance for the continuity of the Kurdish struggle in this part of Kurdistan. The national awareness parallel to the social awareness must be kept alive. The sporadic evidences like those during last months are indeed important, but without continuity and visions they will remain sporadic. The political awareness in East is intertwined with social awareness; but it lacks political leadership. The Kurdish political establishment – both the legal and the outlawed – must realize this and work together to bring about an inclusive discourse to create a common agenda with visions and continuity.

THE JORDAN TIMES November 25-26, 2005

Syria blames UN for failure to agree with Hariri probe

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria on Thursday criticised the chief UN investigator in the probe into the assassination of a prominent Lebanese politician for refusing its offers on where and how to question Syrian officials implicated in the murder.

Foreign Minister Farouq Sharaa also demanded chief UN investigator Detlev Mehlis reach an agreement on the scope of Syria's cooperation with the inquiry.

The Syrian accusations and demands complicate the standoff with the United Nations, three weeks before the UN investigation into the assassination of former Lebanese premier Rafiq Hariri is due to wrap up its work.

The Security Council on October 31 warned Syria to cooperate with the investigation or face further action — a hint at possible sanctions.

Sharaa said Mehlis has turned down Damascus' offers to hold the questioning of six senior Syrian officials at the headquarters of UN peacekeepers in Syria's Golan Heights.

Sharaa said the site would have been ideal, "but Mehlis rejected the venue and his rejection raised Syrian suspicions." Mehlis earlier this month demanded that the six Syrians appear before the investigators at the probe headquarters in neighbouring Lebanon. Syria has refused that, saying it could destabilise Lebanon, and since then the two sides have been deadlocked over the venue.

There is speculation in Lebanon that Syria did not want to have the questioning in Lebanon because the officials could be arrested under an agreement signed by Mehlis and the Lebanese government.

Syria then demanded the

two sides negotiate the process of how the questioning will take place. Mehlis and a Syrian official whom he met in Europe last week did not reach an agreement on the outstanding issues.

"It is in Syria's right to sign a protocol of cooperation so that it knows what's for it and what it has to do, how the cooperation is achieved and the scope required," he said. "Refusing to sign a cooperation protocol is unjustified and unacceptable." Mehlis has not spoken publicly about the

matter since he submitted his report to the UN Security Council in October. The Arab newspaper Al Hayat reported Thursday that Mehlis has proposed a compromise of holding the questioning in Vienna or Geneva and gave the Syrians until Friday to respond.

Mehlis' report implicated senior Syrian officials in the truck bombing in Beirut on February 14 that killed Hariri and 20 others.

Lebanon was then under the control of the Syrian military, which withdrew from the country in the international and domestic uproar over Hariri's killing after nearly three decades of deployment.

Four pro-Syrian Lebanese generals in the security services are under arrest and charged of involvement in the assassination.

President Bashar Assad two weeks ago criticised the Mehlis investigation as politicised with the aim of framing Syria to punish it for its opposition to the Iraq war, support for Palestinian militants and Lebanese guerrillas. He declared Syria's innocence in the murder and said he will cooperate with the investigation but will stop if Syrian interests are harmed.

Among the Syrians named in the Mehlis report are Maher Assad, the president's brother, and military intelligence chief Brig. Gen. Assef Shawkat, the Syrian leader's brother-in-law.

Media reports said Shawkat was among the six that Mehlis wanted to question.

On Thursday, some 1,500 flag-waving Syrian merchants, joined by several legislators, staged a sit-in at Omayyad Square in down-

town Damascus to express solidarity with their government in confronting international pressures.

The protests have become almost a daily occurrence since Mehlis released his report last month.



Reuters photo by Khaled Hariri

A Syrian woman holds up a picture of President Bashar Assad during a protest against UN investigators

What Are We Holding Together?

11/7/2005 - *Washington Post* - By Peter W. Galbraith

Although it was certainly not his intention, George W. Bush broke up Iraq when he ordered the invasion in 2003. The United States not only removed Saddam Hussein, but it also smashed, and later dissolved, the institutions that enabled Iraq's Sunni Arab minority to rule the country: the army, the security services and the Baath Party. Kurdistan, free from Hussein's rule since 1991, moved to consolidate its de facto independence. Iraq's Shiites, suppressed since the founding of the Iraqi state, have created a theocracy in southern Iraq and have no intention of allowing a central government in Baghdad to roll it back. Iraq's new constitution merely ratifies this result.

There is no reason to mourn the passing of the unified Iraqi state. For Iraq's 80-year history, Sunni Arab dictators held the country together — and kept themselves in power — with brutal force that culminated in Hussein's genocide against the Kurds and mass killings of Shiites. As a moral matter, Iraq's Kurds are no less entitled to independence than are Lithuanians, Croatians or Palestinians. And if Iraq's Shiites want to run their own affairs, or even have their own state, on what democratic principle should they be denied? If the price of a unified Iraq is another dictatorship, it is too high a price to pay. Iraq's Kurds, Shiites and Sunni Arabs do not share the common values and aspirations that are essential to building a unified state. The country's Kurds are avowedly secular and among the most pro-American people in the world. Almost unanimously they want nothing to do with Iraq. Iraq's Shiites, whether we like it or not, have voted overwhelmingly for pro-Iranian religious parties. Iraq's Sunni Arabs, through their own choice, boycotted the constitutional assembly. Some of the leaders who claim to speak for the Sunnis say they want a unified state, though it seems their real concern is that they no longer rule Iraq. Even if it had been done competently, American-led nation-building could not overcome these divisions.

The constitution accommodates all three groups. Each can have its own region. Except for a few matters in the exclusive jurisdiction of the federal government, regional law prevails. Thus Kurdistan can continue to be secular while the Shiites can create an Islamic state in southern Iraq if their constituents so choose. Regions can have their own militaries and control part of their water and oil resources.

Logic would suggest that once they come to terms with the fact that they no longer rule Iraq, the Sunni Arabs will realize that the constitutional framework actually protects them from domination by the Shiite majority. It does not leave the Sunni Arabs penniless as some fear; they get a proportiona-

te share of Iraq's oil revenue. But Kurdistan and the Shiite south will manage new oil fields in their own regions. When the Sunni Arabs were in charge, they used Iraq's oil to finance their own development — and the destruction of Kurdistan and the south. The Kurds and Shiites will not let this happen again. The United States should focus now not on preserving the unity of Iraq but on avoiding a spreading civil war. The constitution resolves the issues of oil, territory and control of the central government that might intensify conflict. Engaged diplomacy will be required to make these provisions work, especially with regard to the territorial dispute between Kurdistan and Arab Iraq over the ethnically mixed province of Kirkuk. A referendum will decide its status by Dec. 31, 2007. Meanwhile, the United States should promote a special regime for Kirkuk with entrenched power-sharing for all communities, so as to make the referendum's outcome as painless as possible for the losers.

Iraq's political settlement can pave the way for a coalition exit. Foreign forces have no security role in Kurdistan and only a minimal one in the south. In the Sunni areas, the focus should be on developing a regional army that is aligned with moderate political elements. While the Bush administration pretends there is an Iraqi army today, it actually consists of homogenous Kurdish, Shiite or Sunni Arab battalions loyal not to the civilian authorities in Baghdad but to their respective communities. It is hard to win hearts and minds in the Sunni Arab areas when the Iraqi troops fighting there are seen not as fellow citizens but as alien Kurds and Shiites. There are tribes and other Sunni Arabs willing to fight the terrorists, but not as collaborators. The coalition could base its forces in Kurdistan, where the population would welcome them and where they can be ready to move in case the Sunni Arab military proves unable or unwilling to take on the terrorists. As Iraq divides, the problem of Baghdad becomes central. Religiously and ethnically mixed, Baghdad is already the front line of the sectarian war between Sunnis and Shiites. Kurdistan's departure from Iraq — which seems inevitable in the not-too-distant future — will not greatly affect the city, but the separation of Sunni Arabs and Shiites into independent states would cause havoc. Fortunately, this is much less likely, especially if federal arrangements work.

As Yugoslavia broke up in 1991, the first Bush administration put all its diplomatic muscle into a doomed effort to hold the country together, and it did nothing to stop the coming war. We should not repeat that mistake in Iraq.

The writer, a former U.S. ambassador to Croatia, is senior diplomatic fellow at the Center for Arms Control and Non-Proliferation. He has advised Kurdish leaders.

PKK's War With No Name

By Christian Parenti - *The Nation* - November 21, 2005

On an empty switchback road that climbs a narrow valley pass in the mountains of northern Iraq, one finds an unusual

sight—armed women at a roadblock. It's the PKK, the formerly Marxist Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan—or Kurdistan Workers Party, a formidable guerrilla force that has been waging war in Turkey, Syria and Iraq for more than twenty-

five years. In case the presence of women fighters and red flags don't clearly mark this as a PKK checkpoint, there is a huge stone portrait of the organization's supreme but currently imprisoned leader, Abdullah Ocalan, scowling down from a hillside. Known as Apo (meaning "Uncle"), Ocalan is a man whose round mustached face bears more than a passing resemblance to another, more famous Soviet Uncle named Joe.

At the checkpoint the "Apocular"—followers of Apo—send me to a small cement barracks, where a dozen young guerrillas give a tour and offer tea. Two female officers are there but soon tromp off, AK-47s slung over their backs. The guerrillas' little post is stocked with weapons and some bags of flour, its walls bear portraits of martyrs, five of whom were gunned down months before on the streets of Mosul, Iraq, by the Syrian Mukhabarat.

This mountain redoubt is just inside the Iraqi border near both Turkey and Iran and is used as a launchpad for PKK operations into Turkey, which has always been its main theater of war. The Turkish airwaves may be full of news about accession talks to the EU, but in the countryside of the southeast there are signs of war: military helicopters in the sky, paramilitary police checkpoints, the ruins of Kurdish towns put to the torch by Turkish troops. For twenty-five years this war with no name has pitted the forces of the Turkish state against the PKK, and the consequences have been horrific: More than 2,500 Kurdish villages have reportedly been destroyed, thousands of civilians have been tortured and 30,000 people have been killed. Even during a recent two-month cease-fire that ended on October 8, dozens of guerrillas, soldiers and civilians were killed. Yet despite the scale of the carnage, the Western press has remained relatively quiet, seemingly unwilling to expose the brutality of the Turkish government—a prime American ally and possible EU member.

For a few years the war seemed to be winding down. Ocalan was captured, and Syria, which once hosted the guerrillas, turned on them. But now the violence is up and running again, thanks in part to the US conquest of Baghdad, which has resulted in an increasingly secure Kurdistan Autonomous Region in northern Iraq—a new rear guard for the PKK. Despite a troubled, even violent, history between the PKK and the two more right-wing Kurdish parties that control northern Iraq, 3,000 of the PKK's 5,000 guerrillas now operate out of Iraqi Kurdistan.

The American government considers the PKK a terrorist organization on par with Al Qaeda. But without the inadvertently US-created safe haven in Iraq, the PKK probably couldn't survive.

Many of the young fighters patrolling the mountains here say they joined up during high school. They are the ambitious, brave but frustrated and downwardly mobile working-class kids of the small towns and middle-sized cities of Turkish Kurdistan, a few of them are from Syria and Iran. Their grievances are on one hand specifically Kurdish, while on the other merely articulate frustrations typical of young people struggling at the margins of the global economy: no work, no education, no peace, nothing but this cause and this group to give hope and meaning.

A 23-year-old blue-eyed fighter named Razgar explains that he has been with the PKK for a year. His politicization started when the Turkish military destroyed and forcibly resettled his village in the early 1990s. His family fled the area and moved to Istanbul. As a teenager Razgar worked in a textile factory and then, last August, he'd had enough of the police harassment, low wages and hopelessness so he joined the PKK. He hasn't seen much action, having spent most of his time in this valley guarding the PKK headquarters that are hidden somewhere further up a huge mountain.

The young fighters say they are encouraged to study, but when pressed for details, there seems to be no formal program of lectures or reading. What about Marxism, the creed that was the PKK's cause for so many years? A few of the older guys mouth rote phrases about democracy and Kurdish rights, but none of them seem very politically developed. None mention socialism.

The youngest soldier, named Jaman, is only 17. He is from a small town in northern Syria. "They don't teach in Kurdish. We have no ID cards in Syria," says the boy. As a result receiving schooling, work and state benefits is difficult. A year and half ago he joined up, fought in Turkey and then came here. Like the rest of the fighters he is somber, perhaps depressed. The mood here, devoid of joking and small talk, has an air of dread about it. It's the feeling of fearful anticipation of those headed into combat. These kids know that the cease-fire with Turkey is doomed; that means their war is far from over.

