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MASSUD BARZANI, PRESIDENT OF IRAQI KURDISTAN, DECLARES THAT NATIONAL RECONCILIATION MUST NOT BE ACHIEVED AT THE EXPENSE OF KURDISH RIGHTS

IN 29 August the President of Iraqi Kurdistan, Massud Barzani, stated in a communiqué that he supported Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's National Reconciliation policy on condition that it did not call Kurdish rights into question. "We are putting all our weight behind the National Reconciliation process, today as we have done since the fall of the old regime", insisted Massud Barzani. "But we observe that certain parties have laid down conditions to the reconciliation process, such as amending the Constitution

and going back on federalism. We are supporting the reconciliation process, but it must not be carried out at the expense of the Kurdish people", continued Mr. Barzani.

This statement came following the national reconciliation meeting with 600 tribal chiefs attended by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki that took place in Baghdad on 26 August to check the daily acts of violence that are bathing the country in blood. "You have gathered here under the banner of national reconciliation. No Iraqi can be excluded from this

project, at this stage — we need all of them, Sunni, Shiite or Christian", declared Mr. Maliki in opening the conference, held in a hotel in the centre of Baghdad. "Iraq will not be rebuilt by violence but by dialogue. To free our country from the presence of foreign troops we need unity and a national consensus", he added before the sheikhs who had come from all over the country. At the end of the meeting the participants signed "a pact of honour" promising, in the framework of the government's reconciliation policy, to put an end to the violence that is daily drenching the country in blood. The tribal chiefs meeting in Baghdad promised "to preserve the country, to bring an end to the carnage and population displacements as well as to arrest

the *takfiris* (Sunni extremists)", stated Sheikh Fa'al Neamah, reading the document finally drafted by the participants. During this meeting, a Sunni Sheikh representing a tribe from Anbar (West) and Salaheddin (North of Baghdad) Provinces, Abderrazak Suleiman, voiced a series of demands, the chief of which were the maintenance of Iraqi unity, the amendment of the Constitution (too federal for his taste), stopping the "*deBaassification*" aimed at former members of Saddam Hussein's party. Federalism is strongly opposed by the Sunnis who are afraid of finding themselves isolated in more barren provinces while the Kurds and the Shiites share the oil resources of the country between them.

Tribes are the backbone of the traditional organisation of Iraqi Arab society. Of varying sizes, sub-divided into clans, led by Sheikhs, the tribes unite individuals sharing kinship bonds, living in the same region but not necessarily of the same faith. The Secretary of State for Dialogue, Akram al-Hakim, considered that "*national reconciliation will succeed if the different groups manage to reach a compromise*".

For his part, the head of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), one of the principal Shiite parties, called on the activists of his party to "*convince people*" the advantages of federalism. "*The best insurance for our people would be to put federalism to work in the Provinces of the Centre and the South, following consultation with the people*", stated Mr. Hakim.

In Washington 15 August, the White House spokesman, Tony Snow, declared for his part that US President, George W. Bush, rejected the idea of partitioning Iraq as a solution for putting an end to the violence shaking the country. "H doesn't back it (...). It's not achievable", pointed out Tony Snow, referring to a proposal, that keeps recurring, of dividing the country into distinct States on the basis of

the different communities. "*Most of the Iraqis don't want it (...) The Iraqis don't consider themselves as Sunnis, Shiites or Kurds but as Iraqis, as descendents of Mesopotamian civilisation*", he said.

Moreover, on 2 August, the Italian Foreign Minister, Massimo D'Alema, announced that Italy had decided to spend 30 million euros "*in the next few months to strengthen the multinational commitment to the reconstruction of Iraq*". "*Italy supports the "International Compact" project jointly launched by UNO and the Iraqi government*", insisted Mr. D'Alema following a meeting in Rome with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Barham Saleh. This project, launched on 27 July with World Bank support is a contract of objectives aimed at creating a framework to enable the reconstruction and development of Iraqi economy and its integration into regional and world economy. "*We also intend to*

take an active part in it to strengthen relations between Iraq and the European Union in the context of international management of the process of stabilisation and peace", Mr. D'Alema pointed out. Even though the new Italian government, led by Romano Prodi, has decided on the total withdrawal of its troops from Iraq by the end of autumn "*this does not mean that Italy is completely withdrawing from Iraq, where it will remain present through economic, political and cultural cooperation*", the Minister added. Mr. Saleh, for his part, thanked Italy for "*its continued support and its sacrifices in Iraq*", where 31 Italian troops have died in three years. "*Besides, the departure of Italian troops does not mean the withdrawal of Italy from the Iraqi scene, where Rome will remain committed regarding its political and economic aspects*", added the Iraqi Kurdish leader.

BAGHDAD: SADDAM HUSSEIN'S TRIAL FOR THE GENOCIDE OF KURDS

THE first hearing of the Iraqi criminal High Court of the Anfal trial opened in Baghdad's high security Green Zone on 21 August. This is Saddam Hussein's second trial and follows on the Dujail case in which he was tried for the massacre of Shiite villagers in the early 80s. The verdict for this trial is expected in the autumn. Saddam Hussein, the former dictator, is being charged with genocide for having ordered the Anfal ("*war booty*" from a verse in the Quran) campaigns that caused over 182,000 deaths in Iraqi Kurdistan in 1982. He refused to plead at the opening of his trial. Seven leaders of the old regime were in the dock with him, including "Chemical Ali". Saddam Hussein is accused of having ordered the "Anfal" campaign and being the person most responsible for the genocide, along with Ali Hassan al-

Majid, better known as "Chemical Ali" because of his propensity for using chemicals. It was the latter who was made responsible for carrying out the orders of his cousin, on his father's side, to "*settle the Kurdish question once and for all*". Sabir al-Duri, Director of Military Intelligence under Saddam Hussein's regime, is charged with being one of the instigators of the Anfal plan and one of its main actors of its execution. Sultan Hashim al-Tai, Saddam's former Minister of Defence was operational commander in the field of the campaign. Hussein Rashid al-Tikriti, assistant operational commander and a member of the Hussein clan, is accused of having actively taken part in the operations while Farhan al-Juburi, Director of Military Intelligence for Eastern Iraq is accused of having actively taken part in the operations.

Public Prosecutor, Munkith al-Farun, listed the eight successive campaigns of Operation Anfal, between 22 February and 6 September 1988. *"A considerable number of chemical weapons were used, thousands of villages razed to the ground and children were separated from their parents. Women were imprisoned, raped and tortured. Only the pride and dignity of the people survived — all the rest was destroyed"*, declared the Prosecutor, who estimated that about 182,000 people were killed. The Public prosecutor tried to show that the dictator was guilty of genocide through ordering this operation, in the course of which 4,500 Kurdish villages were destroyed. *"It is time for humanity to know (...) the extent and scale of crimes committed against the people in Kurdistan"*, declared the Public Prosecutor. *"Entire villages were razed to the ground, as if killing the people was not bad enough"*, he added, showing photographs of the corpses of women and children. This new trial will see between 60 and 120 plaintiffs and witnesses for the prosecution appearing before the court, which will also have to examine over 9,000 documents. Many Kurds have been waiting for this opportunity, as with the Shiites for the Dujail trial. Several thousands of survivors and relatives of the Anfal victims demonstrated in Suleimaniyah on Monday, calling for Saddam Hussein's head.

In the main towns of Iraqi Kurdistan, the population observed five minutes silence in memory of the victims. For those Kurds who survived the campaign of repression, this day represents a victory — but also revives cruel memories. *"I am impatiently waiting to see him come before the court to satisfy my thirst to see him humiliated"*, said Abdallah Mohammed, who lost two sons, three daughters, three brothers and three sisters-in-law in the Anfal campaign of repression. Those who survived the air raids and the

artillery bombardments were killed by the army, according to Human Rights defence organisations. The Kurdish leaders hope to make this trial a high point of national catharsis. The Minister for Human Rights, Yussef Mohammed Aziz, points out that 32 lawyers are due to go to Baghdad to represent the victims and that 42 Kurdish witnesses have been appointed to represent their people. Despite the reservations of some observers, the Kurdish leaders say they are convinced that they can prove the connections between the accused and the horrors committed. Kamal Othman Khoshaw, Public Prosecutor of Kurdistan, states that his team has found proof of Saddam's personal responsibility. *"Amongst the documents is one coming from the Armed Forces General Command to the General Command of the operation. It is signed by all the Chiefs and some members of the Party who were involved"*, he insisted.

The Director of the Anfal Centre in Dohuk, Iraqi Kurdistan, Ali Bandi, considers that Saddam Hussein wanted *"to destroy the Kurdish people"* but recalls that many Western countries *"sympathised"* with the fallen dictator. The Anfal Centre seeks both to collect information and documents on the campaigns of repression in Kurdistan and also to help the victims and their families. *"We say that Saddam Hussein is guilty — but that he is not the only one guilty. Saddam Hussein enjoyed the sympathy of many countries. Germany, in particular, helped him to stay in power. Dutch firms took part — moreover they have been condemned by the Dutch Courts, which we thank for this. The Iraqis used chemical weapons against us, but many major powers, like the United States, kept silent. We paid the price of the cold war. The French sold arms to Iraq and cooperated a great deal with it. They sympathised with the Iraqi regime. However, we also remember Danielle Mitterrand, who defended the Kurds. There is a*

street here in Dohuk named after her and all Kurds have a little place in their hearts for Danielle Mitterrand".

There is also the problem of displaced persons. There are two kinds of displaced persons, those whose villages had been *"Arabised"* by the old regime and those whose villages had been razed during the Anfal campaign. Mussa Ali Bakir, Head of the Internally Displaced Persons Office (IDP) for Dohuk and Mossul states that *"the problem of displaced persons goes far beyond just that of their numbers. ... Saddam displace populations and burned down villages, destroying the economic fabric but also the family cells and the conditions for any possible return"*. *"The international lenders only understand part of the problem. We must resettle the displaced people in their villages, but this is not easy. Security must be guaranteed, the fighting must be stopped, including between Kurds, remove all the mines (Editor's Note: 20 million mines are said to have been dispersed across Kurdistan). Former villages must also be made accessible by road and houses worthy of the name must be built"*, Mussa Ali itemised.

According to analysts, the evidence of the massacre of Kurds at the instigation of fallen dictator Saddam Hussein is solid, but the Special Court that is trying the case is ill equipped for a trial on an issue as complex as genocide. *"The evidence against the old regime is solid but, in view of the events during the trial for the Dujail massacre, the Court does not seem equipped to conduct procedures of such an importance against a Head of State"*, declared Nehal Bhutta, of the New York based Human Rights defence organisation, Human Rights Watch (HRW). *"The proof of genocide lies in the creation by then Iraqi government of forbidden zones in which all the inhabitants are to be executed"*, points out Nehal Bhutta. *"The argument that*

all the inhabitants were rebels is not a credible one as children were amongst the tens of thousands who died in this operation", he added. However, the prosecution seems to have gained maturity and transparency: in particular, the six prosecution witnesses who came to the bar during the third hearing did so unveiled. Human Rights organisations had criticised the excessive use of anonymous witnesses, hidden behind a screen and with their voices artificially disguised, during the Dujail trial.

Around 1986 wide areas of the Kurdish region had been freed from control by a central government increasingly under pressure because of its war with Iran. Early in 1987, Saddam Hussein charged his cousin, Ali Hassan al-Majid, with the task of bringing the region back under central government control. The latter set up "forbidden zones" in the region and regarded all their inhabitants as "insurgents". The villagers were transferred to areas more easily controlled by the Baghdad while the "forbidden zones" were bombed and then invaded. According to the Human Rights defence organisation Human Rights Watch, these campaigns were aimed at exterminating the Kurdish people and not simply counter-insurgency operations as the former regime claimed. *"It must be stressed that the murders were not only committed during the counter-insurgency operations: detainees were killed several days or weeks after the armed forces had reached their objectives",* states HRW in a detailed report on the Anfal campaign, dated 1993, translated and published in French by Karthala publishing under the title of "Genocide en Irak — La campagne d'Anfal contre les Kurdes". "In the end, the issue of intention is at the heart of the concept of genocide", stresses the report, which details documents and eye witnesses showing that this intension did exist, according to the organisation.

The character of Ali Hassan al-Majid is central to this case. He is the subject of several accusations, in particular regarding the use of poison gasses, of mass executions and of setting up detention camps so as to subdue Kurdistan. Ali Hassan al-Majid was Saddam Hussein's henchman in the dirty jobs. Saddam Hussein's right hand man, he was regularly called upon whenever it was a matter of smashing the slightest protest movement against the old regime. A man of appalling brutality, he held the post of general secretary of the Baath Party in the North of Iraq from March 1987 to April 1989, co-ordinating, at the same time, the Army, the police forces and the military Intelligence engaged in repressing the Kurds. In May 1987, he began an implacable scorched earth policy in Kurdistan, with a vast operation of evacuating the population and the livestock, forcibly transported to near the Jordan and Saudi Arabian borders, far from the traditional areas of Kurdish settlement. However, he was also the butcher of the 1991 Shiite uprising, as Commander of the Republican Guards divisions in the South of the country. During the 1990s, he directed a campaign of forced deportation of the inhabitants of the marchlands (Southern Iraq), the population of which

dropped from a million to 40,000. He also supervised the occupation of Kuwait. Thus, from August to November 1990, he was the blood-thirsty governor of that country, invaded by the Iraqi Army, before resuming, in 1991 his position of Minister of Local Government, which he had held since 1989. In February 1996, without the slightest qualms, Mr. Majid executed his own nephew, Hussein Kamel, on his return to Baghdad, after having defected to Jordan and denounced the regime the year before. Member of the Revolution Command Council (RCC, the highest organ of the Baath regime), Chemical Ali was appointed head of the Southern Military region with the task of defending it against the Americano-British offensive, launched on 20 March. In January 2003 he visited Damascus, then Beirut, in the context of a tour of Saddam Hussein's emissaries aiming to put forward Iraq's point of view, one and a half months after the beginning of the UN inspection on the country's disarmament.

The trial will not deal with the most notorious attack, that on the town of Halabja, in March 1988, in which 5,000 people are estimated to have died from gassing. This will be treated as a separate case.

AS VIOLENCE OF ALL KINDS IS INTENSIFYING, THE PKK PROPOSES A CEASE-FIRE TO THE TURKISH GOVERNMENT

ON 23 August, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) proposed a ceasefire to the Turkish government. Murat Karayilan, one of the politico-military chiefs of the PKK declared that "in response to many requests from the government of Iraqi Kurdistan and to statements of the American State Department, we are ready to observe a ceasefire and to chose a peaceful manner of settling the question of the Kurdish people in Turkey". "We are ready for a cease-

fire as from 1 September, World Peace Day. Turkey must be ready to respond to this in a flexible manner", added Murat Karayilan, who declared he was the N°2 man in the Iraqi PKK. "We know that Turkey has expansionist and nationalist ambitions and wants to put pressure on the Iraqi Kurdish leaders. We do not expect them to attack us, but we are ready to defend ourselves", he continued, referring to the thousands of Turkish troops massed along the border.

On 11 August the German-based pro-Kurdish press agency, *Firat*, had reported that Abdullah Ocalan had reported that Abdullah Oclan had announced that he might call on his activists to declare a ceasefire if Ankara displayed "a sincere approach" for a resolution to the conflict. "It is possible to stop the shedding of blood (...). If the government displays a sincere position we will do what is in our power. I will call for a ceasefire and the clashes will cease", the PKK chief is said to have declared. These statements have, apparently been sent to the agency by Ocalan's lawyers who, according to this source, are said to have met him on his island prison of Imrali, where he has been serving a life sentence for treason since 1999. "Our demands are very clear (...). Our children must be educated in their mother tongue and (be able) to listen to the radio, watch television and read the papers" in Kurdish, Abdullah Ocalan is said to have declared. The PKK head is also said to have declared that, if Ankara took "certain measures and gave certain guarantees" following such a ceasefire, the fighters would withdraw to Iraq or another country. "At a final stage, the arms would be laid down for good, in the event that a legal guarantee were given", he is said to have stressed, in what seems to be an allusion to a demand for an amnesty for all members of the PKK. "A democratic dialogue is necessary (to achieve) a permanent solution (...). You cannot finish with the PKK by begging the United States and by cooperating with Iran and Syria", A. Ocalan is said to have considered.

For his part, on 12 August the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, insisted that Iraq would not be a PKK sanctuary, during a telephone conversation with his Turkish opposite number, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, according to the Turkish Press Agency *Anatolia*. Mr. Maliki is further said to have insisted that his government would continue to work

with the United States and Turkey in the common struggle against the PKK. On 2 August, the Iraqi President, Jalal Talabani, had insisted that Iraq "Will do everything possible to prevent the PKK Kurdish separatist organisation from attacking Turkey from Iraqi soil". "I personally intervened on the issue of the Kurdistan Worker's Party and called the Turkish representative to assure him that the Iraqi government has seriously decided to see to it that Iraqi territory ceases to be used by armed groups aimed at neighbouring countries", declared the Iraqi President in the course of a Press conference. "Iraq will do everything possible to prevent the PKK from attacking Turkey from Iraqi soil", he continued, insisting that he had decided to order the closing of the PKK offices. A tripartite meeting between Iraqi, American and Kurdish leaders is due to take place on this subject shortly, Mr. Talabani indicated.

Turkey has long complained at the inaction of Baghdad and Washington regarding the PKK. In July it had threatened cross-border military intervention against PKK camps in Kurdish territory if Baghdad did not act. On 30 August the Turkish Foreign Ministry welcomed the appointment of retired general Joseph W. Ralston as Washington's "special envoy" for co-ordinating the struggle against the PKK. The communiqué issued considered that this appointment constituted an "opportunity" for taking "concrete steps" in the struggle against the PKK. General Ralston has served as Supreme Commander of NATO and several times visited Turkey, which is a member of that organisation.

At least 98 PKK activists and 66 members of the security forces died in the violent actions that have increased this year, according to an AFP tally. Thus a civilian who was collecting firewood in an area of woodland was killed and two soldiers were wounded in a clash that took place on 24 August near the

town of Bitlis. The day before, the local media reported that five members of the PKK had surrendered to the Turkish forces in Silopi, in Sirnak province. A communiqué from the provincial governor indicated that a total of 69 PKK activists had surrendered to the Turkish forces in Sirnak. Moreover, on 20 August the *Anatolia* press agency reported that two PKK Kurdish PKK fighters were killed in fighting in Sivas province, in central Turkey. Two other Turkish soldiers were killed on 15 August fighting the PKK on the heights of Gabar, in Sirnak province. On 13 August, two policemen were killed and another wounded by Kurdish fighters at Tunceli, using a remote controlled mine. This incident occurred near the anti-riot police station in the centre of the city of Tunceli. A Turkish warrant officer was killed on 7 August in his house at Beytussebab, about 50 Km from the Iraqi border, while a fighter was blown apart when the device he was handling exploded, in the same region, according to the local authorities. The day before, three soldiers were killed and eight other people injured during attacks by alleged members of the PKK in a rural area of Gumushane province (North-East Turkey). The provincial governor, Veysel Dalmaz, stated that PKK members enticed an army vehicle into an ambush during which the driver was wounded and lost control of the vehicle. Earlier in the day, a remotely controlled mine had exploded as a goods train passed by, between the provinces of Bingol and Elazig, wounding 4 security guards.

In addition to the PKK, another radical group, the Hawks of Kurdistan Freedom (TAK) on 29 August, claimed responsibility for a triple attack at a seaside resort in South-West Turkey the day before that had wounded 21 people, including 10 Britons, and also another in Istanbul, on the same day, that had wounded six. The TAK also claimed another explosion that occurred the day before in the tourist resort of

Antalya (Southern Turkey) that caused three deaths and about twenty injured. In the statement making their claim, the TAK stated that they had carried out their attack on Antalya in reprisal for conditions of confinement to which Abdullah Ocalan was subjected. On their Internet site, the TAK also indicated, on 23 August, that their members had started forest fires in at least 17 areas to protest against the "fascist attitude" of the Turkish authorities in Turkish Kurdistan. The TAK had also, on 15 August, claimed responsibility for a bomb attack carried out the day before in a tourist quarter of Istanbul that wounded three people. A low powered bomb exploded in the tourist quarter of Sultanahmet. The device, a "percussion bomb" (a term used to describe devices aiming at making more noise than victims) was placed under a bench in Sultanahmet Square, which is surrounded by the Mosque-Museum of Saint Sophia, the Sultanahmet Mosque and the Ottoman Topkapi Palace. "We assume full responsibility for this action (...) whose consequences could have been much bloodier", the Hawks of Freedom for Kurdistan pointed out in a communiqué reported by *Firat* news agency. The explosion took place on the eve of the anniversary of the PKK's launching of armed struggle on 15 August 1984.

Moreover, on 5 August the TAK claimed responsibility for two bomb attacks that caused 17 injured. One bomb, placed before the entrance to the Diyarbekir regional offices of the Republican People's Party (CHP) damaged the building without causing any casualties, according to the authorities. Earlier, TAK had claimed two simultaneous bomb attacks in front of a bank in Adana (Southern Turkey), which injured 17 people. In a communiqué published on their Internet site, the TAK made the point that their attack was an act of reprisal against "the fascist treatment to which President Apo and our people are being subjected". "Our actions

will become more and more violent every day", TAK threatened. The branch of the Oyakbank bank next to the explosion, which is owned by the Turkish Officers Pension Fund, was targeted because it is answerable to the Army the communiqué stressed.

Furthermore, for the last year the Province of Iranian Kurdistan has been the scene of armed confrontations between Iranian troops and activists of PEJAK, an Iranian Kurdish group close to the PKK. A daily paper, *Kayhan*, reported on 21 August that five Iranian Kurds, members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Iran (KDPI) and four PKK fighters had been arrested and three others wounded during a clash. "Five members of the Kurdistan Democratic Party were arrested in the Miandoab region (Western Azerbaijan)" declared Colonel Hossein Rashidi, one of the chiefs of the security forces in Western Azerbaijan, a province of North-West

Iran with a mainly Kurdish population. He added that "weapons and documents have been seized". According to this officer, "three members of the PKK were targeted by the armed forces after the death of a police officer and a member of the Guardians of the Revolution, killed by mines laid in the region". Colonel Rashidi did not specify where these incidents took place.

Rostam Judi, a PEJAK leader, indicated, for his part, that two civilians had been killed on 18 August by Iranian artillery fire on villages in Iraqi Kurdistan that were sheltering Iranian Kurdish fighters. "The Iranian forces shelled (...) eight villages near Qandil, killing two civilians and forcing many of the inhabitants to leave", he declared. In March, April and August, Iranian artillery has targeted positions held by this organisation, causing four deaths and considerable material damage in this mountainous area of Iraq that borders on Iran.

IRAQ: JULY WAS THE BLOODIEST MONTH SINCE THE START OF THE WAR IN 2003

IN its 16 August issue, the *New York Times*, basing itself on figures from the Iraqi Health Ministry and various morgues throughout the country, suggested that the month of July was the most murderous since the beginning of the war in Iraq, in 2003, with a 9% increase compared with June and twice as many deaths as in January. Thus in Baghdad, the Ministry of Health announced that the capital's morgue had received "the bodies of 1,850 people in the month of July, most killed by gunfire", as against 1,350 in June. Ten civilians died every day in Iraq, victims of the sectarian violence that is shaking the country, of bomb attacks in market places, of attacks by regular militia wearing official uniforms or, very often, executed by bullets. Thus, for the month of

July, there was a total of 3,438 violent deaths. This despite the security plan for Baghdad, launched mid-June by the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nuri al-Maliki, with the deployment of over 50,000 members of the Iraqi security forces and US soldiers. The failure of this plan has led to the launching of a "second phase", for which an additional 5,000 US troops have been sent to the capital, considered a priority area. "As Iraqis and, especially, as Shiites we have become the targets of the takfiris (Sunni extremists) and Saddam Hussein supporters", declared Aziz Zein al-Ali, one of the spokesmen of the supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), one of the most important Shiite parties. The US Ambassador to Iraq, Zalmay Khalilzad, has accused senior leaders of the

regime of being linked with the Sunni or Shiite militia. "A great deal of the responsibility lies with the Iraqi politicians, most of whom have links with the militia".

Despite assurances by the US Army that the situation in the capital has improved, at least 77 people, as of 30 August, have been killed in Iraq — 24 of them in a bloody bomb attack aimed at a street market in the centre of Baghdad. A double bomb attack later hit Karrada, a business quarter in the centre of Baghdad, killing three people, including a policeman, and injuring 14 others in a queue at a service station. In other attacks throughout the capital, particularly in the Dura (Southern) and Amariyah (Western) quarters, ten people were killed. However, according to the US Army, violence has diminished by 46% in Baghdad since the beginning of August, as compared with previous months. Since 7 August, nearly 30,000 men, American and Iraqi, have been conducting house-to-house searches in the most dangerous quarters, beginning with Dura, one of the most dangerous, and Gazaliyah (Northern Baghdad). This strategy seems to have born fruit in these districts. The security plan also envisages the setting up of dialogue between Sunni and Shiite community representatives and measures of economic development. Despite exceptional security measures, on 20 August Shiite pilgrims were the target of attacks as they passed through the Sunni quarters of the capital to visit the mausoleum and celebrate the anniversary of the death of Mussa al-Kazim, the seventh of the twelve Shiite Imams, persecuted and killed in 799. His mausoleum lies in a mainly Sunni quarter on the West bank of the Tigris, and twenty pilgrims were killed and 300 wounded in the course of a number of separate attacks as hundreds of thousands of Shiite pilgrims paid tribute, in Baghdad, to their revered Imam. The violence has not diminished in the rest of the country, either in the

"Sunni death triangle" to the South of Baghdad, where corpses of people who have been kidnapped and killed are regularly found, or in the Baaquba region, to the North of the capital, where armed men maintain a reign of terror over the civilians.

In the South, tension is also great following the violent clashes on 15 August between the police and followers of the radical Shiite Ayatollah, Mahmud al-Hassani in the Shiite holy city of Kerbala, where a three-day curfew was decreed.

In Kurdistan, two anti-Kurdish suicide attacks killed 10 people and injured 50 early in the evening of 27 August in Kirkuk. The two attacks, using car bombs, occurred within a few seconds of one another, in the Iskan quarter of Kirkuk. One of the attacks was aimed at a house linked with the memories of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's family. The second occurred in front of the house of Colonel Ahmed Abdallah, a local police chief. Earlier in the day a suicide car bomb attack on the offices of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Jalal Talabani's party,

killed a guard and injured 16 people. Four police, moreover, were shot down about fifty kilometres south of Kirkuk in the course of the day. "This attack bears the hallmark of Baath and Ansar al-Sunna (an extremist Sunni group linked to al-Qaida) terrorists, who see great danger from the PUK", opined Jalal Joha, a local official of this Kurdish party.

Furthermore, nine people, five peshmergas and four civilians, were killed and 51 injured in a suicide attack in Tamim, one of the quarters to the West of the city of Mossul, near one of the biggest offices of the PUK. The week before, these same offices had been sacked by followers of a Basra Shiite sheikh, a certain Yaqubi. They had been incensed by an article by a PUK leader in the Kurdish daily *Al-Ittihad*, which had accused Yaqubi of inciting "hatred against the Kurds". In a communiqué, Jalal Talabani had regretted this article, which could have wounded some people's feelings, adding that he had not been advised of its publication.

HASANKEYF: START OF THE BUILDING OF THE CONTROVERSIAL DAM THAT WILL ENGULF 12,000 YEARS OF HISTORY IN KURDISTAN



ON 5 August Turkey began the construction of a huge dam on the Tigris, despite violent criticisms aroused by this project that will destroy a major historic site force the displacement of several thousands of Kurds. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan took part in the inauguration of the Ilisu Dam construction site, near Dargecit, 45 Km from the Syrian border by laying the first stone. The project has been very controversial from its very inception in the late 70s. At the heart of the criticisms is the little town of Hasankeyf, on the banks of the Tigris — a prosperous city in ancient Mesopotamia, then the last stronghold of Saladin's Kurdish

Ayyubide dynasty, but today poverty stricken and in danger of losing much of its land under the lake formed by the Dam. The many opponents of this project, which also includes the building of a hydroelectric power station, fear not only the disappearance of a unique historic site, where Assyrian, Roman, Kurdish and Ottoman monuments stand side by side but also of a traditional style of life that its Kurdish and Arab population has so far preserved.

To stop the project, some activists have petitioned the European Court for Human Rights (ECHR) in Strasbourg and have called on international lenders to suspend their

loans to the consortium charged with its construction. On the other hand, the supporters of the project consider that it will bring to this poor region the means of developing its economy, in particular by enabling the creation of 10,000 jobs, the development of fishing and the irrigation of arable land. According to Mr. Erdogan, this project is the proof of Ankara's determination to improve the living conditions of the Kurds in Turkey. *"The step we are making today shows that the South-East is no longer neglected (...). This Dam will bring substantial benefits to the local population"*, he declared in the course of the ceremony.

Planned for completion in 2013, the Ilisu Dam will become the country's second largest water reservoir and the fourth largest hydroelectric power station, with an annual production of 3.8 million Megawatts. Its cost is estimated at 1.2 billion euros. According to some officials, 80% of the Hasankeyf archaeological sites, including tombs and some of the underground houses, already worn by the weather and years of neglect, will remain above the water level. The rest, and particularly some mosques, a public bath and the remains of an ancient bridge across the Tigris, will be transferred to an open air museum, which will become, according to Mr. Erdogan's expressed wish, *"a tourist centre"*. The government is determined to preserve the Hasankeyf heritage, added Mr. Erdogan, recalling that 66 million euros had been allocated to archaeological research, already well under way. Some opponents, for their part, consider that even if the monuments are transferred, the integrity of the site and of the original countryside will be irredeemably altered. The government also envisages to pay compensation to the inhabitants of nearly 200 villages that will be expropriated and to build a new town to house the population of Hasankeyf. *"The Dam will destroy 12,000 years of history"*, laments Abdulvahap Kusen, the Mayor of Hasankeyf and mem-

ber of a civic group opposed to the project. *"Neither I nor anyone else will go to live in the new locality. If Hasankeyf is destroyed we will migrate to the big cities"*, he declared.

In 2001, the British Building and civil engineering company, Balfour Beatty PLC had withdrawn from the project, citing *"the environmental commercial and social complexity"*. The Italian building company Impreglio did the same. The official responsible for the hydraulic works, Veysel Eroglu, for his part considered that *"the Dam will give life to the region"* and that *"it should have been done thirty years ago"*. But Maggie Ronayne, an archaeologist

from the Galway National University of Ireland, who has been working on the site since 1999 explains: *"This Dam is a weapon of mass cultural destruction — not only because of the great number of monuments but also of the culture of the people here"*.

The Ilisu Dam is part of the Project for South-Eastern Anatolia (GAP) that envisages the building of 22 dams and 19 hydroelectric power stations on the Tigris and Euphrates. The GAP is sharply criticised by Iraq and Syria, who accuse Turkey of expropriating the water of these two rivers that flow from Kurdistan to the drought-stricken lands of the South.

DAMASCUS: A VISIT BY THE TURKISH FOREIGN MINISTER

ON 22 August, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Abdullah Gul, made a working visit to Syria for discussions with Syrian leaders on the situation in the Lebanon and the Palestinian territories. Mr. Gul met Syrian President Bashar al-Assad as well as his Syrian opposite number Walid al-Mu'Allem, about the Lebanese issue and the problem between the Israel and the Palestinians. On 20 August Mr. Gul had visited Israel and the Palestinian territories to seek a solution to the Palestinian problem. During his meeting with the Palestinian leader, Mahmud Abbas, Mr. Gul pointed out that *"efforts must be made in the region to enable a permanent peace"*. *"The kidnapped Israeli soldiers must be freed and the Palestinians detained in Israeli prisons must also be freed"* the Minister declared, adding: *"Such acts could establish a new climate of peace in the region"*.

For his part, the German Foreign Minister, Walter Steinmeier, had cancelled a visit to Syria planned for 15 August in protest at a speech by President al-Assad that praised

the Hezbollah and threatened Israel. Damascus confirmed that the head of the German Foreign Office had cancelled a visit to Syria, but cited *"divergent views"* regarding UN Resolution 1701, calling for an end to hostilities between Israel and the Hezbollah to explain his change of plan. The German Foreign Minister cancelled his visit to Syria declaring that the remarks made by President Bashar al-Assad constituted a *"negative contribution"*. *"We say (to the Israelis) that after having tasted humiliation in the latest battles, your arms will not protect you — neither your planes, nor your missiles or even your nuclear bombs ... Future generations in the Arab world will find means of beating Israel"*. The Syrian head of State had cried out. The Syrian Foreign Minister did not make any reference to Mr. Steinmeier's remarks about Bashar al-Assad's speech, limiting himself to stating that the visit had been cancelled at Germany's request because of *"divergent views between the two parties on their evaluation"* of the UN ceasefire plan.

IRAN CARRIES OUT A SERIES OF ARMED FORCES MANOEUVRES

On 1 August Iran began a series of major Army manoeuvres throughout the country, supposedly due to continue "for an unspecified time". They are held "to present the new defence doctrine" of the country, according to the Army's spokesman, General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani, as quoted by the public television service. This exercise was announced at a time when the international community had given Iran till the end of August to suspend its uranium enrichment as well as just after the ceasefire in the Lebanon, that Teheran considered a victory for the Hezbollah and, indirectly good news for Iraq. As the General explained, these manoeuvres reflect the present level of tension in the region: "We must be prepared to face any threat and we must be an example for other countries" and "our Army is ready to foil any plots against the Islamic Republic of Iran". These great manoeuvres involve 12 infantry regiments. In April Teheran had launched the most important

military exercises to date, and claimed to have tested several high-tech weapons, including missiles.

At this time, when tension is at its height in the Near East, the Turkish Foreign Ministry obliged two Iranian planes flying to Syria to land in Turkish Kurdistan to search them — apparently for rockets or other military equipment. On 16 August, the mass circulation daily, *Hurriyet*, reported that Iranian planes had been forced to land at Diyarbakir Airport on 27 July and 8 August but that no military equipment had been found. Namik Tan, the Foreign Ministry spokesman confirmed the facts, adding that Turkey was only acting in conformity with international regulations. "Turkey is a country that is careful to act in the context of the rules of international agreements", he declared. "The incident took place in this context". The spokesman added that relations between were not damaged by the incident. "There are no problems between the two countries", he added.

the form of a tick. Mr. Fatihj Shahin, a barrister, has stated that he had filed a complaint with an Ankara Court, on 1 August, against the satirical magazine *Leman* and the caricaturist Mehmet Cagcag for insulting the Prime Minister following the publication of the incriminated cartoon in the 6 July issue of the satirical weekly.

Referring to a tick-borne hemorrhagic fever that had killed about twenty people this year in Turkey, Mehmet Cagcag had drawn Mr. Erdogan in the form of a tick, biting the head of a man and written underneath that he was "making Turkey suffer". Mr. Sahin explained that the Prime Minister was demanding 25,000 Turkish lire (13,000 euros) damages.

The lawyer specified that no date had yet been set for the trial but that it would probably begin when the legal term began in September. This procedure is the fourth undertaken by Mr. Erdogan against caricatures. The Prime Minister has lost all three previous cases. In April 2004 he had sued the Left wing daily paper *Evensel* for a caricature showing him as a horse, mounted by one of his advisors. In February 2005, he sued the daily *Cumhuriyet* for a caricature depicting him as a cat entangled in a ball of wool, then a week later the satirical magazine *Penguen* that had drawn him as a whole series of animals as a gesture of solidarity with *Cumhuriyet*. These legal actions aroused a wave of criticisms in the Turkish press, which questioned the sincerity of the head of the government when he stated that he was determined to increase freedom of expression in Turkey to ease the country's entry into the European Union.

AS WELL AS ...

• **THE TURKISH AUTHORITIES SEIZED OVER A THOUSAND BOOKS TRANSLATED INTO KURDISH BY A SWEDISH NOVELIST.** On 24 August, the Swedish agency TT reported that over a thousand Kurdish-language copies of a famous series of children's books by the Swedish novelist Astrid Lindgren were seized by the Turkish authorities in Istanbul. A cargo intended for libraries in five Kurdish areas in Turkey was seized because it was not accompanied by the required authorisation from the Ministry of Education and also lacked customs documents, according to the authorities cited by TT.

The 1,208 books, including 25 differ-

ent "Fifi Brindacier" titles (a heroine created by Astrid Lindgren) had been shipped in Sweden on 7 August by the Komak association, which is active in promoting education in the Kurdish population of Turkey. The adventures of Fifi Brindacier, a freckle faced girl with wearing a comforter, have been translated into 85 languages and published in over a hundred countries.

• **THE TURKISH PRIME MINISTER SUES A CARICATURIST WHO HAD DRAWN HIM IN THE FORM OF A TICK.** Turkey's Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, has sued a caricaturist and a weekly for a cartoon in which he is shown in

• **THE IRANIAN MINISTER OF CULTURE COMMITS HIMSELF TO "PURIFYING" THE CULTURAL SECTOR IN IRAN.** On 11 August, the Conservative Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad-Hossein Saffar-Harandi, committed himself to eliminating the "signs of immorality in society" and

to “purifying” the cultural sector. He also announced that a reduction in the number of press agencies authorised to work in Iran. “Unfortunately we are seeing inappropriate signs of immorality in present day society” declared Mr. Saffar-Harandi in a speech broadcast on the State radio. “However you now have my word that I will commit myself to a purification of the cultural atmosphere”, he added. “In the near future, we will no longer see an unhealthy cultural production of books, films, music, happenings etc.”, he continued in this speech addressed to a crowd just before the Friday prayer. The Minister then attacked the growing number of press agencies by announcing his intention to reduce them. “I have no other choice than to restrain them, since investment has gone more to quantity than to quality,” he stressed. He explained that 11 press agencies were working with a permit from his ministry, that eight others were waiting to receive it and that between 50 and 60 had begun procedures to secure one.

Mr. Saffar-Harandi took office last summer following the election of the ultra-conservative Mahmud Ahmedinjad as President. Last autumn the authorities had launched a campaign against what they perceived as a “Western cultural invasion” in the State media. But, in fact, this only resulted in a wider spread of traditional or “soothing” music in broadcasts. According to Mr. Saffar-Harandi, the supervision of the cultural sector is a government prerogative that “must not be yielded to society”. “No one has the right to clash with the ideals of the people and the system, including in the cultural domain” because otherwise the religious values of the Islamic Republic “will not survive” he added. The broadcasting and distribution of music, films and books is subject to a procedure of authorisation by the Ministry of Culture, while the press has, for a long time, been subjected to legal attacks.

Furthermore, on 28 August the Iran-

ian media announced that the Iranian authorities were organising an International Conference on the Holocaust (the reality of which they challenge) on 11 December to celebrate World Human Rights Day. This Conference, entitled “Research on the Holocaust: world perspectives” is being organised by the Centre for Political and International Research of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. It is planned to last two days. The themes for discussion are: “the reasons for anti-Semitism in Europe”, “the holocaust seen in the light of historic documents”, “the holocaust, the law and the media” and finally “the holocaust and Zionism”. The ultra-conservative Iranian President, Mahmud Ahmedinjad has cast doubt on the reality of the holocaust on a number of occasions in the last few months. Mid-August the Iranian daily *Hamshahri* and the Iran House of Caricatures organised, in Teheran, an exhibition of caricatures on the holocaust of the Jews during the Second World War. Mahmud Ahmedinjad, who describes the Jewish state as a “tumour” has accused the Europeans of having used the “myth” of the holocaust to create the state of Israel.

• **THE FARCICAL TRIAL OF A TURKISH EXTREMIST, PERPETRATOR OF A BOMB ATTACK ON THE TURKISH STATE COUNCIL.**

The alleged perpetrator of the attack against the Turkish State Council, that caused one death and four injured in Ankara, tried to escape from the courtroom as his trial began on 11 August causing the suspension of the hearing. Alparslan Arslan, a 29-year old lawyer, earlier acknowledged having committed the attack against the highest body of Turkish Judicial administration as well as a grenade attack against the centre-left daily *Cumhuriyet*, giving religious motives. The young man was making his statement when the muezzin’s call to prayer sounded through the courtroom. “That is the Friday call to prayer — I must conform to Allah orders”, repeated the accused several times as the judge refused to let him leave the hearing

to pray. A. Arslan then jumped out of the dock and tried to escape but was rapidly overcome by the gendarmes present in the court. In the face of the disturbance caused by the lawyer’s eight alleged accomplices, on trial with him, the court suspended the hearing for two hours.

Later in the day, Alparslan Arslan made a second, unsuccessful, attempt to escape after hearing the afternoon call to prayer. A. Arslan admitted the attack on the 4th Chamber of the State Council, in which he had opened fire on five judges, killing one and wounding the four others, as well as one of the three grenade attacks on the daily *Cumhuriyet*, in which there were no victims. According to witnesses, the lawyer had burst into the State Council’s courtroom crying “I am a soldier of God!”. “I planned in my head the events at the State Council and at *Cumhuriyet*”, he declared. “I have a nature inclined to violence”. The accused explained that he had acted in reaction to a State Council decision on the wearing of the Islamic headscarf.

This state institution is well known as a stronghold of secularism and for the vigour with which it imposes observance of the ban on wearing the Islamic headscarf in public administrations and universities. Alparslan Arslan pointed out that the attacks on *Cumhuriyet* were aimed at punishing the paper following the publication of a caricature in which a pig (an unclean animal for Moslems) is shown wearing an Islamic headscarf. The lawyer also gave some clues to his political past by explaining that one of his fellow detainees, Suleyman Esen, his intellectual guide as a student, was, at the time, head of a local branch of the Idealist Hearth, an extreme Right organisation. The Public Prosecutor asked for life imprisonment, without any reduction for good conduct, for Alparslan Arslan and four of his alleged accomplices, charged with an attempt to overthrow the Constitutional order, with assassination,

using explosives and breach of the law on firearms. The attack on the State Council had aroused sharp political tension, the opposition accusing the government (whose origins lie in the Islamist movement) of having encouraged the attacker by taking a stand against the ban on the Islamic veil and by criticising the State Council's decision on the subject.

• **THE INTERNATIONAL AUTOMOBILE FEDERATION IS CAUGHT IN A TRAP BY TURKEY'S ATTEMPT TO SECURE OFFICIAL RECOGNITION OF NORTH CYPRUS.** Cyprus intends to complain to the International Automobile Federation (IAF) about the conduct of the giving of trophies of the Formula 1 Turkish Grand Prix on 25 and 26 August. In fact it was a Turkish Cypriot leader, Mehmet Ali Talat, who gave the winning trophy to the Brazilian driver Felipe Massa (Ferrari). Nicosia did not appreciate the fact that the organisers presented Mehmet Ali Talat as President of the "Turkish Republic of North Cyprus" — a political entity that no one recognises except Turkey. The Cyprus Government spokesman, Christodoulos Passiardis, accused the Turkish leaders of having exploited a sporting event for political ends and of having "conned" the IAF. "The Cyprus Government will denounce this unacceptable and provocative bit of play-acting organised by Ankara", stressed Mr. Passiardis.

The Turkish organisers recognised that they had circumvented the IAF rules regarding the prize giving but expressed no regret — far from it. "Such a promotion (of their Cyprus case) is priceless", declared the President of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, Murat Yalcintas to the *Anatolia* press agency. "The Formula 1 race was a splendid opportunity. Cyprus is our national cause." Mr. Yalcintas admitted that, under the IAF regulations, the organisers were obliged to inform the IAF of the identity of the public figures giving

the prizes. "However, as we had the idea of using Mr. Talat in mind, we delayed notification to the utmost. We only gave the information about noon on the day of the race", pointed out Mr. Yalcintas. For his part, Mr. Passiardis stated that the Cyprus Automobile Federation, a member of the IAF, will also be complaining.

Since the Turkish invasion in 1974, Cyprus has been divided into a Turkish-occupied part in the North and a Greek part in the South, governed by the only Cyprus government with any international legitimacy for representing the island as a whole. This is the entity admitted to the European Union in 2004.

• **THE HAZEL NUT CRISIS: OVER 100,000 PEOPLE PROTEST AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT IN TURKEY.** The Turkish government is faced with an unprecedented agricultural crisis provoked by the anger of the hazel nut producers, badly hit by the drop in price of this fruit, of which Turkey has a virtually a world monopoly. There were nearly 100,000 (according to the police — 150,000 according to the organisers) who demonstrated to attack the government's policy at the end of July. The demonstration took place at Ordu, on the Black Sea, (North-East Turkey), where these nuts have been cultivated since immemorial times. The rally developed into a clash with the police and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has sacked the local police chief, considering his attitude towards the demonstrators far too lenient ... The demonstrators burned effigies of Cuneyd Zapsu, a major exporter of hazel nuts and one of Mr. Erdogan's close advisers, who they accuse of deliberately lowering prices.

Between 70 and 80% of the hazel nuts produced in the world come from Turkey, according to Ministry of Agriculture figures and over two million people live mainly from their cultivation in the Black Sea region. This nut represents some 30% of the national agricultural output.

Hazel nut production is greater than world consumption — hence the collapse of the price, which dropped from 6 to 2.5 lire (3.2 to 1.3 euros) — the lowest level in Turkey's history. The small scale producers, who have difficulty is selling their hazel nuts, are in debt to the banks, some have even been ruined. Total losses are evaluated at some 2.5 billion dollars (1.95 billion euros) according to specialist in this field. The Union of hazel nut producers (Fiskobirlik) responsible for sales, cannot pay the amount they owe the cultivators, causing prices to drop still further, and is highly criticised by the government that is pointing to it for its "incapacity" in managing the crisis. But it is the government that is the main target of the peasants. Indeed, the State used to clear Fiskobirlik's deficit (estimated at 100 million dollars — 78 million euros) by buying up the surplus nuts. But, for the last three years the government has refused to bail out Fiskobirlik because of its commitment to the IMF, which has demanded that it reduce its budget expenses.

