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## TURKEY: A GREAT SCANDAL INVOLVING CORRUPTION IS DESTABILISING THE GOVERNMENT

**O**n 17 December, 52 people were arrested in the course of a police raid carried out both in Istanbul and Ankara in the context of an enquiry into accusations of fraud in issuing public tenders. Of these, 29 were kept in detention in the premises of the financial brigade, including 2 sons of ministers in office while another son of a minister is being interrogated in the premises of the brigade against organised crime. The three Ministers whose sons have been arrested are the Minister of the Interior, the Minister for the Economy, Zafer Çağlayan, and the Minister of Town Planning & the Environment, Erdoğan Bayraktar.

Other public figures, prominent in political life or business, are also among the suspects, including the building industry mag-

nate, Ali Ağaoğlu, the General Manager of Halkbank,

Süleyman Aslan, a businessman of Azeri nationality, Reza Zarrab, the mayor of Fatih (one of Istanbul's boroughs), Mustafa Demir, as well as some employees of the Ministries of the Environment and of the Economy, according to the daily paper *Hürriyet*.

The General Manager of Emlak Konut, Turkey's largest property company has also been summoned by the police for questioning.

On 25 December Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced a cabinet reshuffle after the three Ministers involved in the scandal had resigned. Of the 20 Ministers in the government, ten have been replaced, though three of them (the Ministers of

Justice, Family Affairs and Transport) would in any case have had to step down because they are candidates in the coming municipal elections.

However, even while "purging" his government, the Prime Minister counter-attacked in Parliament speaking about a "conspiracy of international dimensions" to destabilise the country's economy and to "attack Turkey's future". He directly implicated Fetullah Gülen's religious brotherhood, his allies since 2007 against the nationalist circles and the Army although there has been a running battle between them for some years now. This brotherhood has considerable influence in police circles and with the magistracy. In 2012, head of the Secret Services (MIT), Hakan Fidan, then in the middle of negotiations with Abdullah Ocalan, the PKK lead-

er, who was the target of an charge launched by a Public Prosecutor close to the Brotherhood. Indeed, Gûlem's movement is still very hostile to the PKK, especially as the brotherhood draws its inspiration from the Nurcu movement and its leader Saïd Nursi and the Kurdish neo-Sufis, while Ocalan was unsparing in his attacks on the "Gülenist plotters" early in 2013. A further grievance of the pro-Gülen groups is the planned suppression by the government of the private lessons given by the brotherhood (to candidates for the competitive examinations to university and specialist top level colleges), which was a lucrative source of revenue for them.

Taking advantage of the governments statements attacking the

Gülenist stranglehold of the politico-legal apparatus, the Army, that had been decapitated by the sentencing of hundreds of their leaders in the military-nationalist Ergenekon scandal, filed a petition on 27 December for the retrial of 275 officers, journalists and elected officials, including the former Chief of the General Staff, Ilker Basbug, who had been sentenced to life imprisonment: *"If the legal system rigged the cases for political ends it must re-open the Ergenekon and Balyoz trials based on charges, forged in the basis of rigged evidence"*.

Indeed, on 29 December the new Minister of Justice, Bekir Bozdog, made a speech to appease the Army, which has never stomach the heaviness of the sentences passed in August 2012:

*"Injustices can take place at the trial level. This has happened in the past and is happening today. Injustices have been committed to some people in the past and to others today. Tomorrow it could happen that they may be committed to yet another group. What we must do is to unite against those injustices and actions that could be in breach of the Constitution and the Law"*. At the same time, the Vice President of the AKP Parliamentary Group, Mustafa Elitas, stated to the daily paper *Hürriyet* that his government might envisage a fresh trial of the sentenced officers, in particular by amending the law to authorise a retrial. However, two days later, on 30 December, the Deputy Prime Minister, Bülent Arinç, rejected any possibility of re-trying the officers convicted of having been involved in the "Ergenekon" conspiracy.

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## IRAQI KURDISTAN: THE ASSASSINATION OF A JOURNALIST

**O**n 6 December, some armed men shot down a journalist investigating cases of corruption.

Kawa Ahmed Germyani, Chief editor of the magazine *Rayal*, and correspondent of the daily *Awene*, was 32 years of age. He was wounded by shots in the head and chest under his mother's eyes in his home at Kalar, Suleimaniyah Province, in the evening. Taken to hospital, he died soon after.

Kawa Germyani had earlier received death threats and was also being sued by several politicians and officials of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) whom he had criticised in his articles.

Reporters without Borders immediately condemned the murder and accused the authorities of the Iraqi Kurdistan RG having failed to provide the journalist, who

knew he was in danger, with protection.

*"We are horrified by Kawa Germyani's assassination. Our sincerest condolences go to his family and colleagues. Known for his professionalism and his enquiries into cases of corruption and nepotism in the Region of Iraqi Kurdistan, the journalist knew that he was threatened. Moreover, he had warned the Region's authorities about the threats he had received. This crime could have been avoided if those local authorities had taken the necessary measures to ensure his protection."*

*We are very concerned at the climate of great insecurity that hangs over journalists in Iraqi Kurdistan and in Iraq generally, as well as the impunity their attackers or assassins enjoy. Thus we urge the authorities, both local and national, to set up suitable measures to ensure that news professionals are able to do their job without fearing for their freedom or their*

*lives. It is the duty of the authorities of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the central government in Baghdad to carry out deep investigations into these assassinations and on these groups that targets journalists"*.

On the same day, 7 December, hundreds of people, journalists, lawyers and academics demonstrated in Suleimaniyah, in front of the Kurdish Parliaments premises, as well as in the towns of Kalar and Kifri. On 9 December, several dozens of journalists, representatives of civil society organisations and several members of Parliament demonstrated outside the UN offices in Erbil and presented it with a memorandum. They also waved placards, banners and photos of murdered journalists with the slogan *"Yes Yesto Freedom — No No to murdering of journalists"*.

The leader of *Zar*, a Civil Liberties Defence organisation, Hajar



Anwar even was as far as to demand that the UN organisation in Iraq, UNAMI send an "international force to protect the lives of journalists as well as an international team to enquire into this murder.

Indeed, Hajar Anwar recalled that the other cases of journalist being murdered, that had taken place in the Kurdistan Region or in Kirkuk, like those of Soran Hama and Sardasht Osman, had never been cleared up. He also called all the civil society organisations, intellectuals and artists to continue their sit-in so as to put pressure on the KRG, accused of indifference (and even of direct involvement, as in the case of Sardasht Osman) regarding these murders of journalists.

On 11 December, some journalists also demonstrated in front of the Ministerial Council. Safeen Diyazee, the government's spokesman, went out to discuss with them and promised that the enquiry would continue and that the government had decided to set up a commission of enquiry.

On 9 December, four suspects were arrested at Kalar, without their identities being disclosed.

However, the main suspect, from the start, was a PUK military leader, Mahmoud Sangawi, who had been criticised in an article by the victim and who had threaten him over the phone in July 2012. Indeed, Kawa Germiyani had recorded this phone call and had broadcast it as well as filing a complaint against Sangawi for his

threats. He had demanded protection from the authorities and even the American consulate, but in vain.

On 18 December, the Region's Minister of the Interior, published a communiqué in the Ministry's Internet site stating that Mahmoud Sangawi was prepared to appear a thousand times before any court regarding Kawa Germiyani's assassination, pointing out that till then he had received three phone calls from the Kalar court.

Finally on 7 January, Mahmoud Sangawi was brought before the judge responsible for the enquiry, who questioned him for two hours before deciding to keep him in detention. The suspect then asked to be sent to the Peshmerga Ministry, no doubt hoping for an army enquiry, but this request was rejected.

In all, four journalists have been assassinated since 2008. Dr. Abdul Al-Sattar, a 74-year old academic was killed in Kirkuk on 10 March 2008 after writing in the daily *Lvin*, where he criticised the Kurdish leaders for not working more energetically to secure the integration of Kirkuk into the Region.

In July 2008, still in Kirkuk Province (thus outside the Kurdistan Region) the journalist Soran Mama Hama was shot down by unidentified killers — he had also been working for the same paper (*Lvin*).

In the Kurdistan region itself, at

Erbil, Sardasht Osman was kidnapped in May 2010 and found again dead in Mosul a few days later. He had written several articles criticising the nepotism of Masud Barzani and his clan.

More recently, in October 2013, some armed men attempted, in Suleimaniyah, to kill Shasiwar Abdul Wahid, a businessman and owner of a television channel, NRT, who had already been the target of two previous attacks.

In a communiqué, Reporters without Borders accused the Kurdish authorities of only having made a "pretence of enquiries" into these murders. Mahmoud Sangawi's arrest is the first of a political leader being accused and arrested by the courts.

On 12 December the Independent Commission on Human Rights in Kurdistan gave a press conference on its annual report. The Commission's President, Zeya Betruss Slewa, stated that despite improvements in the area of Human Rights, Kurdistan was still facing difficulties. Thus a large number of detainees are still awaiting trial. The Commission also called on Television for a review of the trials of 183 people who had been sentenced to death.

For the year 2013 alone, about a hundred people had lost their lives in their work places because of defective or insufficient safety measures and working conditions. Finally, the right to information by journalist as well as their safety are recurrent problems.

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## SYRIA:

### THE GENEVA II CONFERENCE IS DIVIDING THE KURDS



he impending session of the second Geneva Conference, set for 22 January, has not ended the dissensions between

the Kurds in Syria. The dissensions were revived by the recent unilateral declaration of autonomy of "Western Kurdistan" which has irritated

the Kurds of the Kurdish National Council, Massud Barzani, President of the KRG, the Syrian National Council and Turkey.

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However, despite this, attempts to reconcile the views the PYD (the Syrian branch of the PKK) and the others Kurds as well as the Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Government have been unceasing throughout December, though without much success. The Kurds as a whole feel the need for both presenting a united front at Geneva yet failing to do so concretely keep blaming one another.

Salih Muslim, whose relations with Masud Barzani have considerably declined this autumn, gave an interview to the ANF News agency in 12 December in which he called on the Kurds to take part in Geneva as an “independent” delegation, that is not as part of the Syrian National Coalition, which the Kurdish National Council has intended doing as it is a member of that Coalition. At the same time, Leyla Zana (a Kurdish MP of the Turkish BDP) and Osman Baydemir (Mayor of Diyarbakir), who had met Masud Barsani during his visit to that town, both visited him in Erbil to act as mediators between the PYD and the Barzani’s KDP.

On 17 December, in a joint statement, the PKK and the KDP announced that an agreement had been reached on the subject of the Kurdish participation at the Geneva II summit.

On the same day, all the Syrian Kurds met in Erbil to try and reactivate the agreements signed between the PYD and the KNC in July 2012, under pressure from both Barzani and the PKK (as was admitted by a leading member of the Executive Council of the Union of Kurdish Communities (KCK-PKK)) as well as getting the Supreme Kurdish Council to really work (SKC). This was an attempt to create a platform that included both pro-PYD and pro-KNC parties:

*“Our people, in the four parts of Kurdistan, was very worried by the disunity and incompatibility of positions that were leading to a weakening of the revolution. This discord and the resulting confusing not only weakened the revolution in Rojava but created obstacles to national unity. The result of contacts between the PKK and the KDP was the holding of a meeting of all the parties of Rojava and the reviving of the Supreme Kurdish National Council. This is a most important step”.*

The tone was probably a bit too optimistic, since the PYD representatives then made a less definite and exulting statement on the result of the discussions and then insisted on affirming their power to make their own decisions, even independent of the PKK, as was stressed by Aldar Xelil, a PYD member of the Supreme Kurdish Council:

*“We are taking part in the Erbil meeting because we respect all the Kurdish parties. We hope that Qamishlo will become a centre for resolving conflicts. (It was at Qamishlo that the “autonomous government was proclaimed.) We are not against the fact that the other Kurdish parties want to help us settle our problems but, as Rojava (Rojava is the name of the new autonomous administration) parties and organisations we retain the power to make our own decisions”.*

Despite rumours reported in Rudaw on a planned meeting between Masud Barzani, the President of Iraqi Kurdistan and Salih Muslim, the PYD leader, the two did not meet and were not planning to do so soon, as Jaffar Akashm PYD spokesman in the Iraqi Kurdistan Region, stated categorically: *“This report is wrong and Salih Muslim has no plans to meet Barzani. Salih Muslim has essentially nothing to do in this Region”.*

On the second day of the discussions between the Syrian Kurds they were still discussing the possible participation of the Rojava People’s Assembly and the Supreme Kurdish Council at Geneva as an independent delegation and not as part of the Syrian National Coalition, despite the fact that the international powers organising the conference would certainly not accept the Kurds as an independent force. The formation of a Commission was also discussed to carry out enquiries into certain “incidents”, in particular into an anti-PYD demonstration at Amude that was violently repressed. The detention by the PYD Asayish (police force) of certain public figures belonging to parties allegedly hostile to it, like Al Parti and Azadi, and their eventual release were also discussed. The KNC parties made this an essential condition for renewing normal relations with the PYD, while the Rojava People’s Assembly, for its part, called for an enquiry into the motives for the “attacks” on the PYD that it presented as led by the Islamists and describes these detentions as being questions of maintaining public order and the law rather than politically motivated.

Since by 20 December the meeting seemed to be about to fail, as no agreement had been found on the form of its participation at Geneva or of that of the KNC in the administration of the newly autonomous Syrian Kurdistan, Nuri Brimo, spokesman for the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Party, interviewed by the Arabic daily Ashar al-Aswat threw all the blame on the PYD, accusing it of breaches of the Erbil agreement with its *“individualist ideas, whereby it continued to insist on always having a leading position regarding Kurdish problems in Syria and preventing other parties of having a share in decision making”.*

The PYD's main demands at this meeting covered recognition of the new autonomy, rejected by the other Kurdish parties as Alan Semo, its spokesman pointed out to the daily Al-monitor: *"The Supreme Kurdish Council must be formally recognised as a legitimate representative of the Syrian Kurds and its objectives must be respected and supported by the Kurdistan parties and all the Kurdish parties must trust the new provisional administration set up in Rojava. The KDP must formally encourage the Syrian Kurdish parties to support this administration for a unified Kurdish national strategy"*. This amounts to demanding that the KDP ratify what it and the KNC denounce as the PYD's stranglehold of Syrian Kurdistan.

The Kurdish National council, for its part wanted the re-opening of the Semalika-Pesh Khabour border crossing (that the PYD and the KDP have been accusing one another of "closing" for several months past), the freeing of political prisoners and its participation in decision making in the Kurdish government unilaterally declared by the PYD. According to Semo Brimo, since the latter had rejected these demands as *"impossible"* the discussions had reached a dead end.

Nuri Brimo added that Masud Barzani was very dissatisfied with the dissensions of the Syrian Kurds and insisted on the fact that if the Erbil agreements had really been carried out these tensions would not have arisen.

At the same time, Armed Jarba, President of the Syrian National Coalition re-iterated that the Kurdish National Council would be represented at Geneva by Abdel-Hamid Darwish, the secretary of the Kurdish Progressive Party in Syria and would be part of the Syrian opposition, independently of the PYD, which would

thus go there alongside the representatives of Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian government.

Three days later, Ilham Ahmed, of the PYD and a member of the Supreme Kurdish Council, described these remarks as *"attempts to divide the Kurdish people"* and of wanting to create *"a new Lausanne through a fait accompli by preventing the unity of the Kurds"*. Ilham repeated that *"some progress"* had taken place in the current discussions.

*"The principal objective is to take part in Geneva as an independent delegation and to make the Kurdish question one of the principal points of the agenda. We think that this must be a pre-condition for participation as we do not want a new Lausanne (Treaty) to be imposed on the Kurds. It is impossible to set up a democratic Syria without resolving the Kurdish question. A consensus must be reached on this point, but discussions are continuing"*. (Firat News)

On the issue of the autonomous government, Ilham Ahmed also denied that matters had reached a dead end.

(Regarding the autonomous government): *"There is the question of recognition of the Kurdish Supreme National Council and if it will be involved. They accept the fact that Western Kurdistan needs an administration but there are problems on how they will take part in it. The correct way is that the administration be elected by the people. Let us let the people decide what they want. That would not be a problem for us. However, discussions are continuing within the SKC on this issue"*.

Regarding Ahmad Al Jarba's remarks about the *"collaboration"* with the Baath: *"Ahmed (al-Jarba) asks how such an administration can exist when the (Syrian) regime's*

*forces are still present. We find it significant that such a statement be made at a time when the Kurds are negotiating. Just as they divided the Kurds at the beginning by incorporating some of them, they are now uniting their efforts and trying to prevent things from happening"*.

Ilham Ahmad then reaffirmed the *"democratic"* character of the present management of Rojava

On 25 December, it was finally announced that a unified delegation would leave for Geneva II and that a 10-point agreement had been reached between the PYD and the KNC. In addition to the resolution about leaving together for Geneva, it includes the opening of the Semalika border crossing (the side controlled by the PYD); the freeing of all political prisoners (even if Rojava's Asayish spokesman, Ciwan Ibrahim, declared that there were no political prisoners in its prisons, just people arrested for *"terrorism"* and *"illegal actions"*); the formation of an 11-man Commission including independent activists to conduct enquiries into the bloody events at Amude and Tell Gharzzi in which civilians had been killed (which is an accusation made against the PYD). The parties are this finally in agreement to award the title of *"martyrs in the struggle for democracy in Western Kurdistan"* to all those who lost their lives in fighting against the regime.

According to Zara Saleh, member of the Kurdish Unity Party, the KNC and the PYD had agreed to demand *"a secular and federal Syria"* at Geneva.

On the other hand, no agreement could be found regarding the government of the PYD's autonomous administration and the discussions on this were postponed to 15 January. The question remains whether an independent Kurdish delegation,

neither in the ranks of the opposition or that of the regime would be accepted by the organisers of Geneva II, which does not seem likely at the moment, no Kurdish party having yet received an invitation, despite a campaign organised by the PYD and its allies like the BDP demanding that such a Kurdish delegation be admitted to Geneva.

Faced with this situation, it seems that the member parties of the KNC might maintain their original position of going to Geneva II as party of the Syrian Coalition, as originally planned — for which they are being criticised by the parties close to the PYD.

Finally, should the KNC go to Geneva as part of the Syrian

Coalition, one does not know if the PYD will go there alongside the regime's representatives as Al-Jarba affirms. Nor, indeed, is it known if the Syrian Coalition will itself go to Geneva, as the Friends of Syria are making efforts to persuade it to do.

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## IRAN: CAN LAKE URMIAH STILL BE SAVED?

**W**hile scientists and ecologists have for many years been sounding the alarm regarding the dramatic drying up of Lake Urmiah, that straddles in Iran the borders of Kurdistan and Western Azerbaijan Provinces, the situation, already worrying in 2010 when 60% of its water had dried up, has not improved over the last four years.

In 1995, the lake's area was 6100 km<sup>2</sup> as against 2,366 in August 2011. According to Hassan Abbasnejad, the General Manager of Western Azerbaijan's Environmental protection agency, 85% of the lake's surface area has dried out and only 6% of its original extent remains on the South side.

Yet, in 1971 the Lake had been declared a "*wet zone of international importance*" by the Ramsar Convention and a biosphere reserve by UNESCO in 1976. Indeed, Lake Urmiah shelters 212 species of birds and is an essential shelter for a number of migratory birds, with its 102 islands, natural niches for many species of animals, both sedentary and migratory. Living in it are 41 species of reptiles, 7 amphibians, 27 species of mammal. It is also the largest natural habitat for *artemia salina*, a crustacean that is a major food for flamingos and other migratory birds, which could disappear

because of the increased salinity resulting from its concentration in the waters.

This increased salinity is also a disaster for the region's agriculture and for vegetation in general. There is also fear of the development of the notorious "salt storms" that have formed round the Aral Sea, which cause substantial damage to flora and fauna and are also the source of serious public health problems (increases of respiratory illnesses, throat and oesophagus cancers and eye problems).

The principal cause of this slow death of Lake Urmiah is the increasing number of dams on the watercourses that feed the lake, together with the building of 130 Km long motorway, part of which crosses the lake via a one and a half Km long bridge as well as a dam on the lake itself. Industrial wastes, which for a long time were mainly blamed, seem, finally, to be less important.

To save the lake its level has to be raised by supplying it with water. Thus in 2011, President Ahmadijad had ordered that 600 millions of cubic metres of water from the Aras dam be poured into the lake to replenish it. It is also necessary, according to a report of the UN Environment Programme to reduce agriculture by irrigation, which is difficult

because of agricultural activity's great dependence in this source of water, as well as the population growth and the climate changes that are increasing the whole region's needs.

Another solution would be to divert other watercourses so that they could also feed the lake — the Zab, the Aras or the waters of the Caspian Sea. The last, however, is too far away and would be the most expensive. Moreover, the Caspian Sea is shared with neighbouring states, while the Zab also flows through Turkey and Iraq and half of the Aras basin is in Azerbaijan. So far, negotiations have been unsuccessful. Even recourse to local rivers is likely to be insufficient, even though it would be the least expensive and quicker to carry out.

Another means could be to stimulate greater rainfall by seeding clouds with aerosols that increase the condensation of water vapour. This technique, however, has a very limited effect.

On 22 November 2013, the first international conference to preserve the lake was held in Berlin. European, American and Iranian experts met to discuss means of checking the lake's disappearance.

The problem before the conference was presented in this way:

“Lake Urmiah, located in North-Western Iran at 70 m above sea level, is one of the largest permanent lakes in the world and in many ways is similar to the Great Salt lake in the United States morphologically, chemically and in its sediments. The lake was declared a “wet zone of international importance” by UNESCO in 1976.

Because a dyke was built across the middle of the lake in 1980 to carry a motorway, the lake is partially divided into two — the gap that connects the two parts is only 1400 metres wide. In addition to the earlier dams built before the 1979 revolution, 10 have been built on rivers that flow into lake Urmiah since 2000.

In general, the saline Lake Urmiah has been shrinking for a long time and seen its depth diminish in a significant manner in the course of the last few years. The lake’s salinity has increased to reach over 300 grs/l in 2010 and considerable areas of the lake’s bed have dried out. Because of the recent drop in the lake’s water level, there is a real danger for the lake’s future as a world natural resource.

Current geomorphologic, hydro-chemical, hydrological and hydro-ecological studies show an ecological and environmental catastrophe in the region round the lake. The highly saline character of the lake’s waters leads to a high rate of evaporation (100cm/annum), which has a negative effect on the eco-system and encourages desertification, which is already visible in many areas round the lake.

For several years past, Iran has tried to carry out measures to stop the deterioration of the lake and its eco-system, but with little success. Considering that only an overall approach based

on natural, economic technical and social sciences can resolve the problem. The main object of the conference is to encourage a fruitful discussion and intellectual exchange of views between those taking part. The conference aims to draw up a long-term water management plan for the lake and the biosphere of the area round the lake.

The principal questions dealt with at the conference are the following:

- What is the present situation (environmental, economic, social and hydrological) of Lake Urmiah?
- What measures have already been studied and carried out?
- What are the human roles (and, secondarily the climatic ones) in the drying up of the lake?
- What can be done to avoid increasing the rate of evaporation and the consequent deterioration of the lake’s eco-system?
- What lessons can be drawn from the Aral Sea and the Dead Sea?
- What alternative measures can be taken to stop this evolution and to help the lake’s environment and restore it? Is an overall plan possible?
- Can a middle and long-term comprehensive, global approach be defined, based on urgent objectives?

Among the many contributions to the discussion, the following can be found (in English) on line at:

[http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/v/bccare/termine/urmia\\_2013.html](http://www.polsoz.fu-berlin.de/v/bccare/termine/urmia_2013.html):

Prof. Dr. Siegmund W. Breckle (department of Ecology, Bielefeld University) : “From Aral Sea to Aralkum - Problems and solutions for a lost lake”;

Dr. Michael Kaltofen, Director of the Department of Methodological Advice, DHI-WASY GmbH, Dresden: “Integrating German Iranian experience - Battle for water in Zayandeh River basin”;

Dr. Massoud Bagherzadeh Karimi, Assisten General Manager of the Office for protected wet zones and habitats des zones et habitats protégés, Department of Environment of the Islamic Republic of Iran: “[Ecosystem approach as a main strategy for Urmia Lake Basin](#)”;

Raana Koushki, Minister of Energy of the Islamic Republic of Iran: [An analysis of the various factors leading to decrease in water levels of Lake Urmia](#);

Prof. Dr. Steffen Mischke, Institute of Earth and environmental Science of Potsdam University: [The history of the Dead Sea and its present state](#);

Dr. Mahdi Motagh & Dr. Sigrid Roessner, Department of geodesy and remote sensing, Helmholtz Center Potsdam, GFZ: “Contribution of remote sensing for natural hazards assessment in Iran”;

Prof. Dr. Bahram Taheri, Amirkabir University of Technology, Teheran: “A comprehensive analysis of long-term strategic dynamic rehabilitation and preservation plan for Lake Urmia”.

## PARIS: AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

**O**n 14 December, an international conference on the Syrian civil war, organised by the Paris Kurdish Institute, took place in Paris. It was entitled: "The Syrian civil war: regional impacts and perspectives", and was introduced as follows:

As you know, over and above the heavy toll it has levied (over a hundred thousand deaths and nearly two million refugees, the destruction of several towns) this war, which has lasted for two years, has resulted in a violent fragmentation within Syrian society. Moreover, this conflict that shows the limitations of the Western model when applied to the Near East, is also exerting destructuring pressures on the whole region by involving many areas, recognised states and otherwise, (Lebanon, Iraq, Kurdistan) directly in the conflict. It is also leading to a worrying redefinition of the regional map along religious and communal lines thus sharpening, in its wake, the tensions between the regional powers (Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Qatar...).

Without being insensitive to the issues of the moment, the international symposium hopes to analyse the Syrian conflict on the basis of fresh historical and political perspectives as well as in the multiplicity of its internal and regional ramifications.

**The first Round Table was chaired by Ms Joyce Blau**, Professor Emeritus and covered the regional impacts of the Syrian civil war.

**Mrs Myriam Benraad**, a research worker associated with the Sciences-Po.-CERI. Since Iraq

has been in a situation of considerable violence and instability since 2003, the "dislocation of Syria" has still further aggravated the conflicts already existing in Iraq. In both the Syrian and Iraqi cases, there is a similar calling into question of the Nation States set up by the French and British during the colonial era, in which we can see an obliteration of national borders.

The Syrian conflict further accentuates a trend towards denominational differences issues, with the Sunni provinces of Iraq acting in solidarity with a fringe of the Sunni opposition armies in Syria. As far as Iraqi is concerned, the impact is threefold: on the borders, with the Sunni solidarity, regional, by thwarting Iraq's desire to be major political power in the Middle East, and international.

**Hamit Bozarslan**, research director at the EHESS, in Paris, dealt with the impact of the Syrian conflict on Turkey, pointing out that from the start, for Turkey "the Syrian Conflict was experienced as an internal conflict", not only because of the half-million Syrian refugees on its land but but because this conflict reflects its own Kurdish and denominational conflicts.

One should be cautious about the denominational issue since in Iraq and in Syria this was not a determining factor in their history between 1920 and 2000. It is only in the last decade that power has been taken over by clans from these communities. Indeed throughout the region, the denominational map of confrontation is new. However, it places Turkey in conflict with Iran and on the same side as

Saudi Arabia, whereas until 2010 there was an Ankara-Teheran Axis.

Regarding the Kurds, for Erdogan recognising the Kurds of Turkey implies that they should accept to become part of Sunni Turkey "or at least accept to serve that nation". He even makes himself the "protector of the Iraqi Kurds" because they are also Sunni.

The Syrian and Iranian response was broadly to withdraw from the Kurdish zones of Syria. Bashar al-Assad has this fallen back on his capital and on the strategic zones going in Alawistan going from Damascus, Homs, Qusayr and Lattaqia. This is also a response to Ankara — the Turkish support for the Jihadists leading to Damascus's support for a pro-PKK Syrian Kurdish party.

**Bernard Keyberger**, Research director at IISMM-EHESS, described the situation of the Christians in Syria

Bernard Keyberger, director of research at IISMM-EHESS described the situation of the Christians in Syria, where they are between 4 and 8% of the population, divided between several churches with different histories and structures and "no particular ethnic characteristics". Information regarding the Christians and their present situation is hard to gather since it is often subject to manipulation both by the rebels and the regime's supporters. Many Christians have left the country, about 60% of them. The majority of those remaining are in Government controlled areas, which could explain the cautious statements by Bishops and

Patriarchs who, it must be said were lined up behind the Assad regime from the start.

**Mrs Azadeh Kian**, lecturer at Paris-7 University (Diderot), sketched out Syrio-Iranian relations. Iran has supported the Syrian regime ever since the Iranian Revolution and, for its part, Syria was the only Arab country to support Iran during the Iraq-Iran war. Thus Syria allowed Iran to extend its influence in the region, particularly in the Lebanon and in the Palestine conflict. Today, Syria has become a battleground between Saudi Arabia and Iran. So far Iranian support for Syria has been indirect, only a few dozen Pasdarans have been killed or captured in Syria. However Iran is intervening through the Lebanese Hezbollah and a group of Iraqi Shiites. However the Hezbollah is a Lebanese force and does not have any interests in being presented as Iran's armed wing or in diverging too far from its own Lebanese interests.

Today, it is in Iran's interest to find a solution to the Syrian crisis for economic reasons. However, so long as relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran are antagonistic, both countries will continue to strengthen their regional position through groups involved in the that conflict.

Thus the international community and the Geneva Conference have the most important role of helping ease this rivalry.

**Matthieu Rey**, research associate at the Collège de France, compared the Iraqi and Syrian routes — "Baath against Baath". The Baath Party, that has always claimed a pan-Arab ideology and wanted to preside over the destinies of all the Arab coun-

tries, only ever asserted itself in these two countries. Both regimes were highly personalised round two figures Saddam Hussein and Hafez al-Assad. State violence and a personality cult made them similar to certain European totalitarian regimes. Hafez al-Assad achieved power, as the public saw it, as an omnipotent single man. However, he enabled the promotion of a group of men whose prerogatives he recognised, in an accepted collegial administration based on intelligence systems that prevented opposition. Bashar al-Assad destroyed this collegial system and became an increasingly isolated person. In 2011 he set into action the present system based on one chief and some apparati.

**Jordi Tejel**, lecturer and researcher at the Geneva Institute of International Research and Development presented a "*view of the Syrian Kurds*" that, in his view, was placed in a major dilemma by the 2011: wither to join the revolutionary movement or to place itself and an intermediary between the regime and the Kurdish population so as to secure concessions.

As from 2012 there was a convergence of interests between the PYD and the Damascus government: the regime allowed the PYD to take control of the North to show Turkey that its Southern border was threatened. In exchange, the PYD was to become the hegemonic force in the North of Syria at the expense of the other Kurdish parties, including the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Syria, linked to that of Masud Barzani in Iraqi Kurdistan. There ensued a cold war, a conflict by proxy between the PKK and the KDP through the PYD and the KNC. At the same time the Syrian

regime was spared a Kurdish armed uprising.

In November 2013 the PYD announced a sort of autonomy, a transitory administration of the territories it controlled, which was attacked by Masud Barzani. There is thus, at the moment, a strong state of tension within the Kurdish camp — there is no "Kurdish Spring" in Syria.

**The second Round Table was Chaired by Kendal Nezan**, President of the Paris Kurdish Institute. It explored the conflict's perspectives.

**Joseph Bahout**, lecturer at Sciences-Po first of all sketched the effects of the Syrian crisis on the Lebanon before going on to the overall political perspectives and the Geneva Conference and what can be expected of it.

The thing that distinguished the Lebanon from other countries in the region is its marked polarisation and the Sunni-Shiite division, which existed long before the Syrian crisis and the Arab springs.

Three issues show that the Lebanon has more than one foot caught in the Syrian crisis and that it is also its own crisis:

- the refugee issue: Lebanon has 3.6 million inhabitants with between 800,000 and 1,200,000 Syrian refugees, which means there is 1 Syrian for every 3 or 4 Lebanese in the country.
- the movement of men, equipment and money the network of fighters between Syria and the Lebanon — and that on both sides. Hizbollah has tens of thousands of fighters in Syria who cross the borders every day. The Sunni Jihadist fighter net-



works also leave from the North and the Western Bekka to fight in Homs, Idlib or elsewhere.

- the financial factor: because of its banking secrecy and its developed financial system the Lebanon is handling a financial flow that could, in time endanger its structure.

Thus the Lebanon is not on the edge of the Syrian war — it is already in this war, even if this war will not necessarily take the forms of its civil war of 1974-5.

The political perspectives for Geneva II: if the balance of power continues to be deadlocked in the field between the two sides, we can't expect much more than a series of temporary agreements of a humanitarian character, as during the Lebanese war, which will go side by side with the conflict until there is a political solution.

The geopolitical expert, Gerard Chaliand sees the Syrian crisis as three-dimensional, with an international dimension (Russia, the USA and Europe), a civil war between a dictatorship and a population of which the majority are Sunni who oppose an authority taken over by 15% of Alawiites and other minority fractions. The third is that of a generalised conflict between Shiites and Sunnis, in which the role of Saudi Arabia is central.

The Syrian conflict is a "coagulation" of the struggle between Shiites and Sunnis, with the Saudi determination to weaken Iran and the difficulty the other has of escaping from the "ghetto".

Peter Galbraith, former US Ambassador to Croatia and a specialist on the Balkans and the Near East, pointed out that the Shiite regime in Baghdad, that lacks support of the Iraqi Sunnis

supported the Alawiites and Assad while the Iraqi Sunnis support the Syrian Sunnis who hope to start a civil war in Iraq again. In the North, there is a pacified Kurdistan in Iraq and the most peaceful part of Syria is Syrian Kurdistan.

In Kurdistan, there is a population that unanimously wishes for independence. The United States was probably the country the least capable of understanding the reality and adapting itself to it. American policy in Iraq was based on the idea of a united and strong Iraq is being shattered. The United States will, in time, admit the realities of the changing map of the Near East.

**Fuad Hussein**, chief of staff of the President of Iraqi Kurdistan, recalled that the Syrian conflict had a direct effect on Iraqi Kurdistan, firstly because it shelters, today, 250,000 refugees from Syrian Kurdistan, mostly Kurds but with also a high number of Christians.

What is happening in Syria also has an impact on Iraqi Kurdistan since this war is linked to the deploying of al-Qaida along the borders of Turkey and Syria. Al-Qaida has proclaimed the creation of an Islamic Syrian and Iraqi State — this movement is very active in Mosul, Tikrit and the Sunni regions of Iraq.

As for Syria, in discussions with the representatives of Kurdish political parties in Syria, several scenarios have been examined from the start of the conflict. The KRG considered that the Kurds should join this movement, of which the Kurds had been the forerunners in 2004. This was to position them as the "first opponents" of this government. Today there are several scenarios being discussed: if Syria undergoes a transition to democ-

racy what would be the impact on the Kurds? Similarly what impact would result from the division of Syria? The conflict will probably get bogged down and Geneva II will be a great media event for the Western powers without much impact in the field and we can expect a Geneva II, IV, V etc. The problems will continue in Syria, with the same division between what is happening in the field and what is taking place at the international community level.

**Bernard Kouchner**, former French Foreign and European Affairs Minister, first of all gave some basic issues:

In the Lebanon, the major problem is that of refugees — it is the greatest exodus since the Second World War. In this country as elsewhere, there is the spectre of al-Qaida which is everywhere in the region and is becoming a major preoccupation for Moslems.

The Kurds could thus propose a "confederation", that is to say more autonomy, a real independence in matters concerning each entity's own destiny on the military, economic etc level — which is the European Union's model, even if it is still being criticised. The Kurds are already becoming indispensable factors in the region and they should press home their advantage by clearly uniting the Kurdish political forces of Syria and Iraq.

Bernard Dorin, former French Ambassador, wound up with the idea that this war in Syria is a purely religious war between Arabs and not political, ideological or ethno-linguistic except for the Kurds. This war is unending, because of the powers on both sides and their foreign alliances (Russia and Iran on one side, Saudi Arabia on the other side) — hence large numbers of



deaths, hatred and reprisals are inevitable.

Thus in the long term we will have to return to France's "brilliant solution in 1920", during the Syrian mandate when, having understood that there were regions that could not be reconciled with ne another, it planned a Syrian Republic with Damascus as its capital, a Druse republic to the South, An Alawiite republic in the Tartus-

Lattaqia region to which must be added a Kurdish republic.

The last speaker was **Dr. İsmail Beşikçi**, a Turkish sociologist and a long time activist of the Kurdish cause, invited to France for the First time on the occasion of the Kurdish Institute's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. In his view, three States were involved: Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. People talk about "Rojava", about this

part of South-West Kurdistan. Everywhere this self-management has or is emerging. Those three States, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have only one aim — to do everything to prevent self-management taking place. With regard to the Kurds and Kurdistan, there have been great and important changes in the last few years that it would have been impossible to imagine happening a few years ago.

## CULTURE:

### THE DEATH OF HUSSEIN YOUSSEF-ZAMANI

**T**he Kurdish composer, conductor, clarinet player and artist Hussein Youssef-Zamani, a major public figure of classical Kurdish and Iranian music died on 31 December in Teheran. He was 80 years of age.

Born on 23 August 1933 at Sine, he had a half-century long musical career. At the age of 15 he entered the Sine School of Army Music from

which he graduated. He performed on the radio and formed the Kurdish Orchestra, which enjoyed a great audience throughout Kurdistan, well beyond the Iranian borders in Turkey, Syria and Iraq. He then went to study at the Teheran Music Conservatory, where he led several major orchestras — the Teheran Symphony Orchestra, the Radio-Television Orchestra and the Opera Orchestra. He also taught music in several

Faculties and led a Folk Music group at Teheran Radio as from 1962.

As a composer, he has several symphonic Works to his credit, like: Sohrab's Death, Free, The Battle March, The Invocation, The Wave, The Fragrant Rain, The Body Cage . . . He also wrote nearly two hundred songs for the most outstanding Iranian singers like Mohammad Reza Shajarian and Sima Bina, or Kurdish ones Shahram Nazeri and Mazhar Khaliqî.

# Le Monde *diplomatique*

## Turquie

### Des Ottomans aux islamistes

# Fragile espoir de paix avec les Kurdes

*Plus que tout autre problème, le statut et l'avenir des millions de Kurdes en Turquie ont empoisonné la vie politique. Ankara a tenté à maintes reprises, sans succès, de venir à bout de leurs aspirations. L'ouverture de négociations entre le pouvoir central et le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan pourrait-elle écrire une nouvelle page de l'histoire ?*

Par Kendal Nezan \*

\* Président de l'Institut kurde de Paris.

**B**RISANT l'un des tabous les plus tenaces de la vie politique turque, le premier ministre Recep Tayyip Erdogan a récemment engagé des pourparlers directs avec le chef emprisonné du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), M. Abdullah Öcalan, pour négocier la fin d'un conflit qui sévit depuis 1984 dans les provinces kurdes du pays.

Après trente ans d'affrontements sans merci qui ont fait quarante mille morts, dont 90 % de Kurdes, et coûté plus de 400 milliards de dollars au budget, les parties en conflit réalisent enfin qu'il n'y a pas de solution militaire à la question kurde. La deuxième armée de l'Organisation du traité de l'Atlantique nord (OTAN), en dépit du soutien politique de ses alliés occidentaux, n'a pas pu vaincre, et encore moins éradiquer, la guérilla du PKK. De son côté, celle-ci constate l'impossibilité d'imposer par les armes la création d'un Kurdistan indépendant en remettant en cause les frontières existantes. Son objectif affiché s'est réduit à une « autonomie démocratique » au sein d'une Turquie démocratique.

Un tel objectif, qui pourrait désormais être poursuivi par des moyens pacifiques, rend la lutte armée absurde et contre-productive aux yeux même de nombre de ses partisans.

Ce double constat incite les réalistes des deux camps à rechercher un compromis, qui cependant s'avère difficile tant sont nombreux les obstacles à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur des frontières du pays.

L'opinion turque, formatée par un bourrage de crâne nationaliste de plusieurs décennies, est divisée. Selon les enquêtes d'opinion, environ 60 % des Turcs soutiennent l'initiative de paix de leur premier ministre, mais une fraction radicale, proche du parti d'extrême droite de l'Action nationaliste (MHP), crie à la trahison. La principale formation de l'opposition, le Parti républicain du peuple (CHP), fondé par Mustafa Kemal Atatürk et héritier de son nationalisme jacobin et ombrageux, critique sévèrement les « négociations secrètes avec le chef de l'organisation terroriste ». Nombre d'anciens gauchistes reconvertis dans le nationalisme dénoncent, eux, un « complot de l'impérialisme visant à créer un Kurdistan indépendant ». Les faucons de l'organisation secrète et tentaculaire Ergenekon, sorte de Gladio (1) turc, gardent encore une certaine influence au sein de l'armée et des services de renseignement et sont susceptibles de manigancer des provocations pour saboter le processus en cours. On leur attribue notamment l'assassinat, le 9 janvier 2013 à Paris, de trois militantes kurdes, dont Sakine Cansiz, figure historique du PKK.

