

INSTITUT
KURDE
DE PARIS

Information and liaison bulletin

N°302

MAY 2010

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

Price per issue : France: 6 € — Abroad : 7,5 €
Annual subscription (12 issues) France : 60 € — Elsewhere : 75 €

Monthly review
Directeur de la publication : Mohamad HASSAN
Numéro de la Commission Paritaire : 659 15 A.S.

ISBN 0761 1285

INSTITUT KURDE, 106, rue La Fayette - 75010 PARIS

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

www.fikp.org

E-mail: bulletin@fikp.org

Contents

- **IRAN: FARZAD KAMANGAR AND FOUR OTHER KURDISH PRISONERS HAVE BEEN HANGED.**
- **IRAQI KURDISTAN: THE ASSASSINATION OF A STUDENT SHAKES AND DISTURBS PUBLIC OPINION.**
- **TURKEY: JUDICIAL HARASSMENT LIMITS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION.**
- **PARIS: AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE STATUS OF KIRKUK.**
- **CINEMA: HUSEYN KARABEY REPRESENTS KURDISH FILMS AT CANNES.**

IRAN: FARZAD KAMANGAR AND FOUR OTHER KURDISH PRISONERS HAVE BEEN HANGED

Farzad Kamangar, a 35-year-old Kurdish teacher accused of membership of a Kurdish armed movement, the PJAK was executed on the 9th of this month. He had been condemned to death following a second trial, on the 25th of December by N° 130 Branch of the Iranian Revolutionary Court, charged with endangering National Security. The accused always pleaded “not guilty”. His lawyer had stressed the irregularity of

the trial, which was not public and without any jury.

Farzad Kamangar who has been kept waiting for execution for two years in death row, after managing several times to escape from immediate execution, was finally hanged on 9 May in the morning at Evin prison, together with four other political prisoners, without their families, or even their lawyers, being informed.

Farzad Kamangar, Shirin

Alambuli, Ali Heydarian and Farhad Vakili were accused of membership of PJAK (a branch an Iranian branch of the PKK). Mehdi Eslamian was at accused of membership of Tonder, a monarchist movement.

Farzad Kamangar had been a teacher at Kamaran for 12 years, in Iranian Kurdistan. He was married and father of a family. He was a member of the teachers union and of several social associations. He used to write for the review *Royan* of the Mamiriyaran

Education association and for local Human Rights associations.

He was originally arrested on 19 August 2006 at Sanandj by secret service agents. For the 4 months following his arrest his family received no news about him and the authorities denied any involvement in his disappearance.

In fact, Farzad Kamangar had been transferred to Teheran's N°9 Evin prison. A secret and unofficial detention centre run by VEVAK, the Iranian secret service body that has replaced the Shah's notorious SAVAK. Some Human Rights activists report that a letter the teacher had managed to smuggle out of his cell told that he had been held isolated in solitary while he was being seriously tortured. He reported he was beaten with a garden hose during his interrogation, solely because he was a Kurd. He was also left for 24 hours tied to a chair, in an extremely restricted space, completely unable to move, without any food or being able to relieve himself. He was then locked into a minute and airless cell, without seeing any lawyer of any contact with his family. He was also subjected to psychological torture, particularly by threats of reprisals against members of his family and by the arrest of a young woman with whom he was linked. He then tried to commit suicide by throwing himself down a very high staircase, but failed to kill himself. He was in so bad a state that he had to receive treatment in the prison hospital. His lawyer confirms these statements by describing the physical state of his client at the time of their first meeting. In addition to badly scalded hands caused by boiling water, he was suffering from kidney infection and blood in his urine.

Between 2006 and 2007 he was several times moved either to

Kermanshah or to Sanandaj to be tortured and interrogated. Thus he mentions that the cell in Kermanshah where he was confined in February and March 2007 measured 1m x 1m x 0.6m. He was also tortured and beaten as well as subjected to sexual violence (a speciality of Evin prison, which aims at psychologically breaking detainees).

It was only seven months later that his mother and brother were authorised to see him for a very short time in the presence of intelligence agents, who forbade speaking in Kurdish during this meeting. Farzad Kamangar had not yet been informed of the charges being made against him or been able to see his lawyer, who had been given no information about his case. He was later charged with "undermining state security".

Farzad went on hunger strike several times, with the other detainees, in protest against the conditions of their detention. In January 2008 he was in Gohardash prison, which was shaken by revolt of the prisoners and, after violent action by the prison services he and Farhad Vakili and Ali Heydarian were taken away and separated from the others.

In the week following his execution, along with four others (one of whom was a woman), a general strike took place in several Kurdish towns in Iran in protest, particularly at Sanandaj, Meriwam and Mehabad.

Farzad Kamangar, whose writings had been published on a blog, wrote last April, while in death row, a letter to other jailed teachers. This letter, the last he wrote, was published by the Human Rights Activists News Agency (HRANA) and headed "Stand Firm, Comrades".

Farzad Kamangar himself explained this title by recounting the following story: "About eight years ago, the grandmother of one of my pupils, Yassin, was listening to an audio cassette by professor Mamoosta Ghootabkhanch. She then said: "I know that your fate, like that of the professor who recorded this poem, is to be executed, but stand firm, comrade". The granny said this while drawing on her cigarette and gazing at the mountains".

The tale of the little black fish mentioned was written in 1967 by the dissident teacher Samad Behrangi. The book was banned by the Shah's regime. It recounts the adventures of a little fish that defies its community's rules by undertaking a journey to find the sea. On the way it bravely faces its enemies. The tale is considered a classic of the Iranian resistance. Its author, Samad was drowned in the summer of 1968. Some people believe that his death was suspicious and accuse the Shah's agents of having assassinated him.

"There was once a mother fish who laid 10,000 eggs. Only one little black fish survived. It lived in a brook with its mother. One day it told its mother "I want to leave this place". Its mum asked: "To go where?". The little fish replied: "I want to see where this stream ends up".

Greeting to you companions of prison! Greetings to you companions of suffering!

I know you well. You are teachers, the voices of the stars of Khavaran (a cemetery to the east of Teheran where many political dissidents were executed in the 80s and buried in mass graves) the fellow disciples by the dozen of those whose essays were included in their charge sheets, the teachers

of students whose only crime was human thought. I know you well — you are the colleagues of Samad and of Ali Khan. You also remember me, don't you?

I am the one chained up in Evin prison.

I am the pupil sitting quietly behind broken school desks in a far off valley of Kurdistan. Like you I recited Samad's stories to his pupils, but in the heart of the Shahu mountains.

It is I who likes to play the part of the little black fish.

I am your comrade in death row.

Now the valleys and the mountains were way behind and the river was running through a field in the plains. To the right and the left, other rivulets came to join the river and this river was carrying even more water along. The little black fish was rejoicing at this abundance ... it wanted to reach the end of the river. I could swim as much as it wanted without banging against anything.

Suddenly it saw a big shoal of fish. They were 10,000 strong. One of them saw the little black fish. "Welcome to the sea, comrade!"

My imprisoned comrades! Is it possible to sit behind the desk like Samad and look this coun-

try's children in the eye and remain silent?

Is it possible not to take the road to the sea like the little fishes of this country? What does it made whether they come from the Aras, Karoon, Sirvan or Sarbaz river? What difference does it make when the sea is our common destiny — that of being united as one? The sun is our guide. It is a very good thing that prison should be our reward.

(Translators Note: each of these rivers runs through an ethnically different region of Iran: Azerbaijan, Khuzistan, Kurdistan, Baluchistan)

Is it possible to bear the heavy burden of being a schoolteacher, whose duty is to sow the seeds of consciousness, and remain silent? Is it possible to see the pupils' throats tight with emotion, their thin and hungry faces and stay silent?

Is it possible to go through a year of injustice and iniquity and fail to teach the H of hope and the E of Equality, even if such teaching brings you to Evin prison and death?

I cannot imagine being a teacher in Samad's country, the land of Khan Ali and Ezzati, without joining the eternity of Aras! I

cannot imagine witnessing the sufferings and poverty of this country's people and failing to give one's heart to the river and the sea, to the roaring waves and the flooding main!

(Translators note: Aras is the river in which Samad was found drowned — or was assassinated)

I know that one day this hard and rough road will be paved for the schoolteachers and that the sufferings that you all endure will be a badge of honour, so that the world can see that a teacher is a teacher, even if his way is barred by the process of selection, of prison, of execution. It is being a little black fish, not a heron, that honours a teacher.

The little fish swam peacefully in the sea and thought: "it is not hard for me to face death nor do I regret it".

Suddenly the heron pounced on him and swallowed the little fish.

The grandmother fish finished telling the story and told her 12,000 children and grandchildren that it was time for bed. The Grandmother also went to sleep. Only one little goldfish was unable to sleep. This fish thought deeply.

A schoolteacher in death row at Evin

Farzad Kamangar

IRAQI KURDISTAN: THE ASSASSINATION OF STUDENT SHAKES AND DISTURBS PUBLIC OPINION

Iraqi Kurdistan was shaken by the kidnapping and murder of a student, Serdest Osman, who was in his last year of a degree in English at Salahaddin University, in Irbil. He used to work as translator or columnist for several independent newspapers and reviews. The critical and contentious tone of his writings, as well as the press's

general dissatisfaction with the authorities and the political establishment immediately transformed this murky affair into suspicion of a settling of scores between the powers that be and the press and student circles.

On 4 May, Serdest Osman was dropped off by his brother at the entrance to the Salahaddin University Arts College, in Irbil,

in the very heart of the Kurdistan Region. According to witnesses, he was then kidnapped by a group of armed men driving a white minibus. His brother, Sardar, did not see the kidnapping because of the crowds of people masking the scene. He only recalls having seen a dozen soldiers of the Zerevan unit guarding the institute's entrance as usual.

On 6 May, his family learned that his body had been found in Mosul, thus completely outside the Region. According to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan based there, the Mosul police had notified them that they had found the body bound hand and feet and bearing signs of torture and killed by a shot in the mouth.

Although one of the victim's brothers, Zerdest Osman, stated that he did not know why he had been murdered and that he did not suspect anyone, the opposition press immediately suspected the Kurdish government itself: partly because of the place where the kidnapping had taken place (Irbil is completely controlled by the Kurdish Security forces) but mainly because of the young man's journalistic activity. Indeed, in addition to his work as translator, he wrote for the magazine *Astiname* (Peace News Letter) under the pen name of Desti Oman and cooperated with several press online sites: *sbeiy.com*, *Hawlati.info*, *Awene.com*, *rudaw.net* and *Ivinpress.com* — all very critical of the government.

Thus, *Sbeiy.com* did not hesitate, directly and with bold headlines, to accuse the Kurdish government, giving as reason an article that Serdest Osman had written implicating a senior official of the KRG, Kosrat Rasul, a PUK veteran, claiming this information came from "a close friend of the victim".

Similarly, another of Serdest's brothers, Basdar Osman, stated to the Committee to protect Journalists as well as to *Hawlati* that he was convinced that Serdest was killed because of this article, written in *Astiname* last April. "Over the last few months my brother has received threats by telephone demanding that he cease meddling with government business".

This kidnapping and murder, the first directed against a journalist in

the Kurdistan Region (not the second as reported by Reporters sans Frontières that doesn't seem aware that Kirkuk has not been integrated into federal Kurdistan) has caused a shock wave throughout the student movement and the Kurdistan press. The University's English Department has had to cancel several exams because of the high feelings amongst the students.

Over 60 Kurdish writers and journalists condemned this murder and directly questioned the government and security forces about it.

"Kidnapping a journalist in the regional capital, taking him outside the Kurdistan Region and finally killing him raises serious questions. Such an act cannot have been committed by a single person or a little group. This is why the Kurdish Regional Government and Security forces must, first of all, face up to their responsibilities. We must do the utmost to find those responsible".

The signatories of this petition to the Regional Government point out in a communiqué that such a kidnapping could not be the work of a single person or a small group, which immediately eliminates any question of personal revenge.

Moreover, they point out the fact that, in the event of a mafia or terrorist operation, it is hardly likely that such a group coming from Mosul could have entered Irbil, kidnapped a student under the very nose of the Peshmergas on the threshold of a busy University, left the Region and returned to Mosul without being bothered by the various Peshmerga checkpoints that control all traffic between Irbil and Mosul, bearing in mind the dangerous border with Nineveh Province is.

This is just the point on which journalists and friends of the victim are making in accusing the security forces of both parties of being directly involved in the crime. Yet more affirmative, Reporters sans

Frontières directly accuses the KDP secret services, though without any real facts to back them up, apart from the fact that they are led by Masur Barzani, President Barzani's son and that Irbil is controlled by them and not by the PUK.

Opinions vary about the motive. Serdest Osman having written many articles attacking various officials of both parties. The Committee for the Protection of Journalists at first mentioned the article in the daily paper *Astiname*, criticising a senior PUK official, Kosrat Rasul. According to Basdar Osman, the January threats had been followed by other telephoned warnings, telling him to stop "meddling with government affairs".

However, the political insignificance of Serdest Osman, who was not the only one to criticise the government and parties in power in the press, or to receive threats or be intimidated, raises doubts about the motive of such an extreme revenge by so senior an official. There is a striking disproportion between the victim's lack of importance and the implications of such a State crime.

The Irbil Chief of police, Abdul Khalid Ta'lat stated on 4 May to the paper *Rudaw* that he had not been informed earlier about the threats made to the victim. However, in an earlier article, dated 21 January of this year Serdest Osman had described his attempts to file an official complaint to this particular police officer — which Abdul Khalid Ta'lat continues to deny.

The signatories of the petition are concerned by another point: the prolonged silence of the government media or the party organs on this case until the protests and accusations had so increased that it was impossible to ignore them. On 7 May, the KDP paper *Xebat* briefly mentioned that the body of a student, Serdest Osman, had been found in Mosul, after having been kidnapped

from Salahaddin University, and that the Region's police were opening an investigation. Serdest's "journalistic activities were not mentioned nor was the fact that the kidnapping took place in broad daylight by a group of armed men.

Reporters sans Frontières does not hesitate to connect this with the assassination of another journalist, Soran Mam Hama, killed in Kirkuk in July 2008 — but this too is unconvincing. While the two victims had in common the fact of being Kurds and Moslems (thus, of not having been killed for religious reasons by islamists), of having written articles targeting officers of the Kurdish government and of having received threats before being assassinated, all other circumstances are different. Soran Mam Hama was killed in Kirkuk, a town officially controlled by the Iraqi Central Government, not the KRG. Moreover the 2-year gap between the murders is not compatible with a campaign of extra-judicial executions like those carried out by the JITEM in Turkish Kurdistan.

The shock caused by this murder comes from the fact that it calls into question the effectiveness of the Kurdistan's internal security and that the KRG cannot get out of its responsibility, whatever may be the truth that emerges: guilty is directly involved, not guilty but still responsible, if its is a case of negligence.

Moreover, this murder crystallises

all the discontent and frustration of the student youth that feels it is excluded from the general economic boom that Kurdistan is enjoying and accuses the authorities of concentrating political power in the hands of a caste of veterans and their families, coming from the main parties. Some more or less spontaneous demonstrations took place (it cannot be excluded that they were "encouraged" or relayed by opposition parties even though they could not have been solely responsible for instigating them) in both Irbil and Suleimaniyah as soon as the murder was announced. Thus, on 10 May a march, some hundreds strong, went from the Language Department of Irbil's Salaheddin University through the capitals main streets to gather in front of the Parliament. Dressed in black, and carrying a coffin of the same colour bearing the slogan "Azadi" (Freedom) and pictures of Serdest Osman, the student defied the truncheons of riot police deployed round the building to prevent them from entering and retaliated by throwing shoes, bottles of water and pieces of glass.

In the end, the Speaker of the House, Kemal Kirkuki, came out to talk to the students and promised to insist that the government conduct a thorough investigation into this murder. He added that the President of the Kurdish Region, Masud Barzani, had already ordered that those guilty be found and punished. The Speaker of Parliament also called for penalties against those

whose "negligence" had enabled the crime to be committed: *"Those who want to punish you for what you write are those who cannot face the words of truth"*.

The Kurdistan Human rights Committee, for its part, demanded direct explanations from the Minister of the Interior, since it is the Security services that are most strongly suspected by public opinion: of neglect at best — of complicity or of actually committing the murder at worst.

On the same day, 10 May, the directorate of the Irbil Security Services described the murder, in a communiqué, as a "terrorist" act and asked the public not to jump too quickly to "hasty conclusions" but to await the results of the enquiry, without listening to unfortunate "rumours" going around.

Earlier, on Saturday 8 May, the president of the Kurdistan Region, Masud Barzani, had declared he was "saddened" by Serdest Osman's death, which he described as an "odious crime that aimed at undermining the Region's security". He also insisted that the enquiry was under way and that the Departments concerned were doing everything possible to bring every thing to light.

The President of Iraq, who is also head of the PUK, also deplored the crime and sent his condolences to the family.

TURKEY: JUDICIAL HARASSMENT LIMITS FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

In its latest report on Turkey, Amnesty International's assessment is rather pessimistic, as it considers that the country has made little progress regarding Human Rights. Cases of torture and ill treatment in detention continue, as well as judicial procedures aimed at limiting free-

dom of expression. The organisation also pinpoints judicial and administrative harassment that hinder Human Rights Defence organisations in Turkey.

Human Rights defenders are sued for having done their work in a legal manner by reporting breaches of human rights. Some prominent

public figures are regularly subjected to criminal investigations. They are also subjected to excessive administrative checks and, in some case, of judicial proceedings have been started to close down some organisations.

Thus, Ethem Açikhan, who runs the Adana branch of the

Association for human Rights (IHD), was the target of a number of charges arising from his activity in defending Human Rights. Last October, he was found guilty of “*inciting hostility or hatred*” in the population and sentenced to 3 years imprisonment for having criticised, in 2008, the detention of children involved in street demonstrations as well as the suppression of State social assistance to their families. He has appealed.

In December 2009, Muharrem Erbey, Vice-President of IHD and Director of its Diyarbakir branch, was arrested on the grounds that he was officially suspected of membership of the Union of Kurdish Communities (KCK) considered by the authorities as a branch of the PKK. In fact, the police interrogated him about his work in the IHD and seized IHD documents regarding breaches of Human Rights in Diyarbakir. He is still in preventive detention.

In many cases, complaint of human rights breaches by the authorities are not followed up by any enquiry and the possibility of seeing any official charges for such abuses are very slight. Nevertheless irregular trials still regularly take place, particularly in the context of the “*anti-terrorist*” legislation that allows minors to be imprisoned and punished as severely as adults. Children are sometimes detained with adults but in any case Amnesty observes that children’s prisons are no different from other places of detention. In particular, there are no arrangements for children to continue their schooling during their sentence. These minors have been tried by the same proceedings as are used for adults, on the basis of suspect allegations, without any tangible evidence, merely for having taken part in demonstrations that ended in violence.

In general, the treatment of detainees in prison has not

improved and access to medical treatment is systematically refused.

There are other lapses in human rights: the status of conscientious objector continues to be rejected as grounds for refusing military service, the rights of refugees and asylum seekers continue to be violated. Homosexuals and transsexuals still continue to suffer considerable discrimination in their daily lives. Five transsexuals have been murdered and only one of these murders resulted in a condemnation. Women are still subjected to personal and family violence, without any adequate state protection because to the grossly insufficient number of hostels or shelters, despite the fact that the law provides for one hostel place per 50,000 people. In September 2009, had nevertheless signed a protocol to facilitate the cooperation of State institutions in the fight against domestic violence.

The attacks on freedom of expression and opinion through penal proceedings and sentences, often very heavy, have not, in fact stopped and affect all backgrounds. Thus the Kurdish Alevi singer, Ferhat Tunç, is facing 15 years jail for “*propaganda in favour of the PKK*” and “*acts in the name of an illegal organisation*” because of a speech he made at a festival on 15 August last, in the town of Eruh (Siirt Province). The 15th August 1984 is the date of the beginning of the PKK’s armed struggle and the charge sheet alleges that the festival was organised to celebrate this by the PKK.

Ferhat Tunç is charged under Article 7/2 of the Ant-Terrorist law of propaganda for an illegal organisation, as well as being accused of “*crime on behalf of an organisation without be a member*” of the Turkish Penal Code. He is due to be tried by the Diyarbakir Upper Criminal Court — a court notorious for its severity and its sentences, often disproportionate to the facts charged.

The speech that the Turkish legal system is incriminating is as follows:

“For 25 years I have been witness, as an artist, of what you have lived through in this region. I have been an eyewitness of those uniformed murderers, who have been tried for their links with the Ergenekon organisation, who have killed people and were the authors of the “unsolved murders” in this region. I witnessed the way these uniformed murderers turned this heavenly geography is a hellish one. Yes, I am not only an artist but also a witness.”

After 25 years, you are opening, at Eruh, a new window towards peace and brotherhood. I am as enthusiastic as you at taking this round that you have initiated by giving your blood and your lives for peace (...). We yearn for a Turkey in which people would be able to live in accordance with their beliefs, their languages and their cultures as equals. I say and hope that our calls for peace and brotherhood at Eruh, where the first shot was fired, will be heard throughout Turkey. I hope I hope that our cry for peace will be heard by Turks, by Arabs, by Armenians and other peoples of this region, Because is no other way towards peace and brotherhood, and it is with these feeling that I express my friendship to you”.

Another socio-profession group that is paying a heavy price in the form of judicial harassment in Turkey is that of writers, journalists and publishers. This month, *Reporters sans Frontières* condemned the surrealist sentence of 166 years and six months passed on Vedat Kursun, former chief editor of the Kurdish daily *Azadiye Welat*.

Vedat Kursun was found guilty under Articles 314-3 and 220-6 of the Penal Code and of Article 7-2 of the Anti-Terrorist Act for “*membership of the PKK*” and propaganda in favour of this organisation — a sentence that *Reporters sans Frontières* describes as “*absurd*”.

Arrested at Istanbul airport on 30 January last, Vedat Kursun was faced with 103 indictments by the Turkish legal system, all regarding the paper *Azadiye Welat*, accused of “conducting propaganda for the PKK”. Although the Public Prosecutor had demanded a 500-year sentence verdict was a relatively lenient 166 years confinement.

His successor at the head of *Azadiye*

Welat Ozan Kiling, found guilty of the same charges in 2009, was sentenced to 21 years and 3 months prison last February.

Another editor has been detained for the last 4 months — the owner of Aram publishing, Bedri Adam, 38 of whose works have been confiscated. As owner of the Kurdish newspaper *Hawar*, he is being sued because of 4 articles. The Public

Prosecutor of the Diyarbekir Upper Criminal Court, Adem Ozcan has demanded 50 years imprisonment for “membership of the PKK” and “propaganda for an illegal organisation” for having published a collection of statements sent by Abdullah Ocalan, the movement’s head, to the European Court for Human Rights as part of his defence. The book has been banned by the Minister of Culture

PARIS:

AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE STATUS OF KIRKUK

On Friday 14 May an International Conference, organised by the Paris Kurdish Institute, took place at the Palais de Luxembourg, France’s Senate House. It brought together, for the first time in Paris, the President and members of the Iraqi High Committee for applying Article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, the Governor of Kirkuk, several Kurdish and Iraqi public figures as well as experts on geopolitics.

The first Round table, chaired by Jonathan RANDAL, former Washington Post correspondent, brought together Dr. Khaled Salih, special advisor to the Kurdistan Oil Minister, who dealt with the economic aspects, Gerard Chaliand, geostrategist, and Dr. Nuri Talabani, Professor of law and former member of the Kurdistan Parliament, who described in detail the roots of the “Kirkuk question”, its population and political history.

In his view, the changes that occurred on the spot were the result of the former Iraqi regime’s policies, which were contrary to international law and responsible for the situation in which the Kirkuk citizens find themselves. “The reason we concentrate on Kirkuk, using it as a

model for comparing the past with the present is because this town was the centre of the former Iraqi regime’s policy”.

After outlining the history of the different communities in Kirkuk and their peaceful cohabitation, Nuri Talabani showed that the situation changed after 1963, when the Baath took power.

“In general, relations between the Turcomen, the Kurds and even the Arabs from Hawija, as well as other ethnic minority groups had been good until the Baath Party took power in 1963. The new regime used the Nationalist Guard militia” mainly composed of Baathist Arabs as well as Turcomen to attack the Kurds. They concentrated on the poor areas, where they destroyed all the houses. In 1963, the Baathist regime was responsible for destroying 13 villages near Kirkuk. The population of another 14 villages in the Dubz district, near Kirkuk, were forced to leave and Arabs from the centre and South of Iraq were brought in and settled in their place. Between 1963 and 1988 the regime destroyed a total of 779 Kurdish villages in the Kirkuk region, together with their cemeteries. There were 491 primary schools, 598 mosques and 40 little medical treatment centres. The clear aim of all this destruction was to wipe out all evidence of any previous population. In all, 37,726 Kurdish families were

driven from their villages. During the war between Iraq and Iran, the Iraqi regime also destroyed a dozen Turcoman Shiite villages South of Kirkuk.

In the city of Kirkuk itself, the regime took a number of measures to force Kurds to leave. The staff of the oil company, the civil servants, as well as the teachers were transferred to the South and Centre of Iraq. The town’s streets and schools were re-named with Arabic names and the owners of little shows obliged to adopt Arabic names. The Kurds were not allowed to sell their property to anyone except Arabs or to buy any other property.

Thousands of flats were built for Arabs and the estates given Arabic names. The historic citadel, with its mosques and ancient churches was demolished. Tens of thousands of Arab families were brought to the town and given housing and jobs. These measures were intensified after the first Gulf War in 1991. The regime prevented the Kurds who had fled their homes following the repression of the 1991 uprising from returning. In 1996, in preparation for the 1997 census, it passed the so-called “identity law” under which the Kurds and other non-Arabs were obliged to be registered as Arabs. Any who refused were expelled either to the Kurdish governed part of Iraqi Kurdistan or to Southern Iraq.

In its 2002 report, Human Rights Watch estimated that between 120,000 and 200,000 non-Arab people had been forcibly expelled from the Kirkuk region.

This situation persisted until the collapse of the regime in 2003, when the city of Kirkuk was liberated”.

Dr. Talabani concluded: *“One of the major problems that should be resolved by the new Iraqi government is that of Kirkuk. A national coalition government with Kurdish participation cannot be set up without giving guarantees regarding the carrying out of Article 140, with a very precise timetable for it. This commitment, which this time must be in writing and must lay down a strict date for being carried out, is very essential for the Kurds”.*

The second Round table, particularly devoted to the carrying out of Article 140, was chaired by Kendal Nezan, President of the Paris Kurdish Institute. Those taking part were Dr. Raid Fahmi, Iraqi Minister of Science and Technology and President of the High Committee for Applying Article 140, Dr. Mohammed Ihsan, former Kurdish Minister responsible for

territories outsider federal Kurdistan, Dr. Najmaldin O. Karim, Member of Parliament for Kirkuk, Mr. Tahsin Kehya, Turcoman member of the High Committee for Applying Article 140, and Mr. Abdulrahman Mustafa, Governor of Kirkuk.

The presence of Mohammed Ihsan, former Minister responsible for all Kurdish areas covered by Article 140, and not just Kirkuk, enabled the problem of these regions to be seen in a wider context — that of all the Kurdish regions broken up by Saddam Hussein in his general carving up of Iraq into 18 provinces, the purpose of which was to scatter the non-Arabs populations and divide them up between several administrative units so as to break their political unity and any possible idea of autonomy.

Dr. Karim, the Kurdish Alliance candidate in Kirkuk at the last elections, speaking about his election campaign, started by recognising the population’s fears about the mode of application of this law — for example the daily practical difficulties faced by displaced families is

establishing their rights to property of which they had been despoiled or else the vagueness surrounding the compensation proposed in exchange for the settlers returning to their original regions. Despite these obstacles, the Kurdish M.P. for Kirkuk repeated he set great store to the full application of this Article, even though it would not be easy. One indispensable action towards the other communities was to reassure and convince them that becoming part of the Kurdistan region did not mean another phase of discrimination for the Turcomen or of an inferior status for the Arabs. A permanent dialogue must be maintained with all the people of Kirkuk, who have all suffered from Saddam and his Arabisation policy.

However, one of the biggest opportunities for getting inclusion in the Kurdistan Region accepted by its inhabitants was, according to Dr. Karim, the spectacular difference in economic development and security between the Kurdistan Region and the Province of Kirkuk, which has been completely abandoned by Baghdad.

CINEMA:

HUSEYIN KARABEY REPRESENTS KURDISH FILMS AT CANNES

The Kurdish film director from Turkey, Huseyin Karabey, was selected at Cannes by the Festival’s “Cinéfondation Atelier” (Film Foundation Workshop), which highlights new talents with their film projects. This makes him the only Kurdish filmmaker to be represented at Cannes this year — or, indeed, the only one of Turkish nationality.

His project, “Sesime Gel” (Come to my voice) will be a 90-minute film, shot at Diyarbakir in the

autumn of 2010 in both Kurdish and Turkish. Like *Gitmek* (My Marlon and my Brando) it mingles fiction and documentary.

In a snowed in mountain village in Eastern Turkey, Berfê (an old woman) and Jiyan (her granddaughter) find themselves alone, confronted by the absence of the household’s only man. In fact, Temo, at once father and son of the two women, in jail. The senior officer has been informed that some villagers are hiding arms. So he announces that all the village men will be kept in

detention till their families surrender and hand over the weapons that they are supposed to be hiding. As far as they know, the two women have done no wrong — these just arms don’t exist. In despair, Berfê and Jiyan begin a journey to find some weapon that they can exchange for their Temo. Will their innocence and naivety enable them to face up to a system that, little by little throws them into a world soiled by an endless conflict?

Huseyin Karabey, who wrote the

script jointly with Abdin Pirilti, recounts the plot as follows: "During a raid on the village, everyone is assembled in the village square. The soldiers then take one man from each family and tell the women "Bring out your arms and we will release them". However, there are no arms in the village. This is where the heroines enter.

Berfê, 70 years of age, undertakes a journey with her 8-year-old granddaughter, Jiyan, to find a gun that they could change for her son Temo's freedom. Despite all their efforts they cannot find a single one in their house and so go to the nearest town. The problem then is to bring the gun they have bought back to the village without being caught on the way. Which is why she chose to cross the mountains.

Talking about the behaviour of the Turkish soldiers, Huseyin Karabey also shows the doubts that the met felt. "For example, one soldier compares Berfê with his own beloved grandmother, of the same age, to whom he writes that he

cannot understand what they are trying to do". Huseyin Karabey adds that the traumas of crimes committed are still unhealed and that his aim is to relate a real event through the cinema. "In Turkey, for the last 20 years, we have been faced with a state of latent war. Through the story of Granma Berfê I hope to show to what extent this war could become absurd. My objective is not to make a political statement about this situation since we know that a rotten situation causes losses and suffering on both sides. That is why I prefer to use a device and story with the hope of arousing both tears and laughter, while also, let's hope, giving the spectator something to think about after he's left the cinema. I sincerely hope that, through these two women's journey, we could also discover many things about ourselves and the world we live in".

Regarding the use of the Kurdish language, which is becoming increasingly popular in the Turkish cinema now that the bans on its use are being gradually lifted, Huseyin Karabey hopes to make

Westerners and Turks like the language enough to want to learn the language.

Regarding the recent "Kurdish initiative" launched by the AKP government last year, the filmmaker considers that "changes and the status quo, solutions and barriers are all mixed up together. Sometimes you can see things with some optimism and sometimes nothing that is happening makes any sense. In order to take part in this process I am trying to give an account of what the Kurdish people are going through: there are many stories that need to be told about its tragedies.

Regarding the overall state of the Turkish cinema, Huseyin Karabey considers it is passive and more inclined to entrench itself behind excuses of a bureaucratic character than want to change things: "The young generation is making an effort but, in general, the Turkish cinema is predominantly conservative".

Election Victories Help Kurds in Iraq Push for More Sovereignty

By SAM DAGHER

ERBIL, Iraq — Emboldened by his party's electoral success, the president of Iraq's semiautonomous Kurdistan region is intensifying his demands for greater sovereignty and control of oil, adding more complexity to an already tumultuous government formation period.

As the deadlock in Baghdad has deepened with the recent disqualification of some winning Sunni candidates and the coming vote recount in the capital, important bloc leaders like the Kurdish president, Massoud Barzani, have been heavily courted for support in forming coalitions.

But no one has been more openly aggressive in the jockeying for position than Mr. Barzani, and he is being closely watched because the issues he seeks to influence all have stark ramifications for Iraq's stability. In particular, his demands for a federalist approach to governing Iraq — a weakened national government and stronger regional control — have revived fears that his Iraqi Kurdistan region may eventually try to secede.

During a recent interview, Mr. Barzani said he was determined to extract upfront commitments from any prospective coalition partners in Baghdad on potentially explosive issues like the settlement of disputed internal borders, including those of the oil-rich northern city of Kirkuk, and the sharing of oil revenues.

"It is impossible for us to participate in or back a government that will operate in the same old way," said Mr. Barzani, speaking at his mountaintop palace overlooking the regional Kurdish capital, Erbil.

The March 7 elections solidified Mr. Barzani's position as the dominant voice in Kurdish politics, with his Kurdistan Democratic Party winning 29 of the Kurds' 57 seats in Parliament, and with three other seats allocated to Iraq's minorities going to candidates supported by his party.

In the weeks since, Mr. Barzani and his party have worked, with apparent success, to persuade all the Kurdish factions to go to Baghdad as a bloc unified under his banner, despite their sharp differences.

That is in part because the other main Kurdish party, led by Jalal Talabani — a



Ayman Oghanna for The New York Times

Portraits of the influential Barzani family for sale in Erbil, the regional capital of Kurdistan. The Kurdish president, Massoud Barzani, is aggressively pushing for a federalist style of government.

Kurd who occupies the largely ceremonial post of Iraq's president — came in a distant second. Mr. Talabani had already been losing ground, faring badly in local elections last summer as a splinter movement, known as Gorran, meaning change in Kurdish, made headway by calling for an end to the entrenched system of patronage and corruption fostered under the two governing parties.

Evidence that the Kurds are moving forward together came last week when the Kurdistan regional Parliament quietly created a new committee tasked with reclaiming "historic Kurdish land" — meaning contested areas like Kirkuk and hot spots in Nineveh Province — under the regional government's de facto control but nominally still attached to the central government. And the Kurds are pushing for more leverage by holding out for partial vote recounts in those areas to minimize further the influence of Sunni Arabs and other groups there.

In the interview, Mr. Barzani stressed that he believed that the only hope left for stability in Iraq was in dividing it into federations, preferably three: Kurds in the north, Sunni Arabs in the middle and west and Shiites in the south. He said Baghdad would become a "federal capital" fulfilling basic government functions. He likened talk of a strongly unified Iraq to "bird dreams and wishes."

He said he had been personally involved in drafting a tough negotiation agenda to secure territorial claims and

extra money for the region's armed forces, the pesh merga, and resolve outstanding differences with Baghdad over how to allot oil revenues.

One of the crucial Kurdish demands will be a pledge from the next prime minister to carry out Article 140 of the Constitution, a hotly contested passage that outlines the steps toward a plebiscite on the fate of the disputed northern territories, including Kirkuk.

"If Article 140 is not implemented, then this will mean the demise of the Constitution and Iraq itself," Mr. Barzani warned.

Mr. Barzani's strengthened hand in negotiations does not ensure a complete Kurdish victory on those issues, of course. And American officials have made a point of urging the Kurds to back down from some of their more hard-line demands.

The back and forth over Article 140 is one example of how the Americans have sought to soften the Kurds' demands while still showing support for their relative autonomy within a larger Iraq.

Mr. Barzani noted that one of the main reasons Kurds dropped their opposition to the election law in November was a promise by President Obama that the United States would "push hard" to put in effect Article 140. He said Mr. Obama first made the promise in a telephone call at the time and then reiterated it at a meeting in the Oval Office in January.

But a senior American diplomat in Baghdad said that while Mr. Obama offered broad support for Iraq's Constitution, including Article 140, the American government at all levels made it "very clear" to Kurdish leaders that their continued insistence on an all-or-nothing plebiscite on the disputed areas without a negotiated agreement with Baghdad was a "recipe for a crisis."

"The Balkans, when they tried an up or down referendum, it led to bloodshed," warned the diplomat, speaking on the condition of anonymity under diplomatic ground rules.

He said the United States and the United Nations were still trying to persuade Kurds to back away from their ultimatum on Article 140 by highlighting the economic and financial benefits of greater integration with Iraq.

Another Western diplomat hoped the defiant Kurdish position could be balanced by the fact that Sunni Arab and Turkmen nationalists in Kirkuk and Nineveh did surprisingly well in the elections, and so far they remain adamant about opposing Article 140.

Asos Hardi, editor in chief of Awene, an independent Kurdish newspaper, said

that if Kurdish leaders had been serious about Article 140 and not just concerned with preserving their powers, they would have withdrawn from the government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki when he turned hostile toward Kurdish demands almost two years ago.

Mr. Hardi said the only hope left for Kurds was to exploit the divisions among Iraq's other communities, namely the Shiites.

"There are lots of opportunities for Kurds if they play it right," he said.

The New York Times May 2, 2010

Bombs Hit School Buses in North Iraq

By SAM DAGHER

ERBIL, Iraq — About 70 college students, most of them Christians, were wounded Sunday and another Iraqi was killed when a convoy of school buses was attacked in a double bombing on the outskirts of the northern city of Mosul, according to a security official.

"We were going for our education and they presented us with bombs," said Jamil Salahuddin Jamil, 25, a sophomore geography major, who was on board the lead bus. "I still do not know what they want from Christians."

The attack was a reminder of the threats in a still-disputed part of the country, claimed by Kurds and Arabs, where a resilient insurgency remains active and where American soldiers still staff checkpoints.

The convoy of about 20 buses was taking students from Christian towns and villages in the Nineveh Plain, between Mosul and the semiautonomous Kurdistan region, back to classes at the University of Mosul.

The buses were crossing a joint checkpoint staffed by American, Iraqi and Iraqi Kurdish soldiers, one of about two dozen such checkpoints that have been operating since the year's start along the internal border between the semiautonomous Kurdish region and the rest of Iraq. The joint operation is aimed at reducing tensions between Arabs and Kurds, and preventing extremists from exploiting the rifts.

The buses were escorted by Iraqi sol-

diers because of past threats and attacks against Christians in the area, according to a security official in Mosul who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the attack with the news media.

After the first buses crossed the checkpoint, a car bomb parked on the shoulder of the highway blew up in their path. Shortly afterward, a roadside bomb exploded, the official said.

The attack happened in an industrial area known as Kokjali, the official said. The owner of a nearby car repair shop was killed and at least 70 students were wounded, some severely, he said.

Mr. Jamil, who spoke from his hospital bed in the town of Qaraqosh, halfway between Mosul and the Kurdish regional capital, Erbil, said one of his classmates lost her leg in the attack and two others were blinded.

AP Associated Press

Kurdish rebels kill 4 Turkish soldiers, wound 7 in attack on military outpost

May 1, 2010 —By SELCAN HACA OGLU, (AP)

ANKARA, Turkey —Kurdish rebels killed four Turkish soldiers and wounded seven others in eastern Turkey in the largest attack on troops in several months, authorities said Saturday. The rebels attacked a remote military outpost with rocket propelled grenades and automatic weapons in foggy weather late Friday, private CNN-Turk and NTV televisions said. The commander of the outpost was killed along with three other soldiers, authorities said. Two of the seven wounded were in serious condition, according to media reports.

Turkish troops launched a man hunt but helicopter gunships remained grounded due to fog near the outpost, close to the town of Nazimiye in the eastern Tunceli province, television reports said Saturday morning.

The attack followed a surge in violence by autonomy-seeking rebels. Another Turkish soldier was killed when he stepped on a mine believed to be planted by the rebels near the town of Cukurca in southeastern Hakkari province on Friday, authorities said.

The violence has picked up since a high court shut down pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party over ties to the rebels in December and after a Turkish nationalist punched the now-banned party leader, Ahmet Turk, earlier this month.

The party's closure have sparked violent street demonstrations in several towns and cities across Turkey and threatened to derail the government's hopes to reconcile with minority Kurds.

Parliament Speaker Mehmet Ali Sahin on Saturday said the latest attack was aimed at the government's intensified efforts to end terrorism.

The guerrillas of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, have been fighting for autonomy in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast for more than two decades. The fighting has killed tens of thousands of people.

Turkish Kurd rebels often cross back and forth from bases in Iraq, using remote, mountain passes that are difficult to monitor.



QUATRE SOLDATS TURCS TUÉS DANS UNE ATTAQUE DE REBELLES KURDES

DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 1 mai 2010 (AFP)

QUATRE soldats turcs ont été tués et sept autres blessés lors de l'attaque d'un poste militaire par des rebelles kurdes dans l'est de la Turquie, l'accrochage le plus sanglant depuis plusieurs mois, a-t-on appris samedi des services de sécurité.

Un commando important de militants du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), armé de fusils d'assaut, a attaqué un poste militaire situé près de la ville de Nazimiye, dans la province de Tunceli, vendredi soir, et l'échange de tirs s'est poursuivi jusqu'aux premières heures de la matinée de samedi.

Un des soldats tués est le commandant du poste, et deux des blessés, hospitalisés, sont dans un état grave.

Plusieurs rebelles auraient été tués lors de cette attaque, selon un responsable des services de sécurité.

L'armée a envoyé des renforts sur place et des hélicoptères de combat, dans cette région montagneuse, selon la même source.

Le PKK, qui est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie et de nombreux pays, lutte pour la défense des droits des 15 millions de Kurdes de Turquie, sur une population totale de 71 millions d'habitants.

Le conflit a fait au moins 45.000 morts, depuis 1984.

Le printemps marque chaque année la reprise des affrontements entre le PKK et les forces de sécurité, puisqu'il permet aux rebelles, avec la fonte des neiges, de quitter leurs bases des montagnes turques et du nord de l'Irak.

En décembre, sept soldats avaient été tués et trois blessés lors d'une embuscade attribuée aux rebelles kurdes, dans le nord du pays.



LE CHEF DE L'ARMÉE TURQUE PROMET D'ÉCRASER LES REBELLES KURDES

ANKARA, 2 mai 2010 (AFP)

LE CHEF de l'armée turque Ilker Basbug a promis dimanche d'écraser les rebelles kurdes après la mort de cinq soldats turcs au cours d'attaques de la rébellion en deux jours.

"Si vous pensez que ces attaques vont porter un coup à la détermination et à la résolution des forces armées turques dans leur lutte contre le terrorisme, vous vous trompez gravement," a-t-il dit à des journalistes à Ankara.

"Vous ne pouvez arriver à rien par le terrorisme", a-t-il ajouté lors d'une visite au mausolée de Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, père de la Turquie moderne.

Vendredi soir, un poste militaire a été attaqué par des rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) armés de fusil d'assaut dans la province de Tunceli (est), tuant quatre soldats et en blessant sept autres.

Un autre soldat a été tué dans une embuscade de rebelles kurdes près de Lice, dans le sud-est de la Turquie, samedi soir, selon une source sécuritaire.

Le PKK, qui est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie et de nombreux pays, lutte pour la défense des droits des 15 millions de Kurdes de Turquie, sur une population totale de 71 millions d'habitants.

Le printemps marque chaque année la reprise des affrontements entre le PKK et les forces de sécurité, puisqu'il permet aux rebelles, avec la fonte des neiges, de quitter leurs bases des montagnes turques et du nord de l'Irak.



UN SOLDAT TURC TUÉ DANS UNE ATTAQUE DE REBELLES KURDES (SOURCE SÉCURITÉ)

DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 2 mai 2010 (AFP)

UN SOLDAT TURC a été tué dans une attaque de rebelles kurdes dans le sud-est de la Turquie samedi soir, a-t-on indiqué de source sécuritaire.

Des rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) ont ouvert le feu sur un groupe de soldats qui patrouillaient près de la localité de Lice dans la province de Diyarbakir, a ajouté cette source qui a requis l'anonymat.

Une opération était en cours pour tenter de capturer les assaillants.

Cette embuscade intervient après l'attaque vendredi soir d'un poste militaire par

des rebelles du PKK armés de fusil d'assaut dans la province de Tunceli (est) qui s'était soldée par la mort de quatre soldats et de sept autres blessés.

Le PKK, qui est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie et de nombreux pays, lutte pour la défense des droits des 15 millions de Kurdes de Turquie, sur une population totale de 71 millions d'habitants.

Le printemps marque chaque année la reprise des affrontements entre le PKK et les forces de sécurité, puisqu'il permet aux rebelles, avec la fonte des neiges, de quitter leurs bases des montagnes turques et du nord de l'Irak.

IRAN : CINQ REBELLES KURDES DONT DEUX FEMMES TUÉS DANS UNE EMBUSCADE



TEHERAN, 5 mai 2010 (AFP)

CINQ REBELLES KURDES dont deux femmes ont été tués dans un accrochage avec des membres des Gardiens de la révolution, l'armée d'élite du régime, dans la province de Kermanshah (ouest), a rapporté mercredi l'agence de presse Fars

L'accrochage s'est produit mardi lorsque des éléments des Gardiens de la révolution ont tendu "une embuscade à un groupe de terroristes du PJAK (Parti pour une Vie Libre du Kurdistan, ndr) dans la région de Dalahu, tuant cinq d'entre eux dont deux femmes", a indiqué le commandant de cette force d'élite Ali Akbar

Nouri cité par Fars.

Les régions iraniennes frontalières de l'Irak et la Turquie, où vivent des minorités kurdes, sont le théâtre d'affrontements périodiques entre les forces armées iraniennes et le PJAK, un groupe rebelle kurde basé dans le nord-est de l'Irak.

L'Iran accuse les Etats-Unis de soutenir ce mouvement ainsi que d'autres organisations ethniques aux frontières de l'Iran, ce que Washington a toujours démenti.

Les Kurdes représentent environ 7% de la population en Iran.

Le PJAK est lié au Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui lutte contre le gouvernement turc dans le sud-est anatolien.



L'Iran, au cœur de la conférence d'examen du TNP

Réunis à New York, les Etats parties veulent renforcer l'efficacité du traité de non-prolifération nucléaire

Le président iranien Mahmoud Ahmadinejad s'apprêtait à tenir la vedette, lundi 3 mai, de l'ouverture à New York de la conférence d'examen du traité de non-prolifération (TNP). Seul chef d'Etat à faire le déplacement, il devait prononcer un long discours campant son pays en victime d'un ordre nucléaire mondial que Téhéran juge discriminatoire.

Plus la menace d'une nouvelle résolution de l'ONU comportant des sanctions contre son pays est évoquée par les Occidentaux, plus le régime iranien se tourne vers le Sud et les « non-alignés » pour chercher des appuis. D'autant que la Russie et la Chine ont cessé de lui apporter une couverture diplomatique totale. L'Iran courtise en particulier les membres non permanents du Conseil de Sécurité de l'ONU, Brésil et Turquie en tête.

Le régime iranien se place ainsi au cœur des débats à New York, alors qu'il a fait l'objet en février d'un rapport accablant de l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA), le bras de vérification de l'ONU, qui avait évoqué pour la première fois la possibilité de travaux visant à fabriquer une charge nucléaire pour un missile.

L'intervention de M. Ahmadinejad devait être suivie, dans l'après-midi, par une prise de parole de la secrétaire d'Etat américaine, Hillary Clinton. A l'approche de la confé-

rence, M^{me} Clinton a commenté qu'il était « absolument indiscutable » que l'Iran violait le TNP et que ce pays devait se conformer à « ses obligations de non-prolifération » incluses dans le traité.

Les représentants des 189 pays signataires du traité de non-prolifération (TNP) de 1968 entament lundi un marathon diplomatique de plus de trois semaines, jusqu'au 28 mai, qui promet d'être jalonné de tensions.

L'objet : tenter de revigorer les fondements de ce traité, clef de voûte de l'ordre mondial en matière nucléaire, destiné à prévenir la dissémination de l'arme atomique. Avec les crises nucléaires iranienne et nord-coréenne, le TNP a été sérieusement écorné. Mais il perdure. En 1995, les Etats signataires avaient ainsi décidé de le reconstruire pour une période indéfinie.

La conférence d'examen du TNP se tient tous les cinq ans. La précédente, en 2005, s'était achevée sur un échec. Faute de consensus (l'unanimité est requise), aucun document final n'avait été approuvé. Des pays du Sud et les « non-alignés » avaient reproché aux puissances dotées de l'arme suprême de ne pas avoir tenu leurs engagements en matière de désarmement nucléaire. Un même accueil guette la conférence actuelle.

Pour l'administration Obama,

qui a placé au cœur de sa diplomatie l'idée de parvenir un jour à l'élimination totale de l'arme atomique dans le monde, la conférence est un exercice délicat. Le nouveau message abolitionniste américain, déployé depuis avril 2009, vise à créer un consensus international qui permettrait de résoudre les crises du moment, en premier lieu, le défi nucléaire posé par l'Iran. M. Obama veut s'appuyer sur la dynamique créée par l'accord de réduction des arsenaux stratégiques (START) signé en avril avec la Russie.

Mais l'Egypte, qui préside le groupe des « non-alignés », a déjà fait savoir par la voix de son ambassadeur auprès de l'ONU que ce geste ne suffirait pas. Le Caire veut relancer l'idée d'un « Moyen-

Les Occidentaux font face aux critiques des pays du Sud et des « non-alignés »

Orient exempt d'armes nucléaires », et mobiliser un front diplomatique contre la détention de l'arme atomique par l'Etat juif, qui n'est pas partie au TNP.

Le TNP repose sur un marché. Les cinq puissances nucléaires de 1968 s'engageaient à désarmer progressivement, tandis que les autres pays promettaient de ne jamais chercher à se doter de l'arme atomique. Les puissances dotées s'engageaient en outre à faciliter la diffusion de la technologie nucléaire civile.

Le problème est que le TNP autorisait les Etats à maîtriser la technologie de l'enrichissement d'uranium. Celle-ci permet tout autant de fabriquer de la matière fissile pour une arme atomique que de produire du combustible pour des centrales nucléaires produisant de l'électricité. C'est ainsi que l'Iran continue de s'approcher du seuil nucléaire militaire, sous couvert d'un programme civil.

Les Occidentaux voudraient aujourd'hui durcir les règles de contrôle des activités nucléaires dans le monde, en prônant un renforcement des mécanismes d'inspection de l'AIEA, ou encore la mise en place de « banques internationales » de combustible nucléaire. Mais ces solutions sont jugées intrusives par des pays du Sud, soucieux de leur souveraineté.

Un autre objectif des Occidentaux est de mieux encadrer les conditions d'un retrait du TNP par un Etat partie. Une telle décision – annoncée en 2003 par la Corée du Nord, qui a ensuite procédé à deux essais nucléaires, en 2006 et 2009 – devrait à leurs yeux entraîner des conséquences plus lourdes avec, notamment, une saisine automatique du Conseil de sécurité. En ligne de mire : l'Iran. Les diplomates n'excluent pas en effet que ce pays soit tenté à l'avenir par un scénario de rupture visant à se débarrasser des inspecteurs de l'AIEA.

La France a pour sa part déployé de grands efforts pour que le dossier nucléaire iranien soit considéré comme prioritaire à New York, jugeant que la crédibilité du régime de non-prolifération se joue avant tout sur cette question et non sur celle du désarmement. Une position relayée par l'Union européenne. Mais cette approche intransigeante s'expose aux critiques des militants pour l'abolition de l'arme nucléaire. ■

Natalie Nougayrède

Le régime de non-prolifération affaibli

Les fondements du traité de non-prolifération (TNP) Signé en 1968, entré en vigueur en 1970, il reconnaît comme seules puissances nucléaires officielles les Etats-Unis, l'URSS, le Royaume-Uni, la France et la Chine. Tous les autres signataires (ils sont aujourd'hui 189) s'engagent à renoncer à l'arme nucléaire. Les puissances nucléaires s'engagent à « poursuivre de bonne foi des négociations » sur un désarmement nucléaire généralisé. Le traité reconnaît le droit de tous les Etats non dotés de l'arme à

développer des applications pacifiques de l'atome.