On 8 August, Mr. Erdogan called a "hazel nut summit" at which several ministers took part to take stock of the situation and it was decided to buy up part of the surplus this year — a decision judged insufficient by the producers. The President of the powerful Ankara Chamber of Commerce, Sinan Aygun, called for a "mobilisation" to prevent this crisis leading to a social scourge in the production areas. His organisation decided to distribute hazel nuts in the schools to dispose of the surplus product. "The hazel nut is the keystone of Turkish economy" he went so far as stating, calling on Turks to consume this "national" fruit in great quantities. The President of the Union of Chambers of Agriculture (TZOB), Semsi Bayraktar, for his part threatened the government with further demonstrations unless he involved himself more in helping settle the crisis.

Revue de Presse
Press Review
Berhevoka Çapê
Rivista Stampa
Dentro de la Prensa

Seule solution durable au conflit, renverser le pouvoir islamiste iranien

LE FIGARO
mardi 1^{er} août 2006

L'Iran veut l'arme nucléaire et elle l'aura ; les mollahs feront tout pour l'en doter. Actuellement, ils ne font que mettre en pratique la célèbre devise de Clausewitz : « La guerre n'est que la poursuite de la politique par d'autres moyens. »

Le 12 juillet dernier, le dossier du nucléaire iranien était renvoyé devant le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU ; le même jour, deux militaires israéliens étaient enlevés par le Hezbollah et sept autres étaient tués, provoquant la réaction de l'État hébreu et une nouvelle guerre au Liban ; ce nouveau conflit provoqua une nouvelle hausse du prix du baril de pétrole qui frôla les 80 dollars ; ces faits sont consécutifs d'une stratégie des responsables iraniens.

Le Hezbollah constitue l'outil des mollahs iraniens pour menacer Israël. L'Iran qui se trouve déjà dans une situation intérieure économique et sociale extrêmement fragile peut difficilement prendre le risque d'affronter directement Israël, ses dirigeants savent très bien que l'armée iranienne serait parfaitement incapable de s'opposer à une offensive aérienne de grande envergure de la part d'Israël, les dégâts pourraient être considérables et cela donnerait lieu à un conflit régional dont l'importance en dépasserait les simples enjeux. L'Iran n'en a pas pour l'instant les moyens.

Pour contourner ce risque, l'Iran arme et finance le mouvement terroriste du Hezbollah à raison de 500 à 800 millions de dollars par an, suivant les estimations. Ce mouvement serait prêt par exemple à entrer en action en cas d'attaques aériennes sur l'Iran destinées à détruire les sites liés au processus d'accession de ce pays à l'arme nucléaire.

L'Iran a fourni au Hezbollah un armement léger classique et des missiles Zelzal d'une portée d'environ 200 km et pouvant emporter une charge utile de 500 kg. La ville de Tel-Aviv se trouve dans le rayon d'action de ces missiles. L'alliance entre l'Iran et la Syrie prend toute son importance dans ce contexte puisque c'est par la Syrie que transitent les armes.

Pendant que le monde a les yeux tournés vers le Liban, l'Iran

Par
Louis Chagnon *



« La hausse du prix du pétrole participe à l'augmentation du financement du Hezbollah »

poursuit tranquillement son chemin vers l'accession à l'arme nucléaire, arme qui devient légitime compte tenu de l'inversion à laquelle nos « élites » intellectuelles et politiques nous ont habitués, transformant les agresseurs en victimes ; Israël agressé par le Hamas puis par le Hezbollah devient l'agresseur selon la propagande arabe et tout renforcement militaire de l'Iran prend toute sa légitimité face à « l'agresseur sioniste ». Le 20 juillet, Téhéran affirmait sa volonté de produire du combustible nucléaire et menaçait de se retirer du TNP, tout cela en pleine crise au Liban alors que le dossier iranien était renvoyé devant le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU.

Toujours dans le même temps, l'Iran en profitait également pour étendre son influence régionale au Turkménistan et au Tadjikistan, avec l'ambition de l'étendre à toute l'Asie centrale, au niveau des républiques de l'ancien état soviétique ; dans le passé, l'Iran avait déjà joué le rôle d'intermédiaire dans le conflit entre l'Azerbaïdjan et l'Arménie.

L'Iran se veut et devient une puissance incontournable, ce qui serait tout à fait légitime pour ce grand pays s'il n'était gouverné par des terroristes fondamentalistes musulmans qui, à force de jouer avec le feu, pourraient bien provoquer une guerre de très grande ampleur.

Cette guerre arrange d'ailleurs bien les affaires de l'Iran par ses répercussions financières. Ce

conflit provoque, comme tout conflit dans cette région, des tensions sur le prix du baril de pétrole, qui connaît une hausse conséquente depuis plusieurs années, passant en 2001 de 24,44 \$ (cours moyen) pour atteindre 38,24 \$ en 2004 ; au début juillet 2005, il dépassait la barre des 60 \$; en avril 2006, c'était la barre des 70 \$ qui était atteinte. Avec le nouveau conflit au Liban, le baril a dépassé les 78 \$ le 14 juillet.

Rappelons que l'Iran se place au 4^e rang des producteurs de pétrole et au second rang des exportateurs de l'Opep. Cette nouvelle envolée du prix du pétrole est bénéfique pour l'Iran qui voit augmenter ses revenus : ainsi la hausse du prix du pétrole finance la poursuite des recherches iraniennes dans le domaine nucléaire et participe à l'augmentation du financement du Hezbollah.

La Syrie a une production pétrolière modeste comparative-ment aux pays du Proche-Orient, elle ne représente qu'approximativement 14 % de celle de l'Iran. Cette production pétrolière est en baisse constante et les réserves devraient s'épuiser dans les prochaines années. Ce qui implique que pour la Syrie l'avenir s'annonce assez sombre puisque les exportations pétrolières représentent une partie importante de ses recettes, d'où l'importance pour elle de l'alliance iranienne. L'arme nucléaire iranienne pourra servir à sanctuariser non seulement le territoire iranien mais aussi celui de la Syrie.

Bref, la puissance des mollahs iraniens se nourrit de la guerre et ceux-ci ont tout intérêt à ce que l'état de guerre persiste au Liban. Dans ce sens, une force de maintien de la paix envoyée par l'ONU serait surréaliste, elle ne résoudrait aucun problème et serait inefficace. La seule solution durable passe par le renversement du pouvoir islamiste iranien et donc un soutien sans faille de la part des occidentaux à l'opposition démocratique iranienne ; la Syrie, qui n'a pas les moyens de l'Iran, serait alors isolée et son bellicisme aurait moins de portée.

** Professeur d'histoire, chargé de recherche au Service historique de la Défense.*

Attacks targeting Iraqi forces kill 36

By Kirk Semple

BAGHDAD: Four separate attacks aimed at Iraqi soldiers or police officers killed at least 36 people Tuesday and wounded at least 45, officials said, as American and Iraqi generals continued to shift security forces to Baghdad as part of their retooled strategy to roll back surging violence in the capital.

In the deadliest of those attacks, a powerful improvised bomb exploded before dawn next to a bus carrying Iraqi troops from Mosul to Baghdad, Iraqi military officials reported. At least 23 soldiers were killed and 20 were wounded in the blast, which occurred near the Sunni Arab bastion of Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown.

Several hours later, a suicide bomber drove a sedan packed with explosives toward a Baghdad bank where Iraqi troops were collecting their monthly pay, but the vehicle exploded before it reached its apparent target when soldiers opened fire on it, military officials said.

The attack killed at least 5 people — 4 civilians and 1 soldier — and wounded at least 14, including 8 civilians, according to the Ministry of Defense.

Loqman Shikhan, the owner of a musical instrument store several blocks away from the bomb site, said he had seen bloodied victims lying in the street and calling for help but receiving none "because people thought there might be another bomb waiting to explode."

Insurgents seeking maximum carnage sometimes detonate secondary bombs after rescue crews have arrived at an attack site.

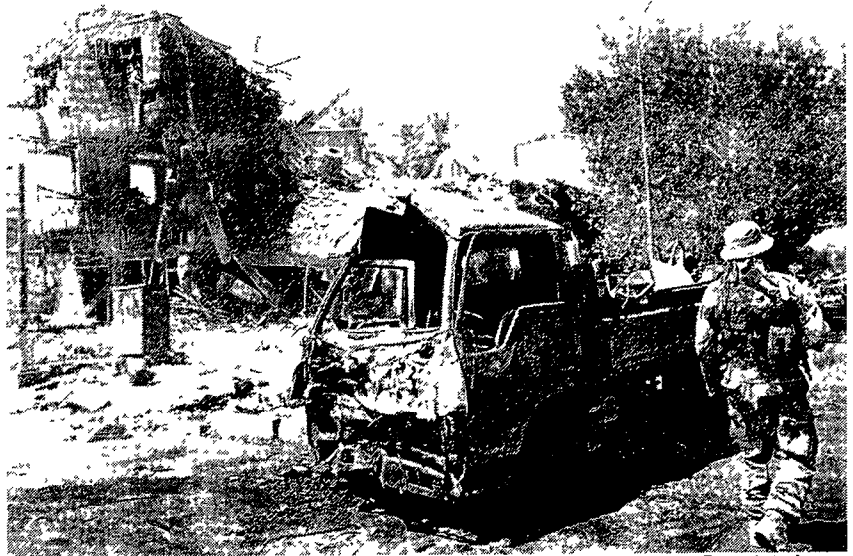
President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki announced an agreement last week to significantly strengthen military presence in Baghdad. The plan calls for adding at least 4,000 U.S. soldiers and 4,000 Iraqi security troops in the capital.

There are now 9,000 U.S. troops, 8,500 Iraqi soldiers and 34,500 Iraqi police officers involved in security operations in Baghdad, according to military officials.

The cycle of sectarian bloodshed has steadily worsened in recent months, particularly in the capital, in spite of Maliki's original security plan, which he instituted shortly after he was installed in office in late May.

According to statistics from the Iraqi government and collated by the United Nations, an average of more than 100 civilians a day were killed in June, many in the capital.

Much of the recent violence has been driven by sectarian death squads, including Sunni insurgents seeking to topple the national government, and by Shiite militiamen operating under the cover of Iraq's Shiite-controlled security forces.



Mohammed Jali/European Pressphoto Agency

An Iraqi soldier guarding the scene of a suicide car bombing Tuesday in the Karrada district of Baghdad. The attack killed at least 5 people and wounded at least 14 others.

The suicide car bomb attack in Baghdad on Tuesday occurred on a busy commercial street in the predominantly Shiite, middle-class neighborhood of Karrada, on the east side of the Tigris River opposite the fortified Green Zone.

It was the second car bomb in five days on that street, which runs through the center of a district that, until recently, had not seen the level of violence that has plagued other neighborhoods. But the latest attack shattered any lingering notion among residents and shop owners that the neighborhood was a bastion of calm.

"The situation is very bad and this street is very dangerous now, but we have no remedy," said Shikhan, the music store owner. "We have to work to feed our families."

In another deadly attack against Iraqi security forces Tuesday, a car bomb apparently rigged to explode next to an Iraqi police patrol near the main hospital in the troubled town of Muqadadiya, north of Baghdad, killed five civilians and a policeman, according to the police in Diyala Province.

In Kirkuk, an improvised bomb exploded next to a police convoy, killing two officers, said Captain Firhad Aziz of the Kirkuk police.

Elsewhere in Iraq, bombs, ambushes and street clashes left at least 3 people dead and 13 wounded, the police said.

Separately, a cameraman for an Iranian television channel was killed in the Amariya neighborhood of Baghdad, said a Ministry of Interior official.

In an U.S. military courtroom in Tikrit, a hearing began Tuesday to weigh the evidence against four soldiers accused of killing three Iraqi detainees during an operation against insurgents in May. The soldiers are accused of releasing the three Iraqis — suspected insurgents detained in a region north of Baghdad — and shooting

the men as they fled.

The hearing will determine whether enough evidence exists to recommend that the four soldiers face full court-martial.

The New York Times

Reporting for this article was contributed by Sahar Nageeb and Qais Mizher from Baghdad, an Iraqi employee of The New York Times from Kirkuk, and Paul von Zielbauer from Forward Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune

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Iraq and the Kurds:

The Brewing Battle over Kirkuk

Executive Summary and Recommendations

Crisis Group Report

As all eyes are turned toward efforts to stabilise Iraq, the conflict that has been percolating in Kirkuk remains dangerous and dangerously neglected. That struggle is equal parts street brawl over oil riches, ethnic competition over identity between Kurdish, Turkoman, Arab and Assyrian-Chaldean communities, and titanic clash between two nations, Arab and Kurd.

Given the high stakes, the international community cannot afford to stand by, allowing the situation to slip into chaos by default. It needs to step in and propose a solution that addresses all sides' core concerns without crossing their existential red lines. The most viable negotiated outcome, which a special UN envoy should mediate between leaders of Kirkuk's communities as well as representatives of the federal government and the Kurdish federal region, would rest on the following provisions:

postponing the constitutionally-mandated referendum on Kirkuk's status which, in today's environment, would only exacerbate tensions; designating Kirkuk governorate as a stand-alone federal region falling neither under the Kurdish federal region nor directly under the federal government for an interim period; equitable power-sharing arrangements between Kirkuk's four principal communities; and continued reversal of past abuses, including managed return of those who were forcibly displaced by previous regimes; facilities and compensation for those brought by previous regimes (including their offspring) who agree to leave voluntarily; resolu-

tion of property disputes via the established mechanism; and a process by which former Kirkuk districts can either be restored to Kirkuk governorate or remain where they are.

To the Kurds, Kirkuk was always a Kurdish-majority region - shared, they readily admit, with other communities - over which they fought and suffered, from Arabisation to forced depopulation to genocide. In their view, the Baathist regime's removal created

an opportunity to restore Kirkuk to its rightful owners. They have done much in the past three years to encourage the displaced to return, persuade Arab newcomers to depart and seize control of political and military levers of power. Their ultimate objective is to incorporate Kirkuk governorate into the Kurdish federal region and make Kirkuk town its capital.

To the other communities, the Kurdish claim is counterfeit, inspired primarily by a greedy appetite for oil revenue, and they view the progressive Kurdish takeover of Kirkuk as an outrage. To the Turkomans, in particular, the growing Kurdish presence has caused deep resentment, as they consider Kirkuk town historically Turkoman (while conceding that the Kurds are a significant urban minority, as well as an outright majority in the surrounding countryside).

The Kurds' rising power has allowed them to create institutional faits accomplis that now threaten to bring the Kirkuk conflict to a vigorous boil. Their prominent role in drafting the constitution in 2005 enabled them to insert a paragraph that ordains a government-led de-Arabisation program in Kirkuk, to be followed by a census and local referendum by

the end of 2007. However, while the constitution puts them formally in the right, neither any of Kirkuk's other communities, significant parts of the central government nor any neighbouring state supports these procedures. Turkey, in particular, has indicated it will not tolerate Kirkuk's formal absorption into the Kurdish region, and it has various means of coercive diplomacy at its disposal, including last-resort military intervention, to block the Kurds' ambitions.

Within a year, therefore, Kurds will face a basic choice: to press ahead with the constitutional mechanisms over everyone's resistance and risk violent conflict, or take a step back and seek a negotiated solution.

Passions may be too high to permit the latter course but, on the basis of two years of conversations with representatives of all Kirkuk's communities, as well as of the governments of Iraq, Turkey, the US and the Kurdish federal region, Crisis Group believes a compromise arrangement that meets

all sides' vital interests is attainable.

Failure by the international community to act early and decisively could well lead to a rapid deterioration as the December 2007 deadline approaches.

The result would be violent communal conflict, spreading civil war and, possibly, outside military intervention. It is doubtful that an Iraq so profoundly unsettled by sectarian rifts and insurgent violence would survive another major body blow in an area where the largest of the country's diverse communities are represented.

Recommendations

To the Government of Iraq:

1. Invite the UN Security Council to appoint a special envoy charged with:

(a) facilitating a negotiated solution to the status of Kirkuk as well as other Kurdish-claimed areas;

(b) raising donor funds for Kirkuk's rehabilitation and ensuring their use on the basis of need, not ethnicity;

(c) monitoring the parties' compliance with any agreements reached, and
(d) reporting regularly to the Security Council.

2. Intensify the process of reversing past abuses in Kirkuk, including:

(a) the managed return of people forcibly displaced by previous regimes;

(b) facilities and compensation for people brought in by past regimes (including their offspring) who agree to leave voluntarily;

(c) resolution of property

disputes via the established mechanism; and

(d) a process by which former Kirkuk districts can either be restored to Kirkuk governorate or remain where they are.

To the Government of Iraq, the Council of Representatives, Representatives of Kirkuk's

Communities and the Kurdistan Regional Government:

3. Indicate the intention to resolve the status of Kirkuk and other disputed territories through peace-



Kurdish voters waiting for entrance into a polling station in Kirkuk

ful negotiations and commit to moderating rhetoric on this matter.

4. Negotiate with the help of the UN special envoy an interim solution for a defined period, perhaps ten years, along the following lines:

(a) broaden the negotiations over Kirkuk to include other Iraqi stakeholders, specifically representatives of civil society, including unions, non-profits and women's organisations,

(b) during the scheduled constitutional review process, the council of representatives would set aside the idea of a referendum for Kirkuk and instead draft a charter dealing specifically with that governorate;

(c) the charter would grant Kirkuk governorate the status of federal region for a defined period of time; and

(d) Kirkuk's four communities would agree on equitable power-sharing arrangements.

To the Kurdistan Regional Government:

5. Prepare the Kurdish public for necessary compromises on Kirkuk and Kurdish national aspirations, including acceptance of Kirkuk governorate as a stand-alone federal region for an interim period.

6. Relinquish directorates in the Kirkuk governorate over which the Kurdish parties took control in April 2003 and cooperate with the UN special envoy in redistributing senior posts in the governorate

on an equitable basis.

To the Government of Turkey:

7. Commit to the peaceful resolution of the Kirkuk question and lower rhetoric on this issue.

8. Facilitate trade, especially in fuel products, between Turkey and northern Iraq, for example by opening a second border crossing in addition to the one at Khabur, and promote investment with the Iraqi Kurdistan region.

9. Commit not to send military forces into Iraq or to undertake measures of coercive diplomacy, such as shutting down the Khabur border crossing or the Baji-Ceyhan pipeline.

To the Government of the United States:

10. Lend full diplomatic and financial support to peaceful resolution of the status of Kirkuk and other disputed territories, make this one of its diplomatic priorities in Iraq, and persuade all Iraqi political actors of the need to pursue a negotiated solution to the Kirkuk question.

(a) Encourage Iraqi political leaders to promote more inclusive and transparent decision-making around the future of Kirkuk by including a broader group of actors in the negotiations.

To the United Nations Security Council:

11. Act on an Iraqi request to appoint a special envoy for Kirkuk, supported by a Security Council resolution outlining the envoy's powers in accordance with proposals in this report.



Massoud Barzani: Kirkuk must be integrated into Kurdistan Region



Kurdistan President Massoud Barzani

In a visit to Suleimaniya, KRG President Massoud Barzani, insisted that Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, for the normalization of Kirkuk, be implemented and stated that Kirkuk should be returned to the Kurdistan Region.

President Barzani also stressed

his commitment to supporting the people of Kirkuk, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

"The brotherhood that is present among all the ethnic varieties in Kirkuk should be aided towards better development, and every effort should be made to prevent those who want to destroy this relationship "

The Globe

General Ali, the Minister of Peshmarga has declared that up until this moment, no Turkish soldier has crossed the border, however if they do, we will defend Kurdistan.

In his first interview with The Hewler Post since his appointment as a Minister of Peshmarga, General Ali talked about the Turkish attempts to enter Kurdistan and made his announcement concerning the border, "we are not interfering in Turkish internal affairs, and will not cross the borders of anyone, therefore we will defend our country with the cooperation of Iraqi Federal Government if anyone tries to cross our borders, our policy was always defense not attack....



Minister of Peshmarga General Ali

"it is correct that Turkey bombed inside Kurdistan and we have recorded the areas names in a report and send it to the Iraqi Government," the Minister said.

The Globe

KRG Minister of Peshmarga: Turkey always offenses (threatens), we will defend Kurdistan by all means

LE FIGARO 2 août 2006

L'armée turque conforte son influence politique

TURQUIE
Les réformes demandées par Bruxelles n'ont limité que partiellement le pouvoir des militaires.

Istanbul

L'ARMÉE a remporté une manche dans sa bataille contre le gouvernement AKP islamo-conservateur. Le général Yasar Büyükanit,

qui appartient à la tendance dure de la hiérarchie militaire, a été nommé lundi chef de l'état-major. Son arrivée à la tête des forces armées confirme le regain d'influence du clan des souverainistes au sein de l'institution et intervient alors que les relations entre l'armée et le pouvoir civil se durcissent en Turquie.

La possible arrivée en 2007 au palais de Cankaya, fief laïc, d'un



La nomination du général Yasar Büyükanit (au centre) à la tête des forces armées est l'un des jalons que pose l'armée en vue de l'élection présidentielle de 2007. AP/SIPA.

chef de l'Etat sorti des rangs de l'AKP, cristallise cette radicalisation. « Si jamais le premier ministre Erdogan brigue la présidence de la République, il y aura des tensions, assène Gündüz Aktan, directeur du think-tank Asam, proche des cercles militaro-nationalistes. L'armée le mettra en garde gentiment. »

Le message semble avoir été bien reçu par le gouvernement et la majorité AKP du Parlement, chargé d'élire le chef de l'Etat : les noms de présidentiables plus consensuels que celui du premier ministre circulent. L'enjeu de cette élection présidentielle est révélateur de l'intervention de l'armée dans le jeu politique turc. Tou-

jours bien présente même si elle s'est faite plus discrète, notamment sous la pression de l'Union européenne.

Depuis 2003, de nombreuses réformes ont été menées pour réduire la capacité d'ingérence politique des militaires. Ainsi, ils ne disposent plus de représentants au sein du conseil de l'audiovisuel ou du YÖK, le puissant organisme de tutelle des universités. Surtout, le Conseil national de sécurité (MGK), sorte de cabinet ministériel parallèle qui permettait à l'état-major d'imposer ses vues au gouvernement, a été démilitarisé. Tout comme la majorité de ses membres, l'actuel secrétaire général du MGK vient désormais de la société civile.

Le processus de négociations d'adhésion à l'UE, soutenu par l'armée, a également réduit la marge de manœuvre des militaires dans le sud-est du pays à majorité kurde. La guerre civile entre les troupes du séparatiste Abdullah Ocalan et l'armée a causé 37 000 morts dans les années 1980-1990. « Bruxelles soumet désormais l'armée à sa discipline en

quelque sorte », explique Umit Cizre, politologue à l'université Bilkent à Ankara. Les combattants du PKK ont repris ces derniers

mois leurs attaques : seize militaires ont été tués ces deux dernières semaines. Pourtant les requêtes d'une partie de l'appareil militaire pour restaurer l'état d'urgence n'ont jusqu'à présent pas trouvé d'écho favorable.

Mais selon Levent Unsaldi, sociologue auteur de l'essai *Le Militaire et la politique en Turquie* (*), les réformes obtenues par Bruxelles n'ont entamé qu'à la marge le pouvoir de l'institution : « Ses intérêts sont intacts, tout comme son droit d'ingérence dans la vie politique et sa mission de

gardienne de l'intégrité de l'Etat. » Le Parlement valide toujours le budget des dépenses militaires sans discuter. Et la loi précisant les obligations de l'armée n'a pas été modifiée.

Son devoir reste « de surveiller et protéger la République établie constitutionnellement ». En 1997, jugeant la laïcité en danger, l'armée avait acculé le gouvernement islamiste de Necmettin Erbakan à la démission. Ce pouvoir législatif est consolidé par un soutien sans faille du public. « Il faut garder à l'esprit que 80 % de la population lui fait confiance, rappelle Mehmet Ali Birand, journaliste vedette à Kanal D et spécialiste des enjeux militaires. Une partie de la société civile soutient cette influence. »

Partage du pouvoir

Après l'assassinat en mai dernier d'un juge du Conseil d'Etat au cri de « *Allaho Akbar!* », des milliers de manifestants avaient scandé dans les rues d'Ankara « *Erdogan, assassin!* » Le chef de l'état-major de l'époque, Hilmi Özkök, était intervenu publiquement pour féliciter ses concitoyens.

L'actualité en Turquie est rythmée par les déclarations des généraux. Mais les interventions de

Büyükanit veut neutraliser les bases arrière des rebelles kurdes dans le nord de l'Irak

Le nouveau chef de l'état-major est un partisan de la manière forte pour lutter contre le PKK. Le général Yasar Büyükanit défend une opération militaire dans le nord de l'Irak afin de neutraliser les bases arrière des combattants kurdes. Lorsqu'il était commandant des forces terrestres turques, il avait critiqué

la mollesse du gouvernement face aux attaques de l'organisation terroriste. Mais dès le début de l'intervention israélienne au Liban, le premier ministre turc a durci son discours en menaçant d'intervenir de l'autre côté de la frontière. L'ambassadeur américain à Ankara a aussitôt prévenu qu'une incursion turque « ne se-

rait pas sage ». Piqué au vif, Recep Tayyip Erdogan a dénoncé le « deux poids deux mesures » de Washington dans la région : « Le terrorisme est partout du terrorisme. Il n'est pas possible d'être d'accord avec une mentalité bienveillante à l'égard des actes d'un pays A, mais qui montre une attitude différente

quand il s'agit d'un pays B. » Ankara demande depuis des mois à son allié américain d'agir dans les montagnes irakiennes. Lors d'entretiens téléphoniques ces derniers jours, George Bush aurait assuré à Erdogan que les troupes américaines allaient agir contre les camps du PKK.

L. M.

l'armée ne se limitent pas au débat public. En novembre 2005, l'explosion d'une bombe dans une librairie pro-PKK à Semdinli, près de la frontière irakienne, avait fait un mort. Les responsables de l'attentat avaient été

pris sur le fait : il s'agissait de deux gendarmes.

Un procureur de Van avait réclamé l'ouverture d'une enquête contre le général Büyükanit, commandant de l'armée de terre, et soupçonné de liens avec les

deux militaires. Le magistrat, accusé par l'opposition d'agir pour le compte de l'AKP, a été radié. « Concernant les enjeux essentiels, le gouvernement est obligé de partager le pouvoir avec les militaires, résume Umit Cizre. Ils ont

toujours le dernier mot sur les sujets sensibles comme Chypre ou les Kurdes. »

LAURE MARCHAND

(*) Ed. L'Harmattan, Paris 2005.

Le Monde

Mercredi 2 août 2006

Un « faucon » favorable à une opération en Irak à la tête de l'armée turque

ANKARA

ENVOYÉE SPÉCIALE

Le gouvernement turc a nommé à la tête de son armée, lundi 31 juillet, un général considéré comme un « faucon ». Cette nomination intervient au moment où la Turquie relance ses menaces d'intervenir dans le nord de l'Irak et s'interroge sur sa participation à une force de paix au Liban.

Conforme aux traditions de rotation à la tête de l'état-major, la nomination du général Yasar Büyükanit, 66 ans, commandant des forces terrestres, pour remplacer le général Hilmi Özkök, un « modéré » qui part à la retraite, met fin à des mois de spéculations sur la volonté supposée du gouvernement turc de s'opposer à cette succession.

Penchants nationalistes

Le gouvernement du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP), aux racines islamistes, fut ainsi accusé par l'opposition « kémaliste », laïciste et nationaliste comme les militaires, d'avoir poussé un procureur de province à demander – audace sans précédent – la mise en examen du futur numéro un de l'armée pour liens occultes avec un gang de provocateurs antikurdes.

Le procureur fut radié, mais le général Büyükanit, bien que déclaré au-dessus de tout soupçon, pourrait réagir en « animal blessé », estiment certains commentateurs, et chercher à se venger.

Le général Büyükanit est, en effet, connu pour ses rigidités sur les questions sécuritaires et ses penchants nationalistes, tout en étant accusé, dans les milieux islamistes qu'il combat, d'être « pro-américain » et « pro-israélien ». Il serait surtout un « faucon » de la lutte contre le PKK – le parti ex-marxiste et séparatiste des rebelles kurdes de Tur-

quie qui opèrent aussi à partir du nord de l'Irak.

En novembre, il critiqua le gouvernement pour son refus d'ordonner une intervention de l'armée contre les camps irakiens du PKK, après des attaques de celui-ci en Turquie. En juillet, des attaques plus meurtrières encore – 15 militaires turcs tués par le PKK en trois jours – ont fait la « une » des médias et amené le gouvernement à menacer d'intervenir « au cas où le gouvernement irakien ou les forces américaines en Irak ne prenaient pas eux-mêmes les mesures nécessaires ».

Mais les Etats-Unis ont, comme toujours, exprimé leur opposition à toute opération « unilatérale » de l'armée turque en Irak, tout en promettant de coopérer avec la Turquie, membre de l'OTAN, contre le PKK – que Washington, de même que l'UE, ont inscrit sur leurs listes d'organisations terroristes. Ces promesses ne furent jamais mises en œuvre, ce qui a nourri le soupçon, en Turquie, que les Etats-Unis veulent préserver le PKK comme une arme contre les régimes d'Iran et de Syrie, où celui-ci est également actif. C'est, en tout cas, ce qu'affirme l'ambassadeur d'Iran à Ankara, qui se félicite de la bonne coopération de la Turquie avec son pays contre le PKK.

Besoins sécuritaires

Dans ce contexte, l'attaque israélienne contre le Liban à la poursuite du Hezbollah a eu pour effet d'accroître l'irritation turque contre Washington, les médias dénonçant la politique de « deux poids, deux mesures » des Américains, qui « encouragent Israël à faire ce qu'ils interdisent à la Turquie ». Le premier ministre turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a dû hausser le ton et tancer les Américains avant d'en obtenir des mises au

point, confirmant que la Turquie « a le droit de se défendre contre le terrorisme ».

Des séries de rencontres entre représentants turcs, américains et irakiens, ainsi que des entretiens téléphoniques entre MM. Bush et Erdogan, ont permis à ce dernier d'assurer à son pays que, cette fois, les Américains seraient décidés à agir contre le PKK. Des membres de l'administration kurde d'Irak entamaient, par ailleurs, leurs premiers entretiens sur le sujet en Turquie.

Mais, c'est surtout l'éventualité d'une participation turque à la force de paix envisagée pour le Liban qui donnerait à M. Erdogan l'espoir de voir les besoins sécuritaires de son propre pays pris finalement en compte.

Pour autant, les militaires turcs – et sans doute le général Büyükanit lui-même, qui doit prendre ses fonctions le 30 août – restaient très prudents sur leur intérêt à se joindre à une force dont les conditions de déploiement sont inconnues, où ils risquent d'être les seuls membres musulmans et de se retrouver au côté uniquement de membres de l'OTAN, estimait-on, lundi, de source diplomatique à Ankara. ■

SOPHIE SHIHAB

Israël en conflit indirect avec l'Iran

ANALYSE

ALAIN FRACHON

Vue d'Israël, la guerre contre le Hezbollah libanais ressemble aux prémices d'un conflit indirect, mais fondamental, avec l'Iran. Elle n'est pas seulement la réponse à l'enlèvement de deux soldats israéliens par la milice extrémiste chiite ; pas seulement une bataille pour empêcher que les miliciens du Parti de Dieu continuent à tirer des missiles de l'autre côté de la frontière ; pas seulement une épreuve de force décidée pour rétablir, aux dépens du pays du Cèdre, un pouvoir de dissuasion que l'armée israélienne estime avoir perdu à la suite des retraits du Liban (printemps 2000) et de Gaza (été 2005).

Derrière la guerre déclarée au Hezbollah, il y a un objectif stratégique plus large : en frappant un groupe que les Israéliens qualifient de bras armé de l'Iran au Proche-Orient, Jérusalem entend interdire à la République islamique de s'imposer comme partie prenante dans le conflit israélo-arabe.

Telle est l'impression qui ressort d'une série d'entretiens avec des responsables politiques et des experts israéliens organisés pour des journalistes européens par le gouvernement de Jérusalem. Le message est, parfois, formulé pour répondre à la critique dont Israël est l'objet : la « disproportionnalité » de sa réplique au double enlèvement du 12 juillet.

Les représailles aux provocations du Hezbollah justifient-elles le nombre des morts civils au Liban et la destruction de tant d'infrastructures civiles dans ce pays – routes, autoroutes, stations-service, centrales électriques, usines, centaines d'immeubles, aéroport, etc. ? La question est détournée, suscitant la réponse suivante : l'ampleur des destructions au Liban doit être appréciée à l'aune du véritable enjeu. L'argument vaut ce qu'il vaut.

Plus sérieusement, Ze'ev Schiff, l'un des commentateurs militaires les plus respectés du pays, écrivait la semaine dernière dans le quotidien *Haaretz* (centre gauche) : « La bataille en cours au Liban va déterminer la place de l'Iran au Proche-Orient. »

Une défaite du Hezbollah (Parti de Dieu) est une défaite pour son créateur et son protecteur iranien. Les Israéliens n'ignorent pas que le Parti de Dieu est une formation solidement ancrée dans la réalité libanaise ; ils savent qu'une majorité des chiites du Liban se reconnaît dans cette formation. Elle ne disparaîtra pas sous l'assaut.

Mais les Israéliens observent que le Hezbollah, dont l'idéologie prône la disparition pure et simple d'Israël, est intrinsèquement lié à la République islamique. Le Hezbollah recevrait, chaque année, quelque 100 millions de dollars d'aide

militaire, dont des équipements les plus sophistiqués ; ses cadres et ses miliciens sont entraînés par un détachement des Gardiens de la révolution iraniens, ouvertement installé dans l'est du Liban ; les missiles qui fondent sur les villes israéliennes sont de provenance iranienne ou syrienne ; nombre de chiites libanais font allégeance au chef suprême de la République islamique, l'ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Cette république n'est pas n'importe quel régime. Il s'agit d'un régime désireux d'acquérir

l'arme nucléaire et dont le président, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, proclame son désir de rayer Israël de la carte. Au Proche-Orient, l'histoire enseigne que les uns et les autres font en général ce qu'ils disent, de Gamal Abdel Nasser à Ariel Sharon...

Personnalité vedette de la vie politique israélienne, Tzippi Livni, la ministre des affaires étrangères, voit le chef du Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, comme un porte-parole de la politique iranienne dans la région. Téhéran affiche volontiers ses objectifs : refus de toute solution négociée dans le conflit israélo-palestinien et donc volonté d'en torpiller la moindre esquisse ; conviction qu'Israël doit un jour disparaître de la région et, en conséquence, que la création d'un Etat palestinien à ses côtés relève du défaitisme.

Pas question, dit M^{me} Livni, de laisser l'Iran révolutionnaire, et ses alliés d'un nouveau front du refus – la Syrie et le Hamas palestinien – devenir une force ascendante au Proche-Orient. Pour les Israéliens, cela passe par une défaite du Hezbollah – claire et nette même si elle n'est que partielle – dans la guerre en cours au Liban.

Depuis le retrait de l'armée israélienne, en mai 2000, sur une ligne frontalière fixée par l'ONU, il n'y a plus de contentieux entre le Liban et l'Etat juif. A quoi étaient donc destinés les quelque 17 000 missiles accumulés par le Hezbollah au Liban ?

A assurer ainsi, dit-on à Jérusalem, une présence iranienne, militaire et politique, dans la région. Objectifs supposés de la République islamique : exercer une influence sur le conflit israélo-arabe, dans un sens bien particulier ; répliquer sur Israël à la moindre attaque contre l'Iran.

Nombre d'Etats arabes pensent comme les dirigeants de Jérusalem. Et, pour la première fois, ils le disent tout haut. L'Egypte, l'Arabie saoudite, la Jordanie, et plusieurs Etats du Golfe ont publiquement dénoncé l'irresponsabilité du Parti de Dieu dans le double enlèvement du 12 juillet.

Et ces pays souhaitent aussi que le Hezbollah ne sorte pas vainqueur de la nouvelle guerre libanaise. Mais ils sont à contre-courant de leurs administrés, d'une opinion arabe largement

acquise au Parti de Dieu, et qui l'est un peu plus à chaque bombardement sur le Liban, à chaque image de civils libanais tués, blessés, terrorisés.

Hassan Nasrallah est en passe de devenir l'un des héros de la rue arabe, territoires palestiniens compris ; l'un de ces messies qui, à la façon de Nasser dans les années 1960 puis de Saddam Hussein en 1990-1991, promettent à intervalle régulier de venger « l'humiliation » des Arabes et de débarrasser les Palestiniens d'Israël, et confortent les illusions et le malheur de ces derniers...

La popularité du chef du Hezbollah n'est pas de nature à rassurer des élites arabes majoritairement sunnites. Au-delà, elles voient confirmée leur crainte de la remontée en puissance d'un Iran qu'elles avaient cru assagi. La présidence Ahmadinejad sonne le réveil de ce mélange détonnant – ultranationalisme et messianisme chiite – qui est le carburant de la révolution iranienne.

Au Caire, à Riyad, à Amman, on redoute la formation d'un « croissant chiite » radical qui part de Téhéran, passe par Beyrouth (avec le Hezbollah) et Bagdad. La chute de Saddam Hussein a libéré un pouvoir chiite irakien souvent proche, très proche du régime iranien. Le rôle que ce « croissant chiite » sera amené à avoir se joue en partie dans cette énième guerre du Liban.

Fondée ou non, cette analyse stratégique est l'un des éléments qui commandera une décision-clé de la part d'Israël : quand accepter un cessez-le-feu ? ■

UN adopts resolution on Iranian atomic work

By Warren Hoge

UNITED NATIONS, New York: The Security Council adopted a resolution Monday demanding that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment and reprocessing work by the end of August or face the possibility of sanctions.

The vote was 14 to 1, with Qatar, the Arab representative on the council, dissenting.

Javad Zarif, the Iranian ambassador, speaking after the vote, rejected it, saying that the council was acting illegally and had no international credibility.

"Iran's peaceful nuclear program poses no threat to international peace and security, and therefore dealing with this issue in the Security Council is unwarranted and void of any legal basis or practical utility," he said.

He mocked the council for its inability to act forcefully in the current war in Lebanon, saying, "You be the judge of how much credibility this leaves for the Security Council. Millions of people around the world have already passed their judgment."

The resolution is the first move by the council on the Iranian nuclear program that is legally binding and carries the threat of sanctions.

It demands the "full and sustained suspension" of nuclear activities, including research and development, by Aug. 31, to be verified by the International Atomic Energy Agency, the UN nuclear watchdog.

It also calls on all countries to prevent the shipment to Iran of any materials that could be used in its enrichment-related activities or ballistic missile programs.



Osamu Honda/The Associated Press

Nassir Abdulaziz al-Nasser, Qatar's UN envoy, voting against the resolution Monday.

"This is the first UNSC resolution on Iran in response to its nuclear weapons program, reflecting the gravity of this situation and the unity and determination of the council," said John Bolton, the U.S. ambassador. "We hope this resolution will demonstrate to Iran that the best way to end its international isolation is to simply give up the pursuit of nuclear weapons."

Iran says its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, but the United States and its European allies argue that it is for bomb-making.

The final text, worked out after objections from China and Russia, noted the need for "further decisions" before any punishments for noncompliance can be adopted. Those measures include economic, travel and communication sanctions, but do not resort to military force.

Vitaly Churkin, the Russian ambassador, stressed this aspect, saying that the measure should be viewed as an interim step and that all the council members had decided was to consider further action if Iran did not cooperate.

Bolton emphasized the punishment aspects of the resolution, saying that if Iran did not comply with the council's demands, "we will be back here in a month looking at a sanctions resolution."

A number of speakers noted the failure of Iran to respond to a package of commercial and technological incentives offered to Iran on June 6 by Britain, China, France, Germany, Russia and the United States.

"Our message to Iran is that we are open to negotiations, the package is quite clear, what it offers and what it requires," said Emyr Jones Parry, the British ambassador. "If Iran is prepared to take those steps, then we can move forward constructively."

Zarif countered that Iran had agreed to give an answer to the package by Aug. 22 and the council was therefore acting prematurely.

Bolton told reporters, "If you look at the entire length of the Iranian nuclear program, some 18 years, this is not exactly hasty action."

The New York Times

International Herald Tribune
Tuesday, August 1, 2006

Iran rejects council's vote

The Associated Press

TEHRAN: President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad on Tuesday rejected a UN Security Council resolution that would give his nation until Aug. 31 to suspend uranium enrichment.

Ahmadinejad insisted that Tehran would pursue its nuclear program.

"My words are the words of the Irani-

International Herald Tribune
Wednesday, August 2, 2006

an nation," he said. "Throughout Iran, there is one slogan: 'The Iranian nation considers the peaceful use of nuclear fuel production technology its right.'"

The Security Council passed a resolution Monday calling for Iran to suspend uranium enrichment by the end of August or face the threat of economic and diplomatic sanctions.

Ahmadinejad said Iran would not give in to threats from the United Nations.

"If some think they can still speak with threatening language to the Irani-

an nation, they must know that they are badly mistaken," he said in a speech broadcast live on state-run television.

"Our nation has made its decision. We have passed the difficult stages," he said. "Today, the Iranian nation has acquired the nuclear technology."

Drafted by Britain, France and Germany with U.S. backing, the resolution follows a July 12 agreement — among the foreign ministers of those four countries, Russia and China — to refer Tehran to the Security Council for not responding to the incentives package.

Lebanon carnage appalls a torn Iraq

By Damien Cave

BAGHDAD: Several prominent Iraqi clerics and officials on Monday delivered their stiffest rebukes yet of Israeli airstrikes, condemning the civilian casualties in Lebanon as shootings, bombings, and mass kidnappings continued to plague Iraq.

Vice President Adil Mahdi, a Shiite, described the Israeli bombing that killed 56 civilians in Qana, Lebanon, as a "massacre."

Echoing earlier statements made by Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, he said Iraqis of all sects were unified against the carnage and eager for a cease-fire.

"These horrible massacres carried out by the Israeli aggression, like what happened at Qana, incite in us a spirit of solidarity," Abdul Mahdi said in a speech at a memorial for Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr al-Hakim, a cleric killed three years ago. "It's time for this nation to stand up and stop this aggression."

Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, a Sunni Kurd, and Hakim's brother Abdul Aziz al-Hakim also spoke at the event in central Baghdad, offering similar condemnations of Israel to a gathered crowd of more than 1,000.

In the Shiite slum of Sadr city, hundreds of women and children marched Monday to protest the Israeli attacks. Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, Iraq's most prominent Shiite religious leader,

also issued a statement Sunday that criticized the "outrageous crime" at Qana.

An anti-U.S. cleric, Moktada al-Sadr, said at a news conference Monday that he was "ready to go to Lebanon to defend it if this would stop the war."

"We, the unified Iraqi people, will stand with the Lebanese people to end the ominous trio of the United States, Israel and Britain, which is terrorizing Iraq, Lebanon, Afghanistan and other occupied nations," he said. "We do not want U.S. enterprises in the Middle East."

The increasingly caustic response to events abroad came on a day rife with continuing violence in Iraq.

In central Baghdad on Monday, about 20 gunmen wearing Interior Ministry uniforms kidnapped at least 12 people from a mobile phone company and eight people from the Iraqi-American Chamber of Commerce and Industry, an Interior Ministry official said.

Witnesses said the gunmen arrived in pick-up trucks with Interior Ministry markings and cordoned off the area, separating female employees from the crowd and taking the men. Among the abducted was Raad Omar, the Sunni director of the Chamber of Commerce, which was founded three years ago to increase trade with the United States.

In a drive-by shooting at 9 a.m. a senior intelligence officer, Colonel Fakhri Jamil Salman, was killed in southwest Baghdad, the Interior Ministry official said. A half-hour later, a car bomb ex-

ploded near a mosque in northern Baghdad, wounding two people.

At dusk Monday, gunmen killed a senior advisor to the Health Ministry, shooting him in his car. Throughout the capital, an additional 21 unidentified bodies were found by the authorities, many of them with gunshot wounds to their heads.

On a highway between Tikrit and Kirkuk, gunmen killed three police officers and kidnapped two others after forcing an ambulance off the road Sunday night, according to an Iraqi police official in Kirkuk. He said that on Monday the police found the bodies of the other two kidnapped officers.

In Mosul, a suicide car bomber struck an Iraqi Army checkpoint, killing four, according to an army official.

Separately Monday, U.S. Representative Tom Cole, a Republican from Oklahoma, warned during a visit to Baghdad that domestic support for a plan to assign U.S. troops to police the capital might be short-lived.

President George W. Bush and Maliki announced the security plan for Baghdad last week in Washington.

"Americans are not going to be very patient about having American forces essentially being police officers and maintaining order between indigenous Iraqi groups," he said.

The New York Times

Now Tehran's choice is cast in starker terms

■ By Henry A. Kissinger

NEW YORK
The world's attention is focused on the fighting in Lebanon and the Gaza Strip, but the context leads inevitably back to Iran.

Unfortunately, the diplomacy dealing with that issue is constantly outstripped by events. While explosives are raining on Lebanese and Israeli towns, and Israel reclaims portions of Gaza, the proposal to Iran of last May by the so-called Six (the United States, Britain, France, Germany, Russia and China) for negotiations on its nuclear weapons program still awaits an answer.

It is possible that Tehran reads the almost pleading tone of some communications addressed to it as a sign of weakness and irresolution. Or perhaps the violence in Lebanon may have produced second thoughts among the mullahs regarding the risks in courting and triggering crisis.

However the tea leaves are read, the current Near Eastern upheaval could become a turning point. Iran may come to appreciate the law of unintended consequences.

For their part, the Six can no longer avoid dealing with the twin challenges that Iran imposes. On the one hand, the quest for nuclear weapons represents Iran's reach for modernity via the power symbol of the mod-

ern state; at the same time, this claim is put forward by a fervent kind of Muslim extremism that has kept the Muslim Middle East unmodernized for centuries.

This conundrum can be solved without conflict only if Iran adopts a modernism consistent with international order and a view of Islam compatible with peaceful coexistence.

Heretofore, the Six have been vague about their response to an Iranian refusal to negotiate, except for unspecific threats of sanctions through the UN Security Council. But if a deadlock leads to de facto acquiescence in the Iranian nuclear program, prospects for international order will dim everywhere. Every country, especially those composing the Six, will face growing threats, be they increased domestic pressure from radical Islamic groups, terrorist acts or the nearly inevitable conflagrations sparked by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

A modern, strong, peaceful Iran, by contrast, could become a pillar of stability and progress in the region.