Pour convaincre les réticents et populariser son « processus de paix », M. Erdogan a mobilisé le puissant appareil militant de son parti ainsi qu'une cinquantaine de « sages », écrivains, artistes et personnalités de la société civile qui parcourent le pays pour prêcher la réconciliation kurdo-turque.

Côté kurde, l'aspiration à une solution pacifique est massive, comme on a pu le constater lors de la célébration du Newroz, le Nouvel An traditionnel, le 21 mars 2013 dans la capitale kurde Diyarbakır, où une foule évaluée par les médias à un million de personnes a réservé un accueil favorable à l'appel à la fin de lutte armée et à la réconciliation lancé par M. Öcalan. La population, qui a payé un très lourd tribut à cette guerre, au cours de laquelle, dans le cadre de sa stratégie anti-insurrectionnelle, l'armée turque a évacué et rasé trois mille quatre cents villages kurdes, déplacé deux millions de civils, détruit l'économie agro-pastorale qui assurait l'autosuffisance alimentaire du Kurdistan, est très éprouvée. Elle



aspire à la paix et le fait savoir à ses responsables politiques, en leur enjoignant d'éviter tout maximalisme.

**C**ONSCIENTS de cet état d'esprit et des espoirs soulevés par le dialogue entre Ankara et Imrali – île prison où est détenu M. Öcalan –, les commandants militaires du PKK, en dépit de leurs réserves et réticences, ont répondu favorablement à l'appel de leur chef pour se retirer de Turquie. Les premiers groupes sont arrivés au Kurdistan irakien le 8 mai 2013. Mais ils refusent de déposer les armes tant que leurs revendications n'auront pas été satisfaites.

Celles-ci portent principalement sur la reconnaissance constitutionnelle de l'identité kurde et des droits culturels et linguistiques qui s'y rattachent, ainsi que sur une réelle décentralisation du pays, amorce de l'« autonomie démocratique ».

Une telle reconnaissance assortie d'une amnistie politique générale pourrait convaincre les combattants du PKK de déposer les armes et transformer l'actuelle trêve en une fin définitive de cette guerre de trente ans. Il faudrait ensuite mettre en œuvre un véritable plan de développement économique pour rattraper le retard considérable des régions kurdes, où le revenu par habitant atteint à peine le quart de celui des provinces occidentales du pays.

Cependant, certains responsables du PKK et de nombreux militants kurdes restent méfiants vis-à-vis du pouvoir. Ils rappellent que le fondateur de la République Atatürk avait lors de la guerre d'indépendance promis un Etat commun des Turcs et Kurdes, où ces derniers bénéficieraient d'une large autonomie, et que, dès la victoire acquise, il était revenu sur ses engagements – allant jusqu'à interdire la langue, les écoles, les journaux kurdes afin de créer une nation homogène avec une seule langue et une seule culture.

Depuis, les dirigeants turcs promettent régulièrement, notamment en période électorale, monts et merveilles à « nos frères kurdes » et oublient ce qu'ils appellent eux-mêmes « des mensonges gris » une fois tournée la page des élections. Ainsi, rien que dans les années 1990, on a vu le premier ministre Süleyman Demirel, devenu plus tard président de la République, déclarer en 1992 à Diyarbakır : « *La Turquie reconnaît désormais sa réalité kurde.* » Deux ans plus tard, son successeur, M<sup>me</sup> Tansu Çiller, évoquait « *le modèle basque pour régler la question kurde* » avant d'être rappelée à l'ordre par l'armée et de devoir couvrir la « guerre totale » lancée par celle-ci. On a encore vu un autre premier ministre turc, M. Mesut Yılmaz, déclarer en 1998 solennellement que « *la route de Bruxelles [de l'Union européenne] passe par Diyarbakır* » et promettre d'ambitieuses réformes qui n'ont connu aucun début d'exécution. M. Erdogan lui-même avait lancé en août 2009 une « ouverture kurde » largement médiatisée qui n'a pas tenu ses promesses. A sa décharge, il faut dire qu'à l'époque il devait composer avec une hiérarchie militaire nationaliste exerçant encore sa tutelle sur les choix stratégiques du pays.

Ces réticences, les agissements des milieux d'extrême droite et des partisans du statu quo, rentiers de la guerre, les menées de l'Iran et de la Syrie, qui disposent de relais en Turquie et au sein de la direction du PKK, auront-ils raison du fragile mais prometteur processus de paix en cours ? Cela dépendra en grande partie de la capacité de M. Erdogan à donner un contenu concret et substantiel, susceptible de frapper les esprits, à son projet de réconciliation et à tirer profit des enseignements des tentatives avortées d'un passé récent.

**L**A PLUS MÉMORABLE de ces tentatives fut celle du président réformateur Turgut Özal, qui, il y a vingt ans, avait déjà compris que la question kurde était éminemment politique et qu'elle ne pouvait être réglée militairement. Il avait sollicité la médiation du leader kurde Jalal Talabani, devenu plus tard président de l'Irak, pour tenter de trouver une solution négociée avec le chef du PKK, alors basé à Damas. Özal, qui se disait prêt à discuter de toutes les options possibles, y compris celle d'une fédération turco-kurde, est subitement mort en avril 1993, en plein processus de négociation. Selon sa famille, il a été empoisonné par les ultras de l'armée, qui s'opposaient farouchement à toute reconnaissance des Kurdes en Turquie. Des médecins légistes ont récemment confirmé la thèse de l'empoisonnement. Un procès est actuellement en cours pour identifier et juger les auteurs de cet assassinat présumé.

Eduqués dès leur plus jeune âge dans le culte de la toute-puissance de leur armée, gardienne autoproclamée de l'idéologie nationaliste d'Atatürk, fondateur et « père de la nation turque », les Turcs dans leur grande majorité croyaient alors à la victoire militaire « prochaine et définitive » promise année après année par leurs généraux. Les contestataires, qualifiés globalement de « traîtres », d'« ennemis intérieurs » ou d'« alliés du terrorisme », étaient traduits devant des cours de sûreté de l'Etat et condamnés à de lourdes peines de prison. Plusieurs députés, dont M<sup>me</sup> Leyla Zana, première femme députée kurde, lauréate du prix Sakharov pour la liberté de l'esprit décerné par le Parlement européen, durent passer dix ans dans les prisons turques de sinistre réputation en même temps que des centaines de journalistes, avocats, écrivains, syndicalistes condamnés pour délit d'opinion. D'autres, moins « chanceux » parce que moins connus, ont été froidement exécutés par les divers escadrons des forces paramilitaires turques au cours de la « sale guerre » qui a suivi la disparition du président Özal. Les organisations des droits humains évaluent à dix-sept mille le nombre de ces civils kurdes assassinés, dont des médecins, des avocats, des étudiants, des hommes d'affaires.

Cette « guerre totale » prônée par les ultras de l'armée et glorifiée par les médias à leur service, loin de briser la résistance kurde, n'avait fait que polariser davantage la société. Dans un pays où un gros tiers des dix-huit millions de Kurdes vivent dans les grandes métropoles de l'Ouest, dont près de trois millions à Istanbul, çà et là éclatèrent des affrontements entre Kurdes et Turcs annonciateurs d'un risque sérieux de conflit ethnique aux conséquences incalculables.

En 1999, l'arrestation de M. Öcalan au Kenya avec le soutien de la CIA et du Mossad israélien et la trêve unilatérale décidée à la demande de son chef par le PKK ont stoppé cet engrenage potentiellement dévastateur. L'arrivée au pouvoir, en 2002, du parti islamo-conservateur de la justice et du développement (AKP) de M. Erdogan a changé la donne en amorçant une transformation progressive de la vie politique et culturelle du pays accompagnée d'un développement économique soutenu.

La Turquie a ainsi grandement changé dans la dernière décennie. Faisant preuve d'une remarquable habileté manœuvrière, M. Erdogan a su renvoyer l'armée dans ses casernes et mettre un terme à sa pesante tutelle sur la vie politique du pays. Accusés de complot et de tentatives de coup d'Etat, des dizaines de généraux sont actuellement derrière les barreaux. Le nationalisme turc laïque mais jacobin et intolérant d'Atatürk recule devant le néo-ottomanisme socialement conservateur et libéral en économie de l'AKP, qui s'accommode des aspirations à la diversité culturelle de la population. Dans cet esprit, le gouvernement de M. Erdogan, qui a créé une chaîne de télévision d'Etat en kurde et des départements de kurdologie au sein de quelques universités, pourrait bien accepter la reconnaissance des droits culturels et linguistiques élargis, mais individuels, sans aller, pour l'instant, jusqu'à la reconnaissance d'un peuple ou d'une communauté kurde historiquement constituée. C'est bien peu pour les dix-huit millions de Kurdes de Turquie qui revendiquent au minimum un système public d'enseignement en langue kurde

(1) Lire François Vitrani, « L'Italie, un Etat de "souveraineté limitée" ? » *Le Monde diplomatique*, décembre 1990.



pour assurer la survie de leur langue et de leur culture millénaires et demandent une autonomie administrative de leur région. Demande d'autant plus légitime que la Turquie exige, elle, un statut de confédération pour les quelque cent quatre-vingt mille Turcs de Chypre, et que les cinq millions de Kurdes d'Irak jouissent d'un statut fédératif depuis l'adoption en 2005 d'une nouvelle Constitution ratifiée par plus de 80 % des électeurs irakiens.

La conjoncture régionale tumultueuse et les enjeux du calendrier politique intérieur, dont le débat sur le projet de Constitution et les élections de 2014, obligent M. Erdogan à aller de l'avant dans sa recherche de compromis. Il constate par ailleurs que la diplomatie turque, engagée avec superbe dans une stratégie de «zéro problème avec les pays voisins», n'a pas eu le succès qu'elle escomptait. Malgré des échanges commerciaux substantiels, l'Iran est plus que jamais un rival disputant âprement l'influence turque dans le Caucase, en Asie centrale et au Proche-Orient. Le flirt avec la Syrie a tourné court, et la Turquie est devenue de fait la base arrière et la protectrice majeure de l'opposition armée au régime de Damas. Les relations avec l'Arménie restent médiocres en raison de la question du Haut-Karabakh opposant les Arméniens aux «frères azéris» des Turcs. La question chypriote est au point mort.

*Si Paris valait bien une messe pour le futur Henri IV, les ressources énergétiques du Kurdistan valent bien un compromis pour Ankara.*

**Q**UANT À L'IRAK, où Ankara avait espéré jouer le rôle de «grand frère équidistant envers toutes les communautés», le désenchantement a été encore plus grand. Après le départ des Américains, le gouvernement à majorité chiite de Bagdad a basculé dans l'orbite de Téhéran, devenant ainsi un maillon important de l'axe Téhéran-Bagdad-Damas-Hezbollah.

Faisant la part du feu, M. Erdogan s'est résigné à jouer les protecteurs des sunnites de l'Irak, mais ceux-ci sont divisés et engagés dans une insurrection; ils nourrissent au fond peu de sympathie envers les Turcs, qui ont occupé le monde arabe pendant quatre siècles.

La Turquie réalise aussi avec amertume que, malgré ses performances économiques et son système politique laïque et pluraliste cité souvent en exemple pour le monde arabo-musulman, aucun des régimes issus des «printemps arabes» n'a cherché à adopter le «modèle turc». L'Union européenne n'est pas davantage pressée de l'accueillir en son sein.

La nouvelle diplomatie turque d'ouverture tous azimuts n'a en définitive connu qu'un succès majeur : la normalisation des relations avec le Kurdistan irakien, sous la double influence des hommes d'affaires turcs ayant flairé le potentiel économique considérable de la région kurde et des dirigeants kurdes irakiens cherchant une porte de sortie pour leur entité enclavée.

M. Erdogan a amorcé, en 2010, avec sa visite à Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan, un processus qui s'est rapidement transformé en une coopération économique et politique mutuellement avantageuse. Avec un volume d'échanges de 8 milliards de dollars, le Kurdistan est devenu, dès 2011, le dixième partenaire commercial étranger de la Turquie. Au-delà du commerce florissant, ce sont surtout les ressources énergétiques du

Kurdistan qui intéressent l'économie turque, en pleine croissance et énergivore. Avec des réserves prouvées de quarante-cinq milliards de barils de pétrole et des gisements gaziers gigantesques capables d'alimenter via le gazoduc Nabucco une bonne partie de l'Europe du Sud, le Kurdistan irakien est devenu un acteur énergétique mais aussi géopolitique incontournable. L'accès à ces ressources permettrait à la Turquie de réaliser bon an mal an une économie de 10 à 20 milliards de dollars, selon les estimations, sur sa facture énergétique et réduirait sensiblement sa dépendance vis-à-vis de l'Iran et de la Russie, ses rivaux historiques.

Si Paris valait bien une messe pour le futur Henri IV, les ressources énergétiques et le potentiel commercial du Kurdistan valent bien un compromis avec les Kurdes pour M. Erdogan, affaibli par les manifestations de la place Taksim du printemps 2013 (2). Un tel compromis lui permettrait de surcroît de bénéficier de l'apport des voix de la trentaine de députés kurdes du Parti de la paix et de la démocratie (BDP) pour faire adopter son projet phare : la première Constitution civile de l'histoire du pays prévoyant notamment un système présidentiel cher à M. Erdogan. De plus, l'aile syrienne du PKK, le Parti de l'union démocratique (PYD), qui gère actuellement de fait, avec ses alliés du Conseil suprême kurde, les régions kurdes de Syrie, cesserait d'être une menace et pourrait devenir une alliée de la Turquie susceptible de fédérer d'autres minorités au sein de la coalition syrienne.

Une réconciliation turco-kurde élargirait la base électorale de l'AKP, qui pourrait ainsi conserver le pouvoir longtemps encore, faute d'alternative crédible; surtout, elle ne manquerait pas de renforcer considérablement le poids politique et économique du pays dans la région, notamment face à son rival historique, l'Iran.

En 1514, le sultan ottoman Selim, devenu plus tard calife après sa conquête de l'Égypte, avait compris tout l'intérêt géopolitique d'une alliance avec les Kurdes. En leur offrant une large autonomie interne, il avait obtenu leur soutien face à l'Iran chiite. Cette alliance assura trois siècles de paix kurdo-turque et une grande stabilité régionale. Les néo-ottomans au pouvoir à Ankara, désenchantés par l'insuccès de leur politique affichée de «zéro problème» avec des voisins comme la Syrie et l'Iran, et soucieux de jouer le rôle de leader du monde sunnite, semblent s'inspirer de l'exemple de leur illustre prédécesseur, dont le nom vient d'être donné au troisième pont sur le Bosphore.

Kendal Nezan

## Sur la Toile

### «La Turquie dans l'Europe»

Un plaidoyer pour l'entrée des Turcs dans l'Union européenne, par Emmaniel Auber, enseignant à Sciences Po, à lire en version intégrale sur le site de la revue *Le Banquet*, éditée par le Centre d'étude et de réflexion pour l'action politique (Cerap). On pourra également consulter d'autres articles sur la Turquie.

[www.revue-lebanquet.com/La-Turquie-dans-l-Europe-48](http://www.revue-lebanquet.com/La-Turquie-dans-l-Europe-48)

### Institut kurde de Paris (IKP)

L'IKP, fondé en 1983, est un organisme indépendant rassemblant des intellectuels et des artistes kurdes, ainsi que des spécialistes occidentaux de la question kurde. Il publie notamment la revue *Etudes kurdes* (distribuée par L'Harmattan), dont la livraison de février 2003

revenait longuement sur les lois votées par le Parlement turc en août 2002 et autorisant l'enseignement privé du kurde.

[www.institutkurde.org](http://www.institutkurde.org)

### «Le parc Gezi : dessous d'une transformation très politique»

La revue électronique *Métropolitiques* présente une analyse de Jean-François Pérouse, maître de conférences à l'université Toulouse-II et membre de l'Institut français d'études anatoliennes (IFEA) d'Istanbul, consacrée au plan de réaménagement urbain de la place Taksim. Selon l'auteur, ce plan «est un des fondements du projet de promotion d'Istanbul sur le marché international de l'immobilier résidentiel et commercial, de la finance et du tourisme».

[www.metropolitiques.eu/Le-parc-Gezi-dessous-d-une.html](http://www.metropolitiques.eu/Le-parc-Gezi-dessous-d-une.html)

(2) Lire Alain Gresh, «Vent de fronde en Turquie», *Nouvelles d'Orient*, Les blogs du diplo, 5 juin 2013.

# Kurds' Oil Deals With Turkey Raise Fears of Fissures in Iraq

By TIM ARANGO and CLIFFORD KRAUSS

**I**STANBUL — The sharp, dry mountains that run between Turkey and Iraq have long marked a front line in the battle between the Turkish government and Kurdish separatists where cross-border attacks took many lives on both sides.

Though a rapprochement has calmed the border, the United States fears stability may now be in even greater danger. The problem is not war — but commerce. Iraqi Kurds are selling oil and natural gas directly to Turkey, infuriating Washington and the central government in Baghdad, which fear that oil independence could lead Kurds to declare a broad independence and the fracturing of the nation.

Even as sectarian killing is again spiking across Iraq, and the Syrian civil war destabilizes the region, American officials in Baghdad say the flow of oil to Turkey may be the greatest potential risk to Iraq's cohesion.

But a year-and-a-half-long diplomatic drive by the United States to stop the flow has so far failed, reflecting Washington's diminished influence in the region, even with its two longtime allies. Not only will trucks continue to travel daily from the Kurdish region to two Turkish cities on the Mediterranean coast, and not only will the Kurds continue to deliver oil via a pipeline to Turkey, but the parties plan to build a second pipeline, whose details have been kept secret.

"The Kurdistan deal with Turkey is a huge violation against the Iraqi Constitution because they didn't make the deal with the coordination of the central government," said Ali Dhari, the deputy chairman of the Iraqi Parliament's oil and gas committee. "This means the stealing of the Iraqi wealth, and we will not allow it."

The oil accords with Turkey, potentially worth billions of dollars, are part of a broader effort by Iraqi Kurds in recent years to cut their own energy deals — including exploration agreements with foreign companies like Exxon Mobil, Chevron and Gazprom — that sidelined the central government. The Kurds, and the Turks, say they will pay Baghdad its fair share. But officials in the capital have long claimed such arrangements are illegal.

The controversy is in part the unfinished business of the American occupation of Iraq. The failure of the Iraqi govern-



Ayman Oghanna for The New York Times

A Kurdish shepherd passing a flare from an oil well in Kirkuk, Iraq. Tens of millions of Kurds live in Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran.



ment to pass a national oil law, one of the benchmarks set by President George W. Bush when he announced the United States troop "surge" in 2007, has left Baghdad and Erbil, the Kurdish capital, in a perpetual feud over how to divide profits and who has the authority to make agreements with international oil companies.

Qasim Mishkhati, a Kurdish member of Parliament's oil and gas committee, insisted that the wealth from the deals would be shared with the rest of Iraq, and that it was the responsibility of the regional government in the north to find international markets for its oil resources. "Kurdistan is working to increase the national income so that all Iraqis can enjoy better services and more wealth," he said.

Although the mechanism for such payments has not been worked out, the Turks and the Kurds have indicated that they would adhere to the existing proportions for the division of national revenue, meaning Baghdad would receive 83 percent of the net profit and the Kurds would keep 17 percent.

But the alarm in Baghdad and Washington has grown with these oil deals, which appear to be part of a slow, long-term strategy by the Iraqi Kurds to pursue a path of increasing autonomy that experts say has one endgame: an independent Kurdish state.

Tens of millions of Kurds live in Iraq, Syria, Turkey and Iran, and they have long held ambitions for independence that for decades were thwarted. Now, amid →



⇒ the turmoil of the Middle East, Kurdish leaders are taking decisive steps to advance that dream, not just in Iraq, but also in Syria, where Kurdish factions recently declared an autonomous administration in the northeast.

The Iraqi Kurds run their own autonomous and relatively prosperous region in northern Iraq, control their own ports of entry, field their own army and intelligence service and conduct their own foreign policy. The Kurdish region also has separate visa rules, so an American, for instance, might wait weeks or months to secure a visa to Baghdad, but could buy one at the airport in Erbil. The region has also served as a safe haven for Sunni officials looking to escape the reach of the Shiite-led government, including former Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi, accused in 2011 of terrorism.

But the oil deals also highlight the drastic reshaping of regional alliances in the past few years. In 2003 Turkey, worried that the American invasion of Iraq would promote Kurdish independence, forbade American troops to use its territory to enter Iraq.

But now Turkey is in the process of making peace with its own Kurds, who have waged a three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state with bases in Iraq. In a region where Turkey has few allies these days, the Iraqi Kurds have become close partners.

For Turkey, though, the energy deals with Iraqi Kurdistan, which include oil and natural gas, underscore a persistent national challenge to secure reliable supplies of energy for its economy. Turkey boasts the Middle East's largest economy but has few domestic energy sources. It has historically relied on two countries for the bulk of its energy — Russia and Iran — and a national priority for Turkey has been to diversify its sources of oil and gas.

The only place in the world where demand for energy is growing faster than



Khaled Hasan for The New York Times

**Oil tankers in Erbil. Iraqi Kurds are selling oil and natural gas directly to Turkey, angering Washington and Baghdad**

Turkey is in China, and the only people who pay more for gasoline at the pump than Turks are Norwegians. In Turkey it can cost more than \$120 to fill the tank of a compact car because of high taxes the government has levied in an effort to keep demand down

While Turkey and the Iraqi Kurdish regional government have slowly expanded their relationship in the past few years, they have recently agreed to something ambitious and broader: a multibillion-dollar pact that includes the building of the second pipeline, according to press reports and oil executives involved in the negotiations.

That deal comes as Turkish and Iraqi government officials have recently sought to mend ties that had soured in recent years, an effort that included a visit to Baghdad on Sunday by Turkey's energy minister, who indicated Turkey would try to win Baghdad's support for the deals with the Kurds. Turkey had supported the Sunni Muslim opposition in Iraq, angering the Shiite leadership that dominates the government in Baghdad.

"There has been a rapprochement between Ankara and Baghdad, but what I see in the energy policy of Turkey relating to Kurdistan still seems to be a fly in the ointment for the Ministry of Oil in Baghdad," said Badr H. Jafar, the chairman of the Pearl Petroleum consortium, the largest private oil and gas investor in Iraqi Kurdistan.

The recent steps taken to improve the relationship between Turkey and Iraq — a reconciliation pushed by the Americans — now seem to be the best bet, analysts said, to achieve an agreement on an elusive national oil law to divide the country's vast petroleum profits.

The Iraqi Kurdish leadership "is positioning itself for greater autonomy in negotiations with Baghdad, but as relations between Ankara and Baghdad continue to warm it is inconceivable that the K.R.G. will be allowed to export to Turkey without Baghdad's consent," said David L. Goldwyn, the State Department's coordinator for international energy affairs during the first term of the Obama administration, referring to the initials for the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq.

Turkey, though, has said it will ensure that the government in Baghdad will be paid for any oil it imports from Kurdistan in accordance with Iraq's revenue-sharing arrangement.

"If done correctly, these deals have the potential to generate huge revenues for Iraq, distributed by the Iraqi government in accordance with the Iraqi Constitution and for the ultimate benefit of the Iraqi people, including of course, the Kurdish region," Mr. Jafar said.

*Tim Arango reported from Istanbul, and Clifford Krauss from Houston. Duraid Adnan contributed reporting from Baghdad, and Sebnem Arsu from Istanbul.*

Bloomberg

December 3, 2013

## Iraq Controls Kurdish Oil Exports Under New Accord, Luaibi Says

By Nayla Razzouk  
www.bloomberg.com

Iraq's self-ruling Kurds agreed to let the central government in Baghdad control the amount and quality of crude they export as well as manage revenue from its sale, Iraqi Oil Minister Abdul Kareem al-Luaibi said.

The Kurdistan Regional Government will export oil using a metering system operated by the Oil Ministry in Baghdad, Luaibi told a news conference yesterday in Vienna. The Kurds also agreed to put money earned from the sale of oil from Kurdish fields into a UN-administered

account for Iraq's earnings from crude, he said.

The agreement may herald an end to years of confrontation between Iraq's Kurds and the central government. It may lead to a formal accord this month under which Kurdish authorities resume oil shipments via Iraq's government-run export pipeline to neighboring Turkey, Luaibi said. The KRG halted the flow last December in a dispute with the central government over how to share oil revenue. Even so, Luaibi's comments shed little light on how the agreement conforms with what may be a separate deal between the KRG and Turkey.

"It's still very vague and unclear what's been agreed to," said Robin Mills, the head of consulting at Manaar Energy Consulting and

► Project Management in Dubai. "The most unclear issue in all of this is how payments will be handled."

#### SEPARATE ACCORD

Mills, who spoke by phone from Iraq's Kurdish city of Erbil, said KRG officials he met with there declined to divulge details of any agreements they have with Turkey. Iraq has rejected efforts by the KRG to reach a separate accord with Turkey to start exporting crude by the end of the year, using a new pipeline in the Kurdish region.

The Kurds have signed an energy agreement with Turkey, Nechirvan Barzani, the KRG's prime minister, said Dec. 2 at a conference in Erbil. Luaibi declined yesterday to comment directly on reports about such a deal, saying only that Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz confirmed to him that no accord exists yet between Turkey and the Kurds.

"Everyone's got their own version" of whether the KRG and Turkey have formally agreed to anything, Mills said. "My take is that there are some agreements, but not everything is in place yet to resolve all issues."

International companies including Exxon Mobil Corp. (XOM), Total SA, DNO International ASA and Genel Energy Plc have been caught up amid turmoil between Iraq's central government and the semi-autonomous KRG.

#### TECHNICAL TEAMS

Iraq's understanding with the KRG will help the country boost crude shipments next year to 3.4 million barrels a day on average, a daily rate that would include 400,000 barrels from the Kurdish region, Luaibi said. Technical teams from Baghdad and the KRG will meet "very soon" to

work out details, he said.

Iraq, the second-largest producer in the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries, exported 2.4 million barrels a day in November, according to the Oil Ministry. The Kurds have been sending as much as 50,000 barrels a day by truck into Turkey. They plan to start pumping about 300,000 barrels to Turkey using their new internal pipeline before the end of this year, KRG Natural Resources Minister Ashti Hawrami said Oct. 31. The Kurds are targeting exports of 1 million barrels a day.

"Without a payment plan in place, no one can commit to a full-scale development of the oil fields, which is what is really needed if the Kurdish government is to reach its target," said Mills, the consultant.

#### BASRA PIPELINE

Companies from Turkey, which has been trying to ease tensions between Iraq's government and the Kurds, may help complete a pipeline from Iraq's southern province of Basra, Luaibi said. This "strategic pipeline" may be ready within a few months, with a capacity for 850,000 barrels a day, including 500,000 barrels a day for export, he said.

Iraq will install two additional single-point tanker-mooring units by February to contribute to its oil exports southward from the Persian Gulf, Luaibi said. The country is operating two mooring units and will have a fifth as a spare, he said. Work on the new units won't affect exports, Luaibi said.

Iraq has 150 billion barrels of proven crude reserves, excluding deposits in the Kurdish region, according to BP Plc's Statistical Review of World Energy of June 2013. The KRG estimates its own reserves at 45 billion barrels, enough to meet U.S. needs for almost seven years.



Kurdistan Regional Government

3 December 2013

## Prime Minister Barzani invites Baghdad to observe process of oil exports to Turkey

3 December 2013 | KRG.org

**E**rbil, Kurdistan Region, Iraq - (KRG.org) – Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani, speaking at a conference in Erbil today, highlighted Kurdistan Region's contribution to the global energy market and reiterated Kurdistan's commitment to the Iraqi constitution in the Region's dealings with Turkey.

The Prime Minister referred to the discussions over the past two years between the Kurdistan Regional Government and Turkey on cooperation in oil and gas, which includes oil exports, and said that the framework agreement between Erbil and Ankara adheres to the Iraqi constitution.

He said, 'I have insisted at all times of these negotiations on the transparency and accountability of the export process and revenues from the Kurdistan Region. And here I would like to announce that we will invite officials from the federal government and independent third parties to observe all stages of the process.'

The Prime Minister was speaking at the third Kurdistan Iraq Oil and Gas Conference which has attracted almost 1,000 executives from the energy industry as well as senior diplomats from across the world. Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Rowsch Shaways, the KRG's Natural Resources Minister Ashti Hawrami and Turkey's Energy Minister Taner Yildiz also spoke at the opening of the conference.

Prime Minister Barzani said that the people of Kurdistan suffered unspeakable crimes under the former regime including chemical bombardment and now want an Iraq that treats everyone as equal citizens. 'We believe that the only path to Iraq's unity and stability is by genuinely adhering to the constitution, which mandates power-sharing and wealth-sharing. These principles especially apply to the management of our country's natural resources. We have always and continue to confirm that we work as real partners, but because of our past full of oppression and killing, it is very difficult to trust others to



decide our destiny.'

Prime Minister Barzani emphasised that Kurdistan needs to be an equal partner to Baghdad and wants Iraq to be a country at peace with itself, removed from the centralised system that still courses through the country.

He said, 'The finalisation of our energy cooperation with Turkey is a great achievement for Iraq and the Kurdistan Region. I want to reassure our colleagues in Baghdad that this process will bring us together. Our doors have always been open to discussion and dialogue, and they will remain open.'

The Kurdistan and Turkish energy ministers, who are in serious, detailed and constructive discussions about the cooperation in the energy sector, are also encouraging the federal government in Baghdad to join the discussions about the best revenue-sharing formula for the proceeds of crude oil exports.

Minister Yildiz reiterated the Turkish leadership's focus on the common interest of all parties and Turkey's hopes for a three-way partnership that can have a positive impact on the unity and stability of Iraq. 'We believe we can have strong impact on an understanding between Erbil and Baghdad,' he said.

Dr Hawrami told the conference that the new pipeline from Kurdistan to Turkey is operational. 'The new pipeline is now tested and up to 350,000 barrels per day will flow in the coming year and replace the current trucking of oil from the Kurdistan Region to Turkey where it is mainly bartered for products such as benzene,' he said.

The pipeline starts at the Taq Taq oilfield, running through the Khurmala field to the north at Duhok and via Fishkhabur along the Turkish border to Ceyhan. It has the capacity to export 1 million bpd by the end of 2015. The KRG is taking full responsibility for the oil pipeline transportation process to replace the current trucking of →

⇒ oil to Turkey, but is inviting the federal government and others to act as observers to the process.

Dr Hawrami told delegates that the Kurdistan Region is on course to becoming a net contributor to the federal budget and that the whole of Iraq would benefit from implementing the provisions of the federal constitution.

'We would like to have Baghdad join the discussion with Turkey, because the dialogue and the good will are there and with the support of our friends from Turkey, things will move on,' added Minister Hawrami.

With 45 billion of barrels of oil reserves 3-6 tcm of potential gas resources, the Kurdistan Region has been identified as one of the few remaining conventional oil and gas frontiers. Over the past few years, the region has become one of the most actively explored hydrocarbon

regions of the world.

Dr Shaways, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, emphasised that oil and gas revenues will enhance the living standards of all Iraqis. 'The development of oil and gas will not only bring revenues but also stability and security for the country,' he said.

Chair of the opening session Sir Jeremy Greenstock, former UK Ambassador to the UN and Chairman of Lambert Energy Advisory, said that, 'The Kurdistan Region is moving into the consolidation phase. I congratulate Kurdistan on the progress it has made with Turkey and Turkey for the role it has played in this relationship.'

The first day of the conference also heard discussions on various aspects of the oil and gas industry with executives and experts as well as KRG officials participating. The conference continues tomorrow. ■

THE DAILY STAR  
LEBANON

December 2, 2013

# Turkey stands by Kurdish oil deal, seeks to appease Baghdad

By: Humeyra Pamuk

**Turkey's relations with Baghdad strained  
Iraq unhappy with oil deal  
Pipeline ready to begin deliveries**

**ARbil, Iraq, Dec 2 (Reuters)** - Turkey said on Monday it stood by a bilateral oil deal with Iraq's Kurdistan region that bypassed central government but sought to appease Baghdad by drawing it into the arrangement.

Reuters reported Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan signed a multi-billion-dollar energy package last week, infuriating Baghdad which claims sole authority over oil exports and is wary of any move that could extend political autonomy in the region.

Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz met Iraqi deputy prime minister for energy, Hussain al-Shahristani, in Baghdad on Sunday to try to mend ties with a federal government which says independent Kurdish oil exports would be illegal. The affair has soured relations between Ankara and Baghdad.

"We stand by the agreement we did with northern Iraq but we hope this can be carried out through a three-way mechanism," Yildiz told a conference after flying into Arbil, the capital city of the Kurdistan region (KRG). "As



*Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister for Energy Hussain al-Shahristani (L) speaks during a joint news conference with Turkey's Energy Minister Taner Yildiz in Baghdad December 1, 2013. (REUTERS/Ahmed Saad)*

Turkey, we are trying to move this forward in a careful and courteous way."

"We also would like to have the consent of the Central Government of Iraq for the commercial export of oil from the KRG to Turkey and start a trilateral cooperation scheme that will be beneficial to all."

The Turkish-KRG deal has enormous significance for major oil companies as well as for the Kurds and Turkey, which can benefit in domestic supply and onward westward export through the mediterranean port of Ceyhan.

"Turkey is trying to follow a balancing act here," a source close to the talks said. "These are really significant contracts and the Turkish Republic just doesn't sign deals like this every day."

"But Turkey...can't just look like it's acting hand-in-hand with the KRG and doesn't care about Baghdad and that's never been the case anyway...If Baghdad agrees, great. If they don't, the exports will nevertheless go ahead, I think."

The deal has political as well as economic ramifications.

The Kurdish north of Iraq has enjoyed autonomy since the 1990-1991 Gulf War when a U.S.-led coalition drove Iraqi occupation troops out of Kuwait.

## TENSIONS WITH BAGHDAD

Since the overthrow of president Saddam Hussein in a second war in 2003, that autonomy has grown in a region largely saved the civil conflict that has gripped the rest of the

country. Baghdad fears growing economic autonomy could drive moves towards creation of an independent Kurdish state.

Baghdad claims sole authority over Iraqi oil exports, while the KRG says it has the right to sell the oil independently and has recently built its own pipeline to export crude to Turkey.

Yildiz confirmed that the details of the deal had been agreed, but none of the officials would comment on whether the final agreement had actually been signed.

"The formalities were recently completed...the finalization of such cooperation is a great achievement for Iraq and the Kurdistan region and this process will bring us together," KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani told the Arbil conference.

He suggested the deal could work to Baghdad's benefit.

"For the first time the Kurdistan region will become a net contributor to the Iraqi national income and that's why we need to sit down with our colleagues in the Iraqi government as equal partners," he said, according to an English translation of his comments.

Baghdad might prove hard to persuade, having resisted for years Arbil's moves towards direct exports.

Officials would not say whether crude flows through the pipeline had started yet.

"Our new pipeline is complete... (It is) tried and tested and when fully operational can take 300,000-400,000 bpd," KRG energy minister Ashti Hawrami told the conference.

"We also would like our colleagues in Baghdad to work with us in harmony but this doesn't mean that we have come to a standstill, everything is moving on ... Turkey is trying to create goodwill."

Turkey which is heavily dependent on imports to satisfy its growing appetite for energy, wants Iraqi Kurdistan's oil to help diversify its energy supplies.

Turkey has repeatedly said it respects Iraq's sensitivities over territorial integrity and that increasing oil revenues will help the whole of Iraq.

Oil exports from the Kurdish region via an Iraq-Turkey pipeline had dried up due to a row over the sharing of oil revenues between Arbil and Baghdad. The deal between Turkey and the Kurds also offers a solution to the payment problems.





## Syrie : le PYD veut un Kurdistan autonome dans une Syrie fédérale

MARSEILLE, 01 décembre 2013 (AFP)

**LE PARTI de l'Union démocratique (PYD), principal groupe armé kurde, veut créer un Kurdistan autonome dans le cadre d'une Syrie fédérale, et une commission prépare une Constitution pour cette région, a déclaré dimanche à l'AFP à Marseille son responsable.**

"La région du Kurdistan (syrien) sera divisée en trois provinces autonomes : celle de Kobani (Ain al-Arab en arabe, dans le centre), celle d'Efrine (dans l'ouest) et celle de Qamishli (dans l'est). Le but n'est pas de faire sécession, mais les Kurdes demandent un système fédéral en Syrie", a indiqué Salih Muslim, actuellement en Europe pour participer fin janvier à la conférence Genève-2 sur l'avenir de la Syrie.

L'entretien, qui a eu lieu à Marseille, s'est fait en kurde et a été traduit en français par des représentants kurdes de cette ville du sud-est de la France.

Le 12 novembre, des formations kurdes du nord-est de la Syrie ont annoncé l'établissement d'une administration autonome de transition après avoir enregistré plusieurs avancées sur le terrain face aux groupes jihadistes.

"Il ne s'agit pas de la création d'un gouvernement autonome. Toutefois, 19 représentants ont été désignés en juillet avec pour tâche de préparer une Constitution, une loi électorale et de définir les modalités selon lesquelles la région sera dirigée. Cette commission a terminé son travail et une date sera prochainement fixée pour des élections", a ajouté Salih Muslim, précisant que toutes les composantes de la population de la région participaient au processus.

"Lorsque nous avons pourchassé les forces du régime, nous avons dû faire face aux attaques des jihadistes, soutenus et envoyés par l'État turc. Les combats avec les jihadistes ont commencé en novembre 2012 et se poursuivent au

moment où je vous parle", a-t-il ajouté.

Les Kurdes représentent 15% de la population syrienne et se trouvent le long de la frontière avec la Turquie dans le nord et l'est de la Syrie.

Dans un conflit où l'opposition est de plus en plus atomisée, ils défendent avant tout leur territoire, d'où l'armée s'est retirée et où ils souhaitent instaurer une zone autonome à l'instar des Kurdes d'Irak.

Les groupes jihadistes combattent pour leur part à la fois le régime syrien, les autres rebelles et les Kurdes afin d'imposer leur pouvoir sur tout le nord et l'est et d'assurer la liaison avec l'Irak, où ils comptent sur une réserve de combattants aguerris.

"Nous avons été aidés par notre peuple, les Kurdes irakiens, le président irakien (le Kurde Jalal Talabani) et par le PKK", a confié dimanche le dirigeant du PYD, considéré comme proche du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK, rebelles kurdes de Turquie).

Il a fermement démenti vouloir chasser les populations arabes de la région qu'il convoite. "Autour de nous, il y a trois sortes d'Arabes : il y a ceux avec lesquels nous avons toujours vécu et avec lesquels nous combattons côte à côte. Nous défendons la fraternité entre les peuples", a-t-il affirmé.

"Il y a ceux qui n'ont pas leur place, les Arabes qui viennent de l'extérieur, d'autres pays ou de la région, les jihadistes qui ont brûlé nos maisons et qui ont décapité des Kurdes", a poursuivi Salih Muslim.

"Enfin, il y a les Arabes installés au Kurdistan de force par Hafez al-Assad à partir de 1974 en vue d'arabiser la région. Ce sont des victimes de déplacements de populations. Nous préconisons une solution pacifique pour ces populations : que ceux qui peuvent retourner sur leur terre d'origine le fassent et que les autres puissent vivre en paix avec les Kurdes", a-t-il encore dit. ●



## Un journaliste tué au Kurdistan irakien

SOULEIMANIYEH (Irak), 06 décembre 2013 (AFP)

**DES HOMMES armés ont abattu à son domicile le directeur d'un magazine enquêtant sur la corruption dans la région autonome du Kurdistan, dans le nord de l'Irak, ont rapporté vendredi une ONG et une source policière.**

Kawa Ahmed Gemyani, le rédacteur en chef du magazine Rayal et correspondant pour le journal Awene, a été abattu jeudi soir, a indiqué Rahmane Gharib, un responsable de Metro Centre, une association kurde de défense de la liberté de la presse.

Un capitaine de police a confirmé sa mort.

Gemyani, 32 ans, a été touché à la tête et la poitrine devant sa mère à son domicile dans la ville de Kalar, selon M. Gharib.

Le journaliste avait reçu des menaces et été poursuivi en justice par des hommes politiques pour ses écrits sur la corruption, a précisé le responsable de l'ONG.