Trois Etats non signataires du TNP sont dotés de l'arme Israël, l'Inde et le Pakistan. L'Inde bénéficie cependant d'un régime d'exception lui permettant d'importer de la technologie nucléaire civile.

Violations du régime du TNP La Corée du Nord (sortie du TNP) a procédé à deux essais nucléaires (2006 et 2009). L'Iran (pays signataire) poursuit un programme accusé d'être de nature militaire.

En Irak, les partis chiites s'allient pour gouverner

Les deux principales formations chiites irakiennes ont annoncé mardi soir qu'elles scellaient une alliance pour conserver le pouvoir, ce qui écarterait du poste de premier ministre Iyad Allawi, dont le parti est pourtant arrivé en tête aux élections législatives. Ce possible retour aux affaires des ultra-conservateurs inquiète les États-Unis.

Quelle est la situation politique en Irak ?

L'Alliance pour l'État de droit (AED) du premier ministre Nouri Al Maliki et les chiites conservateurs de l'Alliance nationale irakienne (ANI) ont trouvé un accord pour gouverner ensemble.

Avec 159 députés, il leur manquerait encore quatre sièges pour obtenir la majorité absolue au Parlement. Les dirigeants de l'Alliance kurde, forte de 43 sièges, ont fait savoir à plusieurs reprises qu'ils étaient prêts à se joindre à une grande coalition chiite.

Cette annonce douche les espoirs de l'ancien premier ministre Iyad Allawi, dont le parti, le Bloc irakien, est arrivé en tête aux législatives avec 91 sièges, notamment grâce à un vote massif des sunnites en sa faveur. Mais le Bloc irakien n'est sans doute pas au bout de ses peines. Victime annoncée d'un décompte des votes à Bagdad, où il est arrivé en tête, le parti laïque voit sept de ses députés menacés d'invalidation.

Une commission juridique dirigée par deux membres de l'ANI doit se prononcer cette semaine sur le cas de ces élus, soupçonnés d'avoir

appartenu au parti Baas du dictateur Saddam Hussein, ce qui est un vice rédhibitoire pour tout postulant au Parlement.

Que changerait cette alliance ?

L'accord annoncé mardi ouvre la voie à la formation d'un nouveau gouvernement après deux mois d'impasse depuis les législatives du 7 mars. « La chose la plus importante pour cette union est de former un gouvernement irakien et de mettre au point un programme gouvernemental avec la participation de tous et la nomination d'un premier ministre », affirme le communiqué commun de l'AED et de l'ANI. À l'heure qu'il est, rien ne dit que Nouri Al Maliki restera à la tête

À l'heure qu'il est, rien ne dit que Nouri Al Maliki restera à la tête du gouvernement.

du gouvernement. En effet, l'ANI, qui regroupe le Conseil supérieur islamique d'Irak (CSII), dirigé par Ammar Al Hakim, et les partisans du chef radical chiite Moqtada Sadr, lui voue une profonde animosité. C'est grâce au soutien de ces deux leaders proches de l'Irak que Nouri Al Maliki était devenu premier ministre en 2006, avant de constituer sa propre liste face à ses anciens alliés. Considéré comme plus distant à l'égard de l'Irak, Nouri Al Maliki avait les faveurs des Américains.

Que craignent les États-Unis ?

Toujours extrêmement impliqués en Irak, les États-Unis ont deux craintes concernant la coalition AED-ANI. Ils pensent qu'elle risque d'exacerber le sentiment de marginalisation

ressenti par la minorité sunnite, toute-puissante du temps de Saddam Hussein et déjà en première ligne dans la violence terroriste. Par ailleurs, Washington voit d'un mauvais œil la place importante que pourraient prendre au sein du gouvernement les partisans de Moqtada Sadr, qui forment la première formation en termes de votes au sein de l'ANI. Les « sadristes » ont déjà annoncé leur intention d'obtenir au moins un des ministères chargés de la sécurité. Or, leur milice, l'Armée du Mahdi, est accusée de fournir la plupart des membres des escadrons de la mort s'en prenant aux sunnites, ce qui a conduit les armées irakienne et américaine à la combattre.

LAURENT D'ERSU

Un « mur de sécurité » autour de Bagdad ?

Les autorités irakiennes ont l'intention d'entourer Bagdad d'un mur de sécurité, a annoncé le porte-parole du commandement opérationnel de Bagdad, le général Kassim Atta. Le mur devrait être construit d'ici à 2011 et l'accès à la capitale ne sera possible que par huit points de contrôle. Les autorités de Bagdad enlèveront les barrières de béton et les points de contrôle à l'intérieur de la ville après la construction de cette enceinte. En 2007, la capitale irakienne avait été divisée en plusieurs zones séparées par des barrières de béton, afin de prévenir les affrontements interconfessionnels. Ces mesures n'ont pas empêché les attentats, qui ont fait des centaines de victimes ces derniers mois.

Le Monde
5 mai 2010

Joute entre les États-Unis et l'Irak sur le nucléaire à l'ONU

Washington a révélé posséder 5 113 armes contre plus de 30 000 lors de la guerre froide

New York (Nations unies)
Correspondant

Le président iranien, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a tenté de placer Washington en position d'accusé, en ouverture de la conférence d'examen du traité de non-prolifération (TNP), lundi 3 mai à l'ONU. Les États-Unis, « hais » pour avoir été le seul pays à utiliser l'arme nucléaire, a-t-il dénoncé, « continuent de menacer d'utiliser de telles armes contre d'autres pays, y compris l'Irak », et chercheraient à « monopoliser » la

production d'énergie nucléaire. Téhéran n'aurait pourtant, selon lui, aucune intention de se procurer l'arme nucléaire, qu'il juge « répugnante et honteuse ».

Jouant sur un thème cher à de nombreux pays du Sud, M. Ahmadinejad a aussi accusé Washington de pratiquer le deux poids, deux mesures : « Alors que le régime sioniste [Israël], qui a stocké des centaines d'ogives nucléaires, a fait de nombreuses guerres dans la région et continue de la menacer (...), il bénéficie du soutien inconditionnel des États-Unis et de ses alliés. »

Suivant une scénographie bien rodée, plusieurs délégations – dont celles des États-Unis et de la France – ont protesté en quittant le hall de l'Assemblée générale de l'ONU. La réplique de Washington a été délivrée plus tard, du haut de la même tribune, par la secrétaire d'État américaine, Hillary Clinton. « Le président iranien a utilisé les mêmes arguments éculés, faux et parfois délirants contre les États-Unis », a-t-elle dénoncé. Elle a jugé que cette attitude visait à créer une « diversion ».

La secrétaire d'État a plaidé en faveur d'un renforcement du TNP, « mis en danger » par le « cynisme » de l'Irak qui poursuit ses activités nucléaires suspectes en « ignorant les injonctions du Conseil de sécurité ». Pour M^{me} Clinton, « les contrevenants potentiels doivent savoir qu'ils payeront un prix élevé s'ils violent les règles ».

« Naïf et irrationnel »

En échange d'un durcissement des sanctions contre des pays comme l'Irak ou la Corée du Nord, les États-Unis sont prêts, selon M^{me} Clinton, à « remplir leur part du contrat » en progressant vers « la vision d'un monde sans armes nucléaires ». En gage de bonne volonté, les États-Unis ont pour la première fois révélé le nombre exact d'armes nucléaires dont ils disposent : 5 113, contre 31 255 au plus fort de la guerre froide.

M^{me} Clinton a également mis en avant la signature du nouveau traité Start avec la Russie. Mais selon M. Ahmadinejad, il serait « naïf et irrationnel de croire à une initiative volontaire efficace de désarmement » des puissances nucléaires. « Un couteau ne tranche jamais son propre manche », a-t-il affirmé, citant un proverbe iranien. ■

Philippe Boloignon

AFP

IRAK: LES KURDES ACCEPTERONT LE PREMIER MINISTRE CHOISI PAR LES CHIITES

NAJAF (Irak), 5 mai 2010 (AFP)

L'ALLIANCE KURDE acceptera le Premier ministre choisi par la nouvelle coalition chiite composée des partisans du Premier ministre Nouri al-Maliki et des partis proches de l'Iran, a affirmé jeudi le vice-Premier ministre de la région autonome du Kurdistan irakien.

"Nous ne mettrons pas de veto sur une personne choisie par les deux alliances pour occuper le poste de Premier ministre. Nous accepterons la personne choisie", a indiqué Roz Nouri Chawis à l'issue d'une rencontre dans la ville sainte de Najaf avec le guide spirituel de la communauté chiite, l'ayatollah Ali Sistani.

Interrogé sur son sentiment concernant cette nouvelle coalition, le dirigeant kurde a déclaré: "Nous nous réjouissons de l'unité de nos principaux alliés et nous attendons l'ouverture d'un dialogue sérieux avec eux, car l'Irak ne peut être dirigé qu'avec la participation de toutes ses composantes", a-t-il dit.

Avec 159 députés, il manque encore quatre élus aux deux listes pour obtenir la majorité absolue au Parlement, qui compte 325 sièges. L'Alliance kurde (43 sièges) s'est dit prête mercredi à rejoindre cette coalition.

M. Maliki, dont la liste a obtenu 89 sièges, n'est toutefois pas sûr de conserver son portefeuille. L'ANI, qui regroupe le Conseil supérieur islamique d'Irak (CSII) dirigé par Ammar al-Hakim et les partisans du chef radical chiite Moqtada Sadr et qui a recueilli 70 députés, lui voue une profonde animosité.

Elle lui reproche d'avoir constitué sa propre liste pour les élections du 7 mars, face à ses anciens alliés chiites qui l'avaient pourtant choisi en 2006 comme Premier ministre. Elle dénonce aussi ses méthodes autoritaires de gouverner, qui avaient poussé certains ministres du mouvement de Moqtada Sadr à quitter le gouvernement en 2007.

Cette nouvelle alliance prive de facto l'ancien Premier ministre laïque Iyad Allawi, de la capacité de former un gouvernement. Sa liste, le Bloc Irakien, est arrivée en tête des législatives avec 91 sièges notamment grâce à un vote massif des sunnites.

AFP

UN JOURNALISTE KURDE ENLEVÉ ET ASSASSINÉ DANS LE NORD DE L'IRAK

ERBIL (Irak), 6 mai 2010 (AFP)

LE CORPS d'un journaliste kurde, encore étudiant et enlevé mardi sur le campus de son université à Erbil (nord), a été retrouvé dans la nuit de mercredi à jeudi par la police, ont indiqué sa famille et un responsable kurde.

Sardasht Osman, 22 ans, étudiant en langue et littérature anglaise, a été inhumé jeudi à Erbil par sa famille.

"J'ai reçu un appel téléphonique (mardi) indiquant qu'une personne avait été enlevée à Erbil et nous avons informé la police", a indiqué à l'AFP Mariwan Abdelhamid, un membre de l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK), le mouvement kurde du président irakien Jalal Talabani.

"La police de Mossoul nous a informés vers minuit qu'elle avait retrouvé un corps et une carte d'identité d'étudiant", a ajouté ce responsable, affirmant que le corps avait les mains ligotées et portait des traces de torture. Le journaliste a été tué d'une balle dans la tête, a-t-il ajouté.

Sardasht Osman travaillait pour le magazine kurde Ashtiname (Lettre pour la paix) et plusieurs publications sur internet, selon l'organisation de défense de la liberté de la presse Reporters sans frontières (RSF), qui a vivement condamné l'assassinat dans un communiqué.

"D'après le site d'informations sbeiy.com (pour lequel il travaillait), Sardasht Osman aurait été assassiné pour avoir écrit un article dans Ashtiname sur un membre haut placé du gouvernement du Kurdistan irakien", a indiqué RSF.

"Pour la famille du journaliste et ses amis, le lien entre l'enlèvement et les activités journalistiques de l'étudiant est évident", ajoute l'organistaion, demandant "au gouvernement du Kurdistan irakien de prendre enfin la mesure de la situation et d'assurer la protection des journalistes".

Selon RSF, Sardasht Osman est le deuxième journaliste assassiné au Kurdistan irakien après Soran Mama Hama le 21 juillet 2008, tué par balles à son domicile, à l'âge de 23 ans.

AFP

DEUX SOLDATS TURCS TUÉS DANS DES ATTENTATS ATTRIBUÉS AUX REBELLES KURDES

ANKARA, 8 mai 2010 (AFP)

DEUX SOLDATS turcs ont été tués samedi par des bombes artisanales dont la pose est attribuée à des séparatistes kurdes, dans deux incidents séparés dans le sud-est de la Turquie, a annoncé l'armée turque sur son site web.

Les bombes ont explosé en bordure de route, l'une dans la province de Hakkari, l'autre dans celle de Simak, toutes deux frontalières avec l'Irak.

Vendredi, deux soldats turcs et cinq rebelles kurdes avaient été tués lors de combats dans la province de Hakkari, suscitant des raids aériens turcs sur le nord de l'Irak, où les rebelles ont établi des bases. "Après des tirs sur des hélicoptères turcs venant de diverses positions de l'autre côté de

la frontière, l'armée a tiré sur ces positions" durant une heure, a indiqué l'armée turque vendredi soir. "Ces positions ont été détruites".

"Les opérations dans cette zone se poursuivent et nous pensons que les pertes essuyées par les terroristes sont plus élevées", a ajouté le communiqué de l'armée.

Le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie et de nombreux pays, a pris les armes en 1984 pour obtenir l'indépendance du sud-est anatolien, peuplé en majorité de Kurdes. Il revendique aujourd'hui l'autonomie de la région. Le conflit a fait 45.000 morts.

Le printemps marque chaque année la reprise des affrontements entre le PKK et les forces de sécurité, la fonte des neiges permettant aux rebelles de quitter leurs bases des montagnes turques et du nord de l'Irak.

Middle-East expert: Kurds will continue to play a role in Iraq

By Hawar Ali

Middle-East expert Thomas R. Mattair told Rudaw that he thinks the Kurds will continue to play a role in Iraq. He also argues that the U.S. have an interest that neighbouring countries of Iraq do not affect the outcome of the next government formation.

Dr. Mattair has taught at Kent State University, the University of Southern California, the University of California at Riverside, and Cornell University and was Director of Research at the Middle East Policy Council from 1992 to 1995. From 1997 until 2003 he was a research scholar at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research and published a book about Iran's foreign relations.

Recently a few Iraqi leaders visited Saudi Arabia e.g. Iraqi President Jalal Talabani and the President of Kurdistan region in Massud Barzani, How do you see Saudi's role in the process of forming Iraq's new government?

It is in the interest of Saudi Arabia that the new government in Iraq should include enough Sunni Arabs to ensure that Iraq's Sunni Arabs have adequate representation and do not resort to violence that destabilizes Iraq.

As always when a Iraqi leader visits Iran, Washington is very quick in pointing out that Iran is interfering in Iraqi affairs, but now most of the Iraqi leaders have visited Saudi Arabia and the U.S government hasn't said anything. In your opinion, is the involvement of the Saudis is to implement U.S's agenda in the formation of new Iraqi government?

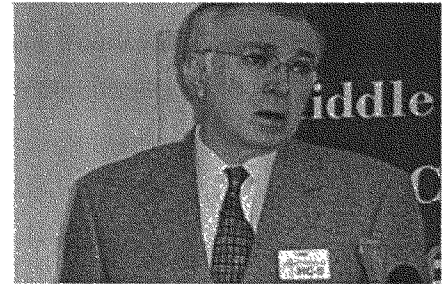
The Saudis understand their own interests and can judge whether they are the same as U.S. interests. They don't need to be told what to think or what to do by the United States.

Can the Kurds have a central role in those Saudi and U.S attempts?

The Kurds certainly have won enough seats in the new parliament to have a role in choosing the next prime minister and influencing cabinet choices. They are in a position to help form a coalition that includes everyone, not just who the United States and Saudi Arabia may favor.

Do you think the participation of Saudis is an effort to ruin Iran's shots in forming the new Iraqi government, and try to form a new government with Allawi's leadership, just like Saudis and U.S wants it?

It would not be smart to permit Iran to be the only neighbor to discuss the formation of a new Iraqi government with the various factions and coalitions that won seats in the recent election. For Iraqis to discuss this with the Saudis and other neighbors introduces some balance into the equation. For the past few years the Iraqi government has been closer to Iran



than to any other neighbor and it is understandable that other neighbors would prefer a change.

Last week U.S's ambassador in Baghdad Christopher Hill regarding Iraqi leaders visiting neighboring countries stated " the new government is formed inside Iraq, not in the neighboring countries", is the U.S. concerned about Iraq's leaders traveling to the neighboring countries?

Clearly the United States does not want the new Iraqi government to be under the thumb of any neighbor and certainly not Iran. It is not the discussions that are taking place with neighbors that concern the United States; it is the outcome of all these talks.

Maliki as a sign of frustration toward Saudi's role, said that the neighboring countries should stop interfering in Iraq's internal affairs, in your opinion can a government be formed without Maliki's State of Law and is he ready to leave his post?

I think the State of Law should be part of a new all-inclusive coalition, even if the new prime minister does not come from the State of Law. If al-Maliki resists leaving his position as prime minister then he would be an obstacle to democracy in Iraq.

© Rudaw

PKK denies responsibility in Lice attack

Rudaw - The Kurdistan Workers Party denies being responsible for the death of a Turkish soldier and two wounded soldiers in Lice (Diyarbakir province).

On 1st of May, 2010, there was a clash in the Abali Gendarmerie Station in Lice/Amed, and as a result one lieutenant and 2 soldiers have been wounded. According to the Turkish army, this was the result of a PKK-attack.

In a statement released by the PKK, the PKK denies the attack. "There is no

involvement of our forces in this case at all. Foreword case occurred as a result of a opened fire by the soldiers in the station against the soldiers returning to the station from a operation. The Turkish state army and the media of the special warfare knowingly giving such reports to the public. Our people should not pay attention to such reports until we make one."

On April 30, four soldiers died in a PKK attack in the Nazimiye district of Tunceli. The army was criticized by some circles for failing to send backup troops to Tunceli to help the soldiers during the ambush. The Turkish president Gül said Turkey should take lessons from the recent attacks.

Turkey's foreign minister Davutoğlu expects support from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) in their fight with the PKK, reports Hürriyet.



"We are expecting active support from the regional administration [in northern Iraq]." The Kurdish president Barzani is supposed to visit Turkey soon.

© Rudaw

Intrigue in Turkey's Bloodless Civil War

By MARC CHAMPION

ERZINCAN, Turkey—A bloodless civil war is splitting this pivotal Muslim nation on Europe's fringe, pitting the old secular establishment against the country's Islamic-leaning government and its supporters.

For mesmerized viewers, that showdown was crystallized earlier this year as TV channels played over and over a leaked video clip of one prosecutor arresting another one.

"We will take you with us," said a special terrorism prosecutor, lounging in an armchair across from his target.

"You can't do this, buddies. You don't know what you are doing," replied an astonished Ilhan Cihaner, one of Turkey's previously untouchable chief prosecutors.

Their clash in a remote outpost in eastern Turkey quickly spiraled upward into a battle between the country's top judges and political leaders over the right to define Turkey's future, a battle now coming to a head.

Turkey's parliament is voting on a slate of constitutional amendments drafted by the ruling party after



Ilhan Cihaner, shown last year, arrived in 2007 in Erzincan.

Turkey's powerful judiciary took away the powers of the man who had arrested Mr. Cihaner.

Some of the amendments would rein in the judiciary, a bastion of opposition to the governing party, the moderately Islamic AKP.

To foes of the amendments, they are an AKP power grab. To supporters, they are an overdue fix to a constitution that was written after a military coup and long used by the judiciary and other entrenched powers to override the democratic process.

Alongside this fight is one in the courtrooms, where members of the



Andres Gonzalez for The Wall Street Journal
The eastern Turkish city of Erzincan, where most women wear headscarves.

longstanding power structure await trial for an array of alleged crimes aimed at destabilizing the government.

Mr. Cihaner, the arrested prosecutor, is accused of running a wing of this conspiracy. He says he is innocent. He and 11 others go on trial Tuesday.

Who prevails in these struggles matters. Turkey, a nation of 72 million that straddles Europe and the Middle East, has the second-largest military in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization after the U.S.

Overwhelmingly Muslim, it plays an increasingly important role as a regional power and is seen as critical to any effort to show that a Western-style democracy can flourish in the region.

Hasan Koni, a professor of international law, describes what is happening as a kind of long-delayed counter-revolution. When Mustafa Kemal Ataturk imposed a radical secular revolution on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in the 1920s, he says, the effect was to marginalize people in Turkey's rural, religious heartland. Now, they are demanding a voice.

If the AKP can redress this imbalance peacefully, that would be an ideal outcome, Mr. Koni says. The concern would be if, as critics of the ruling party allege, it has a larger Islamist agenda that will emerge only later, and in the meantime is using authoritarian methods to destroy its opposition. "If that is the case, then we [liberal] Turks and the West are really in trouble," Mr. Koni says.

The AKP, which pledges its support for secular government and favors free markets, denies any such hidden agenda. Many of its leaders are former Islamists, ensuring support from religious groups.

The AKP's attempts to liberalize

Turkey's restrictive laws since coming to power in 2002 have won it the backing of the European Union and many Turkish liberals. In the current power struggle, the AKP also has support from the Justice Ministry, the civilian police who keep order in cities, and some younger judges and prosecutors.

In the other corner stand members of Turkey's old establishment, who see themselves as guardians of the Westward-looking, radically secular and military-dominated state Ataturk built in the 1920s. They include most of the military high command; most senior judges and prosecutors; and military police who keep order in rural areas, known as the Jandarmerie,

As elected governments and military coups came and went, those groups held ultimate power in Turkey. They are known here as "the deep state."

Each side accuses the other of threatening Turkey's democratic future. But the balance of power has shifted radically in recent years.

Since its re-election with a big majority in 2007, the government has mounted an attack on the deep state. It is seeking to prosecute some 200 deep-state figures on charges that in some cases include murders and bombings, allegedly used to destabilize the government and falsely attributed to others. The name for this broad alleged deep-state conspiracy is "Ergenekon."

Mr. Cihaner, the arrested prosecutor, is accused of being part of it.

Mr. Cihaner arrived in the eastern city of Erzincan in August 2007 with his wife, Muhteber, who wears her hair in dyed-blond ringlets. Most women wear headscarves in the remote city of 70,000, ringed by snow-capped mountains, and the head-to-toe chador is a common sight on the street.

The prosecutor, now 42 years old, hardly seems to fit the profile of a deep-state plotter. He had tackled rogue members of the deep state himself, in a 1999 investigation of military police, whom he suspected of summarily executing people during a brutal war with Kurdish separatists. Mr. Cihaner dug up bodies and matched weapons used in murders, according to a book about the intelligence wing of the military police and a 14-page letter Mr. Cihaner hand-wrote from jail in response to questions from *The Wall Street Journal*.

No one before him had even documented the existence of the secretive intelligence wing of the military police. His prosecutorial effort was lionized by liberals at the time. Higher-ups blocked it.

In Erzincan, Mr. Cihaner chose a different target. He began investigating unapproved schools teaching the Quran.

Turkey's secular laws say religion may be taught only in government-approved schools, and only to children over 12. Though unsanctioned religious education is widespread and rarely prosecuted, Mr. Cihaner says he saw it as his duty to prosecute the practice, because according to him and his lawyer, a conservative sect called the Ismailaga was sending children as young as 3 to "madrassa-like" schools.

The Ismailaga want Turkey to introduce Sharia Islamic law. "The attitude of our order to is to resist the break with a thousand-year-old traditional structure" that Atatürk's post-Ottoman-empire revolution caused, said Saadetin Ustaosmanoglu, a nephew of the religious group's leader.

He scoffed at the idea that Mr. Cihaner was simply doing his job, contending he mounted his probe of religious groups as "revenge" for the attack on the deep state.

Mr. Cihaner tapped the religious group's phones. He arrested nine members of it in early 2009. By then, the wiretaps had led him to a far larger investigation.

Mr. Cihaner proposed 235 suspects and organizations for possible prosecutions, according to a case file he eventually had to hand over. The charges he envisioned bringing included money laundering by religious groups, including transfers to Chechnya and Palestine; fraud in public tenders involving government ministers; election fraud; and failure by Education Ministry officials to prosecute parents who refused to send their daughters to school.

His sprawling case appeared aimed at showing corruption in ties between religious groups and the government. It had the potential to damage the government in the run-up

to elections that must be held by mid-2011.

Mr. Cihaner, who denies he had a political motive, says he faced pressure from a top government official to drop the case. The official denies bringing any pressure.

Things began to go wrong for Mr. Cihaner last June. A newspaper published a document it said outlined a plot by members of the deep state to deflect attention away from the broad case against them, and toward religious groups instead, with a view to bringing down the government. This would be done, the document said, "by ensuring that material such as weapons, munitions, plans, etc., would be found" on religious groups' premises.

"As soon as I heard about this document on TV, I said this was manufactured to undermine the prosecution I was conducting," Mr. Cihaner said during his interrogation early this year.

Then in October, munitions were found in a lake outside Erzincan, evidently stashed for later use. They carried markings of the military police, the Jandarmerie, with which Mr. Cihaner worked closely. The prosecutor says he immediately suspected the weapons had been placed to discredit the military police.

Soon, a special terrorism prosecutor, Osman Sanal, launched an investigation of whether this weapons stash was related to the alleged plot by members of the deep state to retain power and undermine the government. Next, Mr. Sanal filed a request to take over the probe of the Ismailaga religious sect; he said it was his jurisdiction, because he had a tip that the sect was armed.

The Justice Ministry let him take it over, despite Mr. Cihaner's protest that there was no evidence the sect had arms. Mr. Sanal declined to comment.

On Feb. 17, plainclothes police searched Mr. Cihaner's office and home. He was charged with planning to stash weapons in the homes of religious conservatives, with fabricating evidence, and with threatening witnesses. There followed Mr. Sanal's interrogation of his fellow prosecutor, a 6 1/2-hour grilling in which the two traded tightly mirrored accusations.

"Have you ever considered this was a plot that could trigger conflict between [security] institutions?" asked Mr. Sanal, according to a transcript seen by *The Wall Street Journal*.

"I ask the same question of you," said Mr. Cihaner. "The police, the Jandarmerie and even the [National Intelligence Agency] are fighting each other."

Whether Mr. Cihaner was just an assiduous prosecutor, as he says, or was gunning for the government and

its Islamist supporters, prosecutors may face challenges in proving he was a member of terrorist organization. For instance, the core charge against him is that he planned to plant weapons on the religious orders, yet he had spent months arguing the groups were peaceful.

Mr. Cihaner stands accused of being part of the alleged broad plot by members of the deep state to hold onto power, even though several of his alleged co-conspirators are men he targeted in his 1999 probe of summary executions. That, Mr. Cihaner said in his letter from jail, is "insanity."

Hours after his arrest, Turkey's Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, part of the secular establishment, struck back, stripping away the powers of the terrorist prosecutor who arrested Mr. Cihaner, Mr. Sanal, saying he exceeded his authority.

And then the government struck back at the Supreme Board's move: It produced a package of constitutional amendments, the core of them aimed at the entrenched judges.

The 30 amendments would greatly expand the Constitutional Court and the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, giving Turkey's presidency and parliament—both currently controlled by the AKP—a big say in appointing the new members.

The amendments also would make it much harder for the courts to close down political parties, a power the courts have used some 20 times in the past. Two years ago, the Constitutional Court came within one vote of outlawing the AKP itself.

In an exhausting first round of debate and voting on each amendment, the government didn't win enough support to adopt them but got enough to call a referendum, which polls suggest it would win. More voting is now under way, and on Monday the government lost on its bid to make it tougher for courts to ban parties.

Government leaders say their aim isn't to consolidate their power but to replace courts' alleged subservience to the military with democratic oversight, and to bring Turkey into line with most European countries, where parliaments have a role in naming top judges.

The government "is just using Europe," replies Kadir Ozbek, vice chairman of the Supreme Board of Judges and Prosecutors, claiming that in Turkey, democratic oversight of the courts would mean control by the government.

Said Mr. Ozbek: "Everything is divided in Turkey."

As Iraq changes, U.S. tribal allies left in the cold

FALLUJA, IRAQ

Members of Awakening embittered as dreams of national power evaporate

BY TIM ARANGO

Sheik Aiffan Saadoun al-Aiffan stepped across a scorched patch of farmland, raised his shotgun and fired once. A bird fell to the ground.

"Shooting Qaeda," he said, explaining how he had honed his accuracy by fighting alongside American forces. But those times of counterinsurgency, when tribal leaders like him switched sides in what became known as the Sunni Awakening, are giving way to the rise of a new political order in Iraq.

The recent parliamentary elections were a serious blow to the Awakening, which has been regarded not just as a movement to pacify restive areas but as a potential political force to re-empower Sunnis.

That did not happen. In the election, the Awakening presented no organized front, and with much division and squabbling, the dream of national political power died. Mr. Aiffan was among the prominent Awakening leaders to lose in the election.

Now, under threat from insurgents it once battled and facing a government it says has not kept its promises to give jobs to the fighters, the Awakening seems to be a force whose strength is waning, as it looks for a way to cling to any rung of power it can. Some wonder if this is the beginning of the end of the Awakening.

The ramifications could be stark. Most worrisome would be an increase in violence, should disenfranchised Awakening fighters become insurgents again. Whether Mr. Aiffan and others accept their electoral defeat and go quietly is a question that could determine how peacefully power changes hands here.

As the role of the United States in Iraq wanes, the unraveling of the Awakening, a counterinsurgency effort that gave cash and jobs to fighters who were previously aligned with insurgents, could threaten the legacy of what many regard as perhaps the greatest tactical success of America's war here.

In the weeks since the March 7 election, the fighters have faced a rash of assassinations, including the slaughter of more than two dozen relatives of Awakening members. The government said that was retribution from Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia, the insurgent force



Sheik Aiffan Saadoun al-Aiffan with his son. His compatriots, he said, "didn't get what they deserved — a good job in the government."

whose two top leaders, an Egyptian and an Iraqi, were killed last month.

On April 20, gunmen stormed an Awakening member's home in Tarmiya, north of Baghdad, killing his three teenage sons, his daughter and his wife.

Leaders of the Awakening are beginning to ask themselves questions about what went wrong in their drive for political clout, and if it is even possible to fix.

At a meeting at the Baghdad home of Sheik Hamid al-Hais, a tribal leader from Ramadi, the capital of Anbar Province, Awakening leaders vented their frustrations to a representative from the government, which last year took responsibility from American forces for the local groups.

"We didn't get what we deserved for our sacrifices," said Abu Wahaj, an Awakening member from Baghdad. "Right now, the government has hired me as a street cleaner. We call the Americans occupiers? They are more honorable than our people."

The Awakening was and remains a narrowly Sunni-centered enterprise. Distrust of the Shiite-led government prevails and even when the members go to collect their paychecks, they say, they are derided as members of Al Qaeda. Fears run so deep that the men were hesitant to accept an offer to meet with an aide to Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, who is in charge of sectarian reconciliation matters.

"I can't go there, because I am afraid for the safety of my people," Mr. Wahaj

said. "Honestly, I don't trust the government."

The election was a wipeout for the tribal sheiks associated with the Awakening, also known as the Sons of Iraq, in this region where it began and in Baghdad.

"We call the Americans occupiers? They are more honorable than our people."

Rather than building on their accomplishments in a united party, Awakening members went their own ways. With few exceptions, they also did not back the former interim prime minister, Ayad Allawi, the secular Shiite who surprisingly became the standard-bearer for Sunnis. His coalition also won the most seats in the election.

It was a bitter loss for the Awakening.

Mr. Maliki, who is trying to hold on to power after an election whose results are still in dispute, met with a group of tribal leaders amid growing concerns about a return to sectarian violence. In a speech that was broadcast on television, he said, "We all know that this blessed phenomenon started in Anbar. Whenever the patriotic forces and the tribes combine forces in the name of national security, victory comes."

The prime minister said he would bring more Sons of Iraq members into the intelligence apparatus, even as he

acknowledged delays in offering the men permanent government positions. "They know a lot about sleeper cells," he said. "This is our only way to end the violence."

In Anbar, some say the security gains are already slipping.

"The people who sacrificed before and who were doing a good job before didn't get what they deserved — a good job in the government," said Mr. Aiffan, who added that some disillusioned members had renewed their links to Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia.

The rugged terrain of this part of Anbar Province, the site of American military's greatest tragedies and successes of the war, wears the scars of battle. A shot-up minibus lay in the tall reeds of grass alongside an irrigation canal as

Mr. Aiffan tended to his sheep and ducks. More American soldiers and marines died here than in any other province of Iraq.

With the scheduled exit of American combat troops in August, feelings of resentment and abandonment prevail among the tribal leaders who were once America's greatest friends in Iraq.

"Because the U.S. side knows very well that the last election was a forgery and a fake, and now there are explosions in Baghdad, and the U.S. is quiet about those events," Mr. Aiffan said. "They didn't live up to all their promises in Vietnam, or Germany or Iraq."

When historians pass judgment on the U.S. war here, the decision to align with the Awakening movement will

most likely be regarded as one of the most consequential.

"I think that we would not be where we are at right now without what was done with the Sons of Iraq and the Awakening process," said Maj. Gen. Stephen R. Lanza, the senior U.S. military spokesman in the country. "I think that had a key ripple effect, in all of the Sunnis actually pushing back and not embracing the ideology of Al Qaeda anymore."

But there is worry about what will happen if it all unravels and some number of the nearly 90,000 members of the Awakening, former fighting men, slip from the grasp of the government.

Herald INTERNATIONAL Tribune
MAY 5, 2010

Iraqis torturing Iraqis

Inmates at **Samer Muscati**

a secret Baghdad prison show their wounds and tell of systematic torture.

BAGHDAD The man looked much older than his 24 years, in part because his front teeth had been smashed, he told us, during one of his interrogation sessions in the secret prison here. His emaciated body and trembling arms were those of a fragile hospital patient rather than the fearsome terrorist the security forces had accused him of being. His psychological wounds matched his physical state: He confided that after repeatedly being sodomized with a stick and a pistol, he frequently wets his bed and has trouble sleeping.

Despite overwhelming evidence that torture was routine and systematic at a secret prison in the old Muthanna airport in West Baghdad where the young man had been held, Iraqi officials at the highest level appear to be in denial, claiming the accounts by the men who were held there are fictitious. Instead of ordering an independent inquiry, Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki has dismissed the torture accounts as "lies" and "a smear campaign." He told the state-run Iraqiya television that the detainees inflicted the scars on themselves "by rubbing matches on some of their body parts."

But the wounds that my colleague and I witnessed on April 26, when we interviewed 42 of the men who had been held in that place, could not have been self-inflicted, let alone with matches. Huge scabs on their legs matched detainees' descriptions of being suspended upside down with their lower legs trapped between bars. Deep welts on their backs were consistent with cable whipping. These scars were just the beginning of the horror the men, and the evidence on their bodies, revealed.

We hadn't been in Wing 5 of Baghdad's Al Rusafa detention facility for more than a few minutes before dozens of detainees pressed against the 19 overcrowded cage-like cells to which 300 of the men had been moved after the secret prison was exposed and began re-enacting the dreadful abuses that interrogators at Muthanna had subjected them to. They lifted their shirts and pant legs to reveal fresh scars, bruising, scabs and disfigurements. Each wanted to share his story, and each story was horrifically like the ones before. We had been in Iraq for about a month recording human rights violations through interviews with victims of torture and other abuses across the country, but nothing prepared us for this encounter.

The 42 men the two of us were able to interview in the three hours we spent there candidly recounted in appalling detail interrogation sessions that lasted three or four hours each. They described how their torturers kicked, whipped, beat and tried to suffocate them, gave them electric shocks, burned them with cigarettes and pulled out their fingernails and teeth. The prisoners said that interrogators sodomized some detainees with sticks and pistol barrels. Some young men said they had been forced to perform oral sex on interrogators and guards and that interrogator forced detainees to molest one another.

If the detainees still refused to confess, interrogators would threaten to rape the women and girls in their families.

The detainees were among about 430 who had been kept for months in the secret facility, which was run by the Baghdad Operations Command, one of several regional security commands set up by the prime minister that answer directly to him. All were transferred or released, with 300 of them moved to Al

Rusafa, after the Human Rights Ministry inspected Muthanna in March and reported abuses to the prime minister. Until then, the detainees had no access to their families or lawyers. They didn't even receive a case number, never mind formal charges. An investigative judge questioned many of them individually in a room just down the hall from one of the torture chambers.

The Iraqi Army had detained them between September and December 2009 during sweeps in and around Mosul, a Sunni militant stronghold, accusing them of aiding and abetting terrorism. They were forced to sign false confessions but even after they confessed, many said, torture persisted.

If the Iraqi government wants to avoid comparisons with U.S. abuses at Abu Ghraib and the appalling practices of the former government of Saddam Hussein, it needs to stop stonewalling.

The sooner the Iraqi government changes course and brings those responsible to justice, the better for these victims, the government's reputation, and for all Iraqis who hope that the country is on its way to peace and justice.

SAMER MUSCATI is a Middle East researcher at Human Rights Watch.

Turquie: 2 soldats, 5 rebelles kurdes tués

Deux soldats turcs et cinq rebelles kurdes ont été tués aujourd'hui lors de combats dans le sud-est de la Turquie, près de la frontière irakienne, a affirmé une source sécuritaire.

L'affrontement s'est produit dans la province de Hakkari, quand un groupe de rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan a lancé une attaque contre une petite garnison à proximité du village de Daglica, selon cette source.

Un soldat a également été blessé dans l'ac-

crochage.

En octobre 2007, Daglica avait été le théâtre d'un des assauts les plus sanglants du PKK contre les forces de sécurité turques. Douze soldats avaient été tués et 17 blessés.

L'attaque avait scandalisé la Turquie et accru les pressions sur le gouvernement en faveur d'une action militaire contre les camps du PKK dans le nord de l'Irak.

Le PKK, considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie et de nombreux

pays, a pris les armes en 1984 pour obtenir l'indépendance du sud-est anatolien, peuplé en majorité de Kurdes. Il revendique aujourd'hui l'autonomie de la région. Le conflit a fait quelque 45.000 morts.

Le printemps marque chaque année la reprise des affrontements entre le PKK et les forces de sécurité, puisqu'il permet aux rebelles, avec la fonte des neiges, de quitter leurs bases des montagnes turques et du nord de l'Irak.(AFP)



ACCORD ENTRE BAGDAD ET LE KURDISTAN SUR LA PRODUCTION PÉTROLIÈRE

BAGDAD, 6 mai 2010 (AFP)

UN ACCORD a été conclu entre le gouvernement central irakien et la région autonome du Kurdistan permettant la reprise de la production pétrolière dans cette région, a annoncé jeudi le ministre irakien du Pétrole Hussein Chahristani.

"Nos sommes arrivés à un accord avec les Kurdes aux termes duquel les revenus de la production pétrolière seront transférés à la Somo (State oil marketing organisation) et le gouvernement (de Bagdad) sera chargé de payer toutes les dépenses engagées pour extraire le pétrole dans les champs du Kurdistan", a-t-il lors d'une conférence de presse à Bagdad.

La Somo est l'organisme chargé de récolter les revenus pétroliers et de signer des contrats.

M. Chahristani a précisé que le pétrole produit au Kurdistan devait "transiter par les oléoducs irakiens et tous les revenus du pétrole doivent être alloués au gouvernement central".

La production de pétrole au Kurdistan irakien a été stoppée à la mi-octobre 2009

en raison d'un différend entre Bagdad et Erbil. Les champs pétroliers du Kurdistan, exploités par le Danois DNO et le Turc Genel, produisaient jusque là environ 60.000 barils par jour.

Le Kurdistan irakien avait commencé le 1er juin à exporter du pétrole pour la première fois de son histoire, dans un climat d'hostilité avec Bagdad qui nie à sa province du Nord le droit de signer des contrats sans son aval.

Bagdad, qui avait refusé de reconnaître les contrats conclus par le Kurdistan avec des sociétés étrangères, veut des contrats de service, rémunérant les compagnies pétrolières au baril extrait plutôt que par un partage des bénéfices tirés de l'exploitation des ressources.

Selon le gouvernement irakien, les revenus du pétrole doivent être centralisés à Bagdad et le Kurdistan se verra reverser 17% des recettes de l'Etat. Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan, souhaite au contraire que l'ensemble des revenus tirés de l'exploitation du pétrole des champs se trouvant dans sa région autonome lui revienne.

Selon le gouvernement kurde, DNO et Genel ont investi chacune 500 millions de dollars dans l'exploitation des champs. La première exploitait le gisement de Tawke, près de Dohouk, avec une capacité d'exportation de 50.000 barils par jour (bj) et la seconde celui de Tak Tak, avec 10.000 bj.

Irak: au moins 32 morts dans une vague d'attentats

BAGDAD -10 mai 2010 - (AFP)

AU MOINS 32 personnes ont été tuées et plus de 100 blessées lundi en Irak dans une vague d'attentats ayant notamment visé les forces de sécurité et une mosquée chiite au sud de Bagdad, selon un nouveau bilan des sources de sécurité.

Dans la ville de Souwayra, à une soixantaine de kilomètres au sud de Bagdad, une bombe a explosé près d'une mosquée chiite. Des passants ont accouru pour secourir les premières victimes quand une voiture piégée a explosé sur les lieux.

Au total, onze personnes ont été tuées et 70 blessées dans ce double attentat, selon un nouveau bilan fourni à l'AFP par le lieutenant de police Sabah al-Chammani.

Dans la capitale irakienne, des tirs et des attentats à la bombe ont visé des points de contrôle militaires faisant neuf morts et 24 blessés, en majorité des membres des forces de sécurité, a indiqué une source au ministère de l'Intérieur.

"Les attaques ont commencé à 06H30 (03H30 GMT) et ont duré jusqu'aux alentours de 08H00 (05H00 GMT)", a-t-elle ajouté.

"Il s'agit d'opérations coordonnées qui font partie des actions terroristes auxquelles doivent faire face quotidiennement les forces de sécurité", a expliqué

le porte-parole du commandement militaire de Bagdad, Qassem Atta.

Plus de 11.500 policiers et militaires ont été tués depuis l'invasion de l'Irak conduite par les Etats-Unis en 2003.

Parmi les autres victimes de cette journée sanglante, figurent également un civil et trois gardes du corps du maire de la ville de Tarmiya (45 km au nord de Bagdad), Mohammed Jassem al Mashhadani, dont le convoi a été visé par une bombe. Le maire a été blessé dans l'attaque avec 15 autres personnes.

A Fallouja, un ancien bastion de la rébellion sunnite et d'Al-Qaïda à l'ouest de Bagdad, quatre personnes, dont deux policiers, ont été tuées dans des attentats contre des maisons appartenant à des membres des forces de sécurité.

A Iskandariya, à 50 km au sud de Bagdad, deux personnes ont été tuées par l'explosion d'une bombe dans un magasin de primeurs alors que deux peshmergas (combattants kurdes) ont péri dans un attentat suicide à la voiture piégée près de Mossoul, à 350 km au nord de Bagdad.

Près de la ville de Balad (70 kilomètres au nord de Bagdad), deux pèlerins iraniens ont été blessés dans l'explosion d'une bombe au passage de leur bus.

Cette vague d'attentats intervient trois semaines après la mort des deux principaux chefs de la branche irakienne d'Al-Qaïda, Abou Omar al-Bagdadî et Abou Ayyoub al-Masri, tués dans des opérations conjointes des forces irakiennes et américaines dans un fief sunnite au nord de Bagdad.

Le Monde
7 mai 2010

Difficile démocratisation de la justice en Turquie

Une réforme constitutionnelle, votée par le Parlement, vise à atténuer le lien entre l'armée et l'appareil judiciaire

Istanbul
Correspondance

La bataille a fait rage dans les travées de la Grande Assemblée nationale. Reclus à Ankara depuis dix jours, les députés turcs ont débattu avec passion le projet de réforme de la Constitution du gouvernement de Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Cette première véritable tentative de réécriture de la Constitution de 1982, rédigée à l'époque par la junte militaire, vise à démocratiser le système judiciaire, jugé proche des nationalistes et de l'armée.

Pas un jour n'est passé sans que certains d'entre eux n'en soient venus aux mains. Les insultes ont fusé. Un élu de l'opposition (CHP, Parti républicain du peuple) a même déployé, en pleine séance, des pancartes pour manifester son désaccord. Mais cette série de réformes de la Constitution qui a ainsi cristallisé les tensions devait finalement être approuvée par le Parlement, jeudi 6 mai, à une courte majorité. A l'exception notable d'un article, repoussé, qui devait réduire les possibilités offertes au procureur général pour demander l'interdiction de partis politiques.

Pour le reste, le vote des parlementaires à la majorité simple n'est qu'une étape. En effet, la majorité des deux tiers (367 voix) n'ayant pas été atteinte, les amendements n'entrent pas automatiquement en vigueur. Ils devront être soumis à un référendum dans les deux mois qui suivent leur ratification par le président de la République, Abdullah Gül.

Parmi les 27 articles proposés par le gouvernement, trois avaient provoqué la défiance de l'opposition kémaliste et nationaliste. « Retirez-les et nous vous soutiendrons », avait lancé Deniz Baykal, le leader de l'opposition. Deux de ces amendements transforment sensiblement le système judiciaire en modifiant la structure de la Cour constitutionnelle et du Haut Conseil des juges et des procureurs (HSYK), ainsi que le mode de nomination des magistrats.

« Vous sabotez la justice », a grondé le député (CHP) de Konya, Attila Kart, mercredi soir à l'Assemblée. Les adversaires de M. Erdogan estiment que le Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP, islamiste modéré), au pouvoir, tente de museler l'appareil judiciaire, proche de l'armée. Mais selon le minis-

tre de la justice, Sadullah Ergin, la mesure, inspirée des modèles européens, est destinée à mettre fin à la « juristocratie » qui se serait installée en Turquie.

Le gouvernement semble tenir sa revanche. En 2008, à une voix près, les juges de la Cour constitutionnelle avaient failli se prononcer pour une dissolution de l'AKP, soupçonné d'« activités antilaisiques ».

Si cette réforme de la Constitution est approuvée par référendum, le nombre de juges passera de 11 à 17 et le président de la République, désormais élu au suffrage universel, nommera la majorité d'entre eux. Le pouvoir du HSYK, un bastion de l'opposition chargé de nommer les magistrats, sera lui

Le pouvoir a échoué à faire modifier l'article facilitant l'interdiction des partis politiques

aussi dilué. Le conseil des magistrats y voit une « atteinte à l'indépendance de la justice ».

Pour s'assurer une majorité, M. Erdogan avait interdit aux

ministres de voyager pendant l'examen des textes qui prévoient également la possibilité de traduire des militaires devant des tribunaux civils. Malgré cette précaution, un autre article clef, censé réduire le recours contre les partis politiques, a été rejeté, mardi, provoquant la colère du premier ministre : « La Turquie est un cimetière de partis politiques », a-t-il regretté. Huit députés dissidents de l'AKP, notamment, n'ont pas voté l'amendement, pour maintenir, selon eux, le parti kurde sous pression. Une vingtaine de formations ont été interdites depuis 1960. En décembre 2009, ce fut ainsi le tour du Parti pour une société

Les hautes juridictions

La Cour constitutionnelle (Yargitay) Composée de onze juges et de quatre suppléants, elle est chargée de protéger la Constitution de 1982. Trois de ses membres sont nommés par le président de la République, le reste par les hautes cours de justice civiles et militaires et par le Haut Conseil universitaire.

Conseil d'Etat (Danistay) Il fonctionne comme un tribunal et comme un organe consultatif. Les trois quarts des conseillers d'Etat sont nommés par le Haut Conseil des juges et magistrats, un quart par le président de la République. Il n'est pas concerné par la réforme.

Haut Conseil des juges et magistrats (HSYK) Equivalent du Conseil supérieur de la magistrature, il est composé de cinq juges, du ministre de la justice et de son sous-secrétaire. La réforme élargira à vingt et un le nombre de ses membres, nommés par le président de la République, les hautes cours et l'Académie de justice.



Des députés du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP, islamiste modéré) et du Parti républicain du peuple (CHP, opposition) en viennent aux mains, mercredi 5 mai à Ankara, lors du débat sur le projet de réforme de la Constitution. REUTERS

démocratique (DTP) pour ses liens présumés avec la guérilla kurde du PKK. L'AKP, le parti de M. Erdogan, demeure également sous la menace d'une interdiction.

La démocratisation du système judiciaire est réclamée de longue date par l'Union européenne (UE) qui a accueilli favorablement les intentions du gouvernement turc. Elle constitue un des 35 chapitres des négociations d'adhésion que

mène la Turquie avec Bruxelles. Mais les détracteurs du gouvernement islamo-conservateur soulignent la tentation autoritaire de Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Après avoir modifié le mode d'élection du président et le système judiciaire, l'actuel premier ministre briguera, au plus tard dans un an, un nouveau mandat. S'il est réélu, M. Erdogan entend bien dessiner un régime présiden-

tiel à sa main. Une manière de renforcer son emprise sur le pays, qu'il dirige depuis 2003. En quelques années, le rapport de force s'est inversé en faveur du parti au pouvoir contre les piliers traditionnels du régime. Le procès-fleuve lancé contre le réseau Ergenekon, une nébuleuse militaro-nationaliste accusée de comploter contre le gouvernement et les démocrates, tourne, selon ses adversaires, à la « chas-

se aux sorcières ». Des dizaines d'officiers supérieurs ont été arrêtés dans le cadre de cette affaire.

Pour faire annuler les deux articles réformant le système judiciaire, le parti kémaliste (CHP) a annoncé qu'il saisirait la Cour constitutionnelle. Celle-ci pourrait donc être chargée de se prononcer sur une réforme qui la concerne au premier chef. ■

Guillaume Perrier

LE FIGARO mercredi 12 mai 2010

Le chef de l'opposition turque piégé par une vidéo d'alcôve

LAURE MARCHAND
ISTANBUL

Deniz Baykal a été contraint à la démission après la diffusion sur Internet de ses frasques sexuelles.

TURQUIE En Turquie, la révélation de frasques sexuelles de la gent politique ne produit pas le même effet qu'en Italie. Piégé par une vidéo, Deniz Baykal, le chef de file de l'opposition, a présenté sa démission lundi. Diffusé sur Internet vendredi, l'enregistrement pirate de six minutes montre un homme ressemblant au président du Parti républicain du peuple (CHP) en train de se rhabiller dans une chambre. Il est en compagnie d'une femme en petite tenue, qui n'est pas la sienne et qui serait son ancienne collaboratrice, aujourd'hui députée de sa formation. Dépassant le fait divers, ce scandale pose la question du recours à ces chausse-trappes pour affaiblir un adversaire et pourrait avoir des conséquences importantes dans la vie politique turque. Hier, les médias se

perdaient en conjectures sur l'origine du coup bas. Vient-il d'une faction du camp de Deniz Baykal qui n'aurait trouvé que ce stratagème pour se débarrasser de son indéboulonnable leader ? Probablement l'homme le plus honni du spectre politique turc, il avait totalement verrouillé le CHP, le parti fondé par Atatürk, en plaçant ses affidés et y régnait en maître depuis bientôt deux décennies. S'agit-il d'une manœuvre du parti islamo-conservateur (AKP) au pouvoir, qui a trouvé là un moyen d'écartier son détracteur le plus virulent, et donc d'un nouvel épisode dans la guerre que se livrent le gouvernement et les partisans de l'establishment militaro-nationaliste ?

Le principal intéressé affirme être victime d'une «conspiration» : « Un tel complot ne peut pas être réalisé sans que le gouvernement n'en ait connaissance. » Sous-entendant que la divulgation de la



« Un tel complot ne peut pas être réalisé sans que le gouvernement n'en ait connaissance », a accusé Deniz Baykal, lundi à Ankara. ADEM ALTAN/AFP

vidéo viserait à le discréditer et à empêcher le recours devant la Cour constitutionnelle qu'il avait l'intention de déposer contre la réforme constitutionnelle portée par le gouvernement. Recep Tayyip Erdogan a rétorqué que ces accusations étaient « monstrueuses ».