This cannot happen unless Iran's leaders decide between representing a cause or a nation, whether their basic motivation is crusading or international cooperation. The goal of the diplomacy of the Six should be to oblige Iran to confront this choice.

Diplomacy never operates in a vacuum. It persuades not by the eloquence of its practitioners but

by assembling a balance of incentives and risks. It is often asserted that what is needed in relation to Iran is a diplomacy comparable to that which, in the 1970s, moved China from hostility to cooperation with the United States. But China was not persuaded by skillful diplomacy to enter this process. Rather, China was brought, by a decade of escalating conflict with the Soviet Union, to a conviction that the threat to its security came less from capitalist America than from the growing concentration of Soviet forces on its northern borders.

The contribution of American diplomacy was to understand the significance of these events and to act on that knowledge. The Nixon administration did not persuade China that it needed to change its priorities. Its role was to convince China that implementing its strategic necessities was safe and would enhance China's long-term prospects.

The challenge of the Iranian negotiation is far more complex. Iran has reacted to the American offer to enter negotiations with taunts and has inflamed tensions in the region. Even if the Hezbollah raids from Lebanon into Israel were not planned in Tehran, they would not have occurred had their perpetrators thought them inconsistent with Iranian strategy.

Iran has not yet made the choice of the world it seeks — or it has made the wrong choice from the point of view of international stability.

The crisis in Lebanon could mark a watershed if it confers a sense of urgency to the diplomacy of the Six and a note of realism to the attitudes in Tehran.

Up to now, Iran has been playing for time. The mullahs seem to seek to accumulate as much nuclear capability as possible so that, even were they to suspend enrichment, they will be in a position to use the threat of resuming their weapons effort as a means to enhance their clout in the region.

The Six will have to be prepared to act decisively before the process of technology makes the objective of stopping uranium enrichment irrelevant.

Well before that point is reached, sanctions will have to be agreed on. To be effective, they must be comprehensive; half-hearted, symbolic measures combine the disadvantage of every course of action.

We must learn from the North Korean negotiations not to engage in a process involving long pauses to settle disagreements within the administration and

within the negotiating group, while the other side adds to its nuclear potential.

A suspension of uranium enrichment should not be the end of the process. A next step should be the elaboration of a global system of nuclear enrichment in designated centers around the world under international control — as proposed for Iran by Russia. This would ease implications of discrimination against Iran and establish a pattern for the development of nuclear energy without a crisis with each entrant into the nuclear field.

But it will not be possible to draw a line between nuclear negotiations and a comprehensive review of Iran's overall relations to the rest of the world. The legacy of the hostage crisis, the decades of isolation and the messianic aspect of the Iranian regime represent vast obstacles to such a diplomacy.

If Tehran insists on combining the Persian imperial tradition with contemporary Islamic fervor, a collision with America — and, indeed, with its negotiating partners of the Six — is unavoidable. Iran simply cannot be permitted to fulfill a dream of imperial rule in a region of such importance to the rest of the world.

At the same time, an Iran concentrating on the development of the talents of its people and the resources of its country should have nothing to fear from the United States. Hard as it is to imagine that Iran, under its present president, will participate in an effort that would require it to abandon its terrorist activities or its support for such instruments as Hezbollah, this awareness should emerge from the process of diplomacy. Such an approach would imply the redefinition of the objective of regime change, providing an opportunity for a genuine change in direction by Iran, whoever is in power.

It is important to express such a policy in precise objectives capable of transparent verification. A geopolitical dialogue is not a substitute for an early solution of the nuclear enrichment crisis. That must be addressed separately, rapidly and firmly.

But a great deal depends on whether a strong stand on that issue is understood as the first step in the broader invitation to Iran to return to the wider world. For that very reason, America has an obligation to explore every honorable alternative.

Henry A. Kissinger heads the consulting firm Kissinger & Associates. This article was distributed by Tribune Media Services.

**A modern, strong,
peaceful Iran could
become a pillar of
stability in the region.**

LE FIGARO mercredi 2 août 2006

Liban : la France mise sur l'Iran

POUR Paris, le chemin du règlement de la crise libanaise passe par Téhéran. Le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Philippe Douste-Blazy, a rencontré lundi soir à Téhéran son homologue iranien Manouchehr Mottaki (*notre photo*). Au moment où

l'Iran est accusé de souffler sur les braises au Moyen-Orient, le chef de la diplomatie française a loué le rôle «*stabilisateur*» de Téhéran. Du point de vue de Paris, l'aide de l'Iran est nécessaire pour négocier un cessez-le-feu au Liban et déployer une

force multinationale. La France attend que l'Iran, qui parraine le Hezbollah, manifeste un «*esprit de responsabilité*». Téhéran, pour sa part, attend sans doute des concessions occidentales dans le dossier nucléaire.



L'armée américaine va devoir renforcer son contingent

NEW YORK

CORRESPONDANT

Annoncé la semaine du 24 juillet par George Bush et le premier ministre irakien, Nouri Al-Maliki, lors de sa visite à Washington, le « plan de sécurité » décidé en urgence rend impossible toute diminution de la présence de troupes américaines en Irak avant au mieux l'année prochaine. Il signifie même une augmentation des effectifs dans les prochains mois.

Une mauvaise nouvelle pour le Parti républicain qui espérait bien un début de retrait, même symbolique, à partir de septembre, deux mois avant les élections législatives de mi-mandat.

Le « plan de sécurité » consiste à déployer au moins 4 000 Américains et 4 000 membres des forces de sécurité irakiennes de plus dans les rues de Bagdad pour tenter d'en reprendre le contrôle. Ils viennent s'ajouter aux 9 000 sol-

datés américains, 8 500 soldats irakiens et 34 500 policiers irakiens déjà présents dans la capitale. Après sa nomination en mai, M. Maliki avait voulu envoyer un signe fort.

Les forces irakiennes avaient multiplié les barrages, les points de contrôle mais ont été incapables d'enrayer l'explosion de la violence entre communautés. En juin, 3 169 civils irakiens ont été tués contre 1 778 en janvier.

« Moyens inadéquats »

Le Pentagone a annoncé ce week-end que 3 700 hommes de la 172^e brigade, basée à Fort Wainwright, en Alaska, sont envoyés à Bagdad. Ils disposent de véhicules blindés à huit roues, baptisés Stryker, plus rapides et manœuvrables que les engins à chenilles et plus adaptés aux combats urbains. Cette unité déployée en Irak depuis août 2005, qui

devait rentrer dans les prochains jours, restera au moins quatre mois supplémentaires sur place.

Une décision diversement appréciée par les officiers américains qui estiment que les unités servant plus de 12 mois en Irak perdent une grande part de leur moral et de leur motivation. Ils craignent aussi que renforcer la présence à Bagdad en retirant des soldats du reste du pays crée des difficultés notamment dans des villes comme Mossoul et Kirkouk. Les troupes sont aussi engagées depuis un mois dans une opération pour reprendre le contrôle de Ramadi, place forte de l'insurrection sunnite.

Plusieurs spécialistes estiment que les renforts sont à la fois tardifs et insuffisants. « Les effectifs devraient au moins être le double de ce qui est annoncé. Le plan est bon mais les moyens totalement inadéquats », estime Kenneth Pollack,

ancien membre du Conseil national de sécurité.

Le commandant des forces en Irak, le général George Casey, avait établi un plan de réduction progressive des troupes américaines d'ici à la fin de 2007. Première étape, le nombre de brigades devait être ramené de 14 à 12 en septembre. Environ 7 000 hommes ne devaient pas être remplacés. Il n'en est plus question. Les effectifs de 127 000 soldats américains aujourd'hui en Irak devraient même augmenter de quelques milliers dans les prochaines semaines.

« Avec ce nouveau plan de sécurité, il est impossible de réduire les troupes cette année. Plus grave, on parle maintenant de 2009 pour arriver à rétablir un bon niveau de sécurité dans le pays », explique Anthony Cordesman, du Centre d'études stratégiques internationales. ■

E. L.

Iraqi leader defends his security forces

He sees units in control by year's end

By Damien Cave

BAGHDAD: President Jalal Talabani defended Iraq's security forces Wednesday against accusations of atrocities and said they would assume control of the country from U.S. troops by the end of the year.

"Iraqi security forces are doing their duty, but we still expect more of them," Talabani said at a news conference in Baghdad, surrounded by senior military and Interior Ministry officials. "God willing, by the end of this year we will bring an end to terrorism."

The vote of confidence came only hours before a pair of bombs at a soccer field in a Shiite area of western Baghdad killed at least 11 people, most of them children, and wounded 18. A day earlier, attacks aimed at soldiers and police officers killed at least 44 people. On Monday, commandos wearing Interior Ministry uniforms kidnapped at least 20 people from a pair of offices in central Baghdad.

Talabani, a Kurd, provided no details to support his claim that Iraqi forces would soon provide security for the entire country. U.S. military officials turned over the first of 18 provinces to Iraqi forces on July 13, but U.S. troops continue to fight bloody battles with in-

surgers in Anbar Province, and under a new security plan for the capital announced last week, more U.S. troops are taking the lead.

U.S. military officials did not immediately respond Wednesday to requests for comment on Talabani's timetable.

At the news conference, Talabani seemed primarily concerned with shoring up support for the Iraqi forces. Without naming names, he condemned politicians who have complained that the Interior Ministry employed militias whose members kidnapped and killed with impunity. Calling Iraqi troops "sacred," he said that discussions about the armed forces should be conducted in Parliament, not in the news media.

"Everyone who takes part in the government and the democratic process should speak a certain way when they address the citizens," he said. "They should not talk as they wish and sing outside the flock."

Talabani and Interior Minister Jawad al-Bolani played down accusations against army and ministry officers, suggesting that those who have been seen robbing armored cars and kidnapping dozens of civilians were not representative of the force as a whole.

"We've started to make real progress in establishing and training our employees despite well-known challenges," Bolani said.

Khalef al-Aliyan, a senior member of the largest Sunni Arab bloc in Parliament, dismissed Talabani and Bolani's defense as an effort to shift attention away from rogues who have been allowed to undermine trust in authority.

The violence here sent another shudder through Iraq on Wednesday. The bombs at the soccer field in western Baghdad exploded around 8 p.m., sending horrified families to a nearby hospital to search for their children.

An officer at Al Aamel police station who is leading the investigation said the bombing occurred at a public match between two teams of men mainly in their early 20s. About 12 to 15 children were sitting on benches watching the match on the sidelines.

Just before halftime, two men arrived at the soccer field with sports bags and put them on the ground next to the player's bags. When the players finished the half and sat down on the benches beside the children, the two bags exploded.

In central Baghdad, roadside bombs exploded at an intersection where laborers were seeking work, killing at least three people, an Interior Ministry official said. A roadside bomb killed a soldier in an Iraqi Army convoy on a main road south of Baghdad.

Fifteen other bodies were found throughout Baghdad, many showing signs of torture.

The New York Times

"Merci d'avoir apporté la démocratie au Kurdistan"

Sur des chaînes américaines, on peut voir des spots de pub qui vantent la stabilité du Kurdistan irakien. Le but ? Attirer les investisseurs. Un paradoxe quand le reste du pays est en guerre, note le quotidien turc *Hürriyet*.

DU 3 AU 23 AOÛT 2006

COURNIER
INTERNATIONAL

HURRIYET
Istanbul

L'administration kurde du nord de l'Irak vient de lancer une campagne de publicité audiovisuelle afin d'attirer les éventuels investisseurs américains et anglais dans cette région. Baptisée "Le Kurdistan, l'autre Irak", la campagne, préparée depuis novembre dernier, comprend un certain nombre de films publicitaires, que les chaînes de télévision américaines ont commencé à diffuser depuis la fin du mois de juillet.

Le contrat signé entre la société de communications américaine Russo, Marsh et Rogers (RM&R) et le gouvernement irakien s'étale sur plusieurs années et prévoit un budget

de plusieurs millions de dollars. L'un des films commence par la phrase : "Merci aux Etats-Unis d'avoir apporté à notre pays la démocratie." Ensuite, il explique que le Kurdistan est très heureux d'avoir ainsi obtenu la paix, la sécurité et la laïcité.

Le deuxième film publicitaire est intitulé *L'Autre Irak*. Il rappelle que, en plus des soldats de la coalition, il existe au Kurdistan irakien des

forces de sécurité bien expérimentées. Arabes, Kurdes et Occidentaux sont invités à y passer leurs vacances ensemble. Le film se termine par un "Bienvenue au Kurdistan irakien !"

Dans le troisième film, des investisseurs précisent que la question n'est pas seulement de construire un aéroport : nous apprenons de la bouche d'un ingénieur qui travaille

à cette construction qu'il s'agit également de "bâtir la démocratie". Un technicien ajoute : "Nous investissons dans l'avenir", et un jardinier enchaîne : "Nous cultivons l'espoir." Ensuite, une fillette kurde fait le

point : "Partagez nos rêves !" En invitant les investisseurs américains au Kurdistan, les films montrent la croissance des activités commerciales dans la région, informent que les industries alimentaires produisent des jus de fruits et de la sauce tomate, que les conserveries tournent à plein régime et qu'aucun soldat de la coalition n'y a perdu la vie depuis le début de la guerre en Irak. Il faut noter, finalement, qu'il existe une version de ces films destinée au public britannique. Seule différence : les remerciements des Kurdes y vont cette fois aux Anglais. ■

Londres craint un éclatement de l'Irak

LE FIGARO

4 août 2006

GOLFE

Dans un télégramme confidentiel, l'ambassadeur britannique à Bagdad évoque le spectre d'une guerre civile suivie d'une division du pays.

SUJET TABOU, l'hypothèse d'une partition de l'Irak est abordée sans ambages par William Patey, l'ambassadeur de Grande-Bretagne à Bagdad. Dans un document confidentiel rendu public hier par la BBC, le diplomate confie ses craintes d'une implosion de l'Irak. « Une guerre civile de faible intensité et une division de fait de l'Irak sont plus probables à ce stade qu'une transition réussie et substantielle vers une démocratie stable », estime-t-il. À en croire l'ambassadeur britannique, l'Irak risque de se diviser en plusieurs entités avec, au nord, un territoire contrôlé par les Kurdes, au sud et au centre, dans les régions riches

en réserves pétrolières, une domination chiite, et dans un triangle entourant Bagdad, ville en principe multiethnique et multiconfessionnelle, un bastion sunnite.

« Si nous voulons éviter de tomber dans la guerre civile et l'anarchie, il sera prioritaire d'empêcher les milices chiïtes comme l'armée du Mahdi de devenir un État dans l'État, à l'instar du Hezbollah au Liban », prévient William Patey. Observateur attentif de l'évolution des mouvements armés chiïtes en raison de la présence des forces britanniques dans le sud du pays, il estime que ces dernières sont dans l'incapacité de s'opposer seules aux milices. Et de sommer Londres d'associer l'armée irakienne aux opérations.

Spécialiste de la région, William Patey, qui est arrivé en Irak en juin 2005, a exprimé ses analyses détonantes dans le dernier télégramme adressé au pre-

mier ministre Tony Blair et au Foreign Office avant son départ de Bagdad. Dans ce texte aux allures de testament, le diplomate dresse un constat pessimiste de l'action du couple américano-britannique en Irak. « On peut mettre en doute l'espoir du président Bush de voir établi en Irak un gouvernement capable de fonctionner et de se défendre tout en étant un allié dans la guerre contre le terrorisme. » Puis il conclut : « La situation n'est pas désespérée », mais l'Irak va demeurer « difficile et en désordre » pour « les cinq à dix années à venir ». Selon lui, les « six prochains mois seront cruciaux ».

Le chef du Commandement central américain (Centcom), qui supervise les opérations de l'US Army en Irak, le général John Abizaid, a lui aussi mis en garde, hier, contre un risque de guerre civile en Irak. « Si cela ne s'arrête pas, il est possible que l'Irak sombre dans la guerre civile », a-t-il déclaré lors d'une

audition devant la commission du Sénat sur les forces armées.

Tenues sous le boisseau

Ce n'est pas la première fois que des responsables britanniques ou américains en charge du dossier irakien prennent en compte un possible éclatement de l'État irakien. Hostile à une telle solution, l'ancien ambassadeur américain Peter Galbraith, qui conseille aujourd'hui le président du Kurdistan autonome Massoud Barzani, n'exclut pas cette hypothèse. Mais ces projections sont en général tenues sous le boisseau, car elles vont à l'encontre des discours officiels de George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld ou de Tony Blair. À en croire le premier ministre britannique, l'Irak continue à avancer vers la démocratie malgré les difficultés du moment. Une marche semée de cadavres.

THIERRY OBERLÉ

U.S. generals see growing threat of Iraq civil war

By David Stout

WASHINGTON: Two senior U.S. military commanders said Thursday that the wave of sectarian bloodshed in Iraq has heightened the danger that the country will slide into all-out civil war.

"I believe that the sectarian violence is probably as bad as I've seen it, in Baghdad in particular, and that if not stopped, it is possible that Iraq could move toward civil war," General John Abizaid, the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

A similarly sobering assessment was offered by General Peter Pace, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who said he could envision the present situation "devolving to a civil war."

"But that does not have to be a fact," Pace added. In the long run, he said, peace in Iraq depends not just on American forces helping the Iraqis secure their own country but on Iraqis of different heritages deciding that they "love their children more than they hate each other."

Abizaid, too, said he remained hopeful. "Am I optimistic whether or not Iraqi forces, with our support, with the backing of the Iraqi government, can present the slide to civil war?" he asked rhetorically.

"My answer is yes, I'm optimistic that the slide can be prevented."

But the tone of the hearing, and the continuing carnage in Iraq and the Israeli conflict with the Hezbollah militia in Lebanon, was not one of optimism.

And it coincided with a report from a senior British diplomat in Baghdad who, contradicting official policy in both London and Washington, wrote in a cable to the Foreign Office that Iraq was closer to civil war and partition than democracy.

"The prospect of a low intensity civil war and a de facto division of Iraq is probably more likely at this stage than a successful and substantial transition to a stable democracy," William Patey, who concluded his tour in Baghdad last week, said in an assessment in a final e-cable, the BBC reported.

"The position is not hopeless," the diplomat went on, but he concluded that, for the next decade, Iraq would remain "messy and difficult." (Page 4)

At the hearing in Washington, nothing in the testimony of the commanders, or in that of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, pointed to an early withdrawal of U.S. forces.



Karen Bleier/Agence France-Presse

From left, General Peter Pace, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and General John Abizaid on Thursday at a hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"We can persevere in Iraq, or we can withdraw prematurely, until they force on the judgment of ground commanders.

He counseled patience, from the lawmakers and their constituents.

"Americans didn't cross oceans and settle a wilderness and build history's greatest democracy only to run away from a bunch of murderers and extremists who try to kill everyone that they

war and whether we have to come back to the Congress to get further indication of support," Warner said.

When Abizaid was asked about the prospects for reducing U.S. forces in Iraq by the end of the year, he replied, "It's possible, depending on how things go in Baghdad and how Prime Minister Maliki and his government grab a hold of the security situation."

The general said he was confident that the Iraqis understood that the United States military commitment to Iraq was not open-ended.

In any event, Rumsfeld said it was difficult to gauge the ideal number of troops the United States and its allies should have in Iraq.

Too many troops, and the Iraqis would see them as occupiers, leading to more unrest. Too few, and the violence could spiral out of control.

"There's no rule book," Rumsfeld said.

The valor and sacrifice of America's sons and daughters serving in Iraq was praised by Warner and the committee's ranking Democrat, Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, along with other panel members.

But the session was full of sharp, and occasionally angry, exchanges. For instance, Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton, Democrat of New York, accused Rumsfeld of being inconsistent over the months in his assessment of the military situation.

'I believe that the sectarian violence is probably as bad as I've seen it.'

cannot convert and to tear down what they could never build," he said.

Pace sounded the same theme: "Our enemy knows they cannot defeat us in battle. They do believe, however, that they can wear down our will as a nation."

But the committee chairman, Senator John Warner, Republican of Virginia, signaled that political support for the conflict could be fraying.

"I think we have to examine very carefully what Congress authorized the president to do in the context of a situation if we're faced with all-out civil

us to make a stand nearer home," said Rumsfeld, appearing before the panel after sharp criticism of his earlier intention not to go to Capitol Hill. "But make no mistake: They're not going to give up whether we acquiesce in their immediate demands or not."

Rumsfeld said, as he has many times before, that the possibility of pulling out some American troops depended

"Senator, I don't think that's true," Rumsfeld said, declaring that the senator would have "a dickens of a time" documenting her assertion that he had been overly optimistic in the past.

But Clinton did not back down and she said she would introduce evidence of her assertion into the committee record.

Senator Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat who graduated from West

Point, the U.S. military academy, and served in the army for 12 years, said that under Rumsfeld's tenure the army had been stretched beyond its capacity, a situation he called "a stunning indictment of your leadership."

"It think it's an inaccurate statement," Rumsfeld shot back, going on to say that the situation was more complicated than Reed had suggested.

The New York Times

Iraqi Shiites plan Hezbollah rally

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD: Thousands of Shiite youths, many wearing white shrouds, converged Thursday on Baghdad for a pro-Hezbollah rally.

Moktada al-Sadr, the anti-American Shiite cleric, summoned his followers around the country to attend a mass rally Friday in the Sadr City district in support of Hezbollah as the Shiite guerrilla group battles Israeli forces in southern Lebanon.

Crowds began arriving in the eastern Baghdad neighborhood late Thursday and were housed in mosques and community centers.

U.S. Army vehicles were seen Thursday evening guarding the approaches to Sadr City to prevent clashes between Shiite and Sunni extremists. Some incidents were reported before the militants even made it to the capital.

The police said that one Sadr follower was killed by U.S. troops near Mahmoudiya after he brandished a weapon. U.S. officials said two people were killed after gunmen in three vehicles shot at the guard towers of a U.S. base near the city and American soldiers fired back.

At least 15 Sadr loyalists were wounded when bombs exploded near a busload of them as they traveled through southern Baghdad to Sadr City from southern Iraq, said Captain Firas Geti of the police.

About 20 buses carrying Sadr followers headed to Baghdad from Basra, the country's second-largest city after Baghdad. Most of the passengers were draped in the white shrouds that Muslims use to wrap their dead, a symbol of their willingness to die for Lebanon. The rally was supposed to focus on events in Lebanon rather than in Iraq, where violence between Sunnis and Shiites is on the rise.

The presence of so many young Shiite militants, most of them from Sadr's Mahdi Army, added a new and dangerous element to an already volatile situation in the capital.

In the latest violence, a bomb

strapped to a motorcycle exploded Thursday in the center of Baghdad, killing at least 12 people and wounding 29, the police said.

The blast occurred near a group of fruit and vegetable vendors in a shopping district, said Lieutenant Ahmed Mohammed Ali of the police.

At least 13 other people were killed or were found dead Thursday across the country. Among them were nine whose bodies found floating in the Tigris River, some of them bound and with bullet wounds.

The Sadr City rally was aimed at mustering support for the Lebanese guerrillas and against Israel, and by extension against the United States for failing to force an end to the fighting.

"This is all to demonstrate our support for the Lebanese people and to condemn the aggression of the Israeli enemy," said Saheb al-Ameri, a Sadr aide in Najaf. He added that "they are willing to face death even if it's on the

'This is all to demonstrate our support for the Lebanese people.'

road" to Baghdad.

Buses were plastered with pictures of Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, the Hezbollah leader in Lebanon, who has assumed a hero status in the Arab world for confronting the Israelis. The men on board the buses waved the yellow flags of Hezbollah and carried banners that read "Here we are, Lebanon."

One of the men, Muhannad al-Musawi, said that his group was responding to the call made by Sadr "to express our solidarity with the fighters in southern Lebanon." He added, "We are ready for anything, even to go to Lebanon."

U.S. officials have blamed Sadr's mi-

litia for much of the sectarian violence, which escalated after the bombing on Feb. 22 of a Shiite shrine in Samarra. That attack set off a wave of reprisal attacks against Sunnis nationwide.

■ U.S. soldiers refuse to testify

Four U.S. soldiers accused of murdering Iraqi prisoners refused to testify Thursday at a military hearing, The Associated Press reported from Tikrit.

The four invoked their right not to testify for fear of incriminating themselves at the hearing, which is being held to determine if they should be court-martialed for the May 9 shooting deaths. Instead, their lawyers submitted sworn statements and rested their case on the third day of the hearing.

The accused initially said the prisoners were killed because they tried to escape, but military prosecutors have said they were freed and then shot.

Defense lawyers are arguing that the soldiers were only following the orders of a brigade commander to "kill all military-aged males." A witness, Specialist Micah Bivens, a medic, said he did not recall hearing such an order.

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune

August 4, 2006

The Center Cannot Hold-Iraq

A former U.S. ambassador argues that we must split Iraq into three pieces or face even more bloodshed.

Reviewed by David Ignatius Sunday, August 6, 2006; Page BW01

THE END OF IRAQ

How American Incompetence Created a War Without End

By Peter W. Galbraith

Simon & Schuster. 260 pp. \$26

Last year I asked a retired Israeli intelligence officer what he thought about the American struggle to create a new Iraq. "Forget it," he said with a dismissive wave of his hand. "Iraq is not a real country. Let it dissolve into its parts."

That's pretty much the prescription of Peter W. Galbraith in his elegiac new book, *The End of Iraq*. While Bush administration officials warn of the dangers of giving up on a united Iraq, Galbraith argues that the worst has already happened: The United States has failed to create a stable post-Saddam Hussein government; a bloody civil war is already raging; and the longer the United States tries to maintain the fiction that the Iraqi killing ground is a viable nation, the more people will get killed. Better that Iraq break into its constituent pieces -- an independent Kurdistan in the north, an Iranian-dominated Shiastan in the south, a Sunnistan in the northwest.

"There is no good solution to the mess in Iraq," Galbraith writes. "The country has broken up and is in the throes of civil war. The United States cannot put the country back together again and it cannot stop the civil war. If it scales back its ambitions, it can help stabilize parts of the country and contain the civil war. But the U.S. needs to do so quickly."

A similar argument for letting Iraq divide along its natural fault lines has been made by Sen. Joseph R. Biden Jr., the leading Democratic Party voice on foreign policy, and Leslie Gelb, a former president of the Council on Foreign Relations. And it has become an urgent question for the Bush administration as the situation on the ground in Iraq continues to deteriorate. By Galbraith's account, "staying the course" in Iraq won't just waste American lives and money; it will prevent Iraqis from reaching their own form of stability once the American enterprise collapses, as it inevitably will. "Looking at Iraq's dismal eighty-year history," he writes, "it should be apparent that it is the effort to hold Iraq together that has been destabilizing.

Pursuit of a coerced unity has led to endless violence, repression, dictatorship, and genocide." If partition were an easy process of tearing along neatly perforated lines, it would be hard to argue with the Galbraith-Biden-Gelb proposition. But the reality is that the old Iraq was a genuinely heterogeneous society, with Sunnis and Shiites sharing neighborhoods, inter-marrying, even being members of the same tribes. Saddam Hussein's regime was built on the idea of "Arabism," a shared identity that transcended religious and ethnic fault lines -- by force, if necessary. Still, this ideology was remarkably successful. It's common now for analysts like Galbraith -- who amassed a grim expertise on ethnic bloodshed as the first U.S. ambassador to Croatia -- to say that this Iraqi Arab identity was fused at the point of a gun, but that misses the yearning for modernism and secular society that animated the educated middle class in the old Iraq. The only group that always remained outside this national consensus, in my experience, was the Kurds.

The de facto partition of Iraq has already begun, and we can see what a brutal process it is -- especially around Baghdad, the epicenter of sectarian violence. Sunni neighborhoods are being cleansed of Shiites and vice versa; death squads roam the streets and throw up checkpoints; the squads kidnap, torture and kill those from the "other" sect. Looking at Iraq's ravaged capital, whose security situation even President Bush called "terrible" in late July, it's hard to imagine that things could get worse. But they almost certainly would the moment it became

clear that the United States had given up on a unified Iraq. That would unleash a violent separation of populations and wholesale killing until Sunni, Shiite and Kurdish militias established what they considered defensible boundaries. In this initial separation, tens of thousands could be killed. (The Indian subcontinent still shudders from the trauma of the India-Pakistan partition almost 60 years ago.) Once stable ethnic cantons were established, the killing would diminish but not stop. In Lebanon, the separation phase was followed by 16 years of civil war that included sniping and artillery duels across the "green lines" that separated the cantons.

If things are as bad as Galbraith argues, it's possible that poor, ragged Lebanon may be Iraq's best model. Through all the years of its miserable 1975-90 civil war, Lebanon retained a president, a prime minister, a parliament, a national army. These governing institutions didn't do much; real power had devolved to the militias and to the regional powers -- Israel and Syria -- that had occupied Lebanon. But the idea of a Lebanese nation survived, as has been evident in the way its population has rallied around its tattered flag during recent weeks.

A partitioned Iraq, too, would risk being carved up by the regional powers, with Iran enfolding the Shiites in its wings, Turkey setting brutal red lines for the Kurds lest they try to wrest away a chunk of its own turf, and the Syrians and Jordanians sharing the thankless task of trying to maintain order among the Sunnis. Not an appealing prospect.

Despite its troubling prescription, Galbraith's book is important because, as much as any American, he has lived the Iraq tragedy up close and personal. From the beginning, he focused his attention on the plight of the Kurds, becoming a kind of adviser and emissary of the Kurdish leader (and now Iraqi president) Jalal Talabani. This ardent identification with the Kurdish cause has simplified Galbraith's choices in analyzing the Iraq conundrum: It's clearly good for the Kurds to achieve their historic dream of an independent homeland, but whether this separation is better for other Iraqis -- and for the interests of the United States and its allies -- is a much harder question.

Galbraith's fascination with Iraq began in 1984, when he traveled to Baghdad as a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He had the gumption to press then-Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz about whether Iraq was using poison gas in its war against Iran, and he has been asking good, contrarian questions ever since. Galbraith's passion for the Kurds dates back to 1987, when he traveled to Sulaymaniyah and stumbled upon what he later realized was a genocidal Iraqi campaign, code-named the Anfal, that was meant to break Kurdish political and cultural life. He returned again and again, becoming close to Talabani, Iraqi exile leader Ahmed Chalabi and other key figures in the story. Galbraith sketches some reasons for the American failure in Iraq, such as inadequate planning for postwar Iraq, lack of understanding of the players and their interests, and ongoing policy squabbles in Washington. But such familiar assessments are not the real contribution of his short book, part-memoir, part-policy treatise. Other books, published and on the way, are doing that big analytical task better. The value of Galbraith's account is that it's rooted in his personal experience -- why he loathed Saddam Hussein's regime, why he came to champion the Kurdish cause, how he watched as America turned a war of liberation into a bungled occupation.

I wished for a little more self-criticism -- an appreciation that the Kurds, for all their tragic history, have been part of the problem in post-liberation Iraq, too, by pushing their own agenda for greater self-rule so hard. And I found a bit too easy Galbraith's transition from enthusiast for toppling the old Baathist tyranny to critic of the postwar occupation. The people who got it wrong sometimes seem to include everyone but Galbraith. But those criticisms don't alter my admiration for the book or its author.

So what of the fundamental question he raises? Is the Iraq venture doomed? Are we wasting American and Iraqi lives pursuing a vision of a new, unitary Iraq that has no connection with reality? Should we conclude, as Galbraith does, that Iraq itself is finished? We're all shaped by our personal experiences and contacts in weighing questions like this. When I put the

matter to some of the Iraqis I have met in the 26 years since I first visited that country, they warned that, bad as things are now, they would be even worse if America pulled out suddenly. In the end, accepting partition may amount to accepting reality -- but that's a measure of just how bad things have gotten in Iraq. We made the mistake of rushing into Iraq without thinking carefully enough about the consequences of our actions. We should not make the same mistake in rushing out.

David Ignatius is a syndicated columnist for The Washington Post and the co-moderator of PostGlobal, an online forum hosted by washingtonpost.com.

TURKEY NEEDS PLAN B TO BE READY FOR THE DIVISION OF IRAQ

The New Anatolian

8.8.2006

Turkey should be prepared for a possible division of Iraq and develop a plan B, said a recent report published by a major Turkish think-tank. It urged the Turkish government about the need for a new approach towards the Iraqi Kurds and northern Iraq. The Ankara-based International Strategic Research Organization (ISRO), in a 33-page report on Iraq, criticized Ankara's current policy and gave recommendations on a new approach.

"The ideal choice for Turkey could well be a united Iraq with a strong central government consolidating its power in all parts of the country, including northern Iraq. But developments show the contrary," the report said. "In these conditions Turkey needs plan B."

Stressing that Turkey so far failed to adapt its Iraq policy to the rapidly changing conditions in Iraq and the region, the think-tank warned that without a policy change in the short term Ankara will face grave problems stemming from northern Iraq.

"An independent Iraqi Kurdistan is not necessarily a threat to Turkey. On the contrary, it could be a major advantage," the report claimed.

"The worst scenario for Turkey wouldn't be the division of Iraq but chaos and civil war in northern Iraq, the case now in the south. Should that happen Turkey would then border a region where there's civil war and the [terrorist Kurdistan Workers' Party) PKK could also reap the benefits of that."

The think-tank proposed the Turkish government take new measures to stop alienating the Iraqi Kurds and win their confidence. It made the following 15 recommendations:

- 1) Turkey's wrong policies towards the region are alienating it from the Iraqi Kurds, creating permanent fear among them of Turkey and pushing them to seek support from other countries. Ankara needs to reverse this trend soon by taking confidence-building measures.
- 2) The Iraqi Kurds and Turkmens' interests don't necessarily contradict each other. It's in Turkey's interests to bring the Iraqi Kurds and Turkmens as close as possible. But in Turkey some political groups are deliberately trying to portray differences between the Turkmens and Kurds as being greater than they really are for domestic consumption. But in fact this not only undermines Turkey's interests in northern Iraq but also fuels a greater risk of polarization in Turkey between ethnic Kurds and others.
- 3) Ankara needs to do immediate work for greater economic integration between Turkey and northern Iraq. This would give Turkey more leverage in possible future scenarios in Iraq -- a united or divided one.

4) It's not in Turkey's interests to let other countries increase their domination in this region. But today countries like the U.S., Israel, Britain, Russia and Iran and many others are undertaking extensive intelligence work in the region and trying to influence the Iraqi Kurdish regional government. Added to which, in a large part of the region neither the central Iraqi government nor the Kurdish regional government have effective control. Turkey, meanwhile, has got very behind in increasing its influence in the region.

5) Northern Iraq has become an important element which could influence the domestic balances in Turkish politics. If Turkey doesn't draw up new policies towards the region, the region's impact on Turkey will be more dramatic.

6) Turkey should stop a small security-oriented group from dominating the development and implementation of policies on the Turkmens and Kurds. Such policies have to date failed to unite the Iraqi Turkmens and instead caused further divisions among them.

7) Some Turkish groups and units sent to northern Iraq have abused their financial and political power for their individual interests or ideological goals. It has become clear that northern Iraq is consistently and increasingly becoming a more prominent factor in new crime gangs in Turkey. The weapons and money transfers involved all recent political criminal activities in Turkey, from the Atabeyler gang to the shooting of a Council of State judge, were all from northern Iraq.

8) Some groups in Turkey are carrying out secret talks with foreign intelligence officials in northern Iraq in their personal interests or to achieve their ideological goals.

9) Turkey should introduce new mechanisms and channels to its new approach towards the Iraqi Kurds. These should include improving bilateral contacts, increasing trade volume, offering scholarships to Iraqi Kurdish students and starting TV broadcasting in Kurdish and Arabic.

10) Turkey's new policy towards the Iraqi Kurds should focus on two points. First of all, Turkey has to show the Iraqi Kurds that it isn't hostile towards them and that, on the contrary, it will defend them. Secondly, Ankara has to show its determination to combat the PKK. But Turkey is currently giving counter messages. The majority of Iraqi Kurds seem to perceive Turkey as their main obstacle and, on the other hand, believe Ankara is not strong or courageous enough to combat the PKK.

11) Iraqi Kurds, in the long term, can contribute to Turkey's efforts to combating separatist terrorism but for that there needs to be official authority, the political will and security forces ready to combat terrorism. If central government cannot do so, it should be done by the regional government. Turkey should not miss the larger picture by focusing too much on and limiting itself to the issue of Iraq's territorial integrity.

12) Since Turkey is unwilling to train Iraqi Kurdish militias (peshmerga), this is being done by the U.S. and Israel. But Turkey's military and police are the most experienced in the field and are currently training hundreds of foreign students.

13) Turkey should prioritize avoiding terrorism and civil war spreading to northern Iraq. It should also try to contribute to stopping conflict among the Shiites and Sunnis. The civil war in Iraq is pushing Iraqi Kurds to be more independent of regional countries and more dependent more on foreign powers like the U.S., Israel and Britain.

14) Turkey should make itself and the southeast more attractive to the Iraqi Kurds. Ankara should draw up a plan on that.

15) The Iraqi Kurds shouldn't be perceived as limited to two main groups under Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and Iraqi Kurdistan region President Massoud Barzani. Ankara should develop its relations with other Iraqi Kurdish groups as well and support plurality. Ankara also needs to find ways to talk with the Iraqi Kurd public and not limit communication to just with its leaders.

8 August 2006

UNICEF urges Turkey to teach in Kurdish

Reuters

by Emma Ross-Thomas
07 August 2006

Reuters-The United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) deputy chief urged Turkey on Friday to try out teaching its Kurdish children in Kurdish, saying international examples indicated it would improve educational standards

Speaking Kurdish in public used to be forbidden in Turkey and although bans on broadcasting have been eased in line with demands from the European Union, it remains a highly charged political issue. But Kul Gautam, deputy executive director of UNICEF, said examples from multi-lingual communities from Bolivia to India showed that if children are taught initially in their mother tongue they advance better. "At the very least, I think it should be tried out, it should be experimented, because worldwide experience tells you that it is helpful," Gautam said in an interview.

"This may not be the answer but it could be one answer that I think is worth considering.. an answer to better enrolment, better educational attainment, better completion of school." Turkey has a primary education enrolment ratio of 90 percent, which slumps to 55 percent in secondary school, official data shows. Literacy rates stand at 95 percent for men and 80 percent for women but those figures hide a huge divide between prosperous western Turkey and the poor mainly Kurdish Southeast.

While private language schools can teach Kurdish -- an Indo-European language unrelated to Turkish -- the only language of instruction in schools is Turkish. For decades Ankara denied the existence of the Kurds as an ethnic group and the European Union, which started accession talks with Turkey last year, has criticized Turkey for not doing enough for Kurdish cultural rights.

The Turkish army meanwhile has been battling Kurdish rebels in the mountainous Southeast since 1984.

"I think this is something that needs to be considered not as a political issue but truly as an issue that needs to be considered very thoughtfully... as an educational issue, an academic issue," Gautam said. He also said Turkey, which spends 4 percent of gross domestic product on education compared to a European Union average of 5.5 percent, should invest more on education. "These are not just social welfare schemes, these are the most powerful investment in a country's economic prosperity and national development, so Turkey needs to do more."

L'alliance de la Turquie avec Israël à l'épreuve

La guerre au Liban, unanimement condamnée en Turquie, fait resurgir des sentiments anti-israéliens dans ce pays proche de l'État hébreu.

Istanbul

PEU APRÈS les premières frappes de Tsahal au Liban, des affiches bleues placardées par un groupuscule d'extrême gauche ont fleuri sur les murs du quartier de Beyoglu, repaire de la jeunesse stambouliote. Israël est écrit au milieu avec le sigle du dollar, \$, à la place du « s », celui de l'euro, €, pour remplacer le « e » et une étoile de David au lieu du « a ». Un sous-titre dénonce : « Une expérience humiliante pour l'humanité. »

Le week-end dernier, deux jeunes artistes, piercings et cheveux en bataille, déambulaient au milieu de la foule sur l'avenue d'Istiklal, avec un drapeau américain réalisé avec des fils de fer barbelés.

La guerre au Liban force la

Turquie au grand écart, une position de plus en plus douloureuse à tenir. Tirillée entre, d'un côté, son alliance stratégique avec Israël et, de l'autre, la solidarité avec « ses frères » musulmans et des sentiments anti-américains à fleur de peau.

« On ne peut pas justifier une mentalité qui massacre des innocents, détruit des villes et légitime la violence », martelait le premier ministre, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, à l'occasion de son discours télévisé mensuel à la nation, lundi 31 juillet.

Les avions de Tsahal dans le ciel d'Anatolie

Le gouvernement AKP, islam-conservateur, multiplie les condamnations contre Israël tout en mettant en avant les liens naturels qui l'unissent à la fois aux Palestiniens et aux Israéliens pour se positionner comme médiateur dans le conflit proche-oriental.

Ankara était directement intervenu auprès du président syrien Bachar al-Assad afin d'es-

sayer d'obtenir la libération du soldat israélien Gilad Shalit, enlevé par des brigades armées palestiniennes à Gaza le 25 juin.

La Turquie est le seul pays musulman de la région à entretenir de bonnes relations avec l'État juif. Les deux alliés ont signé un accord de coopération militaire en 1996. Les avions de Tsahal s'entraînent dans le ciel d'Anatolie. Fidèles à ce pacte, quelques rares voix soutiennent le droit à l'autodéfense d'Israël.

« Ne vous laissez pas émouvoir par les images de trois enfants morts », a par exemple lancé Nuri Cilingir, député de l'opposition sociale-démocrate CHP, comparant la lutte menée contre le Hezbollah à celle qui vise le PKK.

Mais ce discours est ultramilitariste. Soixante-dix députés de l'AKP, du CHP et d'Anavatan – le Parti de la mère patrie – ont déjà claqué la porte du groupe d'amitié turco-israélien du Parlement. Avec 263 adhérents sur 550 élus, le cercle parlementaire symbolisait la vigueur des échanges entre les deux pays.

Les déclarations du président AKP de la commission des droits de l'homme de l'Assemblée ne vont pas améliorer les relations. Qualifiant les bombardements de Tsahal de « crimes contre l'humani-

té », Mehmet Elkatmis a livré, jeudi, son analyse : « Il me semble qu'Israël fait payer des gens innocents pour le génocide commis par Hitler. »

Manifestations contre Israël dans plusieurs villes

Des manifestations contre Israël et ses alliés se déroulent dans plusieurs villes du pays. Parallèlement aux réactions anti-israéliennes largement répandues au sein de la population, des théories antisionistes sont colportées notamment par les groupes d'extrême gauche.

La thèse du complot judéo-américano-occidental contre les pays musulmans fait recette depuis l'invasion américaine en Irak. Et dans les cercles islamistes, les rumeurs les plus folles circulent.

Comme les origines prétendument juives du chef d'état-major des armées, Yasar Büyükanit. Ou l'introduction par des randonneuses israéliennes de la fièvre hémorragique de Crimée-Congo, qui a tué une vingtaine de personnes depuis le début de l'année en Turquie.

LAURE MARCHAND

LE FIGARO

5 - 6 août 2006

Turquie: Des attaques attribuées aux Kurdes font 4 morts et 7 blessés



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 6 août 2006 (AFP) - 15h21 - Quatre soldats ont été tués et sept personnes blessées dimanche en Turquie dans des attaques menées par des membres présumés du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), a-t-on appris de source officielle.

Dans une zone rurale de la province de Gumushane (nord-est), des membres de cette "organisation terroriste" ont attiré dans une embuscade un véhicule militaire qui s'est renversé après que le chauffeur eut été blessé et eut perdu le contrôle du véhicule, a indiqué le gouverneur de la province Veysel Dalmaz à l'agence Anatolie.

Quatre soldats ont été tués et trois autres ont été blessés dans l'incident, a-t-il ajouté.

Un responsable local de la sécurité a attribué cette attaque au PKK, qui revendique l'indépendance du Sud-Est de la Turquie à majorité kurde et qui est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie, l'Union européenne et les Etats-Unis.

Plus tôt dimanche, une mine, activée par télécommande, avait explosé sur le passage d'un train de marchandises dans le sud-est, entre les provinces de Bingöl et d'Elazig, blessant 4 gardes de la sécurité.

Des responsables locaux ont attribué l'explosion au PKK, déjà accusé d'avoir commis des attaques similaires dans le passé.

Cinq responsables de la sécurité avaient été tués l'an dernier par l'explosion d'une bombe au passage d'un train dans la province de Bingöl.

Au moins 94 militants du PKK et 62 membres des forces de sécurité sont morts dans les violences qui se sont multipliées cette année, selon un décompte de l'AFP.

Attentat contre un train en Turquie, quatre blessés



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 6 août 2006 (AFP) - 11h49 - Des rebelles kurdes présumés ont fait exploser une mine au passage d'un train de marchandises dans le sud-est de la Turquie, faisant quatre blessés, ont déclaré des responsables locaux.

L'attentat s'est produit sur la voie ferrée reliant les provinces de Bingöl et Elazig. Les autorités soupçonnent le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), une organisation interdite accusée d'attentats similaires dans le passé.

Les victimes sont des gardes qui assuraient la sécurité du train.

La rébellion kurde en Turquie a fait 37.000 morts depuis que le PKK, considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie, les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne, a déclaré la lutte armée en 1984.

Depuis le début de l'année, 94 militants du PKK et 58 membres des forces de l'ordre ont été tués dans le sud-est de la Turquie, selon un décompte de l'AFP.

Quatre morts dans un attentat près du parti du président irakien



MOSSOUL (Irak), 15 août 2006 (AFP) - 09h45 - Quatre personnes ont été tuées et 36 blessées mardi dans un attentat suicide à Mossoul (370 km nord de Bagdad) près d'un des plus gros sièges du l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan du président irakien Jalal Talabani, a-t-on appris auprès de la police.

L'explosion s'est produite vers 10h30 locales (6H30 GMT) à Tamim, un des quartiers à l'ouest de la ville de Mossoul.

Kurde, Jalal Talabani est à la tête de l'Etat irakien dont le gouvernement d'union nationale dirigé par le Premier ministre chiite Nouri Al-Maliki est composé de diverses tendances à la fois politiques, ethniques et religieuses.