Over the decades the PKK has undergone several political transformations. It all began during the economic crisis of the 1970s, when urban Turkey's factories, universities and streets were electric with political struggle. Trade unionists and student radicals skirmished with ultra-nationalists, fascist paramilitaries and the police in a spiral of escalating violence that eventually provoked a military coup. From this ferment emerged the earliest version of the PKK: a small group of radicals who followed Ocalan with cultish devotion and fought for socialism in Turkey.

By the early 1980s the PKK had moved into the countryside and on to the separatist dream of a greater Kurdistan, an imaginary communist state that would gather up parts of Syria, Iraq, Iran and about a third of Turkey. The guerrillas drew support from the impoverished Kurds who toiled in miserable conditions on the large private cotton farms and vineyards of Turkey's southeast. These days the PKK's goals have been scaled down considerably to social democratic economic reforms, political inclusion and civil rights for Kurds within Turkey.

Part of what has tempered their politics was the capture of Ocalan in 1999. Facing a death sentence for treason, he started a public rethink on politics, strategy and tactics. Ocalan is still in a cell and the PKK is still in the field, but the people of Turkey have grown sick of the war and disillusioned with all sides. While Turkish security forces have been utterly ruthless, the PKK has also behaved badly. At the war's most fevered pitch in the late 1980s and early '90s, the Turkish government, using classic counterinsurgency methods, established a progovernment Kurdish militia force called the village guard. The PKK in turn set about liquidating village guards, in a few cases massacring entire progovernment

vernment Kurdish families, women and children included. They have also bombed civilian Turks in the cities. The guerrilla leadership realizes that these tactics were mistakes that cost them dearly in local and international support. Now they seem to be looking for a way out.

Further into the valley, at the base of a huge mountain on the other side of which lies Iran, is a PKK headquarters camp. Under the shade of an arbor at a long table sits a troika of older, unarmed men. Two of them are visiting from Denmark; one, named Miro, heads the PKK's Europe-based Radio Roj. Like the military forces, the broadcasting is funded by donations from the large Kurdish diaspora, various front businesses and governments hostile to Turkey, which over the years have included the Greek, Syrian and Iranian intelligence services. Miro and his friend seem ready to talk but the man in charge, Said, is part of the guerrilla political directorate and assumes a standoffish attitude. Before him sits a slim volume on Nietzsche.

He starts asking me questions. Who do I write for? How did I get here? What are my politics? "What do they say about the PKK in America?" asks Said. "They say you're terrorist. An interview might help get your side of the story out," I suggest. The negotiation wears on and then, abruptly, Said renders his verdict: no interview. But seeing that I am angry he offers a lunch of flat bread, pickled hot peppers, preserved figs and potato salad. Then, despite his officious rejection of an interview a long political discussion ensues. Miro, the head of Radio Roj, speaks English, so we switch between translated Kurdish and English. "We're more flexible now," says Said. "It is not all as simple as America is the bad imperialist. We hope the US will help broker an agreement with Turkey."

The subtext of the discussion is one of war-weary restlessness. Said says that the PKK is no longer Marxist or revolutionary but socialist, "like Sweden." The party, he reminds me, now calls itself the Kurdistan Freedom and Democracy Congress. But everyone including its supporters still calls it the PKK. So what do they want? "A democratic solution. The freedom of Ocalan." Beyond that he and all the PKK communiqués remain vague.

Kurds keep the peace in their own 'nation'

By Sharon Behn - *Washington Times* - November 30, 2005

As the victims of bombings and kidnappings add up in Baghdad, the most remarkable thing about this northern city is that it is quite normal. There are no explosions, no gunfire mixed with the evening call of the imams to prayer, no burned-out cars by the roadside. The situation in Kurdistan, a region of northern Iraq where about 4 million Kurds live, is so detached from the rest of the country that the Iraqi flag is not even visible here.

Instead, the red, white, green and golden sun flag of Kurdistan flies from every government building. Kurdistan describes itself on the Internet as "the other Iraq," and Kurds take pains to point out that they are not Arabs.

The price of peace in Kurdistan has been steep — the Kurds were slaughtered by the thousands by dictator Saddam

Why did they abandon Marxism? "The Soviet Union collapsed." Said brings out books by Murray Bookchin, the Vermont based anti-urbanist writer, and a copy of Immanuel Wallerstein's *After Liberalism*. "What do you think of Bookchin?" asks Said, then adds: "An anarchist. Too extreme. Wallerstein is very useful." As for the war with Turkey, he says: "We want to negotiate. A dialogue."

Said won't say exactly what the PKK will settle for from the Turkish state. The cease-fire has just expired and he seems embittered, like the young fighters. He claims that while the Turkish president made a big show of parlaying with rebel Kurds, the security forces took advantage of the cease-fire to hunt down PKK cadre. "No more cease-fires for us."

Interestingly, our conversation keeps turning back to the chaos in central Iraq. It is clear the PKK is very worried about that war's outcome. "This is not Vietnam," says Miro. "What the US has created, this is more like Afghanistan." "The insurgents are fanatics," adds Said.

Does the PKK support the US occupation like the Iraqi Kurds? No. They want the United States out: "The Americans are only making it worse, but they won't leave the region." What would follow a US pullout in Iraq? "It's too complicated to say." When I suggest the possibility of endless war, Miro, Said and the others look at me blankly, neither agreeing nor disagreeing. Then Miro says, "Now you Americans are here. You are part of this complicated region."

As we bid farewell the mood is warm but sad. Turkey now has the upper hand. The guerrillas want this fight to end; their ideological commitments of times past have crumbled. They admit to their excesses.

Now they are tired, trapped in a wedge of mountains, much of their beloved Kurdistan a charred crater of suffering. And—as is demonstrated by the brutal occupation, chaotic crime wave and guerrilla fanaticism just south of them in Mosul—at a certain point war is no longer a means but merely its own self-fueling end.

Hussein, fought a civil war and shed their blood alongside U.S. troops to overthrow the dictator. Its leaders are ready to keep it secure at any cost, including secession.

"We will take any measure to secure our people from violence," Massoud Barzani, president of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), told *The Washington Times*.

Controlling their destiny

Kurdistan's borders are guarded by the fierce peshmerga, literally "those who face death," a band of warriors that emerged in the 1920s during Kurdistan's struggle for independence.

Said to number roughly 80,000, the peshmerga are deeply respected by their own people and by the Americans who

fought alongside them in the failed anti-Saddam uprising in 1991 and again in 2003.

"People think it is coming out of no effort, but it took a lot of effort to have such a secure and stable environment, compared to the rest of Iraq," said Falah M. Bakir, drinking tea in Irbil's newest luxury hotel.

"There was no trust between people and the police, because the police were seen as a symbol of terror and a tool of the regime. We had to work hard to establish a proper police force and integrate the peshmerga into the system," said Mr. Bakir, a minister in the KRG's office of the prime minister.

What that means is that Arabs put in place by Saddam were removed from the security forces and replaced by Kurds, who are ethnically different from the Sunni and Shi'ite Arabs of the rest of Iraq. "Those days are over that we give our destiny and fate to Baghdad," Mr. Bakir said.

For decades, the Kurds sought independence, then fought Saddam. After repeated Kurdish revolts, Saddam tried to crush the region with chemical gas attacks and mass executions, reportedly killing almost 200,000 people.

Although Kurdistan experienced a degree of political autonomy in the 1990s, they also faced a double economic blockade — one imposed by Saddam, the other by the United Nations because of Iraq's nuclear noncompliance.

But, under the 1991 U.S.-imposed no-fly zone that prevented Iraqi government attacks on the region, Kurdish politics developed, and by 1992 the two main Kurdish parties had joined to form a national assembly.

In 1994, civil war broke out between the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, led by Iraq's current President Jalal Talabani, and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, led by Mr. Barzani. The two signed a peace agreement in Washington in 1998 and joined forces in 2002.

Kurds say their strong Kurdish identity, forged after decades of fighting for an independent country and the 1998 political agreement, has left no space for the kind of religious and ethnic bloodletting that afflicts the rest of Iraq.

"Terrorism and violence do not have a base in our country," said Mr. Bakir, referring to Kurdistan as many here do as a separate entity from Arab-dominated Iraq.

"The Kurds were liberated from a dictatorial rule, whereas [in Baghdad] others have lost power," Mr. Barzani said. Kurdistan doesn't offer terrorists "a popular base, and we have effective security and police forces."

And, he added, "We keep tight control and monitor our borders." Arabs complain that it is difficult for them to get into Kurdistan. At entry, they are quizzed at checkpoints by peshmerga, who never fail to ask how long and where they plan to stay.

A different world

The drive from Baghdad to Irbil has many military checkpoints, but the crossing into the three-province area of Kurdistan has peshmerga forces, and the Kurdish flag — not the Iraqi one — flutters over the checkpoint.

Iraq has yet to change the flag used under Saddam, and the Kurds refuse to honor it, preferring to wait until a new flag is designed. In Baghdad and the rest of Iraq, Saddam's flag with the words "God is Great" is still used.

"Shame on them," said Mr. Barzani, who joined the peshmerga when he was a teenager and whose father led the struggle for independence.

Unlike Baghdad, which is filled with concrete barriers, razor wire, police vehicles and armored Humvees, Irbil has little visible military presence. Foreigners move about freely, and like Kurdish businessmen, have begun investing in the area.

A sprawling glass-and-marble showroom for Toyota and Kia cars on the road to Kirkuk testifies to growing investor confidence. Started by four brothers, the business is run by the Cihan group, which also imports tea and electronics and makes furniture.

"Before we opened the showroom, we were selling maybe 60 to 100 vehicles a year. Now we are closer to 600 to 1,000 a year," said engineer Hunar Majeed in his office overlooking the showroom's fleet of new Toyota Land Cruisers.

Cihan's sales rose from \$125 million in 2001 to \$200 million in 2003, according to a company statement.

Manufactured products here are still of low to medium grade, and the city awaits its first supermarket and mall. But business is brisk in city markets and in side-street mazes of shops packed with clothes from Syria, Turkey and China.

In the shadow of downtown Irbil's 8,000-year old citadel, a group of ancient dwellings on a high mound, shoppers browse through clothes displayed for sale.

Overhead are cat's cradles of wires crisscrossing the street, as shop owners tap into power lines and all available generators.

An open economy

Stone mansions with large glass windows are being built in Irbil and along the road to Salahaddin, 45 minutes away — a sign business is good. But there is some disagreement about who is making money and how.

"Kurdistan is one big duty-free zone. Everything is traded there, goods, drugs," said a former American adviser to the Iraqi government who did not want to be named.

Mr. Barzani concedes problems, but insists they are no greater than in any other free-market economy.

"Like any other country, there are positive and negative factors" to having an open economy, said Mr. Barzani in his office in Sahirash, just outside Irbil.

The law against drugs is very firm, he said, and customs and security forces have "clear instructions" not to allow smuggling.

The government is tackling corruption "according to civilized and modern laws," the Kurdistan president said. "It is not an easy task; it takes effort and time."

There is also much investment in housing, construction,

farming and trade, mostly from neighboring Turkey. Irbil's glass-fronted International Hotel, for example, is managed by a Turkish company. There is also a new international airport in Irbil and plans to build a larger one linking the region directly with the United Arab Emirates, Germany and Britain.

"The Kurds represent what Iraq could be if security could be obtained," said Phebe Marr of the United States Institute of Peace.

In search of secession

For Kurdistan's young people, change is coming too slowly. The generation that grew up in a semi-autonomous Kurdistan does not feel any ties to Iraq and is losing patience with leaders in Baghdad.

"We are different from Arab people," said Hallo Hosman, 23, a student, standing with friends outside the office of the president of Salahadin University. "We want to be independent, because we have all the conditions to be a country." Heshu Sirouan, 21, a student in denim jeans and jacket, pink sweater and a Che Guevara locket on her necklace, agreed.

"In Baghdad they cannot secure themselves because they are not strong," she said. "We are not Iraqis; we are Kurds. We want independence. We want to separate completely from Baghdad."

Mr. Barzani admits the calls for separation. He said the Kurdish leadership needs to win the support of the younger generation for Kurdistan as part of a democratic, pluralistic and federal Iraq.