Climat de peur

Les partisans des deux théories s'entendent pour dénoncer « l'empire de la peur » en Turquie. Écoutes téléphoniques et violations de la vie privée à des fins politiques font régulièrement les gros titres. « Il semble qu'il existe une vidéo, un enregistrement

ou une photo concernant chaque personnalité et qui attend sur une étagère le bon moment pour être utilisé dans une affaire de chantage », écrit l'éditorialiste Semih İdiz. L'avenir du CHP est, en tout cas, en suspens. « Les

optimistes voient dans cette affaire une opportunité pour renouveler le parti, ce qui rendrait la vie plus difficile à l'AKP et donc démocratiserait la Turquie », analyse Soli Özel, rédacteur en chef à Haber Türk. Sous la tutelle de Deniz Baykal, le Parti républicain du peuple n'avait plus aucun lien avec la social-démocratie dont il se revendiquait, avait glissé vers un nationalisme extrême et une laïcité rigide et s'opposait à toutes les réformes libérales. En revanche, si aucun remplaçant charismatique n'émerge, le vide politique créé sera une aubaine pour l'AKP au pouvoir car des législatives sont prévues l'année prochaine. Mais fort de son expérience politique de quarante ans, Deniz Baykal n'a peut-être orchestré son retrait que pour mieux revenir : la présidence du CHP sera soumise au vote lors de la convention du parti à la fin du mois. ■

Guardian

May 5, 2010

Is Kurdistan the next Dubai?

Kurds are building skyscrapers and hoping to lure tourists, but the reality is that the rest of Iraq is still a war zone



Nicky Woolf

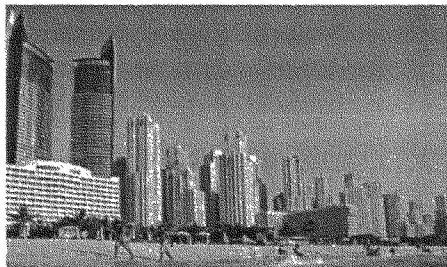
IN ERBIL, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, minarets are now outnumbered two to one by cranes. New shopping malls, hotels and blocks of flats are being built at an extraordinary rate. On a recent visit I heard many people, from politicians to shopkeepers, making comparisons with Dubai in the aftermath of the Gulf war – by which they mean an oil-based economy preparing to diversify into a business and tourist destination.

Kurdistan is using large-scale retail therapy to deal with its grief at the genocides its people suffered under Saddam Hussein. At Silopi, on the Iraqi-Turkish border, we queued to have our passports stamped alongside car transporters loaded with shiny new Hummers, BMWs and Toyotas. The main road through the centre of the university city of Sulaymaniyah is a pristine eight lanes of brand new Tarmac, and here, even more than in Erbil, the skeletons of skyscrapers at various stages of completion dominate the skyline.

Of course, all this development is a good thing. Kurds who fled the genocides in the late 1980s are now returning from Germany and the US and bringing with them more cosmopolitan attitudes. Erbil's wealthy suburb of Ainkawa boasts Chinese, Italian and German cuisine. On the streets of Sulaymaniyah schoolgirls and female students wear skirts that show a little leg; some even uncover their shoulders.

In Duhok, another university town further north, teenagers spend their evenings playing air hockey and paint-balling. People here do not celebrate the fall of Saddam's regime – "it's just not a big deal", they tell me – but a two-nil win by FC Barcelona over Real Madrid is the cause of almost-fanatical street celebration that keeps everyone, myself included, up until three or four in the morning.

As in Dubai, urban planners are reclaiming swathes of desert or scrubland with ambitious projects like Dream City, a development of brand new homes set in landscaped gardens with shops, schools and a mosque; or the planned Korek Tower, an angular glass-clad skyscraper that its owners, a home-grown mobile phone company, even describe as "Dubai-style".



Kurdish officials are looking to emulate the success of Dubai, above. Photograph: Jochen Tack/Alamy

Based on the Dubai model, the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) is planning to expand the scope of the economy from purely oil-based to tourism and services. The minister for tourism has outlined an ambitious five-year plan for the construction of the industry practically from scratch, focusing on new intercity highways, airports and luxury hotels. Erbil's citadel has recently been awarded Unesco World Heritage status and is the recipient of a multi-million dollar restoration scheme, and there are even plans to construct a ski resort in the mountain town of Haj Omaran.

While it is too early to tell whether the lessons in over-borrowing learned from the crisis in Dubai last year will be heeded here, there are much more pressing problems at hand. Erbil is less than 60 miles from both Kirkuk and Mosul – two of the most dangerous places on earth. While Kurdistan indulges in its building and commercialisation binge, the rest of Iraq is still practically a war zone. This tiny northern enclave is kept safe partly by the pride of the Kurdish people but mostly by a massive – though generally benign – police and military presence on the streets.

Checkpoints along every road make it very difficult for Arab Iraqis from the south and west to enter the region. If they are allowed entry they spend their time here under surveillance, and are treated, if not with outright suspicion, then at least with caution.

The streets are kept pristine by Bangladeshi immigrant labour. They are free of beggars – ubiquitous just across the border in south-eastern Turkey – because vagrants are rehoused in special estates, and often beaten if caught returning to their old begging-patch.

This is by no means a police state: people here are largely free, and will go out of their way to assure visitors of

that fact – but they will also complain about massive government corruption. Many locals privately condemn today's KRG as a government of "farmers" and "mountain-people", ill-prepared for power and instinctively corrupt.

It is difficult to get any business done in Kurdistan without the assistance – and permission – of one of the two main parties in the Kurdish coalition, the PUK or the KDP and the two dynastic families which head them. International businesspeople may be refused visas if they do not allow one party or the other to be silent partners in their venture. Non-party members, especially those who criticise the government, find it very difficult to find work.

This reputation is starting to take its political toll. In the 2009 election, the PUK lost Sulaymaniyah – formerly its greatest stronghold – to the reformist Change party led by its former deputy secretary-general.

Dubai has managed to bring institutional corruption under control, which makes for more confident investors; and confidence was able to stay buoyant for so long because of the implicit support of Dubai's wealthy neighbour, Abu Dhabi. Kurdistan has no such regional ally.

Currently Kurdistan's exposure to international financial markets is negligible, but it would not take another global downturn to puncture a future Kurdish bubble. If sectarian violence erupts again in the south, the consequence will be an instant drop in international consumer confidence in the whole of Iraq, Kurdistan included. If people are afraid to visit, the KRG can forget its dreams of a tourist economy. But joining a coalition government in Baghdad, while stabilising the south, could put Kurdistan's independent sovereignty over its wealth and natural resources in doubt.

Kurdistan has come a long way in a very short time, but it has much further yet to go. Not only does it have to prove to a sceptical business community that it can be a safe and stable long-term investment environment, it must also show that it is willing to clean up the corrupt practices – and instincts – of its government. Only then can people here begin to hope for growth on a scale approaching that of Dubai.

☆☆☆

After Iraq election, Shiite parties announce alliance to form next government

In the wake of the disputed Iraq election, the two largest Shiite parties announced they are creating an alliance to lead the next government that leaves them just 4 votes shy of a parliamentary majority.

By Jane Arraf,
Correspondent, Mohammed al-Dulaimy,
McClatchy Newspapers

Baghdad —Iraq's two main Shiite parties brought the country a step toward a new religious-based government by forming an alliance just four seats short of a parliamentary majority. The agreement between the two parties raised fears that Sunnis could once again be cut out of power, sparking a return to sectarian violence.

Underscoring the religious underpinnings of the new alliance, a senior member says the political bloc will be obliged to follow the guidance of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, a reclusive Najaf-based cleric who is the country's most revered and influential religious figure.

"The guidance of the Supreme Marjai'ee (senior Shiite religious scholars) is to be considered an obligation for the alliance," says Ali al-Adeeb, a leader of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Dawa Party.

The alliance – announced without a name or a leader – foreshadows a showdown over who would be prime minister. Mr. Adeeb says a 14-member committee will vote on who should be the next prime minister. The alliance is composed of Maliki's State of Law coalition and the Iraqi National Alliance, an electoral coalition that included the Islamic Supreme Council in Iraq and followers of fiery Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr and there is no clear consensus between these groups yet on who should lead the country.

Adeeb says the new alliance intends to reach out to Iraqiya, a largely secular coalition heavily favored by Sunni voters that won the most seats in the national election. There was no official indication from Iraqiya, headed by former prime minister Ayad Allawi, that they would welcome such a move but a powerful Sunni member indicated they could be open to bargaining.

"We are absolutely sure that no one can exclude the Iraqiya list because of our large number of voters...Our bloc will participate strongly in the coming government unless the government chooses to take a sectarian approach," says Atheel al-Nujaifi, the Sunni governor of Mosul whose party is a member of Iraqiya. Acknowledging that the new alliance cuts Iraqiya out of the running for prime minister, Nujaifi indicated that the political bloc would expect other



Senior Shiite politicians hold a news conference announcing their alliance in Baghdad Tuesday. Iraq's two major Shiite political coalitions, one led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and the other whose leaders have close ties to Iran, agreed on Tuesday on an alliance to form a single bloc in parliament, coalition officials said. (Mohammed Ameen/Reuters)

high-level cabinet posts.

The March 7 elections – the second parliamentary elections since Saddam was toppled – have been seen as a way to redress a Sunni boycott which contributed to sectarian divisions in the country that spiraled into civil war four years ago.

Sunni withdrawal?

Nujaifi, a divisive political figure who came to power on an anti-Kurdish platform, says he fears the return of sectarian politics but that the Sunnis will not withdraw from the political process this time.

"Our constituencies have been through the experience of withdrawing from the political process...we were targets of terrorism or killing. We will not consider withdrawing unless the new alliance is targeting the control of one Iraqi faction over the other."

Although violence has declined dramatically, sectarian political killings have not stopped.

Iraqi police said a senior Sunni imam was shot by unknown gunmen Wednesday morning as he was leaving his home in Baghdad's Amariyah neighborhood. They said Abdul Jalil Fahdawi, a leader of a major alliance of Sunni clerics, was killed along with two of his bodyguards and a relative.

A statement issued by the political wing of several insurgent groups blamed the Iraqi government for the assassinations.

Some Iraqi political analysts are worried about the alliance of the two religious Shiite parties.

"This merger is a failure of the Iraqi people to overcome sectarianism," says Haider al-Musawi, head of an independent research center called the Ali al-Wardi Center for Human Development.

The announcement of the alliance was issued just hours after a strong statement

from Iraq's presidency council warning that political maneuvering and delays were undermining the country's fledgling democracy.

Although Prime Minister Maliki's State of Law is the strongest partner in the new political bloc, he faces strong internal opposition to retain the post of prime minister. Followers of Mr. Sadr, a powerful element of the new coalition, withdrew from the previous government headed by Maliki. Former prime minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari, favored by the Sadrists, is widely seen as too sectarian to be an acceptable candidate. The divisions could lead to the emergence of a lesser-known compromise candidate.

The State of Law's 89 seats combined with the INA's 70 seats is just four seats short of that needed for a parliamentary majority in the 325-seat parliament. Iraqi voters divided their support in the March 7 elections among four main political blocs – the Shiite coalitions, a Kurdish grouping and Iraqiya. Amid charges of electoral fraud, court challenges and moves to ban winning candidates, the parties have been scrambling to form alliances for a coalition government.

"The announcement of the merger is not the problem but its consequences," says Mr. Musawi. "If the biggest Shiite bloc made an alliance with the Kurds, and it is most likely to happen, will this marginalize the first winner - the Iraqiya bloc?" He says cutting out the Sunnis would have "catastrophic" consequences.

"This merger is not the beginning of the solution but the beginning of a crisis," he says.

A Conversation with Turkey's Kurdish Leaders

AHMET TÜRK, SELAHATTIN DEMIRTAS, HENRI J. BARKEY
TUESDAY, MAY 04, 2010 – WASHINGTON, D.C.



Last August, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) government launched an opening to Turkey's large Kurdish minority designed to acknowledge their cultural distinctiveness and recognize some political rights. Despite the great hopes engendered, almost nine months later, the opening seems to have run aground, as the government focuses instead on constitutional changes to redress other issues.

Not only is the Kurdish question not going away, it has also acquired an important international dimension. The fate of Turkish Kurds is interlinked with their brethren across the border in northern Iraq. As the United States prepares to withdraw from Iraq, the United States and Turkey have a vested interest in maintaining peace and stability in the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

Carnegie hosted a discussion on the Kurds continued struggles in Turkey and the effect of the Kurdistan Regional Government's success in northern Iraq with Ahmet Türk, a former Turkish Member of Parliament and Selahattin Demirtas, the current co-chair of the Peace and Democracy party (BDP). Carnegie's Henri Barkey moderated the event.

Turkish Kurds' Demands

The Kurdish people are an integral part of the Middle East, with Kurds living in Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey, yet they are often not acknowledged as such by other ethnic communities. According to Türk, the Kurds in Turkey have three demands:

1. A constitutional recognition of the ethnic and linguistic differences among all citizens of Turkey
2. Cultural recognition and official usage of the Kurdish language
3. The decentralization of the administrative system so as to allow greater local decision making in all regions of Turkey and not just Kurdish majority regions

A Foundering Opening

The Turkish government's announcement of its plans to implement an opening policy towards the Kurds was met

with much fanfare. Over the course of the last nine months, hope has dwindled as it seems that the AKP led government has placed its priorities elsewhere, namely on a robust, inclusive foreign policy and on constitutional issues related to the relationship between civil society, the judiciary and the military.

- **Responsibility:** Selahattin Demirtas placed the onus for the failure to implement this opening policy on the government.

- **Fresh Start:** Even if renewed efforts are delinquent, many of the Turkish Kurds are willing to welcome any attempt to successfully and fully implement this opening. Demirtas' Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) has and will continue to "give its moral support to the government's efforts to reach a resolution to Kurdish problem."

- **Moving Forward:** According to Demirtas, the most efficacious avenue for solving the Kurdish problem is the establishment of a parliamentary commission that would develop a roadmap with concrete step for constitutional changes.

Kurds in the Region

The Turkish government has reoriented its policy towards the Kurds in northern Iraq and is increasingly developing a relationship with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG).

- **Power Play:** Ostensibly this is a positive harbinger for the Turkish Kurds. However, as Kurds, Türk argued that they would oppose efforts by the Turkish government to use its relations with the KRG to diminish ties between Iraqi and Turkish Kurds or manage Turkish Kurdish demands.

- **Regional Perceptions:** Türk suggested "Kurds in Syria, Iraq and Iran all believe that the key to solving the problems of the Kurds is with Turkey and its ability to give Kurds rights at home." It is undoubtedly in the best interest of the Turks to work to solve the Kurdish problem in order to boost their international standing.

Violence and the PKK

The long festering conflict between Turks and Kurds in Southeast Turkey has resulted in a heavy loss of life.

- **PKK Responsibility:** Although the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) is responsible for perpetrating acts of violence against Turks, Demirtas noted that "the PKK is part of the reality of the conflict; it has an important constituency in the region and therefore is an important actor in the resolution of the Kurdish problem."

- **Curbing Violence:** Demirtas also asserted the acts of violence emanating from both sides should immediately cease and that both sides should take the necessary political risks to begin this process. "This problem cannot be solved by force, it is necessary to begin a dialogue process involving all actors," Türk noted, restating Demirtas' assertion.

President Obama and Turkey

The United States and President Obama are well aware of Turkey's rising prominence in the Middle East and the international arena. Consequently, the administration will be careful in pressuring Prime Minister Erdogan's government on the Kurdish problem. Although Türk sees the election of Obama as an important ray of hope for all subjugated peoples and expects his administration to contribute to the flourishing of democracy in the region, he believes the problems of Turks and Kurds must be resolved by negotiations between the Turks and Kurds, not by a U.S.imposed solution.

'What does the PKK want to do?'

RUSEN ÇAKIR

Mulling over the Kurdish question and the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, has always been difficult. No matter how democratized Turkey is these two subjects remain a taboo. Not only legal obstacles stand in the way. One can even say legal setbacks are becoming less important. But the real problem stems from public pressure; or perhaps I should say the "pressure of public opinion."

Unless the Kurdish conflict is resolved, violence will become effective again and already-strong Turkish and Kurdish nationalisms will escalate. Nationalists in both wings are hostile toward each other. To a certain point, that is understandable. What is interesting is that the fringes on both sides cannot stand people who want to remain in between.

News about soldiers killed by terrorists make us discuss the issue soberly, but on the other hand, that also becomes impossible. Following the Daglica and Aktütün attacks, we found ourselves in a similar situation. In both cases, I thought that there are plenty of things to be written or words to be said but I've postponed all for a while.

Still, you say "What the heck" and write what you think despite possible reactions. So, the piece you are reading now will probably be at the center of reaction. I hope this article and others next in line help those who think about a solution.

The PKK is the PKK

People can think that the title of this article "What does the PKK want to do?" is meaningless or unnecessary. People who especially see the organiza-

tion as an instrument of several power centers believe that the question should be "What do people who use the PKK want to do?" In fact, they have their answers ready:

"The PKK wants to sabotage the constitutional amendment package, bring instability and therefore put the Justice and Development Party, or AKP, government in a difficult position. In relation to that, they want to maintain military tutelage and reinforce the Ergenekon crime gang."

The PKK attacks may perfectly create such consequences. We even claim that the organization threatens the state (the government in particular) to cause the aforementioned developments. However, saying that the "PKK works for some other power centers and has no agenda" does not reflect the truth. Since its establishment, the PKK has mostly engaged in secret partnerships and cooperation with internal and external groups, but to see this 30-year period as the "history of conspiracies" rather than the "history of the PKK," and even to describe the process as "an Ergenekon conspiracy" is delusive indeed. In short, before and after anything else, the PKK is the PKK.

Öcalan's remarks

Now, we can ask "What does the PKK want to do?" Terrorist activities in various provinces such as Samsun, Giresun, Hakkari, Tunceli and Diyarbakır may be read as a "show off" and a strategy to "spread the violence." As always or beyond, the PKK wants to be considered as an interlocutor today because liquidation concerns dominate the organization. The PKK is worried about the contacts Ankara is having with Washington, Arbil and Baghdad, considering the fact that all could result in the organization's removal from nor-

thern Iraq. The PKK is no longer tolerated by Western states and public opinion the way it used to be. Since the concerns are becoming more serious, they are resorting to arms, the biggest trump card in hand.

At this point, let me remind everyone what PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan said in his last meeting with his lawyers: "If the way of democratic politics is not cleared, everyone will be harmed. If a solution is not developed, it is possible to talk about a moderate war. And if that happens, thousands may be detained, or even arrested. Our people should take measures in advance."

In the very same meeting, Öcalan continued "Under these circumstances, the AKP cannot be supported. The AKP is not sincere. A party changing plenty of constitutional articles in nine days can easily make necessary regulations. If they want to, they can do it. Not to see any of these and still provide support to the AKP means being a toady, or means self-denial. So, if the Peace and Democracy Party, or BDP, say 'Yes' to the AKP, it will be the end of the BDP politically. They will no longer be respected. Giving political support to the AKP is damaging. The BDP cannot explain this to its people. It is difficult to make a turn."

By taking Öcalan's remarks into account, we see that the government party and the BDP will depart from each other as the PKK continues attacks. Some BDP members or close circles may be disturbed by this and a serious discussion will possibly flare up inside the Kurdish political movement.

** Mr. Rusen Çakır is a columnist for the daily Vatan in which this piece appeared Monday. It was translated into English by the Daily News staff.*

REUTERS

Turkish forces, aircraft hit Kurd rebels in Iraq

ISTANBUL, May 8, 2010 — (Reuters)

TURKISH special forces pursued Kurdish guerrillas into northern Iraq and struck suspected targets with helicopter gunships and drones, killing at least five rebels, the military General Staff said in a statement.

Separately, two Turkish soldiers were killed on Saturday in two separate explosions as they patrolled remote areas of Hakkari and

Siirt border provinces in Turkey, security sources said.

The raid into Iraq, which occurred in a border region south of Hakkari early on Friday, came after two other soldiers were killed by Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) fire, according to the military command's website.

Three groups consisting of seven to eight commandoes each, as well as four helicopters and an unspecified number of unmanned aerial vehicles, made the incursion, it said.

"Anti-aircraft fire was opened onto helicopters from various positions across the border. The air force fired upon those areas," it said. "It was observed that those positions were destroyed," it said, adding that operations against the PKK continued.

In a statement issued late on Saturday, the PKK said the Turkish army began an operation on Thursday to cross the border and guer-

rillas came under helicopter and mortar bombardment as they engaged troops in two days of fighting.

"All together, a ... total of 15 enemy soldiers have been killed during clashes that occurred in five different places on the 6th and 7th of May," the statement said, adding that two PKK fighters had also been killed.

The Iraqi government has protested against previous Turkish land incursions aimed at rooting out the PKK. In February 2008, the

military staged a ground incursion with 10,000 troops. It also regularly bombards suspected PKK targets from the air.

The PKK took up arms against the Turkish state in 1984 in a conflict that has claimed 40,000 lives, mainly Kurdish.

The rebels, who are mainly based in Iraqi Kurdistan, say they are fighting for greater political rights for Turkey's estimated 15 million Kurds. The United States and the European Union both label the PKK a terrorist organisation.



May 9, 2010

BDP makes crucial mistake

JOOST LAGENDIJK

I was in Washington this week to participate in a panel on recent developments in Turkey, organized by the Center for American Progress, an influential democratic think tank. The main focus during the discussion was the Kurdish issue. American Turkey watchers had a difficult time understanding what was happening and how to make sense of the contradictory news coming out of the country. While one Kurdish party, the Democratic Society Party, or DTP, was closed down in December of last year by the Constitutional Court, the successor party, the Peace and Democracy Party, or BDP, is alive and kicking in the national parliament.

Despite the fact that many observers in Turkey and abroad consider the BDP to be under even stronger influence of imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan than the DTP already was. At the same time, hundreds of elected Kurdish politicians in the Southeast have been arrested and are waiting to be tried on suspicion of being linked to the PKK. The Kurdish or Democratic initiative, launched by the government last year, seems to be stuck between good intentions and a lack of political courage but only a few weeks ago the parliament, without making too much fuss about it, changed the electoral law, allowing Kurdish politicians, for the first time ever, to use their mother tongue in future election campaigns. One should not be surprised to see that if even

informed outsiders sometimes get lost.

The day before my panel took place, a BDP delegation, including former DTP chairman Ahmet Türk, was in Washington to open a BDP office and to tell their side of the story to interested pundits in the American capital. My guess is that the new BDP representative will have a hard time explaining the position of the party in the debate on the constitutional amendments that was taking place right at that moment in Ankara. To put it more strongly: I am convinced that few people in the US and in Europe understand why the BDP decided not to take part in the vote on the amendments to the present Turkish constitution which, in effect, meant that the party voted against these changes. Can you imagine how implausible this behavior is in the eyes of many observers who have followed Turkish and Kurdish politics for many years? How can a party whose predecessors were closed down many times, vote against a proposal that makes the closure of political parties more difficult? How can a party whose members have suffered so much before military courts, vote against the article in the package that diminishes the role of these courts and allows civilian courts to trial military officers in the future? Why does a party that claims it wants to radically change the Turkish state, side with the defenders of the status-quo?

I am afraid the answer to this question lies in a combination of maximalist intuition and electoral calculation. According to its leaders, the BDP voted against the constitutional

amendments because the ruling party had been unwilling to take some of the BDP demands on board. No misunderstanding, the wish to lower the electoral threshold is supported by all democrats in Turkey and abroad. That was a good point and it is disappointing to see that the AKP refused even to discuss the issue. But voting against the whole package just because you did not get what you wanted on this particular point, is only understood and defended outside Turkey by marginal groups that thrive on self inflicted isolation. To make things worse, many suspect that the BDP's opposition against the AKP is directly linked to the elections of 2011 in which the BDP does not want to compete with a party that can show that it was successful in tackling at least some of the issues that have bothered so many Kurds for such a long time.

Based on my impressions from Washington and my experiences in Europe, I can only come to the sad conclusion that the BDP has made a crucial strategic mistake in voting against the constitutional amendments. There is still a lot of support at home and abroad for the struggle of the Kurds to be heard and recognized as an integral part of Turkish society. But that sympathy has been severely damaged by the decision to obstruct substantial progress towards more democracy, also among those who recognize that these steps are not sufficient.

Turkey's constitutional reforms

By Jonathan Head / BBC News, Istanbul

MPs in Turkey are locked inside parliament in Ankara this week to vote on a package of amendments to the 1982 constitution.

The amendments are being challenged by the three opposition parties, who argue they will give the government too much power over the judiciary.

The government says they are essential to bring Turkey in line with European norms, and to re-structure a judiciary which is frequently criticised by human rights groups.

Two thirds, or 367 of the 550 MPs, must vote for the amendments for them to pass. The governing AK Party has a majority, but not two-thirds.

If the amendments get more than 330 votes in favour, President Abdullah Gul can put them to a national referendum. The main opposition CHP says it will challenge this in the Constitutional Court - one of the institutions which would be most affected.

THE JUDICIARY

These are the most controversial proposals. The AKP has clashed repeatedly with Turkey's highest courts, which see themselves as guardians of the secular values that were at the core of the political system established by Turkey's founding father Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

The opposition and senior judges complain that the reforms would compromise the independence of the judiciary. But many legal scholars and the European Union say reform of the judiciary is essential.

The Constitutional Court

One of the most powerful arms of the judiciary, it came close to closing down the AKP in 2008.

The government wants to expand the Constitutional Court from 11 permanent and four substitute judges to a total of 17. At the moment the president chooses three and selects the others from a list drawn up by a committee of senior judges. Under the new proposals, parliament will select three members of the court, and the president selects the rest from a list of candidates drawn up from a wider number of sources. Critics believe this gives the president, who is currently AKP loyalist Abdullah Gul, more power over the Constitutional Court.

The Higher Council of Judges and Prosecutors

Another powerful body which has clashed with the AKP. Known in Turkey as the HSYK, it appoints and dismisses judges and prosecutors.

The government proposes expanding it from 7 to 21 members, selected by the president and the highest judicial bodies. Critics say



Turkey's prime minister has doggedly pushed for changes to secular bastions

the minister of justice will have too much power over the HSYK, because he acts as the chair. The government points out that this is no different from the current situation.

BANNING POLITICAL PARTIES

The Constitutional Court has banned political parties repeatedly over the past 50 years, a practice widely criticised inside and outside Turkey. The AKP wanted to make bans conditional on the approval of a parliamentary committee comprised of five members from each of the three biggest parties.

This proposal was unexpectedly rejected by just three votes on Monday after a number of AKP legislators voted against it. The government lost the support of the 20 Kurdish MPs, whose parties have been banned more often than any other group, because its proposal excluded them from the committee which would have the final say on a ban.

THE MILITARY

The government proposes allowing military personnel to be tried in civilian courts for the first time, for crimes against the state or the constitution. Top military commanders would be tried by the Supreme Court on such charges. A similar proposal last year was passed in parliament but struck down this year by the Constitutional Court.

OTHER AMENDMENTS

There are several other proposals aimed at improving gender equality, individual rights and the rights of children.

WHY ARE THEY BEING CONTESTED SO FIERCELY?

There is a gulf of mistrust between the AKP and the two secular opposition parties, the CHP and MHP. The CHP believes the AKP has a hidden agenda to weaken the secular system and promote Islamic values. The AKP says it is challenging an authoritarian system, which restricts individual rights and compromises Turkey's candidacy for the European Union. Each side believes its vision for a more democratic Turkey is threatened by the other side.

The EU has broadly welcomed the reforms. So have many legal scholars. But some have accused the government of being too timid in its proposed reforms; others have accused the AKP of focusing only on those reforms where it has a direct self-interest.



Ankara expects Kurdish help with PKK

ANKARA, Turkey, May 5, 2010 -United Press International,

Ankara is expecting significant support from the Kurdish administration in Iraq in the fight against Kurdish guerrillas, the Turkish foreign minister said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu spoke during an Ankara visit with visiting Sunni lawmakers from Iraq on the need to control militant activity linked to the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK.

PKK attacks in Turkey are increasing as the spring thaw begins.

Ankara believes attacks are on the rise because of a pending visit to Turkey by Massoud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq.

"We are expecting active support from the regional administration (in northern Iraq)," the foreign minister was quoted in the English-language newspaper Hurriyet as saying.

Davutoglu added that Barzani was a welcome partner in Ankara. On trilateral efforts between U.S., Iraqi and Turkish officials on the PKK issue, the foreign minister stressed that Ankara's "determination is continuing."

He said there was no firm date scheduled for the Barzani visit, however.

The PKK is listed as a terrorist organization in the United States, Turkey and Iraq.

Intellectuals to seek solution to Kurdish question

TODAY'S ZAMAN

A group of 50 intellectuals -- both Turks and Kurds -- plans to hold meetings in 10 cities throughout Turkey later this month to seek a solution to the decades-old Kurdish question.

The meetings will be held in cities that often see provocative attacks, including Mersin, Samsun, Kayseri and Erzurum. Many nongovernmental organizations will be represented at the meetings. Among the intellectuals planning to attend the meetings are writers Altan Tan and Ümit Fırat, former National Intelligence Organization (MIT) Undersecretary Cevat Önes, literary critic and columnist Murat Belge, former member of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) Seydi Fırat and former Republican People's Party (CHP) leader Altan Öymen.

Tarık Çelenk, general coordinator

of Ekopolitik, a web-based publication produced by the ADAM Social Sciences Research Center, said participants of the meetings are people who use constructive language to address problems and confront their own realities, though they tend not to change their ideologies or beliefs. Çelenk is one of the many coordinators of the meetings.

"They [intellectuals] have similar reactions if an incident occurs in Samsun. They display a common stance in the wake of provocative acts. Ümit Fırat and Mete Yazar [a retired Special Forces Command officer] are regarded as belonging to opposite camps, but they call each other 'brother,'" Çelenk said.

Çelenk also said the first meeting would be held in Mersin on May 15. "Mersin is the scene of many provocations. The Nationalist Movement Party [MHP] and the Peace and Democracy Party [BDP] have influence on Mersin residents. We

will meet with officials of both parties in the city to prevent any possible problem during the meeting," he remarked.

He went on to state that nongovernmental organizations can stem provocations in cities throughout the country if they are allowed to become active actors in the reconciliation process within society. He also called on Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, opposition leaders and businessmen to consult with intellectuals and nongovernmental organizations about solutions to Turkey's problems.

"Turkey has enough room for everyone to live in peace. Everyone under Turkey's roof must meet at common points. Turkey cannot develop by excluding Kurds. Every citizen is necessary for development," Çelenk added.

Constitutional reform necessary to solve problems of Kurdish people

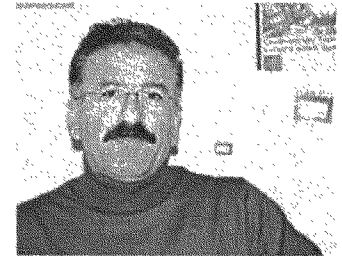
YASEMIN BUDAK

The attitudes of the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP), the closest witnesses of the party closure cases, have been criticized by Kurdish intellectuals. "Every civilian must say 'Yes' to the constitutional amendment. For the first time in the republic's history, the 'State of Judges' will be obviated," Aytekin Yılmaz, chairman of the Association of Confronting the Past and Researching Social Events (Toplumsal Olayları Araştırma ve Yüzleşme Derneği), said.

Article 8 of the constitutional reform package, which would have made it harder to shut parties down, was rejected on May 3 in a second round of voting on the reforms, failing to receive the 330 votes required for inclusion in the package. The article, which would

have given Parliament the final say on whether a prosecutor could launch a closure case against a party, received just 327 votes. In the first round of voting, five BDP deputies participated in the vote, and the article won 337 votes in favor, 72 opposing and five abstentions. At the time, BDP officials said that although they had boycotted the voting, as members of the now-defunct Democratic Society Party (DTP), which was shut down, they wanted to demonstrate symbolic support of the article. While noting that even though the package does not seem to include an article to safeguard the identity rights of Kurdish people, Yılmaz said it would open paths toward a solution in the medium term. The reason for the BDP's attitude, he said, was that the party was not ready for possible developments.

Yılmaz also said those who were questioning why the ruling Justice



Aytekin Yılmaz

and Development Party (AK Party) did not take action on some issues saw it was not easy to change something, adding that the efforts of the AK Party for democratization were being resisted by the opposition and from inside the party.

"This time, there is a ruling party which wants Turkey to change and there is an opposition resisting change," he said.

TODAYS ZAMAN 5 May 2010

What side are the Kurds on?

Turkish Press Review
ORAL ÇALIŞLAR RADİKAL

The status quo has been mobilized. The proponents of the Sept. 12 regime are resisting. They are playing all of their cards. Many analyses can be carried out on why the Kurdish identity movement is adopting a stance that strengthens the

hand of the status quo.

In fact, this may uncover some interesting findings about Turkey's political subconscious. The Kurdish movement's opposition to and criticism of the Justice and Development Party (AK Party) government on certain issues is understandable. But there is merit in keeping a particular argument in mind. These kinds of critical turning points can engender results that impact on the future of the country and society independent of the stance a political actor adopts. I know the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) is experienced enough

to know this. It's also obvious that reversing the process will harm the Kurds the most. It may not be wrong to place the recent increase in Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) activities somewhere within this context as well. Militarism wants conflict. It wants conflict because it wants a nationalist and oppressive wave to rise and stop the "transformation" current. I am curious as to how the Kurds think they will benefit from rising militarism and nationalism.

Rudaw.Net

7 May 2010

Turkish FM uses 'Iraqi Kurdistan'

Rudaw - The Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ahmet Davutoğlu, used the word 'Iraqi-Kurdistan' for the first time in an interview with Al-Hayat. Until now no Turkish politician used these words about the Kurdistan region in Iraq.

Davutoğlu told Al-Hayat, that when he visited the Kurdish regional capital in Erbil, it felt like it was his own city. The Turkish FM later walked through the city, after meeting the Kurdish president Massoud Barzani. "The people of Erbil (Hewler) are just like the people, where I come from."



Davutoğlu also added. "Iraqi-Kurdistan is a special region. In the streets of Erbil I noticed that the people are close to the Turks. Therefore I do not feel a stranger in the city. In addition, we have had positive meetings."

In Turkey its sensitive to use the word "Kurdistan" out of fear that the Kurds will create a separate Kurdish state.

Several Turkish and Kurdish citizens were jailed for using the word. Turkey has so far refused to recognize Massoud Barzani's status as the president of the "Kurdistan Regional Government," as some other countries have, out of fears it could lead to the breakup of Iraq. When the Turkish president Abdullah Gül visited Kurdistan in 2009, he also allegedly used the word 'Kurdistan'. But later the Turkish president denied using the term.

According to the Turkish daily Hürriyet, some official documents issued by the Foreign Ministry and the Undersecretary for Foreign Trade have already begun to use the term "Kurdistan Regional Government." "It's their constitutional title. It would be absurd for us to ignore this fact," diplomatic sources told the Turkish daily on the matter.

© Rudaw

Rudaw.Net

9 May 2010

Kurdish bloc: No article 140, no Iraqi government

Rudaw - The Kurdish united factions demand the implementation of article 140 of the Iraqi constitution. Otherwise they will not be part of the new government.

The Shiite factions want to have the United Kurdistan List (Itilaf Kurdistanî) as a coalition partner, to keep former PM Ayad Allawi and his Iraqiya list out of the government.

Allawi wants to work with the Kurds to form the new government. The Kurdish bloc wants to work with every-



body on the condition that they carry out article 140 of the Iraqi constitution. Article 140 outlines the steps toward a plebiscite on the fate of the disputed northern territories, including Kirkuk. It would include a referendum to decide if the disputed regions belong to Baghdad or the Kurdistan region.

Asiya Ahmed, Iraqi MP of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP) defined article 140 as a red line for Kurdish participation. "It's the right of the Kurdish people to implement this article. Only then we can participate in any Iraqi government. It's good that the Shiite parties formed an Union, but we will not participate if they do not implement article 140."

Kurdish politicians have demanded the implementation of article 140 for years, but the Iraqi government delayed the implementation of the constitutional article. This resulted in tensions between the Kurdish authorities in Erbil and the Iraqi government in Baghdad. There are speculations a referendum will be carried out in October this year in Kirkuk.

© Rudaw



L'IRAN EXÉCUTE CINQ MILITANTS KURDES

09 mai 2010 - Par RFI / à Téhéran, Siavosh Ghazi

Cinq personnes, dont une femme, accusées d'avoir commis des attentats dans plusieurs villes iraniennes et appartenant au Parti pour la vie libre du Kurdistan (PJAK), une émanation du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), ont été pendues ce 9 mai 2010, dans la prison d'Evin à Téhéran. L'agence officielle Irna avance comme autre motif de cette pendaison, le fait que les condamnés étaient des « ennemis de Dieu ».

Parmi les cinq personnes exécutées, quatre sont membres du groupe rebelle armé kurde PJAK. Trois d'entre elles ont été arrêtées dans la région kurde et ont été reconnues coupables d'avoir commis une série d'attentats contre des bâti-

ments publics et un gazoduc qui relie l'Iran et la Turquie.

La quatrième personne est une Iranienne, également membre du PJAK qui a commis un attentat à Téhéran, en faisant exploser une bombe sous une voiture dans un parking d'une des bases des Gardiens de la Révolution, l'armée d'élite du régime islamique.

Le groupe PJAK proche du PKK turc, a mené ces dernières années de nombreuses actions armées dans les régions à majorité kurde, à la frontière avec l'Irak et la Turquie.

La cinquième personne pendue a été reconnue coupable d'avoir participé à l'attentat contre une mosquée de Shiraz, dans le sud du pays, qui avait fait quatorze morts et plus de deux cents blessés en avril 2008. Ce militant, selon le Parquet de Téhéran, appartient à un groupe monarchiste l'association de la



Pendaison publique dans la ville iranienne de Mashhad. (Photo : AFP)

Royauté d'Iran, qui veut renverser le régime islamique. En janvier dernier, deux membres de ce groupe avaient déjà été pendus.



IRAK: UNE LARGE COALITION CHIITE VA DIRIGER LE PAYS

BAGDAD, 5 mai 2010 (AFP)

L'IRAK devrait encore être gouverné durant les quatre prochaines années par une coalition chiite composée des partisans du Premier ministre Nouri al-Maliki et des partis proches de l'Iran, après leur accord pour former un groupe unique au Parlement.

Cependant, l'Alliance pour l'Etat de droit (AED) de M. Maliki et les chiites conservateurs de l'Alliance nationale irakienne (ANI) doivent se réunir mercredi pour régler le point le plus sensible: Qui sera le prochain chef du gouvernement?

Avec 159 députés, il manque encore quatre élus aux deux listes pour obtenir la majorité absolue au Parlement qui compte 325 sièges. L'Alliance kurde (43 sièges) s'est dit prête mercredi à rejoindre cette coalition.

"Un accord a été trouvé pour former le plus grand bloc parlementaire avec l'union entre l'Etat de droit et l'Alliance nationale irakienne. C'est un premier pas pour s'ouvrir ensuite à d'autres formations politiques", avait annoncé mardi soir Abdel Razak al-Kazami, un conseiller de l'ancien Premier ministre Ibrahim Jaafari membre de l'ANI.

"La chose la plus importante pour cette union est de former un gouvernement irakien et de mettre au point un programme gouvernemental avec la participation de tous et la nomination d'un Premier ministre", avait-il ajouté devant les journalistes, au domicile de M. Jaafari.

Les représentants des deux listes doivent se retrouver mercredi pour déterminer la procédure de désignation du nouveau Premier ministre.

"Des discussions se tiendront aujourd'hui (mercredi) pour déterminer les mécanismes afin de choisir notre candidat au poste de Premier ministre, soit en le désignant par consensus ou par un vote au sein du groupe parlementaire", a déclaré à l'AFP le porte-parole de l'AED, Hajem al-Hassani.

M. Maliki, dont la liste a obtenu 89 sièges, n'est toutefois pas sûr de conserver son portefeuille. L'ANI, qui regroupe le Conseil supérieur islamique d'Irak (CSII) dirigé par Ammar al-Hakim et les partisans du chef radical chiite Moqtada Sadr et qui a recueilli 70 députés, lui voue une profonde animosité.

Elle lui reproche d'avoir constitué sa propre liste pour les élections du 7 mars, face à ses anciens alliés chiites qui l'avaient pourtant choisi en 2006 comme Premier ministre. Elle dénonce aussi ses méthodes autoritaires de gouverner, qui avaient poussé certains ministres du mouvement sadriste à quitter le cabinet en 2007.

Cette nouvelle alliance prive de facto l'ancien Premier ministre laïc Iyad Allawi, de former un gouvernement. Sa liste, le Bloc irakien, est arrivée en tête des législatives avec 91 sièges notamment grâce à un vote massif des sunnites.

La porte-parole du Bloc irakien a accusé sans le nommer l'Iran d'avoir été à la manœuvre, estimant qu'il s'agissait d'une coalition confessionnelle.

"Constitutionnellement, c'est le droit de blocs de fusionner. Cependant, nous avons le sentiment que cette alliance vise le Bloc irakien et notre projet national, et qu'elle a été mise au point par des puissances régionales", a déclaré à l'AFP Maysoun al-Damalouji.

"C'est un retour en arrière et c'est une fusion à caractère confessionnel. Nous allons décider dans les prochains jours ce que nous allons faire", a-t-elle ajouté.

L'Alliance kurde a en revanche estimé en revanche que cette union "allait dans le bon sens pour sortir de la crise".

"Mais pour que cela soit couronné de succès, il faut que cette nouvelle alliance prenne l'initiative de s'ouvrir à d'autres listes et laisse chaque formation participer à la formation du nouveau gouvernement", a ajouté son porte-parole, Sami Shorash.



IRAK: LES KURDES S'UNISSENT POUR NÉGOCIER LEUR PLACE AU GOUVERNEMENT

ERBIL (Irak), 9 mai 2010 (AFP)

LES PARTIS KURDES ont décidé de s'unir au sein du prochain Parlement

et de négocier ensemble leur place dans le prochain gouvernement irakien, qui est en pleine gestation, a annoncé dimanche le président de la région autonome, Massoud Barzani.

La Coalition des blocs kurdes compte au total 59 députés sur les 325 que compte le Parlement.

Elle rassemble l'Alliance kurde -formée des deux grands partis traditionnels, le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) de M. Barzani et l'Union Patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK) du président irakien Jalal Talabani- qui a obtenu 43 sièges, Goran (Changement) constitué de dissidents de l'UPK (8 sièges), l'Union isla-

mique du Kurdistan (4 sièges), la Jamaa Islamiya (2 sièges) et deux députés issus de minorités.

"La présidence de la Coalition sera choisie à la majorité et ses décisions seront prises par consensus. Nous nous sommes mis d'accord sur un règlement intérieur pour organiser le travail et nous avons mis au point un programme complet pour la délégation kurde qui ira négocier à Bagdad sur notre participation à la formation du nouveau gouvernement", a-t-il dit à la télévision.

"Nous sommes prêts à nous impliquer dans toutes les négociations avec toutes les parties irakiennes afin de mettre un terme à la crise irakienne et de hâter la formation d'un nouveau gouvernement sur le principe du partenariat et le refus de toute marginalisation" a-t-il ajouté.

L'Alliance kurde avait affirmé jeudi qu'elle accepterait le Premier ministre choisi par la nouvelle coalition chiite composée des partisans du Premier ministre Nouri al-Maliki et des partis proches de l'Iran.

AFP

IRAK: HEURTS ENTRE FORCES IRANIENNES ET IRAKIENNES AU KURDISTAN (ARMÉE)

SOULEIMANIYEH (Irak), 13 mai 2010 (AFP)

LES FORCES irakiennes et iraniennes ont échangé des tirs jeudi soir pendant une heure et demi à la frontière entre les deux pays au Kurdistan irakien, et un officier irakien a été capturé, a déclaré le général irakien Ahmed Gharib Diskara.

"Les forces iraniennes pensaient que les gardes-frontières irakiens appartenaient au PJAK (une groupe rebelle kurde iranien) et ont commencé à ouvrir le feu", a déclaré le général aux journalistes.

"Les gardes-frontières irakiens ont riposté", a affirmé le général, soulignant que les heurts avaient duré une heure et demi dans une zone montagneuse appelée Chamiran.

Un officier irakien a été capturé, a-t-il ajouté. "Des négociations ont lieu actuellement pour libérer l'officier", a ajouté le général.

Les gardes-frontières au Kurdistan sont d'anciens pechmergas (combattants kurdes) qui ont été intégrés par le ministère irakien de l'Intérieur.

Le dernier incident entre les deux pays remonte au 18 décembre quand les forces iraniennes avaient pénétré chez leur voisin irakien en raison d'une dispute sur l'appartenance du champs pétrolier de Fakka, dans le sud de l'Irak.

En mai 2009, des hélicoptères iraniens avaient bombardé pour la première fois trois villages kurdes du nord de l'Irak, visant des indépendantistes kurdes iraniens du PJAK.

Le PJAK, le "parti pour une vie libre au Kurdistan", est un mouvement séparatiste kurde iranien qui opère à partir de bases établies dans les montagnes du Kurdistan irakien.

Le PJAK est lié au Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui lutte depuis 1984 contre le gouvernement turc dans le sud-est anatolien.

L'Iran accuse les Etats-Unis de soutenir le PJAK, ainsi que d'autres organisations ethniques aux frontières de l'Iran, ce que Washington et les Kurdes irakiens ont toujours démenti.

L'Irak, l'Iran, la Syrie et la Turquie ont tous d'importantes minorités kurdes.

Les relations entre Bagdad et Téhéran se sont nettement améliorées depuis la chute de Saddam Hussein, en 2003. Sous son règne, l'Irak et l'Iran se sont livrés une guerre qui a fait environ un million de morts dans les années 1980.

AFP

AU KURDISTAN D'IRAK, JALAL TALABANI SE BAT POUR SA SURVIE POLITIQUE

SOULEIMANIYEH (Irak), 17 mai 2010 (AFP)

LE PRÉSIDENT IRAKIEN Jalal Talabani, dont la survie politique est menacée dans son fief du Kurdistan, veut rajeunir et assainir son parti, après des récents revers électoraux face à des dissidents qui accusent la direction d'être vieillie et corrompue.

L'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK) organise début juin à Souleimaniyeh, le troisième congrès depuis sa création en 1975, après une scission du mouvement historique kurde, le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK).

"Nous faisons face à des développements politiques et idéologiques importants et le but du congrès est d'établir une nouvelle politique basée sur cette nouvelle réalité", a affirmé à l'AFP Aref Qourbani, un responsable des médias à l'UPK.

"Je pense que l'on assistera à des changements, notamment l'accession des jeunes et de femmes à la direction", a-t-il ajouté.

La "nouvelle réalité" dont parle M. Qourbani signifie en termes pudiques la plus grave crise de l'histoire de l'UPK. Une partie de son électorat, traditionnellement urbain, déçue par des années de clientélisme et de corruption, s'est tournée vers un nouveau parti d'opposition, Goran.

Ce mouvement dirigé par Noucherwan Moustapha a été créé en 2009 par d'anciens membres de l'UPK las de voir leurs demandes de réformes renvoyées aux calendes grecques. Il est allé chasser sur les terres traditionnelles de M. Talabani, s'imposant en un an comme le deuxième courant politique au Kurdistan après les deux partis traditionnels.

"Tout le monde reconnaît que Goran est devenu une réelle force politique dans la région", lance satisfait Moustapha Sayyid Qader, du bureau politique de cette jeune formation.

L'autre péril pour Jalal Talabani est la perte de terrain face à son allié et vieux rival, le puissant président du Kurdistan, Massoud Barzani.

Ennemis farouches pendant plus de 20 ans, Talabani et Barzani se sont lancés

dans une guerre sanglante entre 1994 et 1998 autour du contrôle des rentes des routes de contrebande qui avait tourné d'abord à l'avantage de Talabani avant qu'ils ne signent des accords sur un partage du pouvoir au Kurdistan.

Mais aujourd'hui, c'est Massoud Barzani qui a pris l'ascendant en préférant rester maître chez lui et en laissant Jalal Talabani aller à Bagdad devenir en 2006 le chef de l'Etat irakien.

"L'UPK connaît une situation difficile et sans changement radical dans sa politique et son organisation, il se réduira à une seule famille", les Talabani qui ont la mainmise sur le parti, explique Sardar Mohammed un journaliste kurde.

Pour M. Qader, les soupçons de corruption n'expliquent pas seuls la perte de la popularité de l'UPK. "Il y a les promesses non tenues pendant des années en premier lieu sur les zones disputées dont Kirkouk, l'absence de services de base aux citoyens alors qu'il y a de l'argent dans les caisses", dit-il.

Les Kurdes veulent annexer la ville pétrolière de Kirkouk et d'autres zones disputées à leur province, devenue autonome après la guerre du Golfe en 1991, ce que le gouvernement de Bagdad rejette.

Reste à savoir, si l'UPK est capable d'une telle mutation. "Je ne crois pas qu'il y aura de grands changements, ni dans la politique, ni dans la structure du parti", estime Assos Hardi, journaliste et fondateur d'un des trois journaux indépendants kurdes "Awini".

"Au contraire, il est probable que ce congrès ne fasse que consacrer le pouvoir absolu" de Jalal Talabani, ajoute-t-il.

Personne ne devrait en effet briguer la direction face à lui. "Jusqu'à présent, il n'y a aucun concurrent à Talabani et je ne crois pas qu'il y en aura", affirme Farid Assasrad, un membre de la direction du mouvement.



La plus sanglante journée depuis 2010 en Irak

L'Irak a connu lundi sa journée la plus sanglante depuis le début de l'année avec la mort d'au moins 77 personnes alors que 250 ont été blessées dans des attentats contre des ouvriers d'une usine et les forces de sécurité.

Ces violences surviennent alors que le pays est toujours sans nouveau gouvernement plus de deux mois après les élections législatives du 7 mars, et trois semaines après la mort des deux principaux chefs de la branche irakienne d'Al-Qaïda tués dans une opération conjointe irako-américaine.

Une voiture piégée à Bassora

Sept personnes ont été tuées et 18 blessées dans une attaque à la voiture piégée à Bassora (sud) lundi, journée la plus sanglante de l'année en Irak avec une série d'attentats qui ont fait 77 morts, a-t-on appris de source policière. L'explosion s'est produite en début de soirée, vers 18h00 locales (15h00 GMT), sur un marché fréquenté du centre de Bassora, ville portuaire située à 450 kilomètres au sud de Bagdad.

Attentat le plus meurtrier à Hilla : au moins 36 morts

Les attentats les plus sanglants ont frappé Hilla, à 95 km au sud de Bagdad. Deux voitures piégées garées dans le parking d'une usine de textile ont explosé à la sortie d'usine des employés.

Quand les policiers et les ambulanciers sont arrivés sur les lieux, un kamikaze s'est lancé sur la foule et les secouristes, dans une tactique utilisée fréquemment pour faire le plus de victimes possible.

Au moins 36 personnes ont été tuées et 140 blessées dans cette triple attaque, a indiqué un responsable au ministère de l'Intérieur à Bagdad.

« Nous avons reçu des informations sur la



présence de voitures piégées à Hilla et sommes partis à leur recherche. Nous avons entendu des explosions », a affirmé un officier de police de la ville sous couvert de l'anonymat.

« Nous nous sommes rendus à l'usine et avons vu beaucoup de dégâts, des corps et des personnes ensanglantées », a-t-il ajouté.

Attentat à Souwayra : 11 morts

Quelques heures plus tôt, une bombe a explosé près d'une mosquée chiite dans la ville de Souwayra, à 60 km au sud de Bagdad. Des passants ont accouru pour secourir les premières victimes quand une voiture piégée a explosé sur les lieux. Onze personnes ont été tuées et 70 blessées, selon une source policière.