L'organisation Reporters sans frontières (RSF) s'est dite "horriifiée" par ce

meurtre. "Connu pour son professionnalisme et ses enquêtes sur des affaires de corruption et de népotisme dans le Kurdistan irakien, le journaliste se savait menacé", a ajouté l'ONG.

"Il avait d'ailleurs alerté les autorités de la région sur ces menaces. Ce crime aurait pu être évité si ces mêmes autorités avaient pris les mesures nécessaires pour assurer sa protection", a-t-elle poursuivi.

L'organisation s'est dit par ailleurs très "inquiète du fort climat d'insécurité qui pèse sur les journalistes au Kurdistan, et plus généralement en Irak, et de l'impunité dont bénéficient leurs agresseurs ou assassins".

Il y a moins de deux semaines, le journaliste Alaa Edwar a été tué dans la ville de Mossoul (nord). Trois autres journalistes avaient été tués dans cette même ville en octobre.

L'Irak est régulièrement critiqué pour son manque de liberté de la presse, et a été placé premier du classement "Impunité" du Committee to Protect Journalists, une ONG basée à New York, qui recense les meurtres non résolus de journalistes.

Si la région du Kurdistan se présente comme une région plus sûre et plus respectueuse des droits de l'Homme que le reste de l'Irak, elle a été vivement critiquée par des ONG pour son non-respect de la liberté d'expression. ●



## Dépôt d'un projet de loi sur les droits des Kurdes au Parlement turc

ANKARA, 06 décembre 2013 (AFP)

**LE PARTI islamo-conservateur au pouvoir en Turquie a déposé au Parlement un projet de loi destiné à renforcer les droits des Kurdes, qui les jugent toutefois en deçà de leurs revendications, a-t-on appris vendredi de source parlementaire.**

Ce texte sera prochainement débattu en séance plénière et devrait être adopté par l'Assemblée grâce à la confortable majorité dont y dispose le Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP) du Premier ministre Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Comme l'avait annoncé M. Erdogan fin septembre, ce "paquet démocratique" prévoit une série de mesures symboliques comme l'enseignement en langues

maternelles dans les écoles privées ou la possibilité pour des localités kurdes débaptisées après le coup d'Etat de 1980 de reprendre leur nom original.

Il autorise également l'utilisation des lettres Q, W et X, longtemps interdites en Turquie car absentes de l'alphabet turc mais présentes en kurde, et de la langue kurde pour la propagande électorale.

La réforme instaure en outre un crime "de haine" puni d'une peine de prison ferme pour toute atteinte aux particularités sexuelle, religieuse ou raciale d'un individu.

Ces mesures n'ont pas satisfait la communauté kurde, qui représente entre 12 et 15 millions des 75 millions d'habitants de la Turquie.

Interrogé vendredi par l'AFP, Sirri Sakik, un député du Parti pour la paix et la démocratie (BDP, pro-kurde) a critiqué le projet. "Tout ça est très symbolique, ➔

→ c'est loin de satisfaire les demandes de notre population", a-t-il estimé.

Les Kurdes de Turquie exigent notamment la reconnaissance de leur identité dans la nouvelle constitution, l'éducation en langue maternelle dans les écoles publiques et une forme d'autonomie démocratique.

Ils demandent également la libération des nombreux élus, journalistes, avocats, syndicalistes et étudiants détenus pour leur proximité avec les rebelles du Parti

des travailleurs du Kurdistan (PKK), un mouvement interdit en Turquie.

Ankara et le PKK ont engagé il y a un an des pourparlers pour tenter de mettre un terme à un conflit qui a fait plus de 45.000 morts depuis 1984. Mais ce processus est paralysé, après la décision du PKK de suspendre cet automne le retrait de ses combattants de Turquie pour dénoncer des promesses non tenues du gouvernement. ●



4 décembre 2013

## Attaque meurtrière en plein coeur de Kirkouk en Irak, six morts

Neuf personnes ont trouvé la mort mercredi en Irak dans de nouvelles violences dont une attaque coordonnée contre les forces de l'ordre dans la ville multiethnique de Kirkouk, a-t-on appris de sources médicales et policières.

Dans le centre de Kirkouk (nord), six personnes ont été tuées et plus de 70 blessées par l'explosion d'une voiture piégée contre des locaux des services de renseignements de la police suivie d'échanges de tirs entre insurgés et forces de l'ordre.

La ville pétrolière de Kirkouk est un terrain fertile pour les insurgés en raison des divisions entre d'une part les Kurdes souhaitant son rattachement à la région autonome du Kurdistan irakien et de l'autre le gouvernement de Bagdad et d'au-



tres communautés de la ville opposés à un tel projet.

Trois autres personnes ont été tuées dans des attaques à Bagdad, Falloujah et près de Tikrit au nord de la capitale, selon des responsables.

Les violences qui endeuillent l'Irak depuis plus de dix ans ont connu cette année un nouveau pic, avec plus de 6.200 morts depuis janvier, faisant craindre un retour au conflit civil ayant ensanglanté le pays après l'invasion menée en 2003 par les Etats-Unis.

Les autorités se disent particulièrement inquiètes de la résurgence de groupes liés à Al-Qaïda, enhardis par le conflit en Syrie voisine, et accusent des insurgés sunnites liés au réseau extrémiste de la plupart des attentats.

Analystes et diplomates étrangers s'accordent à dire que le gouvernement ne parvient pas à gérer la frustration de la minorité sunnite, qui s'estime discriminée par le gouvernement de Nouri al-Maliki dominé par les chiites.

La paralysie de l'appareil politique, due en grande partie aux différends entre sunnites et chiites, associée à une corruption endémique, contribue aussi à alimenter l'instabilité, à l'approche des législatives du 30 avril.(AFP) □



3 décembre 2013

## Ankara et les Kurdes d'Irak confirment un accord pétrolier

Le gouverne-  
ment régional du Kurdistan (GRK) a conclu un accord d'exportation de pétrole et de gaz vers la Turquie, a déclaré hier le Premier ministre de la région irakienne semi-autonome, confirmant une information donnée la semaine dernière de sources turques.

En dépit de l'opposition du gouvernement central irakien, le Kurdistan irakien, autonome depuis la fin de la guerre du Golfe en 1991, insiste sur son droit à exporter le pétrole produit sur son territoire, tout en promettant d'en partager les revenus avec Bagdad dès qu'un accord, attendu de longue date, aura été conclu à ce sujet.

« La finalisation d'une telle coopération est un grand succès pour l'Irak et pour la région du Kurdistan et cette opération va nous rapprocher », a déclaré Nechirvan Barzani au cours d'une conférence de presse à Erbil.

« Le Kurdistan va être pour

la première fois un contributeur net au produit intérieur brut irakien et c'est pour cela que nous devons discuter avec nos collègues du gouvernement irakien sur un pied d'égalité », a-t-il ajouté.

Le ministre turc de l'Énergie, en visite à Erbil, a insisté de son côté sur la volonté d'Ankara d'obtenir le feu vert de Bagdad pour les exportations de pétrole kurde.

« Nous assumons bien sûr l'accord que nous avons signé avec le nord de l'Irak, mais nous espérons qu'il pourra être mis en œuvre dans le cadre d'un processus à trois », a déclaré Taner Yildiz. « Nous essayons d'avancer sur ce sujet de manière prudente et courtoise (...) Nous attendons la réponse de nos frères irakiens », a dit le ministre turc.

« Nous souhaiterions avoir l'accord du gouvernement central irakien pour l'exportation commerciale du pétrole



Le ministre turc de l'Énergie, Taner Yildiz (gauche), avec son homologue kurde irakien Ashti Hawrami, lors d'une conférence de presse commune, à Erbil. Safin Hamed/AFP

du GRK à la Turquie et entamer une coopération trilatérale au bénéfice de tous. »

Taner Yildiz a confirmé lui aussi qu'Ankara et le GRK s'étaient entendus sur les termes de l'accord. Aucun responsable de l'une ou l'autre partie n'a confirmé la signature du texte.

Le ministre de l'Énergie du GRK, Ashti Hawrami, a en outre annoncé l'achèvement de la construction dans la région

d'un oléoduc d'une capacité de 300 000-400 000 barils par jour.

Taner Yildiz s'est rendu dimanche à Bagdad pour tenter de désamorcer la crise que l'accord avec le GRK risque de faire éclater, le gouvernement irakien considérant toute initiative de la région semi-autonome en ce sens comme une violation de sa souveraineté. ■ (Source : AFP)



# Kurdistan : le processus de paix meurtri

Marc SEMO

**Turquie . Deux manifestants ont été tués par la police vendredi. La tension est ravivée dans la région.**

Déjà bien mal en point, le laborieux processus de paix entre les autorités d'Ankara et la rébellion kurde du PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan) vient de recevoir un nouveau coup après la mort, vendredi dans la ville de Yüksekova (sud-est), de deux manifestants kurdes de 34 et 32 ans. Des rassemblements ont eu lieu hier à Diyarbakir, la principale ville du sud-est anatolien, peuplée majoritairement de Kurdes, où des heurts ont fait plus de dix blessés alors qu'une vive tension règne dans la région.

Samedi soir, un manifestant de 25 ans a été grièvement blessé, touché à la tête selon des témoins par une grenade lacry-



mogène tirée par les forces de l'ordre à Yüksekova, après les funérailles des deux Kurdes. Ceux-ci étaient tombés sous les balles de la police la veille, lors d'échauffourées provoquées par des informations faisant état de la destruction de cimetières où étaient enterrés des rebelles du PKK.

Samedi, la police est intervenue avec des grenades lacrymogènes et des canons à eau pour disperser les protestataires, qui ont riposté par des jets de pierre. Le gouverneur local a démenti la destruction des cimetières à l'origine des incidents.

Le chef du PKK, Abdullah Ocalan,

emprisonné à vie depuis 1999, a dénoncé une «grande provocation contre le processus» depuis sa prison, où il a rencontré samedi des députés kurdes. Ankara et le PKK ont engagé il y a un an des pourparlers pour mettre un terme au conflit, qui a fait plus de 45 000 morts depuis 1984. Mais ce processus est paralysé après la décision du PKK, cet automne, de suspendre le retrait de ses rebelles de Turquie pour dénoncer des promesses non tenues par le gouvernement.

Alors que le pays entre dans une année électorale cruciale, avec des municipales en avril et une présidentielle à l'automne, l'AKP (Parti de la justice et du développement), le mouvement islamiste du Premier ministre, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, n'est guère disposé à faire d'importantes concessions en matière de droits des Kurdes et des minorités, ce qui irriterait les franges les plus nationalistes de son électorat. ♦

Tribune de Genève

9 décembre 2013

## TURQUIE : Bagarre au parlement turc à cause du mot «Kurdistan»

Une bagarre entre députés nationalistes et pro-kurdes a éclaté lundi au parlement turc. Elle a été déclenchée par une dispute sur l'usage du mot «Kurdistan», un terme qui a longtemps été tabou dans la vie politique turque.

Les autorités d'Ankara ont longtemps refusé l'usage du vocable «Kurdistan» pour désigner la région autonome kurde du nord de l'Irak, lui préférant l'appellation de «Gouvernement régional kurde», car elles craignaient que le terme «Kurdistan» n'encourage les visées indépendantistes ou autonomistes chez les Kurdes de Turquie.

Lundi, des députés du parti nationaliste d'opposition MHP ont déposé une motion réclamant que le mot «Kurdistan»

soit supprimé des comptes rendus parlementaires mentionnant la région kurde d'Irak.

Leur demande a suscité la colère d'une formation pro-kurde, le Parti de la paix et de la démocratie (BDP), dont le député Hasip Kaplan a lancé : «Le Kurdistan, les Kurdes et la langue kurde existent».

### Prononcé par Erdogan

Les échanges verbaux ont dégénéré en violences lorsqu'un autre député du BDP a tenté de donner un coup de poing à un député nationaliste. D'autres députés voulant séparer les deux protagonistes se sont alors jetés dans la mêlée.

En novembre, le Premier ministre turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan avait employé pour



la première fois le mot «Kurdistan» en recevant le président de la région autonome kurde d'Irak, Massoud Barzani, dans la ville de Diyarbakir, chef-lieu de la région à majorité kurde du sud-est de la Turquie.

Au cours des dernières années, la Turquie et le Kurdistan irakien ont développé leurs relations économiques, particulièrement dans le domaine de l'énergie. (ats/afp/Newsnet)

AFP

## Turquie: Le PKK relâche quatre soldats enlevés dimanche

DIYARBAKIR (Turquie), 09 décembre 2013 (AFP)

**LES REBELLES** du Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan ont relâché tôt lundi les quatre militaires turcs qu'ils avaient enlevés la veille au soir dans le sud-est de la Turquie, a-t-on indiqué de source de sécurité locale.

"Les soldats ont été remis aux autorités locales et sont en bonne santé", a souligné cette source à l'AFP. Grâce à la médiation du parti pro-kurde pour la paix et la démocratie (BDP), les rebelles ont été convaincus à libérer leurs otages.

Les militaires avaient été enlevés par un groupe de rebelles en voyageant en civil

à la périphérie de Diyarbakir, chef-lieu du sud-est anatolien, peuplé majoritairement de Kurdes.

Leur enlèvement est intervenu après que la tension est brusquement montée dans les provinces kurdes après la mort vendredi de deux manifestants kurdes tués par la police à Yüksekova (sud-est). Les d'échauffourées avaient été provoquées par des informations faisant état de la destruction de cimetières où étaient enterrés des combattants du PKK.

Les autorités locales ont démenti cette information, mais des heurts ont opposé dimanche à Diyarbakir la police à des manifestants, faisant une dizaine de blessés.

Ankara et le PKK ont engagé il y a un an des pourparlers pour tenter de mettre un terme au conflit kurde, qui a fait plus de 45.000 morts depuis 1984

Mais ce processus est paralysé après la décision du PKK de suspendre cet automne le retrait de ses rebelles de Turquie pour dénoncer des promesses non tenues du gouvernement. ●



# Kurdish leader outlines goal of federal system

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb>

**MARSEILLE, France:** Syria's Democratic Union Party, the country's most powerful Kurdish group, hopes to create an autonomous Kurdish region in a federal Syria, its chief Salih Muslim told AFP in an interview. Speaking during a visit to France, he confirmed that a committee was now preparing a constitution for the northeastern and northwestern regions of Syria that are majority Kurdish.

"The [Syrian] Kurdistan region will be divided into three autonomous provinces: Qobani [center], Afrin [west] and Qamishli [east]," he told AFP Sunday, speaking through a Kurdish-French translator.

"The goal is not to secede, but the Kurds want a federal system in Syria," he said.

Syria's Kurds make up around 15 percent of the population and are mostly concentrated in the northeast and northwest of the country, along the Turkish and Iraqi borders.

They have walked a careful line during Syria's uprising, declining to actively join either the government or the rebels and instead focusing on building autonomy in Kurdish-majority regions.

The Syrian government withdrew troops from those regions in mid-2012 and focused its energies elsewhere.

The PYD's armed wing took over security in the areas, and has kept armed rebels out as part of a tacit deal to ensure that



*A commission is already writing the constitution for a Kurdish state, Muslim said. AFP PHOTO / BERTRAND LANGLOIS*

regime troops will also stay out.

On Nov. 12, the PYD and other Kurdish parties announced the establishment of an autonomous transitional administration.

"It's not the creation of an autonomous government. However, 19 representatives were chosen in July to prepare a constitution and an electoral law and to define the mechanisms by which the region will be led," Muslim said.

"This commission has finished its work, and a date will soon be set for elections," he added.

The move to consolidate their autonomy on the ground comes as the armed wing of the PYD battles jihadist fighters that have sought to control Kurdish areas.

The Kurdish region to Syria's east includes oil fields and runs along the border with Iraq, providing jihadists a key route for fighters and supplies.

Muslim said Kurdish forces were facing off against jihadists "supported and sent by the Turkish government," adding that the fight was continuing.

"We have been helped by our people, the Iraqi Kurds, the Iraqi president [Jalal Talabani, a Kurd] and by the PKK," Muslim said.

The PKK or Kurdistan Workers Party is a Kurdish organization that has fought for rights in Turkey and is considered a terrorist group by the U.S. and other countries.

Muslim's PYD is considered close to the group, though it has denied being a Syrian branch.

Muslim insisted that Syria's Kurdish regions, which are also home to Arab Syrians, would welcome everyone.

"There are three sorts of Arabs among us: There are those with whom we have always lived and who we have fought alongside. We defend the brotherhood between these peoples," he said.

"There are those who do not belong, Arabs who came from outside, other countries or the region, the jihadists who have burned our homes, and decapitated Kurds," he added.

"Finally, there are the Arabs who were moved to Kurdistan by force by [former Syrian president] Hafez Assad ... to Arabize the region," Muslim said.

"They are victims ... and we advocate a peaceful solution for these populations: those who can return to their hometowns should do so and the others can live in peace with the Kurds." □



3 décembre 2013

## France : dix Kurdes condamnés à Paris pour financement du PKK

Par RFI

A Marseille, une association kurde qui finançait le Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan, le PKK, a été dissoute mardi après-midi par le tribunal de Paris. Dix Kurdes de nationalité turque ont été condamnés à des peines de six mois à trois ans de prison. Reconnue comme une organisation terroriste par l'Union européenne, les Etats-Unis ou encore la Turquie, le PKK se bat pour l'autonomie du Kurdistan turc, situé au sud-est du pays et la libération de son chef, retenu en Turquie. L'association marseillaise collectait des fonds pour soutenir financièrement sa lutte armée contre les forces turques.

Sous couvert d'activités culturelles, de soirées et autres concerts, la Maison du peuple kurde (MPK) de Marseille collectait la « kam-

panya », autrement dit l'impôt révolutionnaire de la diaspora kurde, affirme l'accusation.

En un an, ce sont près de 300 000 euros qui ont été récoltés, selon le responsable de l'association, qui affirmait que ces dons étaient complètement volontaires. Mais il a été condamné à la peine la plus lourde : 3 ans de prison.

Car en réalité, cette Maison du peuple kurde n'hésitait pas à menacer les membres qui refusaient de verser leur obole. L'une des deux victimes à avoir porté plainte, un entrepreneur, s'était vu réclamer 15 000 euros au titre de la « kampanya ».

Et face aux mauvais payeurs, l'association savait se montrer insistante : appels téléphoniques, visites au domicile, et cela pouvait se terminer par l'intervention de jeunes Kurdes



*Quelque 20 000 personnes avaient défilé le 16 novembre à Berlin pour demander la levée de l'interdiction du PKK en Allemagne, en vigueur depuis 20 ans. REUTERS/Tobias Schwarz*

aux manières plutôt musclées.

L'association kurde doit désormais verser 20 000 euros d'amende, mais les peines de prison des dix condamnés restent inférieures à ce qu'avait demandé par le parquet. ♦

REUTERS

# Coordinated attacks in northern Iraqi city kill 11, wound 70

BAGHDAD - Decembre 5, 2013 - (Reuters)

A group linked to al Qaeda said it was behind suicide attacks on an Iraqi police intelligence headquarters and shopping mall in the northern city of Kirkuk, the SITE monitoring group said on Thursday, citing a communique.

Gunmen and suicide bombers attacked the two sites in Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, late on Wednesday. They killed 11 people and wounded 70, police and medical sources said.

Al Qaeda-affiliated Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) claimed the six-man suicide raid, according to a statement circulated on jihadi forums and social media, SITE said.

Sunni Muslim insurgents linked to al Qaeda have regularly used such attacks on targets linked to Iraq's Shi'ite-led government and security services since the start of 2013.

ISIL operates on both sides of the porous Iraqi-Syrian border. In Syria ISIL is fighting to overthrow President Bashar al-Assad and has taken advantage of a power vacuum in rebel-held areas to assert itself over more moderate elements of the armed opposition.

Paris-based Reporters Without Borders said on Thursday that ISIL had executed an Iraqi cameraman in a rebel-held part of northern Syria.

Violence in Iraq has intensified alongside the conflict in Syria and is expected to escalate further before a parliamentary election in April next year.

Iraqi police said two suicide bombers armed with sniper rifles entered the shopping complex in Kirkuk late on Wednesday, took control of it and captured around 15 shoppers as hostages.

After a gun battle, one suicide bomber blew himself up and the other was shot dead by Kurdish security forces who took over the operation from



*Iraqi security forces personnel inspect the site after an attack by gunmen and suicide bombers on a police intelligence headquarters and a shopping mall in Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, Decembre 5, 2013. REUTERS/Ako Rasheed*

local police. One hostage was wounded, police said.

"I was inside my home when there was a big explosion, our house was shaking and the windows shattered," said a man living next to the mall who gave his name as Abu Ahmed.

He saw several attackers carrying weapons heading towards the center. "Dozens of women, men and children went out and some of them came to my house," he said, adding he heard a gun battle which continued into the night.

Iraqi state television showed smoke billowing from the building after security forces detonated additional bombs the attackers had left inside the complex.

Earlier on Wednesday suicide bombers and gunmen attacked a nearby police intelligence headquarters, killing at least six people and wounding dozens more.

Areas around Kirkuk are strongholds of al Qaeda, according to security officials, in a region which both the central government and autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan claim as theirs, making a coordinated police response difficult.

On Tuesday, 12 people were killed in two similar attacks in northern Iraq targeting a government complex and a police building. ●

Hurriyet DailyNews.com

December / 4 / 2013

# AKP Diyarbakır candidate says territory where Kurds live is 'Kurdistan'

ISTANBUL

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com>

The ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP)'s candidate for the Diyarbakır mayoral seat has said the territory where Kurds live in Turkey is called Kurdistan.

"I wouldn't hesitate to call every territory where Kurds live Kurdistan. I myself am Kurdish as well, and I live there," Galip Ensarioğlu said late Dec. 3, speaking in an interview on broadcaster CNN Türk.

However Ensarioğlu, who is preparing to run for the post during March 2014 local elections, asserted that his remarks did not imply the necessity of a sovereign Kurdistan state.

"The phrase 'Turkish Kurdistan' might



*AKP candidate Galip Ensarioğlu (L) will run to become the Diyarbakır mayor in the March 2014 local elections. AA photo*

be interpreted differently. Connotations that the four areas [where Kurds live - in Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria] will unite in the future and a sovereign state will be

established are intentionally provoked by some people. But the name of the territory where Kurds live in Turkey is Kurdistan," he said.

He said Iraq and Iran constitutionally defined the territories where their Kurdish citizens live in as Kurdistan, and added that he saw no problem with that.

Current Diyarbakır Mayor Osman Baydemir also used the phrase "Turkish Kurdistan" on the same TV program.

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan used the term "Kurdistan" to define the territory during a joint rally with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) leader Masoud Barzani on Nov. 16, in apparent defiance of criticism from ultra-nationalists to his approach and language.



# Syria: Suicide car bomber kills 5 in Kurdish town



*A man walks past debris from damaged buildings after a suicide bomber carried out an attack near a base used by forces loyal to Syria's President Bashar al-Assad in Qamishli December 6, 2013. REUTERS/Stringer*

ALBERT AJI (AP)

**DAMASCUS:** A suicide car bomber detonated his explosives near a building manned by paramilitary forces in a mainly Kurdish town in northeastern Syria Friday, killing at least five people, according to the state news agency and activists.

The blast in Qamishli comes as clashes between Kurdish gunmen and Islamic militant groups led by the al-Qaida-linked Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant have left hundreds of people dead in recent months.

Kurds are the largest ethnic minority in Syria, making up more than 10 percent of the country's 23 million people. They are centered in the impoverished northeastern province of Hassakeh, wedged between the borders of Turkey and Iraq. The capital Damascus and

Syria's largest city, Aleppo, also have several predominantly Kurdish neighborhoods.

Assad's forces largely pulled out of the region late last year when the Syrian military was stretched thin by fighting with rebels elsewhere in the country, effectively ceding control of the area, though they maintain some security posts. Their withdrawal sparked a fierce competition between rebels - mainly Islamic militant factions - and the Kurds.

Kurdish gunmen have been able over the past few months to drive out Islamic militant fighters allied to the rebellion from most of their areas in northeastern Syria. Last months, Kurds declared their own civil administration in areas under their control.

Syria's state news agency SANA said the explosion occurred on a crowded street in

Qamishli, which is in Hassakeh, killing six people and wounding 30.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which has a network of activists around the country, said the attack targeted a building manned by pro-government gunmen known as National Defense Forces. It said the blast killed at least five and wounded 10.

The Observatory said it is not clear if the dead were members of the National Defense Forces.



8 December 2013

# Kurdish Parties Inch Closer to Forming New Cabinet

rudaw.net

**ERBIL, Kurdistan Region**—Ahead of the second round of talks on forming a new cabinet, political groups in the Kurdistan Region have submitted their list for government posts to the negotiation team of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).

The KDP was the winner of the September 21 parliamentary election, winning 38 percent of the autonomous region's 111-seat legislature.

By winning 24 seats, the Change Movement (Gorran), came in second place. Official sources say the group expects the post of deputy prime minister or speaker of parliament.

The KDP has tasked Nechirvan Barzani to form a government. Barzani has been meeting with leaders of all political parties in Sulaimani and Erbil to invite them to join his cabinet.



*KDP candidate for post of prime minister Nechirvan Barzani (R) with Gorran leader Nawshirwan Musyafa in a press conference following their meeting in Sulaimani last month.*

Late last month, opposition groups led by Gorran agreed to join the government, especially after a meeting between Gorran leader Nawshirwan Mustafa and Kurdistan Region President Massoud Barzani.

In a Strategic Agreement signed between the KDP and the

Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) in 2007, both parties agreed on rotating the premiership every two years. Since the September vote however, that clause of the agreement may be losing its glamor.

In the second phase of talks, parties are to discuss ministerial

and other government posts they aim to receive in return for their participation.

The Islamic Union (Yekgirtu) and the Islamic League (Komal) are also eyeing the post of parliamentary speaker.

Meanwhile, the KDP has kept its strategic partner, the PUK in the know about details of its negotiations with the three opposition groups, particularly PUK's own splinter group, Gorran.

On Friday, KDP leaders informed the PUK that they 'welcome Gorran in the government'.

An official KDP source told Rudaw that the decision to include Gorran in the new cabinet had been made in a high-level meeting of KDP leaders with the president and party leader Massoud Barzani.

In a joint statement, the PUK and KDP said that they have agreed on forming an inclusive government "in order to safeguard the security and stability of the Kurdistan Region and guarantee a modern way of governance." ■



# Kurdish militants free 4 abducted Turkish soldiers

December 9, 2013 / by Seyhmus Cakan (Reuters)

**DIYARBAKIR, Turkey — Four Turkish soldiers seized by Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants were freed on Monday after Kurdish politicians intervened, security sources said, ending a brief standoff that could have damaged a fragile peace process.**

The abductions reflected an increase in tensions in Turkey's mainly Kurdish southeastern provinces after two protesters were killed on Friday in clashes with police in Yuksekova, a town near the Iraqi border.

The fatalities set off protests in other cities, raising fears an eight-month truce between the government and the outlawed PKK might be at risk.

The two officers and two sergeants were abducted on Sunday after 200 to 300 villagers blocked traffic on a road in the rural Lice area of Diyarbakir, some 500 km (310 miles) from Yuksekova, the military's General Staff said in a statement on its website.

The group included PKK guerrillas who checked identity cards of people driving through before seizing the soldiers.

The military said it had deployed special forces to the area backed by manned surveillance flights, and the abductees were handed over to local police early on Monday morning.

Other security sources said politicians from the pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) intervened to secure the soldiers' release.

Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan said on Sunday that the kidnapping and the incident in Yuksekova were aimed at derailing his government's efforts to end a three-decade long insurgency by the PKK, but that he would not be deterred.

Erdogan's ruling AK Party headquarters in Diyarbakir, the southeast's biggest city, was targeted late on Sunday by protesters with homemade explosives, which shattered windows in nearby buildings. No one was hurt in that incident, police said.

The clashes on Friday in Yuksekova began after a report that the graves of PKK members had been desecrated. Police fired water cannon and tear gas to disperse the protesters.

Despite the spike in tensions, the ceasefire is holding as Turkey and the PKK's jailed leader, Abdullah Ocalan, negotiate a peace process to end a conflict that has killed more than 40,000 people over the past decade.

Ocalan had also called for calm, BDP lawmakers said in a statement on Saturday after visiting him at his prison on Imrali island near Istanbul.

The PKK is designated a terrorist organization by Turkey, the United States and the European Union. ●



10 December 2013

# Kurdistan in Last Effort to Reconcile Kurdish Groups in Syria

rudaw.net

**ERBIL, Kurdistan Region —** The two rival Kurdish councils in Syrian Kurdistan are engaged in a final effort at reconciliation, and sources involved in the mediation say that if these talks fail the two blocs would sever ties and the umbrella Kurdish Supreme Committee would be dissolved.

The Erbil-backed mediation, between the Kurdish National Council (KNC) and Democratic Union Party (PYD), is being brokered by two senior Kurdish officials from Turkey, MP Leyla Zana from Diyarbakir and the city's mayor Osman Baydemir.

The effort is backed by the Kurdistan Region's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and fol-

lowing a request by Zana Kurdish President Massoud Barzani also agreed to step in to try and move the process forward.

A well-placed source said that Barzani met with a senior KNC delegation last week. He told them the KDP had authorized Zana and Baydemir to arbitrate between the two Syrian-Kurdish councils.

According to the source, Barzani confirmed at the meeting that this would be the last opportunity for the PYD and KNC to reach agreement. He said that if this failed the KNC would sever all ties with the PYD and that the Kurdish Supreme Committee (KSC), a united front for all Syrian Kurdish parties, would be dissolved.



*Diyarbakir mayor Osman Baydemir and independent MP Leyla Zana have arrived in Erbil, Kurdistan region, Iraq. Photo: AA*

The KSC was brokered by Barzani in June 2012 in Erbil, with the aim of unifying the Syrian Kurdish parties for joint and peaceful governance of Syria's Kurdish regions, known as Rojava.

The Erbil Agreement stipulated the formation of many committees to help administer the cities, but tensions soon erupted between the two councils over their formation.

The KNC accused the People's Council of West Kurdistan (PCWK), which is affiliated with the PYD, of taking unilateral decisions in forming the committees. Then, last month the

PYD unilaterally declared an interim government in Rojava, thus severing all ties with the other council.

"Barzani told the KNC delegation that this would be his last mediation effort between them and the People's Council of West Kurdistan," said the source.

Fuad Hussein, the Kurdistan president's chief of staff, has said that an important Kurdish National Congress, which aims to gather all Kurdish groups in Erbil and set out a common Kurdish roadmap, will not take place without reconciliation between the KNC and PYD in Syria. ■





## INTERNATIONAL | CHRONIQUE

PAR ALAIN FRACHON

## En Irak, la revanche des Kurdes

Erbil. Cette ville respire la confiance en l'avenir. Les 4 × 4 y paraissent plus gros qu'ailleurs. Les chantiers de construction, omniprésents, une déclaration d'optimisme. Incontournables symboles de la richesse naissante, les centres commerciaux – les « Malls » – menacent le bazar. Les universités ont des façades en verre, les hôtels internationaux des patios en marbre. Le ciel bas, le temps gris, la pluie et la boue d'inexistants trottoirs n'y font rien : Erbil, la capitale de la région autonome kurde d'Irak, a le moral au sommet.

D'ici à Noël, le Kurdistan d'Irak exportera son pétrole directement vers la Turquie. Sans demander l'aval du gouvernement fédéral à Bagdad, qui râle mais n'y peut pas grand-chose. Depuis pas mal de temps déjà, une noria de camions-citernes turcs achemine le pétrole kurde vers la Turquie. Mais, cette fois, le gouvernement régional du Kurdistan (le KRG) a « son » oléoduc, qui court d'un champ pétrolier du sud d'Erbil à la ville d'Halabur sur la frontière turque. Ankara et Erbil ont conclu un accord d'approvisionnement à long terme – et s'en félicitent. Bagdad grogne. Indépendance énergétique kurde, prémices de l'indépendance politique ?

Netchirvan Barzani est trop intelligent pour s'aventurer sur ce terrain-là. A 48 ans, le premier ministre du KRG est l'un des hommes du miracle kurde. Il reçoit dans un minipalais, sorte de Trianon local, à la sortie de la ville. Costume sombre, silhouette haute, charme à revendre et anglais parfait, il raconte : « Au début des années 2000, nous ne savions pas ce que nous avions dans le sous-sol. Personne ne pariait sur nous. Seules des petites compagnies pétrolières se sont risquées à venir dans la région autonome. »

Les autres attendaient que le Parlement fédéral, à Bagdad, vote une loi sur la redistribution de la rente pétrolière entre régions ira-

kiennes. Née du renversement du régime de Saddam Hussein en 2003, la Constitution de 2005 fait de l'Irak un Etat fédéral – sous protection aérienne américaine depuis 2001, la partie kurde du pays, au nord-est, était déjà, *de facto*, autonome. Mais en huit ans, la majorité au pouvoir à Bagdad, détenue par les Arabes chiites, a été incapable de faire voter cette loi sur la répartition des revenus du pétrole.

**Pied de nez**

« Nous ne pouvions plus attendre. En août 2007, le KRG a fait voter sa propre loi sur l'exploitation de nos ressources pétrolières, poursuit le premier ministre. Les premiers



Netchirvan Barzani, premier ministre du gouvernement régional du Kurdistan, à Erbil, le 2 décembre. SAFIR HAMED/AFP

forages étaient concluants. Aujourd'hui, tous les grands noms du secteur sont là : Exxon, Mobil, Total, Chevron, Gazprom. » La région autonome est assise sur un joli pactole : « Des réserves de l'ordre de 45 milliards de barils et de 3 000 à 6 000 milliards de mètres cubes de gaz. »

Ces chiffres représentent plus encore. Ils sont une revanche de l'histoire, un pied de nez adressé à Bagdad, une forme de réparation pour les 6 millions de Kurdes irakiens. Cette terre passait pour la plus pauvre du pays. Elle a connu un quart de siècle de guerres, de massacres et de tortures, face à un pouvoir central arabe qui n'entendait rien céder aux Kurdes. Elle a traversé à la fin des années 1990 une guerre fratricide entre les deux partis qui dominent la vie politique locale : le Parti démocratique (PDK) et l'Union patriotique (UPK).

Les Kurdes ont appris de l'histoire. Toute la région – Bagdad, Téhéran, Ankara, enfin ceux

D'ICI À NOËL,  
LE KURDISTAN  
D'IRAK  
EXPORTERA  
SON PÉTROLE  
DIRECTE-  
MENT VERS  
LA TURQUIE



qui traditionnellement ne leur veulent pas de bien – paraît sur leur incapacité à s'auto-administrer. Erreur magistrale. En une douzaine d'années, hydrocarbures aidant, les Kurdes d'Irak ont bâti leur autonomie. Ils ont leur armée, leur police, leur service de renseignements, leurs aéroports internationaux, leur diplomatie. Dans un Proche-Orient en pleine tourmente, dans un Irak arabe plongé dans une guerre religieuse sans fin, les Kurdes fournissent une denrée rare : la sécurité, qui attire un nombre sans cesse croissant de sociétés étrangères.

Ce réveil kurde n'eût pas été possible, ou pas si vite, sans la complicité, plutôt inattendue, de la superpuissance régionale : la Turquie. Longtemps, elle s'est opposée à l'expérience du KRG. Elle redoutait l'effet de contagion sur ses propres Kurdes (de 15 à 20 millions de personnes). Une partie de l'armée turque campait aux portes du Kurdistan d'Irak.

Il a fallu la rencontre de deux intelligences politiques, celle de Netchirvan Barzani et celle du premier ministre turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, pour sortir d'une situation stérile. Faute de pouvoir supprimer l'expérience du KRG, Erdogan a décidé de l'embrasser. La Turquie avait besoin de pétrole. « Elle a été le premier pays à manifester son intérêt pour nos ressources », dit Netchirvan Barzani, qui a « développé

un lien de confiance très personnel » avec Erdogan. La Turquie est devenue le premier partenaire économique de la région autonome.

Barzani a aussi noué « de très bonnes relations avec Téhéran ». L'Iran apprécie qu'Erbil adopte une position de relative neutralité dans la tragédie syrienne. Le KRG considère que son principal ennemi est aujourd'hui l'extrémisme sunnite. VRP très diplomate de la région autonome kurde, Barzani réussit cette performance : zéro conflit avec des voisins qui, ayant tous une forte minorité kurde, ont tous des raisons de se méfier d'une expérience autonomiste réussie.

Reste Bagdad, qui dénie au KRG le droit d'exporter directement du pétrole « irakien ». Protestation formelle, dit-on à Erbil, où l'on juge que le gouvernement central finira par accepter la nouvelle réalité. « Je suis confiant. Nous sommes prêts à un accord sur un pourcentage de restitution au gouvernement central, s'il veut bien cesser de vouloir tout contrôler. Cela pourrait être une situation gagnant-gagnant », assure le premier ministre. C'est dit sur le ton de l'évidence, posément, sans arrogance. Guerriers, les Kurdes s'initient à la politique. Avec bonheur. ■

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Le Monde

Samedi 14 décembre 2013

## Les actions du Front islamique affaiblissent l'Armée syrienne libre

LES MAUVAISES NOUVELLES semblent ne jamais s'arrêter pour le général Salim Idriss, l'homme que les capitales occidentales tentent, sans trop y croire, de transformer en commandant en chef de la rébellion syrienne.

Après avoir perdu le soutien de nombreuses brigades, qui ont rejeté sa tutelle, le patron de l'Armée syrienne libre (ASL), la branche militaire de la Coalition nationale syrienne (CNS) a perdu aussi, les 7 et 8 décembre, le contrôle de ses bureaux, à Bab Al-Hawa, près de la frontière turque, ainsi que de plusieurs entrepôts, situés dans cette région, celle de Homs et celle d'Idlib. Ces sites, qui abritent du matériel fourni par des pays alliés, sont passés sous la coupe de combattants du Front islamique, une coalition de brigades d'inspiration islamiste et salafiste, dont certaines ont fait partie de l'ASL.

Ce revers a été suivi par l'annon-

ce par les Etats-Unis et le Royaume-Uni de la suspension de leurs livraisons aux forces du général Idriss.

« Ce qui s'est passé pose un gros problème et nous allons devoir voir comment le gérer avec le général Idriss et l'opposition modérée », a déclaré Chuck Hagel, le secrétaire de la défense américain, jeudi, lors d'un déplacement à Singapour.

Officiellement, comme tous les autres pays européens, le Royaume-Uni ne fournit que de l'équipement non létal aux insurgés syriens (appareils de communication, gilets pare-balles...). Washington a longtemps suivi cette ligne, en livrant notamment des rations de combat, que certains rebelles préféreraient jeter que consommer.

Cet été, les Etats-Unis se sont finalement engagés, du bout des lèvres, à fournir des armes légères aux hommes de l'ASL, mais il semble que ces livraisons aient été jusque-là, d'une ampleur très limitée.

La France, qui ne disposait pas de matériel dans les entrepôts visés, selon Paris, a indiqué qu'elle maintenait « ses livraisons d'aide militaire non létale ».

Par son porte-parole, Khaled Saleh, la CNS a affirmé que les rebelles du Front islamique étaient arrivés sur les sites à sa demande, pour éviter qu'ils ne tombent dans les mains de l'Etat islamique en Irak et au Levant, un groupe armé djihadiste, affilié à Al-Qaida et en guerre larvée avec l'ASL. Mais, selon un proche de Salim Idriss, « cette opération de secours est du bidon, les salafistes se sont servis dans les entrepôts » et rien n'indique selon lui qu'ils sont disposés à rétrocéder leur prise de guerre.

Ce nouvel incident reflète non seulement la faiblesse de l'ASL, mais aussi les inconséquences de ses supposés parrains. Si l'Arabie saoudite persiste à soutenir des

unités dites modérées et pro-occidentales, le Qatar et la Turquie, deux Etats à la pointe de la lutte contre le régime Assad, auraient financé, selon une source diplomatique, la création du Front islamique. Cette dispersion des efforts internationaux est d'autant plus dommageable qu'elle affaiblit l'opposition à l'approche d'une échéance cruciale, la réunion de Genève 2, programmée pour le 22 janvier. Cette conférence de paix, censée rassembler toutes les parties en conflit, pourrait se tenir à Montreux, de l'autre côté du lac Léman, en raison d'un manque de chambre d'hôtel dans la cité de Calvin, qui accueille ce même jour une grosse foire internationale. Sa tenue reste néanmoins incertaine, en raison principalement du refus du régime syrien de s'engager dans un processus de transition politique. ■

B. BA.



# L'UE et Ankara signent un accord sur l'immigration

La Turquie récupérera les migrants passés en Europe par son territoire, et obtiendra la fin des visas pour ses ressortissants.