Turkish anti-Semitism

An unfamiliar spectre rises

ANKARA

Turks have mostly treated the Jews well, but now anti-Semitism is growing

SHORTLY before General Yasar Buyukanit took up his job as chief of the general staff, some detractors looked for a trick to thwart his elevation. Finally they had it: they bombarded their compatriots with text messages, saying the general was a Jew, whose real aim was to steer Turkey even closer to Israel. In the event, the country's president, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, took the rare step of personally confirming the general's appointment rather than waiting for it to be formally announced by the top brass on August 1st.

In a Muslim country whose elite, at least, has taken pride in the absence of anti-Semitism, it is a worrying sign that (falsely) describing a general as Jewish should be seen as a way to block his path. Another recent warning was a finding by the Pew Global Attitudes Survey that only 15% of Turks look kindly upon Jews.

Such attitudes are a far cry from the period 500 years ago when Ottoman sultans embraced Iberian Jews fleeing persecution from Catholic monarchs. Indeed, for most of the Ottoman era, Jews were a prosperous, loyal minority, conscious that Christian regimes would have been worse.

Under the Turkish republic proclaimed in 1923, the Jews have had some bad experiences—such as the crippling “wealth tax” slapped on all non-Muslims during the second world war; those who could not pay went to labour camps. But for most of the time since then, the 25,000-strong Jewish minority has quietly flourished.

Now, an increasing number of them say they no longer feel secure in Turkey, and recently some community leaders have received death threats. Fears began growing after Turkish suicide bombers with links to al-Qaeda blew up two synagogues in Istanbul in 2003. Although there has been no more terror, there are signs of anti-Jewish sentiment gaining ground—such as the hate literature that is appearing on bookstalls across the country.

Meanwhile, some weird conspiracy theories are going around Turkey. Last week, Recai Kutan, the leader of the Islamist Saadet Party, called on the government to examine claims that Israeli women mountaineers might be responsible for an outbreak of a hemorrhagic fever which has (in reality) killed more than 20 people.

One Islamic newspaper quoted people in Bolu province as saying the Israeli visitors had smuggled in giant ticks to transmit the disease to humans. Also, mainstream

dailies have speculated that behind Rupert Murdoch's recent acquisition of the conservative broadcasting station TGRT lie plans to promote Zionism and America.

Turkish officials note that such paranoia abounds all over the Muslim world. They also insist that if some ordinary Turks have negative feelings, it is towards Israeli policies and not towards Jews in general.

Meanwhile Turkey's defence ties with Israel, which mainly involve the secular elite and are hence somewhat fenced-off from populist complaint, are still robust. Whether that would remain the case if Turkey commits troops to peacekeeping in Lebanon—at a time when an ever-increasing share of Turks put their Muslim identity first—is another story. ■



Buyukanit beats the conspirators

Iran

The regional manipulator

TEHRAN

It is unclear on what terms Iran would press Hizbullah to cease its fire

WHAT odds on the foreign minister of a prickly Middle Eastern state sitting down to a cordial chat with his opposite number from a Western country that had, only a few hours before, sponsored a UN Security Council resolution threatening sanctions against his country? On July 31st, the day the council said it would take “appropriate measures” if Iran did not suspend its controversial uranium-enrichment plan, Manuchehr Mottaki, Iran's foreign minister, and Philippe Douste-Blazy, his French counterpart, spent two hours in Iran's embassy in Beirut, discussing ways to end the Israeli-Lebanese conflict. Iran has not hidden its satisfaction that France and others in the EU regard it as a potential agent for peace, and not solely, as Israel and the Americans see it, as an instigator of aggression.

The welcome Mr Mottaki received in Beirut from his Lebanese counterpart, and the contrast it presented with Lebanon's cancellation of a planned visit by Condoleezza Rice, the American secretary of state, boosted Iran's self-esteem. Since the conflict started, Iran has basked in the widespread—but only partially true—perception that the Islamic Republic, as a founder (with Syria) of Hizbullah in the 1980s, and latterly as its suspected main arms supplier, can orchestrate events in the eastern Mediterranean. Yet behind Iran's bravado there is worry at the way the war is going.

This week's intensification of Israel's assault on Hizbullah is raising fears in Tehran that Israel may eventually succeed in its stated aim of mauling Hizbullah militarily. That would be bad news for the Iranians, who, they have repeatedly made clear, see Hizbullah as a proxy agent of retaliation should Israel or America blast its nuclear installations.

Iran's hardline president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, reacted to the UN resolution by vowing that Iran would not give up enrichment, though the Iranians say they will reply, on August 22nd, to a



The anti-Zionist president

package of incentives offered by the UN Security Council's five permanent members plus Germany. That response may include a proposal, short of full suspension, designed to appeal to veto-holding waverers such as Russia and China, who have long been loth to impose sanctions.

In Tehran, officials adhere to the government line that Iran provides only humanitarian and moral support to Hizbullah. A conservative newspaper reported that Hizbullah had politely turned down requests from “private” Iranians that they be allowed to join the fighting. There is no sign that Iran has helped send over the suicide battalions that were formed earlier this year.

All this is in character. Since the beginning of George Bush's war on terror, Iran has perfected the art of manipulating regional conflicts while remaining officially above the fray. Iran's new challenge is to maintain Hizbullah as a deterrent to military action against the Islamic Republic. The trouble is that any multinational force would be deployed to ensure that the militia cannot strike Israel. The biggest question, then, is whether Iran would accept such a condition. At present, it seems unlikely.

The New York Review August 10, 2006

Mindless in Iraq

Peter W. Galbraith

**Cobra II:
The Inside Story of the Invasion
and Occupation of Iraq**

by Michael R. Gordon and
Bernard E. Trainor.
Pantheon, 640 pp., \$27.95

**Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar
Reconstruction Fiasco**

by David L. Phillips.
Perseus, 292 pp., \$15.95 (paper)

**The Foreigner's Gift:
The Americans, the Arabs,
and the Iraqis in Iraq**

by Fouad Ajami.
Free Press, 378 pp., \$26.00

**Ahmad's War, Ahmad's Peace:
Surviving Under Saddam,
Dying in the New Iraq**

by Michael Goldfarb.
Carroll and Graf, 354 pp.,
\$15.95 (paper)



Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld autographing a road sign for US soldiers, Baghdad, April 30, 2003

1.

On the evening of March 19, 2003, Marine Lieutenant Therral "Shane" Childers was part of the first American contingent to cross the Iraq-Kuwait border. His battalion's mission was to secure the key oil installations in the south and it went smoothly. Iraqi army defenses were weaker than expected and the oil wells had not been sabotaged. Childers's platoon easily seized its objective, a pumping station, after which Childers ordered his men into their AAVs (amphibious assault vehicles) in preparation for clearing enemy fighters from the nearby bunkers. In their minutely chronicled account, *Cobra II: The Inside Story of the Invasion and Occupation of Iraq*, Michael R. Gordon, the chief military correspondent for *The New York Times*, and Bernard E. Trainor, a retired Marine Corps lieutenant general, describe what happened next:

...a tan Toyota pickup truck began to approach Childers's platoon. The Marines were not sure how to respond. They had been primed to take on Iraqi T-72s, T-55s, and Soviet-designed armored personnel carriers called BMPs—not a lone civilian vehicle. The truck picked up speed until it was bounc-

ing across the desert at seventy miles per hour. As it flew by the platoon, civilian-clad Iraqis in the cab and bed of the truck raised AK-47s and sprayed the Marines with automatic weapons fire. Most of the bullets ricocheted off an AAV, but one bullet struck Childers just below his flak jacket. . . . When the day's toll was tallied, the Marines determined that Childers had been the first allied soldier killed as a result of enemy action in the war.

Childers's death was a signal that the Iraq war was not going as planned. The CIA had prepared the troops to expect the most formidable opposition to come from Saddam Hussein's Republican Guards and Special Republican Guards, predominantly Sunni Arab soldiers whose officers at the highest level were members of Saddam's own Tikriti clan. The American

troops were told that the demoralized regular army, filled mostly with Shiite conscripts, would not put up much of a fight and that civilians—at least in the Shiite south—would welcome the Americans as liberators. But as they headed northward, the US troops faced the problem of figuring out which

civilians were harmless and which were potential killers or suicide bombers. Before long, the civilian fighters became America's most formidable adversary and the tactics used to protect troops—shooting at vehicles approaching checkpoints too rapidly or convoys too closely—killed thousands of Iraqis and made enemies of hundreds of thousands.

Many of these irregulars were Saddam Fedayeen, a paramilitary organization led by Uday, his eldest son. Uday, an alcoholic and sadistic serial rapist, was considered too depraved by Saddam to be his successor and that legacy—along with responsibility for the defense of Baghdad—fell to Uday's younger brother Qusay. As it turned out, however, Uday's organization provided the most effective opposition to the Americans (the Republican Guards did not put up much of a defense of the capital) and went on to form the nucleus of the insurgency.

I arrived in Baghdad on April 14, 2003, as a news consultant to the ABC investigative team led by veteran correspondent Brian Ross. Before the war, Brian had broadcast a profile of Uday and one of his first stops in Baghdad was at Uday's riverside resi-

dence. In the basement of the partially looted house, Bob Baer, another ABC news consultant, made an astounding discovery, the personnel files of the Saddam Fedayeen. We were amazed that the military had not inspected or secured such an obvious location and Ross made that point in his exclusive ABC news report. ABC had no further use for the files; but they had obvious value for the US military, containing as they did the names and addresses of the main resistance to the American occupation. I had thought Ross's story would arouse some interest from the Pentagon but there was no reaction. I then called Paul Wolfowitz's office to

see if I could discreetly hand them over to the military. (I was still a professor at the National War College—and therefore an employee of the Defense Department—and wanted to help.) Although we were staying in the Ishtar Sheraton, a hotel guarded by US troops, the deputy secretary of defense could not arrange to pick up these documents before I had to leave the city.

In the three weeks that followed Baghdad's fall, I was able to go unchallenged into sites of enormous intelligence value, including the Foreign Ministry, Uday's house, and a wiretap center right across Firdos Square from the Sheraton. All three had many sensitive documents but even weeks after the takeover, the only people to take an interest in these document caches were looters, squatters (who burned wiretap transcripts for lighting), journalists, Baathists, Iraqi factions looking for dirt on political rivals, and (possibly) agents of countries hostile to the United States. Neither the Pentagon nor the CIA had a workable plan to safeguard and exploit the vast quantities of intelligence that were available for the taking in Iraq's capital. That information might have provided insight into terrorism—the Foreign Ministry documents included names of jihadists who had come into Iraq before the war—and the incipient insurgency.

As we now know, Donald Rumsfeld's Pentagon had no plan to secure any part of Baghdad. It allowed looters to destroy Iraq's governmental infrastructure and to steal thousands of tons of high explosives, weapons, and radioactive materials. And it had no coherent plan for Iraq's postwar governance. Gordon and Trainor retell very clearly the now familiar story (at least to readers of *The New York Review*) of the Bush administration's cavalier ap-

proach to postwar issues, but they also provide stunning insights into one key aspect of the postwar failure: the decision to invade Iraq with too few troops.

In late 2001, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld convened a meeting in his Pentagon office to discuss the military campaign beyond Afghanistan. Lieutenant General Greg Newbold, the deputy for the Joint Chiefs of Staff responsible for operations, outlined OPLAN 1003-98, the contingency plan for invading Iraq. Gordon and Trainor describe what happened next:

As Newbold outlined the plan, which called for as many as 500,000 troops, it was clear that Rumsfeld was growing increasingly irritated. For Rumsfeld, the plan required too many troops and supplies and took far too long to execute. It was, Rumsfeld said, the product of old thinking and the embodiment of everything that was wrong with the military.

[The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Richard B.] Myers asked Rumsfeld how many troops he thought might be needed. The defense secretary said in exasperation that he did not see why more than 125,000 troops would be required and even that was probably too many. Rumsfeld's reaction was dutifully passed to the United States Central Command.

Trainor and Gordon present a devastating picture of Rumsfeld as a bully. Convinced of his own brilliance, Rumsfeld freely substituted his often hastily formed opinions for the considered judgments of his military professionals. He placed in the most senior positions compliant yes-men, like Myers, and punished those who questioned his casually formed judgments. He enjoyed belittling his subordinates. The day before the September 11 attacks, Rumsfeld told a Pentagon meeting that the Defense Department bureaucracy “disrupts the defense of the United States and places the lives of men and women in uniform at risk.” His aides followed the same approach: Steve Cambone, Rumsfeld's closest aide, “jested that Rumsfeld thought the Army's problems could be solved by lining up fifty of its generals in the Pentagon and gunning them down.”

It was not an atmosphere that encouraged dissent. But to their everlasting discredit, America's most

senior generals did not stand up to Rumsfeld as he and his ideologues went forward with a plan they knew would not work—at least not until after they had retired and the consequences of Rumsfeld's careless approach were blindingly obvious. Greg Newbold, who later joined the revolt of the generals, told Gordon and Trainor of his reaction to Rumsfeld's 125,000-troop figure:

My only regret is that at the time I did not say “Mr. Secretary, if you try to put a number on a mission like this you may cause enormous mistakes.... Give the military what you would like to see them do, and then let them come up with it. I was the junior guy in the room, but I regret not saying it.”

Men who had put their lives on the line in combat were mostly unwilling to put their careers on the line to speak out against a plan based on

numbers pulled out of the air by a cranky sixty-nine-year-old.

Fortunately for the US troops who had to invade Iraq, they were initially up against an adversary who was also convinced of his own military genius. Saddam Hussein knew it made no strategic sense for the US to invade Iraq and therefore he assumed it wouldn't happen. He had maintained ambiguity about whether he had WMDs not because he had something to hide but to intimidate the two enemies about whom he really was worried, the Iranians and Iraq's Shiite majority.

Even after the invasion began, according to Gordon and Trainor, Saddam could not quite believe the United States intended to go all the way to Baghdad. He did not want to destroy bridges that might have slowed the American advance (since they would be needed to move troops to put down an expected Shiite uprising) and he devised his own plan of concentric circles for the defense of the capital. Iraqi Lieutenant General Raad Majid al-Hamdani identified the Karbala Gap—an agricultural area between Milh Lake and the city of Karbala—as a critical bottleneck for the undermanned American invasion force and sought to redeploy two Republican Guard divisions to take on the enemy. Qusay Hussein, Saddam's more sober son, explained that the plan for the defense of the capital had been decided and Hamdani's job was to carry it out. Thus the two opposing armies had plans dictated by armchair strategists both of

whom made the mistake of assuming the enemy would think as they would.

Saddam could not imagine that the United States would see an advantage in replacing him with a pro-Iranian, Shiite-dominated regime. Knowing very little about American politics, he could not grasp the ideological fervor of the Pentagon neoconservatives who believed Iraq's democratic transformation would revolutionize the Middle East. Rumsfeld and the neoconservatives could not imagine that Iraqis would not embrace liberation and pro-Western democracy and they assumed that both the invasion and occupation to follow would be easy. For the American generals, to challenge the petty tyrant on the Potomac could have ended their careers; for their Iraqi counterparts, taking on the tyrant on the Tigris could have ended their lives.

2.

In *Losing Iraq: Inside the Postwar Reconstruction Fiasco*, David L. Phillips puts forward the thesis, now widely accepted among the war's critics, that the State Department had a plan for postwar Iraq which Rumsfeld's Pentagon ignored. Phillips was a part-time special adviser to the State Department who worked on the Future of Iraq Project, a \$5 million State Department effort, initiated in March 2002, to involve Iraqi exiles (and the Kurds) in deliberations about the country's future. The project ultimately produced thirteen reports running to more than two thousand pages on a variety of postwar issues from oil to security. The most contentious, however, related to Iraq's political future. Phillips provides a clearly written account of the contest between Ahmad Chalabi, who

wanted an interim government to be selected from among the exiles before the invasion, and the State Department, which wanted Iraqis both to commit themselves to a unified state and also to accept that most of the detailed arrangements for postwar governance would be left for the future.

Phillips argues that the State Department project provided a coherent strategy for postwar Iraq that the Pentagon neoconservatives recklessly rejected without providing any alternative plan of their own. That is debatable. Many in the State Department saw the project as a make-work exercise intended to keep Iraqi exiles busy. The Kurds thought it irrelevant, and thus allowed the political project to go forward without reference to their core

demand for continued de facto independence. And Ryan Crocker, the State Department official directly responsible for the project, later told Jerry Bremer, the US administrator for Iraq, that "it was never intended as a postwar plan."

The Bush administration, however, used the Future of Iraq Project to deceive an anxious Congress into believing that it had a plan for the postwar period. At a February 11, 2003, Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing on the future of Iraq, Under Secretary of State Marc Grossman told the committee that "last March the Bush administration announced and has stepped out on what we call a Future of Iraq Project...not to have an academic discussion but to consider thoughts and plans for what can be done immediately." The project was, said Grossman, a roadmap for Iraq's

political future: "One of the reasons that we have spent so much time and so much effort on these Future of Iraq Projects, so that we have a way forward, we have an idea for a constitution, we have an idea for laws." Douglas Feith, the Pentagon's number three and the administration's point man for postwar planning in Iraq, seconded Grossman's endorsement of the project.

Three months later, Jerry Bremer arrived in Baghdad to be Iraq's postwar administrator. The Bush administration never told him the Future of Iraq Project existed; by his own account, he learned about it in the press much later. Fortunately for President Bush, members of Congress have short memories and no one has called his officials to task for grossly misrepresenting a project they themselves never took seriously.

Right-wing reviewers savaged *Losing Iraq* on the grounds that Phillips had not traveled to Iraq during the reconstruction period about which he writes and that much of the book is drawn from press accounts. In fact, the first 120 pages (out of 224 pages of text) are largely based on the author's personal observations of a dysfunctional administration, which is why his book makes conservatives so angry. Phillips, a longtime human rights advocate for Iraq's Kurds, made two trips to Iraqi Kurdistan before the war (in 1992 and 2002). The Pentagon-sponsored tours favored by so many experts—which Phillips is accused of avoiding—take place within a cocoon so removed from the realities of Iraq as to be worse than worthless.

Phillips makes an unconscionable

number of factual mistakes, averaging as many as one per page. He has, for example, the wrong dates for such easily verified events as congressional hearings, the Algiers Accord, Saddam's accession to power, and the latest Turkish elections. He asserts that a proposed US aid package would have amounted to \$97,000 per Turk when the actual figure was around \$300. Nor did the Iran-Iraq War begin with the invasion of the Shatt al-Arab, which is a river. Some of the errors are hard to explain. In December 2002 Phillips attended a conference of the Iraqi opposition in London. He quotes a speech he says was given by Bakr al-Hakim, Iraq's most prominent Shiite political leader. Bakr al-Hakim, however, was not at the London conference. His brother Abdul Aziz al-Hakim was there, but to confuse the two is analogous to thinking one was listening to the President when in fact the speaker was the governor of Florida.

3.

Fouad Ajami, a professor at SAIS, the Johns Hopkins international study center in Washington, has traveled in postwar Iraq both on Pentagon tours and with Iraqis. Born into a Lebanese Shiite family, Ajami is a harsh critic of the Middle East's fossilized Sunni Arab regimes; his book *The Foreigner's Gift: The Americans, the Arabs, and the Iraqis in Iraq* is full of justified outrage at their unthinking bias against Iraq's new Shiite-dominated order. Ajami and I share many friends in Iraq among the secular liberals who have dreamed for decades of the country's deliverance from Saddam Hussein and have devoted their lives to making this possible. Today a few of these men, such as Iraq's Kurdish Deputy Prime Minister Barham Salih, are working to build an inclusive multiethnic and democratic culture in Iraq.

But I am far more pessimistic than Ajami about their prospects for success, a conclusion that sadly seems confirmed by the appalling violence that continues in Baghdad and elsewhere. My book on the subject is called *The End of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created a War Without End*.^{*} Ajami's title reflects his belief that Saddam's ouster was an American gift to Iraq; unfortunately, he fails to consider the full costs to the United States, not only the lost lives and the money spent but the administration's paralysis in the face of much more serious threats from Iran and North Korea, as well as America's increasing

isolation in the world. But he has contributed to public debate by emphasizing that there were Iraqis who seriously wanted a democratic change of regime, and that they should not be confused with the Pentagon's neoconservatives who, without comprehending the difficulties, imagined they could transform the Middle East.

In the two national elections held in 2005, Iraqis voted according to their ethnic and religious identities and not for political programs. This has sidelined the Shiite liberals, including Ahmad Chalabi, who failed to win enough votes for a single seat in Iraq's Council of Representatives. Well before he was rejected by Iraqis, Chalabi had become a pariah not just to the war's critics—who blamed him for duping the administration into war with false intelligence, including claims about WMDs, and promises of a friendly welcome for the American forces—but also to his one-time patrons in the Bush administration. Ajami attributes the hostility of the Bush administration, correctly in my view, to Chalabi's refusal to kowtow to administration policy on issues ranging from de-Baathification to the investigation of corruption in the UN oil-for-food program. But the breaking point came with the bizarre accusation by the Bush administration that Chalabi was leaking sensitive intelligence to Iran.

On June 2, 2004, James Risen reported in *The New York Times* that

villain, and Condoleezza Rice, then national security adviser, said he would be investigated. It seems to me unlikely that Chalabi knew for a fact that the US was monitoring Iranian communications; but, being a clever man, he may have guessed that this was so and cautioned the Iranians not to report their conversations through diplomatic channels. The Iranians couldn't really be sure their codes were compromised until the Bush administration leaked the intercepted cable along with other sensitive information from the Iranian cable traffic. Thus the compromise to US national security came from Risen's source in the US government, not Chalabi. Risen knew this, as did every intelligence professional. But the *New York Times* readers were kept in the dark.

The incident says more about intelligence reporting than it does about Chalabi. Reporters, like Risen, who cover the intelligence agencies depend on their sources in a way other reporters do not. As a result, they are often, at the mercy of their source's political agenda, which they cannot afford to question or disclose, lest the leaks dry up. I learned this the hard way when, in December 1996, the *Los Angeles Times* published a story by Risen (then a reporter for that paper) that was highly critical of Clinton administration policy in Bosnia. It cited "hundreds of pages of classified documents" and compromised intelligence

by the Republicans on a House subcommittee headed by Congressman Henry Hyde to which there was an unclassified Democratic rebuttal. Risen never told his readers this, and in fact wrote his story in a way that would have readers believe the documents were something different from the Republican report. I called Doyle McManus, the *Los Angeles Times* Washington bureau chief, to complain. Risen, he explained, had gotten the documents from the Republicans on Hyde's committee and had promised to disguise the source, which also meant he couldn't mention the rebuttal. As McManus admitted, only the *Los Angeles Times* readers were in the dark since both the Clinton administration and subcommittee Democrats knew exactly what had been leaked (both had been given the GOP report). Several of the top Republican staff on the Hyde subcommittee came from the House Intelligence Committee, then chaired by Porter Goss, and I was told later that the FBI, in tracing the leak, considered one of them a prime suspect. (Like most leak investigations, this one was inconclusive; the other suspect was a Republican congressman, according to a press report.) Goss, whose disastrously incompetent tenure at the CIA's helm was chiefly distinguished by rants against leakers, was silent about this loss of sensitive intelligence. It came from his fellow Republicans and served their shared partisan purpose.

In 2004, Chalabi became a victim of the same mentality, one that is prepared to sacrifice intelligence sources and methods for partisan purposes. He had personally estranged Bush by cavalierly dismissing the false intelligence about WMDs ("We are heroes in error," Chalabi told the *Sunday Telegraph*. "The tyrant Saddam is gone and the Americans are in Baghdad. What was said before is not important.") The administration's ties with him were increasingly seen as a political liability.

The eclipse of Chalabi and his fellow secular Shiites has left the religious parties in full command of Iraq's governing Shiite alliance. Ajami, who is reverential in his descriptions of Iraq's senior ayatollah, Ali al-Sistani, is convinced Iraq's Shiite clerics do not want an Iranian-style religious state and he challenges the claims of those (including me) who assert that the war has resulted in an enormous strategic gain

for Iran. Personally, I believe that Iraq's long-oppressed Shiite majority is entitled to set up the kind of state that it democratically chooses. But the



US Speaker of the House Dennis Hastert, left, with Iraqi Speaker of the Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, right, and his interpreter, at US Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad's residence in the Green Zone, Baghdad, June 2, 2006

the US had intercepted an Iranian diplomatic cable in which the Iranian intelligence chief in Baghdad said that Chalabi told him the US had cracked the Iranian codes and was monitoring their messages. Chalabi became a

sources in a way that potentially jeopardized the safety of the embassy in Zagreb where I was US ambassador.

The "hundreds of pages" were in fact a highly partisan, classified report

evidence from two national elections, the Shiite constitutional program, and the Islamic rule already in place in the south of Iraq makes it clear that they want a theocracy, with many features borrowed from the Iranian model.

4.

Michael Goldfarb's *Ahmad's War, Ahmad's Peace: Surviving Under Saddam, Dying in the New Iraq* should be read by anyone who wants to understand the bitter disappointment felt by liberal Iraqis as the hope for a better future after Saddam vanished, thanks both to American incompetence and the indigenous forces unleashed by the invasion. Goldfarb, a London-based reporter for NPR, arrived in Iraqi Kurdistan on March 18, 2003, the day before the war began, hoping to find someone who had suffered under Saddam Hussein and then report on his liberation. Ahmad Shawkat, his fifty-two-year-old interpreter, turned out to be just such a person.

Shawkat was a Shabak, ethnically Kurdish but Shiite by religion while most Iraqi Kurds are Sunni. The Shabaks do not live in the separate Kurdistan region, and most of them do not share the Kurds' desire for independence. Shawkat was born in Mosul to a family that had recently arrived from a nearby village and were becoming part of Iraq's middle class. Amid the turmoil that followed the overthrow of the monarchy in 1958, Shawkat's father, a butcher, died and the family was forced to return to their dirt-poor village. A year later, they returned to Mosul and Shawkat eventually enrolled in the university there. A promising career seemed open to him, but politics soon intervened. Shawkat had been active in the pan-Arab Nasserite movement of the 1960s but because he was not himself an Arab, he was excluded from any position of leadership.

Under Saddam Hussein, Shawkat was arrested, tortured, and conscripted into the army in the Iran-Iraq War. He fled to Kurdistan after a safe haven was created there following the first Iraq war. He tried to escape to Jordan and was arrested at the border carrying an anti-Saddam article he had written. He was imprisoned and certain he would be executed. Instead, he was released in the October 2002 amnesty, after being brought personally before Saddam to make an apology (the distracted dictator forgot to ask for the apology which Shawkat then didn't offer). He went back to Kurdistan and eventually met up with Goldfarb.

His story reflects the experience of a generation that emerged from poverty with Iraq's new-found oil wealth and then was destroyed by Saddam Hussein's wars and cruelty. Unlike so many other Iraqis, Shawkat engaged in numerous acts of defiance—some large and some small—that preserved his dignity but only at great cost to himself. Goldfarb's account brilliantly captures the turmoil of Iraqi history since the fall of the monarchy and he gives an accurate sense of the different religious and ethnic components of northern Iraq.

Shawkat returned to Mosul after the liberation only to see Major General David Petraeus install a Baathist as mayor while keeping in power many officials of the old regime. It has become conventional wisdom that Petraeus was right when he worked with the old regime while Bremer was wrong when he barred the Baathists from power. But we have to ask what message was being conveyed when those who heroically resisted Saddam Hussein were ignored while those responsible for atrocities—either directly or by their complicity—continued to rule. In the end, Petraeus's strategy failed in Mosul. He inadvertently armed the insurgents, and Mosul remains one of Iraq's most dangerous cities. Shawkat founded a newspaper that used Iraq's new press freedoms to protest against this new form of the old order. He was murdered after ignoring a succession of death threats.

Goldfarb contrasts the casualness with which the Americans approached the occupation with the deadly consequences for his friend. His prose reflects his understandable outrage when he writes about how the Coalition Provisional Authority

had been turned into an extension of the Bush-Cheney '04 re-election campaign. Other nations' professional foreign-service officers found it shocking that senior CPA figures attended meetings with their Bush-Cheney lapel pins on. . . . Didn't they know they were representing all Americans, not just the president's supporters?

Goldfarb describes a young Republican, sent by the Bush administration to instruct the Iraqis on democracy, who explained to a gathering of tribal and community leaders assembled at the Baghdad Hunt Club that "a political party exists to channel power. . . . Once you have political power, then you can create, you can do what you

want with government, right?" Goldfarb comments:

To people who had survived the Ba'ath, a political party that *really* knew how to channel power, the lecture must have seemed ridiculous. . . . By now I was full of slow-burning anger. My friend Ahmad had died for this? So some kid could stand inside a privately guarded compound, explaining that "a political party exists to channel power" on a street guarded by American soldiers in a city where, one year after the overthrow of Saddam, the original meeting site [at a Baghdad Hotel] was so insecure that local police could not defend it? This was bringing freedom and democracy to Iraq? The most powerful nation in history had rendered itself utterly powerless here.

Goldfarb delivers a final devastating verdict on Iraq: "In a better world, I would have written a book *with* Ahmad rather than about him. . . . The book would have been about the hopes the Bush administration's overthrow of Saddam brewed up and how they were dashed through partisan carelessness and—Lord, help us all—sheer laziness."

5.

While I was in Iraq in June, American forces killed Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and, on the same day, Iraq formed its government of national unity. President Bush greeted these developments with unusual restraint and announced he was convening a two-day Camp David summit to review his Iraq strategy. Any hopes that there would be a serious rethinking of Iraq policy were dashed when it turned out that the summit was really a ruse so that Bush could fake out his own cabinet by appearing on a videoconference from Baghdad when they expected to see him at the presidential retreat for breakfast. The President was so impressed with his own stunt that he had the White House press office put out the word that Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki had only five minutes' notice of his arrival, not understanding that this undercut both Maliki and Bush.

On his return, Bush held a press conference during which, it seemed, he could barely contain his enthusiasm. In response to a question about progress in providing electricity, producing oil, and controlling violence, he swerved

into a discussion of his encounter with the speaker of Iraq's parliament, Mahmoud al-Mashhadani. The President didn't seem to recall his name but readily remembered his religion:

The Sunni—I was impressed, by the way, by the Speaker—Denny Hastert told me I'd like him; Denny met with him. And I was impressed by him. He's a fellow that had been put in prison by Saddam and, interestingly enough, put in prison by us. And he made a decision to participate in the government. And he was an articulate person. He talked about running the parliament. It was interesting to see a person that could have been really bitter talk about the skills he's going to need to bring

people together to run the parliament. And I found him to be a hopeful person.

They tell me that he wouldn't have taken my phone call a year ago—I think I might have shared this with you at one point in time—and there I was, sitting next to the guy. And I think he enjoyed it as much as I did. It was a refreshing moment.

The incurious White House press corps never asked the obvious question: Why had the United States jailed al-Mashhadani? According to Sunnis and Shiites at the top levels of government in Iraq, al-Mashhadani was a member of, or closely associated with, two al-Qaeda-linked terrorists groups, Ansar Islam and Ansar al-Sunna. The

first operated until 2003 in a no man's land high in the mountains between Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran while the second has been responsible for some of the worse terrorist attacks on Iraq's Shiites and Kurds. The Iraqis say they gave the Americans specific intelligence on al-Mashhadani's affiliations with those groups and his actions in support of terrorists.

None of this seems to have mattered to a president who is as casual in his approach to national security as his defense secretary. At the same press conference Bush repeated that "the American people have got to understand that Iraq is a part of the war on terror." □

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TURQUIE

Fièvre anti-Europe

Les Turcs bouderaient-ils l'Europe? Après avoir frappé à la porte de Bruxelles, la Turquie serait, à en croire un sondage, en train de verser dans un profond conservatisme religieux. Une réaction qui serait directement liée aux atermoiements de l'Union européenne à accepter en son sein cette nation de 80 millions d'habitants, à 98 % musulmane. Selon l'étude, conduite par

deux universités d'Istanbul, 60 % des Turcs estiment désormais que le manque de foi religieuse est responsable de leurs problèmes quotidiens. Plus inattendu, 46 % d'entre eux veulent confier leurs enfants à des écoles religieuses dans un pays où l'éducation musulmane fut longtemps bannie.

Ce sondage place dans l'em-

barras les conseillers du Premier ministre, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, qui, malgré son étiquette d'islamiste, a fait de la voie vers l'Europe son cheval de bataille. Une stratégie qui lui a valu une grande popularité et permis d'élargir l'assise de son parti, l'AKP (Parti de la justice et du développement).

Il est vrai que les réserves européennes à une intégration rapide de la Turquie constituent une belle épine dans le pied des islamistes au pouvoir. D'autant que l'équipe d'Erdogan s'est

révélée davantage proeuropéenne que les militaires, longtemps au pouvoir et qui disposent toujours d'une grande influence dans le pays. Qu'importe, certains barons de l'AKP entendent profiter du durcissement de l'électorat turc. L'un de ses idéologues, le ministre des Affaires étrangères, Abdullah Gül, enfonce le clou : « Des gens modérés et libéraux en Turquie sont en train de devenir anti-américains et anti-UE. »

Crainte de l'isolement de la Turquie ou revendication d'un conservatisme inné des islamistes turcs? Plusieurs opposants à Erdogan estiment que sa vraie stratégie est de remplacer le dogme laïque par une république théocratique. Une tâche rendue plus facile avec le refus de Bruxelles. L'armée, elle, temporise. La nomination d'un dur à la tête de l'état-major, Yasar Büyukanit, ancien patron de l'armée de terre, démontre que les partisans de la laïcité n'ont pas dit leur dernier mot ■

OLIVIER WEBER



Près de la moitié des Turcs veulent confier leurs enfants à des écoles religieuses

VEHBI SARIHAN/SIPA

L'Iran fait peur sans la bombe, qu'en sera-t-il avec elle ?

LE 31 JUILLET, après deux semaines de discussions entre les membres du Conseil de sécurité, le vote de la résolution 1696 est enfin intervenu avec une belle majorité : 14 voix contre 1. Trois ans après les premières indications décisives d'une violation par Téhéran de ses engagements internationaux, et six mois après la transmission du dossier nucléaire iranien au Conseil de sécurité, c'est une victoire un peu tardive, de surcroît limitée. Il faudra en effet une autre réunion ministérielle avant toute nouvelle décision du Conseil au cas où l'Iran ne tiendrait pas davantage compte de cette résolution que de la déclaration présidentielle de mars. Mais la preuve est tout de même faite – une fois de plus – que ce n'est pas Washington et les capitales européennes qui veulent obtenir seules la suspension des activités d'enrichissement et de retraitement sur le sol iranien. Les cinq membres du Conseil de sécurité ont trouvé un accord pour rendre désormais cette suspension obligatoire, et l'Iran a un mois pour s'exécuter.

Un seul pays a voté contre la résolution. Cette voix rebelle est celle du Qatar, et son vote ne saurait être interprété seulement comme une protestation indirecte aux bombardements israéliens au Liban, et plus particulièrement à la tragédie de Cana. Il exprime aussi la peur que les pays de la région ont désormais de Téhéran. Le Qatar n'a pas la moindre sympathie pour l'Iran. Les deux pays ont même des différends territoriaux connus. La nature exacte du lien avec la crise libanaise n'est pas nécessairement celle qui vient immédiatement à l'esprit. Car l'interprétation la plus répandue à New York au sein des délégations est que Téhéran a eu un rôle décisif dans l'origine du conflit. Personne ne croit à une initiative isolée du Hezbollah le 12 juillet. L'attaque a eu lieu après une rencontre avec Javier Solana à Bruxelles du principal négociateur iranien, Ali Larijani, qui ne s'est pas même donné la peine de feindre un intérêt quelconque pour la proposition élaborée le 1^{er} juin par les cinq membres permanents et l'Allemagne. Le retour au Conseil de sécurité, une échéance que Téhéran a toujours

Par Thérèse Delpech *



« L'AIEA ne contrôle plus la production de centrifugeuses »

redoutée en raison de ses conséquences politiques et économiques – même sans l'adoption de sanctions – était probable, et les

réponses étaient préparées de longue date à Téhéran. L'attaque a aussi eu lieu peu avant le Sommet du G8 à Saint-Pétersbourg, où l'affaire iranienne devait être abordée. Compte tenu de ces échéances, et des liens idéologiques, politiques et militaires du Hezbollah avec Téhéran, il est normal de se poser des questions sur une possible manœuvre de diversion. Les délégations réunies à New York pensent connaître la réponse et en déduisent parfois que l'Iran peut prendre d'autres initiatives déplaisantes.

Mais si l'un des éléments qu'il faut retenir du vote de Doha est la façon dont Téhéran tétanise les capitales du Moyen-Orient, il faut en tirer quelques leçons. Cela signifie en effet tout d'abord que l'Iran est à présent crédité d'une capacité de nuisance considérable, qui ne fait que croître avec le temps. S'il est une crainte générale dans la région, à l'exception notable de la Syrie, c'est celle de voir les milices de Hassan Nasrallah, mais surtout le régime iranien, bénéficier des événements. Des discussions officieuses sont en effet engagées avec Téhéran, que certains créditent maintenant, c'est un comble, d'un rôle « stabilisateur ».

Il y a également une autre leçon à tirer, qui porte sur la confiance plus limitée que les alliés des États-Unis ont désormais en l'efficacité de la protection américaine. Cet élément est très grave, car c'est lui qui peut conduire certains pays à

revoir leurs politiques de défense, voire à se doter de l'arme nucléaire. En effet, et c'est une troisième leçon, on ne peut reprocher aux acteurs de la région de s'interroger sur ce que l'Iran pourrait faire avec la bombe, quand ils assistent à une démonstration en vraie grandeur de ce qu'il peut déjà faire sans elle.

En termes strictement rationnels, la conséquence à tirer serait naturellement, plutôt que de remettre sans cesse à plus tard les échéances, ou de s'opposer à une résolution qui représente une ultime tentative pour obtenir de l'Iran qu'il se plie aux décisions du Conseil, d'exercer une pression plus forte avant que l'avance vers la sanctuarisation du territoire iranien – ou la modification de la composition du Conseil de sécurité –, ait pour conséquence de vider toute pression internationale de contenu ou de rendre cette pression plus difficile encore à décider. Ces deux éléments méritent commentaire. L'avancement du programme, tout d'abord. En effet, pendant que l'on continue de prier Téhéran – on pourrait parfois dire supplier – d'accepter l'offre des six pays, plus personne ne s'interroge sur l'évolution du programme nucléaire iranien. Or, non seulement les questions non résolues n'ont pas fait le moindre progrès, mais depuis le mois de février, l'AIEA ne contrôle plus la production de centrifugeuses sur le territoire iranien. L'assemblage des machines sur le site du pilote de Natanz n'évoluant pas au rythme prévu, l'Iran a-t-il

décidé de construire un autre site ? Et cela pourrait-il avoir un lien avec la date du 22 août, que l'Iran indique depuis des mois comme étant la date de sa réponse ? Les raisons invoquées par Téhéran pour justifier cette date tiennent aux travaux de cinq comités qui devraient alors remettre leurs conclusions. Mais qui croit vraiment à cette fable ? La composition du Conseil de sécurité est une autre donnée importante. En effet, lors du renouvellement qui aura lieu en janvier, trois nouveaux entrants vont apporter un obstacle supplémentaire à l'action : le Venezuela, l'Afrique du Sud et l'Indonésie. Compte tenu de l'extraordinaire aptitude de la diplomatie à faire comme si l'on avait toujours « la vie

devant soi », peut-on miser sur une décision avant cette date, avec les nouveaux avertissements que l'été 2006 apporte sur la capacité de nuisance de l'Iran, cette fois sous forme d'un conflit armé ? Rien n'est moins sûr.

* Chercheur associé au Ceri, auteur de L'Enlisauvement-Le retour de la barbarie au XXI^e siècle (Grasset) et de L'Iran, la bombe et la démission des nations (Autrement/Ceri).

LE FIGARO

7 août 2006

THE TIMES THURSDAY AUGUST 10 2006



The Turkish Government is to relocate the ancient structures at Hasankeyf, which include a 15th-century mausoleum and the Ulu Mosque, right, but archaeologists fear that they will collapse

Go-ahead for dam that will drown ancient city

Critics fear a human as well an archaeological catastrophe if the controversial Ilisu project proceeds, writes Suna Erdem

TURKEY is to go ahead with the construction of a dam on the Tigris river, despite claims that it will displace tens of thousands of people and flood a 12,000-year-old city.

Critics also say that the giant €1.2 billion (£840 million) Ilisu dam will severely restrict the flow of water through Syria and on to Iraq at the risk of provoking another conflict in the troubled region.

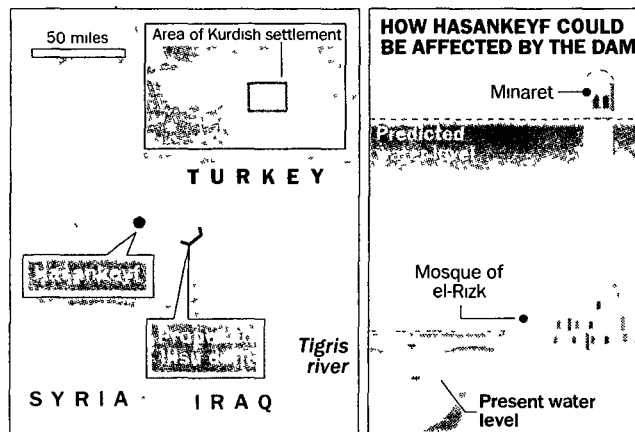
But Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkey's Prime Minister, said during a ceremony to begin the work that the development would create thousands of jobs and bring prosperity to the impoverished, largely Kurdish region in the southeast.

The project, which was shelved four years ago when Britain's Balfour Beatty, the construction company, withdrew because of protests from environmentalists, would also play a key role in generating electricity to plug Turkey's burgeoning energy gap, he said.

"On the one side you have the increasing demand for energy and a bright future for Turkey; on the other, you have history, culture and an inheritance that belongs to all humanity," Mr Erdogan said. "We have to find a solution. We have to make peace between the two sides."

Some 4,000 protesters held an overnight vigil near the dam site on the Tigris, about 45km (28 miles) north of the Syrian border.

The Turkish government has set aside €25 million to cover



- 80 per cent of Hasankeyf will be submerged when the dam is completed
- 25 million euros has been allocated to transport submerged artifacts which include a 12th-century bridge and a 14th-century Ayyubid mosque.
- The town's history spans 12,000 years; Neolithic cave dwellings compete with a Byzantine fort and Ottoman tombs for tourists' attention
- Campaigners argue that much of the construction is too fragile to move successfully

the cost of relocating the ancient structures of the city of Hasankeyf, which will be flooded.

These include the Ulu Mosque, a cemetery with tombstones dating from Byzantium; a 15th-century mausoleum encrusted with tiles, and the remains of an Artukid bridge

But archaeologists and campaigners dismiss the plan, saying that untold ancient treasures in the surrounding area,

which has yet to be excavated, will be lost.

It promises much, they say, given that Hasankeyf alone bears evidence of Assyrian, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk Turk, Persian and Ottoman habitation, and is believed to be among the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world.

"The artefacts in Batman's Hasankeyf district cannot be relocated. If you try to move those artefacts without reinforc-

ing them, they will collapse," said Professor Abdulsalam Ulucam, head of excavations at Hasankeyf.

Maggie Ronayne, an archaeologist at the National University of Ireland, Galway, who has worked in the region since 1999, said: "This dam is a weapon of cultural mass destruction, not only because of the large number of monuments there, but also because of the living culture, the people."

The Ilisu plant, which will generate 3.8 billion kilowatt hours of electricity a year, is part of the ambitious South-eastern Anatolian Project (GAP) to develop the southeast and east.

Dormant since investors withdrew in 2001, it got a reprieve after a Turkish-led consortium, which included German, Swiss and Austrian companies, took it over.

Estimates of the number of people who will be made homeless begin at 50,000

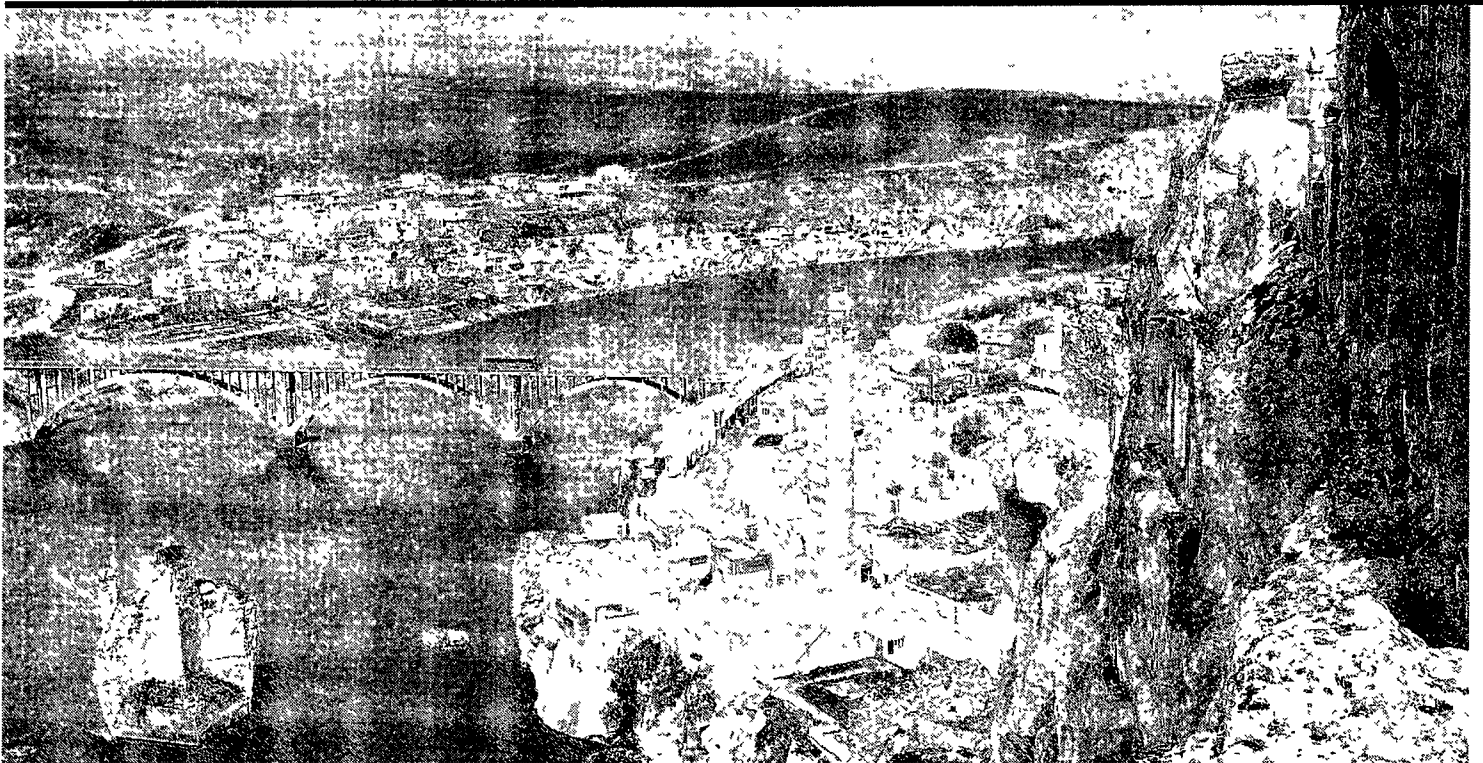
Even if they are compensated and given new homes, they will add to the problem of resettlement in a region that has been badly destabilised by a 20-year-old Kurdish insurgency and military tactics aimed at fighting the rebels.