Attentats à la bombe à Bagdad

À Bagdad, des tirs et des attentats à la bombe ont visé pendant une heure et demie le matin des points de contrôle militaires faisant neuf morts et 24 blessés, en majorité des membres des forces de sécurité, a indiqué le ministère de l'Intérieur.

« Il s'agit d'opérations coordonnées qui font partie des actions terroristes auxquelles doivent faire face quotidiennement les forces de sécurité », a dit le porte-parole du commandement militaire de Bagdad, Qassem Atta, en commentant les attaques à Bagdad.

Selon lui, les assaillants étaient déguisés

en ouvriers municipaux de la voirie.

Plus de 11.500 policiers et militaires ont été tués depuis l'invasion de l'Irak conduite par les Etats-Unis en 2003.

Parmi les autres victimes de cette journée sanglante, figurent un civil et trois gardes du corps du maire de la ville de Tarmiya (45 km au nord de Bagdad), Mohammed Jassem al Mashhadani, dont le convoi a été visé par une bombe. Le maire a été blessé dans l'attaque avec 15 autres personnes.

Attentat à Fallouja : 4 morts

À Fallouja, un ancien bastion d'Al-Qaïda à l'ouest de Bagdad, quatre personnes, dont deux policiers, ont été tuées dans des attentats contre des maisons de membres des forces de sécurité.

2 morts à Iskandariya

À Iskandariya, à 50 km au sud de Bagdad, deux personnes ont été tuées par l'explosion d'une bombe dans un magasin de primeurs et deux combattants kurdes ont péri dans un attentat suicide à la voiture piégée près de Mossoul, à 350 km au nord de Bagdad.

Il s'agit des attaques les plus sanglantes en Irak depuis le 8 décembre quand au moins 127 dans cinq attentats à Bagdad.

Ces violences ont lieu alors que le gouvernement du Premier ministre sortant Nouri al-Maliki continue d'expédier les affaires courantes, le résultat des législatives n'ayant pas encore été validé par la Cour suprême, et les partis, dont aucun ne dispose de la majorité absolue, n'ayant pas réussi jusqu'à présent à s'entendre sur un nouveau cabinet.

En avril, les autorités irakiennes et américaines avaient infligé un coup dur à Al-Qaïda en Irak après la mort des principaux chefs du groupe Abou Omar al-Bagdadi et Abou Ayyoub al-Masri.

(D'après AFP)



UN SOLDAT TURC TUÉ PAR UN ENGIN EXPLOSIF POSÉ PAR LES REBELLES KURDES

DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 10 mai 2010 (AFP)

UN SOLDAT TURC a été tué et un autre blessé lundi dans le sud-est de la Turquie par un engin explosif posé selon les forces de sécurité par les rebelles kurdes, a-t-on appris de source sécuritaire.

L'attentat est le dernier incident meurtrier dans la région entre forces de sécurité et rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) depuis la fin de l'hi-

ver, qui permet aux rebelles de se déplacer dans les montagnes, avec la fonte des neiges.

Il s'est produit près du village de Daglica, dans la province de Hakkari, près de la frontière avec l'Irak, lors d'une opération lancée vendredi dans la région après une attaque des rebelles contre un poste de l'armée, selon la même source.

Après l'attaque de vendredi, dans laquelle deux soldats et cinq rebelles ont été tués, des hélicoptères de combat turcs ont pilonné des positions rebelles, dans le nord de l'Irak.

L'armée turque effectue des raids aériens à travers la frontière contre le PKK depuis décembre 2007, souvent avec l'aide des services du renseignement américain, et elle a effectué une incursion terrestre d'une semaine dans le nord de l'Irak, en février 2008.



Iran: la population réagit vivement à l'exécution de cinq prisonniers politiques, grèves

13 MAI 2010 — Iran Focus

A la suite de la pendaison de cinq prisonniers politiques dimanche dernier, la population des provinces du Kurdistan et d'Azerbaïdjan de l'ouest, notamment dans les villes de Sanandaj, Boukan, Saghez, Marivan, Mahabad, Piranchahr, Bidjar, Makou, Chonou et Divandareh, s'est mise en grève, rapporte un communiqué de la Résistance organisée (Cnri).

Les militants kurdes Chirine Alam-Houli, Farzad Kamangar, Ali Heydarian, Farhad Vakili et l'opposant Mehdi Eslamian ont été pendus le 9 mai à la prison d'Evine de Téhéran.

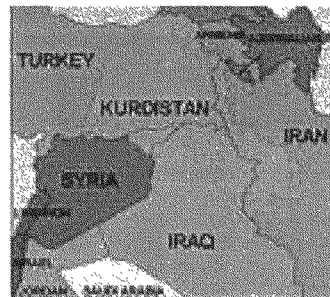
Selon le communiqué, à Piranchahr, la population est descendue dans la rue et a affronté les forces de sécurité. Elle protestait contre les pendaisons

et la délocalisation du bazar frontalier à la ville de Mohammad-Yar de Naghadeh. Les manifestants ont incendié les véhicules de sécurité et rossé le gouverneur et le député local.

A Dehgolan, en lançant des slogans hostiles au pouvoir, la jeunesse courageuse a lancé une manifestation et s'est heurtée aux agents qui chargeaient le cortège. Pour empêcher la manifestation de se développer, les agents ont tiré sur la foule.

A Boukan, la place principale et de très nombreuses rues débordent de forces de sécurité, d'agents de renseignement et en civil pour empêcher toute manifestation.

A Kamiaran et Marivan tous les magasins sont fermés et en grève. La plupart des enfants ne sont pas allés en cours et les écoles sont pratiquement



vides.

A Sanandaj, tous les commerces de la place Enghelab, des centres commerciaux, de la rue Chahpour et du bazar couvert sont fermés et en grève.



PROTESTATION AU KURDISTAN IRAKIEN APRÈS L'ASSASSINAT D'UN JOURNALISTE

SOULEIMANIYEH (Irak), 13 mai 2010 (AFP)

PLUSIEURS dizaines de journalistes ont protesté jeudi devant une annexe du Parlement kurde à Souleimaniyeh contre l'assassinat récent d'un jeune journaliste, qui fut un critique acerbe des partis au pouvoir dans la région autonome.

Cet assassinat a provoqué la colère d'une grande partie de l'opinion kurde qui a organisé plusieurs manifestations ces derniers jours pour réclamer l'arrestation des coupables.

"Nous poursuivons les manifestations populaires pour demander une enquête et connaître les meurtriers du journaliste Sardasht Osman", a affirmé à l'AFP Kamal Raouf, le rédacteur en chef du journal kurde Oulati.

Sardasht Osman, 22 ans, étudiant en langue et littérature anglaise mais aussi journaliste pour plusieurs publications kurdes, a été enlevé le 4 mai sur le campus de son université à Erbil par des hommes armés. Son corps a été retrouvé plus de 24 heures plus tard avec une balle dans la tête.

"Nous demandons la création d'une commission indépendante pour enquêter sur le meurtre mais nous exigeons aussi la démission du ministre de l'Intérieur

(du gouvernement local kurde), Karim Sanjari, et des responsables de la sécurité à Erbil", a ajouté le journaliste.

M. Raouf a également accusé le Parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK) du président de la région autonome, Massoud Barzani, d'être responsable de la mort du journaliste, qui avait sévèrement critiqué le PDK avant qu'il ne soit assassiné.

La présidence du Kurdistan a condamné cet assassinat, affirmant dans un communiqué qu'une "enquête est en cours" et que "les identités des responsables de cette attaque ne sont pas encore claires".

Dans un de ses articles les plus critiques et intitulé "J'aime la fille de Massoud Barzani", publié dans le Kurdistan Post, il condamnait la corruption des dirigeants kurdes, se mettant en scène sous la forme d'un rêve.

"Quand je deviendrais le gendre de Barzani, la nuit de noce se déroulera à Paris et nous visiterons le palais de notre oncle pour plusieurs jours aux Etats-Unis. Nous quitterons nos rues pauvres d'Erbil pour aller vivre dans les beaux quartiers et je serai protégé la nuit par des chiens policiers américains et des gardes israéliens", a-t-il notamment écrit.

Dans un autre récent article, il faisait état des menaces de mort qu'il venait de recevoir.

"Au cours des derniers jours on m'a dit que je n'avais plus longtemps à vivre et que les bouffées d'air que je respirais étaient les dernières", a-t-il écrit. Mais, a-t-il ajouté de manière prémonitrice, "je me fiche de la mort et de la torture et j'attendrai ma mort et le dernier rendez-vous avec mes assassins".



TIRS D'ARTILLERIE IRANIENS CONTRE DES ZONES DU KURDISTAN IRAKIEN

SOULEIMANIYEH (Irak), 16 mai 2010 (AFP)

L'ARTILLERIE IRANIENNE a bombardé dans la nuit de samedi à dimanche plusieurs zones agricoles du Kurdistan irakien que Téhéran soupçonne d'abriter des indépendantistes kurdes iraniens, a indiqué un responsable local.

Ces tirs interviennent trois jours après des heurts entre les forces irakiennes et iraniennes dans une zone frontalière et la capture d'un officier irakien qui a été depuis relâché.

"De 18H00 (15H00 GMT) samedi à ce matin, les forces iraniennes ont tiré à l'artillerie sur les villages Khanawa, Totma, Marado, Sourkan et Nalia Rach (...) pro-

voquant d'importants dégâts dans des terrains agricoles et des pertes de têtes de bétail", a affirmé aux journalistes le responsable administratif kurde de la zone, Azad Oussou.

Selon l'Iran, le PJAK, le "parti pour une vie libre au Kurdistan", est un mouvement séparatiste kurde iranien qui opère en Iran à partir de bases établies dans les montagnes du Kurdistan irakien.

Il est lié au Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), qui lutte depuis 1984 contre le gouvernement turc dans le sud-est anatolien.

En mai 2009, des hélicoptères iraniens avaient bombardé pour la première fois trois villages kurdes du nord de l'Irak, visant des indépendantistes du PJAK.

REUTERS 

Iraq recount 50 percent done; Kurds form one bloc

BAGHDAD - May 9, 2010 - (Reuters) -By Aseel Kami

IRAQ'S PARLIAMENTARY election results have not changed significantly as the result of a recount of 2.5 million ballots that has now reached the halfway point, an elections official said on Sunday.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's predominantly Shi'ite coalition demanded the recount of ballots in Baghdad, alleging fraud after finishing second in the March 7 vote, two seats behind a cross-sectarian bloc headed by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, a secular Shi'ite.

The inconclusive result raised concerns of renewed sectarian violence in a power vacuum as politicians jockey for position to pull together a parliamentary majority before a U.S. troop reduction this summer, and full withdrawal by the end of 2011.

The recount, which began last Monday, is expected to be finished on Friday, said Faraj al-Haidari, head of the Independent High Electoral Commission. Baghdad holds more than 20 percent of the seats in Iraq's 325-member parliament.

"It is possible that there might be a change in a couple of votes here and there," Haidari said. "Change is ... acceptable up to 4 percent and so far the vote count allocation has not changed by even 1 percent."

Allawi's Iraqiya coalition rode strong support from Iraq's minority Sunnis to gain 91 parliamentary seats compared to 89 for

Maliki's State of Law bloc.

State of Law announced last week a tie-up with the Iran-friendly Iraqi National Alliance, which finished third with 70 seats, to form the largest grouping in parliament.

Minority Kurds, who are expected to be a partner in any government, on Sunday announced a long-expected merger between their main coalition and a sprinkling of smaller parties. The merger would give them around 57 seats in the next parliament.

The alliance "allows Kurds to speak with one voice" on issues like the city of Kirkuk, which Kurds want incorporated into their semi-autonomous northern enclave, said Kurdish regional president Masoud Barzani.

Allawi has warned that an alliance of the two major Shi'ite blocs that excludes Iraqiya could anger Sunnis and spark renewed violence as U.S. troops prepare to end combat operations in August and pull out completely next year.

Some Kurdish leaders have indicated they are more likely to join a Shi'ite-led coalition than the one headed by Allawi.

Both majority Shi'ites and Kurds were brutally repressed by Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein, and Kurds have strained relations with some Arab nationalists in Allawi's fold.

IHEC said on Sunday it would send the voting results from 17 of Iraq's 18 provinces, excluding only Baghdad, to the supreme court for a final certification.

Iraq's presidency council suggested such a move last week as a way of speeding up the approval of the final results.

Diplomats have expressed concern about the time it is taking to certify the election result, let alone form a government.

REUTERS 

Iran hangs five members of Kurdish "terrorist" group

TEHRAN - May 9, 2010 - (Reuters)

IRAN hanged five members of a Kurdish "anti-revolutionary" group for various charges, including "moharebe" or waging war against God, the official IRNA news agency reported Sunday

Farzad Kamangar, Ali Haydarian, Farhad Vakili, Shirin Alam-Houli and Mehdi Eslamian were members of the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK), an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which took up arms in 1984 for an ethnic homeland in southeast Turkey and northwest Iran.

"The five, including one woman, were hanged inside Tehran's Evin prison Sunday morning ... They confessed carrying out deadly terrorist operations in the country in the past years," IRNA said.

Iran sees PJAK, which seeks autonomy for Kurdish areas in Iran and shelters in Iraq's northeastern border provinces, as a terrorist group.

In recent years, Iranian forces have often clashed with PJAK guerrillas, who operate out of bases in northern Iraq. Kurds are large minorities in Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Syria.

The five Kurdish activists were convicted in 2008. They were hanged after a Supreme Court upheld their death sentences.

IRNA said three of them were founders of PJAK group in Iran and were also involved in bombings that killed members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards, an elite force that is separate from Iran's regular armed forces.

"Kamangar, Heidarian and Vakili started their armed activities to overthrow the Islamic establishment in 2003 by creating PJAK group in Iran," IRNA said, quoting their indictment.

"Four of them were also involved in a deadly mosque bombing (in the central city of Shiraz) in 2008."

The blast killed 14 people.

IRNA said Alam-Houli confessed to links with PJAK and that she had received orders from the group to carry out "terrorist" acts to create instability in Iran.

"She was arrested when trying to plant a bomb underneath a vehicle near the Guards' headquarter in Tehran," it said.

Like Iraq and Turkey, Iran has a large Kurdish minority, mainly living in the Islamic Republic's northwest and west. The United States, Iran's arch foe, in February 2009 also branded PJAK as a terrorist organization.

The Islamic republic is locked in a dispute with the United States and its allies over its nuclear energy program which Washington fears will allow Tehran to develop nuclear weapons. Iran denies any such intention.



President Barzani Announces Formation of Coalition of Kurdistan Lists

09/05/2010

Remarks by President Barzani following his meeting with the winning lists of the March election from Kurdistan

Fellow citizens,

Pursuant to the formation of a democratic, federal and constitutional Iraq, in accordance with the provision of constitutional rights of the people of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, the winning Kurdistan lists of the March 7 elections have held a series of important meetings in order to unify their positions on all prominent matters in the Iraqi Parliament, particularly Article 140 of the Constitution. Today, after we collectively reached a conclusion, the winning lists have decided to form an entity, which shall be known as the "Coalition of Kurdistan Lists." This coalition will be a helpful factor to unify the positions of the political forces of the Kurdistan Region in order to work effectively and strongly to ensure our rights within a federal Iraq on the basis of partnership, consensus and commitment to the Constitution.

Fellow citizens, Iraq is facing a challenging and complex time. The creation of such a coalition is a big step towards ensuring democracy and the development of the political process. It is also a grand step towards sorting out the Kurdish house. As such, the coalition shall consist of the Kurdistan Alliance List,



the Change Movement, the Kurdistan Islamic Union and the Kurdistan Islamic Society. This coalition has decided to create a higher commission to carry out its affairs, whose decisions will be made on the basis of consensus.

The coalition has also drafted, along with bylaws, an effective program for negotiations in Baghdad so to participate in the formation of Iraq's next government. The Coalition of Kurdistan Lists hereby frankly declares that it is prepared, with utmost responsibility, to participate in the political dialogue process with all other Iraqi entities and coalitions for the purpose of ending Iraq's current crisis and in order to expedite the next government's formation on the basis of partnership and inclusiveness.

The coalition is prepared on the basis of common vision, to negotiate with those Iraqi lists and coalitions whose platforms resemble that of the Coalition of Kurdistan Lists. Finally those with whom we work ought be committed to Iraq's Constitution.

*Masoud Barzani
President of the Kurdistan of Iraq*

Insurgent attacks target Shiite areas in Iraq; 100 killed

AP Associated Press

BAGHDAD — May 11, 2010

By Rebecca Santana and Lara Jakes, The Associated Press

A man with explosives strapped to his body blew himself up in a crowd, bombers struck a southern city and gunmen sprayed fire on security checkpoints in attacks Monday that killed at least 100 people -- most of them in Shiite areas -- in Iraq's deadliest day this year.

Officials were quick to blame insurgents linked to al-Qaida in Iraq for the shootings in the capital, saying the militants were redoubling efforts to destabilize the country at a time of political uncertainty over who will control the next government.

Shiite Vice President Adel Abdul-Mahdi stressed the importance of quickly forming a government that does not exclude any major political group to try to prevent insurgents from exploiting Iraq's fragile security.

More than two months after the March 7 election, Iraq's main political factions are still struggling to put together a ruling coalition. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Shiite bloc has tried to squeeze out election front-runner Ayad Allawi -- a secular Shiite who was heavily backed by Sunnis -- by forging an alliance last



week with another religious Shiite coalition. The union, which is just four seats short of a majority in parliament, would likely lead to four more years of a government dominated by Shiites -- much like the current one.

Sunni anger at Shiite domination of successive governments was a key reason behind the insurgency that sparked sectarian warfare in 2006 and 2007. If Mr. Allawi is perceived as not getting his fair share of power, that could, in turn, outrage the Sunnis who supported him and risk a resurgence of sectarian violence.

The relentless cascade of bombings and shootings -- hitting at least 10 cities and towns as the day unfolded -- also raised questions about whether Iraqi security forces can protect the country as the United States prepares to withdraw half of its remaining

92,000 troops in Iraq over the next four months.

The United States and Iraq have claimed major blows again al-Qaida in Iraq in the last month -- most notably, the killings of two militant leaders, Abu Omar al-Baghdadi and Abu Ayyub al-Masri, in an April 18 raid on their safehouse near Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit.

But U.S. Maj. Gen. Stephen Lanza, the top military spokesman in Iraq, said Monday's attacks show that "there is a threat out there that we have to be concerned about, and the threat is still capable."

The violence began before dawn in Baghdad in a series of attacks against checkpoints and patrols, targeting security forces. Gunmen disguised as cleaners used weapons fixed with silencers to spray security forces with bullets. At least 10 people died.

Most casualties were in two Shiite-dominated cities, where wounded victims screamed their fury at the government for failing to protect them.

The worst violence hit the Shiite city of Hillah, capital of Babil province, 60 miles south of Baghdad. First, bombs in two parked cars near a textile factory exploded as workers were leaving it around midday, said Babil provincial police spokesman Maj.

Muthana Khalid. Then, as rescuers and workers were trying to aid the injured, a suicide attacker, explosives strapped to his body, blew himself up in the crowd.

At least 45 people were killed and dozens more injured, said Maj. Khalid and al-Hillah hospital director Zuhair al Khafaji.

In another Shiite city, the southern port of Basra, three bombs, including one that targeted a marketplace, killed at least 16 people, hospital and police officials said.

A pair of bombs struck the small town of Suwayrah, 25 miles south of Baghdad, killing 11. Three bombings in the town of Abu Ghraib, west of Baghdad, killed at least six people. Twelve more were killed in five separate attacks stretching from the northern city of Mosul to the western city of Fallujah, in Anbar province, to the Shiite city of Musayyib, south of Baghdad.

The attack in Mosul killed at least two people near a checkpoint run by Iraqi security forces, Kurdish security forces and U.S. troops.

The Boston Globe May 12, 2010

Protesters Want Justice For Dead Kurdish Reporter

More Than A Thousand Protesters Rally In Northern Iraq Against Killing Of Kurdish Reporter

SULAIMANIYAH, Iraq (AP)

More than a thousand Kurds poured into the streets of the northern Iraqi city of Sulaimaniyah Wednesday in a growing wave of outrage, blaming authorities for the kidnapping and murder of a young Kurdish journalist.

Throngs of protesters waving banners and carrying pictures of 23-year-old Sardasht Othman marched through the city in the largest protest yet since the discovery of Othman's body May 3. There have been nearly a dozen demonstrations over the past week in Iraq's Kurdish autonomous region calling for his killers to be brought to justice.

Othman was snatched in front of the campus of University of Salahuddin in the regional capital of Irbil, and his handcuffed and bullet-riddled body was found four days later.

"We accuse the Democratic Party and its security forces of assassinating Sardasht because they are in full control of Irbil," said writer Nabaz Goran, referring to the Kurdish party running the capital.

Protesters carried banners calling on authorities to "reveal the truth" about Othman's death, while others wore black shrouds and chanted "we want freedom."

Othman's death has drawn new attention to long-standing allegations of government-sanctioned abuse of media and freedom of expression in the self-rule region. International press watchdog groups have expressed concern over res-



trictions placed on journalists.

Authorities rejected any involvement in Othman's death and called on the protesters to wait for the results of an investigation.

The accusations have particularly focused on the Kurdish Democratic Party of President Massoud Barzani. The party controls Irbil and has been accused by international rights groups of being intolerant of criticism.

Goran, the writer, said he was beaten by KDP security for criticizing local officials and had to flee to Sulaimaniyah, which is controlled by a rival Kurdish party.

Othman was a reporter for the biweekly Ashtiname newspaper and contributed to a number of Kurdish websites, often writing about corruption, according to the online Kurdistan Post, to which he

also contributed. He reportedly had received threats over his articles.

His friends say he particularly enraged authorities with a piece he wrote for the Kurdistan Post saying the only way to become successful in such a nepotistic society would be to marry the president's daughter.

His supporters say his body was dumped outside the Kurdish region in Mosul, which has been a haven for al-Qaida in Iraq, to shift the focus away from Kurdish authorities.

"There are 11 checkpoints between Irbil and Mosul and it would be difficult to pass them with a dead body in the car unless vehicle belongs to the government," Karawan Saleh, a member in the security committee of Kurdish parliament, told The AP.

EDITORIAL: Iran hangs a little fish

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

A year ago, The Washington Times helped bring the world's attention to the plight of Farzad Kamangar, a Kurdish school-teacher wrongly accused of being a terrorist by the Islamic regime in Tehran. He spent almost four years of physical and mental torture in Iran's prison system. Mr. Kamangar's suffering ceased Sunday at the end of a hangman's noose. He was 34 years old.

Mr. Kamangar was killed along with four other "moharebs" or "enemies of God," whom the regime said were "convicted of carrying out terrorist acts." Three of the cases were still undergoing mandatory review when the executions were rushed through. Phone connections to Tehran's infamous Evin Prison were cut over the weekend while the executions were prepared and carried out. The regime did not notify the families or defense attorneys of the condemned in advance, as required by law - they learned of the execution from a press release. For a regime that claims to be the instrument of God, it behaved more like a criminal cabal with something to hide.

Mr. Kamangar's crime was being a Kurd. He taught at an elementary school in the northwestern Iranian city of Kamyaran, where he was a member of the Kurdistan Teachers Union and wrote for various underground human rights publications. He secretly taught his Kurdish students their banned language and told stories about their culture and history. He was arrested in July 2006 and subjected to beatings, whippings, electric shocks, malnourishment, sleep deprivation, and solitary confinement in

cold, squalid cells. His cries of torment were drowned out by loud tapes playing passages from the Koran.

Mr. Kamangar was given a five-minute trial in February 2008. His lawyer, Khalil Bahramian, told The Washington Times by phone from Iran last year that there was "absolutely no evidence against Farzad that connects him to a terrorist group or activity." Farzad, he said, "is a teacher, a poet, a journalist, a human rights activist and a special person." And no such evidence was presented to the court, or was needed for it to make its perfunctory, predetermined ruling.

In his final letter from prison, Mr. Kamangar related the Iranian story "The Little Black Fish," written in 1967 by the dissident teacher Samad Behrangi, which tells the story of a little fish who defies the rules of his community to embark on a journey to discover the sea. Through many adventures, the little black fish finds freedom, but also an untimely death. "Is it possible to be a teacher and not show the path to the sea to the little fish of the country?" he wrote. "Is it possible to carry the heavy burden of being a teacher and be responsible for spreading the seeds of knowledge and still be silent? Is it possible to see the lumps in the throats of the students and witness their thin and malnourished faces and keep quiet? ... I cannot imagine witnessing the pain and poverty of the people of this land and fail to give our hearts to the river and the sea, to the roar and the flood."

Mr. Kamangar wrote, "The Little Fish calmly swam in the sea and thought: Facing death is not hard for me, nor do I regret it."



Iran: Kurds' execution will fuel unrest

TEHRAN, May 10, 2010 —United Press International

THE reported execution of four Kurdish rebels in Iran is likely to fuel the widespread unrest the Islamic Republic is grappling with in its border provinces as it confronts the United States over Tehran's nuclear program.

The Kurds were sentenced to death in 2008 for belonging to a Kurdish separatist group called the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan, or PEJAK, which is fighting for Kurdish autonomy, and for carrying out bombings.

PEJAK is the Iranian arm of the Kurdistan Workers Party, or PKK, which is fighting for an autonomous Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey, and has bases in northern Iraq.

The Kurds were hanged in Tehran's notorious Evin Prison along with an ethnic Iranian sentenced to death for participating in the bombing of a Shiite religious center in 2008.

Sepah News, the agency run by Iran's powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, reported Wednesday that five Kurdish separatists were killed in a gun battle with the guards in the city of Dalahu in Iran's Kurdish zone.

The Tehran regime has been fighting Kurdish separatists in a low-intensity conflict in northwestern Iran along the border with Iraq since the Islamic Revolution in 1979.

But in recent years ethnic armed insurrection has broken out in other border province such as Sistan-Baluchistan in the southeast on the Afghan frontier and in Arab-dominated Khuzestan in the

southwest, the center of Iran's oil industry. There is also unrest in Azerbaijan.

Tehran claims these uprisings by largely Sunni Muslims against the Shiite-dominated state are funded and armed by the United States, Britain and Israel.

The fighting with the Kurdish separatists has worsened in recent months amid persistent reports that the Israelis are active in supporting the rebels.

Three Revolutionary Guards were killed by separatists in the town of Khoy in the Kurdish region near the Turkish border in late April following the assassination of the town's prosecutor weeks earlier.

In February, Iranian state media reported Ministry of Intelligence agents had killed four insurgents in an ambush near the Iraqi border. The slain separatists had reportedly killed three policemen Dec. 26.

The Revolutionary Guards regularly shell PEJAK bases in the Qandil Mountains of northeastern Iraq.

The insurgents in Sistan-Baluchistan, who are allegedly controlled by the Americans and Pakistan's intelligence services, have been fighting the central government since 2003 in one of Iran's poorest and most neglected provinces. The 4 million population is largely Sunni and accuses Tehran of repression.

The rebel group Jundullah, or Soldiers of God, assassinated half a dozen top Revolutionary Guard generals in a suicide bombing in the provincial capital, Zahedan, Oct. 18, 2009. It was the heaviest blow Jundullah had struck against the regime.

But the Guards and their covert operations wing retaliated Feb. 23

with the capture of Jundullah's founder and leader, Abdulmalik Rigi, in a clandestine operation outside the country.

In a televised confession, he claimed the CIA and its allies aided Jundullah. U.S. officials have dismissed that as political theater by the Iranians.

But his capture dealt a decisive and possibly deadly blow to the organization, which had emerged from what had started as a tribal revolt against the central government and became a secessionist movement with distinct ethnic and religious overtones.

Jundullah's activities have decreased sharply since Rigi was seized in what was a major triumph for the guards.

It remains to be seen whether the group will recover but it seems clear the group has been heavily infiltrated by the guards' highly effective intelligence arm.

"Rigi's capture bolstered Tehran's hand during a period when the

Islamic Republic continues to be subject to a U.S.-led campaign that threatens to impose harsh economic sanctions as punishment for its nuclear program," the Jamestown Foundation, a Washington think tank that monitors global security, said in a recent analysis.

There has been speculation that anti-regime activity will build up as Tehran braces for the threatened sanctions and a possible military strike by Israel.

"The United States is, in effect, conducting a secret war against Tehran, a covert campaign aimed at recruiting Iran's ethnic and religious minorities ... into a movement to topple the government in Tehran," says Justin Raimondo, editorial director of the Antiwar.com Web site.

"We are on a collision course with Tehran and both sides know it."

Guardian

13 May 2010

Death of Kurdish journalist must be explained

Zardasht Osman's kidnap and killing poses difficult questions for the Kurdish government and threatens regional stability



Ranj Alaaldin

It would be just another tragedy if it had taken place anywhere else in Iraq, but the killing of Zardasht Osman, a 23-year-old Kurdish freelance journalist and university student who was kidnapped, tortured and then found dead with bullet wounds has shocked the comparatively stable Kurdistan region of Iraq, where the authorities now have much explaining to do.

Osman, writing anonymously but later revealing his identity, had been critical of the authorities and the patronage and corruption that plague Kurdistan. He pushed the boundaries of freedom in the region by publishing a number of inflammatory articles, insulting senior officials of the ruling Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic party (KDP); and crossed the red line of local taboo by writing of his desire to marry President Massoud Barzani's daughter: a no-go area for any sane Kurd.

After publishing such articles, Osman faced intimidation and received death threats (as described by him in an article he wrote in December 2009). Three months later events culminated in his death and fingers are now pointed towards the Kurdistan regional government (KRG) and its security services or, at the very least, a group belonging to one of the ruling entities.

Many will argue that such accusations are not unfounded. Osman was kidnapped in broad daylight at his university in front of its armed security guards. His assailants threw him into a vehicle and met no resistance whatsoever. They were able to take him from the bustling and populated city of Erbil, pass through countless security checkpoints and then take him to the volatile and disputed territory of Mosul where they dumped his body the following night. Osman may have died during this journey, or in Mosul itself.

What makes this so remarkable is that Kurdistan's security and intelligence services are renowned for their tight grip; Kurdistan has suffered just one major terror attack since 2003, has eliminated jihadist terrorists and their cells, and its security forces have successfully created a haven safe for foreign invest-

ment and workers.

Protests have taken place in the past few days in Erbil and Sulaimaniyah, and more are expected. Recognising the severity of the issue and the potential it has to trigger greater protests of outrage on the Kurdish street, the KRG has established a commission to investigate Osman's killing and has called for calm as it does so.

It will have to convincingly answer the questions on most people's minds. First, why were the attackers able to abduct Osman as easily as they did? Second, why were Osman's complaints to the police and his university dean about the threats he received not followed through? And finally, after Osman had been abducted what steps did the authorities take to intercept the attackers? It defies logic that, after abducting Osman, the attackers could make a journey of at least three hours, pass through security checkpoints undeterred and unquestioned, find a safe house to torture their victim and then swiftly dump his body.

In other words, the KRG will have to go beyond merely attributing blame to individuals or a particular entity. Of course, there could be other reasons for Osman's killing but these do not sound very plausible. The operation to kill him was certainly audacious and, in normal circumstances, would have required the most sophisticated planning and the most cunning and exceptionally trained of attackers.

A statement on the KRG's website says the crime was "designed to undermine the security of the region", which could be an attempt to blame foreign entities. But the KRG would do well to avoid making such suggestions unless they can be substantiated – otherwise it could end up looking like the typical undemocratic governments of the world that blame "foreigners" for all their problems.

The sooner the commission establishes its findings, and convincingly so, the better it will be. Continued delay will swell the discontent, as well as provide the opposition movement, Change, with an opportunity to exploit the situation and seriously hurt the KDP and PUK, to the detriment of regional stability. If left unresolved, the situation could deteriorate to such an extent that the two ruling parties end up blaming each other – and that would be dangerous.

At least 95 are killed in attacks across Iraq

BAGHDAD

BY STEVEN LEE MYERS

A series of attacks in Baghdad and other cities across Iraq on Monday struck police and army checkpoints, as well as markets, a mayor's office and a textile factory. The violence appeared to be a coordinated rebuttal of assertions by Iraqi and American commanders that Al Qaeda in Iraq and other extremist groups had suffered debilitating blows in recent weeks.

The attacks, which killed at least 95 people and wounded hundreds, came in the midst of a protracted dispute over the results of parliamentary elections on March 7. Some officials blamed the political impasse for creating a security vacuum that extremists hoped to exploit.

One of Iraq's two vice presidents, Adel Abdul Mahdi, called for the quick formation of a new government to prevent "any attempt by terrorist gangs to use the circumstances in the country to hurt the Iraqi people and the armed forces."

Bahaa al-Araji, a member of the departing Parliament's security committee, blamed the security forces for unclear loyalties and the "arrogance" of the generals because of improved security that, he emphasized, the American military had achieved and Iraq's military was squandering.

The attacks began as the nightly curfew lifted in Baghdad at 5 a.m. and continued relentlessly through the day. Gunmen, dressed as street cleaners, ambushed 10 police and army checkpoints across the city, killing as many as nine soldiers and officers and wounding two dozen, according to officials.

Bombings soon followed in Falluja, Samarra, Tarmiya and Suwayrah, where a parked car exploded in a market, killing 11 and wounding 60. On Monday evening, a bomb struck in Mahmediya and three more exploded in Basra, the largely Shiite city southern Iraq, killing at least 20 people, according to preliminary reports.

The worst attack struck mid-afternoon in Hilla, a city 100 kilometers, or about 60 miles, south of Baghdad, near the ruins of Babylon. Two bombs hidden in parked cars exploded almost simultaneously in the parking lot of the Hilla

Iranians hang 5 Kurd activists as an example to protesters

NEW YORK

BY NAZILA FATHI

The Iranian government has hanged five Kurdish activists, including a woman, in the Evin prison in Tehran in what appeared to be an effort to intimidate protesters from marking the anniversary of huge anti-government rallies after the June 12 election last year.

The executions Sunday brought the total for the weekend to 11. Six men convicted of drug smuggling were hanged Saturday. For the past few years, Iran has had the highest number of government executions after China, according to Amnesty International.

Although the authorities announced that the five people executed Sunday had been found guilty of carrying out fatal bomb attacks, the executions were widely seen as intended to discourage people from rallying against the government on June 12. That will be the first anniversary of the re-election of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a vote many people believe was rigged.

At least four other activists, two Kurds and two protesters, were executed before another planned rally on Feb. 11. An

additional 11 anti-government protesters have been sentenced to death. Human rights activists have expressed alarm at the executions and worry that more might be planned because those Sunday, in February and in late 2009 were carried out hastily and without having been endorsed by Iran's Supreme Court.

"The executions show that this government resorts to any kind of terror and violence to put down any challenge to its authority," said Hadi Ghaemi, director of the International Campaign for Human Rights in Iran, which is based in New York. "This could lay the ground for the execution of postelection protesters."

The five hanged Sunday were sentenced in 2008 after they were convicted of "moharebeh," or waging war against God, ISNA news agency reported. The prosecutor said all had been convicted of "involvement in terrorism activities, bombings in government buildings and different parts of the country," ISNA said. The four men were identified as Ali Heidarian, Farhad Vakili, Mehdi Islami-an and Farzad Kamangar. The woman was identified as Shirin Elmholi, 28. She was arrested in 2008 and was charged with planting a bomb under a car that belonged to the Revolutionary Guards.

Textile Factory, a compound that employed 3,600 workers after a renovation paid for by the United States was completed last year. Workers were just leaving after work, compounding the toll, which rose to at least 35. More than 140 people were injured.

A third car exploded struck on moments later as rescue workers arrived.

By nightfall, Monday turned into the deadliest day of the year, surpassing the death toll from a series of bombings at Shiite mosques and neighborhoods last month.

The attacks underscored the ability of Iraq's extremist groups to mount catastrophic attacks, despite increased secu-

The Islamic State of Iraq vowed to keep waging war.

urity and a wave of arrests and killings last month of terrorist leaders, including the two commanders of Al Qaeda in Iraq.

The Islamic State of Iraq, an umbrella group that includes Al Qaeda's franchise here, acknowledged the loss of the two leaders, Abu Ayyud al-Masri and

Abu Omar al-Baghdadi, and vowed to keep waging war against "the Green Zone government" of Iraq. There were no immediate claims of responsibility for any of the attacks on Monday.

The bombing in Tarmiya, north of Baghdad, struck near the office of the town's mayor, killing three. The mayor, Mohammed Jassim, was among those wounded.

Mr. Jassim, a Sunni, belonged to a party allied with Iraqiya, the electoral coalition led a former prime minister, Ayad Allawi. Mr. Allawi's coalition won 91 seats in the new 325-member Parliament, but faces an uphill battle to become prime minister after Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki formed an alliance last week with another largely Shiite bloc.

With a recount of votes in Baghdad still under way, it could be weeks before final results are certified and negotiations begin to form a new government and elect a prime minister.

Le Monde
13 mai 2010

Les Etats-Unis envisagent de retarder leur départ d'Irak

Les insurgés multiplient leurs actions dans un pays en quête de gouvernement, alors que le retrait américain est amorcé

Les villes ciblées par les attentats du 10 mai



Une famille s'apprête à enterrer, mardi 11 mai à Najaf, l'une des victimes de la vague d'attentats de la veille. ALAA AL-MARJANI/AP

Une soixantaine d'attaques dans une dizaine de villes en douze heures. Au-delà du bilan humain qui est le plus lourd de l'année 2010 avec 119 morts et 500 blessés, le degré de sophistication et d'organisation montré, lundi 10 mai, par la guérilla à travers le pays a littéralement tétanisé l'Irak. Périodiquement donnés par le pouvoir central pour vaincus ou presque, les groupes rebelles djihadistes dominés par la franchise locale d'Al-Qaïda, et probablement aidés par des activistes de l'ancien régime baasiste, ont réussi, lundi, une série d'opéra-

tions comme on n'en avait plus vu depuis près de trois ans.

Coincidence qui n'en est pas une, ces attaques se produisent au moment où l'Irak, plus de deux mois après les élections générales du 7 mars, se cherche toujours un gouvernement viable et, surtout, au moment où les Américains s'apprêtent à plier bagage. Tandis que les partis politiques irakiens se querellent toujours sur les résultats et sur le choix d'un premier ministre, des convois américains de milliers de tonnes d'équipements prennent déjà nuitamment chaque semaine le chemin de la sortie via le Koweït au sud, et la Turquie au nord.

Les « troupes de combat » fortes de 42 000 hommes, encore présentes sur le territoire et n'agissant plus « qu'à la demande du gouvernement irakien », auront théoriquement quitté le pays dans quinze semaines. Selon les accords conclus fin 2008, les 50 000 soldats restants, logisticiens et « conseillers », doivent ensuite se retirer le 31 décembre 2011.

Jusqu'ici, après chaque vague d'attentats, la dernière remontant au 23 avril quand Al-Qaïda en Irak, voulant venger la mort de ses deux principaux chefs tués cinq jours plus tôt dans un raid irako-américain, s'en était pris à la communau-

téchiite (72 morts à Bagdad), le commandement américain répète que son calendrier de retrait « n'est pas affecté ». Cette fois, prenant conscience de la gravité des événements, deux « hautes sources de l'administration », citées par l'agence américaine Associated Press, évoquent une « remise à plat de toutes les options, y compris la date butoir du 31 août ». Le retrait annoncé de 12 000 hommes chaque mois jusqu'au 31 août pourrait « commencer en juin, voire plus tard » et non en mai comme annoncé précédemment.

Beaucoup d'Irakiens craignent un retour aux années sanglantes de 2006-2007 quand les djihadistes occupaient des quartiers entiers de Bagdad ainsi que des localités et qu'ils avaient réussi, en multipliant les attentats contre les chiites, ce qui avait donné naissance à diverses milices armées, à déclencher une véritable guerre civile. Démantelées en 2008, certaines de ces milices d'autodéfense, dont la puissante et meurtrière Armée du Mahdi créée par le populaire prêcheur anti-américain Moqtada Al-Sadr, ont recommencé ces dernières semaines à se montrer dans certains quartiers de la capitale.

« Réveiller » les sunnites

En visant essentiellement des localités majoritairement chiites comme Bagdad, Hilla ou Bassora, deuxième ville du pays, les attentats du 10 mai, qui souhaitent aussi « fixer » le plus grand nombre possible de GI en Irak pour trouver des recrues et des financements à leur combat, recherchent toujours le même effet. « Il faut, disait naguère Zarkaoui, fondateur du réseau sunnite djihadiste en Irak, que des civils sunnites soient tués par les milices chiites afin que la communauté tout entière se réveille et nous rejoigne. »

Au moment où la minorité arabe sunnite d'Irak, qui a gouverné le pays jusqu'à la chute de Saddam Hussein en avril 2003, se montre inquiète de son avenir sous un gouvernement dominé par la majorité chiite, la stratégie d'Al-Qaïda qui considère le chiisme comme une déviance de l'islam n'a pas changé. Seules les tactiques évoluent.

Grande première depuis huit ans, plusieurs dizaines d'hommes déguisés en employés municipaux et équipés d'armes de poing à silencieux se sont permis, aux premières heures de l'aube du 10 mai, d'attaquer une dizaine de barrages militaro-policiers dans la capitale, tuant presque discrètement une

L'offensive d'Al-Qaïda

1^{er} février Une femme kamikaze explose au milieu de pèlerins chiites à Bagdad : 54 morts.

5 février Attentats coordonnés contre des pèlerins chiites à Kerbala : 40 morts.

3 mars Attaques de kamikazes à Baaqouba : 32 tués.

26 mars Double attentat contre un restaurant : 57 morts.

4 avril Des kamikazes attaquent 3 ambassades : 42 tués.

23 avril Attentats contre des mosquées et marchés chiites : 72 morts.

quinzaine de personnels en uniforme.

Bagdad et sa ceinture comptant plusieurs milliers de barrages, y piloter un véhicule bourré d'explosifs pour le faire exploser près d'un bâtiment public, une ambassade ou un hôtel est devenu, sauf à bénéficier de la complicité de certains employés de sécurité, plus ardu. Ce genre d'expédition est plus simple à réaliser dans des lieux moins en alerte comme Hilla, capitale de la province de Babylone, ou Bassora, principale ville du sud.

Avec une douzaine de véhicules piégés et une poignée de « candidats au martyre » qui n'interviennent que lorsque les secours et les badauds s'agglutinent autour d'un site ciblé, les commanditaires de ces attaques à double, voire triple détente, sont sûrs de faire le maximum de victimes. Il y a eu 45 morts et 140 blessés à Hilla, 30 tués et 80 blessés à Bassora. ■

Patrice Claude

Les forces irakiennes à nouveau accusées de « négligences »

LES 262 000 SOLDATS et les 500 000 policiers irakiens formés par les forces américaines et britanniques depuis huit ans sont-ils à la hauteur de leurs responsabilités ? Comme à chaque fois qu'une série d'attentats ensanglante le pays, la question est à nouveau posée à Bagdad, depuis lundi 10 mai. « *Ce qui s'est passé lundi, déclarait mardi Hussein Kamel, vice-ministre de l'intérieur, plus précisément chargé des organes de renseignement, est la conséquence de négligences des services de sécurité et de la faiblesse des mesures de contrôle aux barrages de Bagdad et*

d'ailleurs dans le pays. » Selon certaines sources, les chefs militaires et policiers avaient été avertis il y a deux semaines de possibilités d'attentats dans le Sud. Apparemment, aucune mesure de sécurité supplémentaire n'avait été prise. « *Les chefs des services vont devoir rendre des comptes* », a menacé le ministre.

Bahaa Al-Araji, membre de la commission parlementaire sortan-

te des affaires de sécurité, l'approuve et dénonce les « *loyautés diverses* » des forces de l'ordre – allusion aux milliers d'ex-miliciens, sunnites et chiites, entrés dans l'armée et la police tout en continuant d'obéir à leurs chefs communautaires ou religieux. Au moins 60 000 soldats et policiers ont été renvoyés des services ces trois dernières années pour ce motif.

« Arrogance » des généraux

Cette fois, selon le parlementaire, « *l'arrogance* » des généraux, née des succès précédents, serait également à blâmer. Fin 2009, suite à une série d'attentats contre les institutions de l'Etat en reconstruction, le premier ministre Nouri Al-Maliki, qui est aussi le commandant en chef des forces armées, avait limogé plusieurs dizaines d'officiers supérieurs, dont le chef de la sécurité globale pour la province de Bagdad.

Plus de 10 milliards de dollars (7,9 milliards d'euros), soit un septième du budget national, sont

consacrés cette année aux diverses forces de sécurité, hors marine et aviation, mais incluant 60 000 contractuels privés, essentiellement irakiens désormais.

Selon des officiers américains, il en faudrait moitié plus, car, au-delà de la corruption qui coûte cher – les officiers recevant encore chaque mois les soldes de leurs hommes en liquide, plusieurs dizaines d'entre eux ont été pris à gonfler artificiellement leur nombre pour mettre la différence dans leur poche –, les hommes sont plutôt mal équipés.

En 2008, l'Irak a ainsi acheté à Londres 60 millions de dollars de capteurs d'explosifs qui, selon des experts américains, « *ne détectent rien* ». Pour éviter d'avoir à fouiller chaque véhicule, ces capteurs électroniques, qui permettent de faire le tour d'un véhicule en dix secondes, sont toujours en vigueur à de nombreux barrages... ■

P. C.

La Croix | MERCREDI 19 MAI 2010

La France expulse un détenu réclamé par l'Iran

La libération d'Ali Vakili Rad, deux jours après le retour en France de Clotilde Reiss, laisse penser qu'il y a eu accord. Le Quai d'Orsay dément

L'Iranien Ali Vakili Rad a quitté la France hier, quelques heures à peine après avoir été libéré de la prison de Poissy. Expulsé, il a pris un vol direct en direction de l'Iran. Ce départ met un terme à son dossier judiciaire, mais pas aux questions soulevées par le fait que son expulsion intervient deux jours à peine après le retour en France de l'universitaire Clotilde Reiss, retenue durant dix mois en Iran.

Ali Vakili Rad faisait partie d'un trio ayant assassiné en 1991 à Suresnes, près de Paris, l'ancien premier ministre iranien en exil

Chapour Bakhtiar, ainsi que son secrétaire Sorouch Katibeh. Réfugié en France en 1979, après la révolution iranienne, Chapour Bakhtiar avait déjà fait l'objet d'un attentat manqué en 1980. Le 6 août 1991, Ali Vakili Rad et Mohammad Azati avaient réussi à s'introduire à son domicile, pourtant gardé par des policiers français, grâce à la trahison de Farydoun Boyerahmadi, un proche de Chapour Bakhtiar.

Arrêté quelques jours plus tard à Genève, tandis que ses complices réussissaient à s'enfuir, Ali Vakili Rad a été extradé vers la France et condamné en 1994 à la détention à perpétuité, assortie d'une peine incompressible de dix-huit ans. Durant toute sa détention, il s'est comporté comme un prisonnier modèle, a obtenu le 2 juillet 2009 la fin de sa période de sûreté et a

ensuite demandé sa libération conditionnelle. Hier matin, le tribunal d'application des peines de Paris a logiquement ordonné sa libération. Et l'arrêt d'expulsion a été aussitôt signé par le ministre de l'intérieur, Brice Hortefeux.

Le régime iranien avait lié le sort de Clotilde Reiss à celui de « détenus iraniens en France ».

Le régime iranien avait, par le passé, lié le sort de Clotilde Reiss à celui de « *détenus iraniens en France* », sans donner de noms. La coïncidence de date laisse penser qu'il y a eu un accord avec Téhéran pour échanger l'universitaire

française contre Ali Vakili Rad. Les suspensions sont également nées de la décision de la justice française de refuser d'extrader début mai Majid Kakavand vers les États-Unis. Cet ingénieur iranien, retenu en France depuis mars 2009, est accusé par Washington d'avoir fourni à son pays des composants électroniques ayant de possibles applications militaires.

Le Quai d'Orsay a assuré hier qu'il n'y avait eu « *aucun lien, aucun échange, aucune tractation de quelque nature que ce soit* ». L'avocat d'Ali Vakili Rad a, lui aussi, assuré que la libération de son client « *ne doit pas être considérée comme un échange* ». Celui de la famille de Chapour Bakhtiar à l'époque du procès, M^e Karim Lahidji, a pour sa part critiqué hier un « *marchandage avec un État terroriste* ».

ALAIN GUILLEMOLES

Le Monde
19 mai 2010

Vienne
Correspondante

Téhéran desserre la pression occidentale sur son programme nucléaire

Un accord conclu entre l'Iran, le Brésil et la Turquie complique l'adoption de nouvelles sanctions

L'Iran a ouvert une faille entre le Nord et le Sud sur la question controversée de son programme nucléaire, en signant un accord avec la Turquie et le Brésil, deux puissances émergentes désireuses d'affirmer leur rôle diplomatique. Cet accord va rendre plus difficile l'adoption de nouvelles sanctions – un but que les pays occidentaux poursuivent depuis des mois – pour contraindre le régime iranien à stopper ce programme.

Grâce à la médiation du président brésilien, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, et du premier ministre turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, venus pour l'occasion à Téhéran, l'Iran a accepté, lundi 17 mai, d'entreposer en Turquie 1200 kilogrammes d'uranium iranien faiblement enrichi (à 3,5%). En échange, la République islamique doit recevoir 120 kg de combustible destinés à sa centrale de recherche médicale, enrichi à 20% mais rendu impropre à un usage militaire.

C'est un retour au projet d'accord trouvé à Vienne, en octobre 2009, sous l'égide de l'Agence

internationale pour l'énergie atomique (AIEA) et de son directeur de l'époque, l'Égyptien Mohamed ElBaradei, qui espérait une percée avant de quitter son poste. Il avait réussi à convaincre les États-Unis, la France et la Russie de le cautionner pour amorcer une négociation de fond sur les activités d'enrichissement iraniennes.

«L'Iran, en acceptant la proposition turque et brésilienne, a montré sa bonne volonté», a souligné le chef du programme nucléaire iranien, Ali Akbar Salehi. *La balle est dans le camp des Occidentaux.* Mais, depuis la découverte de son programme nucléaire clandestin soupçonné de visées militaires, en 2003, Téhéran a habitué ses interlocu-

teurs aux déconvenues. Sitôt conclu, le document de Vienne avait été désavoué par les responsables iraniens, qui avaient pourtant pris soin de rappeler à plusieurs reprises que la proposition restait «sur la table».

Aux yeux des Occidentaux, Téhéran a aggravé son cas en commençant au mois de février l'enrichissement de l'uranium à 20%, un taux plus proche d'un seuil «militaire». Or M. Salehi a précisé que son pays allait poursuivre dans cette voie au mépris des résolutions du Conseil de sécurité des Nations unies, qui lui demandent d'arrêter toute activité de ce type. Un autre détail jette la suspicion:

si la quantité de 1200 kg d'uranium faiblement enrichi (UFE), en octobre, correspondait à plus de 70% des stocks iraniens, ils n'en représentent plus aujourd'hui que la moitié, le pays produisant quelque 100 kg par mois d'UFE.

L'accord de Téhéran a donc été perçu différemment au Nord et au Sud, l'optimisme de Brasilia et Ankara n'étant guère partagé de Washington à Moscou. Pour le président Lula, «la diplomatie sort victorieuse», tandis que pour le ministre turc des affaires étrangères, Ahmet Davutoglu, «il n'y a plus de fondements à de nouvelles sanctions» contre Téhéran.

Le Brésil et la Turquie sont membres non permanents du Conseil de sécurité, où la France, les États-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne et la Russie, malgré les réticences de Pékin, militent pour un durcissement envers l'Iran. Sollicitée pour soutenir de nouvelles sanctions, la Chine a salué l'accord, tout comme l'Égypte.

«D'après ce que je comprends», a indiqué le président russe, Dmitri Medvedev, «le processus [d'enrichissement en Iran] se poursuivra. Dans ce cas, les inquiétudes de la communauté internationale pourraient persister.» Washington, Londres, Paris et Berlin ont réagi dans la même tonalité, se gardant de rejeter l'accord, abordé à

Le chef du programme nucléaire iranien, Ali Akbar Salehi, précise que son pays va continuer à enrichir l'uranium à 20%

Madrid en marge du sommet Union européenne-Amérique latine, auquel étaient invités, mardi, le président Lula et aussi M. Erdogan.