"In the end, we have to tell them that independence is a natural right as a people, but at the same time they have to consider reality, and the difference between what you wish ... and what can be achieved," Mr. Barzani said.

The desire for independence is as strong as the Kurdish insistence that the oil-rich city of Kirkuk belongs to them — a very contentious point that was partially resolved with the central government through the new constitution.

Approved in a national referendum Oct. 15, it says the administrative status of Kirkuk will be decided by referendum in 2007 after efforts to mitigate Saddam's "Arabization" of the area.

In his office, Kamal Karkukli, the deputy parliament speaker, carefully took down laminated copies of maps dating from the Ottoman empire and spread them on a table.

Tracing his finger around the 1794 border of Kurdistan, which includes the contested city, Mr. Karkukli said, "If Kirkuk does not come to the Kurds after the referendum, there will be fighting."

Documents dating back hundreds of years, he said, show that Kurds represented about 65 percent of the Kirkuk's population. Saddam pushed Iraqi Arabs into the city and Kurds out in an effort to put Kirkuk firmly under Baghdad's control.

"Saddam tried to change the demographics. He sent the Kurds out, destroyed 779 villages around Kirkuk, and 2,000 houses inside Kirkuk," said the deputy speaker, whose family fell victim to this effort.

"They took our land, our property, our houses," he said. "Now it is time for the Arabs to leave and the Kurds to return."

According to Human Rights Watch, thousands of internally displaced Kurds, Turkomans and others have returned to Kirkuk and other regions since April 2003 to reclaim their homes and land.

Many of those who returned are living in abandoned buildings and tent camps, the group says. And many of the Arabs have been forced to leave their homes and are also living in temporary shelters.

"If these property disputes are not addressed as a matter of urgency, rising tensions between returning Kurds and Arab settlers could soon explode into open violence," warned Sarah Leah Whitson, Human Rights Watch executive director for the Middle East and North Africa in a statement.

The Globe * Tuesday, November 22, 2005 - No.33

New Arabization policy in Kirkuk

The new Iraqi government is working on new methods of increasing the number of Arabs in the oil rich city of Kirkuk, PUK media reported Wednesday. The source quoted the Arabic Al-Naba newspaper that comes out in Kirkuk as writing that the Iraqi ministry of higher education issued an order for appointing 101

new Arab instructors for Kirkuk University to be employed in the evening classes. This step is another attempt by the Iraqi government for Arabizing the city through increasing the number of the Arabs there, the paper writes.

Earlier, Kirkuk council issued instructions for all the civil offices in the city

not to employ any person in Kirkuk offices who comes from the other provinces of Iraq.

The Iraqi government tried several times to prevent the Kurds of Kirkuk who were displaced by the former regime from going back to their home city.

According to the Iraqi constitution, the Iraqi

government is committed to normalizing the situations in Kirkuk until 2007 through implementing article no. 58. Observers think that these measures by the Iraqi government are directly opposite to that article and to the agreement between the Kurds and the Arabs about Kirkuk.

The Globe

Car bomb kills at least 30 outside Iraqi hospital

By Edward Wong

BAGHDAD: A suicide car bomber blew himself up near an American convoy Thursday at the entrance of the main hospital in the volatile town of Mahmudiya, killing at least 30 Iraqis and wounding dozens of others in a ball of flame and shrapnel.

At least 18 other Iraqis, including the police commander of Mahmudiya, and 5 American soldiers were reported killed in various incidents.

The bombing in Mahmudiya was particularly vicious, taking place outside a hospital as visitors and the sick were coming and going. The blast flung bystanders and body parts through the air and shattered the facades of buildings for blocks around.

Policemen and Iraqi Army soldiers quickly sealed off the town's main streets while American helicopters circled the scene of carnage. So overwhelmed were the doctors in the area that the most serious cases, some with missing limbs, had to be transported 50 kilometers, or 30 miles, north to Baghdad.

Ali Khudaiyer Inad Sigar, 13, said he had been buying chocolate at a shop after getting an injection at the hospital for a chronic illness when the bomber suddenly appeared.

"A red car coming at high speed exploded," Ali said as he drifted in and out of an anesthetic-induced haze in a bed in Baghdad's Yarmouk Hospital. Cuts covered his face and arms, and doctors had amputated his right leg.

"I found myself on the lawn on the hospital. Then I fainted. When I woke up, I thought I was home."

The police commander of Mahmudiya, Lieutenant Colonel Moayad Jabir, died in a roadside bomb explosion as he was driving outside town, an Interior Ministry official said.



Mahmudiya lies in a restive part of the Euphrates River valley south of Baghdad commonly called the Triangle of Death, because of the frequency of ambushes by guerrillas and bandits there. Towns in the region served as munitions production sites for Saddam Hussein's army, and well-appointed villas given by the government to senior Baath Party members and army officers line stretches of the riverbank.

The American military has often tried sweeps of towns and villages there, only to find that the residents had cleared out well before the operations began. Some of the worst sectarian violence of the post-Saddam era has taken place in the area, as Sunni Arabs and Shiites struggle for control of the towns and of the major arteries leading south from the capital to the Shiite holy cities of Najaf and Karbala. Shiite pilgrims going to those cities have often turned up dead alongside the main road, known as the Highway of Death.

The executions have incited so much fury that some Shiites in the south have

announced the creation of vengeance-seeking militias to combat the slayings. The sectarian nature of Iraq's low-level civil war is evident in virtually every major attack that takes place now. A surge in such assaults has roiled the country in the last week and tested the limits of Shiite patience. On Nov. 18, a pair of suicide bombers detonated themselves in two Shiite mosques in the Kurdish town of Khanaqin, killing at least 70. A car bombing at a Shiite funeral the next day killed at least 30. By the end of the weekend, at least 155 Iraqis and eight American and British soldiers had been killed over a three-day period.

The attacks could be timed to the fast approach of the Dec. 15 elections for a new Parliament charged with appointing full, four-year government. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most revered Shiite cleric in Iraq, has called for Shiites to remain calm in the face of such violence.

The New York Times

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune November 25, 2005

A move toward Iran talks

Reuters

BARCELONA: Britain, France and Germany agreed Sunday to hold exploratory talks with Iran on resuming negotiations, which broke down in August, about Tehran's nuclear program, a British spokesman said.

"I can confirm that a letter has been written by the three foreign ministers offering to have talks about restarting the negotiations on the nuclear issue," a spokesman for Prime Minister Tony Blair said in Barcelona, where Blair was attending a Euro-Mediterranean summit meeting.

Earlier, Iran's official IRNA press

agency said ambassadors of the so-called EU3 countries handed over a letter accepting a resumption of the talks in December, quoting a statement issued by Iran's Supreme National Security Council. But an EU official in Barcelona said the Europeans had agreed to exploratory talks only to see whether there were grounds for resuming formal negotiations. "We are not calling for a formal session of negotiations,"

the official said, "but for talks with them to sit and look at it."

Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, wrote to the three nations this month, calling for the resumption of talks. The Europeans have said formal

negotiations on long-term cooperation could resume only if Iran halted uranium ore conversion and resumed a full suspension of activities related to uranium enrichment.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's 35-nation board decided on Thursday not to refer Iran to the UN Security Council, to make time to try to broker a compromise. An EU diplomat in Tehran said that the EU3 letter indicated that talks could resume only if Iran was ready to discuss a Russian proposal, backed by Washington and the EU.

The plan enables Iran to maintain a civilian nuclear program, with uranium enrichment transferred to Russia under a joint venture. But a Foreign Ministry spokesman, Hamid Reza Asefi, said Sunday, "We will only review those proposals which include mastering the nuclear fuel cycle inside Iran."

A combative Saddam returns to court briefly

His trial is adjourned, again, for a week

By John F. Burns

BAGHDAD: Saddam Hussein returned to court on Monday and quickly seized the floor for a verbal assault on the American military guards who he said had manhandled him on his way to the courtroom, calling them "occupiers and invaders" and demanding that the chief judge in the trial reprove them.

Saddam's outburst came as the Iraqi High Tribunal, after a 40-day recess, resumed the trial of the former ruler and seven others for crimes against humanity, then once again adjourned for a week to allow two of the defendants time to meet with new lawyers.

The 68-year-old Saddam quickly settled down to listen as the court turned to procedural issues, including the accreditation process that approved a former U.S. attorney general, Ramsey Clark, as a member of Saddam's defense team.

After three hours of exchanges, the chief judge, Rizgar Mohammed Amin, ordered an adjournment until Dec. 5, to allow time for Barzan Ibrahim al-Tikriti, Saddam's half-brother, who is a defendant in the trial, to meet with new lawyers.

Tikriti rejected a defense lawyer named by the court to represent him after his attorney was killed in a drive-by shooting this month and told Amin that he wanted the two lawyers representing Saddam, Khalil al-Dulaimi and Khamis al-Obeidi, to represent him.

Taha Yassin Ramadan, another defendant and the former vice president, also rejected a court-appointed lawyer. Ramadan and Tikriti were previously represented by Adel Muhammad al-Zubaidi, who was killed on Nov. 8 in the shooting in Baghdad.

Saddam, in a gray suit and open-necked white shirt, was the last of the defendants to be ushered into court. But he waited only a few minutes before renewing the challenge that marked the court's brief opening session in October.

Approaching the microphone in the dock, he said that he had been deprived of his notes and a pen before entering the court, forced to walk upstairs in the courthouse because the elevators were not working and obliged, too, to carry his copy of the Koran in manacled hands, something he implied was sacrilegious.

"I want you to order them, not tell them," Saddam told the chief judge, who had said that he would tell the Americans about Saddam's complaints. Saddam continued: "They are in our country. You are an Iraqi. They are foreigners and occupiers and invaders, so you must condemn them."

Moments earlier, following a pattern

he established during his initial court appearance 17 months ago, Saddam invoked a verse from the Koran, on this occasion one that seemed intended to



Iraqi soldiers watching Saddam Hussein's trial in Baghdad on satellite television in their bunker in Saadah, near the border with Syria and the scene of recent fighting.

suggest that the ultimate judgment on the events that occurred during his 24-year rule in Iraq would rest with God, not with the court.

"Do you think that you will enter paradise without Allah judging those among you who fought hard in his cause and remained steadfast?" Saddam said, reciting the verse from memory.

Amin, one of five judges hearing the case, responded with unruffled calm, devoting the opening 90 minutes of the session to procedural issues involving the rights of the defense.

The court has come under intense scrutiny, and widespread criticism, from international legal rights groups, some of which have questioned whether Saddam and his top associates can get a fair trial in an Iraqi court that was originally founded by an American occupation decree.

From the procedural issues, Amin moved directly into the heart of the trial, instructing the prosecution to begin presenting its case. Saddam and his fellow defendants are charged with the torture and killing of 148 men and teenage boys from the town of Dujail, 55 kilometers, or 35 miles, north of Baghdad, after an assassination attempt against Saddam there in July 1982.

The first prosecution evidence took the form of video recordings.

One showed Saddam on a Dujail street immediately after the assassination attempt, wearing the military-style uniform of the ruling Baath party as he questioned three suspects held by guards.

When one of the men said that he could not have been involved in the attack because he was fasting and forbidden from committing evil under Islamic tradition, Saddam responded with a mocking reference to Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the former ruler of Iran,

which was then locked in an eight-year war with Iraq.

"Well, we know that Khomeini fasts, and that doesn't stop him from committing crimes," Saddam said. He ordered the three men to be separated and taken away for interrogation.

The second item of prosecution evidence showed the videotaped testimony of Wadah Khalil Hussein al-Sheikh, a former secret police commander who gave evidence under guard last month in an American military hospital, where he was being treated for lung cancer. Sheikh, who has since died, appeared for his videotaped testimony in a wheelchair, attached to a drip.

He identified himself as the former director of investigations under the intelligence services, then headed by Tikriti.

He said he and other officials arrived in Dujail the day after the attempted assassination and that, by then, more than 400 people had been arrested for the attack on Saddam's motorcade.

"The number of people who attacked the convoy was no more than 10 or 12," Sheikh said. "I submitted a report on this to Barzan. So I don't know why so many people were arrested."

None of the 400 detainees appeared to have been tortured, the former interrogator said — a point duly noted down by Saddam, listening from his position in the dock.

In January 1983, seven months after the Dujail attack, Sheikh said, Saddam ordered him to move all of those held by the intelligence service to the southern city of Samawa and he said he had no knowledge of what happened to them after that.