Thousands of Kurds say that they are unable to resettle in villages they had to evacuate in the 1990s.

The World Bank has refused to finance the Ilisu dam because of these and other environmental concerns.

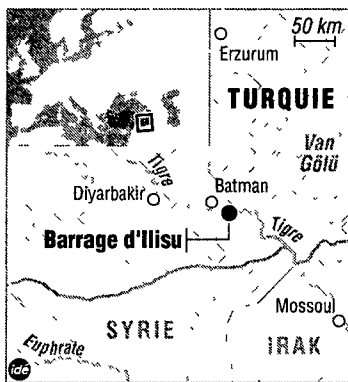
It is also worried about the potential for conflict if Syria and Iraq become belligerent about the amount of water siphoned off by Turkey from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers.

'On the one side you have the demand for energy, on the other you have history, culture'



Le village d'Hasankeyf est condamné à disparaître sous les eaux du lac, malgré la présence de vestiges des civilisations byzantine et ayyoubide. Fedouach/AFP

Ankara lance le chantier d'un barrage contesté sur le Tigre



TURQUIE

Les travaux engagés entraîneraient l'engloutissement sous les eaux de trésors antiques et de deux cents villages à majorité kurde.

Istanbul

« LE PAS que nous franchissons aujourd'hui prouve que le Sud-Est n'est plus laissé pour compte. Le barrage aura des retombées très positives pour les populations

locales », a assuré le premier ministre turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan à l'occasion de l'inauguration des travaux du barrage hydroélectrique d'Ilisu, samedi, à 45 kilomètres de la frontière avec la Syrie. Mais une controverse environnementale et archéologique, proportionnelle à l'immensité de ce chantier qui vise à domestiquer les eaux du Tigre, accompagne le projet depuis son apparition à la fin des années 1970.

Le site d'Hasankeyf se trouve au cœur de la polémique. « Le barrage va détruire douze mille ans d'Histoire », se désole Abdulvahap Kusen, le maire du village. Accroché à la falaise au bord du fleuve et utilisé par les Romains comme forteresse pour repousser les Perses, Hasankeyf présente un intérêt archéologique majeur. Les vestiges des civilisations byzantine et ayyoubide du XIV^e siècle, condamnés à disparaître sous les eaux du lac, s'y superposent : les piliers du pont érigé il y a huit cents ans avec son arche large de 40 mètres, les ruines des anciennes églises chrétiennes,

le tombeau conique couvert de céramiques turquoise du XV^e siècle...

En 2013, date prévue de sa mise en service, le barrage produira 3,8 milliards de kilowattheures par an. La construction de la deuxième plus grande réserve d'eau du pays s'inscrit à la fois dans la politique globale de la Turquie qui cherche par tous les moyens à augmenter sa capacité de production énergétique.

Projet de 22 retenues d'eau

Ilisu fait partie du Projet pour le Sud-Est anatolien (GAP), un programme qui prévoit la construction de 22 retenues d'eau et 19 centrales électriques pour tenter de développer la région la plus déshéritée du pays. Recep Tayyip Erdogan a affirmé que la réalisation d'Ilisu entraînerait la création de 20 000 emplois. Et l'irrigation de 121 000 hectares de terres permettra le développement de l'agriculture selon ses partisans.

« L'étude d'impact sur la population locale menée par le consortium chargé des travaux (NDLR : des entreprises allemande, suisse et autri-

chienne) est totalement insuffisante selon les normes internationales », dénonce Christine Eberlein de l'ONG suisse la Déclaration de Berne. « Kurdish Human Rights Project », une organisation kurde basée à Londres, a déposé plainte auprès de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme. En 2001 déjà, la société britannique Balfour Beatty s'était désengagée du projet, découragée par « les complexités environnementales, économiques et sociales ». Deux cents villages peuplés majoritairement par des Kurdes seront engloutis et 54 000 personnes déplacées. Les autorités turques annoncent l'érection d'une nouvelle ville pour reloger les habitants d'Hasankeyf et des indemnités pour tous les expropriés. Le collectif d'associations et de municipalités locales redoute un exil dans les bidonvilles de Diyarbakir ou de Batman dans lesquels s'entassent des dizaines de milliers de réfugiés chassés de leur maison par la guerre civile entre les séparatistes du PKK et l'armée turque.

LAURE MARCHAND

LE FIGARO 7 août 2006

L'Iran menace l'Occident

PROCHE-ORIENT

En rejetant la résolution de l'ONU sur le nucléaire, Téhéran a promis une réaction « douloureuse » aux pays qui prendraient des mesures coercitives.

De notre correspondante à Téhéran

ALI LARIJANI, le principal négociateur iranien sur les questions nucléaires, aura mis du temps avant de se prononcer sur la dernière résolution de l'ONU. Mais c'est avec fermeté qu'il l'a rejetée, hier, en la qualifiant « d'illégale », et en évoquant même la possibilité d'une expansion des activités nucléaires iraniennes. « Nous étendrons nos activités nucléaires si nous en avons besoin, a-t-il affirmé. Cela concerne toute technologie nucléaire, y compris les centrifugeuses en cascade. »

La résolution, adoptée le 31 juillet, donne un mois à l'Iran pour suspendre l'enrichissement de son uranium, faute de quoi des sanctions contre Téhéran se-

ront alors possibles. Elle a pris de court les Iraniens au moment où ils envisageaient d'apporter une réponse, le 22 août, au paquet de mesures incitatives offert par les cinq membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité et l'Allemagne. Cet ensemble de mesures de coopération dans les domaines commercial et nucléaire avait pour objectif de trouver une issue à la crise. Selon Larijani, « cette résolution a affecté notre attitude ». Pour lui, l'Occident a « tué » la négociation en adoptant un texte « contraire » aux pourparlers.

Classe politique unanime

Téhéran a redémarré ses activités d'enrichissement en janvier dernier, et a annoncé, en avril, avoir produit de l'uranium enrichi. Les grandes puissances craignent que la République islamique utilise ce procédé, qui permet d'obtenir du combustible pour une centrale nucléaire, afin de se doter de l'arme atomique. Dans un effort de médiation, Joschka Fisher, l'ancien ministre al-



Ali Larijani, le négociateur iranien, a affirmé hier avec fermeté : « Nous étendrons nos activités nucléaires si nous en avons besoin. » Atta Kenare/AFP

lemant des Affaires étrangères, s'est déplacé jusqu'à Téhéran, la semaine dernière, pour appeler les Iraniens « à cesser leurs activités afin de regagner la confiance internationale ».

Dans la capitale iranienne, la classe politique, de droite comme de gauche, estime que l'Iran, signataire du TNP, s'est toujours efforcé de coopérer avec les inspecteurs de l'Agence internationale à l'énergie atomique (AIEA). « Deux mille inspecteurs ont visité les sites. Dans son rapport de février, ElBaradei en personne a précisé que rien d'anormal n'a été relevé. Que veulent-ils de plus ? », s'interroge Kazem Jalali, porte-parole de la commission des affaires étrangères du Parlement. Selon lui, « le problème, ce n'est pas la confiance, c'est l'Amérique qui cherche à imposer son projet

de Grand Moyen-Orient ».

Ce député réformateur, partisan du dialogue et de la négociation, regrette que la communauté internationale se soit empressée d'imposer une résolution alors que l'Iran « considérait sérieusement le paquet de mesures incitatives ». « Les puissances internationales ont négocié pendant trois ans avec l'Iran. Ne pouvaient-elles pas atteindre trois semaines de plus avant de voter leur résolution ? », s'interroge-t-il. Ce genre de comportement risque, dit-il, de « radicaliser l'Iran ». Ali Larijani, en personne, prévenait déjà, hier, qu'en cas de sanctions, « nous réagirons d'une manière qui se révélera douloureuse ».

DELPHINE MINOUI

Iran defies UN threat on uranium

Enrichment activities are to be expanded

The Associated Press

TEHRAN: Iran's top nuclear negotiator said Sunday that his country would expand its uranium enrichment, in defiance of a United Nations Security Council resolution that sets an Aug. 31 deadline for the Islamic republic to halt enrichment or face the threat of political and economic sanctions.

The negotiator, Ali Larijani, called the Security Council resolution, which was issued last week, illegal and said, "We reject this resolution."

"We will expand nuclear activities where required," he said. "It includes all nuclear technology, including the

string of centrifuges," referring to the linked centrifuges that Iran would use for such an enrichment program.

He said that Iran had not violated any of its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and that the United Nations had no right to require it to suspend enrichment.

"We won't accept suspension," he said.

"Such resolutions won't have any impact on our behavior," he said. "We will expand our nuclear technology."

However, Larijani said all Iranian nuclear activities would remain under the supervision of the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency. The agency has said there has been no evidence to prove that Iran's nuclear program has been diverted toward weapons.

Larijani said the Security Council resolution was "contrary" to a package of Western incentives offered in June to persuade Tehran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. Iran would formally respond on Aug. 22 to the incentives package, he said.

Iran has said it will never give up its right to produce nuclear fuel, but has indicated it might temporarily suspend large-scale activities to ease tensions.

Larijani said the world should blame the United States and its allies for acting

against their proposed package and seeking to deny Iran its legitimate right under the nonproliferation treaty to enrich uranium and produce nuclear fuel.

Larijani said talks, not threats, would resolve the standoff over Iran's nuclear activities, and he blamed the West for compromising a diplomatic solution.

"We were expected to hold talks" to "remove ambiguities," he said, adding that Western countries had issued a resolution at the Security Council and killed the talks.

The United States has accused Iran of seeking nuclear weapons. Tehran maintains its program is peaceful and intended to generate electricity, not bombs.

In February, Iran for the first time produced a batch of low-grade enriched uranium, using a cascade of 164 centrifuges. The process of uranium enrichment can be used to generate electricity or to create an atomic weapon, depending on the level of enrichment.

Iran said it planned to install 3,000 centrifuges at its enrichment plant in Natanz, in central Iran, by the last quarter of 2006. Industrial production of enriched uranium in Natanz would require 54,000 centrifuges.

TURQUIE MANIFESTATIONS

L'hostilité à Israël s'accroît dans l'opinion publique turque

ISTANBUL

✚ CORRESPONDANTE

« Les tribunaux pour les crimes de guerre devraient punir le terrorisme d'Etat d'Israël et ses crimes contre l'humanité » : c'est en ces termes peu diplomatiques que s'est exprimé Mehmet Elkatmis, président de la commission des droits de l'homme du Parlement turc, à propos des opérations israéliennes au Liban. « Il semble qu'Israël veuille infliger la douleur dont les juifs ont souffert entre les mains d'Hitler », a ajouté ce député qui incarne la ligne dure du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP, au pouvoir). Les membres de la commission parlementaire doivent se rendre au Proche-Orient dans les jours qui viennent « pour témoigner de l'ampleur de ces violations des droits de l'homme ».

Depuis le début des raids israéliens sur le territoire libanais, le gouvernement turc et sa majorité parlementaire ont marqué leur désaccord et affiché leur solidarité de « pays frère » avec le Liban. Multipliant les appels au cessez-le-feu, le premier ministre turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a qualifié les raids israéliens d'« excessifs et inhumains ». Et le groupe d'amitié parlementaire Turquie-Israël s'est vidé de ses effectifs pléthoriques : 215 députés sur 263, dont 124 de l'AKP, ont démissionné en signe de protestation.

Ces critiques apparaissent très inhabituelles pour la Turquie laïque, alliée d'Israël dans la région. Dans les cercles militaires, on reste fidèle à la « ligne » : « Israël se défend. Il ne faut pas changer de politique parce que deux ou trois enfants sont morts », a ainsi déclaré le député de l'opposition Nuri Çilingir, l'un des rares à avoir fait entendre cette voix. Etroitement liés par un accord de coopération militaire depuis 1996, les deux pays entretiennent des relations moins cordiales depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir, en 2002, de l'AKP, parti islamo-conservateur.

« Depuis trois ou quatre ans, ça a changé. Maintenant, l'opinion publique turque est pro-Hezbollah et anti-occidentale, affirme Gündüz Aktan, ancien ambassadeur turc, qui dirige le très nationaliste Centre eurasiatique des études stratégiques (ASAM) : le premier ministre n'aborde ce conflit que sous son aspect humanitaire et pense que c'est une guerre des juifs contre les musulmans », ajoute-t-il.

Aide humanitaire

La Turquie a décidé, mardi 8 août, d'accroître son aide humanitaire aux déplacés libanais, et d'envoyer 900 tonnes de nourriture. Le Croissant-Rouge turc a déjà acheminé 18 semi-remorques de matériel au Liban. Mais la population turque attend des prises de position politiques plus fermes. « Certains traités de coopération avec Israël seront ralentis, d'autres exposés moins ouvertement, prédit Mehmet Dülger (AKP), président de la commission des affaires étrangères du Parlement : cette collaboration serait difficile à expliquer à la population. »

Dans plusieurs grandes villes, les manifestations hostiles à Israël se multiplient, à l'initiative de groupes islamistes, plus souvent de syndicats ou de partis d'extrême-gauche. Embarrassées par l'ampleur de ces protestations, les autorités turques cherchent à éviter toute publicité et à contenir les dérapages antisémites. Dimanche, un groupe d'activistes de la Plate-forme socialiste des opprimés a été arrêté à Istanbul. Les affiches anti-israéliennes, qui ont fleuri dans la ville ont été très vite arrachées.

La semaine dernière à Ankara, lors d'un match de basket Turquie-Liban transformé en meeting anti-israélien, la police a violemment réprimé les manifestants qui brandissaient des drapeaux palestiniens. ■

GUILLAUME PERRIER

Damas et Téhéran misent sur la « résistance » du Hezbollah

BEYROUTH, DAMAS

CORRESPONDANTE, ENVOYÉE SPÉCIALE

Près d'un mois après le déclenchement de la guerre entre le Hezbollah et Israël, la Syrie et l'Iran ne cachent plus leur jeu. Au moment où la diplomatie tente de faire taire le langage des armes, les responsables des deux pays entendent avoir leur mot à dire et leurs intérêts à défendre, comme s'ils faisaient la guerre par Hezbollah interposé. Ainsi, le projet de résolution franco-américain était-il à peine connu, dimanche 6 août, que les présidents syrien et iranien, Bachar Al-Assad et Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, décidaient d'un commun accord qu'il s'agissait d'un « texte unilatéral et injuste ».

A en croire l'agence iranienne officielle Irna, M. Ahmadinejad a prévu que « les Etats-Unis et l'entité sioniste occupante seront vaincus grâce à l'unité et à la solidarité entre le peuple libanais et la nation islamique ». Le même jour, Ali Larijani, président du Conseil national de sécurité iranien, tenait des propos similaires.

Une semaine plus tôt, lors d'une visite à Beyrouth, le ministre iranien des affaires étrangères, Manouchehr Mottaki, s'était déjà autorisé à tracer en pointillés le point de vue de son pays quant à la manière de mettre fin à la guerre. Il s'était fait mettre les points sur les « i » par le premier ministre libanais, Fouad Siniora. Ce dernier l'a révélé lui-même, lundi 7 août, lors d'une conférence de presse, sans fournir de détails.

Lors de sa conversation avec M. Ahmadinejad, le président syrien, selon l'agence iranienne, a pour sa part rendu un hommage appuyé à « la résistance héroïque du Hezbollah ». Il a estimé que le projet de résolution franco-américain « sert les intérêts de l'entité sioniste » et que « le déploie-

ment de forces internationales bénéficierait d'un mandat étendu entraînant le chaos dans ce pays ». Son ministre des affaires étrangères, Walid Al-Moallem, a renchéri le même jour, en déclarant au Liban que « Nasrallah [le secrétaire général du Hezbollah] et la résistance défendent la dignité de la nation [arabe] et son unité. »

Les Libanais irrités

Ce genre de propos est formellement rejeté par une grande partie des dirigeants libanais et de l'opinion publique, qui estiment que leur pays a suffisamment payé seul le prix des conflits régionaux. Le plus virulent d'entre eux est Walid Joumblat qui, dès dimanche soir, rétorquait à M. Moallem qu'il est « facile de faire de la surenchère jusqu'à la dernière goutte de sang libanais ». « Lion au Liban et lapin sur le Golan », a-t-il ajouté, faisant allusion à la fois au patronyme du président syrien (Assad signifie « Lion ») et au fait que le front du Golan est parfaitement calme depuis les accords de désengagement israélo-syriens de 1974.

« Pour l'instant, d'un point de vue strictement politique, le conflit a profité à la Syrie : il lui a permis de revenir en force dans le jeu régional. Sa carte majeure, c'est le Hezbollah, bien sûr, note le correspondant à Damas du quotidien *Al-Hayat*, Ibrahim Hamidi. Qu'en fera-t-elle ? » Elle peut obtenir certaines garanties, concernant, par exemple, un soutien économique et financier de certains pays européens. Peut-être même des accords de coopération, avance-t-il. Mais les raisons de pavoir, reconnaît-il, sont limitées.

« Militairement, le Hezbollah a gagné : il a montré qu'il pouvait résister à Israël. Symboliquement, c'est très important. Mais les Américains vont tout faire pour l'affaiblir politiquement. » ■

MOUNA NAÏM ET CATHERINE SIMON

Thomas L. Friedman

In Iraq, it's time for Plan B

It is now obvious that America is not midwifing democracy in Iraq. It is baby-sitting a civil war. When the top U.S. commander in Iraq, General John Abizaid, tells a Senate Committee, as he did Thursday, that "the sectarian violence is probably as bad as I've seen it," it means that three years of efforts to democratize Iraq are not working. That means "staying the course" is pointless, and it's time to start thinking about Plan B — how we might disengage with the least damage possible.

It seemed to me over the last three years that, even with all the Bush team's missteps, we had to give our Iraqi partners a chance to produce a transitional government, then write a constitution, then hold an election and then, finally, put together their first elected cabinet. But now they have done all of that — and the situation has only worsened.

The Sunni jihadists and Baathists are as dedicated as ever to making this U.S.-Iraqi democracy initiative fail. That, and the runaway sectarian violence resulting from having too few U.S. troops and allowing a militia culture to become embedded, have made Iraq a lawless mess.

It was and remains hugely important to try to partner with Iraqis to create one good example in the heart of the Arab world of a decent, progressive state, where the politics of fear and tribalism do not reign — the politics that has produced all the pathologies of unemployment, religious intolerance and repression that make the Middle East so dangerous.

But the administration now has to admit what anyone — including myself — who believed in the importance of getting Iraq right has to admit: Whether for Bush reasons or Arab reasons, it is not happening, and we can't throw more good lives after good lives.

Since the Bush team never gave us a Plan A for Iraq, it at least owes us a Plan B. It's not easy. Here are my first thoughts about a Plan B and some of the implications.

I think we need to try a last-ditch Bosnia-like peace conference that would bring together all of Iraq's factions and neighbors. Just as Bosnia could be solved only by an international peace force and the Dayton conference — involving Russia, Europe and the United States, the

powers most affected by Bosnia's implosion — the civil war in Iraq can be quelled only by a coalition of those most affected by Iraq's implosion: the United States, Russia, Europe, Japan, India, China, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Iran, Syria and Jordan. As in Bosnia, any solution will have to be some form of federalism, a division of oil wealth and policing by an international force, where needed.

For such a conference to come about, though, America would probably need to declare its intention to leave. Iraqis, other Arabs, Europeans and Chinese will get serious about helping to salvage Iraq only if they believe we are leaving, which would damage their interests.

What would be the consequences of leaving without such a last-ditch peace effort, or if it just fails?

Iraq could erupt into a much wider civil war, drawing in its neighbors. Or, Iraqis might stare into this abyss and actually come to terms with each other on their own. Our presence may be part of the problem. It's hard to know.

If Iraq opts for all-out civil war, its two million barrels a day will be off the market and oil could go above \$100 a barrel. (That would, however, spur more investment in alternative fuels that could one day make America independent of this volatile region.)

Some fear that Iran will be the winner. But will it? Once America is out of Iraq, Iran will have to manage the boiling pot next door. That will be a huge problem for Iran. The historical enmity toward Iran by Iraqi Arabs — enmity temporarily focused on America — will re-emerge. And Iran will also have to compete with its ally Syria for influence in Iraq.

The best way to contain Iran would have been to produce a real Shiite-led democracy in Iraq, exposing the phony one in Tehran. But second best is leaving Iraq. Because the worst option — the one Iran loves — is for us to stay in Iraq, bleeding, and in easy range to be hit by Iran if we strike its nukes.

Finally, the war in Iraq has so divided Americans at home and abroad that leaving, while bringing other problems, might also make it easier to build coalitions to deal with post-U.S. Iraq, Iran, Hezbollah and Syria. All these problems are connected. We need to deal with Iran and Syria, but from a position of strength — and that requires a broad coalition.

The longer we maintain a unilateral failing strategy in Iraq, the harder it will be to build such a coalition, and the stronger the enemies of freedom will become.

How can America disengage with the least damage possible?

IRAK

L'Irak est au bord d'une « guerre civile », admet le général américain Abizaid

NEW YORK
CORRESPONDANT

« L'Irak peut sombrer dans la guerre civile si la violence sectaire à Bagdad n'est pas arrêtée. » La journée de jeudi 3 août a de nouveau été sanglante en Irak — au moins 12 morts, dont 10 civils dans un attentat sur

un marché de Bagdad et deux marines tués dans la province sunnite d'Al-Anbar.

Le constat sur le risque de « guerre civile » a été fait, le même jour, devant la commission des armées du Sénat par le général John Abizaid, l'homme qui dirige les forces américaines en Irak, le commandant du commandement central.

Jusqu'à-là, George Bush et le secrétaire à la défense Donald Rumsfeld s'étaient toujours refusés à admettre que l'Irak pouvait basculer dans la guerre civile. Le général Abizaid a ajouté que « la violence sectaire en Irak est probablement la pire qu'[il a] jamais vue ». Il a défini trois objectifs pour le Pentagone au Moyen-Orient, « où la situation a rarement été aussi incertaine et volatile » : vaincre Al-Qaida, dissuader

l'Irak et trouver une solution au conflit israélo-arabe.

« Ils ne vont pas abandonner »

En Irak, la priorité absolue aujourd'hui du général Abizaid est de rétablir la sécurité à Bagdad. L'armée américaine a annoncé le déploiement d'urgence dans la capitale de 3 700 hommes de la 172^e brigade.

Le général Abizaid a également souligné la difficulté de réduire le nombre de soldats américains dans le pays : « Il est possible d'imaginer quelques diminutions de force, mais je pense que la chose la plus importante est que Bagdad soit sous contrôle du gouvernement irakien. »

Les propos tenus toujours jeudi devant le Sénat par le général Peter Pace, qui com-

mande l'état-major combiné, étaient de la même tonalité que ceux de M. Abizaid. « La situation peut se transformer en guerre civile », a-t-il déclaré.

M. Rumsfeld, qui avait déclaré mercredi qu'il avait un emploi du temps trop chargé pour venir témoigner au Sénat, a finalement changé d'avis devant les critiques, notamment du sénateur démocrate Hillary Clinton.

Jeudi, M^{me} Clinton s'en est prise directement au secrétaire à la défense : « Sous votre direction, il y a eu de nombreuses erreurs de jugement qui nous ont conduits où nous'en sommes en Irak et en Afghanistan. Vous avez sous-estimé la nature et la force de l'insurrection, la violence sectaire et la diffusion de l'influence iranienne. »

Le sénateur républicain John McCain s'est, lui, inquiété des conséquences du transfert de troupes à Bagdad : « Nous jouons un jeu ici qui s'apparente à reboucher sans cesse des trous de taupe. »

En réponse, M. Rumsfeld a mis l'accent sur les risques à ses yeux d'un retrait des troupes américaines : « Nous pouvons persévérer en Irak ou nous retirer prématurément jusqu'à ce qu'ils nous contraignent à nous battre plus près de chez nous. Ne vous trompez pas, ils ne vont pas abandonner, que nous acceptions ou non leurs demandes immédiates. » ■

ERIC LESER

IRAK Une vingtaine de morts au cours du week-end

BAGDAD. Trois soldats américains ont été tués, dimanche soir 6 août dans l'explosion d'une bombe dans la région de Bagdad, a annoncé, lundi, sans plus de précisions, l'armée américaine dans un communiqué. Par ailleurs, au moins quinze personnes ont péri le même jour et une trentaine ont été blessées dans un attentat-suicide au milieu d'une foule rassemblée pour des obsèques à Tikrit, au nord de la capitale. Le kamikaze, arrivé dans une voiture bourrée d'explosifs, a garé son véhicule devant la salle, est entré et a fait détoner ses explosifs, selon la police. Face au regain d'insécurité, depuis deux jours, les soldats américains arrivent à Bagdad depuis Mossoul, à 370 kilomètres plus au nord, pour se joindre aux quelque 50 000 hommes de l'armée américaine et des forces de sécurité irakiennes afin de tenter de rétablir la sécurité dans la capitale irakienne. - (AFP.)

Affrontements entre milices chiïtes et forces régulières à Bagdad

BAGDAD. Dans la nuit du dimanche 6 au lundi 7 août, les forces irakiennes, soutenues par les Américains, ont affronté des milices chiïtes à Bagdad, dans le quartier de Sadr City, lors d'un raid qui s'inscrit dans la stratégie de reprise de contrôle de la capitale, en proie aux violences confessionnelles. Selon le ministère irakien de la défense, deux miliciens ont été tués dans ces affrontements. Un attentat-suicide a par ailleurs tué neuf policiers et blessé trente personnes lundi à Samarra, à 125 km au nord de Bagdad. Mardi, au moins dix Irakiens ont été tués et cinquante blessés dans l'explosion de deux bombes sur un marché, au centre de Bagdad. - (AFP.)

Le Monde

Mardi 8 août 2006

Washington accuse Moscou d'aider Téhéran à s'armer

DIPLOMATIE

Les États-Unis ont sanctionné deux sociétés russes, soupçonnées d'avoir contribué à des programmes iraniens d'armes de destruction massive.

Moscou

UN MOIS après le sommet du G 8 à Saint-Petersbourg, la tension monte à nouveau entre Vladimir Poutine et George W. Bush, sur fond de crise au Proche-Orient. Washington vient de prendre des sanctions contre deux entreprises russes accusées d'aider Téhéran à acquérir des armes de destruction massive. Adoptées dans le cadre de la loi américaine contre la non-prolifération nucléaire, ces mesures visent aussi cinq autres en-

treprises (cubaine, indiennes et nord-coréennes).

« Inacceptable », a fustigé le ministre des Affaires étrangères russe. Cette démarche « représente une nouvelle tentative injustifiable visant à forcer des compagnies étrangères à fonctionner selon les règlements intérieurs des États-Unis », poursuit le communiqué, dénonçant « un anachronisme historique et juridique évident ». Moscou explique que les deux compagnies sanctionnées - l'exportateur d'armes Rosoboronexport et le fabricant d'avions Soukhoï - agissent en se conformant au droit international. Rosoboronexport a d'ailleurs affirmé ne livrer que des armes défensives à l'Iran. Et Soukhoï a précisé ne rien avoir vendu à Téhéran depuis dix ans. Du coup, la presse russe dénonce une « déclara-

tion de guerre économique » (Les Izvestia). Anticipant des représailles, elle prévoit la « fin du partenariat stratégique entre les États-Unis et la Russie » (Kommersant).

Ces propos traduisent l'irritation de Moscou vis-à-vis de Washington alors que les deux capitales semblaient s'être rapprochées sur le dossier iranien. La semaine dernière, elles s'étaient enfin mises d'accord sur une résolution du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies demandant à Téhéran de suspendre son programme d'enrichissement d'uranium, sous peine de sanctions économiques et diplomatiques. Mais Moscou n'a pas remis en question pour autant ses relations étroites avec l'Iran. La Russie doit ainsi livrer d'ici à 2008 l'équivalent d'un milliard de dollars d'armement à Téhéran, en particulier des missiles antimissiles de courte portée.

Boeing, principale victime

« Les véritables raisons de ces sanctions ne se trouvent pas en Iran », prévient cependant Ivan Safrantchouk, directeur du Centre d'informations moscovite sur la défense. « Si les Américains ont décidé seulement aujourd'hui de punir ces deux sociétés sur les-

quelles ils avaient sans doute des informations depuis longtemps, c'est à cause du facteur Chavez... » Allusion à la visite fin juillet à Moscou du président vénézuélien. La bête noire de Washington a acheté pour trois milliards de dollars d'armement, dont des avions Soukhoï.

Cependant, la principale victime de ces mesures, qui interdisent pendant deux ans aux deux entreprises visées d'avoir des contacts avec des sociétés américaines, pourrait bien être... Boeing. La société aéronautique américaine est en effet associée avec Soukhoï pour la construction d'un nouvel avion régional. Et elle achète un tiers de son titane à la firme russe VSMPO-Avisma, qui est sur le point d'être rachetée par Rosoboronexport... ■

ALEXANDRE CÈDRE

LE FIGARO

9 août 2006

Sulaimaniya suburb becomes the save haven for Arab refugees

Controversial camp built to house thousands of Arab families



Fazil Najib

Globe Correspondent

Arab families running from the sectarian violence in central Iraq will have a UN sponsored camp opened for them soon in Kurdistan Region, outside the city of Sulaimaniya. The deliberate distancing of these Arab families from Sulaimaniya city and placing the camp far away from the town is a way to make sure that calm would not be erupted in Sulaimaniya due to probable ethnic confrontations between the Arabs and the Kurds, Globe's Fazil Najib writes.

The distancing officials say prevents a possible shifting of the city's demographic reality, unlike Kirkuk. An influx of Arab settlers could even mean a deepening of the housing crisis in the Region why Kurdish authorities choose to open the camp outside of the city, away from city borders,

The relative security of the Kurdish cities has attracted thousands of Arab families into the Region, families who flee outright fighting in central Iraq.

Sherzad Hafizi, the Head of the Council for the city of Sulaimaniya told the Globe that the UN will build a camp, in which the Arab families can temporarily settle

down. The camp is to be built in Darband Basara, a cool region situated in the South East of Sulaimaniya. It will approximately be 35 kilometres far from the city. The camp will be supervised by the Sulaimaniya City Council.

From a humanitarian perspective, the fact that the Arab families seek their way into Kurdistan is a cause of national pride for the Kurds. However, politically and economically it is a highly

risky business.

"Through the distancing of these Arab families from Sulaimaniya it is easier to maintain calm in Sulaimaniya neighbourhoods," Sherzad Hafizi said fearing sectarian confrontation between Arabs and Kurds if the camp was nearer the city centre.

In Sherzad's words, the number of Arab families is more than 1000 "and will increase daily due to their migration from central Iraq."

The Spokesman for the Security of Sulaimaniya told the Globe that until now no particular security unit has been formed to work with these migrated families.

The city of Sulaimaniya has been described as



Arab workers gesture as they reach an area near Chamchamal west of Suleimaniya fleeing violence in southern parts of Iraq.

one of the most peaceful and advanced cities of Kurdistan and Iraq. Until now the relatively few suicide bombings targeting the city have been perpetrated by people of

Arab origins. Critics say the government should check the background of any Arab family that migrates to Kurdistan

Fear for Epidemics

Also epidemic diseases have been the source of concern after the arrival of the Arab settlers. A source from a chest clinic told the Globe that during the course of one month

four cases of tuberculosis have been diagnosed as positive from the Arabs who migrated to the city.

Those Arab families that will settle in Sulaimaniya must have a Kurdish person acting as their referee. However, these processes and barriers do not apply to doctors, engineers and Arab businessmen when they enter Kurdistan.

Jutiar Nouri, the Deputy Head of the Council of Sulaimaniya says that they will not ban doctors, engineers and businessmen from entering, and will welcome them instead.

"Instead of running to neighbouring countries and Jordan, people should be able to come to Kurdistan and serve the public," he said.

Sherko Abdullah the Head of Health for Sulaimaniya said "as well as Arab doctors being provided with their own salary, they are also receiving \$300 for their accommodation."

\$200 million for Kirkuk Normalization



A displaced family returns to Kirkuk.

KRG President Massoud Barzani announced the allocation of \$200 million for the implementation of Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, which deals with the normalization of Kirkuk. The president also revealed that the Ministry of Justice had formed a committee to deal with all issues relating to Article 140.

The Globe



Zoroastrian Temple discovered in Duhok

Globe Correspondent in Dohuk

Duhok's Director of Antiquities, Hasan Ahmed Qassim, has announced the discovery of a Zoroastrian temple near Jar Ston Cave, a famous ancient site. The temple is believed to be the most complete to have been unearthed in the region. It is also said that it was a Metherani temple.

"The temple was dedicated to the deity Anna Hita, indicated by the discovery of Anna Hita's holy star, and evidence of fires, as well as fireplaces and Zoroastrian holy sand stores have been found nearby," Qassim revealed. He fur-

ther described the temple as being made up of five sanctuaries, three of which

were carved into rock, with the remaining two having been constructed from stone blocks.

This discovery is being hailed as the most significant archaeological development in the region in recent times.

"This new discovery will alter the history of the region due to its unique architectural style, which differs considerably from Zoroastrian temples previously discovered," explained the Director of Antiquities.

"The temple's style which looks toward the four-directions is a unique style ever discovered in the area; thus it becomes an entry to

studying Zarathustrian arts and archeology."

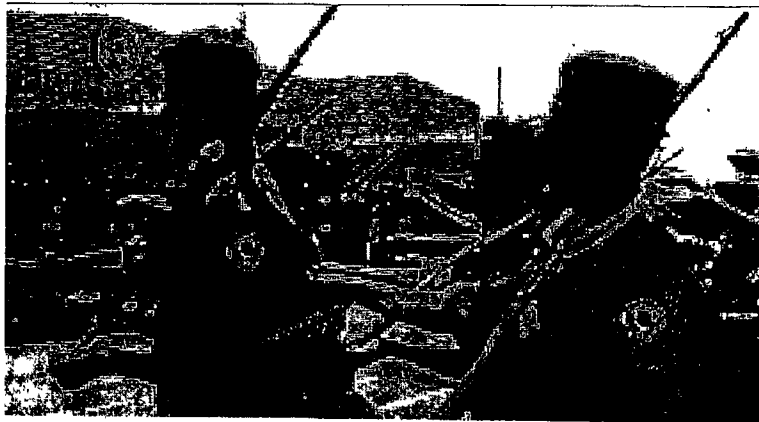
At present archaeology

teams are continuing work at the site to find out more about the temple's history.



The newly discovered Zoroastrian Temple near Jar Ston Cave near Duhok; The picture shows the inside of the cave.

Zakho: graduation of 70 border forces officers from the military academy



Graduated officers march in this file photo

A graduation ceremony has been organized for the graduation of boarder forces officers in special training session lasted for 2 months, where many military, humanitarian and technical subjects were delivered theoretically and practically, local media reported.

70 boarder force officers

graduated in this training session, the ceremony attended by Ali Awni the KDP official and the commander of boarder forces as well as the representative of Kurdistan Army in

Dohuk.

In this ceremony, a range of speeches were addressed indicating to the construction of the army on scientific bases

The Globe

Oil refineries to be constructed in the Region

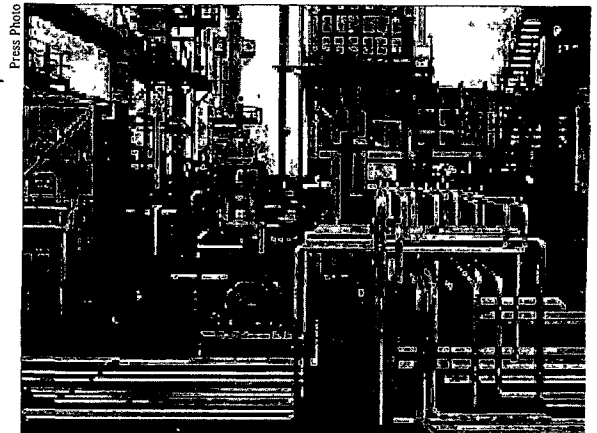
The construction of three oil refineries has got underway in the Region, Kurdish officials said last Thursday. The announcement comes amid exacerbated fuel shortage across the Kurdish cities.

One of the refineries is planned to be constructed in Erbil and the other one in Bazian Region, each with a daily capacity of 20,000 barrels a day. The third one will be built within Suleimaniya governorate with a capacity of 70,000 barrels

a day.

According to new plans, the capacity of Kirkuk's refinery will be increased to 55,000 barrels a day; this will most likely solve the fuel crisis in Kirkuk and its suburbs, officials estimate.

The Globe



Beji Oil Refinery in Kirkuk

Iraq Mayhem in the south too

BASRA
The south is less bloody than the centre but it is violent and lawless all the same

THE noise of a mortar round, like an incoming train, startles a bunch of contractors and aid workers waiting for their helicopter flight out of the British diplomatic compound in Basra, sending them and your correspondent scrambling for cover. This—and the array of other projectiles that have whizzed over the riverside palace complex in the past few nights—is presumed to be the Mahdi Army's revenge for the arrest of their local commander by British soldiers a few days before.

It is very different from two years ago, when British diplomats would happily cool down on the banks of the Shatt al-Arab waterway, since walled off by the concrete barriers that are ubiquitous across Iraq. The Shia-populated southern provinces used to be relatively safe. Not now. The violence in Basra, the south's capital, still pales by comparison with many other parts of Iraq, especially the Sunni areas to the west of Baghdad and the sectarian tinderbox of Iraq's capital. Even at its worst, in mid-summer, the bloodshed in Basra, caused largely by Islamist Shia militias feuding among themselves, claimed about 20 lives a week, according to the police, and now probably accounts for half that figure; Baghdad's daily death toll is far higher.

Still, the violence in Basra has deterred investment and caused the middle class to flee. Few of the billions of dollars of oil extracted from the huge fields just west of the city seem to have been put to good use locally. After suffering terribly under Saddam Hussein, Basra is still a slough of despond; the hoped-for new era of harmony has never arrived.

The region's political parties have done almost nothing for the common good, pre-

ferring to protect their own militiamen or enlist them in the police rather than help establish the rule of law. Many people risk being killed or kidnapped, especially Sunnis, former members of Mr Hussein's Baath party, those whose behaviour offends puritanical militiamen, and middle-class people who look as if they could pay a fat ransom. Most Basrawis moan about the bullying by militiamen or police (often the same thing) at impromptu checkpoints, the corpses found a few yards from police stations, and the authorities' inability or unwillingness to stop such horrors.

Who is guilty?
Some blame rising sectarian tensions across Iraq, others blame a foreign hand, be it British or Iranian, but many say the troubles are largely of the Basrawi politicians' own making, albeit enhanced by Iraq's general lawlessness and the corrupting influence of oil smuggling that Mr Hus-

sein started in order to dodge sanctions imposed by the UN back in 1991.

But even by Iraqi standards, Basra's government is weak and divided. Elsewhere in the south, the strongest force locally has usually been the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), an Islamist Shia party strongly tied to the clergy. In Basra, a SCIRI-linked coalition won 20 of the provincial council's 41 seats in the election of January 2005, but the coalition was divided. The province's powerful governorship went to the small but well-organised Fadila party, which follows the radical ideology of the late Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Sadeq al-Sadr but rejects the authority of his son, Muqtada al-Sadr, who took over most of his father's clerical network in order to set up his Mahdi Army.

Since then, Fadila has built up its own power base and web of patronage. "If you want a job, go and pray under that aw- ▶▶

Iraqi Kurdistan From killing zone to safe haven

ARBIL
In a reversal of roles, Iraq's Arabs are seeking safety among the Kurds

NO ONE was happier at the death in June of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the proclaimed leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq, than Jamal Hussein. The morning before an American air-strike killed Iraq's top terrorist, the 38-year-old civil servant woke up to find a note slipped under the door of his flat in western Baghdad. It called him "a Shia son of the devil" and said he had a week to leave or he would be killed. He had heard of such threats before and shrugged them off, but this one was different: it was signed by al-Qaeda in Iraq. Within hours Mr Hussein, his wife and two young sons had thrown their worldly goods into the back of a cousin's pick-up truck and were heading north along the bandit-ridden roads out of Baghdad towards the calm of Kurdistan.

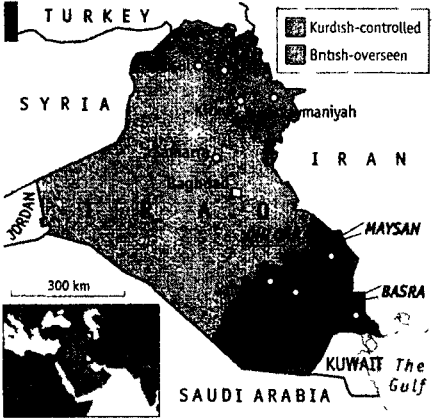
They are among thousands of Iraqis who have arrived in the northern self-rule provinces since the bombing of a Shia shrine at Samarra in February unleashed a wave of sectarian violence in Baghdad and surrounding areas that is still going on. Since the first Gulf war ended in 1991, Iraqi Kurdistan had been a safe haven for Kurds seeking to protect themselves from Saddam Hussein's genocidal tendencies. Now it has become a sanctuary for anyone wanting to escape sectarian violence in central Iraq, especially in and around Baghdad.

Many Iraqis with cash and connections have already resettled abroad. But Iraq's new ministry of displacement and

migration says that more than 200,000 Iraqis have been displaced within the country by violence since February. Some 1,250 families are relocating every week. "Threats, rumours, revenge killings, terrorism, kidnappings, sectarian strife, trigger-happy American soldiers and just plain old violent crime" are the main causes, says a senior civil servant.

Neither UN agencies nor Kurdish officials have exact figures, but a fair guess is that, as well as the 200,000 mentioned as displaced, another 40,000-50,000 have sought sanctuary in Kurdistan. Many are Christians and Kurds; and Baghdad's entire Sabean-Mandean populace, which adheres to a pre-Islamic faith and numbers around 25,000, is said to have asked the Kurdish authorities for a haven. A lot, however, are middle-class Sunni Arabs from Baghdad and Mosul, Iraq's biggest northern city.

The influx has squeezed Kurdish services. Housing is scarce; rents are soaring. But most Kurds, with their own long history of uncertainty and displacement, have been kind to the newcomers. Moreover, Kurdish officials are seizing a chance to beef up the workforce. Labourers from southern Iraq now toil away in the heat on Kurdistan's many building projects, while some of Baghdad's top academics are now teaching in Kurdish universities, dentists and doctors are finding jobs, and experienced civil servants such as Mr Hussein are working in Iraqi Kurdistan's ministries.



ning,” runs a graffito on a wall beside a Fadila-run mosque. Many senior policemen are Fadila appointees. The party controls the oil ministry’s provincial branch and has turned a private security force meant to guard Basra’s oil infrastructure into its own militia. Other militias loyal to SCIRI and the mainstream Sadrist also run local rackets, especially oil smuggling, which, by some estimates, is worth \$4 billion a year nationwide.

The 8,000-strong British force in Iraq’s four southern provinces has been dragged into the mess. A British decision to round up allegedly corrupt police prompted Basra’s city council to cut relations; they have since been restored. Attacks on the British by insurgents thought mainly to be followers of Mr Sadr’s Mahdi Army have increased, though some British officers blame the attacks on splinter groups, possibly led by local gangsters, without Mr Sadr’s approval. The sophisticated technology used in the attacks, as well as other evidence, suggests that other groups hitting the British are linked to Iran’s security services.

More than a score of British soldiers have been killed in the past year, including five in a helicopter crash, the cause of which remains uncertain. Some analysts say the British have given up trying to im-

pose full control and instead are letting some of the militias rule their local roosts, so long as they lay off the British forces.

In May, in an effort to restore order, Iraq’s newly installed prime minister, Nuri al-Maliki, declared a state of emergency in the south and told the Iraqi army, which, unlike the police, has stayed fairly free of party entanglements, to get a grip. Things got a bit better but the militias are unrepentant; violence could flare again any time.

In any event, the British say they are set to withdraw gradually from the south. Last month they (and their Australian and Japanese allies) handed control of the most sparsely-populated of the four provinces, Muthanna, to Iraqi forces, thanks largely to powerful local tribes keeping the peace. Iraqi and British officials say that another southern province, Dhi Qar, is just about ready for a handover. Even Maysan, a lawless province where tribesmen clash with the British and each other, may soon be handed over, partly on the ground that there is a rough balance of power between the competing factions and, anyway, the people of Maysan have long been accustomed to more violence than the city folk of Basra.

What can be done?