«Le cœur du problème nucléaire



Le président brésilien, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, avec son homologue iranien, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, et le premier ministre turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, avant la signature de l'accord, lundi 17 mai, à Téhéran. VAHID SALEMI/AP

iranien, c'est la poursuite des activités d'enrichissement à Natanz, la construction du réacteur à eau lourde d'Arak, la dissimulation du site de Qom, les questions des inspecteurs de l'AIEA laissées sans réponse à ce jour», a insisté le porte-parole du Quai d'Orsay, Bernard Valero.

Les détails de l'accord doivent être précisés dans une lettre formelle de Téhéran à l'agence. Celle-ci prépare pour la fin mai un nouveau rapport sur l'Iran, avant la réunion de son conseil des gouverneurs où l'on avait déjà vu s'affronter, en novembre 2009, les tenants des sanctions et ceux qui y étaient opposés. En février, le premier rapport signé par le successeur de M. ElBaradei, le Japonais Yukiya Amano, évoquait de possibles expériences iraniennes sur des missiles à charge nucléaire.

Pour Israël, Téhéran cherche une fois de plus à gagner du temps.

Le président Lula a peut-être péché par « naïveté », a indiqué à l'Agence France-Presse un responsable israélien, sous couvert d'anonymat, alors que M. Erdogan – dont les rapports avec Israël se sont détériorés depuis la guerre de Gaza (décembre 2008-janvier 2009) s'est prêté de plein gré aux « manœuvres » iraniennes. Maintenant que ces deux pays sont impliqués dans l'accord, « il va être beaucoup plus difficile pour les Etats-Unis ou les Européens de [le] rejeter », a observé la même source.

« L'Iran a repris la main », constate Bruno Tertrais, de la Fondation pour la recherche stratégique. Selon lui, les Occidentaux devront désormais livrer « une grosse bataille de relations publiques », s'ils veulent convaincre de la nécessité de renforcer les sanctions contre Téhéran. ■

Joëlle Stolz

Les principaux points d'un accord limité

L'accord conclu, lundi 17 mai à Téhéran, entre l'Iran, la Turquie et le Brésil stipule que « la République islamique d'Iran accepte d'envoyer en dépôt 1200 kg d'uranium faiblement enrichi en Turquie. (...) L'Iran et l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA) pourront déployer des observateurs pour surveiller les conditions de sécurité de ce dépôt. L'Iran informera l'AIEA de cet accord sous sept jours. (...) Après réponse positive du groupe de Vienne (Etats-Unis, Russie, France, AIEA), les détails de l'échange du combustible feront

l'objet (...) d'un accord écrit » concernant « 120 kg de combustible nécessaire pour le réacteur de recherche de Téhéran (TRR) ».

Après cet accord, l'Iran enverra « sous un mois 1200 kg d'uranium faiblement enrichi et le groupe de Vienne s'engagera à fournir dans un délai d'un an à l'Iran 120 kg de combustible. Si les conditions de cette déclaration ne sont pas respectées, la Turquie s'engage à rendre à l'Iran sans condition et rapidement l'uranium faiblement enrichi ».

La Croix | MARDI 25 MAI 2010



Le « Gandhi » turc

Kemal Kiliçdaroglu

Nouveau patron du parti kémaliste

Kemal Kiliçdaroglu a été élu samedi à la tête du Parti républicain du peuple (CHP), la principale formation d'opposition. Cet ancien fonctionnaire pourrait bien changer la donne sur la scène politique turque.

Kemal Kiliçdaroglu était l'un des seuls samedi à ne pas porter de cravate lors du congrès extraordinaire de son parti, le CHP. De son propre aveu, c'était pour se sentir « proche du peuple ». De fait, il est apprécié de la base. Depuis les élections municipales, ce haut fonctionnaire à la retraite, au visage menu et au front dégagé, surnommé « Gandhi » pour sa ressemblance physique avec le leader indien, bénéficie d'un réel soutien populaire. Certes, il a échoué à

remporter la mairie d'Istanbul en mars 2009, mais il vient de réaliser un exploit en prenant la tête du principal parti d'opposition, dirigé depuis 1992 d'une main de fer par Deniz Baykal. Ce dernier avait démissionné il y a deux semaines après la révélation d'une liaison extraconjugale tout en escomptant être réélu. À tort.

En se présentant à la tête du parti contre l'avis de nombreux pontes du CHP, Kemal Kiliçdaroglu a donc « tué le père ». En quelques jours il a obtenu le soutien de 77 représentations provinciales sur 81 et, une fois élu, a constitué une équipe aux deux tiers renouvelée. Un coup de massue pour Deniz Baykal, accusé d'avoir transformé cette formation sociale démocrate en représentante du statu quo, na-

tionaliste et ultra-rigide sur la laïcité.

Auson d'une chanson vantant ses mérites et sous les acclamations de la foule, Kemal Kiliçdaroglu, expert comptable de formation, a dessiné les grandes lignes de sa po-

litique: lutte contre la pauvreté, la corruption et contre « l'empire de la peur » fondé par le parti au pouvoir. Il a aussi fait des promesses inédites comme mettre un terme à la règle obligeant tous les partis à atteindre 10 % au plan national pour y avoir des élus et œuvrer pour une nouvelle Constitution différente de celle de l'AKP au pouvoir, issu de la mouvance islamiste. Sur la question européenne, il a exigé une date

Sur la question européenne, il a exigé une date de la part de Bruxelles sans quoi la Turquie « ne restera pas prisonnière » de ce projet.

d'adhésion de la part de Bruxelles sans quoi la Turquie « ne restera pas prisonnière » de ce projet.

Par son identité même, Kemal Kiliçdaroglu donne un autre coup de pied dans la fourmilière. Le nouveau patron du CHP n'est pas un musulman sunnite mais il fait partie de la communauté des alévis de Tunceli, une région kurde. Il a aussi brisé ce que certains nomment le « mur culturel » en tendant la main à un électorat conservateur et religieux. L'homme n'a toutefois pas fait bouger les lignes quant à la question kurde.

Kemal « Gandhi » parviendra-t-il à faire de sa formation un réel parti social-démocrate capable d'arriver enfin au pouvoir? Le défi est immense mais une chose est sûre: le CHP a d'ores et déjà vu ses intentions de vote grimper de 10 points en une semaine.

DELPHINE NERBOLLIER
(à Istanbul)

Tueur aux couteaux et cuisine diplomatique

Ali Vakili Rad, assassin de Chapour Bakhtiar, doit être libéré aujourd'hui, deux jours après le retour de Clotilde Reiss.

Par **JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN**

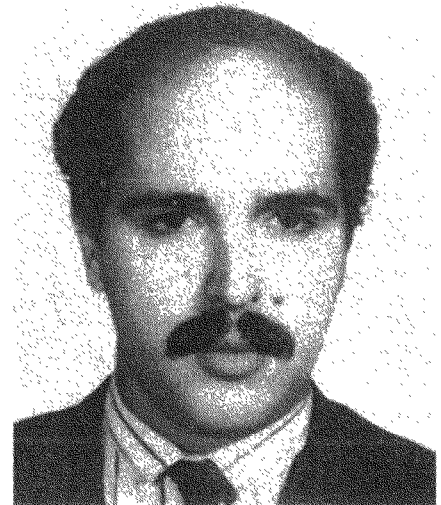
Avant de lire le compte rendu de l'institut médico-légal sur l'assassinat de Chapour Bakhtiar, le président de la cour d'assises de Paris avait demandé aux enfants de l'ancien Premier ministre du Chah, pourtant majeurs, de quitter la salle. Parce que «c'était le procès-verbal d'une véritable charcuterie», se souvient M^e Karim Lahidji, vice-président de la Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme et, à ce moment-là, avocat de la partie civile. Les trois tueurs iraniens s'étaient servis de trois grands couteaux de cuisine pour couper les veines du vieil homme – il était âgé de 82 ans – qui les avait reçus sans méfiance dans sa villa de Suresnes (près de Paris), et pour tuer en même temps son domestique. Chapour Bakhtiar avait mis une heure à mourir. Des trois Iraniens, seul Ali Vakili Rad avait pu être arrêté en août 1991 et condamné, trois ans plus tard, à la réclusion criminelle à perpétuité avec une peine de sûreté de dix-huit ans. Ayant purgé son temps de détention incompressible, Ali Vakili Rad doit regagner aujourd'hui Téhéran, à bord d'un vol d'Iran Air. Hier, le ministre de l'Intérieur, Brice Hortefeux, a signé l'arrêt d'expulsion du tueur aux couteaux, ce qui doit permettre aujourd'hui au tribunal d'application des peines d'entériner sa demande de libération conditionnelle et de le libérer dans la foulée.

CRUEL. Reste que le départ pour l'Iran d'un assassin particulièrement cruel intervient presque simultanément avec l'arrivée dimanche, à Paris, de Clotilde Reiss. Même si la diplomatie française s'acharne à démontrer qu'il n'y a eu «aucune tractation» entre Paris et Téhéran (*Libération* de lundi) et si l'Iran fait de même, ce chassé-croisé laisse un goût amer à nombre d'observateurs qui ne croient guère au hasard du calendrier. «Tous ces faits ne relèvent quand même pas du hasard total ! Ce qui me perturbe, c'est la coïnci-

dence entre la libération d'une jeune fille victime d'une prise d'otage et celle d'un assassin. D'où une question légitime : est-ce qu'il y a eu marchandage ? En tout cas, c'est le président Ahmadinejad qui en avait lancé l'idée et à l'époque Sarkozy l'avait considérée comme une demande inacceptable. C'est une évidence que l'on ne doit pas échanger un criminel contre une innocente», avance M^e Lahidji. Réflexion similaire pour le chercheur iranien Reza Moïni, qui estime que ce «donnant-donnant», précédé la semaine dernière par la libération de Majid Kakavand, un ingénieur iranien

arrêté à Roissy, à la demande des autorités américaines et finalement relâché, faute d'éléments suffisants dans son dossier, «va encore renforcer la diplomatie de la prise d'otage», dont est coutumier le régime iranien. La polémique a gagné la classe politique. Hier, le porte-parole de l'opposition socialiste, Benoît Hamon, a réclamé la «transparence» : «Je pense, comme beaucoup de Français [...] qu'il y a probablement eu des contreparties», a-t-il déclaré sur la chaîne iTélé. A droite, Dominique Paillé, porte-parole adjoint de l'UMP, s'est dit «scandalisé» par l'évocation de liens entre l'affaire Reiss et l'assassin de Bakhtiar : «Clotilde Reiss rentre et on attendait ce retour depuis longtemps, et au lieu de se réjouir collectivement», «l'opposition» et les journalistes se disent : mais en fait il y a eu des contreparties ou il y a eu des marchandages.»

RAISON D'ÉTAT. A l'évidence, Dominique Paillé veut oublier que Paris est notoirement connu dans les chancelleries occidentales pour des libérations de terroristes justifiées, selon l'expression consacrée, par la seule raison d'Etat. Le cas le plus flagrant est l'élargissement, la veille d'un Nouvel An, des deux assassins iraniens de l'opposant Kazem Radjavi, arrêtés à Paris en novembre 1992 et réclamés par la Suisse, pays où s'était déroulé l'attentat. Alors ministre de l'Intérieur, Charles Pasqua n'avait fourni aucune explication, sus-



Ali Vakili Rad. AFP

citant la réprobation des autorités helvétiques. Auparavant, François Mitterrand avait gracié le terroriste libanais pro-iranien Anis Naccache, chef d'un commando de cinq sicaires qui, en juillet 1980, avait déjà tenté d'assassiner Chapour Bakhtiar, tuant deux Français lors de l'attentat. «A chaque prise d'otage, c'est toujours la même chose, déplore Karim Lahidji, il y a toujours [de la part du gouvernement, ndlr] dissimulation, langue de bois, un côté mystérieux. S'il y a eu une sorte de compromis, pourquoi ne pas le dire publiquement ? Dans l'affaire Reiss, si le régime des mollahs n'a pas gagné, la France non plus». ◆

CHAPOUR BAKHTIAR

Chapour Bakhtiar fut le dernier Premier ministre du chah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi. Après la Révolution islamique iranienne de 1979, il se réfugie en France et fait l'objet d'un premier attentat manqué en juillet 1980. Le 8 août 1991, il est retrouvé mort chez lui, avec son secrétaire Sorouch Katibeh.

Près d'un an après l'élection présidentielle contestée en Iran, l'épouse de Mir Hossein Moussavi, Zahra Rahnavard, refuse de baisser les bras. Entretien

« Une immense prison »

Foulard fleuri sous le tchador noir et sourire déterminé, la présence de Zahra Rahnavard sur les podiums électoraux, la main dans celle de son mari, l'ex-premier ministre Mir Hossein Moussavi – jamais vu en Iran – avait été la première surprise de la campagne pour l'élection présidentielle du 12 juin 2009. A ceux qui la critiquaient, elle répondait : « *L'homme a besoin de la femme. Il faut deux ailes à l'oiseau pour voler...* »

Depuis, M. Moussavi, l'un des candidats malheureux soutenus par les réformateurs, n'a cessé de contester la réélection du président Ahmadinejad, prenant rapidement la tête du grand mouvement « vert » d'opposition. Et, de discours en manifestation de rue, Zahra Rahnavard a pris une place croissante à ses côtés.

Cette intellectuelle de 65 ans, artiste et féministe au caractère bien trempé qui fut la première femme recteur d'université après la révolution, partage aujourd'hui, après un an de répression féroce, le « huis clos » de surveillance constante auquel son mari est assujéti.

A quelques jours de l'anniversaire de l'élection du 12 juin, elle a pourtant pris le risque de répondre à quelques questions du *Monde*, par l'intermédiaire d'une journaliste iranienne. Ses réponses, pour des raisons de sécurité évidente, pour une femme à qui le pouvoir en place enjoint de ne pas parler à la presse occidentale, n'abordent pas certains sujets trop sensibles. Mais elle témoigne de la force intacte d'un engagement.

Comment avez-vous passé tous ces mois, sous pression constante ?

Lorsque j'ai décidé d'être au côté de mon mari, pendant la campagne présidentielle, je savais que je me plaçais moi-même dans une position difficile, voire suicidaire. Je savais que tous les groupes intégristes qui sont très misogynes, et le gouvernement, concentreraient sur moi de violentes attaques. La cause des femmes, je lui ai consacré trente ans de ma vie.

A mes idéaux de liberté, démocratie, état de droit, j'ai toujours associé celui de voir arriver la fin de la discrimination pour les femmes iraniennes. Avant la révolution, j'étais aux Etats-Unis et je tenais déjà ce discours dans d'innombrables débats. J'avais même écrit un livre sur le rôle de la femme musulmane. Les intégristes l'ont attaqué, il n'a pu être publié en Iran.

Alors, tout naturellement, en mars 2009, j'ai publié un communiqué intitulé « Les Revendications féministes et



Zahra Rahnavard et son mari, l'ex-premier ministre Mir Hossein Moussavi, lors d'un rassemblement à Téhéran, le 15 juin 2009.

les élections présidentielles», pour dire que les femmes ne doivent plus être l'objet de violence. Et je dois dire que ma présence dans cette campagne avait attiré l'attention de beaucoup de jeunes Iraniens et de femmes. Mais ensuite, nous avons été victimes d'un coup d'Etat électoral et l'Iran s'est transformé en une immense prison. Beaucoup de ceux qui se sont battus pour la liberté se sont retrouvés dans des centres de détention connus, comme Evin ou Kahrizak. Et cette fois, les femmes ont été à égalité avec les hommes, pour les mauvais traitements, les tortures ou les exécutions fondées sur des accusations sans preuves.

Le pouvoir ne nous a pas fait arrêter, mon mari et moi, malgré sa politique de répression policière, il ne voulait pas, je crois, provoquer davantage le peuple iranien. Mais il a utilisé d'autres moyens de pression. Ainsi, ils ont arrêté mon frère Chapour Kazemi, un ingénieur en électronique apolitique qui a passé six mois en isolement total, soumis à des pressions physiques et morales. Même son enfant a été arrêté pendant un mois. Ensuite, le neveu de mon mari a été tué lors des manifestations de la célébration de l'Achoura.

Depuis, les médias gouvernementaux ont lancé contre moi et d'autres personnalités du mouvement « vert » une politique de « terreur morale » : on nous abreuve de calomnies et d'insultes. Mais mon mari, ainsi que M. Karoubi [ex-président du Par-

lement et figure du mouvement « vert »] et M. Khatami [ex-président de la République, réformateur] résistent à tout pour que les revendications du peuple iranien soient satisfaites.

Vous sentez-vous en danger ?

Après les élections, j'ai été attaquée physiquement, lors d'un rassemblement à l'université de Téhéran, par des personnes en civil qui m'ont arrosée de gaz au poivre. Ensuite, lors des manifestations du 11 février, anniversaire de la révolution, les forces spéciales m'ont frappée avec une matraque électrique. Depuis, j'ai mal à la tête et j'ai des problèmes de poumons. Mais je suis prête à ce que l'on me tue si cela peut épargner ceux qui se battent pour la liberté. Je suis prête au sacrifice, à la prison, à la torture, au nom de la liberté. Je n'ai pas peur, je suis croyante et je me sens protégée par Dieu. Mais sachez que si ma famille devait être victime d'un problème grave, ou d'un complot, je l'affirme dès maintenant, c'est le régime qui en serait responsable.

Comment qualifiez-vous le mouvement « vert » ?

C'est un mouvement qui s'est fait l'écho de revendications du peuple iranien qui remontent en fait à plus de cent ans, à la révolution constitutionnelle de 1906. Et l'élection présidentielle était l'occasion de les rappeler : liberté, état de droit, démocratie. Le mouvement « vert »

ne souhaite pas la chute du régime, ce qu'il veut, c'est des réformes. Il vient de la société civile et se veut pacifique. J'insiste, pacifique, même si la partie adverse ne manque pas d'armes, et utilise la violence.

Ce mouvement s'exprime de diverses façons à travers des réunions, des rassemblements de la société civile, il a même une expression que je dirais littéraire et artistique. Toutes les composantes de la société en font partie : enseignants, ouvriers, sportifs, artistes, représentants de minorités ethniques... Les femmes, qui représentent la moitié de la population, et les étudiants ont joué un rôle particulier et ont une place importante au sein du mouvement.

Mon message aux femmes iraniennes, c'est de leur dire : « Progrezsez, élevez votre niveau de connaissances et d'études pour être enfin considérées comme des

citoyens à part entière. » Je milite pour ça, contre la polygamie, la violence et des décennies de discrimination. Les femmes iraniennes n'ont pas le choix, elles doivent continuer le combat.

Votre mari a beaucoup évolué, de candidat discret à leader charismatique de l'opposition...

Moi, je l'ai toujours vu très décidé dans l'affirmation de ses idées, et très courageux pour les faire appliquer. Il ne renoncera pas facilement à son but. S'il s'est lancé dans la campagne électorale, c'est parce qu'il trouvait la situation du pays délicate, voire dangereuse. Et s'il a continué après, c'est en raison de son courage et de sa personnalité. Mais je veux souligner à nouveau qu'il n'est pas le seul responsable, il y a Karoubi, Khatami et beaucoup d'autres qui continuent la lutte pour la démocra-

tie. Et je suis à leur côté.

Le pouvoir peut-il aujourd'hui vous écouter ?

Malheureusement, le pouvoir ne pense qu'au pouvoir et à maintenir son autorité sur le pays. Pourtant, les revendications du mouvement « vert » entrent toutes dans le cadre de la Constitution (fin de la censure, élections libres, liberté des partis politiques...). Nous demandons aussi à présent la libération des prisonniers politiques. Mais le pouvoir n'a pas écouté notre message. Pourtant, s'il le veut, il peut le faire à tout moment. Nous, nous allons multiplier les actes commémoratifs pour l'anniversaire de l'élection présidentielle. Je pense que la victoire finale reviendra, un jour, au peuple. ■

Propos recueillis par
Marie-Claude Decamps
et Fereshteh Ghazi

Le Monde

Jeudi 20 mai 2010

Les grandes puissances contrent l'initiative turco-brésilienne sur le nucléaire iranien

A l'ONU, un accord est intervenu entre les Occidentaux, la Russie et la Chine, sur un projet de sanctions renforcées contre Téhéran

New York (Nations unies)
Correspondant

Les grandes puissances ont infligé un camouflet au Brésil et à la Turquie, qui tentaient de jouer les médiateurs avec l'Iran. Elles ont déposé au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU, mardi 18 mai, un projet de résolution visant à condamner Téhéran. Les nouvelles sanctions, soutenues par la Russie et la Chine, ont été présentées au lendemain d'un accord conclu avec le régime iranien par Brasilia et Ankara, qui revendiquaient une percée diplomatique justifiant le report de mesures punitives. En signe de protestation, l'ambassadrice du Brésil à l'ONU, Maria Luiza Ribeiro Viotti, a refusé de participer aux négociations du Conseil de sécurité.

Le projet de résolution, mis au point par les Etats-Unis avec la France et le Royaume-Uni, n'établit pas le régime de sanctions « paralysant » évoqué par la secrétaire d'Etat américaine, Hillary Clinton, en avril 2009. Le texte renforcerait toutefois les trois résolutions de sanctions adoptées depuis 2006 contre l'Iran, qui est soupçonné de chercher à se procurer l'arme nucléaire, sous couvert d'un programme civil.

Si le texte est adopté, Téhéran

sera frappé d'un embargo sur les armes, qui lui interdira notamment d'acheter des avions de chasse, des navires de guerre, des hélicoptères d'attaque ou des missiles.

La résolution empêcherait par ailleurs l'Iran d'investir à l'étranger dans des activités en lien avec son programme nucléaire, et lui interdirait le développement de missiles balistiques capables de porter une ogive nucléaire. Les activités commerciales de Téhéran seraient placées sous surveillance : les Etats seraient encouragés à inspecter toute cargaison iranienne suspecte, et à bloquer toute transaction bancaire douteuse. La liste des Gardiens de la révolution placés sous sanctions et celle de leurs entreprises, serait rallongée. Un panel d'experts serait également créé, pour veiller à la mise en œuvre du nouveau régime de sanctions.

Table des négociations

Ces mesures vont « renforcer de manière significative » les sanctions contre l'Iran, a affirmé Susan Rice, l'ambassadrice des Etats-Unis à l'ONU, pour qui le projet « renforce, et ne remplace pas » les efforts diplomatiques de Washington. « L'objectif des sanctions est d'amener les Iraniens à la table des négociations », a aussi estimé l'ambassa-

teur chinois, Li Baodong, tandis que son homologue russe, Vitaly Churkin, jugeait le texte « acceptable », même si Moscou n'aurait « pas été contre une brève pause ».

Les puissances occidentales ont dû renoncer aux mesures les plus sévères, qui visaient le secteur énergétique iranien ou la banque centrale du pays. Tout au long de la négociation, la Chine, et parfois la Russie, ont fait valoir leurs intérêts commerciaux pour édulcorer le texte. Mais Moscou et Pékin ont surpris, en ne prenant pas prétexte des efforts de médiation turco-brésiliens pour retarder le dépôt du projet de résolution.

Lundi, à Téhéran, le président brésilien, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, et le premier ministre turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, avaient présenté comme une percée un accord en vertu duquel l'Iran devait livrer à

la Turquie 1200 kg d'uranium faiblement enrichi, en échange de 120 kg d'uranium enrichi à 20% pour un réacteur de recherche médicale. Le projet semblait relancer un schéma proposé en octobre 2009 par les grandes puissances, qui visait à « donner de l'espace à la négociation » en privant provisoirement l'Iran de la quantité d'uranium nécessaire à la mise au point d'une bombe.

La version négociée par le Brésil et la Turquie n'empêche pas l'Iran, si telle est son intention, de progresser vers une arme nucléaire, d'autant moins que Téhéran a affirmé qu'il continuerait à enrichir de l'uranium à 20%. « C'est illogique », explique l'ambassadeur de France à l'ONU, Gérard Araud, qui rappelle que « l'accord est précisément pour fournir de l'uranium enrichi à 20% au réacteur de recherche à Téhéran. Poursuivre cet enrichissement rapproche l'Iran d'une capacité militaire », ajoute le diplomate.

La France, quoique soucieuse de ne pas froisser le Brésil, ne s'est pas opposée à la décision des Etats-Unis, qui souhaitent déposer le texte sans tarder. Washington semble avoir décidé de passer en force, quitte à ne pas recueillir les votes du Brésil et de la Turquie, et à rompre avec la relative unanimité qui avait jusque-là caractérisé les résolutions contre l'Iran.

Sans s'avancer sur la date d'un vote, les pays occidentaux affirment disposer déjà des neuf voix (sur quinze) nécessaires à l'adoption de la résolution. Ils ont renoncé au vote du Liban, pays au sein duquel le Hezbollah, financé par l'Iran, reste une force puissante. ■

Philippe Bolopion

Iraqi Kurd spokesman criticizes U.S. response to impasse

By Paul Richter, Tribune
Washington Bureau
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Kurdish Iraq's spokesman in Washington criticized the Obama administration Thursday for not doing enough to end Iraq's current political impasse, and urged American officials to embark on "intense shuttle diplomacy" between the deadlocked political parties.

Qubad Talabani, representative of the Kurdish regional government, said U.S. officials in Iraq have had limited involvement in efforts by political parties to form a government over the two months since the country's inconclusive national elections.

Talabani said that the administration is determined to avoid the perception that "they are trying to concoct a democratic Iraq." He said the United States must "look out for its interests" to ensure the country has a stable, democratic government.

"It would be a shame to see an undemocratic government, after all the sacrifices," Talabani said in an interview after an appearance at the Nixon Center think tank in Washington.

Talabani, who is also the son of

Iraq's president, Jalal Talabani, said that while U.S. officials have largely remained on the sidelines, officials of most neighboring states, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Turkey have been "heavily involved" with political players inside Iraq to exert influence.

"There has got to be serious thought given to how the United States applies its leverage," he said. "They've got to help us get our act together."

Christopher Hill, U.S. ambassador to Iraq, has urged progress and has said that the nation's Sunnis must be adequately represented in the new government.

Talabani said that while U.S. officials have urged a "stable representative government," they have refrained even from calling for a democratic state. He acknowledged, however, that both Hill and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have stepped up their calls for compromise.

The protracted standoff has raised fears of violence, especially if it begins to appear that the country's Sunni minority will lose out in the new power structure.

Iraq's Kurds have long worried about domination by the larger Sunni and Shiite populations, and they have often appealed to U.S. officials to look out for their interests as



Qubad Talabani is the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) representative in the United States. He is the second son of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani.

well as what they see as those of the country as a whole.

U.S. officials have insisted the standoff would not affect their plans to withdraw U.S. combat troops from the country by August. But Talabani said that in meetings with Kurdish officials, U.S. military officials have emphasized that they have flexibility to slow the withdrawal should violence spike dangerously in the country.

He said U.S. military officials have told him that "nothing is written in stone." At the same time, Talabani said, U.S. officials have expressed confidence that they will be able to handle nearly any contingency with the 50,000 troops that will remain after August.

REUTERS

Iran detains Iraqi soldier in border shooting incident

ARBIL, Iraq, May 14, (Reuters) -

IRANIAN troops fired into the air and detained an Iraqi border patrol officer after mistaking Iraqi border guards for Kurdish rebels on a northern stretch of the two countries' border, officials said on Friday.

There was no exchange of fire between the two sides in Thursday's incident, contrary to some reports, said Major General Jabbar Yawar, spokesman for Iraq's Kurdish peshmerga security forces.

"The Iranians thought the Iraqi forces belonged to the Kurdish opposition PJAK (the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan)," Yawar said.

"After no more than five minutes of shooting, which was from the Iranian side only, the incident ended when the Iraqi soldiers explained ... that they are Iraqi border guards."

An Iraqi officer was detained when he went over to the Iranian forces to identify himself, said Brigadier General Ahmed Gharib, head of Iraq's border guards in Iraq's northern Kurdish province of Sulaimaniya.

"Detaining the Iraqi officer was not justified. We have made calls through official channels to release him, which was supposed to happen today, but did not," he said.

"The Iraqi forces did not open fire, so there was no reason to detain the officer."

The Iranian authorities were not immediately available for comment.

Iranian security forces often clash with rebels from the PJAK, an offshoot of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which took up arms in 1984 for an ethnic homeland in southeast Turkey.

Thursday's incident took place in a border area near the town of Darbandikhan in Sulaimaniya, 260 km (160 miles) northeast of Baghdad.

Iran and Iraq fought a ferocious eight-year war in the 1980s in which a million people died.

But relations have improved enormously since Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein was ousted in the 2003 U.S.-led invasion and Iraq's Shi'ite majority rose to political prominence. Iran is also a predominantly Shi'ite Muslim state.

Still, long-running border disputes have not been fully settled.

In December, a small group of Iranian troops took over an oil well for a few days in a remote region along a disputed part of the border. The well is considered by Iraq as part of its Fakka oilfield and the incident caused oil prices to rise.

Like Iraq, Turkey and Syria, Iran has a large Kurdish minority, mainly living in the Islamic Republic's northwest and west.

Iran designates PJAK, which seeks autonomy for Kurdish areas in Iran and finds shelter in Iraq's northeastern border provinces, as a terrorist group. The United States, Iran's arch foe, in February last year also branded PJAK as a terrorist organisation.

Kurdistan's ex-premier comments on KDP-PUK Relations

By Ako Muhammad

ERBIL-Hewlêr, Kurdistan region 'Iraq', — *Nechirvan Barzani, former Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), was succeeded by a candidate of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Barham Salih, following the July 2009 parliamentary elections held in the Kurdistan region. Massoud Barzani, chairman of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and president of the semi-autonomous region, recently appointed Nechirvan Barzani as KDP deputy-chairman. In an exclusive interview with Rudaw, he comments on recent developments in Kurdistan following the latest Iraqi parliamentary elections held in March.*

Q: Some media outlets of the Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), have criticized you of working to worsen KDP-PUK relations. Are you actually doing so?

Nechirvan Barzani: During my tenure, I proved it was my personal commitment to strengthen the relations between the party [KDP] and the union [PUK]. This was only for the interest of the Kurdish people. What is being discussed now is more related to the internal issues of the PUK. I believe some of the PUK stations see me as an obstacle or a barrier to the improvement of the relations between KDP and the PUK, while in reality the opposite is true. I am one of those who want to see good relations between PUK, KDP and all Kurdish parties.

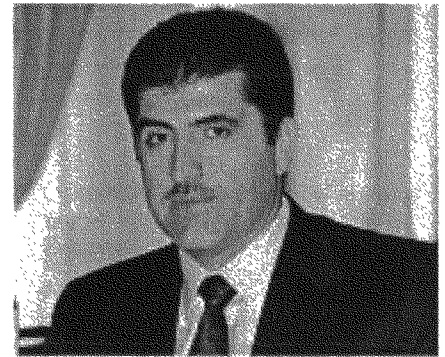
Despite the miserable history that KDP and PUK had with each other, I have tried to use those bad times as an encouraging factor to further step forward and compensate the time and wealth that we wasted which (in turn) inhibited our progress. I guess the harmony existing within the first post-civil-war cabinet of the KRG, in which I was proudly the prime minister working with two of my deputies who were PUK (members), is the best witness of what my perception and position is on this issue. PUK ministers indeed might eye-witness in my favor before KDP ones and the people who saw an active and peaceful government after a 4-year civil war.

Finally PUK faced a new situation and some of its leaders and officials broke away. Since then I believe the new situation and the new party should have been dealt with realistically and calmly. Some people perceived my opinion on Gorran (the Movement for Change) as something against the KDP-PUK agreement and sometimes misinterpreted my opinion on this subject, www.ekurd.net but I was looking at this subject believing in political freedom and the protection of stability in the Kurdish region. Though there is a big difference between the number of seats our parties gained, KDP still adhere to the agreement. I believe that it's necessary to stick to the agreement. We should not ignore the other powers. There must be a power-sharing between all to protect what we have achieved and to achieve more.

Q: Some media outlets, even those affiliated with PUK, use the term "Nechirvan Barzani's wing". However, you have mentioned that KDP is a united party and you don't have such a faction. If not, why do they say this? Are there members of KDP that are against you and those who are closer to you?

Nechirvan Barzani: This is completely baseless. There is no any other faction inside KDP. These sorts of people are surviving on such things. For your information there is no one against me in KDP. It is not possible for such a thing to exist. There are different views inside KDP. Sometimes, we have had serious discussions with KDP's chairman and ended up in two very different opinions about certain issues. This is normal. Are those different opinions seen by some people as different wings? There is no such thing. It's normal to have serious discussions among ourselves. It's natural to have different opinions with some of our colleagues and even with the president; this has always been taken very natural within KDP. But [the question] of whether I represent some wing or have my own people and faction does not exist in the system of the KDP.

Q: Following the fall of Saddam Hussein, the KDP has emerged as a strong block in the Nineveh Province. However it remains to be weak in Kirkuk and Sulaimaniyah, the largest populated Province in Kurdistan, in which the K.D.P came fourth in the previous elections. Can the reason for this be that the



Nechirvan Barzani, deputy secretary of the KDP and former PM of Kurdistan Region and a prominent political figure in the region.

leadership of the K.D.P has detached itself from Sulaimaniyah as has been even mentioned by some of your officials in the city?

Nechirvan Barzani: Part of the reason is historical. Since 1975, we, as the K.D.P, have not had an active presence in that region because of the enmity existing between Kurdish parties in that era, especially between KDP and PUK. After 1975, I would say that one of the PUK's aims was to prevent KDP getting a lot of support in that region. After 1991 when KDP returned to that region (Sulaimaniyah governorate) until 1994, we were working in order to become active. However, civil war and two administrations didn't allow KDP to remain lively in those areas. The second reason behind [the weakness of KDP in Sulaimaniyah] dates back to 1975. The generation which was then born had no idea of KDP how it was formed and working. They are not aware of KDP's past and its struggles. They just see how KDP is doing now? And in this regard KDP has been negligent. Just imagine that a generation born between 1975 to 1991 is not familiar with KDP and when KDP has been in that region, they haven't been able to present anything and have only talked about the past. It is true that we talk about our past with pride, but a generation after 1975 does not know what happened in the past. I want to say that KDP is at fault in that point and KDP's leadership is careless in that it has been unable to utilize a practical system in that region, especially after the declaration of peace in 2000. If this is the true number of KDP's supporter in the region, the KDP leadership and its institutions in that region should be criticized. Though

after the end of civil war, it is clear that there is great animosity toward KDP in the area, but I believe the number of KDP supporters in that region is more than the election result's reveal.

Q: It has been reported that KDP will establish a branch of its political bureau in Sulaimaniyah and you will supervise this branch. Are there such plans?

Nechirvan Barzani: So far we haven't decided on anything like that. It has been reported by the media, but there is no such thing in reality. However, now we are certainly serious about a plan of how to improve ourselves in all of Kurdistan and not only in Sulaimaniyah.

Q: Don't you think that Kurdistan is still divided between two administrations? Look, even in cellphone companies, two different companies, that is, ASIA CELL and KOREK TELECOM, have their own strongholds based on the political division?

Nechirvan Barzani: Until now the

two administrations still exist; if it didn't exist, why do people get fired from work (for political reasons) while no one talks about it? Yes, there are still two administrations in everything. They are divided when it comes to the issues of Peshmarga forces, finance and security. It's true that there are some steps toward unification, but we can't see anything and this is a reality that does exist in Kurdistan. There were divisions in the previous Cabinet that still remain. I believe that the priority of the KRG and its leadership should be to reunite those things. The divisions are represented in reality; you can clearly see them. It is even getting worse. It is not only Korek Telecom and Asia Cell. It's in everything, in sports, in economy and even in the media. Unfortunately divisions still exist and if we say it does not, we are not telling the truth. However, despite all of this, we should happily see some steps taken to reunite the governmental institutions.

Q: It was reported that when you were KRG's Prime Minister, you sent part of the budget share of Erbil and Duhok to Sulaimani. How do you res-

pond to this?

Nechirvan Barzani: When I took the post of the Prime Minister of a recently unified administration, the situation of KRG was very different in comparison to now. The feeling of hostility was very strong between the two parties. For example, KDP was very unwilling for me to work in the same building as my deputy. I had big discussions with my colleagues inside KDP that this view was incorrect to follow. I said we had to unite ourselves. What I am mostly proud of is that during my tenure and with the help of both of my deputies (who came after one another) I did not care about what PUK's problem with (former deputy-prime minister) Mr. Omar Fatah was. I am now talking about the role he played in unifying the two administrations and that was very honorable for us. Also after Mr. Fatah was replaced by Mr. Imad Ahmed our work continued on the same pattern, that is, building trust between ourselves.

Kurdish opposition Gorran looks for key post in Iraqi government

ERBIL-Hewlêr, Kurdistan region 'Iraq', — The main opposition party of Gorran in Iraqi Kurdistan announced last week that it will participate in a joint ticket with other Kurdish parties to form a united Kurdish front in Baghdad, adding that they seek one of the leading posts assigned to the Kurds.

As Arab parties and coalitions bitterly dispute over who and how to form the government, the Iraqi Kurds in the north soon came to an agreement putting aside their ideological differences in order to represent a more forceful voice in Baghdad.

"As the Kurdish front, before disputing over posts among ourselves, we should ask for our national rights. We should demand from Baghdad what we are entitled to as a nation," said Azad Chalak, representative of Gorran - meaning Change in Kurdish - following a meeting he had with other Kurdish parties chaired by Massoud Barzani, President of Kurdistan last week.

Based on the same procedure by which Kurds get their share from Baghdad, Gorran is entitled to get one of

the key ministerial posts or that of deputy prime minister, said Mr. Chalak.

Gorran Movement is headed by Nawshirwan Mustafa, former deputy-leader of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK).

According to the Kurdish parties, there are two sets of conditions that should be fulfilled by any Arab party to form the government.

The first set is what they call "red-lines". They include implementation of article 140 of the Iraqi Constitution, conducting a referendum in disputed territories by October 31, 2010, and the continuation of the 17 percent budget share that Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) gets from Iraqi oil revenues.

Furthermore, Kurds wish to occupy a number of key positions including the post of president, deputy prime minister, deputy-speaker of parliament, and five ministerial posts including either minister of foreign affairs, defense, interior, finance or oil.

In the previous four years the Kurds held the post of president of Iraq, foreign



minister, deputy-prime minister, deputy-speaker of the Parliament, military chief of staff and headed four other ministers.

Political analysts, however, say this time Kurds will not be able to have this much leverage due to the strong participation of the Sunnis and all other Shiite parties who used to boycott the previous cabinet led by Nuri al-Maliki, leader of the Shiite Da'awa party.

It has been almost two months since the March parliamentary elections in Iraq were held in which Iraqiya bloc headed by former Iraqi Prime Minister Iyad Allawi closely edged out the State of Law slate of the incumbent Prime Minister al-Maliki. The date of formation of government still remains indefinite.

Kurdistan Oil, Advantages and Disadvantages: Interview with American oil expert Ustina Markus

By Mohammed Ali Bapir

ERBIL-Hewlêr, Kurdistan region 'Iraq', — *Ustina Markus is an American oil expert. She has been a university professor at a number of prominent American and world universities and currently based in Erbil to teach at the University of Kurdistan-Hawler. It has been more than year since Markus for the first time arrived in Kurdistan. Since then she has had a close following of developments happening in the oil sector of Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. In this exclusive interview with RUDAW, Dr. Markus comments on Kurdistan's oil and the role it has played in the advancement or decline of political, economic and social life.*

Q: Kurdistan has begun extracting its oil, how do you assess this in terms of political and economic advancement?

Dr. MARKUS: Oil has not necessarily been the road to political or economic advancement, but rather a step towards political and economic morass. If the legislation, structures and practice for transparency in oil deals is not in place—as the DNO incident in September showed—then the scene is set to misappropriate money from oil deals and hide behind opaque policies which would only serve to further corruption. In such cases the money bid by oil companies for contracts does not get deposited into the state treasuries intact and does not go towards the economic development of the state to the extent that it should.

Q: Is it wise to rely solely on the extraction of oil? What are the repercussions of such a policy?

Dr. MARKUS: It is never wise to rely solely on one commodity or one source of revenues because that makes a state vulnerable to any fluctuations in its price. In the case of the KRG and oil, such policies of limiting investment almost solely to the oil sector effectively mean that most of the country would be neglected. The oil industry is not labor intensive so this would not create jobs. Once oil comes on-line it is likely the state's currency would strengthen making other exports less competitive. In some cases the result is a rise in unemployment at home.

Q: Some argue that oil in Kurdistan will undermine 'political development',



Interview with American oil expert Ustina Markus. Photo: Rudaw net

how do you evaluate this argument?

Dr. MARKUS: It is a possibility, but it does not have to go that way. In many African states that did not have a transparent and regulated business culture political development turned into the development of a kleptocracy at the highest levels of government. However, the KRG has relied on political support from the international community and assistance and would probably want to remain on good terms with its European and American partners. Those countries actively promote transparency in both government and the economic sector and that could steer the KRG not to veer off onto the course of a thoroughly corrupted state.

Q: Will exporting oil make Kurdistan a rentier-region? If yes how, and what are the advantage/disadvantages of being a rentier-state/region?

Dr. MARKUS: There is always the danger that a government may buy off its citizenry with social benefits and subsidized energy in exchange for not being challenged over its practices if it can receive enough revenues from oil to do that. Saudi Arabia is often cited as an example of such practices. The main disadvantage is that it frees the government from accountability and can ultimately lead to an entrenched group of kleptocrats in power. The main advantage is that it is easy money to simply allow outside companies to pay for oil extraction and just collect the money without having to develop yourself, but ultimately that is a disadvantage.

Q: In which ways oil and industrialization are related? Are there any examples that indicate the negative impact of oil on industrialization?

Dr. MARKUS: If you separate the oil industries from other industries then there can be a negative or positive link depending on how oil profits are spent. Oil exports do serve to strengthen a state's currency which paradoxically has the negative effect of making its other exports less competitive. In some cases that leads to Dutch Disease or de-industrialization. However, www.ekurd.net there are also cases of countries successfully using the oil rents to develop other sectors of their economy and create diversified economies with many sectors that do offer employment opportunities.

Q: Kurdistan is an agricultural region but it is a sector that has been sorely neglected, in which ways can oil influence the revival of agriculture in Kurdistan?

Dr. MARKUS: Oil can provide revenues that can be poured into the agricultural sector to subsidize it and make it worth one's time to be a farmer. Subsidies will not make those agricultural products competitive for external trade, but in some countries like France they keep the rural population gainfully employed so the government opts to do that. In some states such as Indonesia it kept people employed so that when the country stopped being an oil exporter and began importing there was no traumatic effect on the working population since they remained employed in other sectors. And if the currency weakens that country's exports become more competitive. In the case of Nigeria, once oil exports came on-line the country's agricultural sector plummeted and unemployment rose. Since not everyone shared in the oil profits the average Nigerian's income actually decline between the 1970s and 1980s because of the rise in unemployment.

ment.

Q: Will oil protect or threaten the security of the Kurdistan Region?

Dr. MARKUS: It should make the region more important to the oil importers so that they would be more protective of it. As an example, the international community sprang into action to help Kuwait when it was invaded.

Q: How does oil change the social structure of a region and are there any examples of it having any influence on social trends in Iraq and the Kurdistan Region?

Dr. MARKUS: Oil doesn't seem to produce major changes on the social structures of already diversified and functional economies. For example, the US

was the world's largest oil exporter for much of the early part of the 20th century, but it was never an oil state like Saudi Arabia or Kuwait which rely on 90% or more of their export revenues from that one commodity. A more recent example is Norway, whose oil only came on-line in the 1970s and 1980s. Still, its social structure remained much the same as people had already been engaged in other industries to earn a living and very few jobs are created by the oil industry. On the other hand, states that did not have functional and diversified economies but underwent oil bonanzas as many of the Persian Gulf states did, saw huge changes in which the ruling families suddenly became immensely wealthy, the citizenry became accustomed to having all sorts of services provided for free, and there was little incentive to actually work or develop other areas of the economy.

Q: What sort of impact will the export of oil from the oil fields of Kurdistan will have on its economy?

Dr. MARKUS: We shall see.

Q: Is the curse of the black oil best seen in Kirkuk?

Dr. MARKUS: I still need to go there and check it out in person before I comment, but it has certainly made the resolution of Kirkuk's status more contentious than if there was no oil there.

Turkey's AKP not "Honest" in solving Kurdish issue: Kurdish MP

By Firat Kalakhi

ANKARA, Turkey, — Osman Ozcalik, Turkish Parliament member for the pro-Kurd Democratic and Peace Party (BDP), said that the Justice and Development (AK) party is not "honest" when it comes to the Kurdish issue.

"AK party is not telling the truth. It does not point to the main problems," he said referring to the political aspect of the Kurdish issue in Turkey.

After decades of war and struggle between Kurds and Turks resulting in the death of more than 40,000 people, mainly Kurds, there have been some cultural reforms occurring in Turkey regarding the Kurdish question since the Islamic party for the second time came to power in 2005.

The establishment of Kurdish-speaking TRT6 in January 2009 is one of the main reforms.

The main problem which is constitutional, however, is yet to be solved. The Turkish Constitution treats Turkey an exclusively Turkish state and does not recognize any other cultural identity, like that of Kurds.

The closure of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP) by the supreme court of Turkey last year indeed raised questions about the reform project Erdogan's had pledged to bring about.

Recently the Turkish Parliament took a perceivably brave step to amend Turkish constitution written over 80 years ago by the founder of the modern Turkish state, Mustafa Ataturk.

Article 8, which is a proposed law of the reform project of the AK Party which makes the closure of political parties much more difficult, was not passed by the parliament after the Kurdish lawmakers affiliated with the BDP voted against it.

While under current law, the chief prosecutor can file a case to the Constitutional Court to have a party closed, fined or its members banned from politics. The proposed reform says a party could only be closed if it is approved by the parliament.

Prime Minister Erdogan, at a parliamentary meeting of his AK Party, said "As the representative of a political movement which has been a victim of party closures, the BDP betrayed its *raison d'être*, applauded the injustices made against this movement so far and took sides with the status quo by voting against this article. That is it."

But Ozcalik doubts there is such an intention of reform initiated by Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan's AK party.

"I believe that neither any of the parties will be closed down nor the will the generals be put on trial," he added.

He said the AK party and its leader Erdogan have not been committed to their pledges to resolve the Kurdish issue made in the run-up to elections in 2002.

AK party is an Islamic-oriented party led by Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan.

"The constitution is made up of leftover chauvinistic ideas," said Mr. Ozcalik.

"Until now it denies Kurdish existence as a nation and the Kurdish lan-



Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Turkish Prime Minister and the leader of Justice and Development (AK) party.

guage within curricula," he added.

Mr. Ozcalik says that his party is willing to solve the problems in dialogue with the ruling party.

"So far they have not sat [at a table] with us though we have presented what our demands are. We want to find a solution and support the project."

Recently his party Chairman Salahaddin Demirtash, along with a few Kurdish politicians, visited Washington meeting with high-ranking US officials. He said his colleagues told the US what they want.

"They [our demands] include accepting Kurdish identity and education in the Kurdish language. We will never give up on these demands. [we will see] if the US do something in this regard," he said.

Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds: From Red Lines to Red Carpets

Today's think tanks
by AMBERIN ZAMAN

If all goes to plan Massoud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) will be paying his first official visit to Turkey next month.

The decision to invite the Kurdish leader is in line with recent moves designed to end over a decade of hostility between Ankara and the Iraqi Kurdish leadership. Friendship with the Iraqi Kurds is one of the main pillars of Turkey's attempts to solve its long-running Kurdish problem.

Until recently Barzani, who is also the leader of the most powerful Iraqi Kurdish faction, the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), was firmly embedded in Turkey's official gallery of rogues. He was derided as a cocky tribal upstart who emboldened by U.S. support was accused of plotting against Turkey. Turkey's hawkish generals would ever so often warn against the "red lines" that Barzani must not breach. "Don't try to grab Kirkuk" or else... Don't think about independence or else..." The subtext was that Turkey would invade the Kurdish controlled enclave. A defiant Barzani vowed to fight back. The potential for conflict between a critical NATO ally, Turkey, and its Kurdish friends in Iraq was long a source of worry in Washington. Now the red lines are fading. Turkey is preparing to roll out the red carpet for Barzani. The Kurds' internationally respected leader is expected to meet with Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and perhaps even with President Abdullah Gül.

During a recent trip to the Iraqi Kurdish enclave I was able to observe firsthand the dramatic shift in Ankara's outlook. Turkey's first ever Consul General to Erbil is among its most promising career diplomats. Aydın Selcen cut short a tour in Washington to come to Erbil. In the old days Erbil would have been viewed as a dumping ground for mediocre officers. Today it's a good career move he says.

Selcen has no hang-ups about calling the Kurdish region "Iraqi Kurdistan" or Barzani its "President." Until recently he would have been accused, perhaps even prosecuted, for doing so on charges of inciting ethnic separatism.

There are several reasons for the change. It comes after a prolonged



chill prompted by Barzani's refusal to take military action against separatist rebels of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK's top leaders are based together with an estimated three to five thousand rebels in the mountainous terrain that separates Iraqi Kurdistan from Iran and Turkey. Turkey still complains that Barzani doesn't do enough to squeeze the rebels. But it has dropped demands that his peshmerga fighters take up arms against the Turkish Kurds. This in turn reflects the new thinking in Ankara. Firepower alone cannot quell the 25-year long Kurdish rebellion. Turkey knows that it cannot eradicate the PKK altogether, but it can weaken them to the point where some kind of bargain can be struck.

Meanwhile, political, social, and economic reforms tailored to dissuade disaffected young Kurds from heading toward the mountains need to be rapidly enacted. Turkey's military leadership agrees. This in turn reflects the changes within the Turkish Armed Forces where hardliners are being increasingly sidelined partly as a result of the Ergenekon trial. Armed with the generals' support, Erdoğan's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) began introducing such measures last year. They were heralded as the "Kurdish Opening." They include easing bans on the Kurdish language and co-opting Turkey's largest pro-Kurdish party, the BDP. These have been twinned with moves to get the PKK to lay down its weapon with the help of the Iraqi Kurds.

The opening appeared to slam shut when a group of PKK fighters attacked a convoy of Turkish soldiers last December in the northeastern province of Tokat, well outside the rebels' traditional zone of engagement in the Kurdish dominated southeast.

Some seven Turkish soldiers perished in the attack. A wave of nationalist fury ensued. The raid was probably staged by PKK hardliners who owe their raison d'être to continued violence. Clashes between the PKK and

the army have begun to escalate in recent weeks. All of this makes it harder for Erdoğan to justify further Kurdish-oriented reforms; not least because nationwide parliamentary elections are scheduled to take place by the summer of 2011. Despite these setbacks -- and much to the PKK's dismay -- Turkey's relations with the Iraqi Kurds have emerged unscathed.

One of the biggest propellers of change is flourishing trade ties. During the week I spent in Erbil at least three different business delegations from Turkey were in town. Iraq is Turkey's fourth largest trading partner. Most of this trade is conducted with the Iraqi Kurds. "If Iraqi Kurdistan were an independent country it would rank among Turkey's top ten trading partners," notes Selcen, the Turkish Consul General. Erbil's main boulevard is dotted with Turkish shops, its skyline with new flashy buildings put up by Turkish contractors. These include the five star hotel Divan, owned by Turkey's richest conglomerate, Koç Holding. The state-owned Turkish Airlines is expected to begin flying to the Kurdish region in the coming month and two major Turkish banks will be opening branches in Erbil next month. It's hard to imagine that PKK camps are just a three-hour drive away.