Survivors in Dujail have said that more than 1,500 townspeople, including women and children, were transferred to a remote desert camp in the south,

November 29, 2005

HERALD TRIBUNE

and that many died there.

Sheikh spoke to the judges and prosecutors in a special session that defense lawyers refused to attend, citing a boycott that was called after one of the 13 lawyers who appeared on the defense team at the opening of trial was taken from his Baghdad office by unknown assailants and killed.

After the second lawyer, Zubaidi, was shot and killed, it hardened the boycott and prompted the Iraqi Bar Association to demand that the trial be moved outside Iraq.

The dispute was settled, at least for

now, when Saddam's chief lawyer, Du-laimi, and others on the defense team, in talks that were led by American officials, accepted offers of protection by Iraqi Interior Ministry guards and accommodation during the trial sessions in the heavily fortified Green Zone command complex in central Baghdad where the courthouse is situated.

After the long delays in bringing Saddam to trial — he was captured by American troops near his hometown of Tikrit two years ago next month — getting past procedural wrangling and into the substantive part of the trial represented a

significant moment for the court.

Members of the defense team told the court they would be raising new challenges to its legitimacy and pressing demands for a 45-day adjournment that would give them time to study prosecution documents that they said had been transferred to them in August in incomplete form.

But by attending the court Monday, and not disrupting the beginnings of the prosecution case, the defendants and their lawyers appeared to have acknowledged that the trial will proceed and that they will play a part in it.

The New York Times

Le Pentagone redécouvre les opérations de stabilisation

Tirant les leçons des borbiers irakien et afghan, les stratégies américains commencent à réviser leur doctrine.

DANS LE JARGON du Pentagone, la phase IV, dite des « opérations de stabilisation », intervient immédiatement après la phase III, celle des combats. Cette étape est aujourd'hui le maillon faible de la chaîne opérationnelle américaine, et les stratèges de George W. Bush le reconnaissent publiquement. Le borbier irakien et les difficultés afghanes, il est vrai, ne leur laissent guère le choix.

Aveuglés par le sentiment — fondé il est vrai — de supériorité militaire écrasante sur le reste du monde, ils ont gravement sous-estimé les difficultés des missions de pacification. L'heure est venue de corriger le tir. Le Pentagone serait ainsi sur le point d'approuver une nouvelle directive donnant leurs lettres de noblesse aux « opérations de stabilisation ». Les élevant même, dans la hiérarchie des missions militaires, au même niveau que les opérations de com-

bat de haute intensité.

Loin d'être une simple réflexion théorique, cette nouvelle doctrine pourrait avoir des conséquences importantes sur l'organisation des forces, les spécialités militaires privilégiées et les choix d'équipements. Selon le *New York Times*, la directive a fait l'objet d'intenses négociations au sein du

département de la Défense. Mais le débat concerne aussi le département d'État et d'autres agences civiles, puisqu'il s'agit de mobiliser toutes les ressources gouvernementales dans les opérations de sortie de conflits. Le dernier projet de directive vient d'être remis pour visa au secrétaire adjoint à la Défense, Gordon England. Il y est écrit que « les opérations de stabilisation doivent être aussi prioritaires que les opérations de combat, et intégrées à tous les niveaux de l'organisation de la Défense ».

80 % des budgets d'intervention

Le Congrès ne s'est pas privé de critiquer l'Administration Bush et le Pentagone pour avoir

« omis » de fourbir des plans sérieux pour reconstruire l'Irak après sa conquête militaire. En Afghanistan même, où les difficultés sont pourtant moindres, sont pointées des lacunes en personnels compétents pour relever l'économie, reconstruire les infrastructures, lutter contre le trafic de drogue ou développer des institutions politiques démocratiques. Or, depuis la fin de la guerre froide, les opérations de stabilisation ont monopolisé 80 % des budgets d'intervention, contre 20 % pour les opérations de combat.

Pour « institutionnaliser » les opérations de stabilisation au sein du Pentagone, trois pistes sont notamment avancées. S'organiser pour mieux exploiter la « cinquième force », comme les militaires appellent la ressource civile. On y a déjà fait copieusement appel en Irak, où 60 000 contractuels civils sont déployés. Plusieurs millions de dollars devraient ainsi être transférés du Pentagone vers le département d'État pour participer au déploiement des experts civils. Mais si les militaires ne peuvent et ne doivent pas tout fai-

re, ils doivent être « prêts à réaliser toutes les tâches que les civils ne peuvent accomplir ».

Petite révolution culturelle au Pentagone

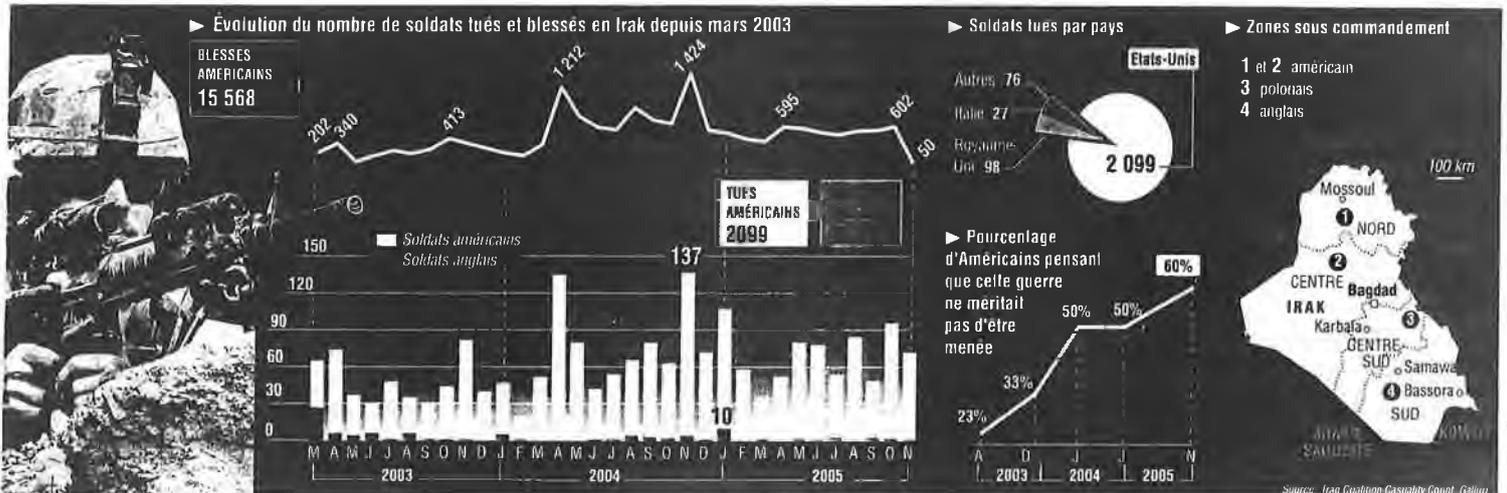
Deuxième piste, une meilleure « communication » envers les populations des pays à pacifier, le moins que l'on puisse dire étant

que le message des GI n'est pas toujours bien passé en Mésopotamie. Enfin, il s'agit d'augmenter le recrutement de « professionnels confirmés » parmi les réservistes envoyés sur le terrain. Le document reconnaît que nombre des tâches de stabilisation sont aussi « plus efficacement réalisées par des ressources locales ou étrangères ».

Une petite révolution culturelle est peut-être en route au Pentagone. Jusqu'à présent, ses hauts responsables civils, néoconservateurs héritiers de la fameuse « doctrine Wohlstetter », misaient sur la supériorité technologique et militaire pour répandre la démocratie sur les marches troublées du premier monde.

ARNAUD DE LA GRANGE

LE FIGARO 25 novembre 2005



Iraq militia chief pulls strings as his forces pull triggers

By Edward Wong

BAGHDAD: Men loyal to Moktada al-Sadr piled out of their cars at a plantation near Baghdad on a recent morning, bristling with Kalashnikov rifles and eager to exact vengeance on Sunni Arab fighters who had butchered one of their Shiite militia brothers.

When the smoke cleared after the fight, at least 21 bodies lay scattered among the weeds, making it the deadliest militia battle in months. The black-clad Shiites swaggered away, boasting about the carnage.

Even as that battle raged on Oct. 27, Sadr's aides in Baghdad were quietly closing a deal that would signal his official debut as a kingmaker in Iraqi politics, placing his handpicked candidates on the same slate and on equal footing with the Shiite governing parties in the parliamentary elections in December.

The country's rulers had come courting him, and he had forced them to meet his terms.

Wielding violence and political popularity as complementary tools, Sadr, the Shiite cleric who has defied the U.S. authorities since the fall of Saddam Hussein, is cementing his role as one of Iraq's most powerful figures. Just a year after Sadr led two fierce uprisings, the Americans are hailing his entry into the elections as the best sign yet that the political process can co-opt insurgents.

But Sadr's ascent could portend a much darker chain of events, for he continues to embrace his image as an unrepentant guerrilla leader even as he takes the reins of political power.

Sadr has made no move to disband his militia, the thousands-strong Mahdi Army. In recent weeks, factions of the militia have assaulted and abducted

Sunni Arabs, rival Shiite groups, journalists and British-led forces in the south, where Sadr has a zealous following.

At least 19 foreign soldiers and contractors have been killed there since late summer, mostly by roadside bombs planted by Shiite militiamen using Iranian technology, British officers say.

"The fatality rate is quite high, much higher than it was a year ago," Major General J.B. Dutton, the British commander in southern Iraq, said in a briefing to reporters.

Members of the Mahdi Army have also joined the police in large numbers, while retaining their loyalty to Sadr. Squad cars in Baghdad and southern cities cruise openly with pictures of

Sadr taped to the windows.

Sadr's oratory is as anti-American and incendiary as it has ever been. A recent article in *Al Hawza*, a weekly Sadr publication that the Americans tried unsuccessfully to close last year, carried the headline: "Bush Family: Your Nights Will Be Finished." Another article explained that Sadr was supporting the December elections to rid Iraq of U.S.-backed politicians who "rip off the heads of the underprivileged and scatter the pieces of their children and elderly."

Partly because of his uncompromising attitude, Sadr, who is in his early 30s, is immensely popular among impoverished Shiites. That has made him the most coveted ally of the governing

Shiite parties as they head into the December elections.

Sadr used this leverage to get 30 of his candidates on the Shiite coalition's slate. This was as many as the number allotted to each of the two main governing parties, the *Dawa* Islamic Party and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Sadr's aides have already negotiated with those parties for executive offices and ministry posts in the next government.



Alfa al-Marjani/AP

Moktada al-Sadr, the Mahdi Army leader, has become a kingmaker in Iraqi politics.

Early this month, the leader of the Supreme Council, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, went to the holy city of Najaf to visit Sadr in a gesture of solidarity. Hakim and Sadr are sons of deceased ayatollahs whose families have feuded. In August,

the Mahdi Army stormed the offices of the Supreme Council across southern Iraq. Hakim's recent visit showed how much the mainstream Shiite leaders need the support of Sadr, no matter how much they abhorred him.

"They are the largest group in the Shiite community," said Hajim al-Hasani, a secular Sunni Turkmen who is speaker of the transitional National Assembly. "They will be a force to deal with in the elections. If they run separately, they would get most of the seats in the south."

The New York Times

Abdul Razzaq al-Saiedi contributed reporting.

LE FIGARO mardi 22 novembre 2005

Visite historique de Talabani à Téhéran

IRAN. Le président irakien, Jalal Talabani, au cours de la première visite d'un chef d'Etat irakien en Iran depuis presque quarante ans, s'est dit certain hier d'avoir l'aide de Téhéran pour lutter contre le terrorisme dans son pays. Les autorités américaines et britanniques accusent l'Iran

de soutenir certains éléments de l'insurrection irakienne, notamment avec un soutien à la fourniture d'explosifs utilisés contre leurs forces. Ce que Téhéran a démenti, mettant en avant son soutien à la résistance irakienne, chiite et kurde, contre la dictature de Saddam Hussein.

Syrie Damas accepte que cinq responsables soient interrogés à Vienne par la commission Mehlis

La Syrie cède sur l'enquête Hariri

PRÈS d'un mois après avoir été sommée par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU de coopérer à l'enquête sur l'assassinat de l'ancien premier ministre libanais, Rafic Hariri, la Syrie a obtempéré, vendredi 25 novembre.