LAURE MARCHAND  
ISTANBUL

**EUROPE** « Clandestins contre visas », c'est en résumé la substance du double pacte scellé lundi par l'Union européenne et Ankara. La Turquie a signé un accord de réadmission en vertu duquel elle s'engage à reprendre les migrants qui ont transité par son territoire et sont entrés illégalement sur le sol européen, ainsi que ses propres nationaux qui séjournent sans autorisation dans un pays de l'Union européenne. En échange, Bruxelles s'est engagée à ouvrir des discussions devant aboutir à la libéralisation des visas, obligatoires pour les ressortissants turcs désirant voyager en Europe. Les deux partenaires ont longtemps achoppé sur le renvoi des étrangers en situation irrégulière et la suppression des visas. La résolution, affichée de part et d'autre, de relancer des négociations d'adhésion en souffrance permet de dépasser, au moins

temporairement, les désaccords.

Ahmet Davutoğlu, le ministre des Affaires étrangères a estimé que le processus devait conduire à la levée des visas au « maximum dans trois ans et demi », se félicitant d'avoir atteint « un objectif de la Turquie depuis de nombreuses années ».

Le maintien de la procédure d'obtention des visas pour les Turcs constitue en effet une particularité : les restrictions ont été levées pour les pays des Balkans, même ceux qui n'ont pas entamé de négociations d'adhésion à l'UE, contrairement à la Turquie, qui est candidate.

« Le moment où les Turcs se sentent le moins européen est lorsqu'ils font la queue pour obtenir un visa », résumait ainsi Egemen Bagis, le ministre en charge des Affaires européennes. Des dossiers interminables et des refus encore parfois incompréhensibles, malgré des améliorations substantielles, pour des hommes d'affaires ou des artistes, nourrissent frustration et ressentiment.

La fin complète des visas ou la réduction des catégories concernées par la nécessaire obtention du sésame entraînera-t-elle un afflux de Turcs vers l'Union européenne ? Pour Marc Pierini, qui a piloté ce dossier sensible lorsqu'il était chef de la délégation de l'UE à Ankara, cette hypothèse est infondée : « Hormis pour l'Allemagne, où le regroupement familial poserait peut-être problème si les visas étaient entièrement supprimés, la Turquie, compte tenu des conditions économiques actuelles, n'est plus un pays de migration vers l'Europe. La demande n'est plus intense. On observe même un reflux des Turcs diplômés (qui ont grandi en Allemagne, NDLR). »

Les avancées concernant l'allègement des conditions d'entrée des citoyens turcs dans l'espace Schengen sont conditionnées à une feuille de route qui prévoit, entre autres, la refonte du système d'asile turc, ultrarestrictif, ou la fin de la politique très libérale d'Ankara en matière de visas pour les pays tiers. Deux exigences pour lesquels les autorités turques sont très réticentes. La libéralisation des visas est également liée à l'accord de réadmission des migrants illégaux, qui doit rentrer en vigueur trois ans après sa ratification. La signature du document par le gouvernement islam-conservateur aura des répercussions très importantes pour la Turquie : par sa position géographique et l'expansion planétaire du réseau de sa compagnie aérienne, Turkish Airlines, la Turquie est l'un des principaux points d'entrée dans l'Union européenne. Afghans, Syriens, Irakiens ou Africains convergent vers Istanbul, avant-dernière étape de leur long et périlleux voyage.

## Le système de l'asile

Oktay Durukan, responsable du programme des réfugiés de l'ONG Assemblée des citoyens d'Helsinki s'inquiète des atteintes aux droits fondamentaux : « Un nombre important de personnes renvoyées concernera des réfugiés qui ont besoin d'une protection internationale, mais que les pays de l'UE ne leur accordent pas. Et je ne parle même pas de la



Le ministre des Affaires étrangères turc, Ahmet Davutoglu et la commissaire européenne aux Affaires intérieures, la Suédoise Cecilia Malmström, lors de la signature de l'accord sur l'immigration, lundi à Ankara. UMIT BEKTAS/REUTERS



Grèce, de la Bulgarie ou de Chypre, où le système d'asile est un échec total. Non seulement ces pays montrent un très mauvais exemple à la Turquie, mais celle-ci risque de déporter à son tour les migrants. » Les violations des droits de l'homme sont légion dans les centres de rétention de clandestins. Avec cet accord de réadmission, la Turquie pour-

rait, comme la Libye en son temps, devenir une sentinelle de l'Europe. « L'Union européenne externalise la gestion des flux migratoires vers des pays de transit », estime Oktay Durukan.

La Turquie a refusé plusieurs années de soumettre la libéralisation des visas à la réadmission des étrangers. En signant l'accord, « elle veut montrer sa volonté de

retrouver des relations normales avec Bruxelles, motivée par les dommages importants que les événements de Gezi ont créés en Occident », précise Marc Pierini. La violente répression de la vague de contestation contre le gouvernement de Recep Tayyip Erdogan, près du parc Gezi d'Istanbul en juin dernier, a particulièrement marqué les 28 États membres. ■

LE FIGARO

18 décembre 2013

# Alep : des barils de TNT sur les rebelles

GEORGES MALBRUNOT  
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**SYRIE** La foudre s'est de nouveau abattue mardi sur Alep. Une foudre particulièrement dangereuse, sous la forme de barils bourrés d'explosifs que les hélicoptères de l'armée régulière ont largués pour la deuxième fois en trois jours sur les quartiers rebelles de Chaar et de Maadi, dans l'est de la deuxième ville de Syrie. Après 76 morts dimanche – dont 28 enfants – les secouristes ont relevé 18 corps des décombres, dont deux enfants, une femme et un adolescent, fauchés par un déluge de feu venu du ciel.

Ces raids sont parmi les plus meurtriers, depuis le début de la révolte lancée en mars 2011 contre le régime de Bachar el-Assad. Selon l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'homme (OSDH), basé à Londres, ces barils en métal tapissés d'une couche de béton sont remplis de TNT. L'absence de système de guidage explique le grand nombre de victimes, lorsque des hélicoptères et des avions de combat les larguent sur des positions rebelles. Des images publiées sur Internet montrent d'importants dégâts dans des immeubles et des bulldozers dégageant des décombres, tandis que des hommes cherchent encore des survivants.

Une source sécuritaire syrienne a précisé que l'armée recourait à ces barils plutôt qu'à des missiles, trop onéreux car importés de Russie, le principal allié du régime de Damas. « Il y a clairement une escalade de la part du régime dans le bombardement des quartiers rebelles à Alep pour terroriser les habitants de ces zones », a affirmé à l'AFP Rami Abdel Rahmane, le directeur de l'OSDH. La majorité des secteurs visés sont à l'est d'Alep, zone tenue par les opposants à Assad dans une ville ravagée par la guerre depuis l'été 2012, où le régime contrôle encore la partie ouest.

## Condamnation par l'Unicef

Même privé d'armes chimiques, le pouvoir n'hésite pas à recourir à d'autres



Recherche des victimes après le bombardement du quartier de Shaar mardi, un quartier du nord d'Alep, où plus d'une dizaine de personnes ont trouvé la mort. M. AL-KHATIEB/AFP

formes de barbaries dans l'espoir d'étouffer son opposition, condamnée parfois à manger des rats pour survivre au blocus imposé par l'armée.

Cette intensification de la répression pourrait annoncer une avancée de l'armée vers ces régions d'Alep que les loyalistes, épaulés par les combattants du Hezbollah chiite libanais, cherchent à reprendre avant la conférence de Genève, prévue le 22 janvier, afin de lancer une transition négociée du pouvoir. Ces derniers mois, l'armée régulière a réussi à reprendre des villes et des localités à l'est d'Alep, progressant ainsi vers les quartiers est de la métropole.

L'Unicef a violemment réagi en estimant qu'il était « inacceptable que des enfants soient pris pour cible de cette manière ». En 33 mois, plus de 120 000 personnes sont mortes à travers la Syrie. La

dégradation de la situation à Alep souligne l'urgence à trouver une solution politique au conflit.

Faute d'un accord de paix, l'ONU s'attend à ce que le nombre des réfugiés syriens double en 2014, et atteigne 4,1 millions.

Six cent mille ont déjà traversé la frontière avec la Jordanie – où ils représentent 10 % de la population du royaume hachémite. Un aussi grand nombre a fui les violences au Liban, alimentant les risques de déstabilisation du pays du Cèdre, déchiré par les tensions exacerbées entre sunnites pro-rébelles et chiïtes pro-Assad. Lundi, les agences de l'ONU ont réclamé à la communauté internationale 6,5 milliards de dollars pour venir en aide aux victimes du plus grand défi humanitaire auquel les Nations unies sont confrontées. ■



International New York Times DECEMBER 5, 2013

# U.N. official warns of aid that's stalled for Syrians

UNITED NATIONS

BY RICK GLADSTONE

The top emergency relief official at the United Nations has expressed new alarm at the humanitarian crisis caused by Syria's civil war, telling the Security Council that despite some modest progress, both the government and insurgent sides were still impeding urgent deliveries of food and medicine to millions of desperate civilians.

Speaking to reporters after a closed briefing for Security Council diplomats, the official — Valerie Amos, an under secretary general and the emergency relief coordinator — said Tuesday that the Syrian authorities had been permitting aid convoys from Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq, but had refused to allow any from

Turkey, which the Syrian government has accused of abetting the insurgency.

Ms. Amos said that nine aid convoys had entered Syria over the past month, three times as many as in earlier months, but that "this is still far too few to meet the needs of the millions of people."

In the two months since the Security Council unanimously approved a presidential statement urging all sides to allow emergency humanitarian access, she said, some other advances had been made, including the appointment of interlocutors to help relief teams distribute aid. But on the protection of civilians, demilitarization of schools and hospitals and access to the areas that are the hardest to reach, Ms. Amos said, "we have not seen any progress on those."

She declined to say whether a Security Council resolution, which carries more coercive weight than a presidential statement, might help.

Ms. Amos spoke as Human Rights Watch issued a report accusing both the Syrian government and some of its opponents of preventing the delivery of aid. The report, which urged the Security Council to take more decisive measures, said that "people are suffering from an increasingly severe shortage of food and that people are dying from lack of medical care because of the siege."

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a group based in Britain with a network of contacts inside Syria, said on Monday that nearly 126,000 people had been killed since the conflict began in March 2011 as a peaceful uprising against President Bashar al-Assad. United Nations officials have estimated that nearly seven million people in Syria are in urgent need of food and medical assistance and that Syrian refugees in neighboring countries will total three million by year's end.

The Syrian ambassador to the United Nations, Bashar Jaafari, who spoke to reporters after Ms. Amos's briefing to the Security Council, cast the humanitarian crisis in a less negative light, asserting that the Syrian government's cooperation with international relief groups had eased some of the suffering.

Mr. Jaafari also had harsh words for Saudi Arabia, long accused by his government of financing, recruiting and arming the Qaeda-linked Sunni jihadist militants who are waging war in Syria. He said that "thousands of Saudi fighters" had been killed in Syria and that the government had taken 300 Saudis prisoner. "Somebody should hold the Saudis responsible for what they are doing," Mr. Jaafari said.

Anne Barnard contributed reporting from Beirut, Lebanon.

International New York Times DECEMBER 9, 2013

# Inspections begin at Iran nuclear site

TEHRAN

## Obama says he's open to deal that would allow enrichment for energy

BY THOMAS ERDBRINK

Atomic experts representing the United Nations nuclear watchdog on Sunday began inspecting an Iranian plant recently opened to them, even as President Obama said that the interim accord that led to that opening had perhaps only an even chance of yielding a final diplomatic agreement with Iran.

The team from the International Atomic Energy Agency began inspecting the Arak heavy-water production plant on Sunday, wire services reported. The inspectors arrived in Iran on Saturday, pursuant to a November agreement between Iran and the agency that allowed for expanded monitoring. The plant produces heavy water for a plutonium reactor that has not yet been finished.

Iran has said the Arak plant is for energy production; however, if it became operational it would produce plutonium that could be used in a nuclear weapon. In the November accord, Iran agreed not to produce fuel for the plant, install additional reactor components there or put the plant into operation.

On Saturday, Mr. Obama said that he could envision a final agreement with Iran that would let it enrich nuclear material for power production with enough restrictions to assure Israel and the rest of the world that it could not produce a nuclear weapon.

But he said there was no guarantee that such a deal would emerge as Iran and Western nations negotiate during the next six months.

"I wouldn't say that it's more than 50-50," Mr. Obama said during a conversation at a conference run by the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, part of the Brookings Institution, in Washington. "But we have to try."

In the November agreement, Iran committed to freezing parts of its nuclear program for six months in exchange

for about \$7 billion in temporary sanctions relief. The pause is intended to allow negotiators time to produce a more lasting agreement.

Iran has continued to claim the right to enrich uranium for peaceful purposes; the agreement did not limit its ability to enrich uranium to low levels suitable for producing electricity.

On Saturday, in an apparent effort to promote the agreement at home, President Hassan Rouhani told students in Tehran that Iran's uranium enrichment centrifuges "would never stop spinning." But in a seeming reference to the lifting of international sanctions, which have severely damaged Iran's economy, he added that the "people's economic lives should also continue to spin."

Mr. Obama's remarks came in an interview with Haim Saban, an Israeli-American film producer, longtime Democratic donor and the founder of the center that bears his name. Mr. Saban pressed the president to respond to Israeli skepticism about the negotiations.

Mr. Obama repeatedly acknowledged that Iran's leaders should not be trusted and said that the United States and Israel were united in their intentions to keep Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons. He said Western nations should assume that

Mr. Rouhani's ideology was "one that is hostile to the United States and Israel."

But he contrasted his own views to those of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister. Mr. Obama said

Mr. Netanyahu believed that further sanctions and threats of military action would eventually cause Iran to agree to Western demands for it to dismantle its nuclear program.

Mr. Obama said the idea that Iran might someday simply give in “does not reflect an honest understanding of the Iranian people, the Iranian regime.”

In Washington, lawmakers of both parties continued to express doubts about the talks with Tehran.

Representative Michael McCaul, Republican of Texas and chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, said he opposed accepting any level of uranium enrichment by Iran. To allow enrichment, he said on Sunday on the ABC news program “This Week,” would encourage other Middle Eastern countries to follow a similar path. He argued that the threat of additional sanctions could lead Iran to abandon enrichment efforts.

The administration strongly opposes new sanctions.

Representative Adam B. Schiff, Democrat of California and a member of the intelligence committee, said that a peaceful Iranian nuclear program would be acceptable, but only if other

countries handled enrichment for Iran. He said he was skeptical about prospects for a final deal with Iran, but added that the alternative to diplomatic efforts to stop its march toward a bomb could only be a sustained military campaign.

“Because that is such an awful prospect, we need to try everything, in my view, to see if there’s a peaceful way to put an end to this program,” he said, also on ABC. “That’s why I think the interim deal makes sense.”

Mr. Saban also asked Mr. Obama about the chances for peace between Israelis and Palestinians. Mr. Obama said

**“I wouldn’t say that it’s more than 50-50,” Mr. Obama said of the chances for a final deal with Iran. “But we have to try.”**

he believed that a framework for progress could be reached within the next several months. “That gets us to a point where everybody recognizes that it’s better to move forward than to go backward,” Mr. Obama said.

The president said Gen. John R. Allen,

who led the coalition effort in Afghanistan before his retirement this year and is now advising the State Department, had concluded that Israeli security could be preserved even with the creation of a Palestinian state. But he said that it would be up to the Israelis and the Palestinians to reach an agreement that both sides could live with.

Secretary of State John Kerry, who has been fostering the efforts for a comprehensive peace settlement, followed Mr. Obama with a speech that sought to persuade Israel’s supporters that such a settlement was not only possible but would make Israel more secure.

“I am not a masochist,” Mr. Kerry said. “I am undertaking this because I believe in the possibilities.”

*Michael D. Shear, Michael R. Gordon and Brian Knowlton contributed reporting from Washington.*

International New York Times DECEMBER 12, 2013

## U.S. cuts off aid to rebels in Syria over jihadist fears

WASHINGTON

### Britain also suspends nonlethal assistance after clash tilts balance

BY MICHAEL R. GORDON

The United States and Britain have suspended the delivery of nonlethal aid to the Syrian opposition in northern Syria after concluding that some of it has fallen into the hands of Islamic fighters, American and British officials said on Wednesday.

The episode underscores the grave challenges facing the Western powers as they seek to bolster the moderate Syrian opposition and compel President Bashar al-Assad of Syria to yield power. Even as Islamic militant groups have gained growing traction within the forces opposing Mr. Assad, that opposition has grown increasingly fractured.

The latest events represent a blow to the argument by some, in Washington

and elsewhere, that more needs to be done to arm moderate opposition elements — and not just with the radios, body armor, medical supplies, money and food that the United States and Britain have been supplying. The White House expressed concern about the reports but emphasized that humanitarian assistance, provided through international and nongovernmental organizations, would not be affected.

American officials also warned against drawing overly broad conclusions. “This is absolutely not the beginning of the U.S. washing its hands. We will remain engaged in the humanitarian effort, we will remain engaged in the diplomatic effort,” one senior American official told Reuters, adding: “This doesn’t represent a change in policy in our support for the moderate opposition.”

The episode at hand occurred late last week when moderate Syrian rebel forces reporting to General Salim Idriss came under attack from fighters aligned with Al Qaeda, according to an account provided by an American official. The United States backs General Idriss’s Supreme Military Council.

The Islamic Front, an alliance of rebel fighters that has broken with General Idriss’s moderate opposition but that opposes the Qaeda affiliate in Syria, then joined the chaotic fray, the American official said.

After the dust cleared, the Islamic Front appeared to have control of warehouses in the Syrian city of Atme that contain assistance supplied by the United States, added the American official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because he was discussing in-

ternal reports.

The first reports of military actions are often confused and inexact, but American officials did not hide their concern that some aid had indeed fallen into the wrong hands.

“We have seen reports that Islamic Front forces have seized the Atme headquarters and warehouses,” a State Department official said.

“As a result of this situation, the United States has suspended all further deliveries of nonlethal assistance into northern Syria,” the official said. “The humanitarian aid to the Syrian people is not impacted by this suspension.”

A British Embassy spokesman in the Turkish capital, Ankara, said Britain had “no plans to deliver any equipment while the situation remains so unclear.”

The opposition Free Syrian Army fighting Mr. Assad deplored the suspension of aid, saying the American and British moves were rushed and mistaken. “We hope our friends will rethink and wait for a few days when things will be clearer,” a spokesman for the group, Louay Meqdad, told Reuters.

A spokesman for the United States Embassy in Turkey declined to say what supplies might have been halted.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a British-based anti-Assad monitoring group, said that in fighting on Friday and Saturday, the Islamic Front had seized dozens of anti-aircraft weapons and anti-tank rockets.

American officials are undertaking an inventory to determine how much of the nonlethal equipment and supplies from Atme are still controlled by forces re-



porting to General Idriss.

Under the Obama administration's division of labor, the State Department is changing of supply "nonlethal" aide like radios, vehicles and food rations. The C.I.A. is running the covert program to arm and train Syrian rebels.

"We are working with General Idriss and the S.M.C. to inventory the status of U.S. equipment and supplies provided to the S.M.C.," the State Department official said, using the acronym for the general's Supreme Military Council. "We are gathering the facts and consulting with friends of the Syrian opposition on next steps in support of the Syrian people."

The rise of Islamist forces in the broad Syrian opposition has posed the Obama administration and others seeking the ouster of Mr. Assad with an intensely complicated challenge.

Some analysts and officials see the threat that Islamist extremists might prevail as so serious that they have speculated at the need of seeking at least a temporary or tactical accommodation with Mr. Assad's secular government, however brutal it may be.

"Bad as Assad is, he is not as bad as the jihadis who would take over in his absence," Ryan C. Crocker, a veteran diplomat who has served in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, recently told a reporter for The New York Times.

Complicating any thought of so dramatic a shift is the strong support for Syrian rebel groups from key American allies in the Middle East Saudi Arabia.

One Qaeda affiliate in Syria, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or ISIS, has recruited thousands of foreign jihadists and taken control of several patches of territory.

Its successes contributed to the announcement last month by seven other powerful rebel groups that they had forged a new Islamic force aiming to overthrow Mr. Assad and install an Islamic state.

It is unclear how much the new alliance, the Islamic Front, represents a true reorganization of the rebels, or how much it might affect their potency.

In northern Syria, where the warehouse was overrun last week, the extremist forces of ISIS have gradually overtaken a more moderate group, Tawhid, as the key group policing the area. That group's foreign fighters are linked to a rise in kidnappings, executions and attacks on Tawhid and its allies.

Brian Knowlton contributed reporting from Washington, and Anne Barnard and Ben Hubbard from Beirut, Lebanon.



9 December 2013

# Syria: Kurdish party denies ties to government

Kurdish Democratic Union party says rival's allegations are "baseless"

www.aawsat.net

by : Mohamed Zangeneh

**E**rbil, Asharq Al-Awsat—The Syria-based Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) denied accusations of having strong ties with the Syrian government, and told Asharq Al-Awsat that it is still determined to "liberate the Kurdish parts of Syria and establish a federation with a local Kurdish administration."

The PYD came under harsh criticism following a recent visit by the Syrian Defense Minister Fahd Jassem Al-Frej's to the PYD-held city of Qamishli, northern Syria. Freij was said to have secretly met with PYD leaders.

Speaking exclusively to Asharq Al-Awsat a senior PYD leader, Ja'afar Akash, said that the accusations are "baseless."

According to Akash, these rumors aim to incite local Kurds to rise up against the PYD, citing a similar incident that happened in the Kurdish-majority Sheikh Maksoud and Ashrafiya districts of Aleppo.

Despite his denial of his party having a strong relationship with the Syrian government, Akash did not rule out the possibility that several Kurdish parties in Syria are being bankrolled by the Ba'ath-led government.

"We want to acquire legitimacy for the local administration we declared in Western Kurdistan," he said, adding, "We



Members of Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) are seen on a military truck that belonged to the Islamist rebels after capturing it near Ras Al-Ain, in the province of Hasakah November 6, 2013 (REUTERS/Stringer)

do not mind sitting at the negotiating table with any side that recognizes the national rights of the Kurdish people."

"We still oppose the regime and do not accept its policies," Akash said.

Akash called on Kurds to "close ranks, participate in Geneva II in a single delegation and comply with the terms of the Erbil agreement brokered by President of Iraqi Kurdistan Massoud Barzani."

Akash criticized some Kurdish parties that said that the establishment of a Kurdish administration in northeastern parts of Syria was too early.

"Such comments do not serve the Kurdish people's interests," he said.

The head of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), Abdul Hakim Bashar, has accused the PYD of forging strong relations with the Syrian government, and has threa-

tened to sever ties with it.

For his part, the ongoing Prime Minister of Iraqi Kurdistan Nechirvan Barzani said last week that he was concerned over the PYD's actions.

A Syrian Azadi Party representative in Iraq, Kawa Azizi, told Asharq Al-Awsat that the Syrian National Council is the legitimate representative of the Kurdish people in Syria and that his party was dissatisfied with the performance of the PYD.

Azizi accused the PYD of taking control over the Kurdish parts of Syria in coordination with the Syrian government.

According to Azizi, by trying to prove that it is the only political player in the Kurdish-majority parts of Syria, especially in Qamishli, the PYD will endanger Syrian Kurds.

# Iraq: Kurdish parties to form single electoral list

Sixteen parties to form electoral alliance to contest April 2014 Iraqi Parliament elections

www.aawsat.net

Erbil, Asharq Al-Awsat—Sixteen Kurdish political blocs and parties from Kirkuk, 150 miles (235 kilometers) north of Baghdad, said they would stand for the forthcoming Iraqi parliamentary elections on the same electoral list, a Kurdish source told Asharq Al-Awsat.

In an official statement, the newly allied parties, calling themselves the “Kurdistan Kirkuk List,” said they agreed to contest the next parliamentary elections in Iraq slated for April 30, 2014, “on the same electoral list, which has the same program.”

The statement continued: “The list will have a uniform symbol, namely the flag of Kurdistan and Kirkuk Citadel.”

Speaking exclusively to Asharq Al-Awsat, a spokesman for the electoral list, Adnan Kirkuki, said that the idea of forging the alliance came “according to the requirements of the Kurdish people in Kirkuk,



*Female Kurdish deputies are pictured outside the Kurdistan parliament building in Erbil, the capital of the autonomous Kurdish region of northern Iraq, on November 6, 2013. (AFP PHOTO/SAFIN HAMED)*

given that they share one national cause, namely that of the land.”

Kirkuki said that there have been “public calls for all Kurdish parties in Iraq and Kurdistan and the political lists to partici-

pate in the Iraqi parliamentary elections on the same electoral list in order to ensure they gain as many votes as possible from Kurds in Kirkuk.”

He added that the parties have taken the decision so that Kurds do not “lose their right to parliamentary representation,” citing previous elections when Kurdish parties were on separate lists.

“The door is open for all Kurdish and non-Kurdish parties [to participate], including Turkmen, Assyrians, Chaldeans and Arab parties operating in Kirkuk regardless of their political, ideological and religious loyalties,” he said.

According to Kirkuki, the Kurdistan Kirkuk List has formed a special committee to “meet with the Iraqi Islamic Party in order to discuss with its members mechanisms for participation in the list.”

He said: “The list will have a unified program that is aimed at advancing the city of Kirkuk and preserving its national mosaic and the brotherly and peaceful spirit of coexistence.”

Kirkuki added that another committee has been formed to “broach the topic of participation with the Iraqi Communist Party,” adding that the “Kurdistan Communist Party is also one of the participants in the Kurdistan Kirkuk List.” ■



# New photos of Iraqi president Jalal Talabani released

Ekurd.net  
 December 11, 2013

**BERLIN, Germany,**— New photographs of Iraqi President Jalal Talabani since last May were released on Tuesday, in an apparent attempt to dampen speculation about his health.

The PUK's Kurdsat TV has published a number of the newest photos of President Talabani.

According to Kurdsat the photos were taken two days ago during Iraqi first lady Mrs. Héro Ibrahim Ahmed, visit to President Talabani in Germany.

The pictures dated December 6-8, 2013 showed Talabani, who turns 80 this year, sitting at a desk along with his wife Mrs. Héro. In one footage he gestures with his left hand when in conversation.

The private doctor of the President Jalal Talabani, Dr. Najmaldin Karim had announced that the health of the president Jalal Talabani has improved and passed great stages of his treatment. During the latest visit of Iraq's first Lady Hero Ahmed to President Talabani, she stressed that his health situation is stable and continuously improving, the PUK media reported.

It's noteworthy to mention that no sound or video of Talabani has been broadcast since last December. The first photos during his convalescence were released last May by the Iraqi Presidential Office.

Last October, a Kurdish source revealed that President Talabani can watch TV and read newspapers, but he cannot speak. The source noted that “Talabani is still in the process of recovery, probably will be able to talk later”.

A Kurdish report said that Jalal Talabani, has been transferred from the hos-



*Iraqi President Jalal Talabani (L) with Mrs. Héro Ibrahim Ahmed, photo released on December 10, 2013 by KurdSat TV*

pital in Germany to an unknown place, www.Ekurd.net but the physician of the Iraqi President, Dr. Najmaldin Karim, denied giving statements over president's health to media and about transporting Talabi from the German hospital into unknown location.

The leader in Kurdistan Alliance, Dr Mahmoud Othman, has criticized the way of not declaring anything about Talabani and his health.

Talabani is being admitted into a German hospital after suffering a stroke on December 17, 2012; he was rushed to the Medical City in Baghdad, www.ekurd.net then moved to a hospital in Germany under joint Iraqi medical team.

Talabani, is the first Kurdish president in the history of modern Iraq, he was elected as president for a transitional period in April 2005 and was re-elected in April 2010 for a second term of four years. ●



REUTERS

## Une centaine de Kurdes enlevés par des djihadistes en Syrie

BEYROUTH / 13 décembre. 2013 / (Reuters) -

DES COMBATTANTS de l'État islamique en Irak et au Levant (EIL), un groupe lié à Al Qaïda, ont enlevé vendredi en Syrie plus d'une centaine de civils kurdes dans un village situé dans la province d'Alep, près de la frontière avec la Turquie, a annoncé l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'homme (OSDH).

L'EIL mène depuis le début du mois une campagne de meurtres et d'enlèvements contre les Kurdes, dont les combattants disputent une partie du

nord de la Syrie aux rebelles islamistes, pour la plupart sunnites, contre le président Bachar al Assad.

L'OSDH, qui est basé à Londres mais dispose d'un réseau d'informateurs sur le terrain, a rapporté que des membres de l'EIL avaient enlevé au moins 120 habitants kurdes, dont au moins six femmes, de la ville d'Inras, située à une vingtaine de kilomètres de la localité frontalière d'Araz.

L'OSDH a aussi dit que l'EIL avait enlevé au cours du mois 51 civils kurdes, dont des femmes des enfants, dans les villes de Manbij et Jarablus, au nord-est d'Alep, et avait expulsé de leurs domiciles 15 familles kurdes dans la province d'Idlib.

L'Onu s'est inquiétée vendredi d'une récente hausse des enlèvements menés par les rebelles comme par les forces fidèles à Bachar al Assad.

"Rien qu'au cours des derniers mois, nous avons observé une hausse conséquente et profondément alarmantes des enlèvements de défenseurs des droits de l'homme, de militants, de journalistes, de figures religieuses et d'autres", a déclaré Navi Pillay, Haut Commissaire des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme. ○

RIANOVOSTI 17 décembre 2013

## Conférence sur la Syrie: les Kurdes élaborent une position commune

<http://fr.ria.ru>

DUBAI / Les représentants des plus importants mouvements politiques des Kurdes syriens se sont réunis à Erbil, capitale du Kurdistan irakien, afin d'élaborer une position commune en vue de la conférence de paix sur la Syrie, rapporte mardi la chaîne de télévision al-Manar.

"Cette série de rencontres est appelée à faire la synthèse de différentes opinions et à permettre aux Kurdes d'intervenir lors de la prochaine conférence en affichant une position forte", a déclaré devant les journalistes Bahjat Bachir, du Conseil national des Kurdes de Syrie.

Ces négociations se tiennent à l'initiative du dirigeant des Kurdes d'Irak, Massoud Barzani.

Ces derniers mois, de sérieuses divergences politiques opposent les deux principaux mouvements des Kurdes syriens, le Conseil national des Kurdes de Syrie et le Conseil populaire du Kurdistan occidental. Le conflit s'est soldé par l'institution par le Conseil populaire, sans participation du Conseil national, de collectivités locales sur certains territoires du nord de la Syrie, ainsi que par la fermeture du poste-frontière entre le Kurdistan irakien et les régions kurdes de la Syrie.



Les Kurdes souhaitent créer un Kurdistan autonome dans le cadre d'une Syrie fédérale à l'instar du Kurdistan irakien. Ils se proposent de soulever la question du statut de la population kurde dans le cadre d'une Syrie fédérale lors de la prochaine conférence internationale sur le règlement du conflit syrien.

Les Kurdes représentent environ 15% de la population syrienne, et se concentrent surtout dans la partie nord du pays. ◆

AFP

## Pas de front commun kurde à la conférence de paix sur la Syrie

KAWERGOSK (Irak), 20 décembre 2013 (AFP)

LE CHEF DE l'opposition syrienne, Ahmad Jarba, a annoncé vendredi que les Kurdes syriens enverraient deux délégations à la Conférence de paix prévue en janvier, une avec l'opposition et une avec les représentants du régime.

Les représentants des principales organisations kurdes négocient cependant depuis mardi pour tenter de présenter un front uni.

"Les Kurdes participeront à la réunion de Genève en deux délégations", a déclaré à l'AFP M. Jarba, chef de la Coalition nationale syrienne, lors d'une visite au camp de réfugiés de Kawergosk, dans la région autonome du Kurdistan irakien.

La conférence dite de Genève-2 doit s'ouvrir à Montreux (Suisse) le 22 janvier.

Il y aura une délégation kurde "avec la Coalition de l'opposition, et une avec la délégation du régime", a dit M. Jarba, sans plus de précision.

Il semble cependant probable que le Conseil national kurde (CNK), membre de la Coalition de l'opposition, fasse partie de la délégation de l'opposition, tandis que le

Conseil populaire du Kurdistan occidental (CPKO), plus proche de Damas, accompagne la délégation du régime.

Le CPKO regroupe plusieurs mouvements, dont le Parti de l'union démocratique (PYD), l'organisation armée kurde la plus puissante en Syrie.

Le CNK et le CPKO sont en désaccord depuis que le premier a annoncé, sans l'accord du second, la création d'une administration autonome de transition dans les zones à majorité kurde du nord-est du pays.

Cependant, des représentants des deux organisations sont réunis depuis mardi à Erbil, la capitale du Kurdistan irakien, pour tenter de s'accorder.

"Nous avons eu un certain nombre de réunions avec nos frères du Conseil populaire du Kurdistan occidental, dans le but d'unir la position kurde", a affirmé à l'AFP le porte-parole du CNK, Nassereddin Ibrahim.

Les deux organisations souhaitent présenter une délégation kurde indépendante à la conférence de paix, mais si cela se révèle impossible, "les deux délégations représenteront la volonté du peuple kurde en Syrie, dans l'intérêt d'une Syrie démocratique", a-t-il ajouté.

Plus de 126.000 personnes sont mortes depuis le début du conflit en Syrie. Mais les zones à majorité kurde étaient restées relativement épargnées, jusqu'à l'éruption cette année de combats entre milices kurdes et rebelles jihadistes.

Ces combats ont depuis poussé des dizaines de milliers de Kurdes syriens vers le Kurdistan irakien, qui accueille, selon l'ONU, plus de 203.000 réfugiés. ●



# Terreur et attentisme chez les chrétiens de Syrie

Les fidèles sont plus que jamais partagés entre rejet de la dictature et peur des djihadistes

LAURE STEPHAN

Beyrouth, correspondance

**L**eïla est amère. Chrétienne orthodoxe, elle s'est rendue dans les banlieues de Damas au début du soulèvement, en 2011, pour rencontrer manifestants et habitants et apporter son aide. Elle a pris part une fois à un rassemblement antirégime.

Leïla – dont le prénom a été changé – est désormais engagée au Liban auprès des réfugiés syriens, qui vivent dans des conditions de plus en plus dramatiques. Elle reste animée par un sentiment de révolte : « *Je peux comprendre les chrétiens qui ont peur, qui sont prudents. Pas ceux qui ont embrassé le parti du criminel, Bachar Al-Assad. Qui a plongé la Syrie dans l'oppression et la corruption ? Qui a ouvert le feu ? On ne peut pas récrire l'histoire ! Beaucoup de chrétiens disent "ni le régime ni la rébellion". Mais ni l'un ni l'autre, ça veut dire le vide.* »

Leïla le sait bien, pourtant : l'extension du conflit armé et la montée des groupes fanatiques, à commencer par Etat islamique en Irak et au Levant (EIL), qu'ici on nomme plus souvent par son acronyme arabe, « Daech », ne font qu'augmenter l'angoisse des chrétiens, pour la majorité restés en retrait. « *L'avenir est sombre. La communauté a le sentiment que son tour est venu, qu'elle est un instrument, menacée par les djihadistes et par le régime. Beaucoup s'interrogent sur l'origine des tirs d'obus contre des régions chrétiennes de Damas* », affirme Leïla. Ou sur l'essor incontrôlé de « Daech », qui évolue dans la mouvance d'Al-Qaïda.

A Rakka, dans le nord-est, les intégristes ont transformé une église en base logistique, déboulonnant la croix de l'édifice reli-

gieux où claque désormais l'étendard noir des islamistes. Si cette profanation est le fait de djihadistes, le geste sert la thèse brandie par le régime depuis des années, se posant en défenseur des minorités.

Protégés, les chrétiens, sous Bachar Al-Assad ? Ils jouissaient certes de la liberté de culte, mais étaient privés de représentation politique consistante et vivaient, comme tous les Syriens, sous la loi de l'omerta. Motivé par l'incertitude, l'attentisme chrétien a des racines profondes : le malaise soulevé par la « réislamisation » de la société syrienne, encouragée par le régime ; le spectre de l'Irak désintégré ; celui du Liban confessionnel.

## Majorité silencieuse

« *Le régime nous a manipulés pendant quarante ans. Ce qu'on fantasmait a fini par advenir : la montée des intégristes, la dislocation du pays* », juge un chrétien installé à Damas, resté à l'écart, même s'il déteste le régime comme, croit-il, une partie du clergé. A côté de la majorité silencieuse ou de ceux qui appuient la révolte, d'autres chrétiens continuent pourtant de plébisciter le pouvoir.

« *Bachar, on sait ce que c'est. A-t-il maltraité les chrétiens ? Un autre leadership, c'est l'inconnu, résume Salwa, réfugiée originaire d'Alep, nostalgique d'« avant » et résolument anti-insurgés. Vous les trouvez sympathiques, vous, les barbus armés qui essaient dans le pays ? On ne peut pas me faire croire qu'avec eux les chrétiens auront une place.* »

Combien sont-ils, comme Salwa, à avoir fui Alep, qui a basculé dans la guerre à l'été 2012 ? Plus de la moitié, estime le père jésuite Nawras Sammour, originaire de la grande ville du nord de la Syrie. Selon lui, un exode de même ampleur a eu lieu à Homs,

tandis que la plaine de la Jézirah, à l'est, où les groupes extrémistes ont progressé, s'est vidée de plus de 70 % des chrétiens. Tous n'ont pas quitté le pays, certains se sont réinstallés dans des régions considérées comme plus sûres, telles Damas ou le Wadi Al-Nassara.

Depuis 2011, des prélats syriens, mais aussi des représentants auto-proclamés de la communauté, à l'instar de sœur Agnès-Marie de la Croix – par ailleurs libanaise –, ont fait le tour des capitales occidentales pour alerter sur le sort des chrétiens.

Mgr Mario Zenari, représentant du Vatican à Damas, se montre beaucoup plus nuancé. Il regrette même les discours « imprudents » de certains chefs religieux en faveur du régime. Pendant les deux premières années de la révolte, les chrétiens n'ont jamais été spécifiquement visés, affirme-t-il : « *Il y a eu des morts, parce que tout le monde subit la guerre.* »

Mais, aujourd'hui, le nonce est inquiet de la montée en puissance des groupes extrémistes « d'étrangers », à commencer par celle d'EIL. La donne a changé, estime-t-il : « *Depuis le printemps, il y a eu des menaces, des profanations contre des lieux de culte chrétiens. Et, récemment, à Sadate [où radicaux et armée se sont affrontés pour le contrôle de dépôts d'armes], des chrétiens ont été tués.* »

Le Père Nawras Sammour ne veut pas s'étendre sur les allégeances des chrétiens. Pour lui, l'urgence est ailleurs : aider, avec ses collègues du Service jésuite des réfugiés, les innombrables déplacés à Damas, toutes confessions confondues, et « *sauver ce qui peut encore l'être d'une Syrie inclusive, pour tous* ». Ce qui passe par des activités destinées aux enfants.

Le jésuite raconte le déplace-

ment perpétuel des fronts de cette guerre et redoute que « *beaucoup des chrétiens partis à l'étranger ne reviennent pas, si elle se prolonge* ». C'est l'une des préoccupations majeures des églises syriennes. Mgr Zenari veut voir une lueur d'espoir dans le carnage syrien, avec cette « *solidarité et cet engagement humanitaire qui se manifestent au-delà des communautés* ». Il veut espérer, comme un ultime sursaut, que la conférence internationale Genève 2 ouvrira une sortie de crise. La tenue de ces négociations, annoncées pour le 22 janvier 2014, reste toutefois incertaine.

## « Attitude de repli »

De l'autre côté de la frontière, à Beyrouth, les chrétiens aussi s'interrogent sur les conséquences du drame syrien. Le clergé libanais a condamné l'enlèvement de religieuses d'un couvent orthodoxe de Maaloula par le Front Al-Nosra. Plusieurs conférences se sont succédé pour disséquer le sort de la communauté en Orient. On n'y a pas vu beaucoup de laïques engagés, mais plutôt une brochette de personnalités politiques et religieuses.

« *Ces conférences ne font que relancer l'alarmisme* », regrette un laïque, pour qui le discours de la peur face aux développements syriens l'a emporté parmi les chrétiens du Liban des deux camps politiques (pro et anti-Bachar Al-Assad). « *La peur est constitutive des chrétiens d'Orient. Il est temps de s'interroger sur notre attitude de repli* », regrette-t-il.