During my trip, I met with Barzani at his mountain fortress overlooking Erbil. Relaxed and confident he sounded genuinely committed to improving relations with Ankara. Over cups of frothy Kurdish style cappuccino, Barzani heaped praise on Erdoğan for his "daring" and "courageous" reforms and insisted these must not be frozen because of the Tokat attack. He said he was ready to continue between Turkey and the rebels. When I asked him whether Turkey would have to eventually talk to the rebels he said: "Turkey will need to deal with the PKK because their problem is with the PKK." Yet he acknowledged that the rebels were divided and that there were indeed hardliners bent on sabotaging peace. Barzani will undoubtedly be discussing formulas to disarm the PKK and to persuade their leaders to go into exile somewhere in Europe or elsewhere. It's a tricky affair. Murat Karayılan, the most senior PKK commander is widely believed to be leaning toward a deal. But he faces stiff resistance from Cemil Bayık and Dursun Kalkan, veteran hardliners who are allegedly allied with

Iran. Another sticking point is the Mahkmour refugee camp, where some 10,000 Turkish Kurds have been languishing for years. The camp, more of a shantytown, has evolved into a rest and recreation center for the PKK. It also provides recruits. Repatriating these Kurds will further test relations between Ankara and the KRG.

I also met with PKK leader Murat Karayilan in the Kandil mountains bordering Iran, where the PKK controls a large swathe of land. The PKK is clearly unnerved by the warm ties between Turkey and the Iraqi Kurds. They don't seem to believe Barzani will stick to his pledge never to fight fellow Kurds again. Their suspicions will have been reinforced by a trilateral security agreement signed on April 11 in Istanbul between Iraq, Turkey, and the United States. The details of the agreement are being kept secret but as one senior Turkish official put it to me "it's the most comprehensive plan of action ever against the PKK." Alongside military options it includes measures to cut off logistical supplies to the PKK and to crack down on its alleged drug trafficking, racketeering, and money laundering activities in Europe and beyond.

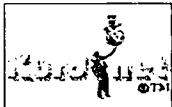
The other major change in

Turkey's relations with the Iraqi Kurds is that they are no longer viewed through the PKK lens, but from an Iraq-wide perspective. Friendship with the Iraqi Kurds allows Ankara to have a greater say in Baghdad. (With Washington's support it is quietly encouraging Barzani to lend support to a broad-based government in the wake of Iraq's parliamentary elections. At the same time Turkey is courting Iraq's Sunni and Shia Arab leaders while support for its ethnic Turkmen cousins is far more subtle. Prior to the elections, Turkey cajoled Turkmen's in Kirkuk to ally themselves with a faction led by the former prosecutor Shiite Prime Minister Ayyad Allawi. The result: Allawi's group won about an equal amount of votes as the Kurds. The Kurds erstwhile grip over the oil rich province, which they claim as their own, has been weakened.

Some Iraqi Kurds claim that if things don't work out with Baghdad in the long run, joining Turkey would be the second best option after outright independence. They may be exaggerating but the Iraqi Kurdish and Turkish economies are already tightly intertwined. Once the Iraqi Kurds strike an agreement with Baghdad over the sharing of oil revenues, they

can start selling their own oil and natural gas resources through Turkey. The ensuing wealth is poised to help generate income and investment in Turkey's own Kurdish hinterland. This virtuous cycle can help alleviate poverty among Turkish Kurds. Yet, Ankara must never cede to the age-old temptation of playing one set of Kurds against the other. Barzani is no longer just another tribal leader. He is the Kurdish national leader. And as much as he dislikes the PKK he is no longer willing to kill fellow Kurds. As one senior Iraqi Kurdish official put it, "They may be terrorists but they are Kurds."

[*] Amberin Zaman is the Turkey correspondent for *The Economist* and writes a weekly column for Turkish daily *Taraf*. The views expressed here are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the views of the German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF). This piece is part of the GMF "On Turkey" series, an ongoing series of analysis briefs about Turkey's current political situation and its future.



May 17, 2010

By Thomas Anthony , ekurd.net

Al-Qaeda seeks to destabilize Kurdistan

The liberal-minded Kurds have long been warned by Al-Qaeda and its radical affiliates for their firmly forged alliance with foreign forces in Iraq. In recent years, Al-Qaeda launched sophisticated public and media campaigns against the Kurd. Growing secessionist tendencies among autonomist Kurds has infuriated many Islamists across the Muslim world, waning their sympathy for the Kurds to a degree that some justify Saddam's brutal behavior of the Kurds. Al-Qaeda persistently encourage Muslim Iraqis and non-Iraqis of all ethnic (Kurds, Arabs) and linguistic backgrounds to cooperate in ousting the Iraqi Government and coalition forces in Iraq. From Al-Qaeda standpoint, democracies, constitutional governments, and insufficiently Islamic monarchies are equally unacceptable forms of governance for Islamic societies. The emergence of Kurdish Regional Government entity, a state within an Islamic Arab state, is totally incompatible with their ideology.

Al-Qaeda attempted various times to destabilize Kurdistan by using diverse tactics involving: suicide bombings, kidnappings, killings, spreading terror, targeting infrastructure, attacking female students and as forth. Due to the tight security state maintained by Kurdish forces, they failed to achieve their goals in disrupting and disturbing the pervasive order in Kurdistan. They were compelled to provisionally divert their focus from Kurdistan to other penetrable, uncontrollable, chaotic parts of Iraq.

Al-Qaeda has characterized the insurgency in Iraq as the central battle in a "Third World War", which according to Al-Qaeda; the Crusader-Zionist coalition began against the Islamic nation. The ultimate goal of Al-Qaeda is to establish a pan-Islamic Caliphate

in Iraq by working with other allied Islamic extremist groups as well as overthrow other regimes it deems "non-Islamic" across the Muslim world and expel Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries.

Iraq bears unique strategic significance for Al-Qaeda. Iraq has huge oil reserves that are the basis of industry in the global economy. Al-Qaeda wishes to see the war in Iraq spill into Syria and Lebanon, which could give "the Islamic action a vast area of action and maneuvering" and help it to attract "tremendous human and financial resources." The expansion of violence in the Middle East could also bring the jihadist movement close to "the border of Palestine" and into direct confrontation with Israel, legitimizing the jihadist cause and its supporters.

Al-Qaeda repeatedly attempted to assassinate senior Kurdish officials and stirred up an ethnic war between the Kurds and Arab in order to undermine the current national unity government in Iraq. Last year, www.ekurd.netit planned to assassinate Iraqi president but the plot was foiled by American forces. It is a fast adapting organization. It sought to recruit fighters and sympathizers in the rural areas in Kurdistan and inflamed tribal feud among the numerous Kurdish clans. It is widely suspected that it is involved in the abduction of Kurdish journalists, as well.

Although it has failed in all its previous attempts, it remains vigilant and a strong threatening force. The real Conflict between Al-Qaeda and Kurdish forces will burst into flames following a premature, impromptu drawdown of American forces in Iraq.

Thomas Anthony is a regular columnist for conservative paper, his Articles have also appeared in NY Times. <http://www.conservatives.com>



Kurdistan Regional Government

16 MAY 2010

President Barzani receives Turkey's Consul General to Erbil

Salahaddin, Kurdistan Region, Iraq (KRP.org) – Kurdistan Region President Masoud Barzani today received the new Turkish Consul General to Erbil, Mr. Mehmet Aydin Selcen.

Turkey is due to open a consulate office



in Erbil this month. The decision came following a visit by Turkey's Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu to Erbil in

October 2009.

The President commended the decision by the Turkish government to open a consulate office in the Kurdistan Region and described it as a "courageous step." President Barzani said that with good will and close cooperation, both countries can benefit from political, commercial and cultural cooperation.

The Turkish Consul General said that the opening of this office in Erbil shows the importance his country attaches to the Region. "This step is part of a strategic and long-term policy to establish good relations," said Mr Selcen.

TheNational

May 20, 2010

UAE to double investment in Kurdistan to \$6bn

Tom Arnol – UAE

ERBIL // Investment from the UAE in Iraqi Kurdistan is expected to double to US\$6 billion (Dh22.03bn) within three years as the region's vast gasfields attract a wave of foreign capital.

Abu Dhabi National Energy Company, or Taqa, is among the companies considering investments in the power sector.

Carl Sheldon, the general manager of Taqa, said: "As the economy grows and Iraq stabilises it is a natural country for Taqa to invest in. Particularly on the power and water side, the needs are tremendous."

Taqa representatives are part of a delegation of government and business officials from the UAE visiting Iraqi Kurdistan to look into investment opportunities.

The region is estimated to have 200 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, as well as oil reserves amounting to 45 billion barrels.

Investment in the region from the UAE is expected to reach about \$3bn this year, but that could rise to \$6bn within three years, according to Sinan Celebi, the minister of trade and industry in the Kurdistan regional government.

Dana Gas, based in Sharjah,

already has operations in Iraqi Kurdistan and is in a partnership that is developing a large gasfield that is supplying fuel for regional electricity generation.

The group has recently completed construction of a gas processing plant that is expected to contribute substantially to the profitability of the venture, in which Dana holds a 40 per cent interest.

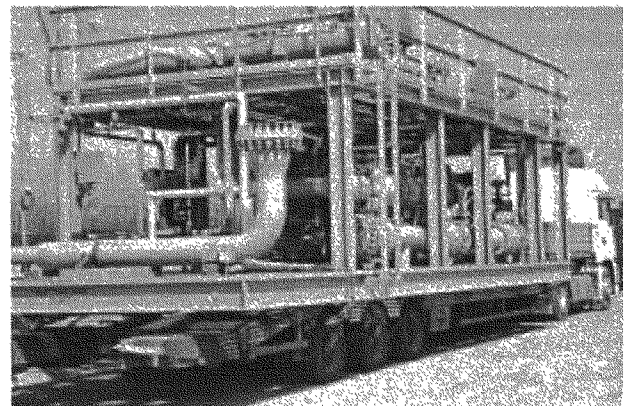
"We are increasing production and have completed train one of the facilities," Ahmed al Arbeed, the chief executive of Dana Gas, said in an interview yesterday.

"We are producing 150 million standard cubic feet per day and about 6,500 barrels of condensate. We are in the process of increasing that to 200 million standard cubic feet per day by the end of this year.

"We will also produce LPG after a couple of months. We expect to reach a level of 500 metric tonnes per day. We have another train to complete, probably next year, which will increase production."

Years of war and under-investment have left Iraq with a dilapidated power network, despite the country's huge untapped oil and gas reserves.

The Baghdad government is expected to start handing out oil and gas licences in September as planned, said Ashti Hawrami, the minister of natural resources in Iraqi



LPG plant components being transported to a site in Kurdistan. Courtesy Dana

Kurdistan.

Iraq's government this week approved an agreement between the oil ministry and the majority-Kurdish region in the country's north to export crude produced there, opening the way for shipments to resume after months of delay. The country is also expected to supply the Nabucco gas pipeline, which is intended to reduce Europe's dependence on Russian fuel.

Mr Hawrami said: "This is a temporary arrangement and a final agreement is needed. Iraq needs a resolution to agree revenue shares and hydrocarbon legislation, and we hope that the government will deal with this quickly."

Mr al Arbeed said the pipeline project would be good for the Gulf. "Nabucco is in the interests of the region and will add

value to the region and companies involved," he said.

Construction on the \$9.7bn Nabucco project is expected to begin next year.

Iraq, which holds the third-largest oil reserves in the world, hopes to develop gas production to feed new power plants. The country's oil ministry auctioned development rights for the Akkas and Mansouriya gasfields last year but did not receive any offers.

Akkas, Mansouriya and a third gasfield in Siba are expected to be part of a third bidding round.

REUTERS

Scenarios: What happens next in Iraq after Baghdad recount?

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - May 17 2010 - By Michael Christie

THE END of a recount of votes in Baghdad opens the way for Iraq's March 7 election results to be finally certified more than two months after the ballot, and for coalition-forming talks to begin in earnest.

It does not mean the pace of government formation will necessarily pick up, and the ingredients are still in place for a protracted political vacuum in which sectarian tensions could lead to violence as U.S. troops pack up and start to leave.

The sectarian warfare between once dominant Sunnis and majority Shi'ites that was kicked off after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion has subsided substantially since its peak in 2006/07.

But a string of attacks by a weakened yet still lethal Sunni Islamist insurgency since the ballot has fueled fears of a slide back into broad bloodshed that could derail U.S. plans to end combat operations in August ahead of a full pullout in 2011.

The following is a glimpse into political negotiations thought to be taking place and a review of possible outcomes.

WHO GETS FIRST CHANCE TO FORM A GOVERNMENT

The recount left intact the two-seat election lead of the cross-sectarian Iraqiya list of former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi over the predominantly Shi'ite State of Law bloc of incumbent Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki.

But Allawi's chances of forming a government are slim, raising the prospect of anger among minority Sunnis who backed Iraqiya and who see its electoral success as a vindication of their claim to greater clout in post-invasion Iraq.

Instead, a Shi'ite mega tie-up announced between Maliki's faction and the other main Shi'ite group, the Iraqi National Alliance (INA), has the best chance. They are just four seats short of a governing majority in the new 325-seat parliament.

In theory, the president picked by the next parliament when it sits should give Allawi as the election winner the first shot at trying to form a government and 30 days in which to do so.

The supreme court, though, has already issued an opinion stating that right could also legally be granted to the single biggest bloc in the new parliament.

WHO IS TALKING TO WHOM

In the meantime, State of Law and the INA will be talking to the recently unified Kurdish bloc about what concessions will be needed to bring the Kurds' 57 or so seats into the fold.

The Kurds want the presidency, a resumption in their oil exports, and commitments on disputed areas like Kirkuk, which the Kurds want wrapped into their semi-autonomous enclave.

Maliki's envoys will also be talking to members of Iraqiya who might cross the floor if offered a suitably attractive deal, such as a ministry. It will be important to bestow a Sunni tint on an otherwise Shi'ite-Kurdish dominated government.

Among those who might be tempted to desert Allawi could be incumbent Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi, a prominent Sunni, or members of former Sunni lawmaker Saleh al-Mutlaq's list.

Hashemi would bring with him around 9 seats while Mutlaq's former National Dialogue Front could deliver at least 20. Mutlaq himself was barred from the election because of alleged links to Sunni dictator Saddam Hussein's outlawed Baath party.

Sunni politician Osama al-Nujaifi, who controls around half of Iraqiya's 20-odd seats in the violent northern province of Nineveh, may also be willing to deal with State of Law and INA.

The inclusion of a large-enough Sunni bloc may defuse some of the outrage Sunnis will feel at Allawi being sidelined by the Shi'ite factions that have dominated Iraq since Saddam's fall.

WHAT STILL STANDS IN THE WAY OF A SHI'ITE MEGA-MERGER

The pick of prime minister is a hurdle that could yet defeat the plans to create a Shi'ite mega-faction.

Maliki, the top vote winner in the March election, insists that he be returned to office for a second term.

But he is opposed by the movement of anti-American cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, which won 39 of INA's 70 seats and dislikes Maliki for sending troops to crush Sadr's Mehdi Army militia.

Maliki is viewed with disquiet within the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council, which has seen its former dominance of Shi'ite politics whittled away by Maliki's growing stature.

In addition, the incumbent prime minister is thought to be viewed by Tehran as overly independent. Shi'ite power Iran has been an influential player in Iraq since its Shi'ite majority was propelled into political supremacy by the invasion.

Under the tie-up, State of Law and INA were to create a 14-person committee to decide on a prime ministerial nominee.

The formation of the panel has been stymied by disagreement within the INA as to who should be included in it, and by State of Law opposition to the INA side appointing too many Sadrists.

The committee, once formed, will have a week to endorse a prime minister unanimously. If it fails, it will then vote on a selection. The winning candidate will need 80 percent support. If that also fails, a new mechanism will have to be agreed.

HOW LONG

It could still take months to form a new government.

While the election results will most likely be certified by June, diplomats expect politicians to want a package deal on all remaining issues -- prime minister, president and ministries -- before the new parliament is allowed to hold its first session.

A popular estimate for a new government is August, just when U.S. troops levels are supposed to go down by half to 50,000.

SPIRAL OF VIOLENCE

When Iraq waited months for a government in 2006, sectarian bloodshed took hold. Some fear history could repeat itself.

But Iraq in 2010 is different to Iraq in 2006.

The 650,000-plus troops and police Iraq now has have proven to be relatively professional, while not flawless, and capable of battling both Sunni insurgents and Shi'ite militia.

Iraqis themselves are tired of war, and less inclined to turn a blind eye to or provide a safe haven for armed groups.

Iraq has also signed 10 deals with global oil firms that could turn it into the world's No. 2 oil producer.

The allure of booming oil revenues may persuade many who might otherwise take up arms that it would be more profitable to join the government, than to fight it.



MAY 17, 2010

Iran's Kurdish Question

The Islamic Republic's recent execution of five Kurds has sparked outrage in northern Iraq, and renewed unrest at home.

BY KAWE QORAISHY, OF INSIDEIRAN

Two days after the hanging of five Iranian Kurds in Tehran, protesters gathered across the Iraqi border in the Kurdish city of Suleymanieh. Thousands of them crowded into the city's leafy Freedom Park, where Javad Alizadeh, a well-known former political prisoner in Iran who had recently left for Iraqi Kurdistan, addressed the gathering. The Iranian regime "follows neither the principles of republicanism, nor does it abide by holy laws of Islam," Alizadeh declared. "The Islamic Republic has shown in the past 30 years that it only cares about its own survival and it will not abstain from committing the vilest of acts in achieving its goal."

The memorial was one of the greatest outpourings of Kurdish opposition to the regime in recent memory, and one among numerous protests and hunger strikes -- quiet ones in Iran, less so in Iraq's Kurdish region, where Kurds were once persecuted but now enjoy relative autonomy -- that have broken out since the execution on May 9. The victims, the Iranian authorities claimed, were activists for Kurdish autonomy; two of the five were accused of belonging to the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK), a Kurdish nationalist group that Iran considers a terrorist organization. The uproar has prompted, and been worsened by, the government's refusal to allow the families of the five victims to be buried publicly, for fear of massive protests.

The executions and other crackdowns in Iran have set up a bind for the country's Kurds, who increasingly fear that the price of political activism within Iran is death or imprisonment -- but worry that their abilities to pressure the regime will be lessened if they instead choose exile in northern Iraq, where the Kurds enjoy protection by their own defense forces. Since President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad came to power in 2005, religious and ethnic minorities have faced worsening discriminatory practices in Iran, the Kurds (who are also mostly Sunni Muslim in majority



Shiite Iran) among them. When human rights and political activists have protested the unequal status, the Islamic Republic has prosecuted many of them. Most recently, Kaweh Ghassemi-Kermanshahi, a member of the central committee of the Kurdistan Human Rights Organization, was arrested after he spoke to the foreign media; he has been in detention for nearly 100 days.

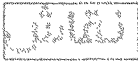
The demonstrators in Suleymaniah hope their protests and vigils will inspire the Kurds in Iran to rise up, despite their fear of Iran's security forces. (They succeeded last Thursday, when Iranian Kurds responded by launching a general strike and shuttering their shops.) Salahaddin Mohtadi, an exiled Iranian Kurd in Suleymaniah who has been fighting for Kurdish independence in Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution, believes that Iran's recent actions could be the goad that activists need to form a broad Kurdish front that transcends political rivalries. "The execution of political prisoners can be a great opportunity to create a large coalition among Kurdish parties against the central government of Iran," he said.

On the evening of May 10, hundreds of Iranian and Iraqi Kurds took part in a protest gathering at the Shneh Dari Park in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan, where demonstrators lit candles in memory of Sunday's victims. Farhad Pirbal, a dissident Kurdish author who spoke at the event, compared what is hap-

pening now in Iran to the repression of Iraqi Kurds under Saddam Hussein. "There was a time when Baathist agents executed young Kurds right here in the neighborhood just because they were carrying cassette tapes with Kurdish music on them," Pirbal said. "But now, we are here at this very place in freedom protesting against a regime that hangs Kurds for the crime of defending their own rights."

"No dictatorship can last forever," he went on. "There was a time when the demise of the Baath regime seemed impossible. ... I am sure that there will be a day when the Iranian people will be free of dictatorship and achieve liberty."

Life in the Kurdish provinces in Iran, meanwhile, remains tense. There is a heavy security presence in places such as Kamyaran, Sanandaj, Mahabad, and Saghez, and local Kurdish media reported that 15 students were arrested Wednesday morning in the Kurdish city of Marivan. Thursday's strike in the region was reportedly the largest in recent years; bazaars were empty, students and activists stayed home, even government offices were closed. These five executions, the activists believe, don't just mark the end of the victims' lives, but also the beginning of a new era in which the Iranian regime will have to answer to its critics.



Turkey looking for economic integration with Kurdistan region

niqash | Qassim Khidhir Hamad |

With bilateral trade between the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and Turkey reaching US\$9 billion, Massoud Barzani, the Kurdistan Region Government President, formerly an enemy of the Turkish government, was invited recently to Turkey for talks on increasing economic integration between the two entities.

Lately, relations between Turkey and the Kurdistan Region have calmed significantly, progressing rapidly as both entities look for opportunities to improve their economic outlooks. Barzani was invited to Turkey while Turkey's Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Feridun Sinirlioglu, was visiting the President in Kurdistan.

Turkey is working hard to take the lion's share of economic opportunities in Kurdistan and beat their competitors to the greatest stake in the region's economic future.

"My Prime Minister wants Turkey and the Iraqi Kurdistan Region to be integrated with each other through economics," said Aydin Selcen, Turkish Consul in the Kurdistan Region's capital, Erbil.

"We hope the border areas between Turkey and Kurdistan Region become very calm in a way that the areas can turn into a destination for trade and tourism," Selcen added.

Turkey sees potential for strategic partnership between themselves and Kurdistan and the economic benefits of a close relationship are obvious to both parties.

"Turkey knows very well that Kurdistan is not a sea of oil, it is an ocean of oil," said Musa Muhammad, an economics lecturer at Salahuddin University in Erbil.

He continued to remark that the Kurdistan Region needs Turkey to build the region and as an export partner for its oil and gas. And if Turkey joins the European Union, Kurdistan can be the gateway between the Arab Gulf Countries and Europe, since Kurdistan Region has a 700km borderline with Turkey.

As for Turkey, Muhammad added, Turkey wants to become the main route for export of Iraqi oil and gas, especially for the proposed Nabucco Pipeline, which takes Iraqi gas to Europe. The pipeline goes through Kurdistan to Turkey. Turkey also sees the Kurdistan Region as a possible gateway to better links with the rest of Iraq and other Arab countries in the region.

According to Muhammad, there is a huge competition between Turkey and Iran for dominance in the Kurdish economy. Turkey currently has a lead and is better placed to win the competition because Kurdistan has more joint interests with Turkey than with Iran and Turkish products tend to be of higher quality than Iranian products.

"If we look at the big picture, we see the situation is more in the interest of Turkey than Kurdistan Region," Muhammad



concluded, suggesting a reason for why relations have improved.

While the relations between Turkey and Kurdistan Region are advancing very fast, the Turkish Military continues a near constant bombardment of their border with Kurdistan, accusing members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) of hiding in the mountainous region. There have been more clashes recently, almost certainly a response to the warming-up of the official relationship.

Jawad Qadir, a member of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), led by Massoud Barzani, says the economy is not the only reason that makes Turkey and Kurdistan Region eager to develop the relations.

"The issue of the PKK is one of the most important reasons," He said "Turkey believes the Kurdistan Region can be a mediator to solve the PKK issue. Barzani has an important influence on PKK.

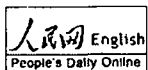
"President Barzani told the Turkish government that if they make any effort to talk with the PKK, he will try to convince the PKK to disarm."

Recently, Qadir was invited by Turkey along with a number of Kurdish intellectuals and writers with the aim of talking with the Turkish Media to end the hostile statements between both sides. He said Turkey has changed its behavior toward the Kurdistan Region and some high-ranking Turkish officials recognise the Kurdistan Region as a distinct "federal region in Iraq", also using the term "Kurdistan Region" instead of "Northern Iraq."

However, Qadir believes there are some elements inside the PKK and the Turkish Army who do not want to see good relations between Turkey and the Kurdistan Region and they try to hinder it.

"The PKK and Turkish Army can have a positive or negative role in Turkey and Kurdistan Region relations," he said.

No date has yet been set for Barzani's visit to Turkey. With the recent improvements in the relationship between the two parties, though, expectations among the population, especially within Kurdistan are likely to be high.



Iran's security forces kill two Kurdish rebels

19 May 2010 / Xinhua

TWO MEMBERS of the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK) were killed in clashes with security forces near Iran's western borders, the local satellite Press TV reported on Tuesday.

Acting commander of Iran's border guards Rahim Khorshidvand said "two of them died in an operation and two

others surrendered to Iranian border police," the report said.

However, the report did not specify the time and the exact location of the operation.

Earlier in May, Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) forces killed five Kurdish rebels of the Iraqi-based separatist PJAK and injured two in the west of the country, IRGC commander Ali Akbar Nouri was quoted by semi-official Fars news agency as saying.

Iran's western provinces witnessed regular armed clashes between Iranian security forces and Kurdish militant parties, in particular PJAK, an anti-Iran Kurdish group linked to Turkey's outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK).

who are the peshmerga?

niqash | Maria Fantappie | wed 19 may 10

“We are a proper army, the army of Kurdistan, we are not a militia because we have a structure,” says General Aziz Waysi, commander of the Zerevani Peshmerga training camp in Erbil.

The future of the Peshmerga in Iraq is highly dependent upon the resolution of this definition crisis. Everyone has a different definition for the Peshmerga, who remain the only armed group in Iraq officially independent from Iraqi security forces.

Kurds, of course, tend to see the group as far more independent and organised than their Arab counterparts in the central government. Some Kurds call Peshmerga “a force to secure the region”, while others do not hesitate to call it the “army of Iraqi Kurdistan.” And as positive as Babaker Zeibari, the chief of staff of the Iraqi Army, is in calling it “a force in charge of border control”, looking forward to its integration into the New Iraqi Army, others are less diplomatic, slapping the term “Kurdish militia” on the group.

The Iraqi constitution is precise in its provisions for integrating secondary militias into the army, meaning that defining the Peshmerga is essential for marking out their future position in the Iraqi security apparatus. The dispute over terminology is the starting point to debating the legitimacy and conditions of their integration.

Peshmerga forces are deployed within the Kurdistan Region but also beyond the borders, in the disputed territories of Ninewa, Diyala, Kirkuk and Salahuddin provinces. With their lengthy history, their structured organisation and their official role in Iraqi security, many Kurds feel it is inappropriate to call them just a ‘militia’.

The origins of Peshmerga date back to the 1940s, when it grew as a movement resistant to the centralised Iraqi state. Since then, the movement grew in size, in its structural sophistication and in its fighting capabilities. The Saddam Hussein era saw a dramatic growth in the size of the force and they led Kurdistan to quasi-autonomy.

This success was followed with the opening of two training camps in Kalakula in Sulaimaniyah province and Zachko, which tried to transform Kurdish fighters into proper soldiers and to organise the movement within a proper military rank system. In 2003, cooperation with American troops enhanced the training of Peshmerga and supported their label as a regular army.

On a technical level, the Peshmerga have many characteristics of a regular army. They have a well-defined internal hierarchy, all of the requisite symbolic and ceremonial systems, specialised training camps, and a complete set of uniforms.

Despite their military organisation, voices inside and outside Kurdistan point out the internal division within the force and the direct political party affiliations with the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). They believe this makes it inappropriate to call the force an ‘army’. The Kurdish MP Adnan Osman, an opposition member from the Goran list, recently denounced the political affiliations of both branches of Peshmerga.

In April 2009, the two branches of the Peshmerga, loyal to the different parties, were officially joined. To many, however, the unity of the two factions, which fought each other in 1994 and 1998, remains only a formal arrangement. Peshmerga affiliated to the KDP still control and recruit in the Erbil and Dohuk governorates, while the PUK operate within the Sulaimaniyah governorate. The two factions act in response to the orders of two different military hierarchies that are often reluctant to cooperate.

Despite their differences within Kurdistan, all the political parties there seem to find common grounds in facing Baghdad, when they perceive the specificity of Peshmerga questioned or the interests of Iraqi Kurdistan under threat.

The integration of Peshmerga into Iraqi forces is highly dependent



on compromises with the central government. What is on the table of negotiations is not only the status of Peshmerga itself, but also the disputed territories at the frontiers between Iraqi Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq.

The central government led by Nouri Al Maliki promoted the incorporation of the Peshmerga within the Iraqi security apparatus under the Iraqi Ministry of Defence together with their withdrawal from the disputed territories, as part of a policy of centralisation. Officially, Kurds deny that integration is a possibility but rumours are rife that negotiations on the issue between the Kurdish Ministry of Interior and the Iraqi Ministry of Defence have already begun.

The KRG could probably accept the integration of the Peshmerga under the condition that their status as Kurdish regular forces is acknowledged in Baghdad. A formal and gradual integration could be conceived in the long term provided that the Peshmerga will keep their current military hierarchy, their training centers, and their location in the Kurdistan region.

This would integrate the Peshmerga into the Iraqi security forces without dismantling them. The Kurdish government would benefit from the Iraqi Ministry of Defence’s budget and the Peshmerga would benefit from training in Iraqi military academies. This would amount to a formal integration, while the force remained substantively at the disposal of the KRG, in case tensions between Baghdad and Erbil were to rise again.

The issue of the disputed territories reduces the scope of compromise and focuses the KRG on the full preservation of their own security force. Ninewa, Diyala, Kirkuk and Salahuddin, governorates inhabited by a mixed population of Arabs and Kurds, in addition to other communities, recently became flashpoints in confrontation between the two governments. The competition is played on the ground through the deployment of security forces affiliated to both sides.

After the Peshmerga crossed the borders between the region and Iraq-proper in 2003, the KRG used them to ensure Kurdish control over the territories, historically claimed by the Kurds – Kirkuk, Khannaqin and areas partially populated by Kurds such as in Ninewa province.

More recently, Maliki’s New Iraqi Army, reporting directly to the central government, were progressively deployed to replace Peshmerga and Kurdish battalions. In 2009, Al Hadba’s electoral victory reduced the KRG’s influence in Ninewa governorate kindling the tensions between the two sides.

Beyond the definition of Peshmerga, the definition of the Iraqi army is at stake at the moment. To many, the deployment of Iraqi units directly affiliated to the Prime Minister begs a question. Is the Iraqi Army itself a regular army operating as a state institution or as an instrument of political parties?

“Why should I consider the Peshmerga an irregular armed force when Al Maliki deploys his own battalions in Kirkuk?” says General Waysi.

The border between regular and irregular armed forces remains blurred in Iraq today. The future of the integration of Peshmerga is in the hands of the forthcoming central government. It lies in its art to negotiate on definition and territories with the Kurdish government, to redraw the line between regular and irregular armed forces, and, above all, nourish definitions of substance.

Iran agrees on nuclear fuel deal with Turkey

CAIRO

Enriched uranium swap could thwart West's bid to impose new sanctions

BY MICHAEL SLACKMAN

Iran on Monday announced an agreement to ship some of its nuclear fuel to Turkey in a deal that could offer a short-term solution to its nuclear standoff with the West, or prove to be a tactic aimed at derailing efforts to bring new sanctions against Tehran.

The deal, negotiated by Turkey and Brazil, calls for Iran to ship 1,200 kilograms, or 2,640 pounds, of low-enriched uranium to Turkey, where it would be stored. In exchange, after one year, Iran would have the right to receive about 120 kilograms of material enriched to 20 percent — which brings it closer to weapons-grade — from Russia and France.

The terms mirror a deal with the West last October that fell apart when Iran backtracked. But it is far from clear that the Obama administration will agree to it now — in part because Iran has continued to enrich uranium, adding to its stockpiles.

The United States reacted cautiously to the announcement. Robert Gibbs, the White House press secretary, said in a statement: "Given Iran's repeated failure to live up to its own commitments, and the need to address fundamental issues related to Iran's nuclear program, the United States and international community continue to have serious concerns."

"While it would be a positive step for Iran to transfer low-enriched uranium off of its soil as it agreed to do last October, Iran said today that it would continue its 20 percent enrichment, which is a direct violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions and which the Iranian government originally justified by pointing to the need for fuel for the Tehran Research Reactor."

Mr. Gibbs made clear that the administration would press forward with sanctions until Iran met its obligations. "The United States," he said, "will continue to work with our international partners, and through the United Nations Security Council, to make it clear to the Iranian government that it must demonstrate through deeds — and not



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, center, in Tehran on Monday with President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil, left, and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey.

simply words — its willingness to live up to international obligations or face consequences, including sanctions."

In October, the 1,200 kilograms that Iran was supposed to ship out of the country represented about two-thirds of its stockpile of nuclear fuel — enough to ensure that it would not retain sufficient nuclear material to make a weapon.

But now, the same amount of fuel accounts for a smaller proportion of its declared stockpile.

A Western diplomat who spoke on the condition of anonymity said the amount of low-enriched uranium that Iran was prepared to ship to Turkey was believed to represent a little more than half its current stockpile. "The situation has changed," the diplomat said.

Yet the agreement could serve to undermine the Obama administration's chances of securing international approval for punitive measures. China and Russia, which have been highly reluctant to impose sanctions on a major trading partner, could use the announcement to end discussions about further measures, representing a fourth round of sanctions.

Washington is seeking further sanctions because Iran has refused to halt further enrichment or to answer international inspectors' questions about evidence suggesting research into possible weapons designs and similar experiments. The inspectors have also been blocked from visiting many locations they have asked to examine.

President Barack Obama now faces a vexing choice. If he walks away from this deal, it will look as if he is rejecting an agreement similar to one he was willing to sign eight months ago. But if he accepts it, many of the urgent issues he has said will have to be resolved with Iran in coming months — mostly over suspected weapons work — will be put on hold for a year or more. Many American officials say that is Iran's most pressing goal.

Iranian officials, however, applauded

the deal as a breakthrough, with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad saying at a news conference that the agreement would be "to the benefit of all nations who want to live freely and independently."

Officials said on Iranian state television that the next step would be to agree to terms for the exchange with the so-called Vienna Group — Iran's description of an informal association comprising the United States, France, Russia and the International Atomic Energy Agency, the United Nations' nuclear watchdog in Vienna.

The Iranian officials said they would send a formal letter confirming the deal to the atomic agency within a week.

"This shows that Iran is not pursuing nuclear weapons, and, rather, peaceful nuclear technology," Ramin Mehmanparast, the Foreign Ministry spokesman, said in a televised news conference Monday. "Such interactions must replace a confrontational approach."

Diplomats in Vienna said the I.A.E.A. had not been formally notified about the reported deal, but added that Tehran's agreement to a swap outside its own territory was potentially significant.

The announcement, which appeared aimed at satisfying international demands, came as Iran faces growing political and economic demands at home.

Although the agreement was regarded as a positive step by regional experts, there was also skepticism about whether it was real or a tactic to transfer blame for the conflict to the West, while derailing the prospect of the U.N. Security Council's imposing new sanctions, something that appeared possible within weeks.

"Iran has a history of forging a deal and then going back on it," said Emad Gad, an expert in international relations at the Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo. "It lets the situation get really tense and then reaches an agreement. This is a genuine

characteristic of the nature of Iranian politics.”

Coinciding with pressure for new sanctions, Iran will on June 12 mark the anniversary of its disputed presidential election last year, which led to months of protests and conflict.

Iran also is wrestling with a serious

inflation problem, declining foreign investment and the prospect of lifting subsidies on commodities, which would mean higher prices and, perhaps, renewed social tensions.

“With deals like this or announcements like this you have to be a bit skeptical, at least initially, because so many

in the past have proved to be a virtual opportunity rather than a more substantial one,” said Michael Axworthy, the former British diplomat and Iran expert who lectures at the University of Exeter.

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune MAY 15-16, 2010

Turkish court is main arena for proposed changes

ISTANBUL

BY SEBNEM ARSU

With official secularism and efforts to align with the European Union as a backdrop, a battle over proposed changes to the Turkish Constitution reached one of the targets of those changes on Friday: the Constitutional Court.

Turkey's main opposition party asked the court to annul 28 amendments passed by Parliament and approved by President Abdullah Gul on Wednesday, opening the way to a national referendum on the changes.

The opposition said some of the amendments were designed to give the government more control over the staunchly secular judiciary and therefore violated the separation of powers.

The governing Justice and Development Party, or A.K. Party, which has Is-

lamist roots, says the changes do not constitute an assault on governmental secularism in this majority-Muslim country but rather are tailored to help Turkey meet the E.U.'s entry criteria.

The senior organs of the judiciary, self-proclaimed guardian of the secular state structure, are also suspicious of the governing party's Islamic motives in politics and vocally opposed the changes. The proposed amendments include restructuring of the Constitutional Court and the Senior Board of Judges and Prosecutors in a way that grants larger presidential authority in selection of their members.

The Electoral Commission has scheduled the referendum for Sept. 12, a highly symbolic day for Turkey, the anniversary of the military coup in 1980 that led to the writing of the current Constitution.

Although the structure suggested by the government is common in several

E.U. countries, Mr. Gul's close links with the A.K. Party as a former prime minister raise concerns about his impartiality.

The Republican People's Party, or C.H.P., which forms the main parliamentary opposition, often turns to the Constitutional Court when seeking to overturn parliamentary actions the party views as endangering secularism.

“The C.H.P. is trying to go to the Constitutional Court and get it annulled there in order not to go for referendum,” Bulent Arinc, deputy prime minister, said of the package of constitutional amendments. “This is a C.H.P. tradition.”

But only the Constitutional Court has the authority to send the package back to Parliament for reassessment, said Mustafa Ozyurek, deputy chairman of the C.H.P.

He said that if the package did go to a referendum, his party would “do our best to explain the A.K. Party's real intentions.”

INTERNATIONAL
Herald Tribune MAY 18, 2010

Hint of deal as French prepare to free Iranian

PARIS

BY STEVEN ERLANGER

A day after Tehran freed a young French academic accused of spying, France prepared to release an Iranian serving a life sentence for assassinating an exiled former Iranian prime minister, Shapour Bakhtiar, in August 1991.

The French and Iranian authorities continued to deny any quid-pro-quo, but the timing was considered suspicious

by French opposition legislators and the French media.

On Monday, Interior Minister Brice Hortefeux said at a news conference that he had signed a deportation order for Ali Vakili Rad, the convicted murderer. A French court will rule Tuesday on a parole request made by Mr. Vakili Rad, but it appears that he will be released and sent back immediately to Iran. He was convicted in 1994 of strangling and stabbing Mr. Bakhtiar, then 76, to death.

Mr. Bakhtiar was the last prime minister under the late Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, who was overthrown in the 1979 Islamic Revolution. Prosecutors had contended that Mr. Bakhtiar was killed on the orders of the government in Tehran.

On May 5, another French court rejected an American extradition request for an Iranian businessman, Majid Kakavand, 37, accused by buying electronic components online with a Malaysian address and illegally shipping them to Iranian companies engaged in military work. The court said he had done nothing

illegal under French law. Mr. Kakavand flew back to Tehran after the decision.

On Sunday, the French academic, Clotilde Reiss, 24, flew back to Paris after Tehran commuted her 10-year sentence on spying charges to a fine of some \$300,000. Ms. Reiss participated in and photographed demonstrations against elections in Iran in June and sent the photos to friends and to the French Embassy. Arrested on July 1, she spent six weeks in jail and the rest of the time on bail at the embassy. French officials said the charges were baseless and rejected any suggestion of a backroom deal with Iran for her freedom. However, the Socialist Party spokesman, Benoît Hamon, said that “I think, like many French, that there was probably something in return” for the release of Ms. Reiss.

But there is also a tradition here of quietly trading for the release of hostages, and it is likely that most French will be pleased that Ms. Reiss has been returned to freedom in France.

TURQUIE

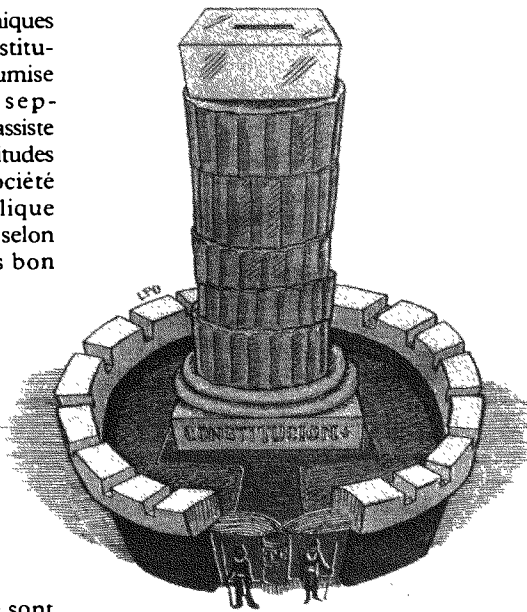
Cette gauche qui peine à être démocratique

C'est l'AKP, parti islamiste au pouvoir, aux traditions autoritaires, qui réclame une réforme de la Constitution rédigée par des généraux putschistes, alors que l'opposition s'en accommode.

VATAN
Istanbul

Les discussions et polémiques liées à la révision constitutionnelle [qui sera soumise à référendum en septembre 2010] montrent que l'on assiste à une remise en question des certitudes dans une bonne partie de la société turque. Ce phénomène s'explique essentiellement par le paradoxe selon lequel les réformes, qui dans bon nombre de pays européens ont été réalisées par des partis politiques de gauche, sont aujourd'hui en Turquie l'apanage d'un parti, l'AKP, issu de l'islam politique et qui se définit désormais comme conservateur-démocrate. En Occident, l'idée d'un "Etat tout-puissant sacralisé" a été réformée par des gouvernements de gauche. Ce sont encore ces mêmes partis qui ont fait triompher le concept de primauté de l'individu. Or, en Turquie, ce sont précisément les partis se définissant comme de gauche qui persistent à défendre la notion d'un Etat qu'il faudrait absolument protéger des individus afin de lui garder sa toute-puissance. Ce sont donc les idées européennes de gauche qui ont débouché sur le rejet de la sacralité de l'Etat – considéré désormais comme un simple instrument de pouvoir – et qui ont permis une transformation du concept d'Etat. Aujourd'hui, en Europe, la notion d'Etat tout-puissant est le fait de la droite radicale et fascisante.

En 1960, dans la foulée d'une expérience démocratique qui s'est soldée par un échec [dix années d'un gouvernement issu des débuts du multipartisme qui s'est achevé par le coup d'Etat de mai 1960], l'idée de défendre l'Etat contre la classe politique qui conduit le pays vers le chaos a commencé à être mise en avant. C'est alors que des présidents de la République issus de l'institution militaire ont été élus, que l'armée a



▲ Dessin de LPO
paru dans
El Mundo,
Madrid.

publié des "mémoires de mise en garde" [mars 1971], que des gouvernements impartiaux ont été mis sur pied, que des coups d'Etat ont eu lieu [mai 1960, septembre 1980], que près de 100 personnes ont été exécutées et des milliers d'autres torturées.

La Constitution de 1982 [œuvre des putschistes de 1980] constitue ainsi l'aboutissement de cette philosophie. En effet, cette Constitution a véritablement été conçue pour protéger l'Etat contre ses citoyens. Elle est marquée par l'idée que le citoyen – et en particulier celui qui ne porte pas d'uniforme ou qui ne fait pas partie de l'appareil d'Etat – est un coupable potentiel. Selon les concepteurs de cette Constitution, le citoyen est de toute façon incapable de gérer le pays et risquerait même de provoquer son démembrement. Tous ceux qui ont eu l'occasion de s'intéresser un tant soit peu à l'histoire de la pensée politique

savent que cette approche constitue l'un des fondements du fascisme.

LA GAUCHE TURQUE PROTÈGE L'ÉTAT SACRO-SAIN

Ceux qui en Turquie estiment que la mission de surveiller et de protéger l'Etat leur revient de plein droit ont toujours considéré que notre pays n'avait pas besoin de trop de démocratie. En effet, selon eux, l'"excès de démocratie" peut conduire certains citoyens à réclamer des "droits absurdes", tels que celui de pouvoir parler sa langue maternelle [allusion aux Kurdes].

Un demi-siècle plus tard, la Turquie est encore travaillée par ce même conflit. Les gardiens de l'ordre établi continuent de faire en sorte, moyennant quelques petites concessions, que le système mis en place par la Constitution de 1982 ne soit surtout pas remis en question. Quant à ceux qui tentent de le faire, ils font malheureusement partie d'une formation politique se définissant comme conservatrice et démocrate. En outre, ce parti [l'AKP islamiste au pouvoir], dont la genèse n'est pas liée à la tradition démocratique, rend les choses encore plus compliquées dès lors que dans toute une série d'affaires il n'a pas toujours agi dans le respect des règles démocratiques. Néanmoins, les protecteurs de l'ordre établi, de l'Etat sacro-saint, et les partisans de moins de démocratie ont configuré la gauche turque d'une façon telle que c'est finalement un parti conservateur-démocrate qui doit se charger de mettre notre pays en adéquation avec son temps...

La Turquie est certes un pays particulier, mais il ne fait aucun doute qu'elle réussira à se sortir du chaos actuel. Et l'on assiste désormais à une formidable remise en cause de l'ordre établi.

Okay Gönensin

IRAK

L'Etat à la Saddam, c'est bien fini

Les difficultés actuelles permettent aux nostalgiques de l'ancien régime d'espérer le retour à un pouvoir centralisé dirigé d'une main de fer. Mais cela paraît bien difficile, car le fédéralisme et la démocratie ont gagné du terrain.

AL-HAYAT
Londres

En Irak et ailleurs, l'idée de rétablir un gouvernement central qui déciderait de tout a encore ses adeptes. Le pays en a fait l'expérience pendant plus de quatre-vingts ans, dont trente-cinq années de parti unique. Cela a donné un des régimes totalitaires les plus barbares que le monde ait connus depuis la Première Guerre mondiale. Celui-ci est tombé il y a sept ans, et ceux qui rêvent de le ressusciter tirent des plans sur la comète, comme l'a très bien expliqué Massoud Barzani, le président de la région du Kurdistan, dans un entretien accordé au *New York Times*.

L'Irak des rêves est une chose et celui de la réalité en est une autre. Certains rêvent par exemple que le Baas revienne au pouvoir et permette à la capitale, Bagdad, de régner à nouveau en majesté sur le pays. Ceux qui caressent ce genre d'idées représentent un danger qu'il ne faut pas sous-estimer, malgré les années qui ont passé. Les dirigeants du Baas continuent de planifier et d'exécuter des opérations terroristes et de sabotage. Leur espoir est de provoquer un état de lassitude qui amènerait les Irakiens, leurs voisins et la communauté internationale à considérer le Baas comme un "sauveur".

Ces derniers temps, en effet, on voit les baasistes redoubler d'activité sur le plan du terrorisme, mais aussi sur le plan politique et dans les médias. A l'intérieur du pays, leurs experts, tapis dans l'ombre, élaborent leurs scénarios, tandis qu'à l'extérieur d'anciens cadres du parti agissent au grand jour. En Syrie, l'une des deux branches du Baas, dirigée par Younes Al-Ahmed, a organisé un "rassemblement politique" à Damas. Avant, pendant et après, on a entendu des discours sur la volonté de se rapprocher de l'autre branche, la plus forte, qui est dirigée par l'ancien second de Saddam Hussein, Ezzat Al-Douri, en vue d'organiser un congrès du parti réunifié. Les baasistes ne sont pas les seuls à envisager le rétablissement d'un Irak centralisé. Tout un courant de nationalistes arabes, en majorité des sunnites mais également des chiïtes, se bercent des mêmes illusions. Ils ne souhaitent pas le retour du Baas, mais ils ne l'excluent



▲ Saddam Hussein.
Dessin d'Avallone
paru dans
La Vanguardia,
Barcelone.

pas, auquel cas il pourrait devenir un partenaire d'appoint dans le cadre d'une "démocratie dirigée", sous la conduite d'un homme fort au poste de Premier ministre. Exit le pluralisme démocratique, les élections libres, le fédéralisme qui embête les voisins, les problèmes que tout cela engendre avec les Kurdes, les chiïtes, les sunnites, les Turkmènes... Plus de soucis avec Kirkouk [ville revendiquée par les Arabes, les Kurdes et les Turkmènes], ni avec les peshmergas [combattants kurdes], ni de compromis à trouver pour l'exploitation du pétrole. Et tant pis pour ceux qui ne sont pas contents !

A les en croire, cela arrangerait les autres pays arabes et permettrait à l'Irak de retrouver son rang parmi eux. Le pays serait considéré comme un élément bienvenu dans l'équilibre régional, pour ne pas dire le "gardien de la frontière orientale du monde arabe". Son rôle consisterait à contenir l'influence ira-

nienne et à faire en sorte que les chiïtes arabes restent "sous contrôle". Ils parient également sur le soutien des "arabissants" au sein des sphères diplomatiques à Washington et à Londres. Compte tenu des tensions existant à propos du programme nucléaire iranien, les Etats-Unis permettraient à l'Irak d'utiliser ses abondantes ressources pétrolières pour acheter des armes et de se doter des capacités militaires nécessaires pour faire contrepoids à Téhéran.

Mais tout cela est un Irak rêvé. A ceux qui ont les yeux ouverts, en revanche, la réalité paraît radicalement différente. L'Irak de la réalité est fédéral, républicain, parlementaire et démocratique, en vertu de sa Constitution, qui ne peut être modifiée que par un vote des deux tiers du Parlement et un référendum populaire. Il ne sera pas gouverné par un pouvoir central, puisque celui-ci a été réparti entre Bagdad et des gouvernements élus dans les provinces. Trois de ces provinces forment le Kurdistan en vertu de la Constitution, qui garantit aux provinces le droit de se regrouper en régions.

Après toutes les souffrances, les massacres et les répressions subis par les Kurdes et les chiïtes de la part de la minorité arabe sunnite qui a accaparé le pouvoir depuis la création du pays, dans les années 1920, peut-on s'étonner que les victimes d'hier parlent aujourd'hui d'elles-mêmes et de leurs concitoyens en tant que chiïtes, sunnites, Kurdes, Turkmènes ou Assyriens ? L'Irak réel est un pays submergé de problèmes, de contradictions et de tensions. Il y a des chiïtes, des sunnites et des Kurdes, avec lesquels il faudra composer pendant encore un bon bout de temps. C'est la même chose pour Kirkouk et d'autres régions disputées. Il n'y a pas seulement des problèmes dans le nord, entre Arabes et Kurdes, mais également dans le centre et le sud, entre Arabes et Arabes. Ainsi, la question de la répartition du pouvoir ne se pose pas seulement par rapport au Kurdistan, elle concerne les rapports de toutes les provinces avec la capitale. Autrement dit, l'Irak d'aujourd'hui est totalement différent de celui d'hier, que cela nous plaise ou non. Il a de très nombreux problèmes, certes, mais il dispose également d'une Constitution susceptible de les résoudre pacifiquement au lieu de les noyer dans le sang, comme cela se faisait sous l'ancien régime.

Kameran Karadghhi



L'AVIATION TURQUE BOMBARDE DES POSITIONS DE REBELLES KURDES EN IRAK

ANKARA, 20 mai 2010 (AFP)

L'AVIATION turque a bombardé jeudi plusieurs dizaines de positions des rebelles kurdes du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) dans le nord de l'Irak, ont annoncé les médias.

Quelque 20 avions de combat ont participé aux opérations, qui visaient des positions du PKK, une organisation armée kurde de Turquie, dans la zone de Zap-Kharkurk, dans la région autonome kurde du nord de l'Irak, a affirmé la chaîne d'information NTV.

Près de 50 cibles ont été visées au cours du raid, qui s'est poursuivi pendant toute la journée sur la base de renseignements transmis par les Etats-Unis, a poursuivi la chaîne de télévision.

L'agence de presse Anatolie a indiqué que les frappes avaient été organisées pour anéantir un groupe de rebelles s'approchant de la frontière turque à partir de leurs camps du nord de l'Irak.

NTV a ajouté que l'opération était jugée comme étant un succès, même si aucune perte n'était encore confirmée chez les rebelles.

L'agence de presse kurde Firat News, considérée comme le porte-voix du PKK, a confirmé que l'aviation turque avait effectué deux bombardements à proximité du village de Sideka, l'un d'une heure en début d'après-midi et un deuxième en fin de journée, sans faire de victimes parmi les rebelles.