Elle a levé les objections qu'elle posait à l'interrogatoire de cinq de ses hauts responsables par le juge Detlev Mehlis qui dirige la commission d'enquête internationale. Ils seront auditionnés à Vienne, à la demande de M. Mehlis, a annoncé le vice-ministre des affaires étrangères, Walid Mouallem. Des contacts doivent être pris avec la commission d'enquête pour en fixer la date. Ce déblocage est survenu à vingt jours seulement de l'échéance du 15 décembre, date à laquelle M. Mehlis doit rendre son rapport au Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies.

Sérieusement épinglée dans un rapport d'étape, remis le 19 octobre à l'ONU, pour l'insuffisance de sa coopération à l'enquête, la Syrie risquait de l'être plus sévèrement encore dans le prochain: en vertu de la résolution 1636 adoptée le 31 octobre, le Conseil de sécurité la menaçait, en effet, entre les lignes, de possibles sanctions, si elle n'accédait pas aux besoins de l'enquête. Ce risque n'est pas totalement levé aujourd'hui. M. Mehlis jugera si la bonne volonté annoncée sera traduite en actes.

Les autorités syriennes ont tout tenté pour que l'audition des intéressés se fasse

à leurs conditions. Elles ont invoqué des questions de dignité et « l'intérêt du Liban et de la Syrie » pour refuser que les témoins soient entendus au siège de la commission d'enquête, dans la banlieue de Beyrouth, comme l'exigeait M. Mehlis. Elles ont tour à tour proposé des locaux de l'ONU à Damas, ou de la Force de l'ONU pour l'observation du désengagement sur le Golan, le siège de la Ligue arabe au Caire. Elles ont demandé la conclusion d'un protocole de coopération juridique entre leur propre commission d'enquête et la commission internationale.

Tensions extrêmes

Le président Bachar Al-Assad a écrit

aux chefs des Etats membres du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU – hormis l'Américain et le Français jugés hostiles – pour se plaindre du comportement du juge. Damas a demandé à des pays arabes, en particulier le Qatar et l'Egypte, d'intercéder en sa faveur. Le secrétaire général de l'ONU, Kofi Annan, a été sollicité – ce qui lui a valu un rappel à l'ordre de l'administration américaine lui signifiant que M. Mehlis devait demeurer seul maître à bord de l'enquête.

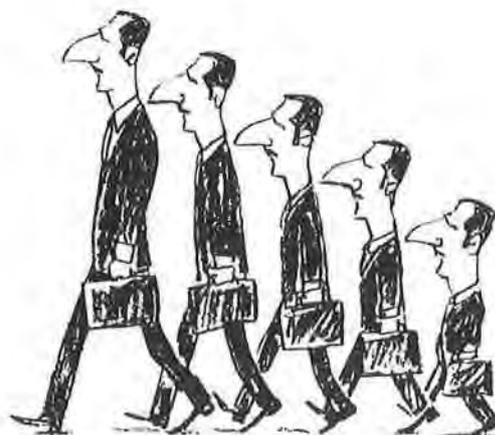
Ce dernier a rencontré le 18 novembre à Barcelone le conseiller juridique du ministère syrien des affaires étrangères, tandis qu'à Damas et dans d'autres villes syriennes, des sit in, manifestations et autres défilés étaient quotidiennement organisés pour dénoncer la « politisation » de l'enquête et la « partialité » du juge.

M. Mehlis est resté de marbre. Il a cédé sur le lieu après un avis, discrètement formulé par le premier ministre libanais, Fouad Siniora, qui a fait valoir que cela risquait d'attiser les tensions déjà extrêmes entre le pays du Cèdre et la Syrie – dont la presse, contrôlée par le pouvoir, traîne quotidiennement dans la boue une bonne partie de la classe politique libanaise, dont M. Siniora. Jamais M. Mehlis n'a révélé les identités des responsables syriens qu'il souhaite interroger.

Dans une version non expurgée de son rapport d'étape, deux personnalités au « statut délicat », avaient notamment été évoquées par des témoins. Il s'agit de Maher Al-Assad et Assef Chawkat, frère et beau-frère du président de la république. Le premier est chef de la garde républicaine et le second dirige les services de renseignement militaires. Ces dernières semaines, la presse libanaise croyait savoir que Maher Al-Assad ne fait pas partie, pour le moment, des personnes que le juge souhaite auditionner.

Aux côtés de Assef Chawkat, elle citait Rostom Ghazalé, « haut commissaire » au Liban, Bahjat Soleimane, chef des renseignements intérieurs, ainsi que les noms de trois autres officiers du renseignement. ■

MOUNA NAÏM



CHRONOLOGIE

14 FÉVRIER 2005. Le premier ministre libanais, Rafic Hariri, est tué dans un attentat à Beyrouth.

7 AVRIL. Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU adopte la résolution 1595, en vertu de laquelle une commission internationale est chargée de l'enquête sur cet assassinat. Son mandat est de trois mois reconductible.

26 AVRIL. La Syrie achève le retrait de ses troupes du Liban, exigé depuis septembre 2004 par l'ONU.

16 JUIN. Le juge allemand Detlev Mehlis, qui préside la commission, commence ses investigations.

19 OCTOBRE. Le juge remet au Conseil de sécurité un rapport d'étape, dans lequel il relève des « preuves convergentes » de l'implication de hauts responsables sécuritaires syriens et libanais dans l'assassinat. Il se plaint de l'insuffisance de la coopération syrienne.

31 OCTOBRE. Le Conseil de sécurité adopte à l'unanimité la résolution 1636 qui somme la Syrie de coopérer « sans réserves et sans conditions » à l'enquête conduite par M. Mehlis.

25 NOVEMBRE. La Syrie accepte que cinq responsables requis par M. Mehlis soient auditionnés à Vienne.

Témoignage accablant contre Saddam Husseïn

MOYEN-ORIENT

Le procès du dictateur a repris hier à Bagdad, avant d'être ajourné d'une semaine.

SADDAM Hussein entre dans le box, un Coran à la main. Il est vêtu d'une chemise blanche et d'un costume sombre. Il a visiblement perdu du poids. Le procès du dictateur déchu vient de reprendre, hier à Bagdad, après avoir été ajourné dès son ouverture le 19 octobre dernier. Comme la première fois, c'est l'accusé qui attaque. Comme la première fois, la scène est retransmise, en différé, sur les écrans de télévision irakiens. Saddam se plaint d'avoir dû prendre l'escalier, l'ascenseur étant en panne. Et d'avoir été menotté : « *Ils m'ont amené jusqu'à la porte avec les menottes. Ils ne peuvent pas amener l'accusé avec les menottes* », dit l'ex-président d'une voix forte, à l'intention du juge irakien.

Le dictateur à une autre plainte à formuler : on lui a retiré son matériel. « *Comment un accusé peut-il se défendre sans papier ni crayon ?* » Le président du Haut Tribunal pénal irakien, Rizkar Mohammad Amine, lui répond de son ton habituel, calme et urbain : « *Je vais en parler à la police.* » Il demande à des gardes américains d'apporter du papier et un crayon à Saddam. Celui-ci hausse encore le ton : « *Je ne veux pas que tu le leur demandes, je veux que tu le leur ordonnes. Ils sont dans notre pays et tu y es souverain. Tu es irakien et ce sont des occupants étrangers et des envahisseurs, tu dois leur donner des ordres.* »

La reprise du procès, dans l'ancien siège du parti Baas, s'est effectuée dans des conditions de sécurité draconiennes, les journalistes autorisés à assister au procès, derrière une vitre blindée, ont dû passer par une machine à rayons X, et, comme à l'accusé, même les crayons leur ont été fournis. Deux heures avant l'audience, un obus



Saddam Hussein est apparu amaigri et vindicatif, reprochant à ses geôliers de l'avoir amené menotté jusqu'aux portes du tribunal. Reuters.

de mortier a atterri dans la zone verte, la partie protégée du centre de Bagdad où est située la cour. Deux des avocats de la défense ont déjà été assassinés, et le tribunal ne veut pas prendre le risque d'un autre meurtre. Les caméras de la chaîne américaine spécialisée Court TV, qui a obtenu le marché, ne montrent pas les visages des défenseurs.

Deux anciens ministres de la Justice pour avocats

Saddam est représenté par un avocat irakien, Khalil Doulaïmi. Mais celui-ci s'est adjoint deux anciens ministres de la Justice, l'Américain Ramsey Clarke, opposé à la guerre américaine en Irak, et le Qatariote Najib al-Nauïmi. Au début de l'audience, le président du tribunal a accepté leur présence en tant que « *conseillers* » de la défense. Outre Saddam, sept de ses lieutenants étaient assis dans le box, encourant comme lui la peine de mort par pendaison : l'ancien vice-président Taha Yassine Ramadan, le demi-frère de Saddam Hussein, Barzan Ibrahim al-Hassan al-Tikriti, l'ancien juge du tribunal révolutionnaire, Awad Ahmed al-Bandar, et quatre anciens responsables du parti Baas dans la région de Doujaïl.

C'est dans cette ville que s'est produit le massacre pour lequel les huit accusés étaient jugés hier. Au début de l'après-midi, le procès a été suspendu pour une semaine, jusqu'au 5 décembre, le temps pour Taha Yassine Ramadan de trouver un avocat, l'ancien

vice-président ayant récusé celui qui avait été commis d'office. Mais cette demi-journée a suffi à l'accusation irakienne, assistée d'une importante équipe américaine, pour marquer des points. Le tribunal s'en tient, pour cette première session, à un dossier circonscrit dans le temps et l'espace : le massacre en juillet 1982 de plus de 140 chiites de Doujaïl, près de Bagdad, après une tentative d'attentat contre le cortège de Saddam qui traversait la petite cité. Selon l'accusation, les hommes de Saddam ont également envoyé des centaines de femmes et d'enfants pendant des années dans des camps d'internement dans le désert.

Les témoignages sont sans ambiguïté. Redevenu silencieux, Saddam Hussein regarde d'abord la projection d'une vidéo granuleuse aux couleurs passées, tournée par un cameraman officiel le jour du massacre. On y voit le dictateur questionner lui-même des suspects détenus au bord de la route.

Puis Saddam ordonne de les « *emmener séparément et de les interroger* ». Puis la cour visionne le témoignage, donné sur son lit de mort, d'un officier de renseignement, Wadah al-Sheikh, présent le jour des faits. Selon lui, « *de sept à douze personnes ont été impliquées dans l'attaque contre le cortège présidentiel, mais ils ont raflé environ 400 personnes, des femmes, des enfants et des vieillards* ». D'après l'officier, « *les gardes du corps personnels de Saddam ont participé à la tuerie* » qui s'est ensuivie.

PIERRE PRIER (AVEC AFP, REUTERS)

la Croix
29 novembre 2005

PORTRAIT

Ebrahim Alizadeh, héraut des Kurdes d'Iran

Le parti kurde iranien Komalah réclame un statut d'autodétermination que la République islamique n'est pas prête à accorder aux Kurdes. La contestation civile se développe dans les zones du Kurdistan iranien alors que leurs frères d'Irak ont obtenu l'autonomie dans la nouvelle fédération irakienne. Porte-parole d'une partie des Kurdes d'Iran, Ebrahim Alizadeh, en visite à Paris, dit quelle solution il attend pour le peuple kurde.

Cheveux gris, la cinquantaine, Ebrahim Alizadeh, secrétaire du parti kurde iranien Komalah, courant maoïste issu du Parti communiste iranien, sera aujourd'hui le porte-parole d'une partie des Kurdes d'Iran. Il apportera sa réponse à la question: «*Quelle solution pour la question du peuple kurde dans le processus de la démocratisation du Moyen-Orient?*», posée à l'occasion d'un colloque organisé à l'Assemblée nationale à Paris. L'occasion de jeter un coup de projecteur sur les Kurdes, une population de près de 25 millions de personnes réparties entre l'Irak, l'Iran, la Turquie et la Syrie. La guerre en Irak et le statut de quasi-autonomie accordé aux Kurdes d'Irak ont créé des espoirs pour ceux des pays voisins. En Iran, les militants du Komalah, second parti kurde après le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan

iranien (PDKI), d'obédience marxiste, réclament l'autodétermination du peuple kurde d'Iran.