Yet Basra, the south’s most populous and

rich province, with Iraq’s biggest oil fields, is least ready to be handed over. A year ago, Basrawis clamoured loudly for regional autonomy, but now many want the central government to step in and curb the

militias. Mr Maliki set up a “Basra security committee” that was supposed to appoint a supremo to crack down on police corruption and militias, but Fadila hinted it might not co-operate. The new oil minister, Hussein al-Shahrastani, says that by cutting fuel subsidies and stopping a fuel handout to Basra’s fishing fleet he has reduced the smuggling which helped fund Basra’s criminal gangs.

But the central government’s power is limited. Some Basrawis hope that Fadila

will get kicked out in coming elections but they are unlikely to be held soon. In any event, Iraqi elections, at any level, have rarely been won by reformist technocrats, unless they have struck deals with the party machines. If Fadila were ousted, either SCIRI or Muqtada al-Sadr’s wing of the Sadrists, both running militias and neither known for their competence, would probably take over. So the British may have to stay in Iraq’s increasingly lawless southern province for a good while yet. ■

Turkey ■ By Jon B. Wolfsthal and Jessica C. Varnum

Heading off Ankara’s nuclear temptation

WASHINGTON
Nothing good can come from a nuclear-armed Iran. But in case the international community needs additional motivation to head off Tehran’s nuclear ambitions, states should consider that a nuclear Iran might cause Turkey — whose incentives to go nuclear have been steadily mounting — to pursue a nuclear option of its own.

As a NATO ally, prospective member of the European Union and secular bridge to the Islamic world, Turkey is a much-needed and increasingly rare source of stability for the region and the global non-proliferation regime. Should the Turkish domino be overturned by a nuclear Iran, it could take other states with it — including Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia, with unpredictable consequences.

It is not by chance that Turkey has no nuclear weapons. Great diplomatic efforts were made in the 1960s and 1970s to dissuade it from obtaining them. Turkey’s ratification of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty in 1980 — a decade after it was completed — was largely predicated on NATO and U.S. security guarantees.

Embedded in the global nonproliferation regime ever since, Turkey is able to enjoy the peaceful benefits of nuclear technology and there are no suspicions, let alone evidence, that Turkey has violated any of its nonproliferation commitments.

Turkey’s security situation is changing rapidly, however. The fighting in Lebanon could spill over at any time, Kurdish separatists, emboldened by the

situation in Iraq, threaten Turkey’s territorial integrity. General unrest in Iraq and the unpredictability of Syrian policy put Turkish leaders on edge. Adding a nuclear Iran to this equation — with missiles capable of targeting all of Turkey — makes it obvious why even optimists wonder about Turkey’s ultimate nuclear direction.

When the Cold War ended, so too did Turkey’s absolute confidence in NATO’s security commitment. Fortunately, Ankara has responded to growing uncertainties by seeking further integration with the West. Yet even as Turkey’s neighborhood becomes more dangerous and its strategic value to the West increases, it is the oft-neglected partner.

U.S.-Turkish relations remain cool in the aftermath of Turkey’s 2003 refusal to allow the transit of U.S. troops into Iraq. The increase in terrorism against Turkey by the Iraq-based Kurdistan Workers Party, along with the perception that the United States is doing too little to stop it, have further exacerbated tensions.

Meanwhile, the EU continues to hedge on Turkish membership, and even the current Turkish government’s strong commitment to the EU accession process is beginning to waver.

Amid these uncertainties, a nuclear Iran might be too much for Turkey’s leaders to process, and might push them to the nuclear edge. That Turkey recently

Turkey’s incentives to obtain nuclear weapons have been steadily mounting.

decided to invest \$1 billion in missile defense is a reminder of its real and growing concerns about Iran's nuclear and missile programs.

Beyond preventing Iran from proliferating, the best hope of keeping Turkey non-nuclear is to convince its leaders that the West remains fully committed to its security. The EU must convince Turkey that the sacrifices it continues to make toward the goal of accession are not in vain, the United States should be more attentive to Turkey's concerns about Iraq, and NATO should recommit itself to the ultimate preservation of Turkey's security.

Evaluating Turkey's worsening security situation, one inevitably concludes that its policy makers

cannot help but keep the nuclear option in reserve, even while remaining committed to nonproliferation. The West must therefore be willing to undertake policies that will strengthen the position of Turkish leaders trying to hold the nonproliferation line by alleviating the threats Turkey faces.

If we deal now with the root causes of Turkey's incentives to obtain nuclear weapons, we may still be able to avert a major crisis.

Jon B. Wolfsthal is a nonproliferation fellow and Jessica C. Varnum is an Armstrong Leadership intern at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington.

Bomber kills 35 near shrine in Najaf

By Edward Wong

BAGHDAD: An explosive worn on a belt by a suicide bomber who intended to blow himself up inside the holiest shrine of Shiite Islam went off Thursday during a police patdown at a checkpoint near the shrine, killing at least 35 people and wounding more than 120 others, including Iranian pilgrims, Iraqi officials said.

The attack, which took place in Najaf, 160 kilometers, or 100 miles, south of Baghdad, was likely to ignite further rounds of sectarian violence in Iraq, especially in the increasingly chaotic capital. If the attacker had blown up inside the shrine itself, the ensuing wave of revenge killings by Shiites on Sunni Arabs would almost certainly have dwarfed the sectarian bloodletting that followed the bombing of another Shiite shrine in February.

The explosion underscored the degradation of security in the spiritual heart of the Shiite-dominated south, an area once believed to be under the tight control of Iraqi and American forces. The most revered Shiite cleric in Iraq, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, lives just blocks away from the shrine.

Other attacks around Iraq, mostly aimed at civilians, brought the death toll for Thursday to at least 48, even as additional Iraqi and U.S. troops continued to deploy across Baghdad to try to bring a modicum of security to the capital.

The blast in Najaf ripped into a crowd of Shiite pilgrims who had come to the golden-domed Shrine of Ali on the anniversary of the death of Zaineb, the granddaughter of the Prophet Muhammad. The shrine sits at the center of Najaf and is a memorial to Ali, the prophet's son-in-law and the first martyr in the epochal seventh-century split between Sunni and Shiite Islam.

The bomber walked up to a police checkpoint about 20 meters, or 60 feet, from the shrine, and the bomb exploded

Attack raises fears of sectarian violence

as a police officer searched his body, according to local officials and the prime minister's office. A ball of flame engulfed the police officers at the checkpoint, killing at least five of them, said Dr. Munthir al-Ethari, the head of the health bureau in Najaf. At least eight women were among the dead.

Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, the prime minister and a Shiite, blamed loyalists of Saddam Hussein for the bombing, as well as "takfiris," a term that refers to fundamentalist Sunni Arabs who consider Shiites to be infidels.

Major General William Caldwell 4th, a spokesman for the American command, issued a statement saying the attack was the work of "a vicious death squad who targeted innocent Iraqis practicing their faith at one of the holiest sites in Iraq."

Najaf's economic growth is dependent on a steady stream of religious tourists, including many from neighboring Iran. Under Saddam's rule, few Shiites from outside Iraq were allowed to make pilgrimages to the Shrine of Ali. Now thousands stream into the city each day, according to some Iraqi officials.

Powerful Shiite parties with militias have control of the security forces in the province encompassing Najaf, and the area was once considered a safe haven shielded from the incessant bombings that plagued central Iraq. But a recent series of deadly attacks has eroded the sense of security.

On July 18, a suicide bomber exploded a van after luring day laborers into his car outside a Shiite shrine in the neighboring city of Kufa, killing at least 53 people and wounding more than 100.

That took place less than two weeks after a suicide car bomber rammed his sedan into two busloads of Iranian pil-

grims near another Shiite shrine in Kufa, killing at least 12 people.

The bombings in Kufa seemed intended to provoke Moktada al-Sadr, a radical Shiite cleric, whose militia is accused by U.S. officials and many Sunni Arabs of slaughtering Sunnis across Baghdad and elsewhere. Sadr's head mosque is in Kufa, and he occasionally preaches there on Fridays.

Sadr's main office is right next to the Shrine of Ali in Najaf, as are those of some of the country's leading ayatollahs. The city is home to the marjajiyah, considered by many Shiites to be the four top clerics of their faith, and the base for the hawza, a venerable seminary.

Prominent Shiites have lived or studied in Najaf, including Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who led the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, and Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The New York Times

■ Army recruiting improves

The U.S. Army says it will meet its 2006 recruiting goal, pulling itself up from a severe shortfall last year, The Associated Press reported from Washington.

The Pentagon's largest service — and the one bearing the brunt in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan — enlisted 10,890 people last month.

That brings the total to 62,505 for the year and puts the army on course to meet its goal of 80,000 for the budget year ending next month, Jeff Spara, army recruiting division chief, said Thursday.

"We are going to make the mission," he told a Pentagon briefing, crediting, among other things, additional recruiters, better pay bonuses and other incentives and new policies on eligibility.

Spara challenged contentions that the service was lowering its standards for recruits because it has been stretched thin after three years of war in Iraq.

Iran stokes Iraq unrest, U.S. says

By Edward Wong

BAGHDAD: Iran is pressing Shiite militias here to step up attacks against the American-led forces because of the Israeli assault on Lebanon, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq said Friday.

Iran could foment even more violence as it faces off with the United States and United Nations over its nuclear program in the coming weeks, he added.

The Iranian incitement has led to a surge in bold mortar and rocket attacks on the fortified Green Zone, said the ambassador, Zalmay Khalilzad.

The Green Zone, a four-square-mile, or about 10-square-kilometer, area on the west bank of the Tigris River, encloses baroque palaces built by Saddam Hussein that now house the seat of the Iraqi government and the U.S. Embassy, and that are protected by layers of concrete blast walls and concertina wire.

The Shiite guerrillas are members of splinter groups of the Mahdi Army, the powerful militia created by radical Shiite cleric Moktada al-Sadr, Khalilzad said. The Mahdi Army rose up twice against the Americans in 2004.

The groups behind the recent attacks have ties to both Iran and Hezbollah, the Iranian-backed Shiite militia in Lebanon that has been battling Israel for a month, the ambassador added.

"One of the main points of contact is some groups have ties to Hezbollah," Khalilzad said in an interview Friday in his home inside the Green Zone. "I think this is an effort that is continuing, that Iran is seeking to put more pressure, encourage more pressure on the coalition from the forces that they are allied with here, and the same is maybe true of Hezbollah."

Khalilzad's remarks are the first public statements by a senior Bush administration official that directly link violence here in Iraq to the war in Lebanon and Israel, and to growing American pressure over Iran's nuclear program. Until now, U.S. officials have characterized Iranian influence in Iraq in vague terms, and none have publicly drawn a direct connection between Shiite militant groups here and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Khalilzad's comments also reinforce the observations of some analysts that the rise of the majority Shiites in Iraq, long oppressed by Sunni Arab rulers, is fueling the creation of a "Shiite crescent" across the Middle East, with groups in Iraq, Iran and Lebanon working together against common enemies, whether they be the United States, Israel or Sunni Arab nations.

But Khalilzad insisted that the most powerful Shiite leaders here had not yet pushed for more attacks against the Americans, even though Iran would like them to. That includes Sadr, he said.

"Generally the Shia leadership here have behaved more as Iraqi patriots and have not reacted in the way that perhaps



Lauren Victoria Burke/The Associated Press

Zalmay Khalilzad, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, said the violence could soon increase.

the Iranians and Hezbollah might want them to," Khalilzad said.

Iran and Hezbollah want the Shiite leaders "to behave by mobilizing against the coalition or taking actions against the coalition," he added.

At least in rhetoric, the top Shiite leaders in Iraq have forcefully condemned the Israeli assault on Lebanon, much more so than senior officials in Sunni Arab countries. Furious denunciations have come from Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, the most revered Shiite cleric

here, Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki and the Parliament, which called the Israeli airstrikes "criminal aggression."

When Maliki visited Washington last month, congressional leaders pressed him to denounce Hezbollah as a terrorist group, but Maliki dodged the request.

The mercurial Sadr has come closest of all the Shiite leaders in hinting that Iraqis might take up arms in support of Hezbollah. He said in late July that Iraqis would not "sit by with folded hands" while Lebanon burned, and on Aug. 4 he summoned up to 100,000 followers to an anti-Israel and anti-American rally in Baghdad. Most of those who showed up were angry young men, many swathed in white cloths symbolizing funeral shrouds and some toting Kalashnikovs.

Sympathy with Hezbollah is not limited to the radical fringe. As images of the destruction in Lebanon continue flickering across the Arab television networks, many ordinary Iraqis say they are ready to join the mujahedeen in holy war against American-backed Israel.

Khalilzad said Iran could stoke more violence among the Shiite militias as the end of the month draws nearer.

That is expected to be a time of high tension between Iran and the United States because a UN Security Council resolution gives Iran until Aug. 31 to suspend uranium enrichment or face

the threat of economic and diplomatic sanctions. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran has insisted that his country will pursue its nuclear program.

"The concern that we have is that Iran and Hezbollah would use those contacts that they have with groups and the situation here, use those to cause more difficulties or cause difficulties for the coalition," Khalilzad said.

If the United Nations passes another resolution against Iran after the Aug. 31 deadline, he said, that "could increase the pressure on Iran," and "Iran could respond to by further pressing its supporters or people that it has ties with or people that it controls to increase the pressure on the coalition, not only in Iraq but elsewhere as well."

Some military analysts cast the Israel-Hezbollah war as a proxy struggle between the United States and Iran, and prominent conservatives in Washington have called for military action against Iran. William Kristol, editor of *The Weekly Standard*, an influential conservative magazine, said on Fox News last month that the Bush administration had been "coddling" Iran and that the war in Lebanon and Israel represented "a great opportunity to begin resuming the offensive against the terrorist groups."

American and British forces in Iraq have stepped up operations recently against elements of Sadr's Mahdi Army, raiding hideouts and engaging in pitched battles in the Sadr City district of Baghdad and in the area around Basra, the southern port city. Last Monday, American forces called in an air attack during a raid in Sadr City. Maliki, who depends on Sadr for political support against rival Shiites, later denounced the raid, saying he had never approved it and that the Americans had used "excessive force."

The New York Times

LE FIGARO 11 août 2006

Carnage près d'un lieu saint chiite à Nadjaf

IRAK
Un kamikaze a causé la mort d'au moins 35 personnes, hier, à proximité du mausolée de l'imam Ali, dans la ville sainte chiite de Nadjaf.

UN ATTENTAT suicide a causé au moins 35 morts et une centaine de

blessés hier matin dans la ville sainte chiite de Nadjaf. Un homme portant une ceinture remplie d'explosifs s'est fait exploser à l'entrée du marché de la vieille ville, devant l'entrée du mausolée de l'imam Ali, le lieu saint le plus important de l'islam chiite. La ville a déjà été la cible d'attentats sanglants : le 29 août 2003 notamment, 83 personnes, dont le dignitaire chiite

Mohammad Baqer Hakim, chef du Conseil supérieur de la révolution islamique en Irak (CSRII), l'un des plus importants partis chiites, avaient été tués dans un attentat à la voiture piégée.

Des chaînes de télévision ont diffusé hier des images de corps identifiés par des numéros et déposés les uns à côté des autres à même le sol, près de l'hôpital. Des civils ainsi que des policiers ont péri dans l'attentat. L'attaque a été revendiquée sur un site Internet par un mouvement se présentant comme « les soldats des compagnons du Prophète ».

100 Irakiens tués chaque jour

Les partis chiites ont fait part de leur indignation. « Nous en appelons à tous pour mettre un terme aux actes criminels qui visent des civils en Irak, dans le but d'aboutir à une partition du pays et d'enrayer le processus politique et de réconci-

liation nationale », a déclaré Aziz Zein al-Ali, un porte-parole du CSRII. « Nous demandons aux autorités de prendre des mesures de sécurité draconiennes. Il faut réactiver le rôle des comités populaires pour protéger les citoyens », a commenté Saheb al-Ameri, le porte-parole du chef radical chiite Moqtada al-Sadr, en référence aux milices de quartier.

D'après un récent rapport des Nations unies, 100 Irakiens sont tués en moyenne chaque jour. Le ministère de la Santé a décompté plus de 1 800 morts à Bagdad en juillet. Le premier ministre Nouri al-Maliki avait pourtant lancé à la mi-juin, à grand renfort de publicité, un plan de sécurité pour Bagdad intitulé « En avant ensemble », pour lequel plus de 50 000 membres des forces de sécurité irakiennes et soldats américains sont déployés. L'échec de ce plan a conduit au lancement, lundi, d'une « deuxième phase », pour laquelle 5 000 soldats américains supplémentaires sont en train d'être acheminés dans la capitale.

T. O. (AVEC AFP ET REUTERS)



Nadjaf, durement touchée hier, avait déjà été la cible d'attentats meurtriers, notamment le 29 août 2003. Alaa al-Marjani/AP

Le Monde
Mardi 15 août 2006

Walid Joumblatt : l'Iran négocie son dossier nucléaire « sur la terre brûlée du Liban »

MOUKHTARA
(Montagne du Chouf)
ENVOYÉ SPÉCIAL

Dans un français châtié, Walid Joumblatt affiche son pessimisme, du ton las de celui qui en a trop vu. Dimanche 13 août, à la veille du jour prévu pour la cessation des hostilités entre le Hezbollah et Israël, le dirigeant druze, retranché dans la montagne du Chouf, au cœur de son immense château, dit qu'il ne croit pas à une paix durable.

« Les Syriens et les Iraniens n'ont pas tardé à faire savoir que la résolution des Nations unies n'est pas dans l'intérêt du Liban. Et pour le Hezbollah, respecter une résolution ne veut pas dire l'accepter. Alors... » explique le député et chef du Parti socialiste progressiste (PSP), en ponctuant ses propos d'un geste désabusé.

L'intervention vidéo d'Hassan Nasrallah, le secrétaire général du Hezbollah, samedi, à la

television, est pètrie des ambiguïtés rhétoriques dont il est coutumier, laisse-t-il entendre : « Le moins que l'on puisse dire, c'est que la sincérité de Nasrallah reste à prouver quant à sa détermination à accepter le processus de désarmement de ses hommes. »

« On peut admettre que ce qui vient de se passer depuis le 12 juillet a permis au Parti de Dieu de casser l'invincibilité d'Israël, continue M. Joumblatt,

mais tant que cela s'inscrit dans le jeu syro-iranien. L'Iran négocie sur la terre brûlée du Liban les termes de la poursuite de son programme nucléaire. Quant à la Syrie, elle veut se venger du Liban, d'où ses troupes ont été chassées [en avril 2005] et elle est aujourd'hui satellisée par l'Iran. »

« Vers un Orient lointain »

M. Joumblatt estime par ailleurs que son pays est pris au piège d'un cercle vicieux, dans la

mesure où le Hezbollah risque de ne pas accepter d'être désarmé si les Israéliens ne se retirent pas. Il estime aussi qu'Israël refusera de se retirer aussi longtemps que le déploiement de la Force intérimaire des Nations unies au Liban (Finul) et de l'armée libanaise ne sera pas effectif.

Pour le chef druze, qui voue une haine tenace au pouvoir du président Bachar Al-Assad, le Liban est redevenu un champ de bataille expérimental pour les forces étrangères.

Pour lui, après l'assassinat, en février 2005, de l'ancien premier ministre Rafic Hariri, et le départ consécutif des forces syriennes, « l'espoir d'un Liban indépendant, certes fragile, existait ». « Désormais, conclut-il avec un humour grinçant, en référence à l'axe syro-iranien, on est tiré vers l'Orient lointain. » ■

BRUNO PHILIP

A Bagdad, l'armée américaine dresse des murs entre communautés

Des barrières de béton ont commencé à être installées autour du quartier d'Al-Dora. L'objectif est de séparer sunnites et chiïtes afin d'éviter les violences interconfessionnelles

Les armées américaine et irakienne ont commencé, mardi 15 août, à construire un mur encerclant Al-Dora, un quartier sud de Bagdad. Des soldats ont posé des barrières de béton préfabriquées afin d'« empêcher les terroristes d'entrer », selon l'armée américaine.

Si Al-Dora est un vaste quartier mixte, l'opération consiste, dans ce cas précis, à isoler une zone habitée majoritairement par des sunnites afin de la protéger d'incursions de milices chiïtes. Depuis que Bagdad est en proie à la guerre civile et que des transferts de populations entre chiïtes et sunnites s'opèrent, Al-Dora a été l'un des quartiers les plus touchés par les violences intercommunautaires.

Reconnaissant l'échec du « plan de sécurité "En avant ensemble" » lancé en juin, l'armée américaine et les forces de sécurité irakiennes ont dévoilé, le 11 août, une nouvelle stratégie, qui consiste à séparer les quartiers de Bagdad selon des critères communautaires. « Nous allons nous concentrer sur les frontières confessionnelles, aller dans ces secteurs, les nettoyer, installer les forces de sécurité, apporter de l'aide économique et travailler avec les leaders locaux afin que les gens se sentent en confiance », a expliqué le commandant de la Force multinationale, le général américain George Casey. L'objectif est de « nettoyer Bagdad avant le ramadan », fin septembre.

« Comités de défense populaires »

Le quartier d'Al-Dora, où sévissent à la fois des combattants sunnites liés à la guérilla irakienne et des milices chiïtes, a été le premier visé par cette stratégie. Mardi, alors que les premières barrières de béton étaient posées, l'armée américaine, qui l'a bouclé dès le 7 août, semblait satisfaite du bilan d'une première semaine d'opérations : « Auparavant, on trouvait vingt-cinq engins explosifs par semaine à Dora. Nous n'en avons trouvé que quatre cette semaine. C'est un succès. »

Marquant leur défiance face au plan de sécurité, deux mouvements chiïtes, le Conseil suprême de la révolution islamique en Irak (CSRRI), pilier de la coalition



Des soldats américains patrouillent dans le quartier sunnite d'Al-Dora, le 9 août à Bagdad, dans le cadre de l'opération « En avant ensemble » menée conjointement avec les forces de sécurité irakiennes. SCOTT NELSON/WPN

au pouvoir, et la faction de l'imam Moqtada Al-Sadr, opposant à l'alliance américano-irakienne, ont créé, mardi, des « comités de défense populaires » dans la ville sainte chiïte de Nadjaf, après un attentat qui a eu lieu le 10 août devant le mausolée de l'imam Ali.

Les deux mouvements disposent déjà de milices, la Brigade Badr pour le CSRRI et l'Armée du Mahdi pour Moqtada Al-Sadr. Ils souhaitent étendre leurs « comités » à Bagdad et à tout l'Irak afin de protéger la population chiïte des attaques de la guérilla sunnite.

L'armée américaine a récemment violemment attaqué l'Armée du Mahdi dans le faubourg de Sadr City, à Bagdad, y compris avec un recours à l'aviation. Le premier ministre, Nouri Al-Maliki, opposé à la création de milices, a condamné le raid américain. Impuissant, il semble pris entre deux feux.

Et pendant que le président irakien, Jalal Talabani, continue d'affirmer qu'il « ne croit pas qu'une guerre civile se déroule en Irak », les gardiens de l'ordre public dressent des murs. ■

RÉMY OURDAN

Moyen-Orient Téhéran célèbre la « victoire » du Hezbollah, met en garde l'Etat juif et affirme ses ambitions

Liban, Israël, nucléaire : l'Iran sur tous les fronts

BEYROUTH

CORRESPONDANTE

Aux yeux des dirigeants de Téhéran, le Hezbollah libanais est le plus « gratifiant » de tous les partis que la République islamique a cherché à inspirer depuis son instauration en Iran : ils ne pouvaient donc que se féliciter de la « victoire » que vient de remporter, selon eux, le Parti de Dieu contre Israël. Aussi est-ce à une véritable démonstration de liesse que s'est livré, mardi 15 août, le pouvoir iranien, au lendemain de l'arrêt des combats entre l'Etat juif et le Hezbollah.

Dès la soirée de lundi, des motos et des bus ont sillonné Téhéran, brandissant des drapeaux du Hezbollah, tandis que, sur les toits des immeubles, des partisans du pouvoir ont scandé « Allah Akbar ! » (Dieu est le plus grand). Mardi, le métro et les bus étaient gratuits. Des gâteaux et des boissons ont été distribués devant certaines administrations.

Les dirigeants iraniens ont récupéré à leur avantage la résistance des combattants du Hezbollah. Tantôt pour menacer Israël du pire – un tir de missile Shahab-3 d'une portée de 2 000 km qui atteindrait Tel-Aviv, selon Ahmed Khataami, l'un des chefs religieux de la tendance la plus dure – si l'Etat juif était tenté de lancer une attaque contre la République islamique. Et tantôt pour annoncer, comme l'a fait le président Mahmoud Ahma-

dinejad dans un discours, l'aube d'un « nouveau Proche-Orient », aux antipodes de celui projeté par les Etats-Unis et qui serait précisément débarrassé de « la domination américaine et britannique ».

Brossant le tableau d'un David contre Goliath, d'un « petit groupe de jeunes hommes pieux, confiants en Dieu », face aux « pouvoirs corrompus des criminels américains, britanniques et sionistes », M. Ahmadinejad s'est exclamé : « La promesse de Dieu est devenue réalité ! »

Les dirigeants de la République islamique considèrent qu'ils ont d'autant moins de raisons de maquiller leur tutelle sur le Hezbollah que les Etats-Unis ne

se privent pas d'afficher leur soutien actif et inconditionnel à Israël. Leur influence au Liban a du reste été reconnue, au moins indirectement, par l'aveu de dirigeants occidentaux du statut de l'Iran comme acteur important sur l'échiquier régional.

Le Hezbollah sous influence

Si, comme le Hezbollah lui-même, les dirigeants iraniens n'avaient sans doute pas prévu l'ampleur de la réaction à la capture, le 12 juillet, de deux soldats israéliens par le Parti de Dieu, la résistance des combattants libanais face à l'imposante machine de guerre israélienne n'a fait que décupler leur satisfaction.

Il reste à savoir comment, au-delà des

mises en garde et des menaces, ils entendent rentabiliser cette « victoire » par procuration, décrochée par des combattants formés à l'école iranienne et grâce à des armes en provenance de la République islamique dans leur écrasante majorité. Téhéran s'est borné, pour l'heure, à

hausser le ton à propos de son programme nucléaire.

Le Hezbollah ne s'est, de son côté, jamais dérobé à sa filiation idéologique et à son alliance avec l'Iran. Il n'est toutefois pas certain que les épanchements de son tuteur contribuent à faciliter sa tâche au Liban. Ils risquent au contraire d'accentuer les suspicions d'une partie des Libanais quant à la priorité que le Parti de Dieu accorderait, selon eux, aux intérêts de la République islamique par rapport à ceux du Liban.

Ces suspicions avaient déjà été intensifiées par ce que certains considèrent comme une volte-face du Hezbollah concernant la résolution 1701 du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU. Selon des sources proches du gouvernement libanais, ce serait sous l'influence de Téhéran que le Hezbollah, après avoir accepté ladite résolution avec quelques réserves, aurait décidé de faire de la résistance concernant son désarmement. ■

MOUNA NAIM

ORGANISÉE EN RÉPONSE AUX DESSINS DANOIS SUR MAHOMET

Une exposition de caricatures sur l'Holocauste s'est ouverte à Téhéran



L'AFFICHE en elle-même est explicite. Sur fond sépia, comme s'il s'agissait d'une vieille photo d'une réalité qui perdure, on voit dessinés des casques nazis renversés, surmontés d'un autre casque, frappé, celui-là, d'une étoile de David, qui semble leur faire pendant.

Cette affiche annonce l'ouverture, lundi 14 août à Téhéran, au Musée d'art contemporain palestinien, d'une exposition de caricatures sur l'Holocauste, dernier avatar de la polémique sur les douze caricatures du prophète Mahomet publiées par le journal danois *Jyllands-Posten* le 30 septembre 2005 et qui avaient suscité la colère de millions de musulmans dans le monde entier. Protests meurtrières, comme au Pakistan, et le saccage d'ambassades et d'églises. Des journaux européens qui avaient reproduit les caricatures avaient été pris à partie. Le

A Téhéran, le concours de dessins sur l'Holocauste organisé au Musée d'art contemporain palestinien a accueilli, lundi 14 août, ses premiers visiteurs. En arrière-plan, l'affiche de l'exposition. BEHROUZ MEHRI/AFP

rédacteur en chef du journal danois avait présenté ses excuses pour tenter de calmer ce qui était vite devenu une crise diplomatique majeure.

« *Les journaux occidentaux ont publié ces dessins sacrilèges sous le prétexte de la liberté d'expression, alors voyons s'ils pensent vraiment ce qu'ils disent et publient des dessins sur l'Holocauste* », avait lancé, en février 2006, le journal iranien *Hamchari*. Un quotidien à grand tirage proche de l'entourage du président iranien, le conservateur Mahmoud Ahmadinejad qui, depuis son arrivée au pouvoir en août 2005, a multiplié les déclarations traitant l'Holocauste de « *mythe* » et souhaitant la « *disparition* » d'Israël.

Le concours a été aussitôt ouvert, avec l'appui de la Maison de la caricature iranienne. Le 13 février, un avant-goût de la production à venir était diffusé sur son site Internet. On y voyait deux vignettes. Sur la première, un juif passe en 1942 sous le portail d'Auschwitz où une inscription annonce : « *Le travail apporte la liberté* ». Sur l'autre vignette, datée de 2002, le même juif, fusil en main, entre sur un champ de bataille sous un fronton qui dit : « *La guerre apporte la paix* ».

Les organisateurs du concours, qui, lundi, ont insisté à nouveau sur le fait que le véritable holocauste à leurs yeux était « *celui des Palestiniens* », ont reçu 1 100 caricatures, en provenance d'une soixantaine de pays. Deux cent quatre ont été retenues, les trois « *meilleures* » recevront 12 000, 8 000 et 5 000 dollars de récompense. La majorité des dessinateurs sont iraniens, mais figurent aussi sur la liste sept Français et douze Américains.

La source d'inspiration, en revanche, est la même : croix gammée se transformant en étoile de David pour étrangler des Palestiniens ; le mot Israël dessiné avec un L final en forme de botte écrasant une mappemonde ou encore une statue de la Liberté tenant un livre sur l'Holocauste dans sa main gauche et faisant un salut nazi avec la droite.

L'exposition, prévue pour durer jusqu'au 13 septembre, a déjà suscité de vives réactions. Mardi, le mémorial de l'Holocauste de Yad Vashem, à Jérusalem, dédié aux six millions de juifs exterminés par les nazis, a publié un communi-

qué exhortant la communauté internationale à réagir. « *L'histoire a prouvé que le silence face à des déclarations malveillantes engendre des actions malveillantes* », explique le Yad Vashem, qui conclut : « *L'exposition de caricatures sur l'Holocauste à Téhéran, en Iran, un pays qui veut se doter de capacités nucléaires et dont le président s'est prononcé pour un génocide d'Israël, doit mettre les voyants au rouge, non seulement pour Israël mais pour toutes les nations éclairées.* » ■

MARIE-CLAUDE DECAMPS

IRAN FOLLIES

Why U.S. policy toward Tehran will only make matters worse.
BY NISID HAJARI

ON IRANIAN STATE TV THESE DAYS, THE APPEALS to solidarity with Hizbullah are anything but subtle. One slick video collage zips from U.S. President George W. Bush hailing the dawn of a new Middle East to a Beirut apartment tower being obliterated by Israeli missiles. Urgent, martial music pounds through a slide show of further contrasts—Bush and a screaming Palestinian girl; Condoleezza Rice and fear-stricken refugees fleeing southern Lebanon; John Bolton and a dead Lebanese child. Then, a

pause: defiant Hizbullah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah addresses an adoring crowd. When the music picks up again, Katyusha rockets fill the skies and Israelis cower in bomb shelters.

Those who argue that the battle in Lebanon is really a proxy war with Iran for supremacy in the Middle East need not look far for evidence. Yet the picture that Iran presents on the ground is both more complex than that and, given the stalemate over the country's nuclear program, more worrisome. The greatest concern: everything that's happening in Lebanon, Iran and the United States right now is stiffening Tehran's resistance to what the United Nations Security Council demanded last week—a suspension of the country's uranium-enrichment program.

The bloodied Lebanese babies plastered across Mideast TV screens are vindicating Tehran's claims about the iniquity of the West. Iran's links to Hizbullah, as well as the tirades of its Israel-bashing president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, are elevating the country to the leadership it's long coveted in the Middle East. Perhaps even worse, according to a senior Western diplomat in Tehran, the crisis has undercut those within the regime who might have compromised over the nuclear issue. Continuing violence has driven crude prices to near \$75 a barrel—a godsend for a government that depends on oil for as much as 80 percent of its revenues. And if, as some insiders say, the mullahs fear

Hizbullah's being demolished by the Israeli onslaught, that unease, too, is feeding a prickly defensiveness.

True, international pressure on Iran is building. The Security Council's resolution threatening possible sanctions if Iran does not halt its enrichment program by the end of August passed 14-1. And while both Ahmadinejad and Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei—the real power in Iran—denounced the measure as bullying, they haven't yet rejected a negotiating package presented in early June by the five permanent Security Council members and Germany, which also demands a suspension of Iran's nuclear program. (Tehran officially plans to respond to the offer by Aug. 22.) Still, the U.S.-driven strategy of confrontation truly seems designed to exacerbate all the worst trends coursing through the region.

Washington's argument that Iran simply cannot be trusted with a nuclear program, for instance, now has to contend with an inflamed nationalism. Anti-Americanism in Tehran goes beyond the bloody murals that still spread across the walls of the former U.S. Embassy, or the ritual chants at Friday prayers each week (led by a figure known as the Minister of Slo-gans), or the equally ritual headlines in the state media, enumerating Washington's "arrogances" on a daily basis. Iran's is a neonationalism of the sort common to newly decolonized countries—a heady mixture of bluff, insecurity, openness to and suspicion of the world. The teenagers who fill the malls of north Tehran—the

Iran

boys with their hair slicked back into exaggerated ducktails, the girls glamorous in bejeweled sunglasses and loosely tied Pucci scarves—are more than happy to drink Coke, listen to iPods and watch J.Lo and Madonna on illegal satellite TV. But their sense of well-being in the world is tied crucially to the idea that they are equal players in global culture.

To declare that they cannot be allowed advanced technology is a direct affront. For the regime, which has cleverly made the nuclear program a signpost of Iran's modernity, there is no percentage in backing down now. "This is no longer an economic issue—it's about politics and stature," says Hossein Marashi, a leading politician and brother-in-law of the losing candidate in last year's election, Ayatollah Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. The idea that the government has raised Iran's place in the world has a surprising currency in Iran, and won't easily be surrendered.

U.S. criticism only bolsters that reputation. "The more America and Israel blame Iran, the stronger Ahmadinejad becomes," says Ebrahim Yazdi, the first post-revolution foreign minister

ers. It's as easy to find a \$200 Bugatti knife set as a mosque, maybe easier.

Some \$60 billion per year in oil revenue washes away most blights on the Iranian economy. Subsidies that may run as high as \$25 billion annually help keep gas prices down to a mere nine cents per liter; according to economist Saeed Laylaz, each of those little Iranian-made sedans uses six times as much fuel as cars in France. Ahmadinejad has made himself particularly popular by traveling to remote provinces and doling out aid and cheap loans. Government contracts have increasingly gone to cronies and powerful constituencies like the Revolutionary Guards, who in June were awarded \$8 billion worth of oil-sector contracts without tender. In fact, economic policy seems designed to buy off most of the population, easy when by some estimates the state controls two thirds of Iran's economy. "With the oil boom, the government can do anything without fearing the consequences of its wrong decisions," says Prof. Masoud Nili, a macroeconomist at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran.



and now a reformist. Both a devout youth eager for martyrdom in Lebanon and a worldly, jaded artist (who serves home-brewed vodka along with the unavoidable cups of sweet tea) praise the Iranian president in essentially the same terms. "Before, America attacked Iran and we had to defend ourselves," says the youth. "Now it's the other way around—we have a voice, and the whole world is listening." As several analysts with links to the government point out, both the Lebanon crisis and the stalemate over the nuclear program help Ahmadinejad in the same way—as a means of burnishing his image, and of distracting Iranians from the various incompetencies of his administration.

Perhaps the greatest distraction is the flood of petrodollars gushing through the Iranian system, propelled by fears of an American attack or sanctions. Those expecting Tehran to look like an imperial Persian capital—or another Havana, faded and peeling from isolation, but glorious in its decay—are bound to be disappointed. Construction cranes tower over half-built skyscrapers. Glossy new condo complexes blend fake marble and blue-mirrored glass in a style familiar to nouveau riche metropolises from Bangalore to Dubai. The well-paved streets are roiling with cars—little Paykan sedans, mostly, but also shiny Peugeots and even the odd BMW. Toward evening, as the heat of the day lifts, crowds of shoppers fill the sidewalks; hundreds of stores beckon them with flat-screen TVs, Italian sofas and Puma sneak-

NATION IN MOTION: Modern and ancient mix in Qom and the capital, Tehran

Opponents of the government are a lonely bunch. The reception area for the leading reformist party, the Islamic Iran Participation Front, is filled only with empty Naugahyde chairs and the lingering smell of raw onions, a common condiment locally. Party spokesman Saeed Shariati freely admits that part of the reason reformists hold only 39 seats in the 290-seat Parliament is that they could not draw a connection

in voters' minds between democratic principles and their economic well-being. That task has been made immeasurably more difficult by the hypocrisy Iranians believe they're witnessing in the Middle East. "Bush says he supports human rights and democracy—that should apply not just to Iranians but to Palestinians," says Mohsen Kadivar, a leading reformist cleric. Others point to the chaos next door in Iraq as an effective advertisement against Jeffersonian freedoms. But most crucially, the link between Washington and Tel Aviv has thoroughly discredited not just America but any Iranian who could plausibly be tarred as its stooge. In Tehran today one is hard pressed to find a single reformer, even among several who have been jailed by the regime, who thinks that the United States is helping their cause.

Given all this, the offer currently before Tehran looks much less attractive than Washington imagines it to be. Maintaining some functioning enrichment program is the Iranians' red line—and the one thing the United Nations is asking them to give up outright. Over and over again, those who deal with the mullahs

in Iran insist that their greatest concern is not spreading the revolution but staying in power. Grand Ayatollah Yusef Saanei, a contemporary of Khomeini's who fell out of favor, says of the regime: "They don't care about the people; they only care about their own interests." Yet after Lebanon, the chances of the Bush administration's providing the mullahs with airtight security guarantees look not just unlikely but impossible.

The international community has maintained a remarkable consensus to this point, with even Russia publicly urging Iran to accept the deal last week. But Tehran knows time is likely to fracture that unity. "China and Russia are totally different [from America]," says Hossein Shariatmadari, president of the conservative Kayhan group of newspapers and an unofficial mouthpiece for the regime. "Some European leaders are even sending us secret messages saying, 'Please, just come to a compromise, because we don't want to go further with this.'" Even granted that he's exaggerating, European governments have certainly split with Washington over its handling of the Lebanon war. As

criticizing Tehran for its links to groups like Hizbullah serve little purpose. No security guarantee should be offered outright, but the prospect of one as part of a larger accord in the Persian Gulf could be raised. And while the Security Council cannot back down on its demand that Iran halt its enrichment activities, it could sweeten the offer. Simultaneously unblocking some frozen Iranian assets, for example, or turning over for trial some members of the Mujahedin Khalq Organization (MKO)—a dissident group even the U.S. State Department admits are terrorists—would be a powerful PR move, if nothing else.

And that's the point. In all likelihood the current Iranian regime will never be able to overcome its suspicion of the Bush administration, any more than the Republican grass roots would support truly conciliatory gestures toward Tehran in an election year. But demonstrating some statesmanship would at least remove doubts in the international community about Washington's seriousness—and back the mullahs into a rhetorical corner. For the same reason, some pro-democracy types in Tehran say that



Council on Foreign Relations Iran expert Ray Takeyh says, if the stalemate continues, "in several months Europeans are going to have to ask themselves if they want [to deal with another] crisis in the Middle East."

What can Washington do? First of all, the United States might take a page from the Iranian regime and compartmentalize. In order to maintain an internal consensus on the nuclear issue, Tehran has sought to neutralize potential flashpoints. The burgeoning youth population, for instance, has been largely placated. Those Pucci scarves have been slipping farther and farther back on the capital's most fashionable heads; ordering up a few bottles of whisky for a party is no harder than it's ever been. Reportedly, Revolutionary Guards chief Rahim Safavi has even warned members of the thuggish *basij* militia not to "interfere in people's lives, ask for identification cards or rifle through CDs and cassettes." At the same time, authorities have intimidated intellectuals with well-timed arrests, like the mysterious April detention of Prof. Ramin Jahanbegloo for unspecified crimes. Kadivar spoke with NEWSWEEK reporters in a mosque because he'd been warned he would lose his job if he met foreigners in his office at a state-run university.

America needs to decide on its priorities. If stopping the Iranian nuclear program is most urgent, then continuing to raise the prospect of toppling the regime—however democratically—and

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America should seek a more open consular presence in Iran, both to ease access to U.S. visas and to embarrass the regime with the long lines out the door. (Kadivar also smartly suggests offering more scholarships to students in the humanities, rather than just the sciences, to instill free-thinking values.)

True, a more generous U.S. policy risks confirming the regime's growing conviction that bad behavior pays. "The government feels they need to act confrontational in order to get anything from the West," notes Mohammad Atrianfar, publisher of the leading reformist daily, Shargh. But all the other options on the table seem guaranteed to make a bad situation worse, not better. The larger goal of fully democratizing Iran is laudable but won't be realized through airstrikes, Voice of America broadcasts featuring pro-shah exiles or, as one Tehran dissident noted dismissively, human-rights seminars that focus on how to surround and occupy a state radio station. "Democracy is not a commodity you can buy and transfer," says Emadedin Baghi, a prisoners' rights activist who spent three years in jail for accusing the Intelligence Ministry of being involved in the assassinations of Iranian intellectuals. "It's a process, and we have to go through certain stages in order to develop democratic values." Making Iran a nuclear pariah isn't going to help that process along. Living up to our own ideals just may.

With MAZIAR BAHARI in Tehran and ZVIKA KRIEGER

NEWSWEEK AUGUST 14, 2006

Accusé de génocide contre les Kurdes Saddam revient devant les juges

Moins d'un an après l'ouverture de son procès pour le massacre de Doujail, Saddam Hussein répond, à partir d'aujourd'hui, des accusations de génocide contre les Kurdes.

PRESSE Océan 22 août 2006

Saddam Hussein, passible de la peine de mort dans un premier procès en cours, doit répondre, aujourd'hui, des accusations de génocide contre les Kurdes pendant la campagne Anfal, qui s'est soldée par au moins 100 000 morts. Alors que le verdict du procès du massacre de 148 chiites de Doujail est attendu pour le

16 octobre, Saddam Hussein va vivre son deuxième procès depuis la chute de son

Étouffer les velléités nationalistes kurdes

régime en 2003 : il risque la peine de mort dans les deux procédures.

« Ali le chimique »

Le parquet va essayer de prouver qu'en ordonnant la campagne Anfal (« butin de guerre », selon une sourate du Coran), Saddam s'est rendu coupable d'un génocide. Saddam Hussein

et ses six co-accusés, dont le général Ali Hassan al-Majid dit « Ali le chimique » ou le « boucher du Kurdistan » seront défendus par une équipe de douze avocats.

Armes chimiques

La campagne Anfal avait pour objectif d'étouffer les velléités nationalistes

Pour les Kurdes qui ont survécu à la campagne de répression Anfal, ce jour marque une victoire, mais ravive de cruels souvenirs. « J'attends impatiemment de le voir devant le tribunal afin d'étancher ma soif de le voir humilié », dit Abdallah Mohammed, qui a perdu deux fils, trois filles, trois frères et trois belles-sœurs dans cette campagne de répression. « Notre village a été transformé en une boule de feu et de fumée. Nous étions assiégés par les blindés, sous le feu des hélicoptères.

kurdes en s'attaquant aux populations civiles. Si les troupes irakiennes ont effectivement été accrochées par de la guérilla kurde peshmerga, elles sont accusées d'avoir concentré leur puissance de feu sur les villages kurdes et d'avoir utilisé des armes chimiques.

Exécutions en masse

Le parquet tentera également de prouver l'existence de camps d'internement et des exécutions en masse. « Les prisonniers étaient tués plusieurs jours ou même plusieurs semaines après que les forces de sécurité eurent atteint leur objectif », affirme le rapport de l'observatoire américain des droits de l'Homme Human Rights Watch.

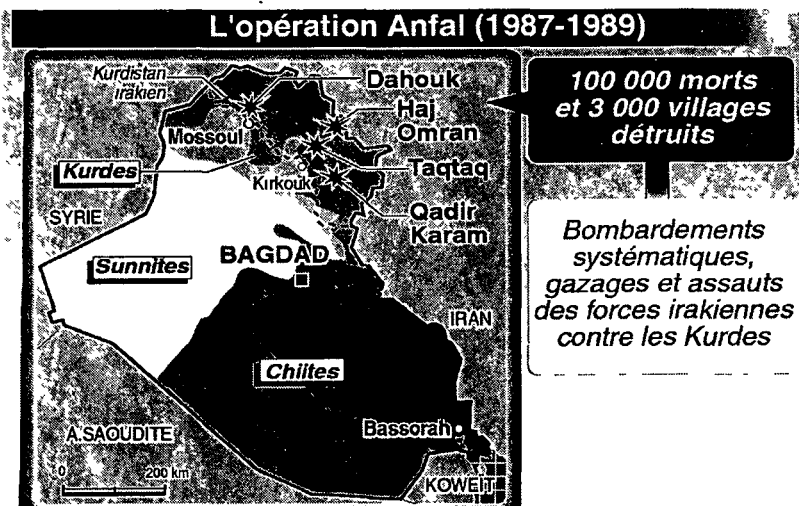
En 1986, Saddam Hussein, dont le régime était fragilisé entre autres par la guerre contre l'Iran, aurait ordonné à « Ali le chimique » de réprimer les Kurdes, dont la région échappait de plus en plus au contrôle de Bagdad.

Fragile Kurdistan

Entre 1987 et 1988, au moins huit offensives ont été lancées contre le Kurdistan. Lors de celles-ci certaines régions étaient vidées et des populations déplacées dans des zones interdites où la répression faisait rage.