"L'aviation turque a bombardé des positions du PKK entre 02h30 et 03h30 dans

la région de Khwar Korak", a par ailleurs déclaré à l'AFP Ahmed Denis, un porte-parole des rebelles, qui, lui non plus, n'a pas fait état de victimes.

L'armée n'a pas pour le moment diffusé de communiqué.

Ce raid, le deuxième au cours de ce mois, fait suite à une série d'attaques du PKK contre des cibles militaires dans le sud-est de la Turquie, peuplé en majorité de Kurdes. Plusieurs soldats ont été tués dans ces attaques.

Le précédent bombardement remonte au 7 mai. L'armée avait alors affirmé avoir détruit des positions à partir desquelles le PKK faisait feu sur ses hélicoptères.

Le PKK, qualifié d'organisation terroriste par la Turquie et de nombreux autres pays, a pris les armes en 1984 pour obtenir l'indépendance du sud-est anatolien. Il revendique aujourd'hui l'autonomie de la région. Le conflit a fait 45.000 morts.

La reprise des affrontements entre le PKK et les forces de sécurité intervient chaque année au printemps, la fonte des neiges permettant aux rebelles de quitter leurs bases des montagnes turques et du nord de l'Irak.

L'armée turque a déclenché une série de raids aériens contre les bases du PKK en Irak depuis décembre 2007 et a réalisé une opération terrestre d'une semaine en février 2008.

Ankara évalue à environ 2.000 le nombre des rebelles du PKK retranchés en Irak.



IRAK: DEUX CAMEROUNAIS ARRÊTÉS POUR TRAFIC DE FAUX DOLLARS AU KURDISTAN

SOULEIMANIYEH (Irak), 20 mai 2010 (AFP)

Deux Camerounais, accusés d'être membres d'un trafic de faux dollars, ont été arrêtés dans la région autonome du Kurdistan irakien (nord), ont indiqué jeudi les forces de sécurité kurdes dans un communiqué.

"Les forces de sécurité ont mené une opération contre un des hôtels de Souleimaniyeh et arrêté deux personnes de nationalité camerounaise qui fabri-

quaient de faux dollars", ont-elles précisé.

Les forces de sécurité kurdes ont également ajouté avoir saisi de fausses coupures, dont le montant n'a pas été précisé, et de l'équipement pour réaliser les contrefaçons.

Les deux Camerounais, dont les identités n'ont pas été précisées, seraient entrés en Irak par la frontière avec la Turquie.

Le Monde

22 Mai 2010

QUATRE MEMBRES DU PKK TUÉS DANS DE RÉCENTS BOMBARDEMENTS TURCS

SOULEIMANIYEH (Irak), (AFP) — Quatre combattants kurdes du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) ont été tués dans des bombardements menés jeudi par l'armée turque contre plusieurs dizaines de positions des rebelles kurdes dans le nord de l'Irak, a affirmé le PKK samedi.

"Quatre combattants ont été tués et cinq blessés par les importants bombardements de l'aviation turque jeudi dernier", a affirmé à l'AFP un porte-parole du PKK au Kurdistan autonome irakien, Ahmed Denis.

Une vingtaine d'avions de combat ont participé aux

opérations, qui visaient des positions du PKK, une organisation armée kurde de Turquie, dans la zone de Zap-Kharkurk, dans la région autonome kurde du nord de l'Irak, selon la chaîne d'information turque NTV.

Près de 50 cibles ont été visées au cours du raid, qui s'est poursuivi pendant toute la journée sur la base de renseignements transmis par les Etats-Unis, avait ajouté jeudi la chaîne de télévision.

Selon l'agence de presse officielle Anatolie, les frappes ont été organisées pour anéantir un groupe de rebelles s'approchant de la frontière turque à partir de leurs

camps du nord de l'Irak.

Dans un communiqué, la présidence de la région kurde a condamné ces frappes aériennes, affirmant qu'il s'agissait d'une "violation de la souveraineté de l'Irak".

"Nous demandons que ces opérations militaires cessent immédiatement et nous leur demandons (au PKK et au gouvernement turc) de régler leurs problèmes à travers le dialogue, de trouver une solution car l'utilisation de la violence (...) n'aboutira à aucune solution", a ajouté le communiqué.

Le PKK, qualifié d'organisation terroriste par la Turquie et de nombreux

autres pays, a pris les armes en 1984 pour obtenir l'indépendance du sud-est anatolien. Il revendique aujourd'hui l'autonomie de la région. Le conflit a fait 45.000 morts.

Les affrontements entre le PKK et les forces de sécurité reprennent chaque année au printemps, la fonte des neiges permettant aux rebelles de quitter leurs bases des montagnes turques et du nord de l'Irak.

L'armée turque a déclenché une série de raids aériens contre les bases du PKK en Irak depuis décembre 2007 et a réalisé une opération terrestre d'une semaine en février 2008.



Kurdish Iraq: An Emerging Success

Max Boot: This One Part of Iraq is Working Better Than the Other Part

May 19, 2010 — CBS NEWS —

By Max Boot — Erbil, Iraq

Iraq has improved immeasurably since the dark days of 2006 when hundreds were being killed every day by al Qaeda bombs and Sadrist death squads in Baghdad. But terrorist bombs continue to go off intermittently, and lingering instability and ineptitude still block economic development. Indeed, the political situation has recently taken a turn for the worse, with Iraq's political parties at a stalemate in their quest to form a new government more than two months after parliamentary elections were held.

Driving down Baghdad's dingy streets, as I did recently as part of a delegation from the Council on Foreign Relations, one is sometimes tempted to despair. What chance is there, the visitor may reasonably wonder, that the capital of this oil-rich country will ever be truly peaceful, not to mention as luxurious as Doha, Dubai, or other boomtowns to the south on the Persian Gulf?

A short trip north to the Kurdish region, where 4.5 million of Iraq's 30 million people live, offers a different, more hopeful perspective. Known as the Kurdish Regional Government, or KRG, this area feels as safe as it gets in the Middle East. Terrorist attacks aren't a concern. Americans can wander around without body armor or bodyguards-even if they're in uniform. Don't try it in Baghdad. That's a tribute to the effectiveness of the Kurdish intelligence service, the Asayesh, and to their peshmerga troops ("those who face death"). It also has something to do with Kurdish attitudes toward the United States. There is none of the lingering resentment that is still prevalent in the rest of Iraq; Kurds are among the most pro-American people on the planet. They regularly and profusely thank American visitors for liberating them from Saddam Hussein's murderous regime-not something one often hears from Iraqi Arabs.

There are also many sights in Erbil that you don't see in the rest of Iraq. They include a spanking new airport that puts dinosaurs like New York's Kennedy Airport to shame, and new shopping malls, banks, stores, homes, and hotels that would not be out of place in Europe. Erbil, the capital of the KRG, seems a world away from the rest of Iraq even though it is located only 50 miles from Mosul, the most violent city in the entire country and the only one where Al Qaeda in Iraq remains a major threat. Almost all of the development has occurred in the last few years, filling once-empty fields with modern buildings.

The Kurdish region's prosperity is fueled by oil. The KRG actually has considerably less oil than the rest of Iraq. It is entitled to just 17 percent of Iraqi oil revenues. So why is the KRG so much richer today? The difference is that the KRG government has gotten its act together and is much further along in attracting foreign investment, exploiting its natural wealth, and spending the proceeds. There was nothing inevitable about this. Kurdish politics in the past have been as violent and divisive and dysfunctional as in the rest of Iraq. As recently as the 1990s, the two major Kurdish factions-Massoud Barzani's Democratic Party of Kurdistan and Jalal Talabani's Patriotic Union of Kurdistan-were fighting one another. Barzani even sought help from Saddam Hussein, while Talabani turned for assistance to Iran. But eventually these two old adversaries realized they



Construction in the Kurdish Iraqi city of Erbil (CBS)

could do better by joining hands and splitting the spoils of an ever-growing economy. In 1998 they signed an American-brokered peace treaty in Washington. In 2002, just prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, they created a joint parliament in Erbil uniting the Barzani-controlled areas (Dohuk and Erbil) with Talabani's preserve (Sulaymaniyah).

The Kurdish compact, which has deepened over the years, allows Barzani predominance in the KRG while Talabani represents Kurdish interests in Baghdad as president of Iraq. This is a rare instance of veteran guerrilla fighters hanging up their guns and concentrating on peaceful development, making the kind of leap that Yasser Arafat never could.

Taking advantage of their newfound autonomy, the Kurds have instituted pro-growth policies that encourage outside investment, something that is still viewed with great suspicion in the rest of Iraq, where the socialist legacy of the Baathist state lingers even among the most strident anti-Baathists.

FLEXIBILITY TOWARD ISRAEL

Kurdish leaders have also shown geopolitical wisdom by not seeking independence as demanded by most of their people. They realize that, surrounded by hostile states, an independent Kurdistan could not flourish. Instead of confronting its neighbors, the Kurdish Regional Government is working with them. Its most notable success has come with Turkey, which in 2007 was threatening to invade the KRG to root out rebels from Turkey's own Kurdish community, the PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party). Today the KRG and Turkey have flourishing trade ties and expanding diplomatic links. The Turkish government has even invited Massoud Barzani to visit in his capacity as president of the Kurdish Regional Government, whose very existence the Turks only recently recognized.

Another sign of the Kurds' sagacity is their attitude toward Israel. In Iraq proper, visiting the "Zionist entity" is still considered a death-defying feat to be undertaken only by the extremely brave or foolish. (Mithal al Alusi, a member of parliament who has visited Israel, was charged with visiting an "enemy state," and his sons were killed in a terrorist attack.)

But the Kurds, who are secular Sunni Muslims, are notably pro-Israeli in their attitudes. If it would not risk a major rift with the rest of Iraq, they would be happy to establish formal ties with the Jewish state. As it is, they maintain informal links. The Barzanis, the first family of the KRG, have a branch in Israel with whom they keep in contact. "It would be good for Iraq to have good relations with Israel," a senior Kurdish politician told me.

The record is hardly perfect. Heavy-handed Kurdish attempts to extend their influence across northern Iraq have caused a backlash among Arabs and created an opening for extremist groups. In some areas they have been guilty of anti-Arab ethnic cleansing in an attempt to make up for anti-Kurdish campaigns under Saddam Hussein. Also, although an opposition party called Gorran ("Change") is growing in influence after its members split from Talabani's camp, political intimidation—even, on occasion, violent intimidation—still occurs.

Recently, for instance, journalists accused Kurdish security forces of killing a young writer who was critical of the Barzanis and other powerful clans. Deplorable as they are, such events are also rare—certainly less prevalent in the KRG than in the rest of Iraq.

So too with corruption, which remains a problem in the KRG (its leading politicians are fabulously wealthy), but far less so than in the rest of Iraq. One old Iraq hand suggested to me that payoffs to politicians in the KRG run only 20 percent of a contract as opposed to 50 percent or more in the rest of the country. More important, Kurdish politicians deliver results; they don't just pocket the proceeds and leave their constituents without basic services. The KRG might be seen as a monument to the kind of "honest graft" that built America's major cities, as opposed to the kleptocratic practice too often evident among Iraqi Arab politicians.

HARBINGER FOR IRAQ?

The Kurdish model suggests what Iraq can become in a few years—but only if it continues to improve in fighting

crime and terrorism, reducing corruption, and developing the rule of law. Much of this is outside American control, but we can have a major impact on the security situation. A key component of Kurdish success, after all, has been American protection, offered in one form or another since 1991, when the George H.W. Bush administration proclaimed a "no fly" zone to keep Saddam's aircraft from bombing the Kurds. American planes were still patrolling the no-fly zone at the time of the U.S. invasion in 2003. Some kind of long-term protection will be necessary in the rest of Iraq, which must deal in the future with hostile neighbors and suspicious sectarian factions. As it stands, however, the last American troops are supposed to withdraw on December 31, 2011.

That is a worrisome prospect because Iraqi political disputes can still engender violence. Nowhere is the danger greater than along the Green Line separating the KRG from the rest of Iraq. The boundary remains disputed, with the Kurds keen to assert their sovereignty over the oil-rich city of Kirkuk and other parts of northern Iraq. The Kurdish peshmerga and Iraqi troops have been on the verge of gunfire numerous times, pulling back only as a result of American mediation. Today U.S. troops patrol the Green Line in cooperation with the peshmerga and Iraqi forces.

If U.S. troops are withdrawn before land disputes between the KRG and Iraq proper are resolved, Kurdish politicians warn that the result could be war. That is an especially worrisome possibility because the United States has agreed to sell the Iraqi armed forces M-1 tanks and F-16 fighters. We have a moral and strategic obligation to ensure that this high-tech hardware is never used against our Kurdish friends. That argues for keeping a small U.S. force in Iraq after 2011, perhaps 10,000 to 15,000 troops and trainers. The Kurds, for one, would love to host a U.S. military base. The Obama administration should push for that once a new government takes power in Baghdad and negotiations begin on a new Iraqi-American strategic accord to take the place of the one negotiated by President Bush and Nouri al Maliki in 2008.

COURRIER INTERNATIONAL N° 1020 - 20 Mai 2010

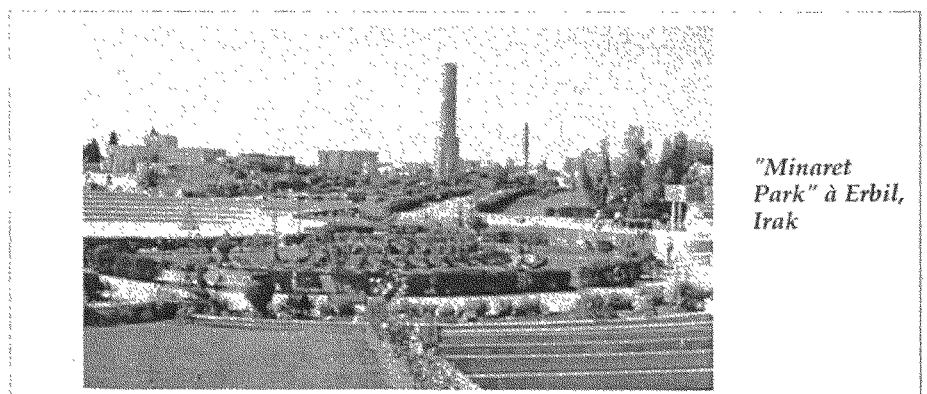
Les roses du Kurdistan fleurissent toute l'année

A quelques centaines de kilomètres des bombes de Bagdad, Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan irakien, ambitionne de devenir le nouveau Dubaï.

Stephen Kurczy |
The National

Le nom de l'Irak évoque rarement l'image de jardins de roses. Et pourtant, c'est par milliers qu'elles fleurissent, roses et rouges, dans les parcs d'Erbil, ville du nord-est du Kurdistan. Cette région, que l'on surnomme "l'autre Irak", se prépare aujourd'hui à accueillir une vague de touristes et d'hommes d'affaires.

Avec ses innombrables parcs semés de fontaines, la ville d'Erbil est la quatrième d'Irak après Bagdad, Mossoul et Bassorah. De larges périphériques permettent d'accéder rapidement à certaines des plus grandes infrastructures du pays, notamment un aéroport international capable d'accueillir des avions gros-porteurs, Boeing 777 et Airbus A380. Il existe déjà des vols directs pour Erbil au départ d'Amman, de Beyrouth, de Dubaï, d'Istanbul, d'Oslo, de Stockholm et de Vienne. Attirées par la sécurité et la relative stabilité d'Erbil, les compagnies occi-



"Minaret Park" à Erbil, Irak

dentes investissent dans des centres commerciaux, des hôtels et des quartiers d'affaires. Et de nombreuses agences de voyages proposent déjà des formules tout compris pour passer les vacances dans la région.



Kurdistan Region Presidency (KRP) — 20 May 2010

Statement on the Ongoing Investigation into the Murder of Sardasht Osman and Freedom of Press in the Kurdistan Region

20 May 2010

Salahaddin, Kurdistan Region, Iraq (KRP.org)-

THE KURDS value greatly the sacrifices many have made to bring news of our struggle to the world. If not for the concerted efforts and attention of the free press at a time when so few cared about our plight, we may still be suffering under the tyranny of the past. As such we appreciate and welcome the continued concern of the international community for the people of the Kurdistan Region.

The Kurdistan Region has earned respect throughout the world for its commitment to providing security and stability for its people, even as bombings, kidnappings, and murders became a daily occurrence in other parts of Iraq.

The Kurdistan Region's police and security forces take seriously any threat made against our citizenry. Operating in this extremely challenging regional security environment, they have thwarted a myriad of attempts to harm or intimidate journalists, politicians, and ordinary citizens of the Region. It is a reflection of their achievements in this regard that a successful attack on one of our citizens is so exceptional.

The shocking murder of Mr. Sardasht Osman met with swift and strong condemnation by President Barzani and other authorities in the Region. We deplore any action that results in the loss of life of any citizen. We remain committed to the development of a vibrant civil society and free press in the Kurdistan Region.

While it remains unclear what motivated the attack against Mr. Osman, we join other democratic governments in taking the loss of even a single life very seriously. We are determined to bring to justice those who were behind this crime.

We reiterate that President Barzani immediately ordered the establishment of an investigatory committee that comprised all relevant authorities in order to coordinate various agencies. This committee is headed by the Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for directing the investigation. The President has also called on independent, outside authorities that might have information that could bring the case to a successful resolution to assist our authorities with the investigation. We are confident that no shred of evidence will be overlooked and take very seriously the importance of sending a clear message that the intimidation of any citizen of the Kurdistan Region will not be tolerated.

Our determination to see the culprits brought to justice does not mean that we are prepared to jump to conclusions and prejudge the results of the investigation before all relevant facts and information

have come to light.

The proper place for the resolution of criminal cases is through the institutions and mechanisms of the criminal justice system. We have absolute faith in the institutions of our government and in the supremacy of the rule of law throughout the Kurdistan Region. We respect the importance of due process and hope that those who profess liberal values understand the importance of doing the same. The public will be informed about the progress of the investigation, and its conclusions. Nobody is above the law in Kurdistan. There are no exceptions to this principle.

There is no clearer evidence that the Kurdistan Region is home to a free and diverse press than the fact that a vast array of misinformation and conjecture about Mr. Osman's murder so swiftly traveled the world.

It is extremely unfortunate that the tragic death of this young Kurdish student has been exploited for the personal political gain of a few. For them, establishing the truth of this crime seems unimportant. It is a tragedy for us all to see a young life cut short and those responsible have committed a crime against all the people of the Kurdistan Region. But the tragedy has been compounded by cynical attempts to distort the truth, confuse the public, and manipulate the facts regarding the government's response. These actions are more than unfortunate, and we would remind those engaging in them to hold themselves to the same high standards that they claim to seek from others.

However, their misguided actions should not be allowed to obscure the fact that the Kurdish authorities have taken the events surrounding Mr. Osman's death seriously and remain resolute in their commitment to see a vibrant and truly free press develop in the Kurdistan Region. The liberty of the people of the Kurdistan Region is always close to our hearts and minds. Together we have sacrificed in blood for the opportunity to achieve democracy. No one will take our freedom from us, and we hold the right to freedom of expression, including the right to criticize one's leadership, in the highest regard. We are a young democracy, but we aspire to join the most mature democracies in possessing the cultural norms and ethical precepts that allow for the flourishing of a liberal society. We have come a long way since our days in the mountains, but still have more to accomplish.

We reiterate our gratitude to those in the free press whose role has advanced the cause of freedom in the Kurdistan Region and Iraq. We remain resolute in our efforts to ensure that all citizens of the Kurdistan Region are free to enjoy the human rights afforded to democratic citizens the world over.

REUTERS

Iraq Kurd oil exports to flow only under new govt

ISTANBUL, May 17, 2010 - (Reuters) -

OIL EXPORTS from Iraq's semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region will start only after the formation of a new Iraqi government, the region's natural resources minister said.

Parliamentary elections were held on March 7 but produced no outright winner. A vote recount in Baghdad and coalition building talks have prolonged the formation of a new government.

Kurdistan and Iraq's central government have been at loggerheads for months over oil deals Kurdistan signed independently with

foreign firms. The Arab-led government deems the deals illegal and refuses to pay firms involved such as Norway's DNO (DNO.OL) and Turkey's Genel Enerji.

Oil exports from Kurdistan stopped last year, but Iraq's deputy oil minister said last week that a deal between Baghdad and the Kurdish region to restart oil exports could come within days. [ID:nLDE64A11H]

The deal, designed to help restart exports ahead of the formation of the new government, however is unlikely to take effect, Kurdish Natural Resources Minister Ashti Hawrami told Reuters late on Sunday.

"Will the interim agreement will be pushed through? I don't think so, wait until the government is formed. I think export will happen as soon as the formation of the government," he said.

REUTERS

Iraq's cabinet approves Kurdish exports agreement

BAGHDAD,- May 18, 2010 - (Reuters) -

Iraq's cabinet approved a deal with Iraq's semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region that would allow the resumption of oil exports from the northern region, the Iraqi government spokesman said in a statement on Tuesday.

The deal between the central government in Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional Government involves the Ministry of Finance paying the foreign oil firms in Kurdistan their expenses after being audited, the statement said.

"The cabinet approved the request of the Oil Ministry to execute the agreement between the ministry and the Kurdish region to export crude from the region ... and allowing the Finance Ministry to send a letter to the regional government guaranteeing paying the expenses of the firms after auditing them according to the agreement," government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said after the cabinet's weekly meeting.

Guardian May 20, 2010

Reports: Turkey bombs Kurdish rebels in Iraq

The Associated Press

ISTANBUL - Turkish warplanes bombed Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq on Thursday, the state-run Anatolia news agency said.

The air strike was carried out against a group of Kurdish rebels seen moving toward the Turkish border, the report said. It did not mention any casualties.

Private NTV television said 20 warplanes took part in the strike on targets in the Zap and Hakurk regions along the border.

The press office of Turkey's military declined to confirm or deny the attack.

Ahmed Danis, a spokesman for the PKK, the

Kurdistan Workers' Party, said Turkish jets bombed at least three villages in the Qandil mountains, near the area where Iraq, Iran and Turkey intersect. But he said there were no casualties among the fighters because the left their bases a while ago and now live in caves in the area.

The bombing went on for about two hours, Danis said, adding that planes could be heard overhead for a few hours later.

Jabar Yawer, a spokesman for the Kurdish military, called the peshmerga, said they had heard reports of bombing near the Qandil mountains but had no details.

Omer Celik, a lawmaker from the governing

Justice and Development Party, urged Iraq's Kurdish administration to stop Kurdish rebels in Iraq launching attacks on Turkey, NTV reported.

Turkish warplanes often have targeted rebel hideouts in northern Iraq that guerrillas have used to stage hit-and-run attacks on Turkish targets for decades.

Such attacks have increased since December when Turkey's Constitutional Court shut down a pro-Kurdish party on charges of ties to the guerrillas.

The rebels from the Kurdistan Workers' Party have killed at least six soldiers and wounded seven in two separate cross-border attacks this month.

The rebels took up arms for self-rule in Turkey's Kurdish-dominated southeast in 1984. The fighting has killed tens of thousands of people.

REUTERS

Iraqi Kurds accuse Turkey and Iran of attacks

TUNCELI, Turkey, May 21, 2010 - (Reuters)

- * *Iraqi Kurds say Iran carried out shelling*
 - * *Strikes violate Iraqi sovereignty, Kurds say*
 - * *Operation killed 4 PKK fighters, Turkish army says*
- (Updates with Iraqi Kurdish government statement)

Iraqi Kurds on Friday condemned air strikes and shellfire by Turkey and Iran on Turkish-Kurdish rebels based in northern Iraq as violations of Iraqi sovereignty.

Iranian forces shelled border regions and Turkish war planes caused "huge" casualties, according to a statement from the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which runs northern Iraq autonomously from Baghdad.

Turkish military sources said Thursday's attacks on the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), an outlawed Turkish-Kurdish group largely based in north Iraq, were the biggest such operation in over a year and had killed four guerrillas and wounded more.

"The presidency of the Iraq Kurdistan region condemns these attacks on the border regions, and at the same time considers this a violation and aggression on the sovereignty of the Iraqi state and demands its immediate cessation," the statement said.

KRG President Massoud Barzani had been expected to visit Ankara as relations between Turkey and Iraqi Kurds improve, but Thursday's operations could revive tension between the two.

The PKK took up arms against the Turkish state in 1984 to fight for an ethnic homeland for Kurds in southeast Turkey and more than 40,000 people have died in the conflict.

The rebels, who the PKK says number 7,000, have scaled back their demands and now want greater cultural and political rights for Turkey's estimated 14 million ethnic Kurds.

Turkey has called on Barzani to do more to combat the PKK, but Iraqi Kurds are reluctant to risk destabilising northern Iraq, which has escaped much of the violence seen in the rest of the country since the 2003 U.S. invasion.

Turkish military sources said Thursday's attacks had been aimed at underground shelters and rebels moving on foot in the remote, mountainous part of northern Iraq occupied by the PKK, straddling Iraq's borders with Iran and Turkey.

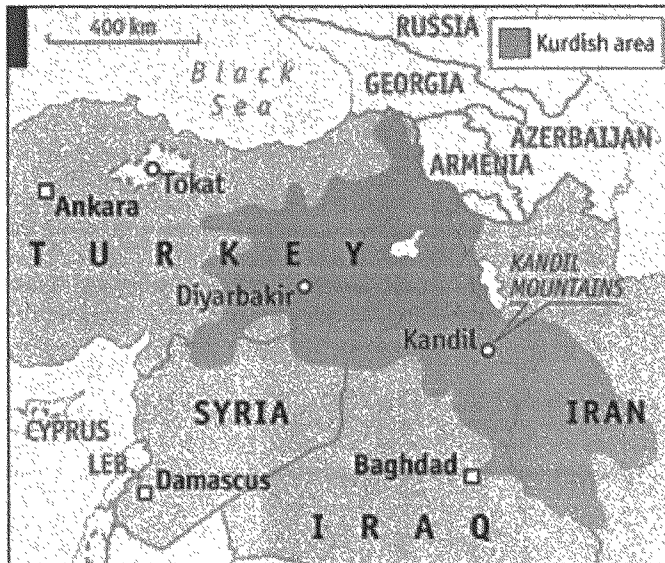
Turkey and Iran have in recent years shared intelligence and coordinated attacks on the PKK and its Iranian offshoot, the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK). (Additional reporting by Shamal Aqrabi in Arbil, Iraq; Writing by Ayla Jean Yackley; editing by Tim Pearce)

Turkey and the PKK

A never-ending fight

KANDIL, NORTHERN IRAQ

The Turkish army continues its long battle with Kurdish rebels



IN TURKEY'S rugged south-east, giant portraits of Atatürk stare down from the mountains at rebellious Kurds. In the Kandil mountains, where the Iraqi and Iranian borders meet, images of Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), loom over land controlled by the rebels. The PKK has been ensconced here for over two decades. And Turkey's army, NATO's second-biggest, has been trying to dislodge it ever since.

Over the past month clashes between the army and the PKK have escalated. Hundreds of Kurds have flocked to the conflict zone to become "human shields" for the rebels. In Turkey's west, the rise in attempted mob lynchings by nationalist vigilantes is a worrying portent of more violence between ordinary Turks and Kurds.

The PKK is squeezed as never before. In November 2007, when Turkey threatened to invade the Kurdish-controlled enclave, the Americans agreed to let the Turks bomb Kandil and began sharing intelligence with them. Turkey has also mended fences with the Iraqi Kurds whose leader, Masoud Barzani, will soon visit Ankara. This follows a

security pact signed in April between Turkey, America and Iraq. Alongside military measures, it takes aim at the PKK's money, much of which is said to be raised through racketeering and drug trafficking (though the PKK denies this).

Yet Murat Karayilan, the PKK's top commander in the field, boasts that "neither the most advanced technology nor the best equipped army can get us out of here." A female PKK fighter called Gulistan says that "dying in our leader's service would be the greatest honour of all." A steady trickle of recruits suggests that her views are not uncommon.

Turkey's prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, knows all this. His chief of the general staff, Ilker Basbug, has repeatedly said that firepower alone cannot vanquish the PKK. Mr Erdogan's "Kurdish opening", marked by the launch of Turkey's first state-run Kurdish-language television channel last year, was a fresh effort to woo the Kurds. It was to have been crowned with a deal between the Iraqi Kurds and Mr Karayilan for the PKK to disarm and relocate its leaders elsewhere. Peace was within reach in October, when a batch of rebels from Kandil returned

to Turkey and were released. But public fury mounted when rebels in guerrilla fatigues proceeded to declare "victory" at rallies across the south-east. A PKK attack in the province of Tokat that killed seven Turkish soldiers was the final straw. The Kurdish opening was put on hold.

Mr Erdogan has since piled the blame on the PKK and on the largest Kurdish party, the BDP. Its refusal to support constitutional changes backed by Mr Erdogan is seen as proof of disloyalty. Yet many observers believe the Tokat attack was staged by PKK hardliners bent on sabotaging peace. This suggests that there are divisions among the rebels, a notion confirmed by Western intelligence sources. Mr Karayilan, who is seen as a moderate, predictably denies this. But he too is full of contradictions. He claims that a unilateral truce declared in April 2009 remains in force. But he also says the PKK has stepped up its attacks because "we remain under constant attack from the Turkish army. We are acting in self-defence."

BDP circles echo the PKK's line that Mr Erdogan's overtures were no more than window-dressing aimed at winning Kurdish votes in next year's general election. Ordinary Kurds' support for the PKK may be fading, but they are also turning away from Mr Erdogan's Justice and Development (AK) Party. And what about the mass arrests of 1,500 BDP officials, including elected mayors? Turkey insists that many were PKK operatives trying to establish "a parallel state" in the Kurdish region. Many are former PKK inmates. They say they want to pursue their cause through peaceful means but that the government won't let them. Even some AK members privately agree that the arrests were a mistake.

Back in Kandil, Mr Karayilan ticks off the conditions of a new truce. "Mr Ocalan must be moved from solitary confinement to house arrest, Turkey must halt all military operations against my men and BDP officials have to be released unconditionally." The subtext is that, like it or not, Turkey will have to sit down with the rebels. Maybe so, but with which lot? That may be the trickiest question of all.



Kurds Mull Iraqi Government Role

As post-election talks loom, negotiators keep their counsel on likely alliances.

By Zaineb Naji, Hogar Hasan - Iraq.

ICR Issue 337, 20 May 2010

A complex round of political give-and-take is under way in Baghdad as Iraq's powerful Kurdish minority works to carve out its role in the next government.

After rulings this week boosted the credibility of the contested March 7 election, a period of coalition-building has commenced that will determine who governs the country. Although the Kurdish leadership claims it is moving wisely, carefully and without haste as it evaluates prospective allies, many observers feel a governing partnership with the Shia majority is imminent.

Long seen as Iraq's political kingmakers, the self-ruling Kurds boast their own military plus an economically thriving, relatively stable region in the north of the country that sits on roughly half of the country's 115 billion barrels of proven oil reserves — the third-largest in the world.

Even so, some analysts believe the Kurds have less political leverage than in years past because of unresolved disputes with central government over oil exports, disputed areas and autonomy.

For the moment, Kurdish negotiators are hedging their bets.

So far, we have not decided who we will form a coalition with. We intend to hold talks with all the political parties, and we intend to help solve disputes between them. We will form coalitions in light of their programmes and perspective on the Kurdish issues and democracy in Iraq. Sami Shorsh, a member of the Iraqi parliament from the Kurdish Alliance and the chief Kurdish negotiator in Baghdad, said.

Earlier this week, an appeals court said no winning election candidates would be barred because of links to the outlawed Baath party. At the same time, an election commission endorsed a manual recount which revealed no evidence of serious voting fraud.

The rulings removed the biggest obstacles to the validation of the election results which has been delayed for more than eight weeks and is now expected by June.

With the final results in place, the Iraqiya bloc, a mostly Sunni and secular coalition under former interim prime minister Ayad Allawi, was narrowly left in first place with 91 parliamentary seats. The main Shia coalitions - State of Law, SOL, and the Iraqi National Alliance, INA - finished second and third with 89 and 70 seats respectively. The Kurdish Alliance, a recently unified bloc of four Kurdish parties, was fourth with 57 seats.

Although no official negotiations may begin until the Supreme Court ratifies the election results, it is an open secret that political brokering has been going on for weeks.

The most significant result has been the merger earlier this month of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's SOL and the INA, dominated by the radical Shia cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

The partnership puts the Shia blocs just four seats short of a two-thirds majority in the 325-seat parliament and in prime position to form the next government.

Allawi has bitterly claimed that Iraqiya was stripped of its right to have a first crack at forming a new government as the top vote-getter. In recent days, however, the Supreme Court has announced that the opportunity to form the government may also be granted to the biggest political bloc in the new parliament.

With the issue still under debate, the Kurds are left with two likely alliance scenarios: unite with the Shia coalition, as they did after the 2005 election; or join with the disgruntled Iraqiya faction and run the risk of being forced into opposition. For some analysts, the decision is



As part of coalition-building talks, Kurdish negotiators will demand implementation of legislation concerning the future of Kirkuk. (Photo: Metrography)

a no-brainer.

It is obvious the Kurdish leaders want to make an alliance with the Shia parties, as they can find more common points with them and they have a history together, Atta Qaradagi, a political expert in Sulaimaniyah, said.

But for others, that history might be cause for concern. If simmering issues between Erbil and Baghdad could not be resolved over the last four years, many are asking how effective a government with a similar composition will be.

The Kurds welcomed the unification [of the Shia coalitions] since they are the foremost proponents of the idea of an Iraq defined by an ethno-sectarian trinity. But the Kurdish-Shia alliance was at its height in 2007, and even then they couldn't solve the question of the oil sector or Kirkuk, said Reidar Visser, a research fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs and the editor of the Iraq website <http://www.historiae.org/>.

Both sides have indicated that an alliance may be ahead, and there already signs of progress. This week, Iraq's oil minister ended a long-running dispute by allowing the Kurds to profit from oil deals made independently of the government.

Still, members of the Shia coalition have been quick to point out the formidable political power wielded by their bloc.

The coalition we have with the State of Law is strong enough to form the government. We don't need any unnecessary alliances. Any possibility of an alliance with the Kurds would be strategic, not because we need them to form the government, Wael Abdul Latif, a spokesman for the INA, said.

As Joost Hiltermann, Middle East deputy programme director for the International Crisis Group, points out, the Kurds lost ground in the overall parliamentary seat count from 2005 — although this was mostly due to a reallocation over a disputed election law in December.

Should the Kurd-Shia alliance emerge, Hiltermann predicts that the Kurds will concede to the Shia coalition the choice of prime minister. Other analysts have said the Kurds' reputation for hard bargaining, namely demanding 17 per cent of Iraq's overall budget and historic claims to disputed areas, has won them few friends in Baghdad.

Needless to say, the Kurds will ask for certain key positions, such as the presidency and perhaps the finance ministry. I don't think the Kurds will be able to push as hard as they might like, as their leverage is reduced somewhat compared with four years ago, Hiltermann said.

According to Shorsh, the Kurdish negotiators will stick closely to their demands. He listed as first on this list the implementation of the Iraqi constitution's Article 140 which relates directly to the status of Kirkuk, an oil-rich city the Kurds would like to incorporate in their semi-autonomous region.

Article 140 says that before a promised referendum is carried on Kirkuk's future, efforts should be made to reverse Saddam Hussein's Arabisation policy under which thousands of Kurds were expelled from the region and replaced by Arabs.

Shorsh said the Kurds are also calling for a census to be held to deter-

mine how many parliamentary seats they should have and what share of the Iraqi budget.

We will try to get the Kurdish share of the Iraqi budget in Baghdad organised and will have it sent to the region on time so that the Iraqi government can no longer use it as a card against the Kurdish nation. We will also try to solve the issue of peshmerga (Kurdish military). We want peshmerga forces to be part of the Iraqi defence force as they are in reality. We will also try to get the new oil and gas bill discussed and approved by parliament. Lastly, we insist on the post of the Iraqi president for the Kurds, Shorsh said.

Shorsh said he believes the Kurds are in a strong position in negotiations over a new government, and called on all religious and ethnic groups to run the country together.

Should this fail to happen, some observers fear a return to the sectarian violence that devastated the country in 2006 and 2007. If a Kurd-

Shia government takes shape, it runs the risk of alienating the Sunni minority, which has already expressed discontent over the Shia-dominated governments in place since 2003. It is hoped by many that a significant number of Iraqiya members will defect to the Shia coalition in the days and weeks to come.

If and when a government is formed without Iraqiya, and this leads to a surge in violence, the Kurds would be in the front line as they co-inhabit the disputed territories with Sunni Arabs and Turkoman. This would reduce pressure on the Shia parties, but let's hope things don't go that way. The wisest way forward would be the formation of an inclusive government with significant Iraqiya participation, Hiltermann said.

Zaineb Naji is an IWPR-trained journalist in Kirkuk., Hogar Hasan is an IWPR local editor in Erbil., Iraq editor Charles McDermid contributed to this report.

Khaleej Times 19 MAY 2010

OPINION

Transformation of Turkey

Matein Khalid

Prime Minister Recep Erdogan is not only the most powerful statesman in 21st century Turkish politics, but arguably the most transformational leader of the Republic founded by Kemal Ataturk in 1924 from the Anatolian carcass of the Ottoman sultanate. Erdogan's greatest achievement is sheer survival since a short-lived predecessor Islamist civilian government was overthrown by the military high command in 1997.

However, Erdogan's AKP (Justice and Development Party) has swept two national elections and commands a 325 seat majority in the Ankara parliament's despite successive challenges to its power from the generals and the judiciary.

Erdogan engineered a constitutional revolution that incorporated minority rights for the ethnic Kurdish citizens, democratic freedoms to fast forward the Turkish accession path to the EU and subordinated the powerful generals, the self-styled guardians of Ataturk's secular legacy, to the elected leadership.

I remember successive visits to Istanbul on the eve of AKP's landslide win in the 2002 elections. Turkey was an economic basket case at the time. The Turkish lira had collapsed amid hyperinflation and the failure of dozens of private banks. Recession had taken its toll on a country that had endured a generation of weak coalition governments, political violence, an inflation death spiral, military coups, IMF shock therapy programmes

and a bloody civil war against Abdullah Ocalan's PKK Kurdish secessionists in eastern Anatolia that claimed 30,000 lives in the 1990's.

Turkey had threatened to invade Syria to punish it for hosting Ocalan in Damascus and was on the brink of war with Greece over Cyprus, where a Turkish invasion had divided the island in 1974. The election of the untested, allegedly Islamist AKP seemed to me only to increase the risk of yet another military coup that would relegate the Turkish Republic to the minor leagues of a Third World failed state, albeit one under IMF and NATO diktat. Thankfully, Erdogan's Turkey has emerged as anything but a failed state in the past eight years. The Anatolian tiger is now the Islamic world's most vibrant democracy and an emerging economic powerhouse. Erdogan has resurrected Turkish influence in the Arab world on a scale not witnessed since the geopolitical death spasm of the Ottoman Empire a century ago.

Economic reform has underwritten Turkey's spectacular return to grace on the international stage. Erdogan's government slashed inflation into single digits for the first time in modern history, reengineered a historic currency reforms that saw the lira lose five zeros against the dollar, committed Ankara to EU mandated reform on subsidies and competition, and, above all, attracted \$80 billion in FDI, more foreign investment than all his predecessors had managed since the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

While the Kemalist elites in the military, academia, big business and judiciary viewed the AKP with suspicion, and even contempt, as the political voice of orthodox Muslim traders and petty bureaucrats from the Anatolian heartland, Erdogan used his economic reforms and enthusiastic embrace of the EU as a hedge against another military coup d'état. It is a pity that visceral French and German opposition to Turkish membership in the EU (too populous, too poor, too Muslim) were the endgame of Erdogan's policies. In fact, the flip side of the EU's glacial response to Ankara's application for membership has been the escalation in the Kemalist military high command's penchant for political intervention, including successive judicial attempts to ban the AKP and even an abortive plot to seize power in a coup d'état.

The only reason that ambitious Bonapartist generals were not been able to dislodge Erdogan is that AKP commands an undisputed mandate to rule from the population and a grass roots national political vote bank. After yet another confrontation with the generals over their refusal to accept Abdullah Gul as the Turkish President, Erdogan called an early election in 2007 and won a landslide win on an epic 84 per cent turnout.

The 2007 election was a milestone event in Turkish politics, a de facto referendum on Erdogan's transformational economic, political diplomatic and constitutional policies.

Erdogan has openly spoken out against Israeli atrocities in

Gaza, refused to allow George W. Bush to use Turkish territory to invade Iraq in 2003, and sought rapprochement with Iran's ruling Ayatollahs. Turkish "soft power", symbolised by the soap opera *Noor* and the hordes of Arab tourists in the palaces and mosques of Istanbul's Sultanahmet district on the Bosphorus, has swept the Middle East. Erdogan has forged close ties with Syria and acted as a mediator with Israel for a settlement on the Golan Heights and established economic ties with both the Iraqi government in Baghdad and the Kurdish

regional elite. This is a revolutionary policy U-turn since the Turkish generals had once threatened to invade both Syria and Iraq. Erdogan has sought historical reconciliation with the Kurds and the Armenians, transformed Istanbul as a hub for Caspian oil and Egyptian LNG, attracted multi-billion petrodollar investments from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states.

Under Recep Erdogan, Turkey is no longer an impoverished EU supplicant, the Pentagon's gendarme in the Mediterranean saddled with a cultural lobotomy where the state's elite aggressively denies the population's Muslim heritage under the prism of an anachronistic ideology. Turkey is the Islamic model of a successful, reformist, and democratic Muslim state — unique in the history of the Middle East.

Matein Khalid is an investment banker based in Dubai.

Un convoi maritime humanitaire à destination de Gaza provoque une nouvelle discorde entre la Turquie et Israël

Une ONG turque controversée, proche du Hamas palestinien, en est l'organisatrice principale

Istanbul

Correspondance

Neuf navires partis de Turquie, d'Irlande et de Grèce devaient faire route vers la bande de Gaza, à partir du dimanche 23 mai, pour tenter de contourner par la mer le blocus imposé par Israël. La « flottille de la paix » se regroupera au sud de la Turquie avant de mettre le cap vers les territoires palestiniens.

Ce convoi, qui achemine un millier de militants et 5 000 tonnes d'aide pour la population de Gaza, essentiellement du nécessaire médical et du matériel de construction, est le plus important organisé depuis 2006. Mais l'opération, soutenue par le gouvernement d'Ankara, risque de contrarier les relations entre la Turquie et Israël, marquées par les tensions ces derniers mois.

« La levée du siège figure en haut de nos priorités », a déclaré cette semaine le premier ministre turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Plusieurs députés de son parti islamo-conservateur, l'AKP, prendront part au voyage, dont le président de la commission des affaires étrangères au Parlement, Murat Mercan.

De son côté, Israël a fait part de son intention d'empêcher les bateaux d'approcher des côtes de Gaza. « Qui veut fournir de l'aide doit se mettre en rapport avec le bureau de coordination du gouvernement », a prévenu Gilon Noar, un responsable du ministère des affaires étrangères, après avoir convoqué les ambassadeurs des pays concernés.

Diverses organisations européennes soutiennent le projet de pont maritime. Mais l'organisatrice principale en est une associa-



Le « Mavi Marmara », un des bateaux turcs qui va rejoindre la flotte à destination de Gaza. N. IMRE

tion caritative turque controversée, réputée proche du Hamas palestinien, la Fondation pour les droits de l'homme, les libertés et le secours humanitaire (IHH). Elle affrète à elle seule trois navires qui partiront dimanche d'Istanbul.

Cette ONG islamiste antisémite jouit de solides soutiens politiques en Turquie, mais elle est interdite de toute activité sur le sol israélien.

Son « correspondant » en Cisjordanie, Izzet Sahin, a été expulsé vers Istanbul, le 17 mai, après avoir été détenu durant trois semaines. « Nous voulons montrer la réalité du blocus », dit le président de l'IHH, Bülent Yildirim, rencontré dans les bureaux de l'ONG situés dans le quartier conservateur de

Fatih, à Istanbul. « Les juifs transformant Gaza en camp de concentration, c'est un génocide silencieux, poursuit-il. Nous voulons qu'ils nous arrêtent au large des côtes. Ainsi le monde entier verra la réalité. »

« Dieu est grand »

L'IHH finance déjà la reconstruction de facilités portuaires ainsi qu'une douzaine d'immeubles. En décembre 2009, elle avait organisé un convoi d'aide humanitaire médiatisé : des dizaines de camions avaient tenté de rejoindre Gaza via la porte de Rafah, mais l'Égypte s'était opposée au passage de la caravane.

En un an, l'IHH a dépensé dans ce programme plus de 80 millions d'euros, selon son dirigeant, qui se défend d'entretenir des liens particuliers avec le Hamas. Pendant l'opération « Plomb durci », en janvier 2009, la fondation islamiste avait organisé une collecte de fonds à travers toute la Turquie avec l'aide de nombreuses municipalités dirigées par le parti islamo-conservateur au pouvoir. L'actuel ministre des affaires étrangères, Ahmet Davutoglu, avait envoyé ses deux filles sur la scène de l'un de ces meetings.

Le 16 mai, une « Nuit de soutien à la Palestine » était organisée, à Istanbul, dans le gymnase municipal d'Ümraniye. Devant des jardins clairsemés, où hommes et femmes, strictement séparés, agitaient des drapeaux du Hamas et du Jihad islamique palestinien, Bülent Yildirim a appelé à la mobilisation contre « les sionistes » et pour « la défense de la mosquée Al-Aqsa » de Jérusalem. « Dieu est grand », répétaient en chœur les militants, au milieu desquels avait pris place le maire local.

La fondation, créée en 1992, est soupçonnée par plusieurs pays occidentaux d'entretenir des liens avec des réseaux djihadistes. Dans les années 1990, des moudjahidins arabes en partance pour la Bosnie transitaient par son siège à Istanbul. « Nous étions une jeune organisation, se défend Bülent Yildirim. Nos bureaux étaient ouverts à tous. » Le nom de l'IHH était également apparu, en 1996, dans une enquête menée en France par le juge antiterroriste Jean-Louis Bruguière, sur un réseau terroriste algérien. « A part deux coups de téléphone, rien n'a jamais été prouvé », assure le responsable. ■

Guillaume Perrier

La marine israélienne s'apprête à intercepter la flottille

La marine israélienne se préparait, samedi 22 mai, à empêcher la « flottille de Gaza » d'atteindre son but, le gouvernement estimant que ce convoi maritime est « une provocation et une violation de la loi israélienne ». Plusieurs navires vont être dépêchés à la rencontre de la dizaine de bateaux venus de Turquie et de Chypre. Sur le port d'Ashdod, au

nord de la bande de Gaza, des préparatifs sont en cours pour l'arrivée du convoi, qui pourrait y être dérouteré, et pour accueillir les centaines de personnes embarquées. Une « contre-flottille » de particuliers devait prendre la mer samedi matin afin de protester contre l'attitude de la Turquie, considérée comme le principal sponsor de cette opération. — (Corresp.)

Irak: le retrait des troupes US ferait plus de mal que de bien (politique kurde)



MOSCOU, 21 mai 2010 -

RIA Novosti

Le retrait des troupes américaines d'Irak ferait plus de mal que de bien, a déclaré vendredi à Moscou le secrétaire général du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan Fazil Mirani.

Le retrait des troupes américaines d'Irak ferait plus de mal que de bien, a déclaré vendredi à Moscou le secrétaire général du Parti démocratique du Kurdistan Fazil Mirani.

La décision de Washington de retirer les troupes américaines d'ici la fin de 2011 bénéficie en paroles de l'approbation de toutes les forces politiques irakiennes. Cependant, de nombreux responsables du Kurdistan irakien (nord du pays) jugent cette décision hâtive.

"Malgré notre position officielle qui consiste à soutenir le retrait de toutes les troupes étrangères déployées en

Irak, nous ne devons pas être idéalistes. Le départ des troupes américaines nous ferait plus de mal que de bien", a affirmé M.Mirani lors d'une conférence de presse à RIA Novosti.

Selon lui, le contingent américain doit rester aussi longtemps qu'il faudra pour former en Irak des forces armées capables de protéger les frontières du pays.

"Les forces armées irakiennes ne sont pas encore en mesure d'assurer la protection des frontières extérieures et la sécurité intérieure de l'Etat. Après la destruction de notre système défensif par les Américains, aucun autre système n'a été créé", a constaté le responsable politique kurde.

D'après lui, les partis politiques irakiens sont partagés sur la question du retrait des troupes américaines.

"Cette mesure n'est pas de nature à garantir à elle seule la souveraineté nationale. Si la présence de ces troupes est indispensable, elles doivent y rester. Cela ne porte pas atteinte à notre sou-

veraineté", a estimé M.Mirani.

Selon de nombreux experts, la raison principale qui amène les Kurdes à opter pour la présence des forces alliées en Irak consiste dans le conflit couvant entre le Kurdistan et Bagdad à propos de Kirkuk, province riche en pétrole dans le nord du pays. Les Kurdes considèrent cette province comme leur territoire ancestral et souhaitent la rattacher à leur région autonome.

Le Kurdistan comprend trois provinces irakiennes Duhok, Erbil et Sulaymaniyah. Après la guerre du Golfe de 1991 (opération "Tempête du désert" effectuée par les Etats-Unis contre l'Irak de Saddam Hussein), cette région a accédé à une large autonomie. Elle a son propre drapeau, son hymne et sa fête nationale.

© 2010 RIA Novosti



DEUX SOLDATS TURCS ET TROIS MILICIENS TUÉS PAR DES REBELLES KURDES

DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 29 mai 2010 (AFP)

DEUX SOLDATS turcs et trois supplétifs de l'armée ont été tués samedi lors d'accrochages avec des rebelles kurdes, dans le sud-est de la Turquie, ont indiqué l'armée et des médias turcs.

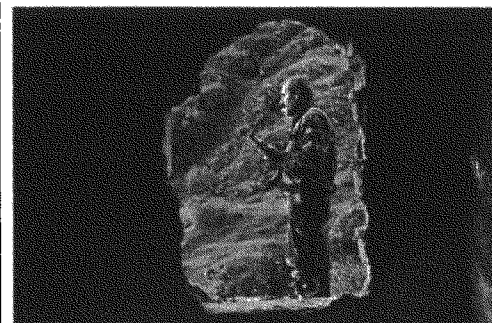
Une fusillade a opposé les forces de sécurité à un groupe de rebelles du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), dans une zone montagneuse de la province de Sirnak, près de la frontière irakienne, a-t-elle précisé sur son site internet.

Deux soldats et un membre des "Gardiens de village", une milice locale kurde qui se bat contre le PKK aux côtés de l'armée turque ont été tués. Deux soldats ont également été blessés.

Lors d'un autre accrochage dans une zone rurale de la province de Siirt, deux miliciens sont morts dans l'attaque d'une patrouille militaire par le PKK, a indiqué l'agence de presse turque Anatolie.

Par ailleurs, le dirigeant emprisonné à vie du PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, a annoncé qu'il abandonne ses efforts pour discuter avec le gouvernement, en laissant l'initiative aux commandants rebelles sur le terrain, a annoncé samedi un journal kurde.

"Poursuivre ce processus n'a plus de sens ni d'utilité. J'abandonne, en date du 31 mai, étant donné que je n'ai pas pu trouver d'interlocuteur", a déclaré le leader rebelle à son avocat, de sa prison, selon le site internet du journal Ozgur



Un "gardien de village", milice kurde qui se bat au côté de l'armée turque, de garde le 10 avril 2010 près de Siirt

Politika.

Abdullah Öcalan, qui continue à diriger le PKK de sa prison par l'intermédiaire de messages passés par ses avocats, a ajouté que la "responsabilité incombe maintenant" aux dirigeants du PKK et au principal parti pro-kurde BDP (Parti pour la paix et la démocratie).

"Je n'y parviens pas, de là où je suis. A eux de décider ce qu'il faut faire", a-t-il dit.