Comme tous les dirigeants de Komalah, Ebrahim Alizadeh est réfugié au Kurdistan irakien, au sud de Souleimaniya, dans la zone contrôlée par l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK) de Jalal Talabani, président de l'Irak. Ebrahim Alizadeh, qui a fui l'Iran en 1985, décrit une situation

explosive dans son pays. Il rapporte que depuis juillet 2005, des incidents ont eu lieu dans plusieurs villes du Kurdistan irakien. À Mahabad, des manifestations ont eu lieu après que le corps d'un jeune garçon torturé par les autorités eut été traîné dans les rues, après avoir été attaché derrière une voiture. «*La mobilisation a été massive du nord au sud du Kurdistan.*» À Sanandaj, capitale de la province du Kurdistan, des ouvriers d'une usine textile se sont mis en grève pour protester contre des licenciements et des salaires non versés. Le mouvement a fait tache d'huile et s'est étendu à d'autres usines. À Sageh, des ouvriers ont voulu célébrer le 1^{er} mai. La police a arrêté les leaders. Ils sont incarcérés et condamnés pour la plupart à des peines de cinq ans de prison.

«*Les revendications vont se multiplier*», prédit Ebrahim Alizadeh qui affirme que son parti n'encourage pas la mobilisation armée «*à cause des risques de dérapage*». «*Nous sommes en contact avec les organisations sociales et les communautés à l'intérieur de l'Iran*, poursuit-il. *Mais nous ne voulons pas que les États-Unis fassent en Iran ce qu'ils ont fait en Irak.*»

AGNÈS ROTIVEL

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune November 28, 2005

Lebanon's example ■ By Roger Owen

What Iraq will look like

The announcement that the Dec. 15 Iraqi elections will be largely a contest among parties representing the Shiites, the Sunnis, and the Kurds provides a clear demonstration of the way Iraq's politics are going to be dominated by the type of sectarian democracy to be found in Lebanon. This is a far cry from the kind of pluralist, interest-oriented democratic systems to be found in Europe and America.

Lebanese sectarianism as it has developed since the days of the French mandate before World War II has three main features. First, the majority of the population vote for members of their own ethnic group or sect. Second, the fact that the leaders of each sect do not need to solicit the votes of their own members leaves them free to negotiate and to make political bargains with the leaders of the other sects more or less untrammelled by the individual or corporate interests of their own followers. Third, the primary business of politics becomes that of dividing the state's resources, including money and jobs, on a sectarian basis.

Certain key implications follow. Such systems can only exist in the context of a weak central government. All sides fear that one of the other sectarian groups might be able to seize control of the army backed by a strong police force with sufficient power to subdue the rest.

It also follows that such systems are unable to generate either a sense of national citizenship or of a

shared past — Lebanese educators are still unable to produce an agreed history text for use in the schools. This is one of the ways the systems tend to perpetuate themselves by making it impossible for politics to be organized along other, more secular lines.

Recent Lebanese history also provides a number of examples that provide evidence of possible perils ahead. A weak central government finds it difficult to prevent armed groups or, in the case of Lebanon, foreign armies, from entering the country. Furthermore, a system based simply on sectarian allegiance often produces serious gaps between the leadership and its followers due to the former's unwillingness or inability to address issues of corruption, inequality and outright poverty within its own ranks. So it was in the south of Lebanon, where the Israeli invasion of 1982 provided an opening for a new and more radical Shiite movement, Hezbollah.

Given the differences in geography, resources and history between the two countries, Lebanon cannot provide an exact template for Iraq's political future.

Nevertheless, there remain too many similarities. Lebanon's system has worked, in its own fashion, only so far as the sectarian elites see it in their interest to cooperate. It has worked only when the country has managed to insulate itself from regional tensions. And it has worked only so long as each leadership has been able to define the main lines of sectarian identity and to prevent itself from being outflanked by discontented followers able to redefine

identity in more radical and populist ways.

By the same token, the Lebanese version of sectarian democracy has not worked well at times like the 1970s and early 1990s when new social forces have pushed themselves on to the political scene. In Iraq, their most obvious equivalent is likely to be the movement led by Moktada al-Sadr, whose Baghdad-based followers have significantly different concerns from those of their more conservative co-religionists to the south.

It is also possible to imagine a major challenge mounted by dissatisfied Kurds. And this is to say nothing about the opposition mounted by angry Sunnis.

If this analysis is largely correct, there is little that either the United States or Britain can now do to control a process that they themselves had a considerable hand in setting in motion. And even in the case of the British this easy exit strategy is looking ever more tenuous now that the local police in Basra and elsewhere are falling more and more into Shiite hands.

Nevertheless, if the situation does not deteriorate into all-out civil war, the occupiers will still be able to comfort themselves that they have left some sort of democracy behind, albeit one in which voters have no real choice and all the major political decisions are made by unaccountable sectarian elites.

Roger Owen is the A. J. Meyer Professor of Middle East History at Harvard University. This article first appeared in *The Boston Globe*.

Le Kurdistan à la recherche de la manne pétrolière



ZAKHO (Irak), 30 nov 2005 (AFP) - Les premiers forages de prospection pétrolière au Kurdistan irakien, qualifiés d'"historiques" par les responsables locaux, ont commencé cette semaine, donnant l'espoir à cette région de renforcer son autonomie économique.

Si du brut est effectivement trouvé au Kurdistan, cela pourrait également calmer les revendications des Kurdes en ce qui concerne la ville pétrolière de Kirkouk, dont ils exigent le rattachement à leurs provinces.

La compagnie pétrolière norvégienne DNO a annoncé mardi le début du forage du puits Tawke 1, qui devrait durer 60 jours pour atteindre une profondeur de 3.000 mètres dans une zone suspectée de receler trois nappes de pétrole.

Le puits est situé à l'est de la ville de Zakho (515 km au nord de Bagdad), à la frontière irako-turque. Son inauguration a eu lieu mardi, en présence de responsables du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK, de Massoud Barzani).

Un responsable de la compagnie DNO, Magne Normann, a indiqué lors de cette cérémonie que le brut présent dans cette région serait du "light oil", de bonne qualité.

Selon la compagnie, opérateur du bloc avec une participation de 40%, il s'agit des premiers forages mis en oeuvre sous le régime des Accords de partage de production (PSA) signés avec les autorités kurdes en juin 2004.

Les PSA sont des contrats en vertu desquels des compagnies étrangères sont appelées à financer les investissements permettant le forage et l'exploitation des ressources pétrolières d'une zone, moyennant une part de la production future de cette zone.

Un responsable de la compagnie pétrolière du Kurdistan, Sarbar Horami, a noté l'"importance de ce projet, pour le développement de l'économie du Kurdistan".

Il a fait état d'autres projets dans le domaine pétrolier, "notamment des contacts avec des compagnies turques".

Selon lui, une compagnie mixte américaine et turque doit commencer bientôt un nouveau forage, et un contrat similaire a été signé avec une compagnie mixte britannique et portugaise.

De son côté, Nigirvan Barzani, un haut responsable du PDK et neveu de Massoud Barzani, a parlé de projet "historique". "Pour la première fois, nous cherchons du pétrole au Kurdistan", a-t-il dit lors de la cérémonie officielle.

"Ce projet va participer à la croissance économique du Kurdistan et à sa reconstruction", a-t-il affirmé.

"L'heure où le peuple kurde n'est plus opprimé et où il profite des richesses est enfin arrivée", a estimé M. Barzani, en référence aux exactions menées par le régime de Saddam Hussein contre les kurdes.

"Nous savons tous que les revenus pétroliers servaient à l'achat d'armes et de gaz, qui étaient utilisés contre les villes et villages irakiens et nous ne permettrons plus cela", a lancé le responsable kurde.

Le régime baassiste est notamment responsable du gazage de 5.000 kurdes en 1988, à Halabja.

M. Barzani a remercié par ailleurs la Turquie qui a facilité le passage du matériel de la compagnie norvégienne sur son territoire, en direction du Kurdistan.

Le Kurdistan, quasi autonome depuis 1991, revendique le rattachement de Kirkouk. Cette ville pétrolière, qui compte parmi ses habitants des kurdes, des arabes et des turcomans, a été fortement arabisée sous Saddam Hussein.

Mais depuis la chute du régime en 2003, ses installations pétrolières sont la cible d'attaques régulières, ce qui perturbe l'exportation du pétrole vers la Turquie, au nord, et même son acheminement vers les raffineries irakiennes.

Turkey

Reining in the Army

Police-linked bombers sought to spark ethnic unrest. Instead they may help break the cycle of violence.

BY OWEN MATTHEWS AND SAMI KOHEN

SEFERI YILMAZ WAS SITTING with friends in his bookshop, in the remote mountain town of Semdinli in southeastern Turkey, when the grenade came rolling in. He dived for a back door just in time. The blast blew out the front of the shop and left two dead. There was little doubt that Yilmaz, a former Kurdish rebel who had served 15 years in jail for terrorism, was the intended target. Five Turkish soldiers were killed in rebel attacks around Semdinli over the last six months, and anonymous leaflets threatening revenge had been circulating in the town. On Nov. 1, a mysterious bomb blast downtown wrecked several shops and houses and injured dozens. The question was, who wanted Seferi Yilmaz dead?

The answer has shocked Turkey—and touched off a scandal that could rock the country's powerful security forces to the core. A crowd of townspeople caught four apparent perpetrators as they ran from Yilmaz's devastated shop and made a fair attempt at beating them to death. According to eyewitnesses, one of the fugitives shot dead a member of the mob before they were rescued by police. The shooter turned out to be Ali Kaya, a 32-year-old sergeant from the intelligence service of Turkey's Gendarmerie, or paramilitary police. An apparent accomplice was Veysel Ates, a police informer and former member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK. The Renault 19 the men had used was registered to Gendarmerie intelligence and contained Kalashnikovs and explosives. Most incriminating, police found an official Gendarmerie watch list of 105 "suspicious" locals with some of their names and addresses—including Yilmaz's—marked with red ink.

News that members of the Turkish military had apparently been caught red-handed in a vigilante attack against Kurds set the region ablaze. Riots broke out through the week amid fears that the scandal would be hushed up by the authorities, like so many allegations of torture and extra-judicial killings by security forces in the 1980s and

'90s. In fact, this time things may turn out differently. Europe's eyes are on Turkey as it starts negotiations to join the European Union. Encouraged by Brussels, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has slowly but surely been edging the military out of politics. The Semdinli incident could be just what he needs to decisively complete the job. Erdogan was quick to



IT COULD HAVE BEEN WORSE: One of many clashes between police and Kurdish protesters

promise no cover-up. "Those who breach the peace, whoever they are, will pay the price," he declared. Parliamentarians from all parties called for official inquiries. Most surprising was the reaction of Gen. Hilmi Ozkok, chief of the general staff. Sensing the magnitude of the gathering scandal, Ozkok made no attempt to protect his men: "I neither blame nor defend our personnel for this. We trust the judiciary."

Evidence that the Semdinli bombers were acting on orders from above could put Erdogan on a collision course with what Turks call the Deep State—a shady alliance of nationalist officers, bureaucrats and judges who consider

themselves the true guardians of Turkey's interests. The outcome of such a clash would be profoundly unpredictable. "It will be a real test of civil society," says one senior European diplomat in Ankara, who agreed to speak only off the record. "Either the Army is brought inside the law or it is not."

A housecleaning within the security forces will not in itself suffice. For the cycle of violence between Kurdish radicals and the military to be truly broken, the country's estimated 14 million Kurds and their leaders must embrace moderation too. Last week Kurdish politicians called for calm. Diyarbakir's Mayor Osman Baydemir addressed crowds in Kurdish, which would have been a criminal offense just five years ago but is now legal thanks to a

**Who
the peace
will pay
the price."**

RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN

raft of freedom-of-speech reforms pushed through by Erdogan. "The people of Semdinli have given Turkey the possibility of a bright future," he said. "We must use this bitter opportunity."

Despite last week's violence, most Kurds resisted radicals' calls for a "rebellion." There seems to be little desire to return to the bad old days of the Kurdish insurgency, which between 1984 and 1999 left 35,000 dead and whole swaths of the southeast economically devastated. "What we need is not revolution, not independence, but simple rights," says Selattin Demirtas, a human-rights lawyer in Diyarbakir. With a bit of political boldness on the part of Ankara and the Kurds' own leaders, they might just get them. ■

Hoshyar Zebari, ministre des Affaires étrangères irakien,
actuellement en visite en France:

«Ou les rebelles dirigent l'Irak, ou ils le brûlent»

A deux semaines des législatives qui vont déterminer la formation d'un nouveau gouvernement à Bagdad, le ministre irakien des Affaires étrangères, Hoshyar Zebari, termine aujourd'hui une visite de trois jours en France à l'invitation de son homologue français. Une visite qui témoigne de la volonté de Paris d'exprimer son «appui au processus politique et aux efforts de reconstruction» en cours en Irak. Interview.