Outre l'enjeu de la reconnaissance du génocide, le procès devrait également avoir un fort écho politique. Depuis 1991, le Kurdistan jouit d'une autonomie qui était garantie en partie par la création d'une zone d'exclusion aérienne imposée par les États-Unis à Saddam.

Aujourd'hui, le Kurdistan est une province autonome de l'Irak, un pays gouverné par une fragile coalition d'union nationale, présidé par le Kurde Jalal Talabani. L'avenir du pays est incertain. Le sort de Kirkouk, ville historique pour les Kurdes, mais habitée également par des turcomans, chiites et sunnites, pose un problème d'autant plus épineux que la région recèle du pétrole.



Deux soldats turcs tués par des rebelles kurdes dans le Sud-Est turc



DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 15 août 2006 (AFP) - 09h19 - Deux soldats turcs ont été tués mardi dans des combats avec des rebelles kurdes du parti séparatiste des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) dans le Sud-Est de la Turquie, a-t-on annoncé de source officielle.

Les affrontements ont eu lieu sur les hauteurs de Gabar, dans la province de Sirnak, proche de la frontière avec l'Irak, a souligné un communiqué du gouvernorat de Sirnak reçu à Diyarbakir, principale ville du Sud-Est anatolien peuplé majoritairement de Kurdes.

Le PKK est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie, l'Union européenne et les Etats-Unis.

Au moins 96 militants du PKK et 66 membres des forces de sécurité sont morts dans les violences qui se sont multipliées cette année, selon un comptage de l'AFP.

Le président irakien Talabani prêt à témoigner au procès de Saddam Hussein



BAGDAD, 22 août 2006 (AFP) - 12h27 - Le président irakien, le Kurde Jalal Talabani, a affirmé mardi qu'il était prêt à venir témoigner dans le procès Anfal, où son prédécesseur déchu, Saddam Hussein, comparaît pour répondre d'accusations de génocide au Kurdistan.

M. Talabani a assuré dans un communiqué qu'il était prêt à venir témoigner, "si on le lui demandait", devant le Haut tribunal pénal irakien qui juge depuis lundi Saddam Hussein et six de ses lieutenants pour leur rôle présumé dans les campagnes Anfal au Kurdistan, où jusqu'à 182.000 personnes auraient été tuées en 1987-1988.

"Ce procès va permettre de raffermir l'unité nationale en Irak et sera l'occasion de démontrer au monde entier que les relations entre Kurdes et Arabes sont très bonnes", a-t-il ajouté.

Mardi, le tribunal a commencé à entendre les premiers témoins à charge, qui ont notamment raconté les bombardements chimiques et les destructions de villages dont ils ont été victimes au Kurdistan.

L'accusation entend démontrer qu'il y a eu volonté délibérée de commettre un génocide au Kurdistan, avec l'usage à grande échelle d'armes chimiques contre la population civile kurde.

La défense veut prouver que les campagnes Anfal s'inscrivent dans une stratégie classique de lutte contre la guérilla, alors que les rebelles kurdes avaient partie liée avec les forces iraniennes, en pleine guerre Iran-Irak.

Irak: 10 morts dans un double attentat anti-kurde à Kirkouk



KIRKOUK (Irak), 27 août 2006 (AFP) - 17h12 - Deux attentats suicide anti-kurdes ont tué 10 personnes et en ont blessé 50 en début de soirée dimanche à Kirkouk (250 km au nord de Bagdad), a annoncé le général de police Burhan Tayeb.

Les deux attentats suicides à la voiture piégée ont eu lieu à quelques secondes d'intervalle, dans le quartier Iskan de Kirkouk, majoritairement kurde.

Ils ont fait 10 morts et 50 blessés, selon le général Tayeb, dont un premier bilan avait fait état de neuf morts.

L'un des attentats visait une demeure liée au souvenir de la famille du président irakien, le Kurde Jalal Talabani. Le second s'est produit devant la maison du colonel Ahmed Abdallah, un responsable local de la police. Le colonel a été blessé mais l'un de ses fils a été tué.

Plus tôt dans la journée, un attentat suicide à la voiture piégée contre le siège de l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK), le

parti de M. Talabani, avait tué un garde kurde et blessé 16 personnes.

Quatre policiers ont en outre été abattus à une cinquantaine de kilomètres au sud de Kirkouk dans la journée.

"Cet attentat porte la marque des terroristes du Baas et d'Ansar al-Sunna (groupe extrémiste sunnite lié à Al-Qaïda, ndr), qui voient dans l'UPK un grand danger", a estimé Jalal Joha, un responsable local du parti kurde.

La situation est très instable dans cette région pétrolière, où cohabitent à la fois des Kurdes, des Arabes sunnites, des Arabes chiites, ainsi que des chrétiens et des Turcomans.

Les forces turques saisissent 74 kg d'explosif dans le Sud-Est



ANKARA, 30 août 2006 (AFP) - 08h14 - Les forces de sécurité turques ont annoncé mercredi avoir saisi 74 kg de Semtex, un explosif généralement utilisé par les rebelles kurdes, dans le sud-est du pays en provenance du nord de l'Irak.

Quinze lance-roquettes ont également été saisies lors de l'opération dont la date n'a pas été précisée, selon un communiqué du gouvernorat de Sirnak, province frontalière avec l'Irak.

L'explosif, du C4 (Semtex), a été utilisé dans des attentats commis par le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, séparatiste) ou un groupe kurde radical, les Faucons de la liberté du Kurdistan (TAK).

Les TAK ont revendiqué une série d'attentats ces trois derniers jours contre des sites touristiques en Turquie qui ont fait trois morts et une cinquantaine de blessés, dont dix Britanniques.

Les autorités turques assimilent les TAK au PKK, estimant que celui-ci préférerait changer de nom pour des opérations visant des civils et pouvant à ce titre encourir la réprobation de l'opinion publique internationale.

Le PKK est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par Ankara, les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne. Plusieurs milliers de ses membres se sont réfugiés dans des camps dans le nord de l'Irak.

Turquie : Paris appelle à la vigilance, n'exclut pas de "nouveaux attentats"



PARIS, 29 août 2006 (AFP) - 10h11 - La France a appelé mardi ses ressortissants voyageant en Turquie à la "vigilance" après la série d'explosions qui ont frappé le pays, soulignant que "de nouveaux attentats ne sont pas à exclure".

"De nouveaux attentats ne sont pas à exclure", indique le site du ministère français des Affaires étrangères, dont la rubrique sur les conseils aux voyageurs a été actualisée mardi.

"Il est recommandé d'observer la plus grande vigilance, particulièrement dans les stations balnéaires ainsi qu'à Istanbul, et d'éviter rassemblements publics et lieux de forte affluence", ajoute-t-on.

La police turque recherchait mardi trois suspects après l'explosion, qui a fait trois morts, tous turcs, et 20 blessés à Antalya (sud).

Cette nouvelle explosion est intervenue après une première série d'attentats perpétrés dimanche soir dans la station touristique de Marmaris (sud-ouest) et à Istanbul (nord-ouest), faisant 27 blessés, dont dix touristes Britanniques.

Aucun ressortissant français n'a été recensé parmi les victimes à ce stade, a-t-on indiqué mardi au ministère des Affaires étrangères.

Sur leur site internet, les Faucons de la liberté du Kurdistan (TAK), affiliés selon les autorités au parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, interdit), ont affirmé avoir commis les attentats de dimanche en représailles aux mesures de confinement dont fait l'objet le chef du PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, qui purge depuis 1999 une peine de prison à vie dans le nord-ouest du pays.

L'ancien dictateur irakien, son cousin «Ali le Chimique» et cinq coaccusés sont jugés pour l'extermination d'au moins 200 000 Kurdes en 1988.

Saddam Hussein en procès pour le «génocide kurde»

Au moment de l'ouverture de l'audience, le pays kurde, au nord de l'Irak, s'est arrêté pour cinq minutes de silence. Beaucoup de familles ont installé les photos de leurs «martyrs» face au poste de télévision alors que défilaient les images du second procès de Saddam Hussein. C'est le moment tant attendu. Il y a un peu moins d'un an, le 19 octobre 2005, l'ex-dictateur devait répondre du massacre de 148 villageois chiites. Cette fois, il est dans le box avec son cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid, surnommé «Ali le Chimique», pour l'extermination de près de 200 000 Kurdes en 1988 pendant l'opération «al Anfal» (butin de guerre), ainsi nommée d'après une sourate du Coran. Au cours de cette campagne contre les rebelles kurdes, accusés de complicité

avec l'Iran, furent massivement utilisées des armes chimiques, notamment dans la petite ville d'Halabja.

Gaz moutarde. Déjà inculpés de crimes de guerre et crimes contre l'humanité, Saddam et «Ali le chimique» sont cette fois aussi accusés de «génocide», le crime le plus grave, qui se caractérise par l'intention de détruire entièrement ou en partie un groupe du seul fait de ses croyances ou de ses origines ethniques. Mais le Haut Tribunal pénal irakien, mis en place en décembre 2003 avec l'aide des Américains, n'a guère, jusqu'ici, affirmé sa crédibilité. L'évidence des crimes est pourtant accablante dans ce dossier. Al Anfal ne fut que l'apogée d'une série de massacres, commencés dès 1979 contre les Kurdes, qui se poursuivirent en 1983 avec l'extermination systématique

de 8000 hommes dans les villages de la vallée de Barzan, le fief de la famille Barzani (leaders historiques du mouvement national kurde irakien, ndlr). Les atrocités contre les Kurdes feront l'ob-

«Aucune population d'Irak n'a autant souffert et n'a eu autant de victimes que les Kurdes avec un demi-million de morts, dont 350 000 disparus.»

Mohammad Ihsan, ministre kurde

jet de trois procès distincts, dont un spécifiquement sur Halabja, où 5000 personnes furent tuées en quelques minutes par des bombardements au gaz moutarde.

«Aucune population de l'Irak n'a autant souffert et n'a eu autant de victimes que les Kurdes avec un demi-million de morts, dont 350 000 disparus», martèle Mohammad Ihsan, 40 ans, ministre des Affaires extra-régionales au gouver-

nement du Kurdistan irakien. Parti tout jeune rejoindre les peshmergas (les combattants kurdes) dans la montagne, il s'exila ensuite en Grande-Bretagne, devint avocat, travailla avec Amnesty Interna-

tional ou Human Rights Watch tout en œuvrant avec le comité Indictment pour un futur procès international de Saddam Hussein, alors encore au pouvoir.

13 tonnes d'archives. Depuis son retour, il consacre la plus grande partie de ses activités de ministre «à enquêter sur les crimes du régime, car il n'y a pas assez de magistrats formés pour travailler sur ces sujets». Il est bien convaincu qu'il est possible de prouver «les responsabilités directes et personnelles» de Saddam dans ces atrocités au travers de milliers de témoins directs et des ar-

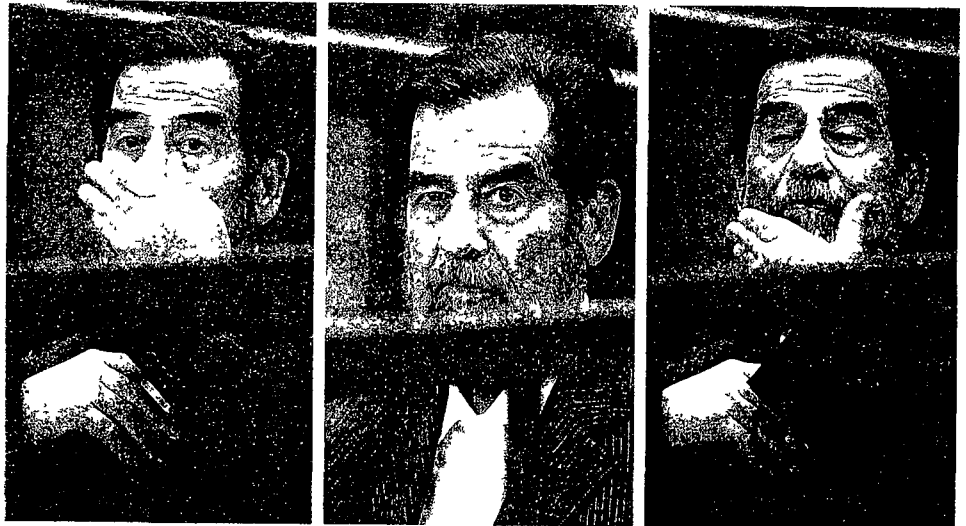
chives. Il y avait déjà celles, prises en 1991 dans les centres de sécurité au Kurdistan, que les peshmergas ont réussi à faire sortir du pays après l'écrasement de la révolte. Depuis la chute du régime, il y en a beaucoup d'autres, en tout quelque 13 tonnes de documents saisis dans les locaux des divers services de sécurité ou du parti Baas. «Saddam Hussein était très fier de ses crimes et il pensait que son ré-

gime durerait éternellement: beaucoup de ses ordres étaient transcrits noir sur blanc et ses subordonnés lui envoyaient directement des cassettes montrant les tortures et les exécutions afin de bien montrer que les consignes avaient été appliquées à la lettre. Tout cela offre un matériel immense aux enquêteurs avec des détails très précis et des noms. Il y a là un moyen d'établir, de façon très méticuleuse et dans tous

●●● leurs rouages, les chaînes de commandement», souligne Mohammed Ihsan.

«Comment imaginer un jour un Irak démocratique et une réconciliation si les responsables des atrocités commises pendant trois décennies n'ont pas un nom et n'ont pas été punis. Il ne s'agit pas seulement de juger Saddam Hussein, mais tout un système et les autres responsables de cette machine de terreur. Aujourd'hui, beaucoup d'hommes qui ont participé à ce système de répression sont non seulement toujours à même de nuire, mais revendiquent haut et fort leurs forfaits», explique le juriste.

Cibles. Le procès de Saddam



Saddam Hussein au premier jour de son procès. Les atrocités contre les Kurdes feront l'objet de trois procès distincts, dont un spécifique pour Halabja, où 5000 personnes furent gazées

THE TIMES WEDNESDAY AUGUST 23 2006

Hussein représenté néanmoins sur ce plan une grande occasion manquée. Le tribunal spécial siège dans la «zone verte», quartier bunker au centre de Bagdad, gardé par les troupes américaines. Les juges, comme les témoins à charge, savent qu'ils sont les cibles de la résistance sunnite. Plusieurs avocats des ex-dignitaires baasistes sont tombés sous les balles des escadrons de la mort chiites. Les audiences sont souvent annulées à cause de Saddam qui refuse de reconnaître la légitimité de la cour.

Les organisations des droits de l'homme soulignent que le Haut Tribunal pénal irakien ne dispose pas de suffisamment de juristes expérimentés pour assurer un procès impartial et conforme aux critères internationaux. «*Ces critiques sur les carences du tribunal sont en bonne partie justifiées car nous manquons aussi bien de juges que d'avocats pour faire face à un tel type de procès, mais en même temps c'est la première fois dans l'histoire de l'Irak, voire du monde arabe, qu'un ex-dictateur répond de ses crimes dans un procès sérieux*», rétorque Mohammed Ihsan.

Peine capitale. Comme beaucoup d'autres juristes, il aurait préféré que Saddam Hussein puisse être jugé par un tribunal mixte sous l'égide des Nations unies, avec des juges irakiens et internationaux. Ce projet avait capoté parce que le gouvernement irakien, soutenu par Washington, voulait pouvoir prononcer la peine de mort. Il espère au moins que les prochains procès contre l'ancien dictateur iront jusqu'à leur terme, même si la cour prononce la peine capitale en octobre prochain pour la première affaire. ◀

MARC SEMO

Kurds tell of gas attack that began Saddam 'genocide'

The former regime's defence argues that the assault was a legal response to a revolt during war, Ned Parker reports

KURDISH villagers relived the horror of a chemical weapons attack on their hamlet of Balisan yesterday as survivors testified at the genocide trial of Saddam Hussein, the ousted Iraqi dictator.

In their hillside cement home, Haiysha Hussein Hassan, 74, and her grandson Mukhlis, 27, watched on TV as their neighbours told a Baghdad court of the Iraqi army assault on Balisan and the adjoining community of Sheikh Wasan 19 years ago that cost Mrs Hassan her husband and three sons.

Mrs Hassan, stooped and gnarled, broke into tears watching the hearing and recalled the day, April 16, 1987, that marked Saddam's first use of chemical weapons against the

Kurds. The assault would prove to be a preview of the next year's bloody Anfal campaign, which prosecutors say left 180,000 victims dead.

"Why must the Government try him? They should kill him at once," Haiysha cried. "I can't stay calm I keep thinking of my sons."

In the valley below her house 25 victims of the attack lie buried.

Hundreds of miles away, Ali Mustafa Hama, her fellow villager, recalled for the Baghdad court the spring evening when between eight and twelve jets flew over Balisan. They started firing on the village and its neighbour Sheikh Wasan.

The explosions were not very loud, Mr Hama told the judge. "There was green smoke rising from the bomb, as if there was a

rotten apple or garlic smell. Lots of citizens immediately had red eyes and began to vomit. Afterwards it was dark," he said.

The second witness, Najib Khudair Ahmad, confronted Saddam and his six co-defendants in a charged moment that gave voice to years of suffering by the Kurds under the collapsed regime.

"If we were Iraqis, why did you bomb us?" asked Mrs Ahmad, a 41-year-old mother whose face and eyes bore scars from the gas attack. "Even now my throat has problems. Skin from all delicate parts of my body has peeled off. After the attacks I had a baby whose skin

also peeled off and is sick. I also had miscarriages," she said.

The defence argued that the regime's 1987-88 campaign was the correct and legal response to an insurrection by Kurdish rebel groups during the country's 1980-88 war with Iran.

Sabir al-Douri, Saddam's former director of military intelligence, said that Iranians and Kurds were fighting hand in hand against the Iraqi military.

Mr Hama admitted that Kurdish guerrilla fighters — *pesmerga* — had visited his village before the bombing.

Along with Saddam, his cousin Ali Hassan al-Majid — the notorious Chemical Ali — is charged with genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. The remaining defendants — senior political and military figures — have been indicted only on the last two charges.

Back in Balisan, the court session gave Mrs Hassan little solace. Her frail body trembled and she kept sobbing. She recounted how she abandoned her husband in the village when the warplanes began firing. He was shot in the leg and she kept running.

Her husband was rescued from the village but the gas attack had left him and her three sons blind. Iraqi security services took them away to a hospital for treatment and they were never seen again.

Even Mrs Hassan has troubles with her eyes. "Until now I don't see well." She brandished a pack of pills in aluminium foil and said that 150 people from Balisan had had problems with their eyesight since the attack.

Her grandson recalled his last memories of his own father taking him to the nearby Sheikh Mahmoud village for safety before the attack. "He said that he had to go home to water the onions and then he'd come back," Mukhlis said. His grandmother added: "We were used to the Iraqi Army bombing us, but they had never used chemical weapons."



The attack on Balisan began the Anfal campaign which left 180,000 dead, say prosecutors

Saddam defies court as Kurdish trial opens

No plea offered to charge of genocide



Max Becherer/Polaris, for The New York Times



Women gathered in a Kurdish village Monday to mark the start of Saddam Hussein's genocide trial in Baghdad, where Saddam insisted he was still president.

By Edward Wong

SULAIMANIYA, Iraq: As his trial on the charge of genocide began Monday, Saddam Hussein insisted he was still the president of Iraq and refused to enter a plea on accusations of ordering massacres, deportations and chemical attacks to annihilate the country's Kurdish minority.

For most of the five-hour session, the defiant Saddam sat stone-faced in a courtroom in the fortified Green Zone of Baghdad, listening to prosecutors give a detailed account of how he and six co-defendants embarked on an eight-stage military campaign in 1988 to eliminate the Kurds from swaths of their mountainous homeland in northern Iraq.

Prosecutors said the campaign, called Anfal after a Koranic phrase that means "the spoils of war," killed at least 50,000 Kurds and resulted in the destruction of 2,000 villages. More than an hour into the session, they presented grim photographs of mass graves, including one with the body of a young girl, and cited orders from one of Saddam's top aides telling military commanders to rid many villages of "human or even animal presence."

The efficient and emotional arguments by the prosecutors were a marked contrast to that side's performance at the start of Saddam's first trial last October, when the chief prosecutor tied himself up in grand rhetoric and was forced to stop by the chief judge.

Here in the heart of Iraqi Kurdistan, people sat fixated before televisions in cafés, homes and offices, watching as the former dictator and some of his most powerful aides underwent ques-

tioning before black-robed judges. Survivors of the Anfal campaign organized rallies in several villages.

Government offices called for five minutes of silence for the victims before the trial began.

The session represented the first time that Saddam and his aides have stood trial for the mass killings that were the most lasting legacy of his rule and that President George W. Bush has cited as one of several rationales for the American-led invasion of Iraq.

Saddam marched into the wood-railed defendants' pen at 11:45 a.m. wearing a charcoal suit and white shirt, his customary court outfit. His gray beard appeared neatly trimmed and he clutched a Koran in one hand.

Later, as two prosecutors presented the case, he watched with raised eyebrows, an index finger occasionally perched on his lip. He scribbled on a notepad. He did not smile.

Ali Hassan al-Majid, perhaps Saddam's most feared aide, a man known as Chemical Ali for the weapons he is said to have unleashed, hobbled into court with a cane, stooped over in his white robe and red checkered head scarf.

At the start, the chief judge, Abdullah al-Amiri, who had served in the courts under Saddam's, asked each defendant to state his name, occupation and place of residence.

"I won't give you my name because all the Iraqis know my name," Saddam said in a gravelly voice.

The judge raised a small book of regulations to show Saddam. "Do you respect this law?"

"You're sitting there in the name of the occupation and not the name of Iraq," Saddam said. Eventually, he gave his name and called himself "the presi-

dent of the republic of Iraq and commander in chief of the heroic Iraqi armed forces." He referred to those forces as holy warriors, a nod to the ongoing insurgency.

Amiri entered a plea of not guilty for Saddam. Most of the other defendants, accused of crimes against humanity, pleaded not guilty. Like Saddam, they generally sat in silence, sometimes jotting notes, sometimes staring at the judges.

Saddam's chief lawyer, Khalil al-Dulaimi, challenged the legitimacy of the court, saying it had been created by an occupying power. He invoked the Geneva Conventions and said the very existence of the court violated international law.

Saddam and Majid, the commander of the north at the time of Anfal, both face the charge of genocide for attempting to eliminate in whole or in part the

Kurds, who make up a fifth of Iraq. Prosecutors say the policy was carried out through mass murder, the razing of villages and the deportation of Kurds from rural to urban areas.

The scope of Anfal dwarfs that of the first case brought against Saddam. The first trial, in which Saddam and seven others are charged with killing 148 men and boys from the Shiite village of Du-jail, began last October and is nearly at an end, with a five-judge panel expected to deliver a verdict in two months.

Some international observers have raised doubts over the Iraqi tribunal's ability to handle such a broad case, given its performance during the Dujail trial. Last week, Human Rights Watch issued a statement saying the judges did not have an adequate understanding of international law, and that the abysmal security conditions in Iraq make a fair trial impossible. Three defense lawyers in the Dujail case have been assassinated.

Furthermore, genocide is an extremely difficult charge to prove, legal experts say. Prosecutors must show that Saddam and Majid had command responsibility for the campaign and that

'I won't give you my name,' the defendant said, 'because all the Iraqis know my name.'

they killed their victims because of their Kurdish ethnicity.

The Iraqi military's use of chemical weapons is expected to figure prominently in the prosecution's arguments. Between 20 and 25 Kurdish villages were hit with chemical weapons in 1988, said Kamaran Sabir, a Kurdish investigator who helped collect evidence for the trial. The weapons included mustard gas and nerve agents, and were usually dropped from fighter jets.

The New York Times

Olivier Roy, spécialiste de l'Iran au CNRS, pense que d'éventuelles sanctions de l'ONU ne feraient que renforcer le régime iranien.

«L'Iran s'affirme en grande puissance régionale»

Directeur au CNRS, Olivier Roy, spécialiste de l'Asie centrale et de l'Iran, a notamment publié *l'Islam mondialisé* (Seuil). Il explique à *Libération* comment l'Iran s'affirme au Moyen-Orient comme une grande puissance régionale à potentialité nucléaire. Et comment Téhéran met en avant des conflits secondaires (Israël-Palestine, Israël-Hezbollah) pour éviter tout choc frontal.

Pourquoi l'Iran refuse-t-il de suspendre son programme nucléaire ?

Sur ce plan, la politique iranienne est une constante: Téhéran veut pouvoir continuer l'enrichissement de l'uranium, officiellement pour un programme civil, mais en même temps sans s'interdire l'option militaire. C'est aussi pour cela que l'Iran fait en sorte de conquérir la position la plus forte possible sur l'échiquier régional, d'où son rôle dans la dernière crise au Liban. Etrangement, les Occidentaux n'ont rien vu venir: depuis le début, ils gèrent la question du nucléaire iranien de façon étroitement bilatérale en proposant à Téhéran un *package*, un programme graduel d'incitations et de pressions, pour l'inciter à céder. En revanche, la stratégie iranienne – surtout depuis l'arrivée au pouvoir d'Ahmadinejad – est de régionaliser ce bras de fer afin d'obliger les Occidentaux à un choix drastique: ou une crise générale, ou laisser l'Iran poursuivre l'enrichissement.

Les Iraniens ont le sentiment que cette stratégie s'est révélée payante. Au Liban, ils sont sortis renforcés d'un conflit auquel ils n'ont pas participé directement. Certes, ils financent, arment et entraînent le Hezbollah, mais ils ont su rester au second plan. De la même façon, sans jamais apparaître sur le devant de la scène, ils tirent avantage des autres conflits de la région, en Afghanistan comme en Irak. Ils sont là d'ailleurs encore plus discrets, sachant que le temps joue pour eux.

Le pouvoir iranien est-il uni sur le dossier nucléaire ?

Il y a nécessairement des débats et des divergences. Je ne crois pas, néanmoins, que les divergences soient telles qu'elles puissent être instrumentalisées par une politique de pressions. Le pragmatique Rafsandjani (*l'ex-président, considéré comme réformiste, ndr*) voulait gagner du temps en présentant l'Iran comme un élément essentiel pour la stabilité régionale. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad pense au contraire que le passage en force est la meilleure des solutions. Il y aurait eu des tensions au sein du pouvoir à Téhéran quand il a dénoncé la première fois «l'illégitimité»

d'Israël. Depuis, il a accumulé les provocations, dont la dernière en date est l'exposition de caricatures sur l'Holocauste, mais chaque fois il a pu se dire gagnant. Pour autant, il ne faut pas voir Ahmadinejad comme un fou avec le doigt sur le bouton nucléaire. Il s'inscrit dans la continuité de la Révolution islamique, non pas bien sûr dans la tendance «thermidorienne», mais dans celle d'une révolution après la révolution. Ses choix stratégiques ne sont d'ailleurs pas en totale contradiction avec ceux de ses prédécesseurs.

L'Iran estime que sa capacité nucléaire lui permettra de s'affirmer comme la grande puissance régionale. Pour Ahmadinejad comme pour d'autres anciens combattants de la guerre Iran-Irak, prendre la tête du front du refus contre Israël a un goût de revanche. Ce discours panislamiste joue sur la corde de l'anti-impérialisme, du nationalisme arabe et de l'antisémitisme. On l'a vu aussi lors de la crise libanaise. Cela permet à Téhéran de délégitimer encore un peu plus les régimes arabes en place: le leader du Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, est vu aujourd'hui dans la rue arabe comme un nouveau Nasser.

Quels effets auront d'éventuelles sanctions internationales ?

Elles renforcent toujours les régimes autoritaires

en place. Dans ce cas, en outre, il n'y a pas de consensus au sein du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies et ces éventuelles sanctions ne seront pas appuyées par de véritables mesures coercitives. Les acteurs régionaux et les pays voisins, bien que presque tous alliés de l'Occident – Dubaï, Afghanistan, Arménie, Azerbaïdjan, Kurdes, etc. –, n'hésiteront pas à les contourner pour faire de fructueuses affaires. Des grandes puissances économiques comme le Japon,

mais aussi la Chine, ont d'ores et déjà annoncé leur refus de tout embargo sur les exportations énergétiques iraniennes. Téhéran pourra donc continuer à vendre son pétrole, et ce à un prix plus

élevé, justement grâce aux sanctions. En même temps, les dirigeants iraniens renforceront leur pouvoir en gérant la redistribution des revenus occultes de la contrebande.

Que peut faire, alors, la communauté internationale ?

S'ils veulent être cohérents, les Occidentaux doivent trouver une stratégie globale pour le Moyen-Orient. Jusqu'ici, ils gèrent ces différents conflits régionaux séparément, comme s'ils étaient cloisonnés. Ou bien au nom de visions idéologiques de lutte contre le terrorisme ou l'islamo-fascisme. ◀

Recueilli par MARC SEMO

La réponse iranienne en cours d'analyse

Les Américains continuent à réclamer des sanctions économiques contre l'Iran.

L'Iran ménage le suspense. Hier, le négociateur en chef du nucléaire iranien, Ali Larijani, a invité les grandes puissances à «négocier» dès aujourd'hui sur leur offre visant à convaincre l'Iran de suspendre l'enrichissement d'uranium, sans indiquer si Téhéran entendait se plier à cette demande. L'Iran devait répondre à cette proposition des Européens, datant du 6 juin, avant le 22 août. La réponse a été formellement remise en mains propres, peu après 16 heures locales, par Ali Larijani aux représentants diplomatiques du groupe 5 + 1 (Chine, Etats-Unis, France, Grande-Bretagne, Russie et Allemagne). Rien n'a filtré sur son contenu, mais le vice-président de l'Organisation iranienne de l'énergie atomique, Mohammad Saidi, avait annoncé dès lundi que «la suspension est désormais impossible». Cette réponse nécessite une «analyse détaillée et prudente», a estimé Javier Solana,

haut représentant de l'Union européenne pour la politique extérieure.

Signe négatif. Le Guide suprême, l'ayatollah Ali Khamenei, avait été inflexible en annonçant que son pays poursuivrait son programme nucléaire «avec force». Autre signe «négatif»: Téhéran a empêché, le week-end dernier, des inspecteurs de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique

«Des sanctions directes contre l'investissement énergétique ou le trafic pétrolier restent improbables.»

Catherine Hunter, analyste

d'accéder à une usine souterraine en construction sur le site d'enrichissement de Natanz, au centre du pays.

Si, comme il est probable, la réponse iranienne n'est pas conciliante, Téhéran s'expose à des sanctions économiques. Le président George W. Bush a réclamé lundi des sanctions rapides contre l'Iran s'il ne se pliait pas à la demande du

Conseil de sécurité de suspendre son enrichissement avant le 31 août. Le procédé permet d'obtenir le combustible d'uranium faiblement enrichi pour une centrale nucléaire civile. Mais il suffit de le poursuivre à un taux plus élevé pour obtenir la matière première d'une bombe atomique. L'offre des cinq membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité et de l'Allemagne vise à convaincre les Iraniens des bénéfices d'une suspension, en échange d'une coopération économique et nucléaire.

Menaces. «Si les gens se moquent du Conseil de sécurité, il faut que cela ait des conséquences», a averti Bush. Une menace réitérée hier par l'ambassadeur américain à l'ONU, John Bolton, qui a promis que les Etats-Unis présenteraient rapidement au Conseil un projet de résolution prévoyant des sanctions économiques contre l'Iran si sa réponse «ne

satisfait pas aux termes définis».

Les Etats-Unis n'ont jamais exclu une option militaire et l'Iran a évoqué la possibilité de couper ses exportations de brut. Quatrième producteur mondial de brut avec 4 millions de barils par jour, dont environ 2,7 millions sont exportés, l'Iran pourrait aussi bloquer le détroit d'Ormuz, par lequel transite 20% du trafic pétrolier mondial. Toutefois, d'après Catherine Hunter, analyste chez Global Insight, «des sanctions limitées ne sont plus aussi impossibles à envisager qu'avant, même si elles prennent des mois à être adoptées. Mais des sanctions directes contre l'investissement énergétique ou le trafic pétrolier restent improbables». Le Conseil de sécurité est toujours divisé sur ce point. La Chine et la Russie s'opposent à des sanctions, l'Europe étant favorable à des sanctions limitées et épargnant le pétrole. ◀

AFP

L'Iran au centre du jeu moyen-oriental

Le Monde

23 août 2006

Au printemps, quelques anciens ministres des affaires étrangères occidentaux, dont l'Américaine Madeleine Albright, le Français Hubert Védrine et l'Allemand Joschka Fischer, avaient suggéré « un grand marchandage » entre l'Iran et les Etats-Unis. Autrement dit, une vaste négociation entre ces deux pays. Il s'agissait, pour les auteurs du texte, de prendre en compte le besoin de reconnaissance de l'Iran et son rôle dans la sécurité de la région, tout en le dissuadant de poursuivre la mise au point d'un armement nucléaire. Il s'agissait aussi d'éviter aux Etats-Unis de se trouver devant le dilemme, dévastateur pour les relations transatlantiques, bombarder l'Iran ou accepter la bombe iranienne.

Le président Bush a rejeté cette suggestion, qui l'aurait amené à délivrer un satisfecit au régime des mollahs. Tout juste a-t-il admis que les Etats-Unis participent à un éventuel dialogue avec l'Iran si celui-ci renonce à enrichir l'uranium, première étape vers la fabrication d'une bombe.

Les cinq membres permanents du Conseil de sécurité (Chine, Etats-Unis, France, Royaume-Uni et Russie), plus l'Allemagne, ont fait cette proposition à Téhéran en juin. Les Iraniens ont promis une réponse pour le mardi 22 août. Le plus

probable est qu'ils n'accepteront ni ne rejeteront la proposition. Ils offriront de négocier... les conditions de la négociation.

Car après la guerre entre Israël et le Hezbollah, ils s'estiment plus que jamais en position de force. Les Américains ne voulaient pas leur reconnaître une place éminente dans la sécurité régionale ? Ils ont montré qu'ils avaient une capacité de déstabilisation que n'entamaient ni les menaces américaines à leur endroit ni l'offensive militaire israélienne contre leurs protégés du Hezbollah. Donc que leur concours était indispensable à la définition du « nouveau Moyen-Orient ».

Quand le ministre français des affaires étrangères, Philippe Douste-Blazy, a parlé en pleine guerre du Liban du « rôle stabilisateur » de l'Iran, il n'a fait que constater, maladroitement, cette évidence.

Les Occidentaux ne peuvent ignorer le régime de Téhéran ni en Irak, où les chiites iraniens conseillent leurs coreligionnaires, ni en Afghanistan, où l'aide de l'Iran pourrait être utile face au regain d'activité des talibans, ni dans le conflit israélo-palestinien, où le cessez-le-feu dépend en partie de la coopération du Hezbollah, ni même dans l'ensemble du monde musulman, où le président iranien Ahmadinejad, l'homme qui veut

détruire Israël et tient tête aux Américains, est la personnalité la plus populaire, en dépit de l'hostilité traditionnelle entre les Arabes et les Perses.

Dans l'immédiat, Paris, qui a été très actif dans l'affaire du nucléaire iranien, se tourne vers Téhéran afin d'obtenir des assurances pour la sécurité des soldats français de la Finul, de même qu'il avait sondé l'Iran, l'année dernière, sur l'attitude du Hezbollah dans les élections libanaises.

Au moins depuis les attentats terroristes en France, en 1986, alors qu'il était premier ministre, Jacques Chirac nourrit une profonde aversion vis-à-vis du chiisme, qu'il tient pour une religion de forcenés. Mais il a justement passé outre ses préventions pour des raisons politiques, alors qu'il se refuse à renouer le dialogue avec la Syrie depuis que le président Bachar Al-Assad lui a personnellement manqué.

Que fera l'Iran de sa position stratégique ? Cherchera-t-il à s'ériger en interlocuteur en acceptant les conditions posées à son programme nucléaire ou en jouant de son pouvoir de nuisance ?

Question corollaire pour les Occidentaux : en cas de refus iranien d'arrêter l'enrichissement de l'uranium, imposeront-ils d'abord des sanctions ou montreront-ils leur faiblesse en se lançant sans préalable dans le dialogue global que recherche Téhéran ? ■

INTERNATIONAL CHRONIQUE

DANIEL VERNET

Bombs and gun battles kill 57 in Iraq

By Paul von Zielbauer

BAGHDAD: A suicide car bomber attacked Iraq's largest newspaper Sunday, detonating his vehicle inside its fortified compound in downtown Baghdad and killing 2 people and wounding 20 others, the paper's executive editor and government officials said.

The bombing was part of a violent day across Iraq in which explosions and gun battles killed at least 57 people, including an American soldier.

In Baghdad, a bomb planted inside a commuter bus blew up near the pedestrian entrance to a central hotel, killing 9 people and wounding 20 others, and a convoy ferrying a deputy defense minister came under heavy gunfire that wounded two bodyguards, two government officials said.

The bombing Sunday of the office of Al Sabah, a newspaper financed the Shiite-led Iraqi government, also destroyed more than a dozen vehicles and collapsed a quarter of the building where journalists and printing press operators work, said the executive editor, Falah al-Mishaal.

The attack occurred at 8:30 a.m. local time, after guards carrying automatic assault rifles grew suspicious of the vehicle after it had already been cleared to enter the newspaper's parking lot, Mishaal said during an interview. Before

the bomber could be shot, he blew up his vehicle, sending at least two parked cars through the building's wall.

In a statement, Iraq's prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, "strongly denounced" the attack on Al Sabah, which he called "a pioneering media organization confronting terror, serving the truth and consolidating unity and national coherence."

Also Sunday, an Iraqi government official said the prison at Abu Ghraib, which became notorious for the abuse of Iraqi inmates by American soldiers, had been emptied of inmates and was now under the control of the Iraqi Justice Ministry.

Saad Sultan, the supervisor of detention facilities in the government's Human Rights Ministry, said during an interview Sunday that more than 3,000 prisoners in American custody were transferred to a detention facility at Camp Cropper, an American military base near Baghdad International Airport, on Aug. 15.

Elsewhere in Iraq on Sunday, 11 people died in sectarian violence in and around Baquba, a city 48 kilometers, or 30 miles, northeast of Baghdad where Sunni and Shiite Arabs have engaged in a long-standing cycle of retributive attacks.

A roadside bomb in Khalis, a town north of the city, killed 6 people and wounded 15 others, a Baquba police

spokesman said. Two truck drivers and three other people were also killed by gunfire in the city's western suburbs, he said.

In a market in Basra, a bomb attached to a motorcycle killed four people and wounded 15 others.

Near the northern oil city of Kirkuk, on the border of the autonomous Kurdish region, four traffic policemen were killed in an roadside ambush as they traveled south toward Tikrit, Captain Firas Mahmoud of the Kirkuk police said.

Also in Kirkuk on Sunday, a suicide bomber driving a truck full of explosives stormed into a building housing the offices of the main Kurdish political party, killing two security people and wounding 16 others, Major Kamil Shakhwan of the Kirkuk police said.

Late Sunday evening in Kirkuk, a suicide bomb attack killed nine people, the Kirkuk police said.

An American soldier was killed Sunday afternoon by small-arms fire in Baghdad, the military said. It also said another American soldier was killed Saturday by a roadside bomb.

The New York Times

August 28, 2006

Herold INTERNATIONAL TRIBUNE

Le tourisme visé par les séparatistes kurdes

En Turquie, une série d'attentats a fait trois morts et une cinquantaine de blessés.

29 août 2006



Une explosion a fait au moins trois morts et une vingtaine de blessés hier dans la station touristique d'Antalya (sud-ouest de la Turquie). La veille, des attentats à la bombe avaient frappé Marmaris, autre localité touristique, faisant une vingtaine de blessés. Ils ont été revendiqués par les Faucons pour la liberté du Kurdistan (TAK), petit groupe rebelle kurde qui avait annoncé, comme l'an dernier, une campagne de bombes contre le secteur touristique turc, appelant les étrangers à s'abstenir de venir dans le pays.

Les TAK seraient, selon les autorités, une émanation du PKK, (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, indépendantiste) d'Abdullah Öcalan, arrêté en 1999 et condamné à la prison à vie. Ce mouvement est également considéré comme terroriste par l'Union européenne et les États-Unis.

En juillet 2005, cinq personnes, dont une adolescente irlandaise et une Britannique, avaient perdu la vie dans l'explosion d'une bombe dans la

station balnéaire de Kusadasi (ouest). A Antalya, l'explosion a eu lieu hier après-midi dans un café-restaurant en face d'un souk. La veille, trois bombes explosant quasi simultanément avaient fait 21 blessés, dont 10 Britanniques. Dimanche en fin de journée, à Istanbul, l'explosion d'un colis piégé dans la partie européenne de la première ville du pays avait fait 6 blessés.

Durcissement. Ces attentats, réalisés avec un type d'explosif souvent utilisé par les séparatistes kurdes, reflètent un nouveau durcissement de la rébellion kurde. Depuis le début de l'été, les accrochages sont devenus quasi quotidiens dans le Sud-Est anatolien à majorité kurde, et, depuis le début de l'année, ont coûté la vie à une centaine de combattants du PKK ainsi qu'à 66 gendarmes et soldats. L'aviation turque a bombardé à la fin de la semaine dernière des bases du PKK en Irak du Nord. Au moins 5000 combattants de la rébellion kurde retranchés dans ces mon-

tagnes ont repris leurs opérations dans le territoire turc depuis l'automne et la fin du cessez-le-feu unilatéral proclamé par Abdullah Öcalan après son arrestation en 1999. Lancée en 1984, la «sale guerre» entre les rebelles kurdes du PKK et les forces de l'ordre a fait plus de 37000 morts. Même restant à un niveau de faible intensité, ce conflit risque de compliquer la marche turque vers l'UE.

«La question kurde constitue l'obstacle majeur dans le processus de démocratisation. C'est ce qui bloque la pleine mise en œuvre des réformes et ce qui pourrait servir de prétexte à une reprise en main autoritaire», s'inquiète Baskin Oran, professeur de sciences politiques à Ankara. Quelque 15 millions de Kurdes vivent en Turquie sur une population de 71 millions d'habitants. Sous la pression de Bruxelles, des réformes ont légalisé les droits culturels des minorités, dont l'emploi de la langue kurde dans les médias. Ces changements sont jugés insuffisants par une partie de la

population kurde, notamment dans le sud-est du pays. En avril dernier, des violentes émeutes avaient éclaté à Diyarbakir, et les manifestants, dont de nombreux adolescents, criaient des slogans demandant la libération d'Öcalan.

Main de fer. Le leader du PKK continue du fond de sa prison à diriger d'une main de fer ce qui reste de son organisation. En montrant son pouvoir de nuisance, il espère s'imposer comme l'incontournable interlocuteur de toute solution de la question kurde en Turquie, bien que l'Etat refuse toute négociation avec les «terroristes». Il préfère miser sur la politique du pire. En juin, les députés ont adopté une nouvelle loi élargissant l'éventail des crimes susceptibles d'être qualifiés d'actes terroristes et introduisant des restrictions supplémentaires à l'activité des médias. Un texte qui revient en arrière sur bon nombre des réformes des dernières années. ◀

MARC SEMO

Threat to tourists as blasts hit Turkish resort towns

By David O'Byrne in Istanbul and agencies

A bomb blast killed three Turks and injured dozens more people, including foreign tourists, in Turkey's south-western resort town of Antalya yesterday, the fifth such terror attack in less than 24 hours.

On Sunday, one bomb exploded in Istanbul while three in Marmaris, another resort town in the country's south-west, injured 22 people, including Britons and Turks.

The Kurdistan Freedom Falcons, seen as a front for the Kurdistan Workers party (PKK), claimed responsibility for Sunday's attacks.

It warned that "Turkey is not a safe country, tourists should not come to Turkey" There was no immediate claim of responsibility for

the Antalya attack. Since 1984 the PKK has waged a campaign of violence aimed at establishing a separate Kurdish state in the country's predominantly Kurdish south-east.

It declared a ceasefire in 1999 following the arrest and trial of its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, now in jail in western Turkey. But since 2004, even as a new government loosened political restrictions on Kurds, attacks have resumed against the military in the south-east and civilians in the west.

Since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, Turkish officials have warned that the PKK, which has camps in the Kurdish-dominated north of Iraq, have been able to obtain more sophisticated weapons and explosives.

A spokesman for the Turkish government said Ankara

was in constant dialogue with the Iraqi authorities, US forces in Iraq and other countries' intelligence services. "But we are just not getting the concrete results that we need," he told the FT.

The bombings appeared to confirm fears that the PKK would increasingly target tourist resorts, in an attempt to damage the economy.

One of the bombs in Marmaris had been left in a bag under the seat of a minibus travelling a route popular with tourists, while the other two had been left in litter bins in the town centre, crowded with holiday-makers on their way to restaurants and bars.

Last year foreign tourists contributed \$13.9bn (£11.5bn, £7.4bn) to the economy, up from \$12.1bn in 2004. Arrivals for the first seven

months of this year were down 6.4 per cent to 10.99m.

The tourist industry, however, is reluctant to attribute the drop in arrivals to terror incidents alone.

"There is a combination of factors at work here," said Nedret Koruyan, secretary-general of the Turkish Tourism Investors Association. She believes the high value of the lira has left Turkish holidays looking overpriced in comparison with rival markets that have been marketing themselves more aggressively, and points to the outbreak of avian influenza in Turkey in January - the time when most tourists book their holidays.

"These attacks are a factor certainly, but they are not the whole story - lots of places have suffered terror attacks, even London," she said.

FINANCIAL TIMES TUESDAY AUGUST 29 2006

Militants warn Turkey

Kurdish group threatens more violence

From news reports

ANKARA: An extremist Kurdish militant group warned Tuesday that it would turn "Turkey into hell" and urged tourists to avoid travel to the country.

The group, the Kurdistan Freedom Falcons, said in a statement on its Web site that it had bombed a busy shopping area in the coastal resort of Antalya on Monday, killing three people and wounding dozens, including European and Middle Eastern tourists.

The blast followed by one day four bombs on the Mediterranean resort of Marmaris and in Istanbul that wounded 27 people.

The police have declined to comment about the group.