Le leader a précisé que ses propos ne doivent pas être compris comme un appel au PKK à intensifier la lutte armée.

"Ce n'est pas un appel à la guerre", a-t-il dit, selon le journal.

Le journal n'a pas précisé si cette déclaration du leader du PKK signifie qu'il renonce à son leadership sur le mouvement rebelle.

Saving Iraqi Kurdistan

Abe Greenwald

Erbil, Iraq. In the lobby of a certain hotel in the Kurdish city of Erbil, you find the familiar row of wall clocks indicating current time in various metropolitan hubs. Only something breaks your heart a little about the local twist put on this fixture of jet-set urbanity. Between clocks whose faces have been factory-stamped Istanbul or New York or Madrid, you see one displaying local time, and it looks like the others except for a single, small anomaly. The Erbil hasn't been emblazoned onto the clock face by a manufacturer's machine. It's been printed out, in ordinary bold font, onto computer paper; cut down to a word-sized rectangle; and glued over the name of some other magnificent city.

The Kurds of the area known as the Kurdish Regional Government want to secure a free, democratic, and thriving Kurdistan. They are on their way to pulling it off. Personal safety here (where I am a guest of the KRG) is a given, so that most of the time, you forget you're in Iraq. Parts of Erbil resemble Miami, Florida. There are rows of manicured palm trees, bustling retail strips, car dealerships, and everywhere the organized rubble of construction.

Other parts look more like the average Westerner's conception of a Middle Eastern country: flat, dusty, and monochrome. In any case, the accomplishments go beyond the realm of the commercial or the aesthetic. The KRG is a free land. If you are an Iraqi Kurd, you don't have to do what your leader orders. In fact, your leader does not order you to do anything. Nor do you have to do as your cleric says. In this corner of "the Muslim world," liquor flows freely, journalists quote Tocqueville in conversation, and praise for Israel is easy to come by.

Praise for America is ubiquitous. The Kurdish foreign minister told my group matter-of-factly, "It was your men and women, in uniform who shed blood, who overthrew Saddam." I heard a group of smart Kurdish students cite chapter and verse on American exceptionalism.

The Kurdish nation is bound to America like few others. Kurdish hopes for autonomy -- after a history of being the victims of ethnic cleansing and mass slaughter -- first became a precarious reality when George H.W. Bush instituted the northern no-fly zone over Iraq in 1991, three years after Saddam Hussein's Anfal campaign

wiped out up to 100,000 Kurds with chemical weapons. With American protection in place, the Kurds began building infrastructure and honing their political vision. When George W. Bush toppled Saddam's regime in 2003, the Kurds, who make up about 20 percent of the Iraqi population, began building what they promote as "the other Iraq" in earnest.

Kurdish identity is largely built on the Kurds' long and heroic struggle for survival. KRG President, Massoud Barzani, is a national hero. So, too, was his late father, Mustafa Barzani, who preceded him as leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP). Both were Peshmerga warriors from a proud tribe who spent their lives fighting for Kurdish self-determination. An uncompromising career enemy of Saddam Hussein, President Barzani is as much a symbol of Kurdish pride as he is leader.

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani is also a Kurdish icon. Talabani, like Barzani, comes from a prominent tribe and was also Peshmerga. In the 1970s, his Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) split off from, and fought against, the KDP. But the PUK now peacefully constitutes the other half of Kurdish party politics. The KRG and PUK share influence, and images of Barzani and Talabani are simply found everywhere in the region.

Kurdistan is bursting with everything the liberation of Iraq was intended to set free: pluralism, democracy, opportunity, and goodwill toward the U.S. But political realities in Iraq and America are bringing the first post-success phase of a free Iraq to an end. The future hangs on a few critical upcoming decisions in Baghdad, Kurdistan, and Washington.

The official outcome of Iraq's March 7 elections is still on hold. Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki is showing the tell-tale signs of a Middle East strongman. After his State of Law Party lost out to the largely secular Al Iraqiya coalition, he's pulled underhanded tricks to hang on to power. Maliki first used retroactive de-Baathification of candidates to dismiss the competition and narrow the race. Now he is stalling for time and, worse, has reached out to secure a bloc with Iranian-backed Sadrists. This new Shiite coalition is now four votes short of forming a government. The Sadrists, if unchecked, could become the equivalent of Hezbollah in Iraq. Aside from the cascade of tragedy this would visit on Iraq, it would solidify Iran's uncontested regional

hegemony.

The Kurds are being courted by both Al-Iraqiya and Maliki's Shiite coalition. The former is a mixed bag, but on the whole, far closer to the Kurds' centrist point of view. What's more, they don't pose the naked threat to stability that the Shiites do. Al-Iraqiya would seem like an obvious Kurdish choice.

But survival isn't always a straightforward affair. The Kurds are now looking into the long-term future and wondering what will come of siding against the Shia, who make up a powerful countrywide majority. Saddam had brutalized and killed the Shia en masse, but since his toppling, they've steadily lost their empathy for the Kurds. One of Maliki's increasingly frequent displays of power found him sending tanks to hem in the Kurds in the disputed city of Khanaqin. The American response was nonexistent.

That brings us to Washington. Kurdish leaders are not enraged but rather baffled by America's eagerness to wash its hands of the hard-won Iraq victory. As a senior PDK official explained it, Iraqi politics is a soccer match in which all Iraq's meddling neighbors, from Turkey to Iran, are fielding teams. "Who's the only one with no team?" he asked. "America."

The Obama administration is anxious to make good on its promise to end the war. This has meant not only the scheduled pullout of all U.S. fighting forces by the end of 2011 but also Washington's growing detachment from all matters Iraqi. The administration has mostly steered clear of the current parliamentary crisis. But if a power-infected Maliki soon rules Iraq with a Shia coalition containing Sadrists, the country could start to unravel. The U.S. must help shape the decisions coming out of Baghdad. This means exercising our unique leverage in Iraq.

Whether or not American officials are able to coax the formation of a moderate central government, the Kurds must be protected. As it stands, at the end of 2011, the U.S. will leave a slew of heavy weaponry to central Iraq, including tanks and F-16s. The Kurds will be left with their lightly armed Peshmerga. An American base of 5,000-10,000 soldiers in Kurdistan would ensure that those American weapons aren't turned on America's most loyal friends. This would entail the most minimal risk of American casualties and help see Iraq safely through its next phase of federal democracy.

The Kurds desperately want the base, but at the moment the chances seem slim. While the U.S. has built an enormous

embassy here, there is not even an American consul where Kurds can apply for U.S. visas. In the meantime, Kurdistan hangs its hopes on a constitutional referendum that would de-Arabize contested Kurdish areas.

There are still problems in Kurdistan. A democratic dynasty is still a dynasty. And the protection of traditional dynasties can turn ugly. Recently, a young journalist named Zardasht Osman was kidnapped and found dead after writing an inflammatory column referring to President Barzani's daughter. But Kurdistan's once calcified two-family political system is already giving way to a more legitimate pluralism. It is a feature of successful democracies that they are self-correcting. The upcoming generation of Kurds doesn't remember life under Saddam and does not behold Barzani and Talabani with the traditional sense of awe. A new opposition party has sprung up and gained traction, particularly among the young. The long-standing Kurdish folk identity built on opposition to Saddam

and the bravery of the Peshmerga must be supplanted by a new infectious idea of Kurdish statehood.

Nor is the KDP trying to choke off the torrent of change. To the contrary, reform is well underway. The Kurdish government has just instituted an astounding \$100 million annual scholarship program, which will send around 2,500 Kurdish students to Western universities every year. Kurdish universities are on a comprehensive fast-track to Western accreditation and have enacted short-term quotas for women to correct for the gross region-wide imbalance in the student population. Government ministries are cracking down on the long-standing problem of tribal cronyism.

In discussing the achievements of the Iraq war, those of us who support the Iraqi liberation have developed a journalistic tic whereby we must attach the disclaimers fragile and reversible to every positive development. This is probably wise, but in the effort to shed the "triumphalist" label, we've neglected to empha-

size something else about achievements in Iraq. They are precious. Nowhere is this more achingly obvious than in Iraqi Kurdistan. There is a population of 4 million overwhelmingly Muslim, pro-American, pro-democracy political and cultural reformers in an oil-rich, strategically critical location in the Middle East. Somehow, the current U.S. administration sees no significant U.S. interest in this treasure, won with the blood of the American soldier. For a White House and a State Department that tout engagement as a panacea, the neglect to engage Baghdad leadership and keep the Iraqi experiment on a positive course is egregious.

The clock in the hotel lobby ticks down to the end of 2011. Under the present policy, our abandonment of the Kurds will be celebrated in America as a campaign promise made good. The Kurds know that that moment will be celebrated in other, less democratic precincts as well.

GULF TIMES May 18, 2010

Iraq approves Kurdish oil exports deal; closer to resolving bitter rows

Baghdad(Reuters) - Iraq's cabinet yesterday approved a deal that would allow oil exports to resume from the country's semi-autonomous Kurdish region, taking the two sides closer to resolving bitter disputes over oil, land and power.

The deal between the central government and the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) involves the Ministry of Finance in Baghdad paying foreign oil firms operating in Iraqi Kurdistan their expenses, government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said.

It does not cover the companies' profits, and did not mean Oil Minister Hussain al-Shahristani accepted the contracts, which are production-sharing deals, signed by the Kurds with the companies, a spokesman of Iraqi Oil Ministry said.

The approval of the deal by

the Iraqi cabinet could signal that Iraq's incumbent Shia-led government is creeping closer to sealing a tie-up with minority Kurds to forge a coalition government following an inconclusive election in March.

It was unclear, though, if the offer to pay exploration and extraction costs would be accepted by the KRG and lead to a speedy resumption of exports.

"We hope that the guarantees offered by the Finance Ministry would be enough to convince the Kurdish Regional Government to start delivering the crude to Iraq to be exported through the State Oil Marketing Organisation (SOMO)," Oil Ministry spokesman Asim Jihad said.

Iraqi Kurdistan and Baghdad have been at loggerheads over many thorny issues that US military officials fear could be the spark of Iraq's next major conflict just as the sectarian bloodshed unleashed

after the 2003 US-led invasion fades.

At the heart of the dispute lies the city of Kirkuk, which Kurds want to have wrapped into their northern region, and other disputed territories.

Baghdad has also opposed oil deals the Kurds signed independently with foreign firms, considering them illegal.

A detente last year led to a brief period of oil exports from two Kurdish oilfields—Taq Taq and Tawke, operated by Norway's DNO, Turkey's Genel Enerji and Addax Petroleum Corp, now bought by China's Sinopec.

But the pumps shut down quickly when Baghdad refused to pay the companies operating them.

"The cabinet approved... the request of the Oil Ministry to execute the agreement between the ministry and the Kurdish region to export crude from the region through the (State) Oil Marketing

Organisation," Dabbagh said in the statement after the cabinet's weekly meeting.

"...and allowing the Finance Ministry to send a letter to the regional government guaranteeing paying the expenses of the firms after auditing them according to the agreement."

Al-Shahristani had said earlier this year that the government could end up paying exploration and extraction costs of oil firms working in Iraqi Kurdistan but not their profits.

On Monday, Kurdish Natural Resources Minister Ashti Hawrami told Reuters that Kurdish oil exports will start only after the formation of a new Iraqi government following the March election. That could still take months.



Kurdistan Regional Government
20 May 2010

House of Representatives approves resolution calling for US Consulate in Kurdistan

Washington DC, US (KRG.org) - The US House of Representatives yesterday approved a resolution calling for the establishment of a US consulate in the Kurdistan Region. The resolution signals America's continued support for the stability, prosperity, human rights and democracy of the Kurdistan Region.

Four Congressmen spoke in favour of Resolution 873, which was passed with no opposition. The resolution's sponsor Congressman Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) said, "A strong relationship with the Kurdish people serves the ideals of peace, stability and democratic governance... the Kurdish part of the country has served as a model for democracy" since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Mr Rohrabacher concluded that the establishment of a consulate in Erbil would "underscore the great friendship between the US and the Kurdish people." He called it a moral and practical resolution.

House Representatives Michael McMahon (Democrat-NY), Ted Poe (Republican-TX) and Lincoln Davis (D-TN) also spoke in favour of the resolution. Congressman Poe said that the Kurds' determination to prevent the persecution they had suffered in the past underlies their desire to work with the US. He added that the Kurds have committed themselves to a future in a federal Iraq, with the aim of improving freedom, security, and human rights.

Mr Qubad Talabani, the Kurdistan Regional Government's Representative to the US, said, "I would like to thank the co-authors of the resolution and members of the Kurdish-American Congressional Caucus who supported it. The establishment of a consulate will broaden and deepen our already strong relationship



with America."

House Resolution 873 gives many reasons why a US consulate should be opened in Erbil. It states, "The Kurds of Iraq have been willing partners with the US in the democratic transition in Iraq since 2003 and the Kurdistan Region has served as a model of Iraq's democratization since Operation Iraqi Freedom... the establishment of a United States Consulate in the Kurdistan Region will demonstrate a US commitment to maintaining and building upon the success and stability of this prosperous and democratic Iraqi region".

The resolution also states that a consulate "will both be helpful in attracting greater US business and investment to the region and ensuring that the region continues to serve as a 'gateway' to US business success in other parts of Iraq, as a number of US Government agencies have advocated."

Currently consular and citizen services are only provided by the US Embassy in Baghdad, more than 200 miles away from the safe and secure Kurdistan Region. American citizens and visitors to Kurdistan must travel this distance to receive such services. Establishing a consulate in the regional capital Erbil will increase travel to the Region and encourage more private investment and government and NGO missions to the area.

Seventeen countries, including European nations, have diplomatic representation in Erbil, and this year the US Department of State altered its travel advisory for Iraq to recognise the safety and security of the Kurdistan Region.



May 25, 2010

Arab, Turkmen leaders in Iraq oppose Kurd staffing decision

DPA - Deutsche Presse Agentur -

BAGHDAD/KIRKUK - A group of Arab and Turkmen leaders in Kirkuk criticized on Tuesday the Iraqi government's decision to permanently staff hundreds of Kurds who moved to the area in 2003 to fight with US forces.

They say the officers have not been through the proper training and qualification channels, and that the decision is part of a policy that marginalizes Arab and Turkmen populations in the ethnically divided area.

Kirkuk is home to a large population of Kurds, who would like to see it become the capital of a future independent Kurdistan. But many of Kirkuk's ethnic Turkmen and Arab populations want it to remain a part of Iraq.

The Iraqi ministry of interior approved the permanent appointment of 382 Kurds currently serving on the police force, working for traffic police and protecting oil fields in the provinces of Diyala and Kirkuk, General Sarhad Qader

said.

"The decision contradicts the Kirkuk provincial council directive of maintaining a national balance for all official appointments," Abdullah Sami al-Asi, an Arab leader and council member, said at a press conference.

The Arab and Turkmen leaders are requesting a review of the decision once the new government has been formed, so as not to politicize the delicate issue of Kirkuk, he added.

"We as Turkmen reject this decision because there are unqualified people in this group," Turkmen politician Hassan Tawran noted. "We demand a fair proportion in official appointments."

The council's Turkmen and Arab coalitions also issued a joint statement alleging that they have been consistently marginalized for the past seven years.

But Ribawar Talabani, the Vice President of the Kirkuk provincial council, called the decision a welcome one.

"We requested this decision two years ago, and now it has been taken after careful consideration. The officers have proven their competence and qualification through their performance, and this decision protects their rights," Talabani said.

www.monstersandcritics.com

IRAN'S FAILED GAMBIT

It is good news that the U.S., Europe, Russia and China will press ahead with new sanctions against Iran.

Every time it looks as if the big powers have finally run out of patience with Iran's nuclear misdeeds, Tehran's leaders suddenly decide they're in the mood to compromise. And every time the big powers let up on the pressure, Tehran's compromises turn to smoke. So it was no surprise on Monday when Iran announced it was ready to accept a deal to ship some of its nuclear fuel out of the country — similar to the deal it accepted and then rejected last year. And it is welcome news that the United States, Europe, Russia and China will press ahead with new United Nations Security Council sanctions.

The resolution, circulated late on Tuesday, takes aim at Iran's financial institutions, including those supporting the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, which runs much of the nuclear program. It would also require countries to inspect ships or aircraft into or out of Iran if there are suspicions they are carrying banned materials. Like the three resolutions that preceded it, it is probably not tough enough to change minds in Tehran. But the fact that Russia and China — Iran's longtime enablers — have signed on is likely to make some players in Iran's embattled government nervous. (We know we can't wait to hear what changed Beijing's mind.)

Several European governments have signaled that they are ready to impose tougher bilateral sanctions after the Security Council moves, and that might unsettle Iran's shaky political and economic system even more.

Since 2006, Tehran has defied repeated demands from the

Security Council to curb its nuclear program. It continues to churn out more nuclear fuel, block international inspectors from visiting suspect nuclear sites and refuses to answer questions about possible research into weapons designs.

The 11th-hour agreement announced this week with the leaders of Brazil and Turkey was much like one reached with the big powers last fall. Iran would transfer about 2,640 pounds of its low-enriched uranium to Turkey within one month and receive — within one year — fuel rods for use in a medical research reactor. There are big differences, however. In October, 2,640 pounds represented nearly 80 percent of Iran's stock of enriched uranium. Now it is only about half of its supply.

The original deal was intended to measurably delay Iran's progress toward a nuclear weapon while opening the door to serious negotiations. The current deal leaves Iran with too much fuel, puts no brakes on enrichment at a higher rate, lets Tehran take back the fuel stored in Turkey when it wants and makes no commitment to talks. Brazil and Turkey both currently hold seats on the Security Council and are eager to play larger international roles. And they are eager to avoid a conflict with Iran. We respect those desires. But like pretty much everyone else, they got played by Tehran.

American officials have not rejected the deal completely. They say that Iran will have to do more to slow its nuclear progress and demonstrate its interest in negotiating, rather than just manipulating the international community.

Brazil and Turkey should join the other major players and vote for the Security Council resolution. Even before that, they should go back to Tehran and press the mullahs to make a credible compromise and begin serious negotiations.

At U.N, push and pull of sanctions

UNITED NATIONS

BY NEIL MACFARQUHAR
AND DAVID E. SANGER

Buried in the sanctions resolution now being debated in the United Nations Security Council lies the possibility of a new effort to press Iran over its nuclear program: a call for countries to "exercise vigilance" in dealing with Iran's central bank.

U.S. and European officials said Wednesday that the reference, passing though it is, could give them a legal basis in the future for choking off financial transactions between Iran and banking centers in Europe and elsewhere. Previous sanctions have taken aim at specific banks suspected of financing proscribed nuclear activity, but never anything as pivotal as dealings with the central bank itself.

What is notably absent from the draft resolution, however, is any binding restriction on transactions with Iran's central bank.

Among the many compromises that the United States accepted to get China and Russia to back new sanctions against Iran was an agreement to limit any reference to the bank — or Iran's entire energy sector, for that matter — to the introductory paragraphs, rather than including it in the sanctions themselves, according to American officials and other diplomats, yielding a weaker resolution than the United States would have liked.

The haggling over the central bank illustrates both the opportunities and the frustrations that American and European officials see in the resolution. On the one hand, it provides an opportunity to expand the range of financial activity that the West can try to impede. On the other, it provides a loophole for any nation that wants to continue relations with Iran, allowing it to argue that a cutoff is not mandatory.

The standoff between Washington and Beijing over what economic measures to include in the final resolution

consumed the last 10 days of the negotiations, diplomats said. China expressed concern that if the central bank was singled out for sanctions, the entire Iranian economy would be paralyzed, they said. Even so, both Obama administration officials and diplomats underscored the mention of the central bank as an important tool to try to limit any trade with Iran that contributes to nuclear proliferation.

Security Council diplomats expressed confidence that they had at least 10 votes on the 15-member Council, and maybe more depending on how negotiations unroll. Turkey and Brazil, both current members, have said they will not engage in talks on the draft, and Lebanon is also expected to sit out the vote. The positions of other members, especially Nigeria and Uganda, remain unclear.

Iran reacted with outrage on Wednesday to the proposed new sanctions, particularly since the agreement was announced just a day after the Islamic

republic had been trumpeting a com-

The Americans got a weaker resolution than they wanted.

promise agreement, worked out with Brazil and Turkey, on nuclear enrichment for an experimental reactor in Tehran.

Iran's foreign minister, Manouchehr Mottaki, said, "There was no chance that the resolution would be approved," given that Tehran had agreed to ship a chunk of its enriched uranium to Turkey, the Fars news agency reported.

Mojtaba Samareh-Hashemi, an adviser to President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, dismissed the draft as having "no legitimacy," the news agency reported. All of the new sanctions come under the umbrella of limiting activity linked to nuclear proliferation. Iran maintains that its program is peaceful, but it is suspected of trying to develop a nuclear bomb.

The carefully worded compromise emerged after the United States said it would not support the passage of any resolution that did not at least mention the central bank and Iran's lucrative en-

ergy sector, while the Chinese were equally adamant that no economic targets be singled out.

In the end, both the energy sector and the central bank were mentioned with somewhat tortured wording in the preamble, with the draft noting the "potential connection between Iran's revenues derived from its energy sector" and possible financing for its nuclear program.

That is enough to pursue companies dealing with either the banks or the energy sector, American officials said. Susan E. Rice, the American ambassador to the United Nations, warned the Chinese that any measures passed by Congress in the absence of a U.N. resolution would probably have much greater consequences for Chinese banks and China's trade relations with the United States, a U.N. diplomat said.

Russia generally supported the Chinese position, although Moscow focused on the arms embargo. The United States and its European allies in the talks — Britain, France and Germany — had proposed a total arms embargo, which Russia rejected.

The final compromise required a telephone call from President Barack Obama to President Dmitri A. Medve-

dev of Russia to break the deadlock, a U.N. diplomat said.

Russia then accepted the wording in the resolution, which bans the sale of all heavy combat equipment to Iran, namely battle tanks, armored combat vehicles, large-caliber artillery systems, combat aircraft, attack helicopters, missiles or missile systems.

That would seem to include the S-300 surface-to-air missiles that Russia sold to the Islamic republic in 2005 but has repeatedly delayed delivering.

Among the most difficult remaining issues is the list of Iranian companies and individuals to be subject to an asset freeze and travel ban.

A Western list that runs to about 10 pages has been circulating for months, one diplomat noted.

But many of the listings refer to multiple names of a single organization, switching names being a favorite tactic in avoiding sanctions.

Iran scolds Russia for supporting sanctions

MOSCOW

BY ELLEN BARRY

Russia and Iran traded barbs on Wednesday, showing strains in their long-standing alliance because of Moscow's support for U.S.-backed sanctions over the Iranian nuclear program.

During a televised speech in Tehran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad lashed out at his Russian counterparts, who last week agreed with the four other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to sanctions against Iranian financial institutions and countries that offer Iran nuclear-related technology.

"We shouldn't see our neighbor supporting those who have shown animosity to us for 30 years," Mr. Ahmadinejad said. "This is not acceptable for the Ira-

nian nation. I hope they will pay attention and take corrective action."

"If I was in the place of Russian officials, I would adopt a more careful stance," he added, according to the ISNA press service.

The comments came a day after Iran's ambassador to Moscow said he hoped Russia would dissuade the other Security Council members from imposing sanctions, and warned that Russia risked being manipulated by the United States.

"Russia should not think that short-term cooperation with the United States is in its interest," Mahmoud-Reza Sajjadi said.

A top Kremlin aide shot back on Wednesday, saying Russia is guided by its own long-term interests, and that "our position can be neither pro-American, nor pro-Iranian."

The aide, Sergei Prikhodko, went on to say Russia rejects extremism and unpredictability in the global arena, and that "those who speak on behalf of the fraternal people of Iran" should not forget this. "No one has ever managed to save his authority by making use of political demagoguery," Mr. Prikhodko said, according to Interfax. "And I am sure that that thousand-year-long history of Iran itself proves that."

Russia has traditionally opposed sanctions against Iran, which it considers an

important regional ally. That position began to shift late last year when Tehran rejected a U.N.-brokered uranium enrichment plan, which Russia helped draft.

Last week, Russia's foreign minister, Sergei V. Lavrov, offered cautious support for a draft resolution that would impose a fourth set of sanctions on Iran. But he stressed that the draft needed approval from the council's non-permanent members, and he encouraged Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton to consider Tehran's newest proposal to enrich uranium in Turkey.

Friction has also been building between Moscow and Tehran over a proposed sale of S-300 anti-aircraft missiles to Tehran, a contract that Russia has suspended but not canceled.

Washington has pressed Moscow not to deliver the weapons, which could help Iran shoot down American or Israeli warplanes should either try to bomb its nuclear facilities.

Kılıçdaroglu and his CHP do not give Kurds hope

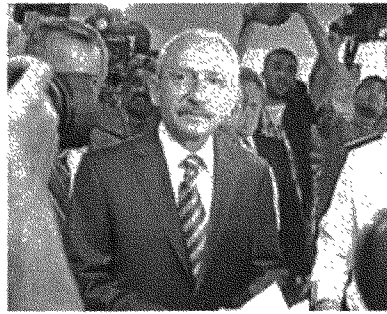
AYSE KARABAT

Analysts and pro-Kurdish politicians argue that Kemal Kılıçdaroglu, the newly elected chairman of the Republican People's Party (CHP), is highly unlikely to contribute to the solution of the country's decades-old Kurdish question.

They say the election of Kılıçdaroglu, who is of Kurdish and Alevi origin, does not mean the CHP will change its mentality. They also underline that there are many names in the new party assembly who are known for their nationalistic stance and militaristic approach.

Sah Ismail Bedirhanoglu, the chairman of the Southeastern Anatolia Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (GÜNSIAD), said he is not excited about Kılıçdaroglu's election because it is obvious that the mentality of the CHP is the same.

"Kılıçdaroglu did not mention the Kurdish question at all in his speech. When you look at the new high-ranking politicians, they are nationalists. I think this was only an operation to replace Baykal,"



Bedirhanoglu told Today's Zaman.

Prominent Kurdish intellectual and former politician Tarik Ziya Ekinci told Today's Zaman that he did not get the impression that the CHP had renewed its mentality.

"Kılıçdaroglu made me think that, regardless of his ethnic origin, he is not aware of the changes in the world, in Turkey and also among the Kurds. He speaks in the language of the 1970s. The new understanding in Turkey is anti-militarist and excludes people who act in the name of the state. I did not see any of this in Kılıçdaroglu's speech," Ekinci said.

He recalled that Kılıçdaroglu did not underline Turkey's European Union ambitions, but that he even took a negative stance on EU accession, which is one of the main forces behind the country's democratization.

"In his speech, he did not mention the operations of the deep state. He did not mention the rule of law. He did not give any clue about real change in CHP politics."

He was not even brave enough to mention the word 'Kurd,'" Ekinci underlined.

Another analyst who had low expectations from Kılıçdaroglu and the CHP when it comes to solving the Kurdish problem is writer Ümit Firat. He told Today's Zaman that if Kılıçdaroglu is unable to mention his own identity as a Kurd and an Alevi, this is mainly because of the policies the CHP has pursued.

"There is a contradiction here. A person of this identity should not be in the CHP. When you look at the other members of the party assembly, there are only a few names among them who are known for their democratic stance. The CHP did not give the impression that it will change," Firat said.

The pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) was also highly critical of the CHP. Its leader, Selahattin Demirtas, said over the weekend in Bursa that changing names does not mean anything.

He recalled that Kılıçdaroglu basically defined the Kurdish question as an economic problem rooted in poverty. "He tried to say that if we give money to Kurds, they will give up their culture, language and identity. This is preposterous. This is the classical CHP mentality at work, one which went bankrupt a long time ago," Demirtas said.

Kurdistan Military Commander Warns PJAK To Stop Attacking Iran

RUDAW

Only a few weeks after the hanging of four of its activists by Iran, a pro-Kurdish military opposition group of Iran was warned by a high-ranking commander of the Kurdish armed forces to stop attacking Iran.

Mahmoud Sengawi warned the members of The Party of Free Life of Kurdistan known as PJACK, to not launch armed activities from the border of Kurdistan deteriorating the stability of the northern region of Iraq.

"We have told PJAK to keep themselves distant from the border of Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran. We don't want their armed activities to give us headaches," said Mr. Sengawi in an

interview with Rudaw in the mountainous city of Sulaimani last week.

Mr. Sengawi says he is aware that PJAK members sometimes sneak into Iran via Kurdistan border, an action which has made the Kurdish villagers pay an often pricy cost when the Iranian jets shell the area aimed at destroying PJAK bases.

Mr. Sengawi also said that if PJACK become a threat to the stability of his region, it would be possible for the forces of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) to confront the rebel group

As a result of the recent Iranian shelling, a woman was critically injured and dozens of families fled their homes. The bombardment of the Iranian forces was mostly directed at Qnadil, Swren and Penjwen areas located to

the south east of Kurdistan.

In a statement issued on May 21, Kurdistan condemned the shelling.

"While the regional presidency office strongly protests the bombardment and attacks of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkey on its citizens and the bordering areas, it also considers these military attacks a breach to Iraq's sovereignty," read the statement.

PJAK is a militant Kurdish nationalist group and an offshoot of the PKK, a Turkish Kurdish rebel group. It has bases in the mountainous regions of northern Iraq, has been carrying out numerous attacks in western Iran, southern Turkey and the northeastern parts of Syria where the Kurdish populations live.

It is designated a terrorist organization by both Iran and the United States. Almost half of its members are believed to be female teenagers.

Kurdish Rebel Chief to Abandon Peace Efforts

Kurdish Rebels Kill Five Near Iraqi Border

Associated Press

Imprisoned Kurdish rebel chief Abdullah Ocalan accused Turkey of ignoring his calls to establish talks with his rebels and said he would withdraw from the peace process, a Kurdish newspaper reported Saturday.

Mr. Ocalan's announcement that he would formally abandon his efforts and leave his rebel command in charge comes amid new clashes between Kurdish guerrillas and the Turkish military.

Kurdish rebels killed two soldiers and three pro-government village guards in two separate clashes Saturday near the Iraqi border, the state run

Anatolia news agency said. Turkey's military killed at least 24 Kurdish rebels in an airstrike on rebel hideouts in northern Iraq last week and separate clashes this week.

Mr. Ocalan has been influential over his rebel command based in northern Iraq and unsuccessfully pressured Turkey to establish dialogue with his rebels, who are branded as terrorists by the U.S. and the European Union. Mr. Ocalan said his rebel command would be in charge of the process, along with a pro-Kurdish political party that struggles for Kurdish rights.

"From now on, the PKK might reconcile with the state and find a solution or they might get stuck. Or it is possible

that the PKK might be defeated and lose the war or be abolished," Mr. Ocalan was quoted as saying on the Website of the *Ozgur Politika* newspaper.

The clashes picked up after Turkey's highest court shut down a pro-Kurdish party in December for links to Kurdish rebels, complicating the government's efforts to reconcile with the minority Kurds to end the 26-year-old conflict that has killed tens of thousands of people.

Turkey has urged Iraq to eradicate Kurdish rebel bases to prevent hit-and-run attacks on Turkish targets. The rebels took up arms in 1984.

The Economist

May 27th 2010

Turkey's opposition

A new Kemal

ANKARA

Kemal Kilicdaroglu gives new hope to the Turkish opposition

THE party has changed its leader, but can the leader change the party? That is the question consuming Turkey's chattering classes now that Kemal Kilicdaroglu, a former civil servant, has swept to the leadership of the main secular opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP). He won a crushing share of delegates' votes at a party convention on May 22nd.

Mr Kilicdaroglu's surprise ascent has transformed Turkey's political landscape and brought new hope to millions of secular voters who have long been desperate for a credible alternative to the mildly Islamist Justice and Development (AK) party that has governed alone since 2002. AK's seemingly unchallengeable grip has even led to some overblown claims that it is heading towards dictatorship.

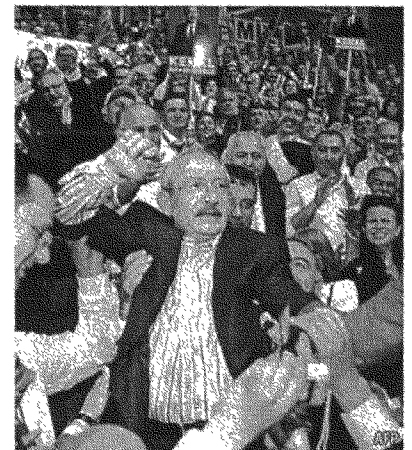
Founded by Ataturk in 1923, the CHP has been out of power for some 15 years. That was largely thanks to its former leader, Deniz Baykal, who has consistently blocked the reforms spearheaded by Turkey's charismatic AK prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. A fervent backer of Turkey's meddling generals, Mr Baykal had seemed glued to his post. But a secretly filmed sex video allegedly featuring him and his former secretary was then leaked to an Islamist

website. Mr Baykal was forced to resign. His fate was sealed after one of his top lieutenants, Onder Sav, decided to back Mr Kilicdaroglu.

Can the mild-mannered Mr Kilicdaroglu steer his party away from the elitism that it has come to symbolise? Peppered with socialist-style clichés, his victory speech suggests not. Mr Kilicdaroglu had little to say about the Kurdish problem (although he is himself a Kurd, he did not even use the word). Nor did he mention discrimination against the country's large population of Alevis, adherents of a liberal interpretation of Shia Islam that is uniquely Turkish. Mr Kilicdaroglu is an Alevi. As for foreign policy, all he offered was that Turkey should pay more attention to India and China.

Yet most Turkish voters care little about the liberals' agenda and even less about the outside world. With his pledges of income equality and more jobs, Mr Kilicdaroglu seems bent on appropriating the role of champion of the underdog from AK, so eating into its traditional base in the shanty towns that encircle the big cities. To his credit, he has also promised to lower the threshold of 10% of the vote for parliamentary seats, a figure originally designed to keep out Kurdish parties.

Mr Kilicdaroglu's strongest card is



that he is squeaky clean. He first drew public attention when, running to become Istanbul's mayor in 2009, he exposed various AK-related corruption scandals. CHP officials claim they have more files up their sleeves on AK associates who worked for Mr Erdogan when he was Istanbul's mayor in the mid-1990s. They may use them before the general election due next year.

His other advantage may be Mr Erdogan's hubris. This week Mr Erdogan dismissed the CHP as "tin" whose "gold" varnish had peeled off. He also seemed to take aim at Mr Kilicdaroglu's faith when he called his supporters in the media "candas" or those who support can (an Alevi term for people). The latest polls suggest that, under Mr Kilicdaroglu, the CHP could take 32% of the vote. That would be enough to deny AK a third term of single-party government.

Turkey takes an ambitious new path



Judy Dempsey

LETTER FROM EUROPE

BERLIN Ankara mightily irritated the big powers last week by brokering a uranium exchange deal with Iran.

The United States was not pleased that Turkey, with support from Brazil, bypassed the United Nations. There was nothing in the deal about Iran suspending its uranium enrichment program — the most disputed issue between Iran and the United States. Washington suspects that Iran is pursuing the enrichment program to produce nuclear weapons.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton swiftly sidestepped Turkey's initiative by announcing that the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — plus Germany had agreed to seek a new round of sanctions against Tehran.

Her remarks were a blow to Turkey's pride. They also exposed the hurdles Ankara faces in implementing a new foreign policy that seeks to resolve disputes with its neighbors — Iraq, Armenia, Syria and Iran. That policy, known as zero problems, is also about moving Turkey out of the shadow of the United States, its traditional ally, making it a regional player on its own terms. Iran was the first high-profile

test of that strategy.

"It is a major breakthrough for Turkey to end the political isolation of Iraqi Kurdistan."

test of that strategy. "Turkey is trying to become a major player in the region, which means it has to rebalance its relationship with the U.S.," said Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, director of the Ankara office of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. "In the case of Iran, Turkey does not want a U.S. or Israeli strike. It does not want sanctions. Turkey knows that sanctions did not work against Saddam Hussein's Iraq during the 1990s."

Turkey had another reason in trying to pull off this diplomatic gamble. It is now one of the rotating members of the U.N. Security Council, along with Brazil. It does not have a veto. But it will have to accept the new sanctions, oppose them or simply abstain next month when the sanctions are put to a vote. "Turkey does not want to be pushed into taking sides," Mr. Unluhisarcikli said. "It could abstain, saying it tried to find a diplomatic solution."

That is one of the reasons President Barack Obama spent more than an hour last week talking by telephone to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan about Ankara's diplomatic initiative. Turkey is a NATO member and an E.U. candidate, and Washington cannot afford to dismiss Ankara's foreign policy ambitions.

Mr. Erdogan and his new foreign minister, Ahmet Davutoglu, are spearheading this policy. If they succeed, it will mean prestige and respect for a mostly Muslim, Western-oriented country that is determined to bring stability to a volatile region on Turkey's borders.

So far, the policy has had mixed results. Take Armenia, with whom Turkey cut all diplomatic relations in 1993 and closed the border. Two years ago, as part of Ankara's zero-problems strategy, Turkish and Armenian diplomats held secret talks culminating in direct negotiations between their presidents. In August, the countries agreed to normalize relations in what was hailed as a major breakthrough for promoting stability in the Caucasus.

But the borders are still closed. More talks are on hold. They have become hostage to the dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave in Azerbaijan. Mr. Erdogan promised the Azeri government last year that Turkey would not open its border with Armenia until Armenia relinquished control over the regions surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. The United States this month tried and failed to break the deadlock.

Richard Giragosian, director of the Armenian Center for National and International Studies in Yerevan, said: "Not all is lost. Lower-level secret talks between Turkey and Armenia are continuing. Resolving this issue was never going to be easy or quick."

Then there is the regional government of Iraqi Kurdistan, led by Masoud Barzani. Turkey spent the past decade demonizing Mr. Barzani, accusing him of being a U.S. stooge and plotting against Turkey, but Mr. Erdogan ended that tack.

Last month Ankara opened a consulate in Erbil, the regional capital of Kurdistan. If all goes as planned, Mr. Barzani will visit Ankara next month.

Reaching out to Kurdistan is a huge step for Mr. Erdogan's Justice and Development Party. Turkey has yet to end

the conflict with its own Kurdish minority. The party's cautious steps toward granting that minority more ethnic and cultural rights — one of the conditions for joining the European Union — have been coupled with a new crackdown. That began after a group of fighters belonging to the separatist Kurdistan Workers' Party killed seven Turkish soldiers in December.

"The new policy toward Kurdistan has been very difficult," said Henri J. Barkey, senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. "It is a major breakthrough for Turkey to end the political isolation of Iraqi Kurdistan. But Turkey also has to deal with its own Kurdish problem."

Turkey has its own interests in pursuing the Kurdistan track. It wants Iraq to stay together. But if ethnic conflict breaks into more serious violence, the country could break apart.

In that case, Mr. Barkey said, Turkey would be better off with a friendly partner in Iraq's energy-rich north. For the Iraqi Kurds, Turkey is their door to the West.

Mr. Erdogan also has set his sights on improving ties with Greece, which is vital to end the impasse over Cyprus, the north of which Turkey invaded and occupied 36 years ago.

This month, Mr. Erdogan was given the red-carpet treatment when he visited Athens. Mr. Davutoglu said the visit was "a revolution."

Keeping the zero-problems policy on track will take all the skill of Turkish diplomats and their counterparts in the region. "We know that the zero-problems policy is very ambitious," said Suat Kiniklioglu, a legislator who is deputy chairman of the Justice and Development Party. "But we have an interest in seeing our neighborhood stabilized and interdependencies created."

That can only be good news for the United States and Europe. Washington understands what Turkey is trying to do. But the European Union, so far, has shown little interest in a country aspiring to membership that is trying to reach out to its enemies.

E-MAIL jdempsey@iht.com
TOMORROW Didi Kirsten Tatlow on hurdles facing women in business.

AFP

QUATRE REBELLES KURDES TUÉS DANS DES AFFRONTEMENTS AVEC L'ARMÉE

ANKARA, 26 mai 2010 (AFP)

QUATRE rebelles kurdes ont été tués mercredi dans l'est de la Turquie dans des affrontements avec l'armée, a annoncé l'armée turque.

Les combats avaient éclaté en début de journée dans une zone montagneuse de la province de Tunceli où l'armée menait une opération contre le PKK (Parti des Travailleurs du Kurdistan, interdit), selon un communiqué mis en ligne sur

le site de l'armée.

Quatre armes automatiques, dix grenades et des munitions ont été saisies, ajoute le communiqué

Le PKK, considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie, les Etats-Unis et l'Union européenne, a pris les armes contre Ankara en 1984. On estime à 45.000 morts les victimes de ce conflit.

AFP

UN SOLDAT TURC TUÉ LORS D'UN ACCROCHAGE AVEC LE PKK

DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 27 mai 2010 (AFP)

UN SOLDAT turc a été tué et trois autres blessés lors d'un accrochage survenu tôt jeudi dans le sud-est anatolien avec un groupe de rebelles qui voulaient s'infiltrer en territoire turc depuis l'Irak, a indiqué une source de sécurité locale.

L'incident avec les membres du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, interdit) s'est produit dans la zone rurale d'Uludere, petite ville de la province de Sirnak, frontalière avec l'Irak où le PKK dispose de camps retranchés, a-t-on précisé de même source.

Quatre rebelles avaient été tués mercredi dans l'est de la Turquie.

Les combats entre les forces armées turques et les rebelles kurdes s'intensifient généralement avec l'arrivée des beaux jours. Après le dégel, les rebelles quittent leurs camps du nord de l'Irak, bombardés par les chasseurs turcs, pour pénétrer en Turquie par les massifs montagneux afin d'y organiser des attaques.

Courrier
INTERNATIONAL.COM

26 Mai 2010

TURQUIE

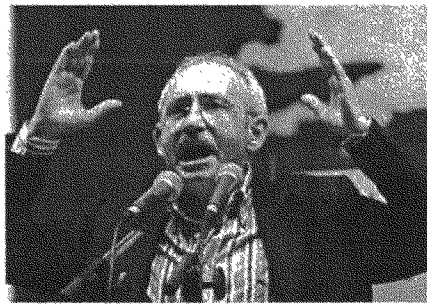
L'opposition à l'AKP a un nouveau leader

L'élection de Kemal Kılıçdaroglu, comme leader du Parti républicain du peuple (CHP), à la place de Deniz Baykal, qui a démissionné à la suite d'un scandale provoqué par la diffusion d'une vidéo compromettante, pourrait annoncer un changement de style. Cela pourrait permettre au CHP de menacer l'AKP au pouvoir.

| Pierre Vanrie |

Courrier international

"LA liquidation de la tendance Baykal [l'ancien leader du CHP] aurait normalement dû se produire après la défaite du CHP lors des élections législatives de 2007", écrit Derya Sazak dans Milliyet. La stratégie du CHP visant à empêcher un membre de l'AKP de devenir président de la République "avait conduit ce parti à cautionner l'ultimatum de l'armée contre l'AKP et avait eu des effets négatifs sur le plan électoral. Cette stratégie d'alignement sur l'armée s'était traduite par la victoire de l'AKP avec 47 % des suffrages. Si Baykal avait été réélu lors du congrès de son parti, le CHP aurait poursuivi



Kemal Kılıçdaroglu au congrès du CHP, Ankara, 22 mai 2010.

sur la même voie, en adoptant des positions racistes et ultra-nationalistes. Désormais, ce parti semble avoir compris qu'un combat fondé uniquement sur la laïcité et le républicanisme ne suffit pas pour battre l'AKP. La voie choisie n'est donc plus celle des projets d'attentats, de putschs ou d'interdiction de parti, mais l'action politique normale".

Emre Aköz, dans Sabah, reste toutefois circonspect vis-à-vis du nouveau leader du CHP dont le discours d'intronisation n'annonce aucun changement sur l'incontournable et épineuse question kurde. "Bien que Kılıçdaroglu soit Kurde et alévi, il a soigneusement évité d'aborder les questions identitaires. Or, aujourd'hui, les questions identitaires sont au moins aussi importantes que celles relatives au portefeuille. Pour preuve, le Premier ministre Erdogan avait été davantage applaudi à Diyarbakir [ville

du sud-est à majorité kurde] lorsqu'il avait prononcé le mot "kurde" que lorsqu'il avait promis plus d'investissements pour la ville. Bref, un discours de lutte contre la pauvreté et la corruption qui n'intègre pas la dimension identitaire n'est pas très porteur de nos jours", explique-t-il.

Dans Radikal, Cengiz Candar doute aussi que ce parti clef du système politique turc soit réellement en train de changer. "Parmi les nouveaux visages de son bureau politique, on trouve d'ardents défenseurs de la manipulation juridique qui visait à empêcher l'élection d'Abdullah Gül [issu de l'AKP] à la présidence de la République et qui constitue une page honteuse de notre histoire judiciaire. On ne peut pas dire que ces personnes nourrissent un quelconque espoir de changement. Les symboles dont Kılıçdaroglu s'est entouré font penser que le CHP va peut-être simplement nous servir du Baykal sans Baykal".

Toutefois, Ahmet Insel estime que cette nouvelle donne pourrait conduire à ce que la rivalité entre l'AKP et le CHP ne débouche plus sur de la surenchère nationaliste. "L'arrivée de Kılıçdaroglu à la tête du CHP va en tout cas mettre l'AKP, le parti au pouvoir, dans une situation où il sera davantage soumis à une pression dans un contexte de concurrence qui aura désormais lieu sur le terrain démocratique", écrit-il dans Radikal.

AFP

ÖCALAN AFFIRME ABANDONNER TOUT EFFORT DE DIALOGUE AVEC ANKARA

ANKARA, 29 mai 2010 (AFP)

LE CHEF emprisonné des rebelles kurdes de Turquie Abdullah Öcalan a affirmé qu'il abandonnait ses efforts de nouer un dialogue avec les autorités turques, a rapporté samedi un journal kurde.

Détenu sur l'île-prison d'Imrali, dans le nord-ouest de la Turquie, où il purge depuis 1999 une peine de prison à vie, le fondateur du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK) avait adressé plusieurs appels au dialogue au gouvernement turc qui les a rejetés.

Maintenir ces effort "n'a plus de sens", a déclaré le chef du PKK à son avocat qu'il a rencontré dans sa prison, selon le site internet du journal Ozgur Politika.

"J'abandonne (les efforts de dialogue) après le 31 mai puisque je n'ai pas pu trouver d'interlocuteur", a expliqué Abdullah Öcalan. La "responsabilité repose maintenant" sur les dirigeants du PKK et sur le Parti pour la paix et la démocratie (BDP), le principal parti pro-kurde de Turquie, a-t-il poursuivi.

"Je ne peux rien faire à partir d'ici. Ils décideront ce qu'il faut faire", a dit le dirigeant emprisonné. "J'espère que des civils innocents ne souffriront pas", a-t-il ajouté.

Abdullah Öcalan a tenu à souligner que sa décision ne revenait pas à appeler le PKK à intensifier la lutte armée. "Il ne doit pas y avoir de malentendu. Ce n'est pas un appel à la guerre", a-t-il dit.

Le PKK, interdit en Turquie et considéré comme une organisation terroriste par Ankara et de nombreux pays, a pris les armes en 1984 pour défendre les droits des kurdes. Ce conflit récurrent a fait environ 45.000 morts en 26 ans.

Le gouvernement du Premier ministre Recep Tayyip Erdogan exige que les combattants du PKK déposent les armes. Il avait annoncé l'année dernière l'octroi de davantage de libertés à la communauté kurde -environ 14 millions, selon les sources, des 78 millions d'habitants-- pour mettre fin au conflit, mais cela n'a pas été suivi d'effets.

Une "autonomie démocratique" pour la communauté kurde devrait être la solution, a estimé Abdullah Öcalan.

"A partir de maintenant, le PKK pourrait se réconcilier avec l'Etat ou pourrait trouver une solution... Ou le PKK pourrait être vaincu et disparaître... On ne sait jamais ce qui peut arriver dans une guerre", a-t-il conclu, cité par le journal.

AFP

TURQUIE: SIX SOLDATS TUÉS DANS L'ATTAQUE D'UNE BASE NAVALE PAR LE PKK

ANKARA, 31 mai 2010 (AFP)

SIX SOLDATS turcs ont été tués dans la nuit de dimanche à lundi dans une attaque de rebelles kurdes contre une base navale dans le sud de la Turquie, un attentat qui survient après l'annonce par le leader rebelle kurde qu'il renonce à dialoguer avec le gouvernement.

Le vice-Premier ministre Bülent Arınç a alourdi lors d'une déclaration devant la presse le bilan de six à sept morts, faisant de cette attaque la plus meurtrière des derniers mois. Mais son bureau de presse contacté par l'AFP a révisé ce bilan à six morts. L'armée a aussi fait état de six victimes.

"Nous condamnons l'organisation séparatiste terroriste (l'appellation utilisée par le pouvoir turc pour définir le parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, PKK) qui est derrière cette attaque", a déclaré M. Arınç.

Des troupes supplémentaires ont été déployées à Iskenderun, petite ville sur la Méditerranée, qui abrite la base navale attaquée, a ajouté le ministre.

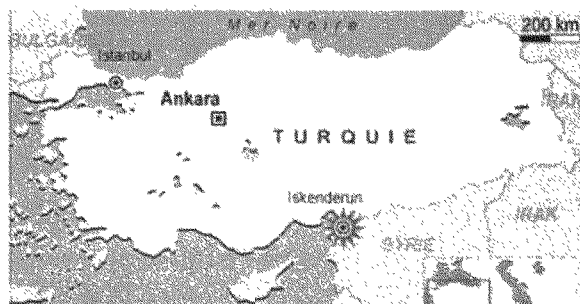
Sept autres soldats ont été blessés dans cette attaque à la roquette, qui a visé vers 04H00 (01H00 GMT) un véhicule militaire transportant des troupes pour la relève de la garde, selon l'agence de presse Anatolie.

Le PKK, qui est considéré comme une organisation terroriste par la Turquie et de nombreux pays, mène depuis 1984 une lutte armée pour la défense des droits des Kurdes de Turquie. Le conflit a fait au moins 45.000 morts.

L'attaque contre la base n'a pas été revendiquée sur le moment par le PKK.

Le leader du mouvement, Abdullah Öcalan, emprisonné à vie depuis 1999, a annoncé samedi qu'il abandonnait ses efforts pour discuter avec le gouvernement, laissant l'initiative aux commandants rebelles sur le terrain.

"Poursuivre ce processus n'a plus de sens ni d'utilité. J'abandonne, en



date du 31 mai, étant donné que je n'ai pas pu trouver d'interlocuteur", a déclaré le chef rebelle à son avocat, selon le site internet du journal Ozgur Politika.

Abdullah Öcalan, qui continue à diriger le PKK de sa prison par l'intermédiaire de messages passés par ses avocats, a ajouté que la "responsabilité incombe maintenant" aux dirigeants du PKK et au principal parti pro-kurde BDP (Parti pour la paix et la démocratie).

"Je n'y parviens pas, de là où je suis. A eux de décider ce qu'il faut faire", a-t-il dit.

Mais le leader a précisé que ses propos ne devaient pas être compris comme un appel au PKK à intensifier la lutte armée. "Ce n'est pas un appel à la guerre", a-t-il dit, selon le journal.

Le journal n'a pas précisé si cette déclaration du leader du PKK signifie qu'il renonce à son leadership sur le mouvement rebelle.

L'an dernier, le gouvernement, qui refuse de négocier avec le PKK, a annoncé une "ouverture" à la minorité kurde, avec l'intention de lui octroyer plus de droits, pour saper le soutien dont bénéficie le PKK dans la population. Mais cette initiative concernant les quelque 15 millions de Kurdes, sur une population de 73 millions, est restée au point mort.

Le mouvement rebelle opère à partir de bases situées dans les montagnes du sud-est de la Turquie et du nord de l'Irak; il reprend chaque année ses opérations après la fonte des neiges, quand les déplacements dans la région sont plus faciles sur un terrain particulièrement escarpé.

Les attaques se sont multipliées ces dernières semaines.

Samedi, sept personnes, dont deux soldats turcs et trois supplétifs de l'armée, ont été tués lors de trois accrochages avec le PKK, dans le sud-est du pays.