D'origine irakienne, ce Libanais est persuadé que « *si la révolte en Syrie était parvenue à des succès significatifs rapides, les chrétiens l'auraient rejointe. La rébellion est aussi en cause : elle n'a pas su envoyer de garanties aux minorités. Et quel chrétien pourrait se fier aux djihadistes ?* » ■



## Reportage

Ketermaya (Liban)  
Envoyée spéciale

Ils sortent par petits groupes des baraques du camp de réfugiés syriens de Ketermaya – un village à 25 km au sud-est de Beyrouth – qui semblait désert l'instant d'avant. Ils portent des vêtements trop légers pour le vent glacial sur ces pentes de l'Iqlim Al-Kharroub, des tongs sans chaussettes sur le sol boueux et glissant. Les plus petits ont le visage sale, le nez qui coule.

Les réfugiés se rassemblent pour ce qui, dans ce lieu d'infortune, semble presque un miracle : une distribution de bottes en plastique pour les enfants, à l'initiative d'un particulier. L'organisation est aléatoire, beaucoup repartent les mains vides, dans la colère sourde des mères. Faute de bailleurs de fonds, les aides ne cessent de diminuer au Liban, premier pays d'accueil pour les Syriens. Une situation d'autant plus difficile que l'hiver, arrivé d'un coup avec la tempête Alexa, a plongé plusieurs régions dans un froid mordant.

Lundi 16 décembre, les Nations unies ont lancé un appel de fonds record pour 2014 : 6,5 milliards de dollars (4,7 milliards d'euros) sont nécessaires pour les besoins des 2,4 millions de Syriens réfugiés au Proche-Orient, de la Turquie à l'Égypte, ou déplacés à l'intérieur de leur propre pays en guerre (4,5 millions). Selon l'ONU, le nombre de réfugiés pourrait doubler d'ici à la fin 2014, pour atteindre plus de 4,1 millions.

Pour le seul Liban, où les réfugiés sont aujourd'hui 800 000, selon le Haut-Commissariat aux réfugiés (HCR) – soit un habitant sur cinq –, 1,9 milliard de dollars est nécessaire afin de couvrir l'action de l'ONU, d'associations et du gouvernement libanais à destination des réfugiés mais aussi des communautés d'accueil libanaises défavorisées. Quelle somme sera réunie ? Lors du dernier appel, seuls 51 % des montants ont été collectés, grâce d'abord aux États-Unis, au Koweït et à l'Union européenne, les trois principaux donateurs.

A la pointe du soutien politique ou militaire à la rébellion, les riches pays du Golfe (Arabie saoudite, Qatar et Emirats) n'apparaissent pas sur la dernière liste des pourvoyeurs des caisses des Nations unies au Liban. Ils lui préférèrent une aide distribuée à travers des canaux privés, parfois religieux.

Résultat : les agences de l'ONU

# Au Liban, premier pays d'accueil pour les Syriens, les réfugiés « manquent de tout »

Faute de bailleurs de fonds, les aides ne cessent de diminuer, alors que l'hiver aggrave la situation



Un camp de réfugiés syriens, dans la plaine de la Bekaa, le 11 décembre. MOHAMED AZAKIR/REUTERS

doivent procéder à des « choix douloureux », autrement dit à des coupes claires. Le HCR avait déjà mis en garde au printemps : on approchait le « point de rupture » pour cette crise, la plus grave du moment pour les Nations unies. Au Liban, l'accès aux soins de santé se limite désormais aux cas les plus urgents : femmes enceintes, enfants. Seul un tiers des jeunes en âge d'être scolarisés a accès à une éducation, à travers l'école publique ou des cours du soir. Les Nations unies ont également réévalué les besoins : depuis octobre, l'aide (nourriture, chauffage, produits d'hygiène), maintenue aux plus nécessiteux, a été supprimée à 30 % des réfugiés.

Noura, jeune maman du camp de Ketermaya, ne comprend pas pourquoi elle a été exclue de cette assistance. « Nos enfants meurent de froid. Nous n'avons pas de poêle pour nous chauffer, pas de vêtements chauds ! Tout manque : l'eau, l'électricité », raconte cette femme originaire de la banlieue de Damas.

Racha, dont le dernier-né de 2 mois est blotti sous des couvertures dans le petit logement fait de contreplaqués recouverts de bâches, fait face à la même détresse : « Nous ne recevons plus rien de l'ONU. J'ai trois enfants, mon mari ne travaille pas, comme presque aucun homme dans le camp. » Pour tenir, elle attend tous les deux mois le colis alimentaire distribué par le propriétaire du terrain, Ali Tafech, élu local du Courant du futur, le parti de l'ancien premier ministre sunnite Saad

Hariri. « Mais on a fini le colis avant que le suivant arrive, s'alarme Racha. Alors on vivote en s'arrangeant avec une voisine qui a encore droit aux bons alimentaires. »

La venue de l'hiver, qui a recouvert de neige certains villages de la plaine de la Bekaa, fragilise des réfugiés de plus en plus désespérés, qu'ils vivent dans des logements en dur ou, comme près de 80 000 d'entre eux, dans des camps informels. Dans le nord du Liban, un nourrisson atteint de la jaunisse et soumis au froid glacial est mort vendredi 13 décembre.

**Lors du dernier appel des Nations unies, seuls 51 % des montants nécessaires pour couvrir les besoins ont été réunis**

A Ketermaya, terrain situé dans une cuvette et relié par un chemin de terre impraticable en voiture, « la pluie est parfois rentrée dans les baraques », raconte Racha. Le camp est à l'écart du village, invisible au visiteur de cette localité devenue tristement célèbre en 2010 après le lynchage d'un Égyptien soupçonné de meurtre.

Beyrouth, pour qui les réfugiés représentent une forte pression économique et démographique, accuse la communauté internationale de ne pas être à la hauteur. Et

rappelle que le Liban n'a jamais fermé ses frontières. Les régions d'Ersal ou de Chebaa, voisines de la Syrie, accueillent régulièrement des civils fuyant les batailles en cours de l'autre côté de la frontière. Une conférence de donateurs pour la Syrie doit avoir lieu en janvier au Koweït. Mais celle qui s'y était tenue début 2013 s'était soldée par de nombreuses promesses non tenues, notamment par les pays du Golfe.

La diminution de l'aide institutionnelle laisse le champ libre à d'autres initiatives. Ali Tafech, le propriétaire du terrain de Ketermaya, fait visiter le camp à un représentant d'une organisation islamique britannique. Les latrines, qui font aussi office de douches, sont spartiates. Une poignée d'antennes paraboliques trônent au-dessus des baraques, convoyées par M. Tafech. Il montre aussi au potentiel bienfaiteur la mosquée qu'il a installée – une de ses fiertés – bien que l'appel à la prière des mosquées de Ketermaya arrive jusqu'au camp, porté par le vent.

Accroupie, la vieille Oum Mohamed fait la vaisselle à même le sol avec de l'eau glacée. C'est là aussi qu'elle prépare les repas – du riz, des pâtes, du boulgour (blé concassé) – sur des briques de béton, car il n'y a pas de cuisine dans le camp. Elle refuse de suivre les nouvelles de Syrie : « Mon pays est à feu et à sang, détruit. Pourquoi regarder, pour pleurer ? » Ses préoccupations sont ailleurs : tenir face à la misère. ■

LAURE STEPHAN



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## OBAMA'S IRAN GAMBLE

A historic but temporary deal to curtail Tehran's nuclear programs may determine the future of the Middle East and the shape of Obama's diplomatic legacy

by Michael Crowley/Geneva



**A calculated risk** Obama announces the temporary agreement with Iran at the White House

IT WAS ONE OF THE great promises of Barack Obama's presidency: that the world might be transformed by the leadership of a President who had an African Muslim father, who lived in Indonesia as a boy and who offered a foreign policy vision that promoted talking to enemies above threatening them. The idea literally brought some of Obama's supporters, shell-shocked by the horror of Iraq, to tears. Not so his opponents, who warned that the idea was dangerously naive and that negotiating with the U.S.'s enemies was a formula for disaster.

Obama's vision didn't change the world overnight. For much of his first term, his critics claimed vindication, particularly when it came to Iran, which rejected his early olive branch and marched steadily toward nuclear weapons capability. But Obama's new nuclear deal with Tehran undermines that narrative. His biggest foreign policy gamble has achieved a success—a tentative and fragile one, to be sure—in a presidency desperately in need of forward momentum.

The deal could still go badly wrong, and the critics may yet be proved right. The U.S. and Iran are not friends, and serious people from Israel to Washington warn that Obama may find himself outfoxed by hard-liners in Tehran who still condone chants of "Death to America." It's also possible that the document signed by Secretary of State John Kerry in Geneva on Nov. 24 is the first step toward a legacy-making accomplishment, one that leaves the U.S. safer and the world more peaceful and meets that early promise of transformation through communication.

The agreement, which trades temporary relief for Iran from international economic sanctions in return for limits on its nuclear program, lets Tehran off easy, Republicans and even some Democrats complain. "We have just rewarded very bad and dangerous behavior," House Intelligence Committee chairman Mike Rogers told CNN. Republican Senator Mark Kirk said the deal "appears to provide the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism with billions of dollars in exchange for cosmetic concessions that neither fully freeze nor significantly roll back its nuclear infrastructure."

Israeli leaders, meanwhile, were furious that the deal hadn't forced a total halt to Iran's uranium enrichment, the complex scientific process that imbues a harmless metallic element with almost supernatural explosive power. "A historic mistake," declared Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "If a nuclear suitcase blows up five years from now in New York or Madrid, it will be because of the deal that was signed" in Geneva, warned Naftali Bennett, Israel's Minister of Industry, Trade and Labor.

But here's another five-year scenario: American tourists visiting Tehran, Iran's unrestricted oil supply keeping global energy prices low and the Middle East more stable and free of a nuclear arms race. The Geneva deal may only be a first step, a six-month trial that pauses Iran's nuclear program while diplomats pursue a long-term agreement that would halt it permanently. But if such a grand bargain could be reached, the future bends. "If Iran seizes this opportunity, the Iranian people will benefit from rejoining the international community, and we can begin to chip away at the mistrust between our two nations," Obama said in remarks shortly after the deal was struck. "This would provide Iran with a dignified path to forge a new beginning with the wider world based on mutual respect."

### Let's Make a Deal

EVEN THE TENUOUS TRUST BETWEEN THE U.S. and Iran that delivered the Geneva deal has taken years to build. You can trace its roots to a 2007 Democratic primary debate in Charleston, S.C. It was there that candidate Obama proclaimed his heretical willingness to talk directly to the leaders of hostile nations, including Iran. His rivals pounced, warning that the youthful Obama could not be trusted with foreign policy. Hillary Clinton branded him "irresponsible and naive." John McCain called the statement a sign of Obama's "inexperience and reckless judgment." And George W. Bush told Israel's Knesset, in a clear shot at Obama, "Some seem to believe that we should negotiate with the terrorists and radicals, as if some ingenious argument will persuade them they have been wrong all along."

Obama survived the political fallout and soon after taking office sent a letter to Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, offering to talk. Events would complicate his plans: in September 2009, Tehran was caught red-handed violating its U.N. treaty obligations by building a secret uranium-enrichment facility deep in a mountain near the town of Fordow. Talks would have to wait.

So Obama worked a tougher second track, building an international coalition to impose harsh economic sanctions on Iran.





**Done deal** Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, in glasses, and Secretary of State John Kerry after the agreement in Geneva

The U.N. had already found the country in violation of its international agreements in 2003, when it failed to disclose its original nuclear program. The new revelations led to further U.N. sanctions as well as new ones passed by the U.S. Congress and the European Union. The combination slowly strangled Iran's economy. Oil exports were slashed by 39% last year, and net oil-export revenue, at \$69 billion, was down 27%. An estimated \$50 billion in assets remained

frozen abroad. Iran's currency, the rial, lost 80% in value against the U.S. dollar.

The sanctions also had a political impact. Three years after the country's hard-line regime crushed a 2009 popular uprising, last June's presidential election elevated Hassan Rouhani, a seasoned and sophisticated diplomat and close ally of Khamenei's who promised engagement with the West—in contrast to his gleefully bellicose predecessor, the Holocaust-denying Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Some Iranian officials suggested a new opening was possible with Rouhani, though it has never been clear whether such an open-

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URANIUM**

ing was due to Rouhani's approach or the tightening sanctions. Either way, it looked like an opportunity to the White House. "We decided to take that seriously and test it," a senior Administration official says.

Beginning in 2011, Obama sent mid-level envoys to the Gulf nation of Oman to hold secret talks with the Iranians. But the process gathered momentum earlier this year, according to an Associated Press report. More senior officials, including Deputy Secretary of State William Burns and Vice President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, met with the Iranians in March, even before Rouhani's election—and then five more times after it, from August to October. It was the most active diplomacy between the two nations since Washington and Tehran negotiated the 1981 release of the American hostages. While Obama hid the talks even from many Administration officials, the meetings produced some visible signs of progress, like a friendly Sept. 27 phone call between Obama and Rouhani, the first direct contact between an American President and an Iranian leader since 1979.

All that work paved the way for the multinational meeting in Geneva. There the U.S. joined Russia, China, Germany, France and the U.K. in two sessions of laborious talks. The first, in early November, ended in discord. The second, in a five-star luxury hotel where coffee cost \$11 and an armored vehicle was parked outside, seemed unlikely to succeed. Negotiators from six nations met in a second-floor conference room adjacent to a party where drunken revelers danced to Irish folk music completely unaware that hand-edited documents about nuclear technology were being passed around a table down the hall. It wasn't until after midnight that Kerry felt confident he could reach a deal with an Iranian counterpart who, as a senior State Department official said, seemed "anxious" and clearly under pressure from Tehran.

At 3 a.m. on Nov. 24, the parties agreed to a four-page document setting out the terms. "For 25 years, hostilities between Iran and the United States was an uncrossable chasm, but with these negotiations we have built a bridge," Amir Mohebian, a Tehran-based political analyst, tells TIME. "We have broken the taboo of meeting face to face."

### Was the Deal Worth Striking?

IN ANY DEAL BETWEEN ADVERSARIES, IT'S more important to pay attention to what is done than what is said. The Geneva agreement requires Iran to neutralize its stockpile of uranium enriched above the level needed for the research and medical purposes it says are the chief aim of its nuclear program. It limits Iran's production and use of centrifuges, which enrich uranium to higher levels of purity by spinning up to a hundred times as fast as a washing machine. Iran also agreed that it will freeze its construction of a heavy reactor whose plutonium by-product offers a second path to a bomb. In return, Tehran will gain access to an estimated \$6 billion to \$7 billion in foreign-exchange earnings and be allowed to again trade petrochemicals, automobiles, airplane parts and precious metals. That pales compared with the \$25 billion in oil revenue U.S. officials say Iran will lose over the six-month life of the deal. The world, the officials say, still has Iran in a box.

Critics say Iran has gotten something worth far more than what it lost: the

## TAMING A DEADLY SCIENCE

The Geneva deal attempts to curtail



### How and why does uranium get enriched?

About 99% of any uranium sample is uranium 238, with three extra neutrons in the nucleus. The remaining 1% is the lighter uranium 235, which is much more subject to explosive fission. Centrifuges spin out the heavier U-238, leaving increasingly pure—and increasingly fissile—U-235 behind.



### What are the different uses for uranium enriched to 5%, 20% and 90%?

Uranium that's only 5% enriched is sufficient to run many nuclear power reactors. Others require 20% enrichment, as do reactors that make isotopes for medical use. A bomb requires 90% enrichment. The jump from 1% to 20% is much harder than the one from 20% to 90%.

## WHAT IRAN GOT, AND GAVE UP, IN THE DEAL

The deal hatched in Geneva is only temporary, a six-month trial period during which negotiators will attempt to cement a more lasting agreement. For now, Iran has promised to cease all activity that could enable it to weaponize its nuclear program and to give greater access to inspectors from the U.N.'s atomic energy agency. In return, the Iranians have won roughly \$7 billion in sanctions relief in the form of eased trade restrictions and access to frozen assets.

world's implicit approval of its nuclear program. Iran has, after all, sworn to eliminate the state of Israel and has sponsored terrorist attacks against the U.S. and its allies from Afghanistan and Iraq to South America. Israel and much of the U.S. Congress believe that Khamenei's regime can never be trusted with the ability to enrich uranium at any level, for the same reason you wouldn't let a dangerous man keep a dull knife if he knows how to sharpen it.

Iran's reaction to the deal hardly consoled the skeptics. When Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif strode into the Geneva press center for a briefing Sunday afternoon, the Iranian journalists present burst into applause. Back in

### BEFORE THE DEAL



#### The tools to make a bomb

Since 2003, Iran has installed an estimated 11,000 uranium-enriching centrifuges at facilities around the country. It possesses 7,154 kg of uranium enriched to between 3.5% and 5% and 196 kg enriched to 20%. At the same time, it has built a plutonium production plant in Arak.



#### International isolation

The U.S., U.N. and E.U. have steadily increased sanctions on the Iranian economy, blocking Iran's oil exports, prohibiting transactions with most of its banks, freezing assets held overseas and blacklisting senior government officials.



#### Outside inspection

Iran, a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, has allowed U.N. inspectors to visit some but not all of its suspected nuclear facilities, including the secret military base at Parchin and the underground uranium-enrichment plant at Fordow.

Tehran, Rouhani held a triumphal press conference with the families of Iranian nuclear scientists killed by assassins presumed to have been sent by Israel or the U.S. "World powers have recognized the nuclear rights of Iran," Rouhani declared, adding that the sanctions regime "had been broken" by the deal and that in time the cracks in the sanctions "will widen."

In a worst-case scenario, Iran will resume progress toward a nuclear bomb. Critics rightly point out that the terms set in Geneva are markedly softer than past U.N. edicts, which insisted that Iran halt all its enrichment activity. Obama's critics believe Khamenei has played the President for a fool—dispatching the Western-



Iran's production of enriched uranium and plutonium, the fuels for nuclear weapons



**Is it easy to dispose of enriched uranium?**

It's painstaking but not complicated. Scientists reverse the enrichment process by mixing U-238 with U-235. Once you've done that, it would be as difficult—and as time-consuming—to re-enrich the stockpile. An alternative is to oxidize the U-235, which would render it unsuitable for use in a bomb.



**What is plutonium, and how are its uses and dangers different from uranium's?**

Iran's Arak reactor uses plutonium, a different element from uranium but also usable in bombs. Diplomatic controls on Arak are crucial because Western military options are limited; plutonium's extreme toxicity means the fallout from an attack on Arak could kill many civilians.

**UNDER THE TEMPORARY DEAL**



**Capping Iran's nuclear program**

Iran will not enrich uranium beyond 5% and will get rid of its stockpile of uranium at 20%. It won't install any more new centrifuges and will have to keep a number of its existing ones inactive. It will also halt work surrounding the Arak reactor.



**A reward for cooperation**

In return, Iran wins a modest amount of sanctions relief—including the unfreezing of \$4.2 billion of its own assets in foreign banks and loosening of commercial restrictions on gold, cars and petrochemicals. But the oil and banking sanctions remain in place.



**Limiting risk of a nuclear surprise**

The deal allows for much more intrusive monitoring by U.N. inspectors, granting them daily access to key enrichment facilities as well as to centrifuge-assembly workshops. The new inspections regime reduces Iran's ability to build a bomb in secret.

**THREE HURDLES TO A FINAL DEAL**

**1.**

**Temporary or permanent?**

The Geneva deal describes a subsequent grand bargain as also having a time limit. Permanent sanctions relief will require permanent concessions from Iran.

**2.**

**The right to enrichment**

The Iranians now claim they have won an implicit right to uranium enrichment—a nonstarter in many American policy circles that will shadow future talks.

**3.**

**Nonnuclear sanctions**

The U.S. and its allies retain sanctions on Iran for a variety of non-nuclear issues like terrorism and missile-treaty violations. Keeping them in place could block a deal.

**Now Comes the Hard Part**

EVEN IF OBAMA'S TRUST IS WELL PLACED and Iran negotiated the Geneva deal in good faith, a long-term agreement remains unlikely. "There's a fundamental conflict of national interest between the U.S. and Iran," says Gary Samore, who served as Obama's coordinator for weapons of mass destruction and nonproliferation policy until earlier this year. "They want to have a nuclear weapons capability, and that means they want a very large-scale enrichment capability. We want to keep their enrichment capability very small so that they don't have a nuclear weapons option." Persuasion won't change the Iranians' minds, Samore says, only "coercive pressure."

Some of the most powerful figures within the Iranian regime also remain deeply hostile to the U.S. The day of the talks, thousands of volunteer Basij militiamen attending a Tehran speech by Khamenei chanted, "Death to America." Many close observers of the Supreme Leader, who has final say over Iran's foreign policy, say his loathing for the U.S. may keep him from striking a larger deal. "He is an isolated, paranoid figure who is convinced the U.S. and the West raise concerns over the nuclear program only as a fig leaf for a hidden goal of regime change," says a former Obama Administration official who worked on Iran issues.

That hardly sounds like a man Obama can trust. But after 30 years of conflict, trust may be too much to ask. That's why Obama aims to set strict limits on Iran's nuclear program, with aggressive international monitoring that can blow the whistle on any move to make a bomb in time to stop it. (The Geneva agreement already gives U.N. inspectors the right to daily access to key Iranian enrichment centers.)

The next few months should reveal how serious Iran is about living under such limits. In a best-case scenario, Iran shows good faith and the talks move toward cooperation on larger issues like Syria's civil war and Afghanistan. But if the Iranians are caught cheating or disputing terms of the agreement, the bargain could collapse. Obama's critics will crow, and the prospect of military action, which he desperately wants to avoid, will again loom large. Which is why the next few months matter hugely, both to the security of the U.S. and Israel and to the fate of Obama's presidency.

—WITH REPORTING BY ARYN BAKER/BEIRUT AND ZEKE MILLER/WASHINGTON ■

educated, English-fluent Zarif to charm the world and put the onus on Obama to show that he's serious about diplomacy.

Obama officials insist they're no fools. They say no long-term resolution to the issue of Iran's nuclear program is possible without giving the Islamic Republic some indication they can trust the U.S. to deliver sanctions relief. And they say strict, expanded international inspections, along with limits on Iran's centrifuge capacity and uranium stockpiles, make it virtually impossible for Iran to build a bomb—at least without being discovered in time for the U.S. to crack down with new sanctions or an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities.

In any case, it's not clear whether Obama could have snared a better deal. In the days before Geneva, some members of Congress called for new sanctions to choke off what remains of Iran's oil flow, with the goal of forcing Iran into more concessions. But Obama officials challenge that logic. "The U.S. does not accept the argument that if you just kept cranking up the sanctions, the Iranians would ultimately cry uncle," says a senior State Department official. Doing so "could be counterproductive and drive the Iranians away from any deal." More sanctions could also alienate China and Russia, whose pressure on Tehran is already grudging.

# Iran, from enemy to ally

David Patrikarakos

**LONDON** The recent nuclear deal with Iran has caused a predictable furor among Middle East hawks. But it offers an opportunity for a much bigger breakthrough: rapprochement and, eventually, even strategic cooperation with Iran.

International alliances morph and shift; relationships freeze and unfreeze. For the last 30 years American-Iranian relations have been stuck in a cycle of suspicion and mistrust, to the detriment of both countries.

America must now begin to think about a gradual realignment of its Middle East policy, one that aims to reintegrate Iran into the international fold and, over time, transform an enemy into an ally.

It won't be easy. But, in the long term, it would be good for the United States, Israel and the Iranian people.

There are many benefits. Iran, which sits between the Caspian Sea and the Gulf, can check Chinese access to critical energy sources, while acting as a buffer against an ever-truculent Russia. It also affects events in Lebanon, through its ties with Hezbollah, and in Israel and the Palestinian territories, through its ties with Hamas. And there won't be a solution to Syria's civil war without it.

Iran currently opposes the United States in all those conflicts — largely because of historical enmity with Washington rather than ideological hostility alone. It uses Hezbollah to further its regional interests and rails against Israel to garner popular Arab support, not from a genuine commitment to the cause. And while its support for President Bashar al-Assad of Syria is more sincere, Iran's past behavior suggests it might be willing to compromise.

In 2003, fearing American military action, Iran reached out, via the Swiss, to American officials. It offered to put everything — including its support for Hamas and Hezbollah — up for discussion. Controversy surrounds the offer, which Washington eventually turned down. But it showed Iran was willing to use its support for militants as a bargaining chip.

And the United States and Iran have several overlapping interests. Bound by mutual antipathy toward the Taliban, the two countries cooperated

**The nuclear deal opens the door for a much bigger breakthrough.**

1980-88 war with Iraq to today's sanctions, it has suffered. The country needs investment in its oil and financial sectors and foreign expertise to develop its economy, but those are impossible without fixing its relationship with the United States.

It's easy to forget that the two nations were once allies. In the 1970s Iran and Saudi Arabia formed Richard M. Nixon's "twin pillar" strategy to counter Soviet influence in the region. Part of America's unpopularity in Iran comes from its support of the hated shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, before he was overthrown in the 1979 revolution. But a realignment today, based on a new convergence of interests, would be a very different proposition.

Becoming a partner of sorts with a member of "the axis of evil" would be extraordinarily hard for America. For a start, the Saudis would be horrified.

But Saudi Arabia's opposition doesn't really matter as much these days. The United States built its ties with the Saudis on a need for oil that no longer exists to the same degree; the relationship is artificial and anachronistic.

New fracking technologies have made America the biggest producer of hydrocarbons and non-OPEC exports in the world, while Canadian, South America and African sources are becoming increasingly plentiful. The Saudis still influence oil markets but they can no longer shock the global economy as they did with the 1973 oil embargo. Unlike Iran, Saudi Arabia has little to offer besides oil; it doesn't have a democratic tradition and its financing of Wahhabi Islam has seriously damaged American interests across the world.

Israel, like Saudi Arabia, fiercely objects to the nuclear deal. But that's shortsighted. Détente between Iran and America could be good for Israel in the long run. Both the Jewish state and the Persian Shiite state are outsiders in a predominantly Sunni Arab Middle East. They were allies before 1979. And though Iran supports Hezbollah and Hamas, its army has never taken part in the many Arab wars against Israel.

in the 2001 war in Afghanistan. Today, both oppose Al Qaeda; Iran can help with intelligence and regional knowledge in that fight.

Iran would clearly benefit from warmer relations. From its

Even after the overthrow of the shah and the subsequent hostage crisis, Israel lobbied hard for the new Islamic Republic in Washington. Seeking to retain Iran's friendship amid a sea of hostile Arab states, Israel even helped Iran in its war against Iraq.

No matter how many peace treaties are signed with Arab leaders, only Iran has proved it can work with Israel. Moreover, Iran cannot be contained

forever; it is far better for the two countries to come to terms based on shared interests.

Iran is still a human rights violator and a sponsor of terrorism. But 30 years of sanctions and silence haven't tempered its behavior. Conversely, engagement strengthens Iran's moderates. One of Hassan Rouhani's first acts as president was to release political prisoners. He has hinted that more concessions could follow if relations improve.

The Iranian people are the West's biggest asset. During the Cold War, Communist governments remained hostile to the West but their citizens' yearning for Western freedoms contributed to the downfall of those regimes.

Iranians yearn, too. The country has a strong tradition of constitutionalism stretching back more than 100 years and its citizens are sympathetic to American-style democracy and know their lives would be vastly improved through détente with the West. That's why they voted in large numbers for Mr. Rouhani earlier this year, and for the reformer Mir Hossein Mousavi, four years ago.

Détente won't happen overnight. Much of Iran's clerical establishment is instinctively anti-American, and the American right remains hostile toward any rapprochement with Iran.

But both Mr. Obama and Mr. Rouhani have proved they can go beyond their respective hard-liners to make a deal. The 21st-century Middle East is a new and dangerous place. To lead the region into a better future, Washington must adapt and leave old enmities behind.

**DAVID PATRIKARAKOS**, a journalist and an associate fellow at the Institute of Iranian Studies at the University of St. Andrews, is the author of "Nuclear Iran: The Birth of an Atomic State."



# Turkey's strained Kurdish peace process

<http://www.foreignpolicy.com>  
BY Chase Winter

Speaking in a discreet village house adorned with Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) flags, posters of imprisoned PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan, and three Kurdish activists killed in an unsolved assassination in Paris last year, Cemil Bayik, the co-president of the Kurdistan Communities' Union (KCK), the umbrella organization that encompasses the PKK and its affiliates, says the peace process in Turkey is over unless the governing Justice and Development Party (AK Party) moves from preliminary talks to a roadmap for a genuine solution to the Kurdish problem.

In a move last year that bred much optimism, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his AK Party entered into direct negotiations with Ocalan to end nearly three decades of conflict. In March, Ocalan declared a cease-fire and the PKK began a withdrawal from Turkey to its bases in Iraqi Kurdistan.

Both the PKK and AK Party agreed to "let the guns fall silent and politics speak," rhetoric Bayik says the AK Party hasn't lived up to. As a result, in early September, Bayik halted the PKK's withdrawal citing lack of progress in the talks. Some of the PKK's guerrilla forces remain in Turkey.

"We are continuing the cease-fire, but if the government insists on its current policies then we will revise our stance," Bayik, a founding member of the PKK, said in an exclusive interview at the PKK's base in the Qandil Mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan.

In late September, the AK Party announced a democratization package it said would advance the peace process. Yet the reforms fell far short of Kurdish expectations, symbolically allowing for the return of village names to their original Kurdish, legalizing the Kurdish letters Q, W, X, abolishing the pledge of allegiance that forced Kurdish children to say they were Turks, and paving the way for the opening of private schools in Kurdish.

The PKK demands the release of thousands of Kurdish political prisoners including journalists, civil rights activists, and members of the legal, pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) caught up in the sweeping KCK trials. Bayik says the trials against unarmed political activists and elected officials is an example of how the government is not living up to its rhetoric of letting the guns fall silent and politics speak. The trials have been criticized by domestic and international human rights groups.

Meanwhile, demands for full Kurdish



education in state schools remain unmet, as do better prison conditions for Ocalan and an independent party to observe the peace process negotiations. And as demanded by the PKK, no legal reform has been prepared to set the foundation for a sustained peace process.

"We want to solve the problem not with war, but with democratic methods," Bayik said, warning that unless the government moves from preliminary talks to a roadmap the cease-fire could end.

With a string of municipal, national, and presidential elections in Turkey scheduled through 2015, few believe Erdogan will further the reform process and recognize the Kurds as a people with natural rights, the primary demand of the Kurdish nationalist movement.

"Are we always going to wait for elections? How long do we have to wait?" Bayik asked. "We undertook the peace process and cease-fire to create the foundation for a roadmap and formal negotiations to solve the Kurdish problem, not to allow the AK Party to easily win elections and take advantage of there being no conflict. The Kurdish problem can't be used for tactical benefit, it can't be sacrificed for election gains and buying time," Bayik said.

The peace process has implications for the broader Middle East, and as the co-president of KCK, Bayik's purview extends well beyond Qandil and Turkey. In Syria, the Democratic Union Party (PYD), the KCK's Syrian franchise, has established a de facto autonomous region in the largely Kurdish populated areas of Syria since the regime strategically withdrew in July 2012. Over the past six months the PYD has made headway against al Qaeda affiliated Islamist groups, and is proving to be the best organized and well-armed group in the Kurdish parts of Syria along the border with Turkey. On November 12, the PYD and more than 30 organizations announced the formation of an interim administration in the Kurdish populated areas of Syria, known to Kurds as Rojava.



Bayik accuses Turkey of using the nascent peace process to support jihadist groups against the PYD. "We didn't start the peace process so that Turkey could move the war to Rojava by supporting the al-Nusra Front, Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham, and al Qaeda affiliated groups," Bayik said, adding that al Qaeda has made Syria the center of its Middle East strategy. "The biggest bulwark against al Qaeda is Rojava. If al Qaeda takes control in Syria it will be a threat to everybody," he said. "This policy will backfire on Turkey, it already has."

Claims of Turkey's complicity in supporting al Qaeda have been widely reported in the media. Turkey continues to deny active support or an inability to control militants on its territory. Meanwhile, an axis including the Syrian National Coalition, Turkey, and Syrian Kurdish parties backed by Turkey and Kurdistan Regional Government President Masoud Barzani accuse the PYD and PKK of working with the Assad regime.

Bayik denies the charges, arguing the PYD has chosen a "third way" that doesn't take sides and has saved Rojava from sharing the devastating fate of Aleppo and Homs. "Syria doesn't have the power to control all areas. It is good they are not attacking the Kurds. Do we have to be bombed by Assad to prove that the PYD doesn't have relations with the regime?" Bayik asked, pointing out the PYD would fight against any group that attacks the Kurds.

The advance of the PYD in Syria has complicated the budding relations between Turkey and the KRG, and the Kurdish cold war playing out between the PKK and Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the two main rivals of the Kurdish nationalist movement. In November, Barzani met Erdogan in the Kurdish city of Diyarbakir in southeastern Turkey. More than "historic" as many including Erdogan and Barzani described the visit, the move was an election bid for the AK Party and a direct challenge to the PKK and BDP. Barzani also took a position against the PYD, which has pushed out pro-KDP factions in the Syrian Kurdish opposition much to the ire of the aspiring →



⇒ Kurdish nationalist leader.

"We are not against economic, political, and diplomatic relations between Turkey and South Kurdistan [KRG], this is normal since they are neighbors. We find this to be positive," Bayik said. "What we oppose are relations that have been developed against the PKK. Barzani is taking up Turkey's policies," Bayik said, accusing Barzani of losing his honor and becoming the "lifesaver" of Erdogan's failures.

By enlisting Barzani, Erdogan sought to involve the KRG leader in the strained peace process against the interests of the PKK. This policy could backfire as it threatens to sideline the PKK, the party that ultimately needs to be a part of any peace process in the region.

"The Turkish state doesn't accept the Kurds as a people with natural rights," Bayik said, describing the fundamental problem that threatens to throw Turkey back into conflict. "The Kurdish issue is

one of the biggest problems in the Middle East. It's the cause of much instability and conflict. If you want stability and non-conflict, then you need to solve this problem." ♦

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the guardian

December 13, 2013

## Syria: al-Qaida-linked rebels kidnap 120 Kurds, monitoring group says

**Civilians were taken from, Ihras, close to the Turkish border, according to Syrian Observatory for Human Rights**

**B**EIRUT (Reuters) - Islamist rebels linked to al Qaeda kidnapped at least 120 Kurdish civilians on Friday from a village near the Turkish border in Aleppo province, a monitoring group said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) fighters entered Ihras, 20 km (12 miles) south of the border town of Azaz, and took the captives, including at least six women, to an unknown location.

The British-based Observatory, which has a network of sources across Syria, cited Arab and Kurdish sources in and around Ihras. Reuters could not immediately verify the report.

The incident is the latest in a series of

kidnappings and killings by ISIL this month targeting Kurds in northern Syria, where mainly Sunni Arab Islamist rebels and Kurdish fighters have clashed repeatedly in recent months.

Control over Syria's northeast, where Kurds predominate, has swung back and forth between them and Islamists, who strongly oppose what they suspect are Kurdish plans to secede.

The Observatory said ISIL had kidnapped 51 Kurdish civilians from the towns of Manbij and Jarablus northeast of Aleppo since the start of December, including eight women and two children.

ISIL has also evicted 15 Kurdish families linked to the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) from their homes in Idlib province, according to the Observatory.

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay said on Friday that both

rebels and government forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad had stepped up abductions recently.

"In just the past few months, we have seen a significant and deeply alarming rise in abductions of human rights defenders, activists, journalists, religious figures and others by armed opposition groups, as well as the continuing arbitrary detention and enforced disappearances of individuals by government forces," Pillay said.

Syrian Kurds number over two million of a total of more than 25 million Kurds in Syria, Turkey, Iran and Iraq. Kurds are often described as the world's largest ethnic group without a state.

Oppressed under President Bashar al-Assad and his father before him, Syrian Kurds view the civil war as an opportunity to gain more autonomy - much as their ethnic kin in neighboring Iraq have consolidated self-rule during turmoil there.

REUTERS

## Crude test flows begin on Iraqi Kurdistan-Turkey pipeline-sources

ISTANBUL / December 14, 2013 / (Reuters)

**TEST FLOWS** in Iraqi Kurdistan's new crude oil pipeline via Turkey started on Friday, but no exports have yet been scheduled, energy sources close to the matter said on Saturday.

Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan signed a multi-billion-dollar energy package in late November, infuriating Baghdad which claims sole authority over oil exports and is wary of any move that could extend political autonomy in the region.

Turkey has lobbied hard to have Baghdad, which claims any oil deals the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) has signed are illegal, on board but so far the central government has not shown any signs of stepping back.

"These are the test flows in limited amounts," an industry source told Reuters. "The volumes are not high enough yet to say exports have started," he said.

He added that it showed both Turkey and the KRG were on track to implement the multi-billion dollar oil and gas deals they signed last month.

"Turkey has repeatedly showed that it wants a comprehensive agreement that includes Baghdad as well, but it has also said it will stand by its agreement with the Kurds," the source said.

The Turkish-KRG deal has enormous significance for major oil companies as well as for the Kurds and Turkey, which can benefit in domestic supply and onward westward export through the mediterranean port of Ceyhan.

Baghdad says it has sole authority over Iraqi oil exports, while the KRG says it has the right to sell the oil independently and has recently built its own pipeline to export crude to Turkey.

Turkey, which is heavily dependent on imports to satisfy its growing appetite for energy, wants Iraqi Kurdistan's oil to help diversify its energy supplies. ●



En perte de vitesse, l'Armée syrienne libre, fer de lance du combat contre Damas, voit la guerre se muer en face-à-face entre jihadistes et loyalistes.

# La rébellion débordée par ses extrémistes

Lors de sa venue à Paris en juillet, le général Selim Idriss, le chef de l'Armée syrienne libre (ASL), le bras armé de la Coalition nationale de l'opposition, affirmait sans peur du ridicule que la montée en puissance des formations jihadistes en Syrie n'était qu'une «invention» des journalistes occidentaux. Six mois plus tard, cet officier n'est pas sûr de pouvoir revenir dans les zones rebelles, précisément à cause de ces mêmes groupes islamistes dont il minimisait systématiquement l'importance. A l'inverse, les forces qu'il dirige ont fondu au point qu'elles apparaissent aujourd'hui comme négligeables sur le terrain. Dernier revers, la perte, la semaine dernière, du poste frontalier de Bab el-Hawa, un point de passage stratégique sur la frontière turque que se partageaient différents groupes rebelles. L'ASL y avait aussi son quartier général et divers dépôts d'armes et de munitions qu'elle a aussi perdus au détriment d'une nouvelle coalition rebelle, créée début décembre, le Front islamique. Revers qui a été suivi par la fuite de plusieurs autres commandants d'unités de l'ASL qui, craignant pour leur vie, se sont réfugiés en Turquie. Désormais, il est à craindre que la guerre en Syrie se résume de plus en plus à un face-à-face entre les groupes islamistes, dont une partie est jihadiste, et les forces fidèles à Bachar al-Assad.

Au départ non violente, la révolte syrienne s'est militarisée à partir de l'été 2011 pour faire face à la féroce répression des forces

loyalistes qui massacraient les manifestants. La mission de l'ASL, constituée de déserteurs, bientôt rejoints par des civils, est donc de les protéger. Elle va peu à peu s'employer à tenir les villes qui se sont soulevées. Première faiblesse, les officiers de l'armée syrienne qui l'ont rejointe viennent plutôt de l'intendance et de la logistique, les postes importants étant, le plus souvent, l'apanage des Alaouites. Certes, une cinquantaine de généraux ont fait défection mais c'est bien peu au regard des 1200 que compte l'armée syrienne.

**Limites.** L'ASL va montrer sa détermination pendant le long siège de Homs, encerclé par la 4<sup>e</sup> Division blindée. Mais c'est là qu'on verra ses limites : aucune autre unité de l'ASL ne va se porter à son secours ni chercher à couper les voies d'approvisionnement des troupes loyalistes. La création d'un Conseil de commandement suprême ne change guère la donne. «L'ASL n'a jamais vraiment existé sur le terrain. Il s'agit avant tout d'un logo attribué à divers groupes rebelles», résume Frédéric Balanche, directeur du groupe de recherches et d'études sur la Méditerranée. Nombre de ces groupes, comme les Brigades du Towhid qui opèrent à Alep, ont d'ailleurs des agendas islamistes. «Si elles faisaient partie de l'ASL, c'est parce qu'elles espéraient bénéficier des livraisons d'armes des pays occidentaux», ajoute-t-il. Quand il s'avérera que ces livraisons n'auront pas lieu, ces groupes quitteront

l'ASL. Le refus des Etats-Unis d'intervenir, contrairement à leurs promesses, après l'attaque aux armes chimiques, accélérera le mouvement. L'ASL est aussi gangrenée par les groupes mafieux qu'elle a pris sous son aile pour gonfler ses effectifs mais qui ont largement contribué à la discréditer.