Une rencontre s'est tenue en novembre au Caire sous l'égide de la Ligue arabe pour préparer une conférence de réconciliation en Irak. Est-ce que cela traduit le retour de Bagdad dans le giron arabe?

Cette réunion préparatoire résulte d'une initiative commune à l'Irak et à la Ligue arabe. Quelque 60 leaders irakiens s'y sont réunis, dont des membres du Parlement, du gouvernement et des responsables irakiens de l'extérieur, parmi lesquels beaucoup de sunnites. Le but était d'initier un dialogue (entre les autorités et la rébellion) sous le parapluie de la Ligue arabe. On le voit, les pays arabes ont commencé à renouer avec l'Irak. On peut même parler d'un tournant de leur part après deux ans d'indifférence. Ils nous négligeaient complètement. A travers cette invitation du Caire, ils reviennent. C'est devenu nécessaire pour eux, maintenant qu'ils voient que nous nous renforçons, que nous sommes dans une situation beaucoup plus stable, que nous ne sommes pas tous revenus sur les tanks de l'US Army et pour répondre aussi au développement de l'influence iranienne.

Leur avez-vous reproché ouvertement cette «indifférence»?

En tête à tête, je leur ai dit: vous n'étiez pas là (*quand on avait besoin de vous, ndlr*), où étiez-vous? Je le leur ai dit brutalement. A présent, ils ont senti qu'il fallait prendre une initiative et l'ont fait via la Ligue arabe. Et c'est une formidable réponse. De notre côté, nous les avons rassurés, montrés que nous ne voulions pas la bipolarisation de l'Irak, ne soutenions pas une communauté plus qu'une autre, et réitéré notre engagement à maintenir l'unité de l'Irak. Cela a été très utile.

Quelles sont les principales raisons de ce revirement arabe?

Ils ont peur de l'extension de la terreur, que l'Irak devienne le havre d'une coalition de terroristes qui s'en prendra ensuite à l'Arabie Saoudite, aux pays du Golfe...

L'ancien Premier ministre Iyad Allaoui a estimé que les droits de l'homme sont autant bafoués aujourd'hui que sous Saddam...

C'est une déclaration malheureuse, fautive et irréaliste, faite pour des raisons électorales (*il est candidat aux législatives, ndlr*), pour attaquer le gouvernement. C'est un mauvais message qu'il adresse à notre peuple et à nos amis. Or, il n'y a pas de comparaison possible: pas de fosses communes, de gazage de population, de milliers de personnes ensevelies dans le désert par des bulldozers comme sous Saddam.

Mais le ministère de l'Intérieur est responsable de graves exactions...

Je ne vais pas défendre le ministère de l'Intérieur, mais nous sommes en conflit. Les

terroristes nous tuent chaque jour. Nous défendre est une question de vie ou de mort.

On ne voit pas les attentats diminuer d'intensité...

Quinze provinces sur dix-huit connaissent la sécurité. Actuellement, il y a un processus de transfert de pouvoir de la force multi-

nationale aux forces de sécurité irakiennes. La terreur ne s'arrêtera pas, toutefois nous avons la perspective d'une meilleure sécurité. Alors que le programme des rebelles est simple: ou ils dirigent l'Irak ou ils le brûlent.

Paris a proposé de former des membres des forces

de l'ordre irakiennes. Pourquoi ce projet ne s'est-il pas concrétisé?

Nous avons d'excellentes relations avec Paris, aucun doute à ce sujet. Ce qui a pu nous séparer, c'est du passé. Quand cette offre nous a été faite par le président Chirac, nous l'avons jugée très bonne, et l'avons bien accueillie. Nous avons ensuite envoyé un ministre pour en discuter, choisir le pays (*de la formation, ndlr*). Plus deux



Hoshyar Zebari.

notes diplomatiques. Ce n'est donc pas à cause de nous car nous sommes toujours très intéressés et souhaitons que ce projet se réalise le plus tôt possible.

Et la dette irakienne que Paris a promis d'effacer? Tout a été finalisé lundi. Très bientôt, nous signerons l'accord officiel qui annule 80% de cette dette, ce qui représente 4 milliards de dollars. ◀

Recueilli par JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN



30 NOVEMBRE 2005

Conference on democracy in Middle East

By Mohammed A. Abdulqadir
The Globe

IRBIL- "Democratization Of the Middle East" was the title of a conference held in Irbil, from Nov. 19 to Nov. 20. The conference was organized by the Kurdish Institute in Paris (KIP) and the Culture Ministry of Kurdistan regional Government. Several Kurdish, Arab, Turkish and European politicians, academics, intellectuals and journalists took part in the conference and delivered speeches on the state of democracy in Middle East, its future and challenges. The topics discussed in the

conference varied from the cause of democracy in the 21st century, role of civil society and media, the political process and Kurdistan in Iraq, to western democracy and the democratization of the Middle East and the role of Middle Eastern Diaspora.

The conference was also attended by ministers and MPs from Iraqi and Kurdish governments and parliaments and also members of the European parliament. In the opening speech of the conference Kandal Nazan, the head of the KIP, said that

the conference is going to discuss some basic question such as "is there a universal model of democracy or democratic principles have to be implemented in line with the cultural and historic situation of each country? Can Islam and democracy get

along together? And is there any chance for a Kurdish democracy in a region where all the ruling regimes are dictatorial? How the western democracies can help the process of the democratization of Middle east?"



The conference was organized by the Kurdish Institute in Paris (KIP) and the Culture Ministry of Kurdistan regional Government.

Iraqi leaders in Cairo reconciliation quest



Iraqi President Talabani listens to his Prime Minister al-Jaafar, Cairo, Nov.19, 2005. (AP Photo/ Amr Nabil,pool)

Irqi leaders from across the political and ethnic spectrum were to discuss reconciliation in their strife-torn country during Arab League-sponsored meetings in Cairo.

The three-day talks are only meant to prepare for a larger conference to take place in Iraq but officials are hoping they will provide an opportunity to start ironing out differences between the country's feuding communities.

Iraqi Prime Minister Ibrahim Jaafari said the meeting was "part of steps aimed at promoting the political process in Iraq" and called on all sides to demonstrate "goodwill to-

wards achieving positive results."

The meetings are to gather representatives of the disenchanted Sunni former elite, as well as the newly empowered Shiite majority and the non-Arab Kurds.

The Sunni Arab minority, which dominated Saddam Hussein's regime and all previous Iraqi governments, has largely stood aloof from the political process since his overthrow, providing the backbone of the persistent insurgency.

Sunni leaders, for their part, charge that Kurdish and Shiite leaders are seeking to marginalise

their community and are bitter over a constitution that many Sunnis charge could hasten the break-up of Iraq.

Joining the meeting alongside the Shiite prime minister will be Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari, a Kurd, Vice President Ghazi al-Yawar, a Sunni, the head of the main Sunni clerics' association, Hareth al-Dari, and the head of the largest Sunni political faction, the Islamic Party, Tareq al-Hashemi

Arab League sources have said former Baathists will be attending as members of some delegations, something that may irk top Shiites who have

insisted that they were not ready to talk to Sunnis opposed to their new regime.

There are notable absentees such as Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, leader of the main Shiite party SCIRI, and radical Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, but both are sending delegations in their places.

Alongside the Iraqi leaders, Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shara, Iranian Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika are to attend the meeting



Arab delegations watch the opening of a three-day preparatory meeting of the Iraqi reconciliation conference at the Arab league in Cairo, Nov.19, 2005. (AP Photo/Amr Nabil, pool)

CONFÉRENCE INTERNATIONALE
Démocratisation du Moyen-Orient
Problèmes & Perspectives

19-20 novembre 2005

Organisée par l'Institut kurde de Paris en partenariat avec Ministère de la Culture du Kurdistan
Gouvernement régional du Kurdistan Irakien, Erbil - Kurdistan

avec le soutien du Ministère français des Affaires étrangères (DGCID).

Programme de la Conférence

SAMEDI - 19 NOVEMBRE

- Présentation de la Conférence par **Dr. Kendal Nezan**, président de l'Institut kurde de Paris
- Discours d'ouverture par **M. Adnan Mufti**, président de l'Assemblée nationale du Kurdistan
- Discours d'accueil de **Mr. Sami Shoresh**, ministre de la Culture du Kurdistan

La question de la démocratie au 21ème siècle

Modérateur : **Dr. Khaled Salih**, Suède

Intervenants :

- **Dr. Awat Asadi**, Centre **Navend** pour les Etudes Kurdes Allemagne
- **M. Bastiaan Belder**, membre du Parlement européen, Pays-Bas
- **Dr. Hamit Bozarslan**, historien et sociologue, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, France
- **Prof. Andreas Buro**, Allemagne
- **Mme Juliette Mincés**, sociologue, France

Le rôle de la société civile et les média

Modérateur : **Dr. Mohammed Ihsan**, ministre des Droits de l'Homme, Kurdistan

Intervenants :

- **M. Jurgen Hoppe**, journaliste, Allemagne
- **M. Christian Rioux**, journaliste, Québec
- **M. Yavuz Önen**, président de la Fondation des Droits de l'Homme, Turquie
- **Mme Eva Weil**, psychologue, psychanalyste, directrice de la Bibliothèque Sigmund Freud, France

Le rôle de la démocratie dans les sociétés plurielles, ou comment gérer la diversité dans une démocratie

Modérateur : **Prof. André Poupart**, Québec

Intervenants :

- **M. Aureli Argemi Roca**, directeur du Centre International pour les minorités ethniques et l'étude des nations (CIEMENS), Catalogne
- **Dr. Mirella Galletti**, historienne, Italie
- **Mme Gülten Kaya**, éditrice de musique, Turquie

Le rôle des diasporas

Modérateur : **Prof. İlhan Kizilhan**, Université de Konstanz, Allemagne

Intervenants :

- **Mme Aso Agace**, directrice de **Hînbûn**, Centre International pour l'information et l'éducation des femmes, Berlin
- **Mme Lily Baravi**, directrice de l'Institut kurde de Montréal, Québec

- **M. Keya Izol**, ancien président de la Fédération des associations kurdes en Suède
- **M. Akil Marceau**, vice-président du Département des Droits de l'Homme de l'Institut kurde de Paris
- **M. Mozaffar Shafei**, journaliste, ancien directeur du Kurdish Cultural Centre, Londres

DIMANCHE - 20 NOVEMBRE

Le Moyen-Orient

Modérateur : **M. Marc Kravetz**, journaliste, France

Intervenants :

- **M. Mehmet Ali Aslan**, avocat, ancien président du Parti Ouvrier de Turquie (TIP)
- **M. Salah Badraddine**, politicien, Syrie
- **M. Marc Kravetz**, journaliste, France
- **Dr. Magnus Norell**, expert à l'Agence de recherche de la Défense Suédoise

Processus politique en Irak

Modérateur : **Dr. Najmaldin O. Karim**, président du Washington Kurdish Institute

Intervenants :

- **Mme Nasreen Barwari**, ministre des Municipalités et des Travaux Publics, Irak
- **M. Hachem al-Hassani**, président de l'Assemblée nationale irakienne
- **M. Hussein al-Hindawi**, président du Haut comité électoral irakien
- **Dr. Khaled Salih**, Suède
- **Dr. Ephrem Isa Yousif**, philosophe, Institut kurde de Paris, France

L'expérience du Kurdistan d'Irak

Modérateur : **Dr. Fuad Hussein**, vice-président de l'Institut kurde de Paris

Intervenants :

- **M. Yonan Hozaya**, ministre de l'Industrie, Kurdistan
- **Dr. Mohammed Khosraw**, président de l'Université Sallahaddin, Kurdistan
- **M. Kharki Alti Parmak**, membre de l'Assemblée nationale du Kurdistan
- **M. Abdul Aziz Taieb**, ministre de l'Education nationale, Kurdistan
- **Dr. Nuri Talabani**, membre de l'Assemblée nationale du Kurdistan
- **Dr. Nebez Majid**, président de l'Université de Koya, Kurdistan

Les démocraties occidentales et la démocratisation du Moyen-Orient

Modérateur : **Dr. Kendal Nezan**, président de l'Institut kurde de Paris

Intervenants :

- **Mme. Lotta Hedstroem**, membre du Parlement, Parti Vert, Suède
- **M. Munther al-Fadhal**, membre du Parlement irakien, Irak
- **M. Chris Kutschera**, journaliste, France
- **Mme Nina Larsson**, parti Libéral, Suède
- **M. Harry Schute**, expert en matière de sécurité, Etats-unis
- **M. Pierre Serne**, parti Vert, France

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Iraq beacons Middle East's quest for democracy

By Mohammed A. Abdulqadir
The Globe

IRBIL- More than thirty months after the invasion of Iraq, the country still suffers from lack of security and stability, the very two prerequisites for establishing a democratic system in the country.