The warnings and the five attacks are part of what appears to be a trend in the Kurdish guerrilla war against the Turkish state: bombings against "soft targets" like tourist sites and Istanbul neighborhoods, in addition to attacks against Turkish troops and the police in the overwhelmingly Kurdish southeast.

The past few months have seen a surge in violent attacks in the southeast, leaving dozens of soldiers and guerrillas dead. That has led to a tougher Turkish crackdown in the region, the massing of Turkish tanks and artillery along

the Iraqi border, and threats to attack the main guerrilla bases in northern Iraq.

The bombings also came as Turkey is increasingly pressuring Washington to take measures against the guerrillas in northern Iraq, with Ankara threatening to take action itself.

On Tuesday, the United States appointed a former air force general, Joseph Ralston, as a special envoy for countering the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK.

"General Ralston will have responsibility for coordinating U.S. engagement with the government of Turkey and the government of Iraq to eliminate the terrorist threat of the PKK and other terrorist groups operating in northern Iraq and across the Turkey-Iraq border," said Sean McCormack, a State Department spokesman. (AP, Reuters)

Des attentats dans des stations touristiques turques et à Istamboul ont fait plusieurs morts et de nombreux blessés

Les rebelles kurdes pointés du doigt pour trois attentats

ISTAMBOUL

De notre correspondante

Marmaris (au sud-ouest du pays) est l'une des stations balnéaires turques les plus appréciées des touristes britanniques et scandinaves. Connue pour ses boîtes de nuit et ses restaurants, cette cité portuaire de la côte égéenne a été la cible, hier, de trois attentats en l'espace d'une heure. Il était minuit lorsqu'un premier colis piégé explosait dans un minibus qui s'engageait dans l'une des rues les plus animées de la ville. 21 personnes ont été blessées, dont 10 Britanniques. 45 minutes plus tard, deux autres déflagrations ébranlaient l'une des rues du port, sans faire cette fois de victimes. Mais des mouvements de panique ont suivi les déflagrations, survenues au moment où des centaines de personnes déambulaient dans les rues de la petite ville. Les mesures de sécurité ont été renforcées et les gendarmes ont instauré des points de contrôle aux entrées et sorties de Marmaris. Un peu plus tôt dans la soirée, six Turcs, dont un enfant de neuf ans, ont également été blessés dans l'explosion d'une bombe déposée dans le quartier de Bagcilar à Istamboul,

sur la rive européenne. L'engin était placé près d'un bâtiment officiel. Enfin, une explosion a fait hier en fin de journée plusieurs morts et une vingtaine de blessés dans la station balnéaire d'Antalya.

Malgré l'absence de revendication et de commentaires de la part de la police, de nombreux éléments orientaient hier vers la piste kurde.

Depuis sa formation, le TAK incite les touristes étrangers à éviter la Turquie, pour fragiliser l'industrie florissante du tourisme turc.

Kurdistan (TAK). Depuis sa formation il y a deux ans, ce groupe incite les touristes étrangers à éviter la Turquie, dans le but affiché de fragiliser l'industrie florissante du tourisme turc qui devrait réaliser 20 milliards de dollars (17 milliards d'euros) de recettes en 2006. En juillet 2005, cinq personnes, dont une adolescente irlandaise et une Britannique, avaient perdu la vie dans l'explosion d'une bombe

dissimulée sous le siège d'un autocar dans la station balnéaire de Kusadasi (ouest). Les TAK avaient revendiqué cet attentat et promis de continuer de s'en prendre au tourisme turc. Et le 25 juin dernier les Faucons ont revendiqué l'attentat dans la station balnéaire de Manavgat, attentat qui a coûté la vie à quatre personnes dont trois touristes étrangers.

Il y a quinze jours, Ankara a également rejeté la main tendue par le chef séparatiste kurde, Abdullah Ocalan. Depuis sa prison d'Imrali, au large d'Istamboul, il a évoqué l'idée d'un cessez-le-feu si Ankara affichait une « approche sincère » pour résoudre la question kurde, demandant notamment un accès à la langue kurde dans les écoles. Ankara, qui refuse toute légitimité à Abdullah Ocalan et au PKK, a ensuite rejeté une autre proposition de cessez-le-feu, à compter du 1^{er} septembre, lancée la semaine dernière par des membres de l'organisation séparatiste installés en Irak.

Les États-Unis, quant à eux, viennent de faire un geste en faveur des Turcs en nommant un « envoyé spécial » qui sera chargé de coordonner la lutte contre le PKK, entre Washington, Ankara et Bagdad.

DELPHINE NERBOLLIER

Ankara annonce sa participation à la Finul, déployée au Liban sud

Malgré l'opposition d'une grande partie de la classe politique et de l'opinion turques, le gouvernement Erdogan a décidé d'envoyer « quelques centaines » de soldats au Liban

ISTANBUL
CORRESPONDANCE

La Turquie avait été l'un des premiers pays à se déclarer prêt à participer à une force internationale déployée dans le Liban sud. Mais sa décision aura tardé à se dessiner. A l'issue d'un conseil des ministres qui a duré plus de cinq heures, lundi 28 août, le gouvernement de Recep Tayyip Erdogan a finalement annoncé qu'il allait apporter sa contribution à la Force intérimaire des Nations unies au Liban (Finul).

« Les soldats turcs iront au Liban pour protéger la paix. La Turquie ne peut pas rester un simple spectateur, à l'écart des événements qui se déroulent au Proche-Orient », a justifié Cemil Cicek, le ministre de la justice et porte-parole du gouvernement. Aucune précision n'a pour l'instant été donnée sur le nombre de casques bleus turcs qui seront engagés au Liban. Mais la presse parle de 600 à 1 200 soldats.

Le porte-parole du ministère des affaires étrangères, Namik Tan, évoque « au plus, quelques centaines ». La décision doit

être approuvée par le Parlement turc qui se réunira cette semaine ou le 19 septembre. Un vote qui devrait être sans surprise, le Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP) disposant de la majorité absolue.

Depuis quelques jours, les Etats-Unis, Israël et le Liban ont manifesté leur désir de voir des troupes turques prendre part à la Finul. Samedi, le porte-parole du ministère israélien des affaires étrangères a répété : « Si la Turquie décidait d'envoyer un contingent, nous accueillerions cela favorablement. » Pays laïque, la Turquie est un allié stratégique dans la région et l'Etat juif souhaite qu'elle garnisse le « contingent musulman ».

Pour le moment, parmi les pays musulmans, l'Indonésie, le Bangladesh et la Malaisie ont offert leurs services, mais aucun de ces pays ne reconnaît explicitement Israël. De son côté, le premier ministre libanais, Fouad Siniora, a déclaré à son homologue turc que « des troupes turques sont cruciales pour le Liban ». « Nous avons toute confiance en la Turquie » ; a-t-il ajouté.

Cette décision impopulaire est assumée par M. Tayyip Erdogan qui souhaite faire de son pays un acteur diplomatique-clé dans la région. Mais la population et la presse y sont majoritairement opposées, craignant que les soldats turcs ne se retrouvent obligés de désarmer le Hezbollah. « Nous

ne voulons pas prendre part à une mission de désarmement », a assuré Namik Tan.

La classe politique aussi est contre, en dehors de l'AKP. Le président de la République, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, membre du CHP, le parti d'opposition kémaliste, s'est prononcé contre le déploiement, au cours de la dernière réunion du Conseil national de sécurité (MGK), prétextant que la Turquie doit d'abord s'occuper de ses propres problèmes.

A l'extrême droite, le leader du Parti d'action nationaliste (MHP), Devlet Bahçeli, a accusé le gouvernement de vouloir « entraîner la Turquie dans un jeu dangereux. Plutôt qu'au Liban, il ferait mieux d'envoyer des troupes dans le nord de l'Irak pour déloger les terroristes du PKK [Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan] ».

L'armée ne montre pas un grand enthousiasme à l'idée

de participer à la Finul. Le nouveau chef d'état-major, le général Yasar Büyükanit, qui a pris ses fonctions lundi, a estimé, dans un discours prononcé devant l'état-major, que « la Turquie n'a jamais été exposée à autant de menaces extérieures qu'aujourd'hui ». Une façon de rappeler sa priorité : déloger les séparatistes du PKK de leur refuge, dans les montagnes du Kurdistan irakien. ■

GUILLAUME PERRIER

Le président turc, Ahmet Necdet Sezer, membre du parti d'opposition kémaliste, s'est prononcé contre le déploiement

TURQUIE UN GROUPE ARMÉ KURDE VISE LES SITES TOURISTIQUES

Des attentats frappent des stations balnéaires

ISTANBUL
CORRESPONDANCE

Hier après-midi, à Antalya, la principale destination touristique du pays, une explosion a fait au moins trois morts et une vingtaine de blessés, au lendemain d'une première vague d'attentats dans le pays. Un incendie s'est ensuite déclaré et des vacanciers ont été pris de panique.

Le centre-ville d'Antalya était alors noir de monde et la déflagration s'est produite à proximité d'un centre commercial, « devant un immeuble municipal », selon le chef de la police locale, Akif Aktug. L'identité des victimes n'a pas été révélée mais, selon certaines sources, des touristes étrangers figureraient parmi les blessés.

Déjà, dans la nuit de dimanche à lundi, un premier engin explosif avait visé un quartier populaire de la partie européenne d'Istanbul, faisant six blessés légers. Et trois autres bombes, dans le petit port de Marmaris, situé sur la côte de la mer Egée, avaient blessé 21 personnes, dont 10 Bri-

tanniques. La plus destructrice était dissimulée dans un minibus qui transportait des touristes.

Cette série d'attaques a été revendiquée, lundi soir, par les Faucons de la liberté du Kurdistan (TAK), un groupe clandestin présumé proche des séparatistes du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK). Et, selon l'agence officielle Anatolie, un membre de ce groupe a été arrêté lundi alors qu'il s'appropriait à commettre un attentat à Izmir.

Sur leur site Internet, les TAK affirment avoir agi « en représailles aux mesures d'isolement dont souffre Abdullah Öcalan [chef du PKK] », qui purge une peine de prison à vie sur l'île d'Imrali. « La Turquie n'est pas un pays sûr, ont-ils ironisé. Les touristes ne devraient pas [y] venir. »

En avril, les Faucons kurdes avaient annoncé leur intention de s'en prendre aux infrastructures touristiques turques, passant à l'action quelques semaines plus tard en tuant quatre vacanciers, dont trois

étrangers, sur le site des cascades de Manavgat, près d'Antalya. L'été 2005, ils avaient visé la station balnéaire de Kusadasi, et revendiqué une explosion dans un minibus qui avait fait quatre morts.

Les TAK, qui ont reconnu avoir commis au moins une dizaine d'attentats à la bombe depuis le début de l'année, sont devenus la bête noire de la police turque. Ils ont affirmé avoir déclenché les feux de forêt qui ravagent actuellement le sud et l'ouest de la Turquie, menaçant des sites très fréquentés. Plus de 4 000 hectares ont été détruits.

Cette vague de violence intervient quelques jours après une proposition de trêve de la part du PKK. Son porte-parole, Murat Kalkiyan, réfugié dans les montagnes de Kandil, au Kurdistan irakien, a appelé Ankara à s'inspirer de l'Irlande du Nord et demandé une amnistie pour les rebelles séparatistes. « La Turquie ne discutera jamais avec le PKK », a répondu le député (AKP) Faruk Celik. ■

G. P.E.

Turkish warplanes bomb PKK bases inside Iraqi Kurdistan

TUNCALI, Turkey - Turkish warplanes bombed Kurdish guerrilla positions in the Iraqi border region this week, military sources said on Friday.

Several thousand Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) guerrillas are based in the mountains of northern Iraq and Turkey insists it has the right to conduct cross-border operations against them if Iraq and the United States fail to crack down on the rebels.

Iraq has warned Turkey not send troops into its territory.

Military sources in south-east Turkey told Reuters two or three warplanes had bombed the Iraqi border region on Wednesday evening after PKK forces were identified in the area.

The military sources said they landed on an uncontrolled part of the border, but would not say if the bombs landed inside Iraq. The action was not significant and it was not clear what damage had been caused, the sources said.

A Turkish Foreign Ministry official declined to confirm the report, which comes after Turkish media reported F-16 aircraft had

attacked PKK positions inside Iraq.

The PKK denied the reports in a statement.

"News that Turkish military forces' F-16 planes bombed south Kurdistan border areas are lies and unfounded," it said.

U.S. President George W. Bush told Turkish Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan last month the United States wanted to deal more aggressively with cross-border attacks by PKK rebels.

Diplomats in Ankara say the government and the armed forces are frustrated at little action on the ground despite mount-

ing soldiers' casualties in Turkey.

More than 30,000 have been killed, most of them Kurds, since the PKK began its campaign for a Kurdish homeland in 1984.

The United States, Turkey and the European Union, view the PKK as a terrorist organisation but the U.S. military ad-

mits it is too bogged down fighting the insurgency in Iraq to launch a full-scale military crackdown on the PKK demanded by An-

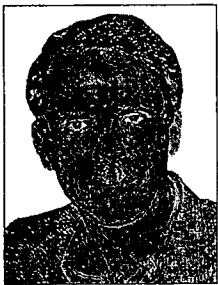
kara
Armed clashes have

intensified since April, when the Turkish military sent tens of thousands of

extra troops to the south-east to reinforce more than 200,000 soldiers already stationed there.

Reuters

PKK - nothing more than an excuse



Aso Kerim
Globe Senior Writer

today has a special status. It has a constitutionally recognized regional government within a federal country having internal, regional and even international responsibilities. Execution of these responsibilities with and understanding of the liabilities inherent with them is the path for future maintenance and enforcement.

Without a doubt, the PKK has fomented a lot of problems for Southern Kurdistan. The arrest of Ocalan has limited the harassment to only a few mountainous regions on the borders and has little existence inside Iraqi Kurdistan.

However, deep within Turkey, the PKK has a strong presence within the cities which are PKK party activity centers. This means that the actual existence and center of operations of the PKK is inside Turkey's borders and not outside its territorial domain.

And then Turkey is focusing a misguided and Chauvinist response on 25 million Kurds in the North, and who lack even the simplest community rights!

At the same time, Turkey has made it abundantly

clear in their statements of opposition towards developing Kurdish positions

in Iraq, sometimes even to the point of interference in Iraq's internal matters, in this case the lingering issue of Kirkuk.

They claim falsely to protect Turkumans in Kurdistan, which in itself is a breach of the main principle of sovereignty, fully recognized by the tenets of international law. Turkey discourages speaking about Kurdish issues inside Turkey. However they have no right to do so within a sovereign entity such as Kurdistan and therefore must respect other countries' internal affairs.

Since 1991 the neighboring countries of Turkey, Iran and Syria have tried to coordinate with each other in studying the Iraqi situation, especially in Iraqi Kurdistan. The PKK issue has become one of the security issues. We see coordination in military actions on both of the Turkey-Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran-Iraqi Kurdistan borders. Both borders have been bombarded by artillery fire and air strikes with substantial loss to local villagers in the



A PKK guerrilla fighter carrying a Kalashnikov rifle.

Region prompting some to leave the area. This is just one example of a serious breach of national sovereignty and an issue to be reconciled within the Iraqi presidency.

It is highly doubtful that America wants cooperation between Iran and Turkey since Iran supports Hezbollah in Lebanon and is in diametric opposition to the United States in the issue of nuclear proliferation.

What shall be the American reaction to Iran trying to attract and entice Turkey into cooperation using the PKK factor? In addition, Iran plays the insurgent card by using Ansar Islam as a threat surrogate to attack Iraqi Kurdistan's main forces and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The message is clear. If Kurdistan supports America, Iran will instigate trouble similar to that being experienced in the rest of

Iraq, in an attempt to abolish the stable security of Iraqi Kurdistan

The PKK has recently announced a ceasefire. However Turkey response was not positive to the ceasefire and continues its attacks on the PKK. The duty of the government of Kurdistan

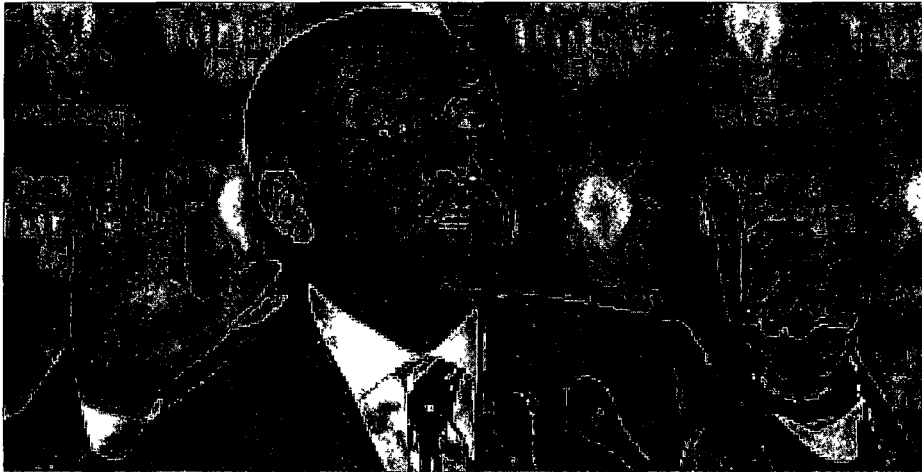
is to nurture and protect the region's political and legal status in compliance with Iraqi Constitution and international rule of law. The PKK should take notice and respect Kurdistan sovereignty by changing its route from Turkey-Iran to its actual domain which

is Turkey itself

Iraqi Kurdistan will face a great challenge in the very near future, perhaps as early as the end of next year. By the end of 2007, the issues of resolving the return of Kirkuk to the Kurdistan Region and other area crises will be at the

forefront

All Kurds should recognize this as a personal challenge and not side with those who devise excuses to make the Kurdistan Region their own particular domain and flooding the region with accessory duties!



Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan addresses a meeting of his Justice and Development Party in Ankara, Monday, Aug. 14, 2006. The PKK's presence in southern Kurdistan and its alleged cross-border activities have been exploited by the Turkish state to launch military operations in Iraqi Kurdistan and gain leverage in Kurdish politics, writes Globe's Azad Aslan.



The Kurdish Globe

August 29, 2006

Deafening Silence

Globe Editorial

Partiya Karkeran Kurdistan (The Kurdistan Workers' Party), PKK, represents the weakest chain in the Kurdish national movement. The inherent contradictions between its political theory and political practice provides ample opportunity for both Turkey and Iran to manipulate the Kurdish national question in their occupied Kurdish territories, as well as to interfere in the political affairs of southern Kurdistan. As Turkey deploys further troops to its border with Iraq, Iran continues to shell southern Kurdistan, causing more harm to civilians than PKK guerrillas.

With its confused political discourse/objective, ranges from "democratic republic" to 'confederalism', and its contradictory practices, which include political and physical violence against its opponents, reduction of Kurdish national question to individual and minority rights issue, and small-scale but unnecessary military confrontation with Turkish army, the PKK has

long consumed its legitimacy within the Kurdish national movement. The question for the future is not what should the PKK do, but rather what should the Kurds do with the PKK?

The PKK's presence in southern Kurdistan and its alleged cross-border activities have been exploited by the Turkish state to launch military operations in Iraqi Kurdistan and gain leverage in Kurdish politics.

And Turkey's recent diplomatic pressure seems to be paying off, with the Iraqi Government agreeing to shut down a number of offices belonging to the PKK and affiliated groups. There have also been suggestions that Turkey and the US have developed a common position on the PKK issue and will work together to eliminate PKK bases in Southern Kurdistan.

Such developments jeopardize the legitimacy and sovereignty of the KRG. The silence of Kurdistan's government and institutions is deafening. Senior Kurdish politician Mahmoud Othman was correct in stating: "whilst it is true that Ankara, for the purposes of

maintaining the integrity of the Turkish-Iraqi border, should discuss the PKK issue with the Iraqi government, they must also discuss it with the Kurdistan Regional Government, because that particular part of the border belongs to the Kurdistan Region." Southern Kurdistan falls under the jurisdiction of its regional government and Assembly, and not a single political, economic, social or military decision may be taken within it without the consent of the KRG and the Kurdistan National Assembly. The Kurdistan National Assembly must, without delay, hold an emergency meeting to formulate a plan to prevent the PKK issue from posing a threat to the future of the Kurdistan Region.

There are currently a number of scenarios circulating as to the likely outcome of PKK's presence in southern Kurdistan. In the end, the truth of these predictions is not important. What is of the utmost importance is that the Kurdistan Regional Government takes the necessary steps to protect Kurdish national interests. For the KRG to maintain integrity and sovereignty, it must en-

sure that no armed groups are permitted to operate within its territory without its consent. It is the same reasoning that dictates that detachments of Turkish forces in the Kurdistan Region must also be removed. Under whatever pretext, the presence of foreign or independent armed groups outside state control can only jeopardize the sovereignty and legitimacy of an elected government.

The PKK's political and military leaders insist that their guerilla forces are for defensive purposes and have no intention of engaging the Turkish army in a military confrontation. The PKK claim their objectives are Turkey's democratic reform and the freedom of their imprisoned leader, Abdullah Ocalan. However, PKK leaders must realize that the interests of the Kurdish nation override those of any individual. It is time for the PKK to seriously contemplate its current position, and whether it really is a positive force in the Kurdish national movement.

Azad Aslan
Globe political Editor

Les Iraniens sereins face aux menaces de sanctions

La population ne semble pas s'inquiéter des menaces de représailles internationales.

Téhéran

LES SANCTIONS, c'est le dernier des soucis de Reza Karimi. « Mes clients ne se sont pas rués vers les stocks d'huile et de riz. Ils n'ont pas changé leur comportement d'un pouce », confie le gérant du supermarché Baloutche, au cœur du quartier Guicha de Téhéran. Dans les allées bien rangées de son petit commerce, des mères de famille en foulard poussent leur chariot comme si de rien n'était. « Les Iraniens ne prennent pas au sérieux les menaces étrangères », glisse-t-il.

C'est aujourd'hui, pourtant, qu'arrive à expiration l'ultimatum fixé par le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU pour que Téhéran suspende ses activités nucléaires. Selon la résolution votée le 31 juillet dernier, des mesures de rétorsion économiques pourraient être envisagées si l'Iran refuse de se plier aux exigences de la communauté internationale. Elles pourraient, dans un premier temps, se limiter à un gel des avoirs iraniens et à l'interdiction de voyage à l'étranger des dirigeants de la République islamique, et donc n'avoir aucun effet direct sur la population.

Mais sur le long terme, s'inquiètent les économistes, elles pourraient être fatales au pays. « On pourrait assister à un boom de l'inflation, une dépréciation monétaire, une augmentation de la fuite des cerveaux et des capitaux, une montée du chômage », prévient Heydar Pourian, le rédacteur en chef de la revue *Iran Economics*.

Face aux menaces étrangères, les autorités iraniennes gardent la tête haute et se disent prêtes à affronter la pire. À plusieurs reprises, elles ont même laissé entendre la possibilité d'une riposte stratégique, en fermant les robinets du pétrole. « Au final, ça risque pourtant de retomber sur les Iraniens »,

prévient l'économiste Ali Rachidi, membre de la chambre de commerce de Téhéran. Quatrième exportateur d'or noir, l'Iran dépend largement de ses recettes pétrolières. Elle demeure, également, un importateur d'essence. Une envoi

lée des prix internationaux aurait donc des répercussions sur l'économie iranienne. « On continue à acheter environ 25 % de notre essence à l'étranger », précise Ali Rachidi.

Une récession économique guette le pays

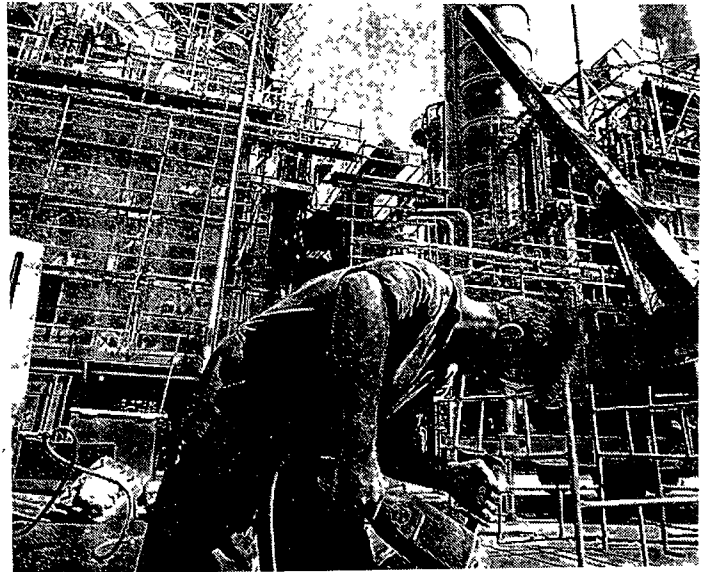
Pour l'heure, la flambée des cours du pétrole a plutôt tendance à soutenir artificiellement l'économie iranienne. L'or noir représente 80 % des recettes à l'exportation du pays, et lui permet donc d'enregistrer une croissance qui tourne autour des 5 %. Or, regrette Fariborz Raïs Dana, spécialiste en économie, « les autorités iraniennes ne font aucun effort pour anticiper une possible récession économique ». Au contraire. Depuis son arrivée au pouvoir, le président Mahmoud Ahmadinejad pousse à tour de bras dans l'argent du pétrole pour financer allègrement un grand nombre d'aides à caractère social, parmi lesquelles des prêts à taux réduits pour les jeunes. À titre d'exemple, le gouvernement vient de prélever l'équivalent de 7,4 milliards de dollars dans le Fond de réserve pétrolier (Oil Sta-

bilisation Fund) au cours des quatre derniers mois. L'année dernière, seul 1,6 milliard de dollars fut prélevé sur la même période.

Toujours dans le cadre de sa politique populiste, Ahmadinejad vient de lancer son fameux projet d'« actions sociales » : l'octroi, à

prix cassés, de 40 % des actions des entreprises étatiques en cours de privatisation aux couches défavorisées. « Mais il serait plus judicieux de créer des emplois pour lutter contre le chômage que de vendre des actions à des personnes qui n'ont même pas les moyens de s'acheter de la viande », regrette Fariborz Raïs Dana.

Scandalisés par ces incohérences gouvernementales, une cinquantaine d'économistes, d'anciens fonctionnaires et d'universitaires ont poussé un cri d'alarme, en juin dernier, en rédigeant une lettre ouverte au président Ahmadinejad. Ils y dénoncent, entre autres, l'interventionnisme excessif du gouvernement en matière économique et sociale et regrettent que le prélèvement excès-



Quatrième exportateur d'or noir, l'Iran dépend largement de ses recettes pétrolières destinées surtout à financer des programmes sociaux. Salemi/AP

sif sur le fond de réserve ne serve même pas aux investissements. « L'instabilité politique, les menaces internationales et la baisse des taux d'intérêt risquent de réveiller la bête de l'inflation », peut-on lire dans cette lettre ouverte publiée dans la presse économique.

Pendant ce temps, du côté du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, l'idée des sanctions continue à diviser les membres permanents. Mais si la Chine et la Russie s'y opposent, Washington s'est dit prêt à créer sa propre coalition pour faire pression sur l'Iran. D'après Ali Rachidi, des sanctions, même limitées, saperaient vite l'économie iranienne. « Cela fait déjà plus de vingt ans qu'on est sous embargo américain, et on en paye le prix », dit-il. Contrainte de se diriger vers d'autres marchés, la République islamique achète ainsi ses équipements « entre 20 et 30 % plus cher que la normale ».

Quant à l'autosuffisance dont se vantent les autorités iraniennes, elle pourrait vite trouver ses limites en cas de sanctions occidentales plus sévères. « L'Iran dépend encore largement de grosses entreprises étrangères pour tout ce qui est pièces détachées de voiture ou équipements utilisés dans l'exploitation pétrolière et gazière », remarque l'économiste.

Si le débat sur les sanctions

Une économie fondée sur le pétrole

L'Iran est le quatrième exportateur mondial de pétrole. Le pétrole représente 80 % des recettes iraniennes à l'exportation. Taux de chômage officiel : 11 %. Officieusement, il avoisine les 30 %. 40 % des actions des entreprises iraniennes en cours de privatisation vont être réservées aux couches sociales défavorisées.

ne fait que commencer, l'ambiance d'incertitude qui prévaut dans la capitale iranienne a déjà poussé certaines entreprises étrangères, comme la banque suisse USB, à anticiper en cessant leurs activités avec la République islamique. En attendant, les chariots continuent à glisser dans les allées du supermarché Baloutche. « Je continue à croire à une issue de dernière minute sur la crise du nucléaire », confie Reza Karimi, le gérant. « Mais si les sanctions finissent par s'imposer, ça sera la pagaille », reconnaît-il.

DELPHINE MINOUI

Iran-Syrie : une alliance pas vraiment convaincante

■ Paranoïa

"On se demande si Damas est encore une capitale arabe. La ville est envahie par des Iraniens, et plus de cinq cents lieux de pèlerinage chiite y ont été construits.

Téhéran aurait versé à Bachar El-Assad 1 milliard de dollars", affirme le quotidien koweïtien Al-Seyassah, reflétant la paranoïa des pétromonarchies arabes du Golfe engendrée par la puissance iranienne.

L'axe Téhéran-Damas peut-il encore tenir si la Syrie obtient satisfaction d'Israël ? Ou si Washington adoucit ses positions sur le nucléaire iranien ?

ASHARQ AL-AWSAT (extraits)

Londres

En raison même de sa position géographique, la Syrie ne veut pas d'un conflit militaire avec Israël. Le pays de Bachar El-Assad a en effet avec l'Etat hébreu une frontière commune, ce qui n'est pas le cas de l'Iran. Sans compter que la situation intérieure du régime syrien est moins assurée que celle du gouvernement iranien actuel. Cette faiblesse syrienne inquiète d'ailleurs Téhéran, dans la mesure où elle pourrait influencer sur les positions iraniennes dans la région. Le président iranien Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a beau assurer à son homologue syrien que l'Iran répondrait à toute attaque israélienne contre la

Syrie, il reste que Téhéran n'a ni les moyens militaires ni la volonté politique de se lancer dans une confrontation armée avec Israël, dans laquelle il ne fait aucun doute que les Etats-Unis interviendraient.

Mais quels sont les fondements de cette alliance entre l'Iran et la Syrie ? Après le 11 septembre 2001, la chute des talibans en Afghanistan et celle du régime de Saddam Hussein en Irak, le rapport des forces politiques dans la région s'est trouvé fortement modifié. La présence des forces étasuniennes à proximité des frontières syriennes a constitué une menace directe pour la stabilité du régime de Damas. La pression américaine s'est

encore accrue après l'attentat qui a coûté la vie à l'ancien Premier ministre libanais Rafic Hariri. Le retrait de l'armée syrienne du Liban a mis en lumière un certain nombre de fragilités du régime d'Assad, réduisant sensiblement ses marges de manœuvre stratégiques dans la région, alors que la Syrie avait grandement profité économiquement et politiquement de sa présence au Liban.

Bien évidemment, l'Iran a été affecté par toutes ces évolutions politiques. Le pays n'a pu que se féliciter de la chute de ses deux ennemis jurés, le régime sunnite des talibans à Kaboul et le pouvoir baasiste à Bagdad. En revanche, la présence des forces étasuniennes chez ces deux voisins immédiats constitue une menace ouverte pour le pouvoir en place à Téhéran. Il reste que, au contraire de

la Syrie, l'Iran dispose de nombreux atouts dans son jeu. Le pays est l'un des tout premiers producteurs mondiaux de pétrole, il contrôle le détroit d'Ormuz et s'est doté d'un ambitieux programme nucléaire, trois avantages dont ne dispose pas la Syrie.

Ces écarts relatifs n'empêchent pas que les deux pays soient liés par des objectifs communs. D'où leur opposition commune face aux Etats-Unis en Irak, d'où leur appui conjoint – financier, logistique et militaire – au Hezbollah, au Liban. Les deux pays appellent de leurs vœux une réduction de l'influence sunnite dans la région, plus particulièrement celle exercée par l'Arabie Saoudite et l'Egypte. Pour l'Iran, un renforcement sunnite se ferait au détriment de son rôle de puissance régionale en tant que patrie du chiisme mondial. Pour la Syrie, il risquerait d'inciter la majorité sunnite du pays à se mobiliser contre le régime alaouite au pouvoir.

Toutefois, cette alliance stratégique irano-syrienne n'est pas à l'abri de changements. L'Iran verrait ainsi d'un mauvais œil tout accord entre la Syrie et Israël, puisqu'il priverait Téhéran de son seul allié dans la région. De son côté, la Syrie ne manquerait pas de s'inquiéter de tout rapprochement entre l'Iran et les Etats-Unis sur la question nucléaire iranienne. Pareille entente renforcerait la position iranienne au point d'amoindrir l'importance de l'allié syrien, et Damas perdrait du même coup tout poids politique régional.

Hoda El-Husseini

IRAN-ISRAËL

Washington a trois options, toutes mauvaises

George W. Bush peut céder, gagner du temps ou faire la guerre, explique le *Jerusalem Post*.

Le président iranien Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, s'il avait un jour le pouvoir de décision suprême dans son pays, "sacrifierait la moitié de l'Iran pour éliminer Israël", nous a déclaré le 24 août Giora Eiland, l'ancien conseiller à la sécurité nationale d'Israël. A 49 ans, le président iranien "a la conviction religieuse que la fin d'Israël est essentielle à la restauration de la gloire du monde musulman".

Face aux ambitions nucléaires de l'Iran, les Etats-Unis ont, selon Eiland, trois possibilités, "toutes mauvaises", et ne pourront pas retarder leur décision trop longtemps. La première option, c'est de "céder" – accepter que l'Iran accède au rang de puissance nucléaire et essayer d'exploiter la situation. "Exploiter la situation", c'est-à-dire isoler l'Iran économiquement, politiquement et internationalement dans l'espoir que cette situation provoquera un jour un changement de régime. "Cela pourrait en

outre convaincre plusieurs autres pays que le prix politique du nucléaire est trop élevé et donc les dissuader de chercher à imiter l'Iran."

La deuxième option, c'est de tenter une ultime action diplomatique. Au point où on en est, un cocktail de sanctions et d'avantages ne suffira pas à dissuader l'Iran de renoncer totalement, mais pourrait le convaincre de suspendre ses projets pendant deux ou trois ans. "En échange, les Etats-Unis devraient se mettre à traiter directement avec Téhéran et reconnaître pleinement son gouvernement. Cela doperait la position et la crédibilité du régime dans le pays et lui permettrait d'affirmer que c'est volontairement qu'il a suspendu son programme nucléaire." L'avantage pour l'administration Bush, c'est que "Bush pourrait dire alors : ils ne sont pas devenus nucléaires pendant que j'étais en charge, et c'est à mes successeurs de veiller à ce que les choses restent en l'état".

La troisième option, c'est une opération militaire – si on considère que la voie diplomatique ne donnera rien et qu'il ne

peut y avoir de compromis avec un pays de l'"axe du mal". La réalité politique interne et l'opinion publique américaines ne vont pas dans cette direction, affirme Eiland, et les Etats-Unis auraient en outre du mal à trouver un soutien international. De plus, "il faudrait lancer cette action dans les mois qui viennent. Sinon, si l'Iran poursuit son programme d'enrichissement, il aura achevé ses recherches et la phase de développement, et disposera de capacités qu'il pourra dupliquer sur de nombreux sites. Et, là, on ne pourra plus l'arrêter par une action militaire. D'ici six à douze mois, il sera trop tard."

Quant aux options d'Israël sur le plan militaire, le gouvernement se trouve devant un grave dilemme. L'Etat hébreu n'est pas aussi puissant militairement que les Etats-Unis et, si une attaque militaire ne parvient pas à freiner le programme nucléaire iranien, l'Iran risque de terminer celui-ci et d'invoquer l'agression préventive d'Israël pour lui infliger en toute légitimité des frappes nucléaires.

David Horowitz,

Jerusalem Post (extraits), Jérusalem

Ugly images in Iran

Iranians have not been flocking to the museum in Tehran where 204 winning entries in the "Holocaust International Cartoon Contest" are on exhibit. The Iranian public's indifference may be due to an understanding that the nasty images on display are not meant to improve life in Iran. Rather they belong to a propaganda campaign by Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who seeks to divert Iran's neighbors from worrying about the projection of Iranian power through Iraq and Syria and into Lebanon. He also wants to make them forget that they would be threatened as much as Israel if Iran acquired nuclear weapons.

One of the images in the Tehran exhibition shows a caricature of an orthodox Jew with an egregiously long nose that impales an Arab figure; the nose is labeled "Holocaust." Another depicts the Statue of Liberty holding a book on the Holocaust in

one hand and raising the other hand in a Nazi salute.

Ahmadinejad and the exhibit's organizers have said that the contest's purpose is to reveal Western double standards concerning free speech. Since the West justified last year's publication of Danish cartoons mocking the prophet Mohammed as a defense of free speech rights, they say, the cartoons denying the Holocaust will test the depth of Westerners' attachment to freedom of expression.

The tacit premise to this pairing of subjects is that, for Europeans, the

existence of the Holocaust has become as sacred as the prophet of Islam is to Muslims. And since Ahmadinejad has made it plain he does not believe the Holocaust happened, calling it a myth, his equating of European sensitivities about the Holocaust to Muslim reverence for Mohammed implies that while Muslims are defending the truth of

their religion against blasphemy, the Europeans are acting offended in defense of a political myth.

In a revealing interview last May with the German weekly *Der Spiegel*, Ahmadinejad seemed to rattle the interviewer by acting as though the reality of the Holocaust is unproved. He cited European laws against Holocaust denial as proof that the West fears a free debate about the historical truth of the Holocaust. He went on to suggest that "if the Holocaust occurred, then Europe must draw the consequences," implying that Europe should provide a state for the Jews. And then he added: "If it did not occur, then the Jews have to go back to where they came from. I believe that the German people today are also prisoners of the Holocaust." In other words, Germans would side with Ahmadinejad if only they had not been made to feel guilty by the myth of the Holocaust.

Like the cartoons he invited to Tehran, Ahmadinejad's notions about the Holocaust are no less repulsive for being false.

— The Boston Globe

Herald Tribune

August 31, 2006

Explosion meurtrière sur un marché de Bagdad

IRAK

De nouveaux attentats ont fait plus de quarante morts en Irak.

PLUSIEURS ATTENTATS ont causé des dizaines de morts hier à Bagdad. Le marché populaire de Chorja, l'un des plus importants de la capitale irakienne, a été la

cible d'une attaque particulièrement meurtrière. Une bombe dissimulée à une heure de grande affluence dans un sac a tué au moins 23 passants et blessés

35 autres dans cet immense souk où se vendent aussi bien des antennes satellites que des épices.

Les lieux de l'explosion étaient, selon les témoins, couverts de sang et maculés de morceaux de chair brûlée tandis que plusieurs véhicules étaient en feu. Dans le quartier commerçant de Karrada, situé au centre-

ville, ce sont trois personnes dont un policier qui ont péri dans un double attentat. Une bombe artisanale a tout d'abord éclaté au milieu d'une file de voitures faisant la queue devant une station-essence puis un véhicule piégé a explosé dans le même secteur. A Hilla, à une centaine de kilomètres au sud de Bagdad, c'est une moto qui a sauté devant un centre de recrutement de l'armée faisant au moins 12 morts et 38 blessés. Toutes les victimes sont des hommes venus s'engager dans les forces irakiennes. Le centre avait ouvert ses portes voici quatre jours et plus d'un millier de personnes étaient rassemblées dans les environs.

En février 2005, 125 recrues venues passer des tests avaient péri à Hilla dans des circonstances analogues dans un attentat perpétré par un kamikaze.

Cette méthode de terreur couramment utilisée par la guérilla sunnite vise bien sûr à décourager les candidats à des emplois



Une bombe artisanale devant une station-service, dans le centre de Bagdad, a tué deux personnes. Mahmoud/Reuters

dans l'armée et la police. Mais en visant Hilla, une ville mixte où se côtoyaient chiïtes et sunnites, les insurgés cherchent à creuser le fossé entre communautés.

Malédiction

A quelques kilomètres de là, près de Souwaira, les règlements de comptes interethniques se sont soldés par la découverte de cinq cadavres – des civils tués par balles –, dans le Tigre. Ils avaient les mains liées et portaient des traces de torture. Le jour précédent, quatre corps

avaient été repêchés dans le fleuve près de la même localité. Au total, au moins 45 morts ont été recensés hier dans des actes de violence dans l'ensemble du pays. Les victimes se comptent

également parmi les troupes américaines. Quatorze soldats américains ont été tués depuis dimanche, soit un nombre plus élevé qu'à l'ordinaire.

Un calme précaire s'est en revanche instauré à Diwaniyah, à 180 km au sud de Bagdad, où des affrontements entre des mili-

ciens chiïtes de l'armée du Mahdi et des militaires irakiens ont causé 81 morts. Les combats avaient éclaté après l'arrestation samedi d'un potentat local du mouvement du chef radical Moqtada al-Sadr. L'explosion accidentelle avant-hier d'un oléoduc à proximité de la localité avait

encore ajouté un peu plus de chaos. 36 habitants qui tentaient de détourner du carburant de l'ouvrage ont été tués dans la déflagration. Une catastrophe qui

rappelle à quel point le pétrole est devenu une malédiction en Irak.

T. O. (AVEC AFP ET AP)

Le Monde

Jeudi 31 août 2006

TURQUIE VAGUE D'ATTAQUES SANGLANTES VISANT LES SITES TOURISTIQUES

Les « Faucons de la liberté » kurdes revendiquent les attentats

ISTANBUL

CORRESPONDANCE

L'explosion d'Antalya, qui a fait 3 morts, lundi 28 août, était bien un nouvel attentat. Les Faucons de la liberté du Kurdistan (TAK), présumés proches du PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, séparatiste) l'ont revendiqué sur leur site Internet, comme ils l'avaient fait la veille pour les attentats de Marmaris et d'Istanbul. Les TAK ont de nouveau affirmé avoir agi en représailles au traitement dont fait l'objet Abdullah Öcalan, l'ex-leader du PKK, sur son île-prison d'Imrali. « Nous allons faire payer cher à la République turque ces mesures », menace le communiqué.

A Antalya, autour du lieu de l'attaque, les drapeaux turcs ont fleu-

ri un peu partout, en signe de resserrement national. Dans la crainte de nouvelles attaques, les autorités turques ont renforcé la sécurité à proximité des sites touristiques. La France et d'autres pays européens ont mis en garde les touristes qui se rendent en Turquie. Le quai d'Orsay leur a demandé d'« observer la plus grande vigilance, particulièrement à Istanbul et dans les stations balnéaires (...). De nouveaux attentats ne sont pas à exclure. »

Cette vague d'attentats menée par les TAK intervient pourtant quelques jours après une proposition de trêve du PKK. Le numéro deux du mouvement kurde, Murat Karayilan, a annoncé qu'il était « prêt à un cessez-le-feu à compter du 1^{er} septembre », à condi-

tion toutefois que la Turquie accepte d'accorder une amnistie à tous ses militants.

Simple émanation du PKK, pour les autorités turques, les TAK sont toutefois, pour de nombreux analystes, une branche dissidente du mouvement kurde clandestin. Depuis l'emprisonnement à vie d'Abdullah Öcalan, des luttes de pouvoir et des dissensions sont apparues au sein du PKK. Plusieurs milliers de ses membres sont retranchés dans les camps des montagnes de Kandil, au Kurdistan irakien, d'où ils mènent, selon l'armée, des raids contre les forces turques.

De nombreuses voix plaident pour une intervention militaire dans le nord de l'Irak. Depuis plusieurs mois, la Turquie milite

auprès de Bagdad et de Washington pour qu'ils mettent fin aux activités des rebelles kurdes. En signe de bonne volonté, le département d'Etat américain s'est résolu, mardi, à dépêcher le général Joseph Ralston pour travailler dans la région à « l'élimination de la menace terroriste du PKK ». Mais la Turquie a pris les devants. Il y a quelques jours, des avions F16 turcs ont mené plusieurs opérations en territoire irakien, contre des camps du PKK. Et le général Yasar Büyükanit, nommé à la tête des armées, lundi, et partisan d'une intervention en Irak, a annoncé, dans son discours d'investiture, qu'« éliminer les terroristes kurdes était l'une de ses priorités ». ■

GUILLAUME PERRIER

FINANCIAL TIMES August 31, 2006

Turkey braced for further decline in tourism

By Vincent Boland in Ankara

Turkey's \$18bn tourism industry is braced for a further fall in visitors and revenues in an already difficult year for the country's economy, after terrorist attacks on holiday destinations this week killed three people and injured dozens.

There is no evidence of cancelled trips to the country since the wave of bombings in Istanbul, Marmaris and Antalya began on Sunday.

Oktay Varlier, chairman of the Turkish tourism investors' association, said occupancy rates at hotels in the Aegean and Mediterranean resorts that cater to most tourists had not fallen.

But he and other industry officials said the incidents could exacerbate a decline in tourist revenue that was already evident this year after more than two decades of growth.

"The industry has been growing at 10 per cent a year since 1985, but this year is

stagnation," Mr Varlier said.

Tourism accounts for about 6 per cent of Turkey's gross domestic product and is an important earner of foreign exchange revenues, helping to finance the country's gaping current account deficit.

Turkey had 21m visitors and earned \$18.2bn (£14.2bn, £9.5bn) from them in 2005. But tourist numbers are not expected to rise this year, and projections suggest that revenues could fall to about \$17bn.

An outbreak of bird flu in January that killed several children is cited as the chief reason for the slowdown.

However, tourism officials also blame a decline in the quality of the product on offer across much of the country's Mediterranean coast.

Mr Varlier said that some 25,000 new hotel beds were added in Turkey every year, but operators were unable to increase prices because of intense competition, pushing down

overall industry revenues.

Basaran Ulusoy, chairman of the association of Turkish travel agencies, wrote in yesterday's Hurriyet newspaper that there were too many hotels in the crowded beach resorts – Antalya gets about one-third of all tourists to Turkey – and too few near other tourist attractions.

He called for more investment in higher value-added tourism, including the building of more five-star hotels away from the beaches.