**Fracture.** Le 22 novembre est créé le Front islamique qui fédère sept des plus puissants groupes rebelles et compte dans ses rangs la plupart des meilleurs commandants de l'insurrection. Le 3 décembre, la rupture avec l'ASL est consommée : le Front islamique claque la porte de l'état-major. Celui-ci se définit comme une «formation politique, militaire, sociale indépendante, qui cherche à renverser totalement le régime Al-Assad et à construire un Etat islamique d'une stricte orthodoxie». Il annonce qu'il se dotera d'un bureau unique chargé de recueillir et distribuer toute l'aide militaire qui lui parviendra. C'est sans doute à la pression des très riches financiers du Golfe, à commencer par ceux du Koweït,

qui ont conditionné leur aide matériel à la création d'une structure unitaire, qu'on doit la création d'un tel bureau.

Mais la donne va se compliquer avec la poussée de deux groupes jihadistes. Le front al-Nosra est créé en janvier 2012 par des jihadistes liés à Al-Qaeda venus d'Irak et des islamistes relâchés par le régime. Une scission intervient et donne naissance à l'Etat islamique en Irak et au Levant (EIL) qui, tout en combattant le régime, s'est engagé dans des règlements de compte avec les autres formations rebelles.

Au départ, l'ASL cherche à s'entendre avec ces combattants aguerris et prêts à se battre jusqu'à leur dernier souffle. La fracture inter-

vient le 11 juillet dernier : un des meilleurs commandants de l'ASL, Kamal Hamami, homme jeune, favorable aux idéaux démocratiques, est tué à l'issue d'une rencontre avec un responsable de l'EIL, un jihadiste irakien du nom de Abou Ayman al-Baghdadi, dans la province de Lattaquié.

Selon une récente étude de l'IHS Jane's Terrorism and Insurgency Center, les jihadistes du Front al-Nosra et de l'EIL représentent à présent près de la moitié des forces rebelles contre 10 à 15% pour l'ASL. Dernier revers pour elle, la suspension, la semaine dernière, par Washington et Londres de leurs livraisons de matériel non létal depuis la perte de Bab el-Hawa dans la crainte qu'il tombe entre les mains des groupes radicaux.

JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN

«L'ASL n'a jamais vraiment existé sur le terrain. Il s'agit avant tout d'un logo attribué à divers groupes rebelles.»

Frédéric Balanche directeur du groupe de recherches et d'études sur la Méditerranée



# Iran : les incertitudes d'un accord

**L**es Etats-Unis, la Grande-Bretagne, la France, la Russie, la Chine et l'Allemagne (P5 + 1), et l'Iran ont signé, le 24 novembre à Genève, un accord sur le programme nucléaire iranien. Téhéran accepte de limiter celui-ci, soupçonné par le P5 + 1 d'avoir des visées militaires, en échange d'un allègement des sanctions économiques. L'accord n'est que transitoire et devra déboucher dans six mois sur un texte définitif.

## Est-ce un bon accord ?

**François Nicoullaud :** C'est un bon accord. Par les clauses qu'il contient, il pousse les deux parties vers un accord définitif. En effet, si l'une ou l'autre viole un des engagements pris pour la période transitoire, limitée dans le temps, la négociation s'interrompt, il n'y a plus d'accord. Cela manquait dans les projets et textes précédents, qui se sont enlisés.

**Bruno Tertrais :** La méthode consistant à dire « essayons de créer la confiance nécessaire pour que la vraie négociation commence » était effectivement la « moins pire » des options. Mais le texte de Genève a ses insuffisances.

## En quoi consistent-elles ?

**B. T. :** D'abord, si l'accord gèle les activités nucléaires sensibles de l'Iran, il ne conduit pas à un arrêt du programme. C'est là que le P5 + 1 a lâché du lest, en renonçant à exiger la sortie du pays du stock d'uranium à 20 % (qui permet la fabrication d'une bombe) et la fermeture de l'usine souterraine de Fordo.

Ensuite, il ne traite pas de la militarisation. C'est comme un sandwich au jambon dont il manquerait le jambon. Or cette dimension traitée entre l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA) et Téhéran est essentielle : si l'Iran n'avait pas conduit d'activités militaires, le programme nucléaire n'aurait pas posé autant de problèmes.

En outre, le problème de cet accord, c'est qu'il est renouvelable. Il aurait été préférable d'en rester à six mois pour mettre la pression sur les négociateurs. Qui sait ce qu'il peut se passer au Moyen-Orient ou ailleurs dans les douze mois qui viennent ? En outre, ce délai d'un an l'expose à deux risques contradictoires : le relâchement des sanctions ou, à l'inverse, des pressions du Congrès américain pour des sanctions supplémentaires.

Enfin, que veut dire laisser à l'Iran un programme d'enrichissement « cohérent avec les besoins concrets du pays » ? Je souhaite bien du plaisir aux négociateurs lorsqu'ils devront s'accorder sur la traduction

de cette expression. Et les procédures de vérification envisagées pour l'accord final me semblent légères.

**F. N. :** Notons que pour parvenir à cet accord, les Occidentaux ont, en effet, renoncé à des exigences anciennes. Par exemple, l'arrêt des centrifugeuses iraniennes qu'exigeait le Conseil de sécurité comme préalable.

## « Deux indicateurs sont à surveiller : l'application de l'accord par l'Iran et le comportement de Téhéran dans le deuxième round de négociations »

**Bruno Tertrais**

## Cet accord est-il la conséquence des sanctions ?

**F. N. :** Non, celles-ci ont joué un rôle dans l'élection à la présidence du réformateur Hassan Rohani en juin. Mais le bon déroulement de l'élection a été une victoire de la société iranienne qui a fait entendre sa volonté de changement. Par ailleurs, les sanctions n'ont pas pu ralentir le programme nucléaire iranien. Fin 2006, date des premières mesures du Conseil de sécurité, Téhéran disposait de 360 centrifugeuses. Sept ans plus tard, il en a 19 000 ! Oui, les Iraniens ont été poussés à la négociation par les sanctions. Mais c'est l'échec de celles-ci qui a poussé les Occidentaux au compromis.

**B. T. :** Je ne suis pas d'accord. La stratégie des Européens a bel et bien fini par payer. En 2003, Téhéran projetait de mettre en service 50 000 centrifugeuses à Natanz ; il n'y en a « que » 16 000 aujourd'hui sur ce site, les 3 000 autres étant ailleurs. En 2006, Téhéran annonçait la mise en service du

## François Nicoullaud

Ancien ambassadeur en Iran (2001-2005) et en Hongrie (1993-1997). Analyste de politique internationale, il écrit souvent sur l'Iran et a travaillé sur les questions de prolifération nucléaire, de défense, de coopération et de développement

## Bruno Tertrais

Maître de recherche à la Fondation pour la recherche stratégique, en relations internationales, questions nucléaires, relations transatlantiques et sécurité au Moyen-Orient et en Asie. Membre de la Commission du Livre blanc sur la défense (2012-2013), il est l'auteur de « L'apocalypse n'est pas pour demain. Pour en finir avec le catastrophisme » (Denoël, 2011)

réacteur d'Arak à l'horizon 2009. On en est encore loin aujourd'hui !

**F. N. :** Oui, mais elles n'ont pas arrêté l'enrichissement d'uranium. Longtemps, les Occidentaux ont poursuivi l'objectif du zéro centrifugeuse. En 2003, les Européens obtiennent des Iraniens la suspension de leurs activités d'enrichissement avec l'espoir qu'ils accepteraient l'arrêt complet de ce programme. Mais ceux-ci ont fini par comprendre où on voulait les mener. La négociation a alors échoué, l'enrichissement a repris. Ce n'est que récemment que l'Occident a compris que le zéro centrifugeuse était un objectif irréaliste.

**B. T. :** Cet accord est pour chaque partie un test des intentions de l'autre. Deux indicateurs sont à surveiller : l'application de l'accord par l'Iran et son comportement dans le deuxième round de négociations.

Il y a aussi la mise en œuvre du texte de Genève, la discussion entre l'AIEA et l'Iran, et la négociation d'un accord final. Forcément, des interférences surgiront entre ces trois derniers points. La probabilité d'un accord final dépendra des progrès effectués sur chacun de ces trois points.

## Quels sont les risques d'un échec de la voie diplomatique ?

**F. N. :** Il y a risque d'échec si nous voulons réintroduire dans l'accord définitif ce que nous n'avons pas pu obtenir dans l'accord transitoire. Va-t-on redemander aux Iraniens la fermeture de l'usine souterraine d'enrichissement de Fordo ? Va-t-on exiger une réduction drastique du nombre de centrifugeuses ? Va-t-on leur demander de renoncer à développer des modèles de centrifugeuses plus performants ? Les Iraniens jugent ces demandes humiliantes.

**B. T. :** Les P5 + 1 ont compris que, pour qu'il y ait un accord, Téhéran doit pouvoir sauver la face. Reste la question centrale : l'Iran est-il prêt à renoncer à une option nucléaire militaire, c'est-à-dire à la capacité de produire rapidement un engin nucléaire ? A mon sens, un bon accord final

devrait créer une situation dans laquelle la communauté internationale pourrait être certaine que l'Iran ne sera pas en mesure de fabriquer en quelques années un engin nucléaire.

**F. N. :** Là, l'Iran sert de test. Le traité de non-prolifération (TNP) de 1968 a fixé comme règle que les pays qui n'avaient pas déjà la bombe renonçaient à l'acquérir. A présent, les cinq pays auxquels le traité reconnaît le droit d'avoir la bombe voudraient, pour les autres, déplacer le curseur de l'interdiction de fabriquer la bombe à l'interdiction d'acquérir les technologies permettant de la fabriquer. Mais l'idée passe mal chez les intéressés, qui reprochent à ces cinq pays de faire peu d'efforts pour démanteler leurs arsenaux nucléaires, comme le demande le même traité.

**B. T. :** Je ne partage pas cette analyse. Le TNP ne s'appelle pas « traité de non-prolifération et de désarmement » ! Le TNP est un texte court et donc sujet à interprétation. Mais on ne peut pas soutenir que la conception d'un engin nucléaire est compatible avec un tel traité.

**Est-ce que les bouleversements en cours au Moyen-Orient ont pesé sur ce déblocage ?**

**F. N. :** Il est sain que les négociateurs aient évité la tentation de traiter avec l'Iran de tous les problèmes en même temps :

## DIX ANS DE POURPARLERS

### 2003

Juin : l'Iran ne respecte pas le traité de non-prolifération nucléaire (TNP), selon l'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique (AIEA).  
Octobre : suspension par l'Iran des activités liées à l'enrichissement de l'uranium.

### 2005

L'Iran reprend la conversion d'uranium dans son usine d'Ispahan.

### 2006-2008

Sanctions à l'encontre de l'Iran, votées par le Conseil de sécurité.

### 2010

17 mai : accord entre le Brésil, la Turquie et l'Iran sur l'échange de combustibles nucléaires. Etats-Unis, France et Russie le rejettent.

### 2012

9 janvier : début de la production d'uranium enrichi jusqu'à 20 % dans le site de Fordo, selon l'AIEA.

### 2013

15 juin : élection d'Hassan Rohani à la présidence iranienne.  
27 septembre : entretien téléphonique entre M. Obama et M. Rohani.  
10 novembre : échec des négociations à Genève sur un projet d'accord américano-iranien.  
24 novembre : accord entre la communauté internationale et l'Iran, à Genève.

Syrie, Afghanistan, Liban, Palestine. La crise nucléaire est très spécifique. Mais, si elle se dénoue, cela pourrait lancer un cercle vertueux dont bénéficieront les autres problèmes clés de la région. L'Iran accepte que sa présence dans une région compliquée lui crée des devoirs. En outre, l'on dit que certains Occidentaux sont trop sensibles aux préoccupations d'Israël ou de l'Arabie saoudite. Rappelons quand même que les pays du P5 + 1 négocient au nom de la communauté internationale. Les voisins de l'Iran ont un intérêt légitime à la tranquillité. Cela ne signifie pas qu'ils ont toujours raison, mais il faut les écouter.

**B. T. :** Certains experts ont prétendu que le rétablissement des relations diplomatiques avec les Etats-Unis allait suivre. C'est une plaisanterie ! Si l'accord a été conclu, c'est justement parce qu'il a été limité à la question nucléaire. La grande question reste de savoir si le régime iranien peut supporter une réconciliation avec l'Occident.

## « Si la crise nucléaire se dénoue, cela pourrait lancer un cercle vertueux dont bénéficieront les autres problèmes-clés de la région »

François Nicoullaud

Quant au lien avec la question syrienne, je ne soutenais pas la position française lors des négociations de Genève I, en juin 2012, qui consistait à dire que l'Iran n'y avait pas sa place. Je pensais que c'était lui envoyer un mauvais message : cela pouvait renforcer les présupposés de ceux qui, à Téhéran, estiment que les Occidentaux ne recherchent pas un accord sur le nucléaire, mais à faire tomber le régime. On peut se demander si, dans les hésitations de Barack Obama sur la Syrie, il n'y avait pas aussi la crainte qu'une intervention ne vienne compliquer la négociation avec l'Iran.

**Faut-il attribuer cet accord aux négociations secrètes américano-iraniennes ?**

**F. N. :** La prise de contact avec les Etats-Unis remonte à mars 2013, soit avant l'élection d'Hassan Rohani. Le président Mahmoud Ahmadinejad étant alors hors course, la décision a été prise par Ali Khamenei, le Guide de la révolution. Dans l'accord transitoire figurent des engagements que

les Iraniens étaient prêts à accepter dans le passé : pas d'enrichissement au-delà de 5% [au-delà duquel un usage militaire est envisageable], contrôles supplémentaires de l'AIEA. Mais, sous Ahmadinejad, les messages iraniens étaient inaudibles. En revanche, les points qu'ils ont toujours refusés, comme la fermeture de l'usine souterraine de Fordo, ne figurent pas dans l'accord. Ce sont donc surtout les Occidentaux qui ont évolué.

**B. T. :** Je suis en désaccord. Sur le papier, l'Iran a toujours été prêt à tout ! S'il accepte aujourd'hui ce qu'il refusait hier, c'est du fait des sanctions.

**La France a joué la fermeté. A-t-elle eu raison ?**

**B. T. :** La diplomatie française a été un peu trop théâtrale, mais je pense que Paris a eu raison dans son insistance sur des points litigieux. Faute de quoi, le Congrès américain aurait cherché à saboter l'accord et la poursuite de la construction du réacteur Arak aurait accru la possibilité d'une frappe israélienne.

**F. N. :** Pour évaluer le rôle de la France, il faudrait pouvoir comparer le texte final de l'accord avec le premier projet d'accord du 10 novembre qui n'a pas abouti. Apparemment, les objections de la France ont su convaincre ses cinq partenaires.

**Cet accord transitoire isole-t-il Israël, partisan d'une ligne dure ?**

**B. T. :** La position israélienne est partagée par l'Arabie saoudite et par une grande partie du Congrès américain. La vigueur de la réaction israélienne s'explique par une inquiétude : que la suspension de certaines sanctions conduise au détricotage de l'ensemble du système de contraintes. Inquiétude pas totalement illégitime car, après tout, c'est un pari qui est fait par les P5 + 1. L'autre raison est qu'il n'y a plus d'option militaire crédible pour au moins six mois. Or Israël estime – et il n'a pas tout à fait tort – que la menace militaire peut faire pression de manière positive.

**F. N. :** Ce texte dessine les contours de l'accord définitif. Si les Occidentaux appliquent scrupuleusement celui sur l'allègement de leurs sanctions, les Iraniens seront incités à faire de même pour leurs propres engagements. Et la qualité de l'application des Iraniens sera publiquement certifiée par les inspecteurs de l'AIEA. Tout cela devrait aider à calmer les inquiétudes et à faire naître la confiance. ■

PROPOS RECUEILLIS PAR  
GAÏDZ MINASSIAN



# Syrian Kurds jockey for seat at Geneva talks

**As long as the Assad regime and the opposition fail to come to an agreement, Syria's Kurds will continue to consolidate their gains**



**Amberin Zaman**  
www.al-monitor.com

**A**s the proposed Geneva II conference which is expected to be held on Jan. 22 — not in Geneva, but in Montreux for lack of hotel space — draws nearer, Syria's Kurds are scrambling to secure a seat at the negotiating table.

Saleh Muslim, the co-chairman of the most influential Syrian Kurdish party, the Democratic Unity Party (PYD) told Al-Monitor in an exclusive interview in Brussels on Dec. 7, that Geneva II represents an historic opportunity for his people to press for their long suppressed rights.

"We will not allow Geneva II to become another Lausanne," he added, thumping a chubby fist.

Muslim was referring to the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne signed between the Allies and Turkey which defined the new borders of the modern Turkish state. Lausanne famously scrapped earlier plans for an independent Kurdish state that were laid down in the 1920 Treaty of Sevres signed between the Allies and their vanquished Ottoman foe.

Muslim's main concern is to cement the big gains made by Syria's Kurds since the start of the civil conflict nearly three years ago. With the PYD and its military wing, the People's Protection Units (YPG), in the driver's seat, Syria's 2 million or so Kurds have established their own interim administration in a Kurdish belt stretching from Derik in the northeast to Afrin in the northwest, bisected by Arab settlements in Raqqah and Aleppo provinces.

The PYD has been furiously lobbying to unify all of the Syrian Kurdish groups to take part in Geneva II in a delegation composed solely of Kurds and under the banner of the Supreme Kurdish Council that was established in 2012 under the sponsorship of Massoud Barzani, the president of Iraq's Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). "It is not so much the outcome of Geneva II but our status at the talks as a separate and equal entity that concerns us Kurds the most," Muslim explained. But bitter divisions among the Syrian Kurdish parties and stiff opposition from Turkey and other regional powers have stood in the way.

**N**ow those differences are said to be melting as PYD representatives continue talks in the KRG capital Erbil with officials from Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), who are mediating on behalf of Muslim's Syrian Kurdish rivals. These groups accuse the PYD of using intimidation tactics and concentrating power in its own hands. These allegations have been echoed by the KDP, whose relations with Muslim's group have grown increasingly acrimonious over the past months.

Unusually, it was neither Muslim nor his decidedly weaker rivals but the Kurdistan Communities Union (KCK), the umbrella group for the numerous wings of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which first commented on the meetings in Erbil. In a statement on Dec. 12, the KCK's executive committee said that it fully supported the KDP-mediated talks and suggested that the Supreme Kurdish Council resume its functions, although squabbles between the PYD and its rivals rendered the agreement obsolete. "If a common stand is adopted on Geneva and the interim administration is strengthened as a result of these talks they will play a seminal role in the resolution of the Kurdish problem and in the democratization of Syria," the KCK added.



*A Kurdish female fighter from Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) checks her weapon near Ras al-Ain, in the province of Hasakah, after capturing it from Islamist rebels, Nov. 6, 2013. (photo by REUTERS)*

The PYD has long been accused of being the Syrian franchise of the KCK/PKK.

It is an open secret that PKK fighters and commanders are helping the YPG in their ongoing turf war against the al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS). Yet the PYD denies it has any links with the PKK, mainly because the PKK is officially designated as a terrorist group by Europe and the United States and it fears ending up with the same label.

**T**he KCK statement clearly demonstrates the extent to which the politics of the Kurds of Syria, Turkey and Iraq are intertwined. It is also a bold admission of its influence over the PYD and the Syrian Kurds. Why it chose this moment to do so is a matter of intense speculation. One theory is that it is making a virtue of necessity: The PYD has no choice other than to kiss and make up with its rivals if it wants a seat at Geneva. Otherwise, the United States and Turkey will continue to veto its participation. The PYD had until recently counted on Russian support; but the Russians are said to be telling the PYD not to raise the issue of Kurdish rights in Switzerland. "As usual, the big powers have shaken hands under the table and the Kurds are the first to be sold out," fumed a Syrian Kurdish activist, who declined to be identified by name.

Muslim flew to Moscow on Dec. 15 for consultations amid reports that the Russians were demanding that PYD join the Geneva talks as part of the National Coordination Body for Democratic Change, the umbrella group which favors nonviolent opposition against the regime, leading to charges that it is an "Assad front."

Another theory is that the PKK is pressuring the PYD to make peace with Barzani in a bid to outmaneuver Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the Turkish prime minister, who invited the Iraqi Kurdish leader to Turkey last month. The two men presided over a mass rally in the Kurds' unofficial capital, Diyarbakir, as a pair of popular Kurdish bards belted out nationalist songs that previously would have landed them in jail. The move caught the pro-PKK Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) completely off guard.

In a countermove, Diyarbakir's mayor, Osman Baydemir, and lawmaker Leyla Zana, who were the sole BDP politicians to meet ➤



► with Barzani in Diyarbakir, persuaded him to resume his mediating role. "Now Turkey's plans to divide and rule the Kurds have been foiled," gloated a Kurdish tweeter following the KCK's announcement.

Yet for all the positive noise coming out of Erbil, it seems unlikely that the talks will have much impact on the ground. The UN has started flying in aid to the Syrian Kurds. The Iraqi Kurds' sealing of its common border with the PYD-controlled region is therefore poised to lose effect.

"The situation in Rojava will remain unchanged by Erbil," predicts Barzan Iso, a Syrian Kurdish activist. In other words, the PYD will continue to call the shots. And for as long as the Assad regime and the opposition fail to come to an agreement, Syria's Kurds will conti-

nue to consolidate their gains. Few believe the Geneva II talks will result in a deal. Hopes have been further dimmed by the recent setbacks suffered by Gen. Salim Idriss and his Free Syrian Army moderates at the hands of the Islamic Front.◆

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December 16, 2013

## Iraqi Turkmen town seeks to join Kurdistan Region

Following years of perceived neglect by Baghdad, some in the Iraqi town of Tuz Khormato have called for joining the Iraqi Kurdistan Region.



By. Omar al-Jaffal  
www.al-monitor.com

Minorities in Iraq are once again demanding autonomous areas or to have their districts joined to other provinces as a wave of attacks targets them in Salahuddin, home to a Turkmen minority, and Ninevah, home to minorities such as the Christians and the Shabak.

Tuz Khormato, located in Salahuddin province, shocked everyone when the district council announced during a Nov. 25 news conference that it wanted the district to join Kirkuk province, instead of being affiliated with Salahuddin. Tuz Khormato has not been calm for years, and on a monthly basis the district is subject to bombings carried out by al-Qaeda or other groups the central government knows nothing about.

The provincial council made this call in light of the failure of both the Salahuddin provincial administration and the security agencies to protect the lives of citizens and to prevent terrorist groups from targeting them.

Vice President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region Kosrat Rasul Ali welcomed this decision and stressed that he is in favor of returning the town to the province of Kirkuk.

The predominantly Turkmen district of Tuz Khormato was part of Kirkuk province until 1976. The regime of Saddam Hussein, however, detached the district from Kirkuk province from its four sides — Amerli, Bestamli, Suleiman Beik and Qadri Kerm — and appended it to Salahuddin province, which had been recently created under a presidential decree.

Political blocs had always called for declaring Tuz Khormato a disaster zone due to it being continuously bombed by al-Qaeda, as well as the lack of medical and educational services. Ali Al-Shalah, a member of the parliamentary State of Law Coalition, described the issue of returning Tuz Khormato to Kirkuk as "delicate."

Shalah told Al-Monitor, "All of the political blocs need to give their opi-

nion about this issue," and stressed, "The opinions of those living in Tuz Khormato should be a priority, as they are the ones affected."

A member of the Kurdistan Alliance, Hamid Bafi, pointed out, "Tuz Khormato was previously a part of Kirkuk province, and [this issue] must be reviewed within the framework of the administrative border law for these regions. These borders were manipulated by the former regime based on sectarian, political, ethnic and non-administrative grounds."

Bafi told Al-Monitor, "Tuz Khormato is one of the disputed areas," and pointed out, "The central government ought to address these areas, which have been unfairly treated by the former regime through Article 140 of the Constitution."

Article 140, which relates to resolving the issue of Kirkuk and determining whether it will join the Iraqi Kurdistan Region as well as the powers of the Iraqi president, the powers of the Kurdistan Region and the distribution of wealth, is one of the most prominent points of contention between the central government in Baghdad and the regional government in Erbil.

"The central government should make haste to address this issue so that the residents can determine their fate," Bafi said. He suggested, "Things staying the same in this region will not lead to the stability of Iraq," adding, "This may affect relations between the Kurdistan Region and [our] brothers in Baghdad."

Legal expert Tareq Harb told Al-Monitor, "No district council or provincial council in Iraq should issue a resolution to separate or attach a part of a province to or from another province, as district councils are not elected, but rather appointed."

Meanwhile, Fawzi Akram Tarzi, a member of the National Turkmen Alliance, which is part of the Ahrar bloc, said, "Calling for attaching Tuz Khormato to Kirkuk is aimed at putting pressure on the central government, in order to rescue the district from the disaster it is experiencing."

Tarzi told Al-Monitor, "The Turkmen have been the target of genocide since 2003 up to this very day, across all of the Turkmen regions without exception, especially in the 'disaster zone' of Tuz Khormato." He indicated, "Some people in Tuz Khormato want to turn this district into a province in order to secure infrastructure, among other things."

On Nov. 25, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Hussain al-Shahristani formed a higher committee to discuss the implications of the security situation in Tuz Khormato, and stressed that the government will do all it can to maintain security in the district. A Turkmen deputy, however, accused him of neglecting the district's security.◆

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# Syrian and Iraqi Kurds more divided over Syria

The Syria war is proving to be a divisive, rather than unifying, force among the Kurds of Iraq and Syria.



Wladimir van Wilgenburg  
www.al-monitor.com

**WASHINGTON** — The Syrian civil war and the weakening of central states in the Middle East has resulted in a new power struggle among Kurdish parties over control of the Kurdish areas in Syria, instead of unifying them. The outcome is two different Kurdish autonomous zones in Syria and Iraq that compete with each other, based on different economic models.

The New York Times earlier suggested that it could be possible that as a result of the Arab Spring, a Syrian Kurdistan could break off from Syria and merge with the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in a breakdown of the Western-imposed Sykes-Picot borders of 1916.

The borders have divided the Kurds and this has created separate Kurdish parties focused either on Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey or all of them. Nevertheless, all of these Kurdish parties share the idea of a unified Kurdish identity, all the while facing different political systems and geographical realities.

The main Kurdish blocs in Syria are the Democratic Union Party (PYD) backed by the rebels of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) that fought a war against the Western-backed Turkish state, and the Kurdish National Council (KNC) uniting several Kurdish parties, backed by Massoud Barzani, the powerful president of the oil-rich Kurdistan Region of Iraq.

Currently, the PYD is the strongest Kurdish party on the ground in Syria and aims to build an interim administration inspired by the PKK's political ideology.

There are long-standing ideological differences between the revolutionary Marxist rebels of the PKK, founded in the midst of the Cold War, and Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) that wants to model Iraqi Kurdistan on a capitalist Dubai-model to attract foreign investment and use the oil wealth to develop the region.

Moreover, Barzani is close to Turkey and wants to export oil and gas through pipelines to Turkey. The PKK sees Turkey as its main opponent.

**B**arzani also has threatened Baghdad with Kurdish independence, while PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan's idea of confederation is against a nation-state.

Ocalan's democratic autonomy ideology from 2005 suggests, "For Kurdistan, however, democratic confederalism is a movement which does not interpret the right to self-determination to establish a nation-state, but develops its own democracy in spite of political boundaries."

He suggests a federation for Kurds in Iran, Iraq, Syria and Turkey, without threatening the territorial integrity of these states.

Moreover, economically, the PKK and PYD want an alternative to capitalism.

PYD's media spokesman in Qamishli, Sihanok Dibo, told Al-Monitor that the PYD wants a self-reliant community-based economy and to build its own factories based on the ideology of Ocalan, which could provide the alternative to capitalism.

"It's not such a productive economy [the KRG economy], it just depends on oil exporting and importing from other countries and does not help society. We want to use the useful experiences of developed countries and the European countries," Dibo said.

Moreover, Kurdish politicians say they do not aim to separate from Syria or unite with the Kurds in Iraq.

PYD leader Salih Muslim told Al-Monitor that the PYD does not aim for such



Residents and Kurdish fighters celebrate what they said was the liberation of their village from Islamist rebels near the city of Ras al-Ain, Nov. 5, 2013. (photo by REUTERS)

a project to unite Syrian and Iraqi Kurds. "As the political parties in West Kurdistan [Kurdish areas of Syria] we never thought about it. Also, I think in South Kurdistan [Kurdish areas of Iraq] nobody thinks about that. I don't know where they got this idea."

Nevertheless, he says that the Kurds from Iraq and Syria could help each other, but that they do not want to remove these borders.

"We never thought about removing these borders. We respect the borders by respecting each other as Kurdish brothers in North, West and even South Kurdistan. All parts have their own conditions and they have their own statements," he said, referring to the Kurdish areas of Iraq (South Kurdistan), Syria (West Kurdistan) and Turkey (North Kurdistan).

The PYD leader said that its main goal is not to remove the borders, but to achieve a democratic Syria. "We choose the German model for us, as how Germans could be united within the European union. They are in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. The united European citizenship united all the Germans."

The Kurdish leader says that the Kurds want a democratic confederation in the Middle East and have a Kurdish union without removing the borders.

**A**lso, rivals of the PYD agree that at the moment, a breakup of Syria is not possible, and that it is also not possible for Kurds from Iraq and Syria to unite in one state.

Mohammed Ismail, a member of the Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria (KDP-S), whose party is close to Barzani, spoke about this issue with Al-Monitor in Qamishli.

"We do not have such a policy because of the borders and international law. We also know that because of the local political circumstances it's not possible to engage in such a project."

He added, "Kurds, we also have a right to do this normally because we are the same people, but it is not possible right now."

Sabri Mirza, a member of the Kurdish Unity Party in Qamishli, which is a member of the Barzani-backed KNC, thinks a greater Kurdistan is a dream and a wish.

"We know the situation that Kurdistan was separated two times during the Chalderan pact in 1516 [the Ottoman Empire defeated the Savafid Empire in 1514 and incorporated most of the Kurdish areas] and the Sykes-Picot agreement. All Kurds dream about a greater Kurdistan in four parts."

But he noted that it's very difficult. "Although the Arabs in the beginning of the 20th century wanted to get rid of the Ottoman empire, they became 23 states after the Sykes-Picot treaty. Until now there is no international will to make such a state for the Kurds. We don't believe that they [international community] will accept it."

Former CIA chief Michael Hayden said he is worried about the dissolution of all the artificial states created after World War I, and the US State Department traditionally has supported the territorial integrity of Iraq and Syria and opposed any form of Kurdish separatism in the region.

Thus, the Arab Spring might result into more Kurdish autonomy in the future, but not necessarily the merging of the Kurdish areas of Iraq and Syria into a Kurdish nation-state. This is also further complicated by political differences between the main Kurdish parties, the KDP and PKK, which are now involved in negotiations over Syria. ♦

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## VIEWPOINT

## Hooman Majd

## Rouhani's Real Test

The Iranian President may find domestic reforms even harder to achieve than a nuclear deal

**T**HE WAVE OF JOY in Iran over the nuclear deal has receded, replaced by a sense that the hard part starts now. Having essentially frozen Iran's nuclear program for six months in exchange for a loosening of economic sanctions, the six world powers are pressing for a final, comprehensive agreement. But for President Hassan Rouhani, the tougher challenge may be on the domestic front, where he must now follow through on his campaign promises to introduce political and social reforms, including the release of political prisoners and allowing the press greater freedoms.

**For the moment, Rouhani's** plan to change Iran has the crucial backing of the country's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who has given vocal support to the President's nuclear policy but has remained silent on the liberal domestic issues Rouhani has raised. But silence on the part of the Supreme Leader is generally viewed, in the complex Iranian political system, as tacit approval.

This gives the President political defense against hardliners who would like to see the nuclear talks derailed and any liberalizing reforms stillborn. Khamenei's support, and the overwhelmingly positive reaction of ordinary Iranians to the Geneva agreement, means that Rouhani's honeymoon period with both the public and the ruling establishment has been extended by six months.

He has the ability and—say those who know him well—the will to now focus on domestic reforms.

Never much liked by hard-line conservatives, Rouhani will in all likelihood try to marginalize them rather than compromise by showing, as he already has through social media, that his intended reforms have much stronger public support than

overthrow the system in favor of a secular, liberal democracy: even now, there is simply no counterrevolutionary movement of any size in Iran. But many Iranians now feel that the promises of the Islamic revolution—justice, equality and dignity—were at best misleading. That is why they voted for Rouhani: they believe he can use his credentials as a revolutionary

system, not its salvation.

Rouhani will try to avoid any such analogy. But while he will work with the conservatives on security issues for the sake of stability and expediency, nothing in his rhetoric or actions indicates that he will now shy away from spending the political capital he's earned in moving Iran on the path to genuine change.

**The ink was barely dry on** the nuclear agreement when Rouhani went on the offensive—on social media—to make a point about his domestic policy, celebrating the earlier reopening of the House of Cinema in Tehran (a cultural guild, closed by his hard-line predecessor Mahmoud Ahmadinejad). “Hopefully,” he tweeted, “other houses & locks can also be opened.”

Rouhani must now push to open up hundreds of prison cells too. Some political prisoners have been released or furloughed since his election, but the pushback from conservatives in positions of power has been so far too strong for Rouhani to yet make good on his campaign pledge to see an Iran without prisoners of conscience. It remains to be seen whether he will be ultimately successful in bringing those prisoners—and the whole country—fully out of the dark. Iranians, many of whose lives are a daily struggle—economically, politically and socially—are counting on it. ■

*Majd is the author of The Ministry of Guidance Invites You to Not Stay*



**Time to deliver** Rouhani at the U.N. in September. As Iran nears political and social collapse, the changes he promised become increasingly urgent

the conservatives' retrograde ideological position.

Rouhani is commonly described as a conservative pragmatist, someone who will never endanger Iran's clerical and political order. But he has nevertheless come to realize that the Islamic Republic he helped build is perilously close to political, social and economic collapse. That doesn't mean, as some in the West surmise, that a year or so more of crippling sanctions will bring Iran to its knees, or that the people will

and a cleric to deliver reform from within the system.

As we in the outside world watch with hope, we must be judicious in how we support Rouhani. While it is tempting to believe we are on the cusp of an Iranian version of the glasnost, or openness, former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev introduced to the Soviet Union, we do no favors to Rouhani by comparing him to Gorbachev. That would be ammunition for the hard-liners who point out that Gorbachev's reforms led to the collapse of a political




TIME

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WORLD  
AL-QAEDA'S NEW STAR

RISES



Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is creating his own Islamic state in Iraq and Syria. How long before he targets the West?  
By Aryn Baker/Beirut

**T**HE AMBITION AND AGGRESSION of the July 21 break into Iraq's biggest and most heavily fortified prison were trademarks of the man who planned it. It began with a barrage of mortars crashing into the open spaces inside the huge perimeter walls of what was once called Abu Ghraib and is now called the Baghdad Central Prison, on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital. Saddam Hussein had kept his enemies there once, and then the Americans had used it for theirs. Rebuilt and yet forever associated with the abuses that had happened there in the past, it is now the Iraqi government's main detention facility for extremists and terrorists, including hundreds of al-Qaeda militants. That's who the mastermind wanted out. He had wars to fight in two countries and a caliphate to establish across the historical lands of Islam, and he needed his fighters back.

The mortars sent the guards fleeing for their lives. Two cars, parked next to the perimeter and packed with explosives, then detonated, punching holes in the exterior walls. Some 50 men, armed with machine guns and grenades, rushed through the breaches. They raced through the corridors of the prison blocks, shooting out the locks

of individual cells as they went. Within hours, 500 inmates, many of them high-value al-Qaeda operatives, battlefield tacticians and bombmakers—some arrested by U.S. troops before their 2011 withdrawal—were free. Shaky, green-lit video footage taken that night with a night-vision camera and later posted to jihadist websites shows the men whooping and calling out “*Allahu akbar*”—God is great—as they spill into the desert. Another video shows several hundred men piling into the backs of Toyota pickup trucks in a convoy destined for neighboring Syria.

The operation was barely noticed outside Iraq: the world was distracted by other horrors in Syria. But in jihadist circles, it greatly elevated the status of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the al-Qaeda leader who planned the breakout. Exactly one year before the Abu Ghraib attack, in an audiotape message to his followers, Baghdadi laid out plans for a yearlong campaign he dubbed “Breaking the Walls.” It was only the second address he had delivered in his two-year tenure at the helm of al-Qaeda's Iraqi wing. Over the course of that 12-month period, he launched 24 complex car-bomb attacks and broke into eight other Iraqi prisons, liberating scores of al-Qaeda members.

Abu Ghraib was his coup de grace. That one operation injected his organization with a vital influx of experienced, committed operatives—and their handiwork is writ large in the Middle East.

In Iraq, a brutal campaign of suicide attacks and car bombings has taken more than 3,000 lives in the past four months. In Syria's civil war, Baghdadi has become arguably the most feared and powerful man after President Bashar Assad. Counterterrorism analysts say the al-Qaeda inmates Baghdadi busted out of Abu Ghraib have become game changers: their arrival fortified the radical wing of the Syrian rebellion, and weakened the overall anti-Assad movement by frightening off international backers concerned about the growing jihadist influence. The rebels as a whole may be suffering under the sustained offensives of Assad's military, but Baghdadi's jihadists are growing in fighting capability and day-to-day influence on civilians' lives in a way that no al-Qaeda group has since Osama bin Laden's men enjoyed the freedom of pre-9/11 Afghanistan.

An enigmatic leader who shuns the spotlight—there is only one photograph of him in circulation, a grainy head shot the U.S. State Department uses to advertise the \$10 million price tag it has put on his head—Baghdadi's ambitions match bin Laden's: to create a new caliphate, or state based on Islamic law, stretching across the Middle East and North Africa. Many jihadist leaders have stated this ambition, but Baghdadi is actually carving out a mini-caliphate in parts of both Iraq and Syria. Not even bin Laden, for all his spectacular international terrorist attacks, came close to holding so much as a square meter of territory in any Arab country.

To make his intentions clear, in April 2013, Baghdadi gave al-Qaeda in Iraq a new name: the Islamic State of Iraq and Greater Syria (ISIS). With operations reaching from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf, it is al-Qaeda's most successful affiliate. The war in Syria has made ISIS “the strongest of them all,” says Jessica D. Lewis, director of research at the Institute for the Study of War in Washington and author of a recent report on al-Qaeda's resurgence in Iraq. “Baghdadi has military momentum, he has taken terrain in Syria, and he has established a governance system,” she says. “He is the one conducting the war that all the foreign fighters are seeking. He is calling the shots, and that will make him a major player in al-Qaeda going forward.”



## Baghdadi's Handiwork

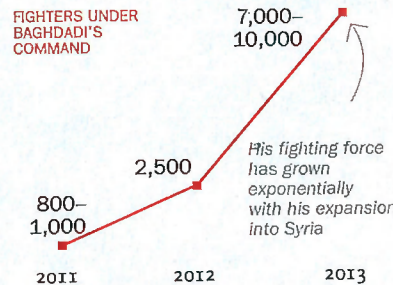
MAYHEM IN IRAQ

More than

# 7,900

Civilians killed in terrorist attacks so far in 2013, the deadliest year since violence peaked in 2008 during the U.S.-led war. Although the attribution of terrorist attacks is not always clear, Baghdadi's group is by far the deadliest jihadist group operating in the country.

FIGHTERS UNDER BAGHDADI'S COMMAND



MAYHEM MULTIPLIED

# 32

Number of suicide bombers involved in Baghdadi's biggest operation, on July 23, 2012, when 116 people were killed across Iraq. Baghdadi's signature style is to launch multiple suicide attacks in several cities on the same day.

### Pretender to the Throne

THE CONFLICT IN SYRIA HAS DEVOLVED into a three-front war. For the moment, al-Qaeda's affiliates are fighting on the side of the rebels, but their goal of establishing a broad Islamic empire anchored in Syria and governed by Baghdadi's interpretation of Islamic law puts them at odds with their supposed allies. Already Baghdadi has battled rebel groups he deemed insufficiently Islamic, forcibly taking towns controlled by moderates.

Baghdadi has a large pool from which to recruit. Syria has drawn as many foreign fighters to its battlefields in two and a half years as Afghanistan did in two and a half decades of war, according to senior officials in the Obama Administration. Most of the new arrivals swear allegiance to Baghdadi and join ISIS, say U.S. and Middle Eastern terrorism analysts. ISIS's well-equipped soldiers, heavy weaponry and sophisticated attacks are evidence of robust funding streams.