"The current violence and bloodshed in Iraq is a humiliating aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime,...and plays into the hand of those regimes who don't want a democratic Middle East," says Bas Belder, a Dutch politician and a member of the Strasbourg-based European parliament. Belder, who participated in a conference on democracy in Middle East, held in Irbil last week, considers "security and the will to share power" and the

non-imposition of Sharia rule as "essential for having a democratic rule in Iraq."

Kurdish part of Iraq has been spared much of the bloodshed that plagues its Arab part. This is regarded as an encouraging factor to start the democratization of Iraq from north. "If there is a European hope for democratizing Iraq, it shall begin here in Kurdistan," adds Belder.

Apart from the importance of security and stability, Khalid Salih, a Kurdish academic who lives in Denmark argues that the burden of democratizing a country is on the elites' shoulder. "If the elites want to apply democracy they can prepare the ground for it," says Salih. He rejects the argument that the establishment of democracy in a certain society has to do with the readiness and ability of

that culture to adopt democracy. "Democracy is a matter of political agreement and once it comes to power then it becomes a culture," adds Salih. He also says that every culture has democratic and undemocratic aspects and the fact that there is a long tradition of democracy in Europe, didn't prevent the emergence of ideas such as racism, fascism and Nazism there.

A democratization process has started in Kurdistan; mainly after 1998, and only when the political leaders of the region reached the conclusion they can not settle any thing through war and conflict, Salih claims.

But to the ordinary people, the current political process in the country and efforts to establish democracy doesn't appeal that much. "Democracy is not nice when people are hun-

gry and suffer from poverty. What should the poor do with democracy if they are hungry," says Nazim Sabir, a taxi driver from Dohuk.

In 1970s and 1980s Iraq had a relatively high level of prosperity and one of the best health-care and education systems in the region while it didn't have democracy. The situation is now quite the reverse and while Iraq enjoys a political democracy, it lacks strong infrastructure and basic services.

Despite the political and elites' rhetoric about democracy, some critics contend that talking about it without implementing basic principles of it, is inappropriate. Dr. Afram Issa Yusef, a Paris-based university professor and writer of Arab origin, says that after a tour of Iraq he found out that democracy, in Basra and Baghdad, for



Mark Cravetz, a French journalist who spoke at Irbil conference rejects the idea of the popularity of religious extremism in the long-run. "[The majority of people] want to make a life and want good things for their children and not an Islamic monarchy or republic."

example, is just dealt with as a means to gain power and impose one's ideology on others.

"Democracy has a philosophical dimension and if you used it without that dimension, it would be incorrect," argues Yusef who participated in Irbil's conference on democracy. He admits that in Kurdistan, in comparison with the rest of Iraq, the readiness to accept the philosophical dimension of democracy is more tangible.

The driving force of democracy in Kurdistan is secularism.

Mark Cravetz, a French journalist who spoke at Irbil conference rejects the idea of the popularity of religious extremism in the long-run. "[The majority of people] want to make a life and want good

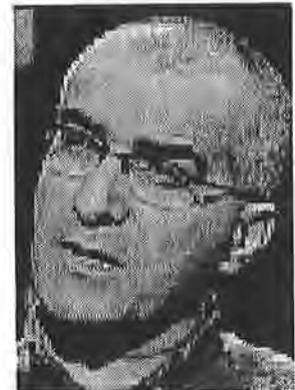
things for their children and not an Islamic monarchy or republic." He also says that theories like that of the clash of civilizations, propounded by the American academic Samuel Huntington, is "stupidity" but "very useful for fundamentalist Muslims since they exactly think the same way" as well.

Observers say Iraqis' voting three times in a year is a sign of the growing democracy in this country.

However, more than just elections is needed for the foundation of a long-standing democratic system in Iraq. One of the solutions offered for Iraq and Middle East is reestablishing state institutions, reshaping the political order and empowering the governance of the country's regions, to strengthen democracy in



Bas Belder: The current violence and bloodshed in Iraq is a humiliating aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's



Khalid Salih: If the elites want to apply democracy they can prepare the ground for it, ... Democracy is a matter of political agreement and once it comes to power then it becomes a culture

Iraq, Salih tells Globe.

Despite all the challenges and shortcomings that democracy faces in Iraq,

the country is believed to be the launching pad for democracy in the Middle East.

The Iranian malaise

Distorted nationalism and unknown future

Khalid Khayati
Globe Political Desk

When in 1997, more than 70% of the Iranian enthusiastic electorate voted for the reform programmes of Mohammad Khatami in the presidency elections, there was a strong conviction about the potential of the former president for wrenching the Iranian politics and society out of the grip of the conservative clerics of the country.

But after a couple of years, the Iranian body of voters who wanted fundamental reforms of the political and the economic systems of the country at that time, became very disappointed, when they had realised that Khatami had failed to deliver the coveted changes. Subsequently, the conquest of the Iranian Islamic Assembly (Majlis) by the conservative forces which was followed by the shock

victory of Mahmud Ahmadinejad in the last summer's Iranian presidency elections can be seen as very salient signs of the end of the governmental reformism and the definitive return of the hardliners to the power.

Taking into the account the geopolitical, ideological, demographic and economic signification of Iran in the Middle East and even the threats that it can present to some other nations in the region, this country has attracted much attention during these years. In these respects, issues such as the production of the atomic bomb, international terrorism, democracy and human rights have been frequently mentioned and discussed. The outcome of these intensive discussions is however an assumption which establishes a logical fact meaning that the country's internal circumstances are intimately connected to what is going on outside the country. According to many analysers



Abbas Vali has indicated the ethnic essentialist historicist nationalistic discourse uses the history in a perpetual way as a unique source of legitimating its nationalistic cause and the prevalence of its claim to power and authority.

and even those who advocate democracy for Iran, a positive evolution of the domestic politics can play a considerable role when it comes to the position of the country within the international community;

at the same time that the recapture of the power by the hardliners and its specific development have become more than any time the subject of the interrogation and concern at the global level that can be posed as following: Which are the salient features of the Iranian national identity and nationalism that prevent the country to opt for a dynamic and productive discourse of identity and nationhood? Does the failure of the governmental reforms which were undertaken under Khatami's management mean the disappearance of all democratic forces in Iran? Which alternative discourse can be the real guideline for the Iranian people if there is a desire for achieving a cohesive and functioning nation, compatible with the democratic principles and the international norms?

The features of the Iranian nationalism

In order to answer these

questions, it is imperative to discern three nationalistic discourses or ideologies in Iran which are periodically contradictory to each-other; at the same time that they co-exist in a concomitant way; at least it is the case of two of them. These three are however an ethnic essentialist historicist nationalistic discourse, an ethnic religious nationalistic discourse and an ethnic democratic nationalistic one. It is important to underline the fact that the historicist and the religious discourses have been co-existed since the establishment of the new Iran which goes back to the beginning of the reign of Reza Shah in 1935.

As Abbas Vali (2003) has indicated the ethnic essentialist historicist nationalistic discourse uses the history in a perpetual way as a unique source of legitimating its nationalistic cause and the prevalence of its claim to power and authority. In the Iranian case, the Persian ethnic is the only "distinctive" group who has seized the historic opportunity to form the framework of the nation and its national institutions. For this kind of nationalism which was the dominant ideology until the Islamic revolution in 1979, the Iranian national identity is the product of the intersection of history and politics; a history which according to this kind of interpretation is more than 2500 years old and which irrespective of some short periods of decadences and external occupations represents nothing than glories and the glance of conquests and splendours for the Iranian people throughout the years. This nationalistic discourse claims a powerful unitary nation-state and thereby it is in its character highly anti-democratic and exclusionary and discriminatory vis-à-vis the non-Persian ethnic groups. Furthermore, it is inclined to use the violence as it did many times before, when there are claims for cultural and political recognition arising from other ethnic and

religious communities. As indicated above, the ethnic essentialist historicist nationalistic discourse is not necessarily antagonistic to the ethnic religious nationalistic discourse. Under the rule of Shah there were perpetual references to the shi'a Moslem confession to such an extent that Mohammad Reza considered himself as the "shadow of God".

The second discourse which is the ethnic religious nationalistic one is characterised more implicitly by the preponderance of the Persian group; but at the explicit level it is covered by a global and totalising discourse with the reference to the Islamic ummah and the Islamic brotherhood, leaving no room for the ethnic and cultural diversity. The climax of this nationalistic ideology was the occurrence of the Islamic revolution of 1979 under the religious leadership of the Ayatollah Khomeini which had enormous impacts on the international geopolitical reality at that time. Furthermore, the shock victory of Mahmud Ahmadinejad in the last summer's presidency elections can be apprehended as a

readopting and renewal of the shi'a set of guidelines and ideology by the Iranian voters, which was abandoned partly during Khatami's presidency. At the level of the political and juridical system, the Velayet-i-Faghih (the supremacy of the clerical institution) takes its full legitimacy and its *raison d'être* from the shi'a doctrine, deeply rooted among the majority of the Iranian population. The ethnic religious nationalistic discourse in the Iranian case has at the practical level transformed into an anti-democratic performance which has affected violently and brutally thousands of political dissidents and many ethnic and religious groups; above all the Kurdish people. The internal national cohesion and the continuity of such nationalism are largely connected to its expansive

character and to the existence of an imagined or a real external enemy which "threatens the values and the land of the Moslems". The ambition of producing atomic weapons can not be analysed irrespective of this ideology and its claims to power.

The third Iranian discourse is a democratic nationalistic one which is strongly limited not only by the lack of democratic traditions and values in the country but also by its own malady which arises largely from the non-ability of this discourse to free itself from the influence of the two other nationalistic discourses, presented above. For example, the project of the governmental reformists under the rule of Khatami and the other so called national-religious democratic forces to achieve restrictions on the power of clerical institutions and hardliner judiciary, was not based on a secular approach with the ambition to successively separate the religion from the politics but still on a religious perspective which endeavoured to attain gradual institutional reform in line with the Islamic constitution and the Islamic values. However, this project has failed because it did not contain substantial materials needed for its own initial objectives. Meanwhile, there are of course other forces who advocate democratic changes in Iran without referring to the Islamic constitution and the Islamic laws; but without being able at

the same time to restraint the impact of the ethnic essentialist historicist nationalistic discourse, strongly exerted on them. When reading the political literature presented by this group, one can ascertain easily that they are rather concerned about the preserving the political and the territorial unity of Iran than a real democratic transformation of the country. In such a case, the notion of democracy has been reduced many times to a pure instrument.

However, it does not mean in any rate that there are not real democratic actors and that we are facing to a situation of a total absence of substantial democratic forces and democratic social movements in Iran. The conclusion should be quite different.

Conclusion

There is a quite strong civil society and an increasing social movement that have been emerging and shaping since the last half on 1990s in Iran. The persisting struggle among women, youths, worker class, journalists, intellectuals, etc., the creation of many civil institutions and associations and the powerful ethnic movement that we can testify above all among the Iranian Kurds and Arabs are the very obvious signs of resistance vis-à-vis the Islamic regime and its authoritarian rule. In a global era when the events occur so rapidly that our imagination is not able to keep up with them, the time is right even for the Iranian nation to opt for a real democratic discourse. Practically, it can imply distancing from the two old-fashioned historicist ethno-religious nationalistic discourses and the "de-ethnification" of the state and its subordinated institutions. Furthermore, the political and institutional recognition of the multiethnic and multicultural reality of the country can be further features of the political development which can put an end to a long period of suffering for those ethnic and religious populations whose identities have been categorically denied since the establishment of the new Iran in 1935. A cohesive and functioning nation which is even compatible to the norms of the international relations can not be achieved through the use of the violence and the exclusionary racist discourses; it is possible to be realised through adopting the universal democratic values.