And Baghdadi doesn't just fight: he holds terrain. ISIS has taken over the Syrian city of Raqqa and its environs, where an influx of citizens fleeing the war has swelled the population to 1 million, mak-

ing it the largest municipality ever administered by al-Qaeda. ISIS controls border crossings to Turkey, a crucial NATO member and U.S. ally, and has captured oil fields and refineries, which help it generate income locally. It even runs a bus service from Raqqa to the surrounding villages.

There's a similar picture in parts of Iraq. ISIS is so strong in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, whose population is nearly 2 million, that Baghdadi's operatives collect "taxes" unmolested. The group is now taking control of areas in neighboring Anbar province, its former Iraq stronghold, say Iraqi officials.

Baghdadi's on-the-ground power base has given him unprecedented authority for an al-Qaeda figure who is not part of bin Laden's original group, the survivors of which are now mostly based in Pakistan. Ayman al-Zawahiri, bin Laden's designated successor, still wields influence in the organization, but his ability to direct operations is compromised by having to live in hiding. As a consequence, affiliates like al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), Somalia's al-Shabab and Yemen's al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) are rising in prominence and vying for leadership roles. But it is ISIS that has the biggest stage, and Baghdadi the biggest clout.

For the moment, Baghdadi has not yet turned his attention to the West in the way that Yemen's AQAP has, with its technologically sophisticated plots to blow up passenger planes and plans to attack foreign embassies. But if he is allowed to continue unchecked, or if the Syrian civil war continues to serve as a

spawning ground for a new generation of jihadists, it may be only a matter of time. U.S. Congressman Mike Rogers, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, says al-Qaeda's affiliates in Syria are already debating about when to launch an attack on the West. "They're talking about conducting external operations, which is exactly what happened in Afghanistan, which led to 9/11," Rogers warned in an address to policymakers at the 2013 Foreign Policy Initiative Forum in Washington in October. "The only thing we think is stopping it now is the fact that there is this struggle between al-Qaeda core leadership saying, 'Hold off, don't do it yet.'" U.S. National Counterterrorism Center director Matthew G. Olsen told the Senate Homeland Security Committee on Nov. 14 that ISIS's "growing cadre of Western recruits probably bolsters the group's pool of external operatives who could be used to target the West."

### An Elusive Enemy

JIHADIST WEBSITES ARE FULL OF ACCOUNTS of Baghdadi's battlefield exploits, but sur-



**Dangerous game** ISIS fighters at a children's playground near a front line on the outskirts of Aleppo on July 4

prisingly little is known about the man himself. Born Ibrahim bin 'Awad bin Ibrahim al-Badri ar-Radawi al-Husseini as-Samara'i in 1971 to a religious family in Samarra, Iraq, he claims he can trace his lineage all the way back to the Prophet Muhammad. Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi is a nom de guerre; he also goes by the name Abu Du'a. He has a Ph.D. in Islamic studies from the Islamic University of Baghdad.

When the U.S. and its allies invaded Iraq in 2003, Baghdadi joined forces with his mentor Abu Mousab al-Zarqawi, a Jordanian militant who went on to found al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI). Over the years, Baghdadi climbed the ranks, taking AQI's leadership position in 2010. (Zarqawi was killed in 2006, his successor Abu Ayub al-Masri died in 2010, and a subsequent leader died shortly thereafter.)

Abdul Rahman Hamad, an ISIS fighter from Homs, Syria, who is currently recovering from injuries in a safe house in Tripoli, Lebanon, remembers meeting Baghdadi at a training camp in Diyala province in eastern Iraq in 2004, when he and hundreds of other Syrian jihadists flooded into Iraq to combat the Americans. Baghdadi seldom spoke, Hamad tells TIME, but when he did, "he had a calm and convincing voice," even in the middle of an air strike. As a commander, Baghdadi stood out for his focus on his men's safety, planning not only sophisticated attacks but also secure retreats. Baghdadi wanted to keep himself alive too, says Hamad. Early on in the war, Baghdadi



started disguising himself, wrapping a scarf around his face even in the presence of close associates. "Abu Bakr knew how men can be seduced by money, so he never shared his secrets with anyone," says Hamad.

Even his enemies bear him grudging respect for that elusiveness. Members of Hizballah, the Lebanese Shi'ite militia that is fighting on behalf of Assad, call him "the Ghost." "Only a few people know the face of Baghdadi," says Sheik Ahmad, the Hizballah intelligence official in charge of investigating ISIS's fighters in Syria. For ex-

ample, he says, "You could be sitting with him one day, and when he passes next to you the second day you will not recognize him." Ahmad, who spoke on condition of not revealing his full name, says his arch-enemy can slip effortlessly into convincing regional accents, from Lebanese to Syrian to Saudi Arabic, a trait that befuddles his pursuers even as it endears him to his men. He has a habit of showing up unexpectedly on the front lines to boost troop morale.

Baghdadi's expansion into Syria has rejuvenated a waning al-Qaeda, inspired new recruits and, with ISIS's dominance in the north, brought the organization the closest it has ever been to its goal of establishing a caliphate. That success may have made Baghdadi too arrogant for al-Qaeda's old guard, says Seth Jones, a counterinsurgency specialist at the Rand Corp., a security-policy think tank in Washington. "He is the naughty son, the one who keeps pushing the line. For the moment he still has a relationship with his parents in Pakistan, where al-Qaeda Central is based, but he is giving them a huge headache."

In May, Zawahiri was forced to publicly intervene in a spat between Baghdadi and his onetime deputy, Abu Muhammad al-Jawlani, head of the Syrian al-Qaeda affiliate al-Nusra Front, over Baghdadi's attempt to merge the two organizations. In a letter followed by an audio recording, Zawahiri abolished ISIS and ordered Baghdadi back to Iraq. Baghdadi didn't listen, snapping back in a terse audio recording that ISIS would stay intact. "I have to choose between the rule of God and the rule of Zawahiri, and I choose the rule of God," he said. Though the two groups maintain an uneasy alliance, almost all the foreign fighters and many of

al-Nusra's top commanders defected to ISIS, pledging allegiance to Baghdadi.

The blatant indifference to instructions from al-Qaeda's top leader may presage more conflicts to come, says Jones. "The fact that Baghdadi has disregarded Zawahiri's instructions suggests that he may view himself as potentially more important than Zawahiri is." The rift has caught the attention of counterterrorism officials

in the Obama Administration, who believe it could herald the splintering of the global jihad movement. But like an employer confronted with a talented but troublesome employee, Zawahiri recognizes that for the moment, at least, it's not practical to let Baghdadi go. In Syria, al-Qaeda has an opportunity to gain territory, win recruits and spread to neighboring countries. Disciplining Baghdadi could unravel it all, says Lewis of the Institute for the Study of War.

Not only that, it might render Baghdadi even more dangerous: unchecked by other central directives, he could lash out with high-profile terrorist attacks in neighboring Israel or Turkey, provoking powerful enemies that al-Qaeda has so far avoided

attacking. Already he has mastered multiple streams of funding, from kidnapping for ransom and capturing oil fields to courting ideologically minded donors in the oil-rich Persian Gulf states, says Lewis, who believes that this has enabled Baghdadi to cut his financial ties to his mentors in Pakistan. "If al-Qaeda were sending funding, I wouldn't expect Baghdadi to push back so much. That's an indication that he can be financially independent."

### A Global Gaze

THE CITY OF RAQQA OFFERS THE MOST concrete example of Baghdadi's views on governance. Captured by the rebels on March 5, the city was soon taken over by

ISIS, which quickly set up Islamic courts and controlled the distribution of humanitarian aid. ISIS has tapped oil wells and captured refineries, handing out fuel to residents and using it to keep electricity supplied to the city. The group also set up a school in the city. It's an effective hearts-and-minds campaign, designed to prove that ISIS can govern as well as it can fight.

But those carrots come with sticks. Billboards promoting Islamic law and the veil for women have blossomed throughout the city. Roving bands of ISIS police pluck cigarettes from the lips of smokers and tear from rearview mirrors the dangling talismans traditionally used to ward off the evil eye—an affront to

the true Islam, say the enforcers. Local activists and journalists who speak out against ISIS's draconian rules are tried in Islamic courts for apostasy. Others simply disappear.

Baghdadi's ambition for an Islamic state is openly stated. During Ramadan celebrations in Raqqa in August, ISIS displayed a map that showed a borderless country stretching from the edge of Iran to the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula and across North Africa—a near re-creation of the 8th century Abbasid Caliphate, the first Islamic empire. The fact that Baghdadi already has a foothold in Raqqa, one of the capitals of Islam's golden age, has inspired a millenarian fervor among his followers, and strengthened his claim to prominence, says a Western aid worker based in Turkey who has close dealings with ISIS representatives. "At this point Baghdadi is saying, 'We are the real jihadis, we have actually won territory, and we are closer to having a caliphate than any other al-Qaeda group before.'"

ISIS, with its estimated 5,000 to 6,000 fighters, is significantly smaller than many of the other major fighting groups in Syria today. But most of ISIS's men have fought in other wars, from Afghanistan to Iraq and Libya. And it can direct and fund operations from Syria to Iraq, says Lewis. "Its military campaigns are very well crafted. I see border crossings taken purposefully and oil fields taken and exploited for financial gain. These are thoughtful terrain objectives indicating a long-term vision of territorial gain," she says. "This is not the enemy we saw in the Iraq War, which simply massed explosive attacks. The organization has evolved." And the man who made all that possible is Osama bin Laden's true heir. —WITH REPORTING BY MICHAEL CROWLEY/WASHINGTON, PIOTR ZALEWSKI/ISTANBUL AND RAMI AYSHA/BEIRUT ■

### ISIS: A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

**2003**  
*The U.S. and allies invade Iraq. An insurgency begins.*

**2004**  
*Jordanian Islamist Abu Mousab al-Zarqawi allies his insurgent group to al-Qaeda.*

**2005**  
*Zarqawi's al-Qaeda in Iraq targets U.S. and Iraqi forces and Shi'ite civilians.*

**2006**  
*The U.S. kills Zarqawi, but his group continues its terrorism campaign.*

**2007**  
*The U.S. military surge begins. Local Sunnis turn on the brutal al-Qaeda.*

**2008**  
*The U.S. withdraws; violence falls to lowest levels since 2004.*

**2009**  
*Two huge al-Qaeda bombing attacks in Baghdad each claim more than 100 lives.*

**2010**  
*Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi becomes the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq.*

**2011**  
*Civil war breaks out in Syria. The U.S. State Department puts \$10 million price on Baghdadi's head.*

**2012**  
*Baghdadi begins replenishing his ranks by breaking al-Qaeda members out of Iraqi prisons.*

**2013**  
*Baghdadi takes over the al-Qaeda affiliate in Syria and establishes a mini-state.*

# Le pouvoir turc ébranlé par un coup de filet anticorruption

Istanbul  
Correspondance

**N**ous ne plions pas», a fait savoir le premier ministre turc, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, depuis la ville de Konya, où il tenait un meeting, mardi 17 décembre. «Aucune force de l'ombre, qu'elle agisse de l'intérieur ou de l'extérieur, ne nous indiquera la ligne à suivre», a-t-il lancé. Le «système AKP» (Parti de la justice et du développement), bâti par le chef turc autour du parti islamo-conservateur qu'il dirige sans partage depuis douze ans, est pourtant en train de vaciller. Un vaste coup de filet anticorruption, mené mardi à Istanbul et Ankara, provoque un séisme au sein du pouvoir.

La justice enquête sur une vaste affaire de malversations, de corruption et de blanchiment d'argent, aux ramifications très politiques. Parmi les 56 personnes placées en garde à vue figurent le maire (AKP) du quartier central de Fatih à Istanbul, Mustafa Demir, les fils de trois ministres parmi les plus pro-

ches du chef du gouvernement, le cousin d'un responsable du bureau national de l'AKP, des bureaucrates de premier plan, mais aussi des hommes d'affaires liés au juteux secteur de la construction et de la promotion immobilière...

La garde rapprochée du premier ministre est sérieusement ébloussée. «C'est le plus gros scandale de l'histoire de la Turquie. Le premier ministre doit démissionner», a réclamé le député Engin Altay (Parti républicain du peuple, CHP). L'opposition exige par ailleurs la création par l'Assemblée nationale d'une commission d'enquête.

Au centre des investigations menées par la justice, se trouve l'administration de développement de l'habitat collectif (TOKI), qui a engrangé au cours de la dernière décennie des bénéfices colossaux en revendant à des promoteurs immobiliers triés sur le volet des terrains publics, et en réalisant ses propres projets de logements collectifs. Cette entreprise parapublique est au cœur de la politique

de transformation urbaine lancée par M. Erdogan et tant décriée au printemps au moment des manifestations de la place Taksim.

Le fils du ministre de l'environnement et de l'urbanisme, Erdogan Bayraktar, ancien directeur de TOKI, fait partie des personnalités arrêtées. En 2012, M. Bayraktar avait reconnu devant une commission parlementaire qu'environ 25 millions d'euros de commissions occultes avaient été dilapidés au cours de son mandat de dix ans à la tête de TOKI.

Un homme d'affaires azerbaïdjanais, Reza Zarrab, mais aussi le magnat de l'immobilier Ali Agaoglu, devenu en quelques années l'une des dix premières fortunes de Turquie, ont été placés en garde à vue par la police, ainsi que les fils du ministre de l'intérieur, Muammer Güler, et du ministre de l'économie, Zafer Caglayan.

Le directeur général de la banque publique Halkbank est lui aussi interrogé. Selon des sources judiciaires, son établissement a servi de plate-forme d'échanges avec l'Iran, alors que Téhéran était soumis à des sanctions internationales.

Cette soudaine offensive de la justice est à analyser à l'aune de la guerre qui fait rage au sommet de l'Etat entre les partisans de M. Erdogan et ceux du prédicateur Fethullah Gülen, exilé depuis 1999 aux Etats-Unis et à la tête d'une puissante confrérie influente dans les rouages de l'Etat. L'instruction est menée par le procureur Zekeriya

Öz, réputé proche des «gülénistes», et qui avait dirigé l'enquête dans l'affaire Erge- nekon, une organisation militaro-nationaliste démantelée en 2007. Le mouvement Gülen aurait décidé de lancer ces opérations de représailles après avoir été visé par la fermeture des «dershane», un réseau de cours privés de soutien scolaire dans lequel il a massivement investi, décidée par le gouvernement. Lundi, le député AKP Hakan Sükür a remis sa démission du parti, invoquant cette passe d'armes pour justifier sa décision. Il est le deuxième parlementaire à quitter l'AKP en quelques semaines. Une vingtaine d'autres, favorables à M. Gülen, pourraient suivre, estimait mardi la presse turque.

Le divorce entre l'entourage de M. Erdogan et la confrérie religieuse, qui a soutenu l'AKP pendant dix ans mais a condamné sa dérive autocratique et antidémocratique, s'étale désormais chaque jour dans les journaux. Le quotidien pro-Gülen *Taraf* menace de sortir «documents» et «enregistrements» compromettants pour le premier ministre.

La bataille est sans doute loin d'être terminée alors que se profile, en 2014, des élections municipales et un scrutin présidentiel au suffrage universel. Face à M. Erdogan qui ambitionne de se présenter, les proches de Fethullah Gülen pèseront de tout leur poids. ■

GUILLAUME PERRIER

## Le pays qui emprisonne le plus les journalistes

La Turquie est, pour la deuxième année consécutive, le pays où le plus grand nombre de journalistes sont emprisonnés, selon le Comité pour la protection des journalistes. Quarante professionnels étaient détenus dans les prisons turques au 1<sup>er</sup> décembre. Cela constitue toutefois une baisse par rapport à 2012,

quand 49 reporters étaient sous les verrous. Ankara devance Téhéran (35 journalistes emprisonnés) et Pékin (32). 211 journalistes sont en prison dans le monde, selon le rapport rendu public mercredi 18 décembre. Depuis le début de l'année, dans le monde, 52 journalistes ont été tués dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions.



21 December 2013

## 36 Kurdish fighters returning from Syria arrested in Sulaimaniya

By Hawar Berwani

Sulaimaniya (IraqiNews.com) A security force from Sulaimaniya province arrested 36 young men who returned from Syria because they were fighting along with the Nusra Front Terrorist Group in Syria.

The head of the Protection and

Information Establishment in Kurdistan Region Lahor Shiekh Jinki reported that "The last explosion which took place last night in Sulaimaniya city completes the series of explosions that targeted the two officers within the Peshmerga Ministry a while ago," noting that "These terrorist operations were conducted by terrorists returning from fight

in Syria."

He clarified "Our security forces have arrested during the last few days 36 young men returning from Syria who admitted that they were fighting with the Nusra Front against the Kurdish Forces there as well as admitting that they received training on fighting tactics and emplacing bombs or conducting terrorist operations."

He emphasized that "The terrorist groups threatened to revenge from Sulaimaniya security departments upon arresting the terrorists returning from Syria





# Turquie : les islamistes en guerre ouverte

**CORRUPTION** L'arrestation de cadres de l'AKP attise le conflit entre Erdogan et la confrérie de Gülen.

Un conflit aussi implacable qu'inédit oppose le Premier ministre islamo-conservateur Recep Tayyip Erdogan, le leader de l'AKP au pouvoir depuis novembre 2002, à la très influente confrérie islamiste de Fethullah Gülen, qui fut longtemps son alliée. Cinq hauts responsables de la police ont été démissionnés hier pour leur rôle dans une opération anticorruption sans précédent visant l'AKP.

## Pourquoi ce coup de filet ?

L'enquête menée depuis plus d'un an par des magistrats d'Istanbul, dont le procureur Zekeriya Oz, considéré comme proche de la Cemaat (la confrérie de Fethullah Gülen), sans que les services secrets (MIT) et le ministre de la Justice n'en aient eu vent, touche le parti au pouvoir en son cœur et sur son point le plus sensible : la corruption. Un sujet tabou dans les médias, en particulier quand elle touche la famille des grands barons de l'AKP.

Les fils du ministre de l'Intérieur, Muammer Güler, de celui de l'Economie, Zafer Caglayan, et de son collègue de l'Environnement, Erdogan Bayraktar, ont été placés en garde à vue en même temps qu'une cinquantaine d'autres personnalités, dont Suleyman Aslan, PDG de Halk Bankasi, une importante banque publique, des patrons, des hauts cadres du parti et le maire du très islamiste quartier Fatih d'Istanbul. Ils sont soupçonnés de corruption active, de fraude, de blanchiment d'argent. Le ministre des Affaires européennes, Egemen Bagis, serait aussi éclaboussé dans l'affaire. «*Le divorce entre l'AKP et la Cemaat est en train de se transformer en une guerre ouverte dans laquelle les deux parties vont perdre énormément*», relève Kadri Gürsel, éditorialiste du quotidien libéral Milliyet.

## Pourquoi ce bras de fer ?

La toute-puissante Cemaat

– dont le chef spirituel Fethullah Gülen, poursuivi pour activités antilaïques, est réfugié aux Etats-Unis depuis 1999 – avait longtemps soutenu l'AKP, partageant peu ou prou le même projet d'islamisation de la société et des institutions. Mais les deux forces sont de natures différentes. «*La confrérie veut se débarrasser d'Erdogan, car elle le perçoit désormais comme une menace pour sa propre existence, mais elle ne lutte pas tant contre l'AKP que contre le Premier ministre lui-même ; elle ne veut pas tant casser le vase qu'en changer l'eau qui, selon elle, est pourrie*», analyse Kadri Gürsel. L'AKP de Recep Tayyip Erdogan, issu de l'ancien parti islamiste Refah, est avant tout un mouvement politique. La confrérie, plus libérale et pro-occidentale, mais encore

plus bigote, dont le maître mot est «*hizmet*» («*service*»), mise, elle, avant tout sur son pouvoir d'influence au travers de ses journaux, dont *Zaman*, l'un des princi-

aux quotidiens du pays, ses réseaux d'écoles, y compris en Europe et en Afrique, et l'infiltration massive de l'appareil policier et judiciaire.

## Quelles seront les conséquences ?

Le bras de fer entre l'AKP et la Cemaat ne pourra que s'envenimer en 2014, année cruciale avec des élections municipales en mars et la présidentielle à l'automne – la première au suffrage universel –, où Erdogan sera en lice.

Le conflit avait commencé en février 2012, quand les réseaux «*gülenistes*» tentèrent d'avoir la tête du patron des services secrets, Hakan Fidan, proche d'Erdogan. Ce dernier décida alors de casser le pouvoir de la Cemaat. Au printemps, des proches de la confrérie, dont le vice-Premier ministre, Bülent Arinç, avaient dénoncé l'excès de répression contre les manifestants d'Istanbul. Il y a un mois, le gouvernement a supprimé les cours de soutien scolaire, manne dont profitait la confrérie. L'opposition laïque compte bien profiter de cette guerre interne islamiste qui va éparpiller l'électorat et du grand déballage des affaires.

MARC SEMO

Challenge

15 décembre 2013

## L'Onu inaugure un pont aérien du Kurdistan irakien vers la Syrie

**BAGDAD (Reuters)** - Pour la première fois depuis le début de la crise syrienne, l'Onu a acheminé dimanche de l'aide humanitaire par voie aérienne depuis l'Irak vers le nord-est de la Syrie et indiqué que le dispositif allait monter en puissance dans les prochains jours.

Le premier avion cargo affrété par les Nations unies a décollé d'Erbil, dans la région du Kurdistan irakien (nord), et s'est posé dans la province d'Hassakeh, à une heure de vol.

Selon le Programme alimentaire mondial

(Pam) de l'Onu, l'aide qui sera acheminée dans les dix jours à venir devrait être suffisante pour nourrir plus de 6.000 familles syriennes jusqu'à la fin de l'année.

"Les régions de l'Est syrien souffrent davantage que d'autres du fait de leur éloignement de la capitale et des difficultés d'acheminement de l'aide alimentaire", a expliqué Iyad Nuaman, coordinateur régional du Pam joint par téléphone à Erbil.

Aucune aide d'envergure n'était arrivée dans cette région depuis le mois de mai dernier.



Le pont aérien, autorisé par les gouvernements syrien et irakien, permettra également le transport de couvertures, de vêtements chauds et de médicaments à destination des populations en grande difficulté de la province d'Hassakeh, que l'Onu estime entre 50.000 et 60.000 personnes.

Au total, les deux avions affrétés doivent effectuer 23 rotations en dix jours, a précisé l'Onu dans un communiqué. En plus de l'aide alimentaire, 300 tonnes d'équipements de première nécessité seront acheminées par les airs.

# Turquie : la confrérie de Fethullah Gülen, un État dans l'État

En butte à un scandale de corruption qui menace son pouvoir, Erdogan accuse la confrérie Gülen, son ancien allié. Qui sont ses adeptes ? Que veulent-ils ?

De notre correspondant à Istanbul,  
Guillaume Perrier  
Point.fr

**O**n croyait le pouvoir du Premier ministre turc Recep Tayyip Erdogan absolu et inébranlable. Mais, depuis mardi, il vacille comme jamais. La révélation d'un gigantesque scandale de corruption qui éclabousse plusieurs de ses proches, et notamment quatre ministres de son gouvernement, fragilise le chef du parti islamo-conservateur (AKP) au pouvoir. Il fait surtout apparaître, désormais au grand jour, la profonde rivalité qui mine le parti, entre les partisans du Premier ministre d'un côté et la puissante confrérie Gülen de l'autre. Une guerre des clans fait rage entre les anciens alliés islamistes.

## "FORCES DE L'OMBRE"

Parmi la cinquantaine de personnes mises en garde à vue depuis mardi, neuf ont été déférées jeudi devant la justice pour corruption, malversations et blanchiment d'argent. Les quatre ministres cités dans cette affaire, Egemen Bagis, chargé des Affaires européennes, Zafer Caglayan (Économie), Muammer Güler (Intérieur) et Erdogan Bayraktar (Urbanisme), tous proches du Premier ministre, auraient proposé leur démission. Mais à travers eux, c'est tout le système mis en place par les proches de Recep Tayyip Erdogan qui est visé. La réplique n'a pas tardé. Plus de quarante hauts responsables de la police turque, ainsi que le préfet d'Istanbul, accusés d'avoir "outrepassé leurs fonctions", ont été limogés. Un remaniement ministériel pourrait être annoncé dans les prochains jours.

Le Premier ministre a dénoncé "les forces de l'ombre" qui agissent derrière ce coup de force judiciaire. Une cabale "plus organisée que celle de Gezi", faisant référence aux manifestations antigouvernementales qui ont éclaté au printemps dernier. Une manière d'accuser la confrérie de Fethullah Gülen, sans la nommer. Un député islamiste parmi ses fidèles, Salih Kapusuz, est monté plus franchement au créneau en déclarant que "l'AKP ne tire sa force ni de forces occultes outre-Atlantique ni d'alliances nauséabondes". Le prédicateur turc



Fethullah Gülen vit en exil aux États-Unis depuis 1999

Fethullah Gülen, à la tête d'un puissant groupe d'influence, vit exilé aux États-Unis depuis 1999, retranché en Pennsylvanie.

## UN RÉSEAU ÉDUCATIF

La confrérie Gülen, aussi appelée mouvement "Hizmet" (service), est une puissante organisation socio-religieuse née dans les années 70, à Izmir. Fethullah Gülen, un jeune imam charismatique, commence à cette époque à constituer une petite communauté de fidèles. Ses prêches s'inscrivent dans la tradition de Saïd Nursi, un penseur islamiste du début du XXe siècle, et attirent les foules. Mais c'est dans les années 90 que son mouvement décolle et commence à jouer un rôle plus politique. Proche des milieux islamistes, Gülen entretient aussi des liens avec le leader de la gauche sociale-démocrate de l'époque Bülent Ecevit. Après la chute de l'URSS, la diplomatie turque s'appuie fortement sur le réseau d'écoles que la confrérie a bâti en Asie centrale pour reconquérir cet espace stratégique. La cemaat (communauté) accroît encore son influence avec l'arrivée au pouvoir de l'AKP en 2002, pour lequel elle a fait campagne.

Car la confrérie est d'abord un réseau éducatif, à la tête de plusieurs milliers d'écoles, dans plus d'une centaine de pays, parfois d'universités. En Asie, en Afrique, mais aussi aux États-Unis, où elle dispose de dizaines d'établissements, son poids ne cesse de grandir. Un enseignement élitiste et strict, tourné vers les sciences, y est dispensé, la mixité y est le plus souvent proscrite. En France, le mouvement Gülen s'est développé depuis 2007 et a ouvert un collège privé

en banlieue parisienne. En Turquie, où il dispose de nombreuses écoles, il a massivement investi dans les "dershane", des établissements de soutien scolaire, qui sont devenus l'une de ses principales sources de revenus. En novembre, le gouvernement turc a tenté de faire passer une réforme qui devait mettre fin à ce système éducatif parallèle. Le mouvement Gülen a alors lancé l'offensive.

## UNE INFLUENCE DANS TOUTES LES INSTITUTIONS

Avec Erdogan, le réseau Gülen a d'abord eu les coudées franches. Il s'est étendu dans l'économie où il dispose de son propre patronat, la Tuskon, qui organise tous les voyages officiels à l'étranger. Dans les médias, il compte sur le journal Zaman, l'un des plus importants de Turquie. À travers le monde, ses fondations interreligieuses, ses groupes de pression et ses think tanks, mais aussi ses mosquées, labourent le terrain. Mais l'étendue de son influence fait l'objet de spéculations. La confrérie, qui cultive le secret et l'opacité sur ses finances, est soupçonnée d'avoir largement infiltré les institutions : l'administration territoriale, la police, la justice... Jusqu'à devenir un État dans l'État.

Ses liens avec les milieux politiques transcendent les partis, même si c'est à l'AKP que se sont retrouvés le plus grand nombre de ses fidèles. Une alliance qui est désormais rompue. L'opération anticorruption a été déclenchée au lendemain de la démission d'un député de l'AKP, le deuxième en quelques semaines, l'ancien footballeur Hakan Sükür, adepte de Fethullah Gülen. Une vingtaine d'autres députés pourraient quitter le parti, estime la presse turque. Et si la confrérie a toujours démenti qu'elle prétendait créer un mouvement politique, elle apparaît bien aujourd'hui comme la principale force d'opposition, la seule capable de mettre fin au règne de Tayyip Erdogan.

## UNE TURQUIE ISLAMIQUE ARRIMÉE À L'OCCIDENT

En termes de projet de société, le lobby Gülen ne diffère guère de l'AKP d'Erdogan. C'est un modèle conservateur et religieux, où la consommation d'alcool, la cigarette et les relations entre ➤



► hommes et femmes hors mariage sont proscrites, qu'il s'attache à promouvoir. Les adeptes envoyés à l'étranger doivent faire preuve d'une exemplarité sans faille et sont tenus de reverser une partie de leurs revenus. Enfin, même si une certaine diversité existe au sein de la confrérie, elle reste influencée par le nationalisme turc et s'est montrée intransigeante sur la question kurde, tandis qu'Erdogan tentait de négocier avec le chef du PKK Abdullah Öcalan.

La dérive autocratique de Recep Tayyip Erdogan et les erreurs stratégiques qu'il a commises sur la scène internationale ont accéléré le divorce qui devrait se prolonger jusqu'en 2014, année électorale chargée. En 2010, Fethullah Gülen avait critiqué l'expédition de la flottille turque vers Gaza qui s'était soldée par la mort de neuf militants islamistes turcs sur le navire Mavi Marmara. Les "gülenistes" ont également déploré l'abandon par le

gouvernement turc des réformes réclamées par l'Union européenne. En termes de politique étrangère, Gülen défend une Turquie forte, arrimée à l'Occident, via l'Otan, et alliée à Israël. Son mouvement manifeste une forte hostilité à l'égard de l'Iran chiite. ♦

**L'EXPRESS** 23 décembre 2013

## Kurdes assassinées à Paris: révélations sur le suspect

Par Eric Pelletier,

**Près d'un an après l'assassinat de trois militantes du PKK, à Paris, l'enquête connaît un brusque coup d'accélérateur. La veille des crimes, le meurtrier présumé avait photographié le fichier des adhérents d'une association kurde. Ses appels vers la Turquie intriguent les policiers.**

**[EXCLUSIF]** Les derniers développements de l'enquête sur l'assassinat de trois militantes kurdes proches du PKK (Parti des travailleurs du Kurdistan), le 9 janvier 2013, à Paris, renforcent les soupçons contre Ömer Güney, l'unique suspect des meurtres. Ils accréditent désormais l'hypothèse d'un assassinat politique sur fond d'espionnage.

Incarcéré, Ömer Güney, réfute toujours toute implication dénonçant un "complot de la France" contre lui. Le jeune homme se présente comme un Turc sympathisant "à 10.000%" de la cause autonomiste kurde. Mais cette ligne de défense se trouve désormais très fragilisée après la brusque accélération des investigations il y a quelques semaines et que L'Express est en mesure de révéler.

### Des photos compromettantes

Le laboratoire de police technique et scientifique situé à Ecully, près de Lyon (Rhône) vient de réussir à restaurer des fichiers photos effacés de la mémoire d'un téléphone mobile de marque Nokia utilisé par Ömer Güney. Elles prouvent que, la veille des meurtres, celui-ci pénétrait en pleine nuit dans les locaux d'une association kurde, à



*Sakine Cansiz, Fidan Dogan et Leyla Soylemez ont été tuées à Paris dans la nuit du 9 au 10 janvier 2013. afp.com*

Villiers-le-Bel (Val-d'Oise) pour photographier le listing des adhérents. Entre 4h30 et 5h30 environ, il a ainsi soigneusement photographié, une à une, 329 fiches d'adhérents, sur lesquelles figurent noms, adresses, numéros de téléphones de ces opposants à l'Etat turc... Il avait pu pénétrer à l'intérieur grâce au double des clés dont il disposait.

Interrogé par la juge d'instruction Jeanne Duyé, en novembre, Ömer Güney a reconnu avoir pris ces photos compromettantes. Mais il affirme avoir agi sur ordre d'un cadre du PKK (dont il refuse de donner le nom) qui lui demandait de "transférer (ce fichier) à l'extérieur". Au petit matin, il aurait apporté cette liste à un sympathisant du mouvement en région parisienne (dont il ne connaît pas l'identité et dont il a oublié l'adresse). Il aurait effacé le tout pour ne pas encombrer "la mémoire pour rien".

### Un sympathisant de l'extrême-droite turque?

Ce n'est pas le seul élément nouveau de l'enquête. Les convictions politiques dont Ömer Güney se prévaut ont été sérieusement remises en cause par le retour de la commission rogatoire lancée en Allemagne, pays où il vécut entre 2003 et 2011 avant de gagner la France et de se rapprocher de la communauté kurde de Villiers-le-Bel.

Certes ses amis et collègues de travail, interrogés dans la région de Munich par les policiers allemands, le décrivent comme un

homme calme, "incapable de tuer un oiseau". Mais selon eux, Ömer était bien éloigné des thèses autonomistes. Il serait, au contraire, un sympathisant de "l'extrême droite" turque, s'affichant proche du parti nationaliste MHP et fréquentant un stand de tir. Deux témoins affirment en outre qu'il portait une chevalière aux "trois demi-lunes", prisée par les "loups gris", ces activistes d'extrême droite. L'un d'eux se souvient d'un grand drapeau turc affiché dans sa chambre et de sa passion pour Galatasaray, l'un des clubs de foot d'Istanbul...

### Cinq téléphones

Les enquêteurs s'interrogeaient déjà sur les nombreux allers et retours d'Ömer Güney en Turquie. Le dernier eut lieu entre la mi-décembre et la fin décembre 2012, peu avant les assassinats. Ils sont encore plus intrigués par les appels d'Ömer Güney vers ce pays. Ils ont découvert que le suspect utilisait cinq téléphones, avec des cartes françaises ou turques. Deux d'entre eux n'ont pas été retrouvés.

Ömer Güney aurait envoyé des dizaines de textos en Turquie en direction de numéros "atypiques pouvant s'apparenter à des numéros techniques", selon les enquêteurs français. Ceux-ci devraient maintenant demander l'appui de leurs homologues d'Ankara pour savoir à qui Güney téléphonait si souvent. Et si discrètement.

○○○



# Le Kurdistan d'Irak, fragile refuge pour les chrétiens

Les chrétiens de Bagdad, de Mossoul et du reste de l'Irak sont venus en masse se réfugier au Kurdistan, fuyant les violences.

AGNÈS ROTIVEL (à Erbil)

<http://www.la-croix.com>

**POURTANT PROTÉGÉE PAR LE GOUVERNEMENT DE MASSOUD BARZANI, LA MAJORITÉ D'ENTRE EUX VEUT PARTIR EN OCCIDENT.**

Wassem a réussi à caler l'encombrant paquet dans son 4 × 4 : une statue de la Vierge de 1,50 mètre en plâtre blanc, avec son voile bleu ciel. Entourée telle une momie dans du papier bulle, personne, et surtout pas les éventuels contrôles aux check-points, ne devrait soupçonner la nature du colis. Ce soir, Wassem entreprend une route périlleuse – 360 km – entre Ainkawa, quartier chrétien d'Erbil dans le Kurdistan d'Irak, et la capitale irakienne. « La Vierge doit être à Bagdad pour Noël ! » dit-il.

Et les risques d'enlèvement ou d'assassinat par les groupes d'Al-Qaïda ? « Les sunnites regardent notre carte d'identité où est mentionnée la religion. Quand ils voient "chrétien", ils sont contents de nous avoir comme voisins parce que nous ne causons pas de problème, ils nous acceptent dans les affaires parce que nous sommes compétitifs, et quand ils cherchent un ennemi, nous sommes tout désignés. »

Cette déclaration désabusée d'un chrétien réfugié depuis une dizaine d'années au Kurdistan en dit long sur les relations entre les communautés irakiennes chrétiennes, sunnites et chiïtes.

**LA GUERRE CIVILE SÉVIT À PEU PRÈS PARTOUT**

Il y a des années, un tel voyage n'aurait posé aucun problème. Mais qu'est-ce que la normalité aujourd'hui en Irak ? La guerre civile sévit dans à peu près toutes les régions sunnites du pays, à l'exception des trois gouvernorats – Soulemanieh, Erbil et Dohouk – de la région autonome du Kurdistan, au nord.

Mais même là, le danger se rapproche, s'ajoutant à l'inquiétude provoquée par la guerre civile dans la Syrie voisine. Le 29 septembre, six kamikazes se sont fait exploser devant le bâtiment des forces de sécurité intérieures du PDK à Erbil, « capitale » du Kurdistan, pourtant réputée stable et sûre.

Puis, il y eut des attaques coordonnées contre le QG des services de renseignement de la police et un centre commercial de Kirkouk, dans le nord de l'Irak, le 4 décembre. Bilan : 11 morts et 70 blessés.



A Erbil, un vendeur de tapis. Chaque jour, des familles chrétiennes arrivent ici, venant de tout l'Irak (Daniel Etter/Redux-REA).

Kirkouk n'est qu'à 70 km d'Erbil. Elle est située dans les zones disputées entre Bagdad et les Kurdes – ils revendiquent cette ville comme faisant partie du Kurdistan, et ce sont les Peshmergas kurdes qui en assurent le contrôle.

**DES FLOTS DE CHRÉTIENS, DE TOUT L'IRAK**

Pourtant, à Ainkawa, les guirlandes clignotent dans les rues le soir, les sapins de Noël ornent les vitrines et les halls des hôtels. Les chrétiens oublieront peut-être pendant ce temps festif les inquiétudes qui les rongent. Personne ne connaît le nombre exact des chrétiens à Ainkawa : 30 000, 45 000 ? Ils sont aussi à Dohouk, au nord, ou dans les villages le long de la frontière avec la Turquie. Le flot des familles qui arrivent tous les jours du reste de l'Irak ne se tarit pas.

Laheeb Hanna, 62 ans, le regard malicieux, est arrivé il y a dix ans de sa ville natale de Bassora, dans le sud de l'Irak, une ville mixte où vivaient beaucoup de chrétiens comme lui. Ingénieur, il avait monté plusieurs sociétés, notamment dans la construction de pipeline, car Bassora est avant tout une ville pétrolière. Ses affaires prospéraient. C'est après la chute de Saddam Hussein, en 2003, que les problèmes ont commencé.

À cette époque, deux de ses beaux-frères sont tués dans des attentats. Laheeb Hanna embarque sa femme et ses deux filles au Kurdistan. « C'était en 2004 », se rappelle-t-il. Lui reste à Bassora pour diriger son

entreprise. Il fait les allers et retours vers Erbil toutes les deux semaines, soit 900 km en voiture à travers un pays devenu de plus en plus dangereux. « Je croyais que la situation allait s'améliorer », confie-t-il. Puis les enlèvements se sont généralisés à Bassora. Travaillant avec des Britanniques, il reçoit des menaces au téléphone.

**L'ÉMIGRATION, TOUS S'Y PRÉPARENT**

En 2006, il quitte définitivement la ville du Sud pour le Kurdistan. « J'avais un terrain à Erbil et de l'argent », explique Laheeb Hanna. En 2009, il fait construire un hôtel à Ainkawa, le Karlovy Vary, du nom d'une ville thermale en République tchèque dont il est tombé amoureux. Ses filles, Maria, 16 ans, et Trazia, 13 ans, sont scolarisées dans une école internationale où elles apprennent des langues étrangères, une garantie pour le jour où la famille devra émigrer. Le père y pense et s'y prépare.

Le dimanche, à la messe de 18 heures – les offices se déroulent le matin de très bonne heure ou le soir, parce que le dimanche n'est pas férié –, l'église chaldéenne Mar Ellia est pleine à craquer d'hommes, de jeunes et de femmes, la tête recouverte d'une mantille blanche sur laquelle est inscrit le mot Lourdes, souvenir de pèlerinage.

Ce soir-là, la paroisse accueille le jeune P. Basel Yaldo, venu du diocèse de Bagdad. Dans l'assistance, de nombreux chrétiens de la capitale irakienne ou de Mossoul, sont présents. La chorale entonne des chants en araméen, l'émotion est ➔

⇒ palpable. Un avant-goût de Noël pour ces familles déracinées. À la fin de la messe, tout le monde se presse pour serrer la main du Père qui repart le soir même pour Bagdad.

#### AU KURDISTAN, UNE RELATIVE SÉCURITÉ

La municipalité d'Ainkawa à Erbil est une sorte de ghetto peuplé de chrétiens, originaires du Kurdistan pour une part et d'Irakiens venus de Mossoul, de Bagdad ou du sud de l'Irak, fuyant l'instabilité et les attentats. « Nous sommes ethniquement et culturellement, les descendants des empires babylonien et assyrien », rappelle Saadi Maleh, historien, érudit et chrétien. « Nous ne sommes pas des invités en Irak, rappelle ce directeur général au ministère de la culture et directeur du musée assyrien à Ainkawa. Nous sommes à l'origine de ce pays, comme les Indiens en Amérique ou au Canada. »

Né à Ainkawa il y a 62 ans, Saadi Maleh a fait des études dans l'ex-Union soviétique, a enseigné en Libye puis a vécu au Canada dont il possède la nationalité. Après un court séjour aux Émirats arabes unis, il revient au Kurdistan en 2002. Ses frères et sœurs sont en Europe et sur le continent nord-américain. Il assure qu'il partira, à terme, « parce que même la société kurde s'islamisme et que si la situation se détériore, les chrétiens seront les premières victimes ».

À l'origine, Ainkawa était habité par des paysans chrétiens, plutôt communistes. Depuis le boom économique que connaît le Kurdistan, grâce à la découverte récente du pétrole, des hôtels ne cessent d'ouvrir, des centres commerciaux se multiplient, des bars où l'on sert de l'alcool attirent les

expatriés qui construisent le Kurdistan. Les chrétiens profitent largement de cette expansion et, pour la première fois, le budget du Kurdistan prévoit la construction de quatre églises à Ainkawa et une à Dohouk, plus au nord.

#### AINKAWA, ÉTAPE AVANT L'OCCIDENT

Bientôt Ainkawa sera aussi dotée d'un théâtre. Elle possède une bibliothèque spécialisée dans la culture syriaque avec plus de 7 000 livres, « la première dans toute l'Irak », ajoute Saadi Maleh. Les chrétiens du Kurdistan ont leurs propres écoles : arabophones, ils ne peuvent aller dans des écoles kurdes d'où l'arabe a été proscrit. Mais ils n'ont pas encore d'université. « Il faut que nous ayons une section en langue syriaque à l'université de Salahedine », dit Saadi Maleh. Mais à cette requête, le doyen lui a répondu, « je n'ouvre pas d'église dans l'université ! »

Massoud Barzani, président de l'entité kurde d'Irak et chef du parti démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK), a donné des garanties aux chrétiens pour qu'ils s'établissent au Kurdistan, achètent des terrains, construisent et ouvrent des entreprises. Mais dès qu'une contrariété vient rompre cette harmonie, les chrétiens ont le sentiment de voir leur avenir menacé

Salim Kako, ex-député chrétien au parlement est originaire d'Erbil. Il se bat tous les jours pour aider ses compatriotes venus du reste de l'Irak. Mais rien n'y fait, les chrétiens quittent aussi le Kurdistan et Ainkawa est souvent la dernière étape avant le saut en Occident.

#### UN PAYS PERDU POUR LES CHRÉTIENS DÉSORMAIS

« C'en est fini du Moyen-Orient pour les chrétiens », avoue l'hôtelier Laheeb Hanna qui tôt ou tard partira « pour mes filles, pour leur avenir ». « Les chrétiens ont payé le prix fort de la guerre en Irak, lâche Salim Kako. Ils ont perdu leur pays, l'Irak, leurs églises, leur peuple. »

La rumeur court qu'il ne resterait plus que 150 000 chrétiens dans toute l'Irak. Ils étaient plus d'un million en 1980. Dans les villages chrétiens d'al Kosh ou Karakosh, situés dans les zones disputées entre la région du Kurdistan et le pouvoir central à Bagdad, les familles chrétiennes qui s'y sont réfugiées, fuyant les violences de Mossoul ou de Kirkouk, partent elles aussi.

Les religieux restent mais doivent se replier pour des raisons de sécurité. C'est le cas des dominicaines de Mossoul dont le monastère a été fermé. Les religieuses ont été relogées dans des villages de la plaine de Ninive.

Les chrétiens ont perdu confiance dans cette région. En aparté, l'un d'entre eux, fonctionnaire, confie que « les Kurdes ont peur que nous prenions trop de pouvoir. Certes, poursuit-il, Massoud Barzani nous protège. Mais il n'est pas éternel. Il est temps que nous cessions d'être des "protégés" ». ■

## Syrian Kurdish parties reach agreement on Geneva II

### 10-point agreement reached between PYD and KNC

<http://www.aawsat.net>

**E**rbil, Asharq Al-Awsat—An agreement has been reached between the Syrian Kurdish National Council (KNC) and the Syria-based Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD) on Syrian Kurdish participation at the Geneva II conference.

After eight days of meetings between the parties an announcement was made at a joint news conference stating that "any Kurdish party" would be able to represent Kurdistan at the conference on January 22, but "not in an

individual or partisan capacity."

"Both sides reached agreement on the differences which have caused many of the problems and media exchanges between them in the past," the statement continued.

Talks between the two seemed to have broken down on Friday over who would represent the Syrian Kurdish people at the upcoming UN-brokered peace conference.

However, a final meeting was held late on the night of December 23, where agreement on 10 points was reached.



The representative of West Kurdistan People's Council, Abdessalam Ahmad, who was present at the meetings, said that aside from the agreement regarding the Geneva II conference, the other points included the opening of the border point at Semalika, which was under the control of the PYD, in addition to the release of all detainees currently detained in PYD prisons. He said the border point →



➔ would be open within 46 hours following the agreement.

He said that the Kurdish people of Syria “were going through a sensitive historic phase and must preserve the unity of their ranks,” adding that the “interests of the Kurdish people in Syria must take priority over the narrow partisan interests.”

Tahir Safouk, the representative of the KNC at the meeting, described the agreement as a “historic achievement for the Kurdish people.” Safouk said the agreement at this current time on the political future of the Kurdish region in Syria gave Kurdish people and parties the “strength and determination to enter the political arena in the next phase

after the overthrow of the current Syrian regime.”

The agreement also included the formation of a committee of 11 people, including independent rights activists, to investigate the events of Amouda and Tall Ghazal in the town of Koubari, where many civilians were killed, and where accusations pointed at the PYD.

The two sides also agreed to describe all those who fall in the region during the struggle against the current regime as “martyrs of the struggle for democracy in Western Kurdistan.”

The two sides, however, failed to agree on “the independent Kurdish administration which was announced by the PYD and some

other parties in the Syrian region of Kurdistan, while an agreement was postponed on the activation of the Higher Kurdish Council.”

A decision on those two issues was delayed until January 15, 2014.

The negotiations were sponsored by the president of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, Massoud Barzani, and mediated by the Kurdish MP in the Turkish parliament, Leyla Zana, and the Mayor of Diyarbakir Osman Baydemir.

The news conference was also attended by Hamid Darabandi who was representing President Barzani. □

## PKK: Erdoğan seeking Kurdish support in his conflict with Gülen

### Kurdistan Workers' Party urges Kurds to remain neutral

Sherzad Shekhani

<http://www.aawsat.net>

**E**rbil, Asharq Al-Awsat—A spokesman for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), Zagros Hiwa, has called on the Kurdish community in Turkey not to interfere in the current conflict between Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and US-based Muslim preacher Fethullah Gülen.

Speaking to Asharq Al-Awsat by telephone, Hiwa said: “Erdoğan has lost many of his allies due to the current conflict, and I think his position will be weak in the next elections. And even if he tried, through his visit to Diyarbakir with [Iraqi Kurdistan President] Massoud Barzani, to court the Kurds for his own benefit, the Kurdish people must not interfere in the ongoing conflict and must rely on themselves and support their own real representatives who can represent them at the next parliament.”

Turkish politics have recently been rocked by a falling out between Erdoğan and Gülen, whose influential social and cultural network counts a number of senior state officials among its members. It also includes some figures within Erdoğan's own Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Earlier this month, a number of allies of the prime minister in the political and business arena were arrested as part of a corruption investigation. Erdoğan denounced the arrests as a plot against his government, and responded by firing a number of senior police officials.

The arrests followed attempts in November to close down a number of private schools operated by Gülen's movement,

which are reportedly a key source of finance for the organization.

Hiwa told Asharq Al-Awsat that Erdoğan had given police and judicial powers to Gülen's group, which had led the group to act as if it were “a state within a state.”

He said the Turkish prime minister was the victim of his own political strategy, adding: “In the interest of his party, [Erdoğan] made alliances with political and Islamist forces who were planning to attack him, and thus he failed to gain credible political allies, and failed in his promises to end Turkey's problems with neighboring countries, evidenced by becoming embroiled in the Syrian quagmire and interference in Egyptian affairs, as well as his problems with Iraq.”

Hiwa said the Gülen Group turned against Erdoğan because of “the issue of quotas, where the Gülen Group wanted a bigger share of the gains made by Erdoğan's party, including the oil agreement between Erdoğan and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, because this Group controlled important power centers in government that did not want Erdoğan and his party to monopolize the larger share of the gains, and as I said earlier, they see themselves as a state within a state.”

Regarding the effects of the current conflict on the Kurdish issue and the peace initiative launched by detained PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan, Hiwa said: “There was a strong alliance between Erdoğan and the Fethullah Gülen Group, and the only objective that they shared was the destruction of Kurdish people and their cause, where the Gülen Group resorted to military solutions to



*A demonstrator hold pictures of Turkey's Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan and Turkish cleric Fethullah Gulen (R), during a protest against Turkey's ruling AK Party (AKP), demanding the resignation of Erdogan, in Istanbul December 30, 2013 (REUTERS/Osman Orsal).*

eliminate the Kurdish issue, while Erdoğan conducted a policy of containment through psychological warfare and making unenforceable empty promises, and following policies of procrastination”.

He added: “Accordingly, Erdoğan needs the support of the Kurdish people in this current conflict, and this will not happen without resolving the [Kurdish] issue and spreading real democracy in the country. The peace process is still faltering because of Erdoğan's promises, and peace will not be achieved by one side. There must be a real will to make peace and end the bloody conflict between the Kurds and the Turkish state in order to enable Erdoğan to defeat [rival] internal power centers.” □

## Barzani sneaks to Geneva II to put Kurdish dream on table

Syria Kurdish groups are holding talks in Iraq Kurdistan region aimed at patching up differences ahead of peace conference.

www.middle-east-online.com

**ARBIL** - Syrian Kurdish groups were holding talks in Iraq's autonomous Kurdistan region on Tuesday aimed at patching up differences ahead of a peace conference planned for next month, an official said. Two main Syrian Kurdish groupings -- the People's Council of Western Kurdistan (PCWK) and the Kurdish National Council (KNC) -- have been at odds since the former announced a transitional autonomous administration for Kurdish-majority areas of northeastern and northwestern Syria without the latter's backing.

The dispute led to the closure of the border between Iraqi Kurdistan, which backs the KNC, and Kurdish-controlled areas of northeastern Syria.

"The meetings of the Kurdish parties begin today, Tuesday, in Arbil," the Iraqi Kurdish regional capital, Bahajet Bashir, a member of the KNC, said.

"These meetings are for the sake of unifying the Kurdish house and its political (position)... and preparing for the Geneva meeting, so the Kurdish participation will be strong," Bashir said, referring to peace talks that are now to take place in Montreux, Switzerland.

He added that the meetings also aim to improve relations between the PCWK and the KNC.

Iraqi Kurdistan regional president Massud Barzani met with delegations from the Syrian Kurdish groups on Monday, a statement on his website said.

During the meetings, he emphasized the importance of establishing a unified Kurdish position ahead of the peace talks scheduled to begin on January 22, the statement said.

More than 126,000 people have been killed in the 33-month conflict pitting forces loyal to President Bashar al-Assad against rebels fighting to topple his regime.

But Kurdish-majority areas of the country's northeast were relatively quiet until clashes broke out this year between Kurd militia and jihadist rebels, pushing tens of thousands of Syrian Kurds across the border into Iraqi Kurdistan. ■



## Kirkuk and the Kurdish Failure



Hiwa Osman  
Ekurd.net

**W**hat happened in Kirkuk last week, where Kurdish parties failed to unite under a single banner ahead of next April's nationwide legislative elections in Iraq, should not be called anything less than a political scandal.

The failure of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) to cooperate in Kirkuk belies the old Kurdish claims of national unity in policy and strategy.

The two political parties demonstrated that they have no joint plans for the strategic issues that should transcend political party lines

The PUK and KDP's conflict over the joint list for Kirkuk ahead of the April 2014 legislative elections indicates that the issue of Article 140 will be delayed a lot more than the people of Kirkuk and other areas were expecting.

While the two parties spend most of their time in campaigns and the media blaming Baghdad for the non-implementation of Article 140, they will have difficulty in continuing to perpetuate the argument that their goal is to bring Kirkuk and other disputed territories into Kurdistan.

It would also be very interesting to hear what the electoral programs of the seven Kurdish Kirkuki lists are going to be if they decide to go

to the election separately.

Kurds often blame others for their misfortune and lack of progress on the issues that have taken a long time to settle. But after the Kirkuk saga, their constituents will blame them, too, for their division and for political mismanagement of these national issues.

Almost all other issues that the Kurds will need to settle will require unity and a non-partisan approach. But today, it seems that with every new development the Kurds are moving further apart and the prospects of a united Kurdish policy on external and internal challenges is getting less likely. The parties can easily slip into a tit-for-tat policy on issues.

The formation of the new government in Erbil, the deal with Turkey and relations with Syrian Kurdistan, Iran and Baghdad are all interconnected issues. Each can affect the other. The more issues that the parties disagree on, www.Ekurd.net the wider will be the gap between them. That lessens the likelihood of a united stance and a policy on these issues.

A PUK Central Council member said in an interview that, "had Mam Jalal been around, he would have taken a decision that may not be in the PUK's interest but it would have been in the general Kurdish interest."

While the absence of "Mam Jalal" is clearly felt by the PUK and many others, especially at times like these, the other person that they and many others would naturally look to for a solution is "Kak Massoud."

The ball is now in his court for a settlement that unites the Kurds and puts Kurdish interests before party ones. □

*Hiwa Osman, IWPR Iraq's country director, previously served as Iraqi president Jalal Talabani's media adviser.*



International New York Times

DECEMBER 18, 2013

# Corruption raids roil Turkish politics

ISTANBUL

## Inquiry stirs suspicions over motive of prosecutor linked to Erdogan rival

BY TIM ARANGO  
AND SEBNEM ARSU

The Turkish police at dawn on Tuesday raided the offices of several businessmen with close ties to Prime Minister

Recep Tayyip Erdogan as part of a wide-ranging corruption investigation. The move immediately raised the stakes of a political contest of will between two men who have long held sway over Turkey's Islamic masses: an ailing and aging Muslim preacher who lives on a sprawling compound in Pennsylvania and Mr. Erdogan.

The corruption dragnet, in which the sons of three cabinet ministers were also detained on allegations of bribery, is a threat to Mr. Erdogan, as it involves the construction business and public financing of real estate — the same issue that provoked a wave of antigovernment demonstrations that swept Turkey this past summer.

The investigation also threatens to shake Turkey's political establishment before a series of elections that will determine the future of the country's Islamist governing party, in power now for more than a decade. And it figures in the personal battle between Mr. Erdogan and the charismatic imam, Fetullah Gulen.

Mr. Gulen left Turkey in 1999 for exile in the United States after he was accused of plotting a coup. From his base in the Pocono Mountains, he presides over a global following in the millions, some of whom have come to fill the ranks of the police and the judiciary in Turkey, including a prosecutor said to be leading the latest corruption investigation.

He and Mr. Erdogan were once uneasy partners in a political alliance that aimed to rid Turkish politics of the influence of the military, which carried out three coups last century and protected the secular elite and oppressed the pious classes, whom these men represent.

After a series of contentious trials, numerous generals and officers are in prison, and civilian authority over the military seems assured. But now the two men are openly feuding, raising questions about the cohesion of the Islamist-rooted governing party here.

Tuesday's raids and detentions attracted public attention partly because the Istanbul prosecutor said to be leading the investigation, Zekeriya Oz, is believed to be sympathetic to Mr. Gulen, as are many others throughout the government. That has raised suspicions in the Erdogan camp of an antigovernment conspiracy.

Kadri Gursel, a Turkish columnist, wrote recently that the rift was "actually a divorce proceeding that is getting uglier by the day."

Like many divorces, this one has come with its share of tawdry allegations, and the discord has also been fed by a series of leaked documents that revealed a government effort to monitor religious groups — including the Gulen movement — as far back as 2004, the year after Mr. Erdogan became prime minister.

The dispute erupted several weeks ago over what would seem to be the trivial matter of a government plan to shut down private test-preparation centers that tutor students for college entrance examinations. But it highlights the long-held suspicions within some wings of the governing Justice and Development Party, or A.K.P., about the growing social power of the Gulenist movement, which runs schools in more than 100 countries and owns many of the tutoring centers the government is trying to shut down.

But the current corruption investigation raises the ante for Mr. Erdogan, who is already facing opposition from the urban liberals and secular-minded Turks who found their voice in the summer's antigovernment demonstrations and is now facing cracks within his conservative religious base, which represents half of the electorate in Turkey.

A target of the corruption investigation is Ali Agaoglu, a construction tycoon behind several controversial development projects in Istanbul. The ministers' sons, according to the Turkish daily *Hurriyet*, are being investigated on suspicion of taking bribes in public tenders.

Others caught up in the investigation are said to be municipal workers accused of taking bribes for ignoring zoning regulations. The offices of Halkbank, which is state run, were also raided, and an Iranian businessman, Reza Zarrab, who is married to a famous Turkish pop star, was also detained.

Hasan Rahvahi, the chief executive of Mr. Agaoglu's construction company, said in a telephone interview that "claims about allegations are merely rumors."

"Criteria to participate in public tenders are very clearly defined and tenders take place with full transpar-

ency," he said. "We are ready to cooperate if there is any information required by the legal authorities."

While many commentators here saw the hidden hand of the Gulen community behind the investigation, one senior member of a Gulen-affiliated organization denied that there was any link.

The movement's power within Turkey stems more from the positions it controls within the state, say experts, and not necessarily from its ability to swing an election. Analysts and A.K.P. officials believe that the group's electoral support is only in the low single digits.

That is why many analysts say Mr. Erdogan could yet keep his hold on power without the support of the Gulenists. But the worry inside Mr. Erdogan's inner circle, according to officials and analysts, is that some powerful Gulen-affiliated businessmen will try to split the A.K.P. and finance a rival party. Already, two lawmakers have quit the A.K.P. over the dispute, including a former soccer star turned politician, Hakan Sukur. The concern about defections has deepened as many Gulen supporters have found common cause with the largely secular and youthful protesters of last summer.

To a great extent, these are the same people who supported Mr. Erdogan in his pursuit of democratic reforms, his

### "Claims about allegations are merely rumors."

promise of a new Constitution to replace the one imposed by the military after the 1980 coup and his quest for membership in the European Union.

"We still think that their efforts to curb the militarized system, and prosecute coup perpetrators were correct and so we supported them," said Mustafa Yesil, the director of the Journalists and Writers Foundation, a Gulen-affiliated organization in Istanbul. "Mr. Erdogan's attitude and approach at those times were more embracing and liberal."

But he never followed through, Mr. Yesil and others say.

"The new Constitution that we all aspire to never came; the European Union membership process has been stalled; and regarding the Syrian policy, instead of a peaceful approach, it was all about burning bridges, which caused a lot of problems for Turkey," Mr. Yesil said. "The approach became harsher and therefore was unacceptable."

Ceylan Yeginsu contributed reporting.

# Iranian Kurds disappointed with Rouhani

Some Reformist Kurds in Iran had hoped to have a Kurdish representative as governor for their region.



Author Behdad Bordbar  
www.al-monitor.com

In all recent presidential elections in Iran, Reformist candidates have managed to win the majority of votes in Kurdish regions. In June, Hassan Rouhani received 71% of the votes in Kurdistan. In his campaign, Rouhani had promised to appoint locals to local administrative positions in different regions of the country. He had also said that he will "work on removing the stain of discrimination and inequality from the face of the religious and ethnic minorities in Iran."

After the new administration took office, many were hoping to see Rouhani nominate a Sunni Kurd as one of his cabinet members. There were discussions regarding the possibility of Bijan Zolfaghar Nasab, a famous soccer coach, becoming the new minister of youth affairs and sports; however, this did not happen.

The Reformist political activists were also hoping to see a Sunni Kurd, for the first time since the transitional government of Mehdi Bazargan, appointed as the new governor of Kurdistan. After a three-month delay, Rouhani's administration chose Abdolmohammad Zahedi as the 17th governor of Kurdistan. At the inaugural ceremony of this nonlocal official, the interior minister said, "After much research and probing, the Interior Ministry could not find a local official with enough expertise and experience for the governorship of Kurdistan."

This statement provoked the Sunnis in Kurdistan. According to the Kermanshah Post, the Friday prayer imam of Paveh responded by saying, "Comments such as these are neither accurate nor beneficial. In Kermanshah and Kurdistan we have many officials who can manage not only Kurdistan but Shiraz and Isfahan, too."

The Kurdish activists also wrote about this issue in their Web logs. Farhad Aminpoor: "Mr. Minister, let us assume that your suggestion regarding the absence of any capable official in Kurdistan is accurate. Still, you should have been honest enough to give some background information regarding this issue. You should have mentioned that it is because of the broad and historical discriminations against the Kurds, and constant disregard for Kurds and Sunnis for administrative positions in the country, that this problem has now emerged."

Jalal Jalazadeh, a former Reformist member of parliament, discussed the appointment of the new governor of Kurdistan with Al-Monitor and about how he felt this was a missed opportunity for the Rouhani administration. "Unfortunately, the government does not trust the Sunnis and never appoints Kurdish officials to important positions," Jalazadeh said. He believes that it would even serve the administration's interests to appoint Sunni and Kurdish politicians in their efforts to reduce tensions with Sunni neighbors, a task that Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif had recently undertaken in trips to several Persian Gulf Arab countries. "Now that the new administration is trying to reduce the tension between Iran and the Sunni countries in the region, appointing Sunni ambassadors could have been a good step in achieving this goal," Jalazadeh said.

He viewed the dangerous trend of Salafism in relation to the issue of poverty and unemployment in Iran's Kurdistan region. He believes that the administration, while respecting the Constitution as a sign of national unity, could solve some of these problems if it were willing to let Kurdish officials participate in the administrative system and take part in the decision-making processes in the country.

In recent years, Kurds have been able to improve their positions in countries such as Iraq, Turkey and Syria. As the president of Iraq, after the fall



An Iranian Kurdish woman talks on her mobile phone as she walks at a bazaar while shopping in Marivan, Kurdistan province, Iran, May 12, 2011. (photo by REUTERS/Morteza Nikoubazi)

of Saddam, Jalal Talabani — a Kurd — managed to work toward national unity and lessening the tension between the Shiites and the Sunnis. In Syria, under the umbrella of the Democratic Union Party, three Kurdish provinces are being governed autonomously by Kurdish officials. In Turkey, too, Kurdish factions were able to make some gains for the Kurdish citizens.

Iranian Kurds, however — although represented in the parliament — are mostly isolated from the political scene of the country. There are a few armed opposition groups active in the Kurdish areas of Iran. The youngest of these factions is the Party of Free Life of Kurdistan (PJAK), which has attracted a large number of the youths in recent years.

Khaled Tavakoli, a Reformist activist resident of Kurdistan, talked to Al-Monitor about the rise of Salafist and armed groups. "Because of the religious split between the Sunnis and the government, Salafi groups were able to become more active, use the network of mosques and attract the youths to their organization." The Salafi groups have been successful in convincing the citizens that their activities are beneficial for the Sunni community. He added that the government is not sensitive about them and does not prevent them from being active. Kurdish political movements are often secular and egalitarian, and as such, the emergence of fundamentalism and Salafi groups is largely a new phenomenon.

Tavakoli does not see the conditions of Iranian Kurds improving. "Given that a Sunni official was not selected as the governor, the MPs will try to increase the development budget of the province," he said. "However, since the administration is trying to cut expenses and the next year's budget will be deflationary, it is unlikely to happen."

Hemen Seyedi, a Kurdish political analyst, said in an interview with Al-Monitor, "Considering these latest developments, the possibility of a politically open environment is very low. Even if a few Kurds are able to penetrate the circle of power, Kurdistan's political problems will not be solved. The important thing is to listen to the demands of the Kurdish citizens, and appointing a Kurdish official is not the same as listening to these demands."

He blamed part of the problem to the fact of unity between Iranian Kurdish groups. "The different factions in Iranian Kurdistan need to first come to an agreement on how they are going to negotiate with the Islamic Republic. They need to decide on what is the minimum they are asking for and who is going to be the negotiator. Currently, they are far from such an agreement."

A week before the Kurdistan governor was announced, Rouhani's special adviser Ali Younessi said that just because they have not appointed a religious or ethnic minority to a ministerial position or as governor "did not mean they will not do so in the future." He said, "Up until now, we have not been successful." Younessi's comments suggest that Rouhani's administration did attempt to elect minorities to key positions but had their attempts blocked by people whom he criticized that those in power believe sensitive positions only belonged to them. Whether or not they are successful in the future, there is a great deal of work that needs to be done in addressing the needs of Iranian Kurds. ♦

Behdad Bordbar is a journalist who has worked for Radiozamaneh in Amsterdam and has also published articles in BBC Persian and Akhbar-e Rooz. His work has been published in English, Kurdish and Norwegian.



# Turquie : «Derrière les affaires de corruption, une lutte intestinale au sein de l'AKP»

Par Arielle Thedrel

**INTERVIEW** - Selon Jean Marcou, spécialiste de la Turquie qui enseigne à Sciences Po Grenoble, le scandale de corruption qui secoue le pays risque de casser la campagne d'Erdogan pour les élections de mars et la présidentielle d'août.

**LE FIGARO - Faut-il croire Erdogan lorsqu'il dénonce un complot?**

Jean MARCOU -La théorie du complot relève du populisme. Cependant, derrière la dénonciation de ces affaires de corruption, nous savons qu'il y a la confrérie de Fethullah Gülen, qui soutenait Recep Tayyip Erdogan au départ. Le premier ministre lui-même a parlé d'un État parallèle qui tenterait de remettre en cause sa légitimité. Depuis deux ans, des désaccords feutrés sont apparus entre lui et la confrérie. Récemment, la décision du pre-

mier ministre de fermer les der-shane, ces établissements de soutien scolaire qui sont l'une des principales sources de revenus de la confrérie, a été perçue par le clan Gülen comme une déclaration de guerre. Depuis, il mène une campagne contre le gouvernement à travers notamment le journal Zaman, le plus important organe de presse en Turquie qui s'est mué en média d'opposition alors qu'il soutenait auparavant Erdogan. Derrière ces affaires de corruption, qui sont probablement réelles, il y a donc aussi une lutte intestinale pour le pouvoir. Cette lutte n'oppose pas simplement Erdogan et la confrérie Gülen, mais différentes forces au sein de l'AKP, qui est un mouvement très hétérogène et donc vulnérable.

**Qui est Fethullah Gülen?**

C'est un imam qui s'est installé aux États-Unis du temps où l'armée était au pouvoir à Ankara. Il y est resté et a contribué à promouvoir

l'image d'un islam réformiste incarné par l'AKP. La confrérie a sans doute aussi aidé au développement des relations entre l'AKP et les autorités américaines. C'est une organisation qui s'est mondialisée. Elle a mis en place un réseau éducatif en Asie centrale, en Afrique et, bien sûr, en Turquie. Elle s'est ramifiée dans le monde des affaires et des médias. Certains hauts responsables passent pour être proches de la confrérie, comme le président Abdullah Gül, qui avait pris ses distances avec le premier ministre lors du mouvement de contestation de juin, et le vice-premier ministre Bülent Arınç avec lequel Erdogan a eu des désaccords profonds. La confrérie est aussi très influente au sein de la justice et de la police. Certains des procureurs qui ont lancé l'enquête dans l'affaire actuelle sont réputés proches de la confrérie. Zekerya Öz, par exemple, a fait ses preuves dans l'affaire Ergenekon qui a contribué à casser le pouvoir de l'armée. Erdogan s'est toujours méfié

de cette organisation à cause de sa puissance. Et puis, il y a des différences d'approche politique. La confrérie reproche à Erdogan son nationalisme et déplore qu'il se démarque parfois de l'Union européenne ou des États-Unis. Lors de l'expédition du Mavi Marmara, ce bateau humanitaire turc arraisonné par les Israéliens en 2010, Erdogan avait ainsi laissé entendre que la confrérie était instrumentalisée par les Américains. Certes, il y a eu des tensions entre Washington et Ankara sur la Syrie, l'Égypte ou sur le dossier des missiles chinois achetés par la Turquie, mais les relations turco-américaines n'ont jamais été un long fleuve tranquille.

**Erdogan est-il menacé?**

C'est une affaire d'État très sérieuse. Elle risque de casser sa campagne électorale pour les élections locales de mars et la présidentielle d'août, où, pour la première fois, le chef d'État sera élu au suffrage universel direct. Il est encore trop tôt pour mesurer l'impact de ce scandale sur l'opinion publique et sur l'électorat de l'AKP. D'autant que nous ignorons encore l'ampleur de cette affaire à tiroirs ■



22 December 2013

# IRAN : After Walk-Out Over Budget, Kurdish MPs to Meet With Rouhani

rudaw.net

**ERBIL, Kurdistan Region** – Six Kurdish-Iranian parliamentarians, who resigned last week in objection to what they said was the country's "discriminatory" budget draft, are expected to meet with President Hassan Rouhani this week.

The Kurdish MPs believed that the budget allocated for their province was meagre, in comparison to that of other provinces.

Following their walk-out, Rouhani's government assigned special envoys to persuade and bring the Kurdish MPs back to the negotiating table.

Salar Muradi, a Kurdish MP from Sanandaj (Sina) told Rudaw that he and his colleague would meet with President Rouhani this week to address concerns.

"We will remind Mr. Rouhani of the promises he made to the Kurdish people," said Muradi. "We will try to make sure his promises are made into constitutional and political decisions."

The Kurdish MPs believe that their resignation was symbolic, but that "the act carried the grievances of the Kurds to the government's ears."

They said that their main aim is to increase government investment in infrastructure in the Kurdish areas and secure support for agriculture, in a region where farming constitutes the main source of income for many people.

In case their meeting with Rouhani and his government is fruitless, said Muradi, the MPs are intent on leaving parliament again.

"As an MP I cannot ignore the needs of my people," said Muradi.



During his election campaign in June Rouhani toured the Kurdish areas, where he received overwhelming support. Photo: AP

overwhelming support.

It was also reported that 80 percent of eligible Kurdish voters in Iran voted for Rouhani, based on promises he made to grant cultural rights to minority groups and relax restrictions on political activists.

However, like many Kurds in Iran, the Kurdish MPs believe that the new budget suggests that Rouhani is backtracking on campaign promises to treat the Kurdish province as a potential growth region.

"President Rouhani made a few promises to the people of Kurdistan, but in the budget we don't see any sign of his promises, especially for development projects," Kurdish MP Hamed Qaderwarzi complained last week.

□□□

# Guerre fratricide chez les islamistes turcs

Le scandale financier qui éclabousse le gouvernement de Recep Tayyip Erdogan a viré à la crise politique. Le premier ministre a annoncé mercredi soir un vaste remaniement ministériel.

ARIELLE THEDREL

**TURQUIE** Après le mouvement protestataire de la société civile en juin dernier, une affaire de corruption, que Recep Tayyip Erdogan avait pourtant promis d'éradiquer, ébranle le chef du gouvernement turc. Ce dernier a annoncé mercredi soir le remplacement de dix des vingt ministres de son gouvernement, à cause de ce scandale politico-financier qui éclabousse l'élite islamico-conservatrice au pouvoir depuis 2002.

Les ministres de l'Intérieur, de l'Économie et de l'Environnement avaient abandonné leur poste dans la journée après l'arrestation de leurs fils, avec vingt et une autres personnalités, élus ou hommes d'affaires. Parmi les ministres remplacés figure celui des Affaires européennes, Egemen Bagis, dont le nom a été mentionné dans l'affaire de corruption présumée, mais qui n'avait pas démissionné.

L'un des membres du gouvernement, visiblement furieux d'avoir été contraint de quitter ses fonctions, a jeté un pavé dans la mare en pressant Erdogan d'en faire autant « pour le bien de la nation ».

Tous sont soupçonnés de corruption, fraude et blanchiment d'argent dans une affaire de transactions illégales, vente d'or notamment, entre la Turquie et l'Iran (placé sous embargo par la communauté internationale). La banque publique Halk Bankasi aurait joué un rôle clé dans ce trafic. Son PDG est aussi sous les verrous. La police aurait découvert chez lui 4,5 millions de dollars dissimulés dans des boîtes à chaussures.

À l'instar de ses collaborateurs, Recep Tayyip Erdogan évoque une « *conspiration* » ourdie par « *un État dans l'État* ». Il n'a pas nommé cité les responsables de cette « *sale opération* », mais tous les observateurs ont reconnu dans cette mise en cause la puissante confrérie musulmane de Fethullah Gülen. Cette puissante organisation, baptisée Hizmet (Service), dispose de ses propres médias, de ses universités, de ses cercles de réflexion et de ses soutiens dans les affaires

ou la fonction publique. Allié de l'AKP (le parti d'Erdogan) depuis 2002, Hizmet est entré en guerre contre le gouvernement à la suite d'un projet de loi visant à

supprimer les écoles privées. Il est très influent au sein de la police et de la magistrature. C'est la raison pour laquelle le premier ministre a lancé une purge sans précédent au sein de la hiérarchie policière. En une semaine, une centaine d'officiers, dont le préfet de police d'Istanbul, ont déjà été démis. Le chef du gouvernement les accuse d'« *abus de pouvoir* », en clair, de ne pas avoir informé leur tutelle politique de l'enquête qui la vise.

Longtemps larvée, cette guerre fratricide se joue désormais sur la place publique. Le prédicateur Fethullah Gülen, qui vit aux États-Unis, a dégainé le premier. « *Ceux qui ne voient pas le voleur mais s'en prennent à celui qui essaie de l'attraper, que Dieu incendie leur maison, ruine leur foyer et détruit leur unité.* » Erdogan accuse en retour Gülen de vouloir le « *salir* » et « *détruire* » les progrès accomplis depuis dix ans. Il s'est engagé à « *mettre un terme à ce vilain jeu de la même façon que nous avons mis un terme (aux manifestations de juin)* ». En juin, des projets d'urbanisme lancés à l'initiative du premier ministre avaient déclenché un mouvement de contestation sans précédent contre la dérive autoritaire d'Erdogan. Les manifestations avaient duré trois semaines et s'étaient

soldées par six morts et 8 000 blessés.

Dimanche dernier comme mercredi soir, à l'appel de l'opposition, plusieurs milliers de manifestants se sont de nouveau rassemblés à Istanbul pour exiger la démission du gouvernement. Certains brandissaient des boîtes à chaussures. Mais cette fois, le premier ministre est contesté aussi dans son propre camp. Cette affaire de corruption risque de bouleverser la donne politique à l'approche d'une série d'échéances électorales, qui s'achèveront avec les législatives de 2015. Prévues en mars, les municipales s'annoncent cruciales, notamment pour le contrôle de la plus grande ville du pays, Istanbul.

L'enjeu est d'autant plus important pour le premier ministre que ce scrutin local, où l'AKP partait jusqu'ici largement favori, doit lui servir de tremplin pour l'élection présidentielle du mois d'août. Recep Tayyip Erdogan n'a pas encore déclaré ses intentions, mais, contraint par les règles en vigueur au sein de l'AKP de quitter la tête du gouvernement aux législatives de 2015, il ne fait pas mystère de briguer le poste de chef de l'État - celui-ci sera élu pour la première fois au suffrage universel direct. ■

(AVEC AFP)

## La confrérie Gülen, un État dans l'État accusé de tirer toutes les ficelles

RECEP Tayyip Erdogan accuse un « *gang criminel* » qui « *tente de devenir un État dans l'État* ». Pris dans la tourmente d'une gigantesque affaire de corruption, le premier ministre turc ne prononce jamais le nom de celui qu'il tient pour coupable de ce « *sale complot* ». Comme tous les commentateurs de la vie politique, il est persuadé que le coup d'envoi des opérations de police a été donné depuis la Pennsylvanie.

C'est dans une résidence isolée dans la campagne américaine que vit Fethullah Gülen, un imam à l'allure souffreteuse et désormais ouvertement

ennemi numéro un du chef du gouvernement. Depuis sa retraite aujourd'hui volontaire - il a été contraint à l'exil en 1999 après avoir été accusé par la justice turque de vouloir imposer la charia - cet homme, aussi charismatique que discret, dirige la confrérie religieuse la plus puissante du pays.

Fethullah Gülen a d'abord fait savoir via son avocat qu'il n'était mêlé ni de près ni de loin à la tempête qui secoue le premier ministre. Vendredi, une déclaration enregistrée et publiée sur Internet a conforté les très nombreux Turcs convaincus de son rôle. « *Ceux*



qui ne voient pas le voleur, mais s'en prennent à ceux qui cherchent à attraper le voleur, qui ne voient pas le crime mais essayent de calomnier les autres en accusant des innocents, ceux-là, que Dieu incendie leur maison, ruine leur foyer, brise leur unité », a-t-il vitupéré. Depuis les premières arrestations, mardi, Zaman et Today's Zaman, les deux quotidiens de la confrérie, publient moult détails sur les enquêtes en cours.

Empire médiatique, écoles dans le monde entier, banque, organisations caritatives, patronale... le réseau musulman étend son influence dans tous les domaines de la vie économique, sociale et politique. Ses adeptes sont très nombreux dans les rangs du Parti de la justice et du développement (AKP), la formation dirigée par Recep Tayyip Erdogan et sont réputés exercer une influence importante au sein de la police et de la justice. Coïncidence ? Le journaliste Ahmet Sik a été arrêté avant la

sortie de son livre *L'Armée de l'islam*, dans lequel il dénonçait l'entrisme de la confrérie dans les forces de l'ordre. Il a passé un an derrière les barreaux.

### Une guerre fratricide

En novembre, la guerre fratricide entre Recep Tayyip Erdogan et Fethullah Gülen a été exposée au grand jour. Le gouvernement a décidé de fermer les *dershane*, des établissements de soutien scolaire privé qui représentent un système éducatif parallèle et constituent pour la confrérie une source essentielle de revenus.

Les deux hommes ont pourtant longtemps formé une alliance solide, motivée par un adversaire commun : l'armée. La condamnation de certaines d'officiers a permis de la mettre hors du jeu politique. D'abord salués comme une avancée démocratique, les procès ont ensuite été dénoncés comme des parodies de justice, tant étaient grossières des incohérences dans les actes

d'accusation.

Les divergences se sont peu à peu transformées en points de vue irréconciliables. La confrérie, malgré un conservatisme prononcé sur les questions de société, veut une Turquie armée à l'Occident et à l'Union européenne. La diplomatie d'Erdogan au Moyen-Orient, son aversion pour Israël depuis l'affaire en 2010 du ferry du *Mavi Marmara* - neuf Turcs avaient été tués lors de l'assaut de l'armée israélienne -, sont des points d'achoppement. Très nationalistes, les gülenistes voient d'un mauvais œil les pourparlers de paix avec la rébellion kurde. L'an dernier, la tentative d'un procureur d'auditionner Hakan Fidan avait déjà été perçue comme le signe d'une rupture consommée. Patron des services de renseignements turcs, il a été mandaté par Tayyip Erdogan pour conduire des négociations avec le PKK et se trouve être un fidèle parmi les fidèles. ■

L.M. (À ISTANBUL)

LesEchos 27 décembre 2013

# Turquie : Erdogan opte pour la manière forte

Par Virginie Robert  
<http://www.lesechos.fr>

Fragilisé, le Premier ministre resserre l'étau sur la police et la justice.

La livre turque a continué de chuter hier, de même que la Bourse.

Déstabilisé, fragilisé par des affaires de corruption, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, le Premier ministre turc, a choisi l'offensive. Il a limogé la moitié de son gouvernement, sacqué le procureur chargé des enquêtes de corruption et lancé une chasse aux sorcières dans la police. En espérant que cela suffira à arrimer son pouvoir. « Au lieu de chercher les raisons profondes du mécontentement et de la corruption, il attaque », observe l'écrivain Nedim Gürsel, directeur de recherche au CNRS.

Le gouvernement tangué depuis le 17 décembre, quand une vague d'arrestations a mis au grand jour des affaires de corruption visant des proches du parti du Premier ministre. Les délits évoqués vont de la vente illégale d'or à l'Iran à des pots-de-vin dans des affaires immobilières. Une



Le 26 décembre, lors de la cérémonie de passation des pouvoirs, au centre, l'ancien ministre de l'Économie, Zafer Çağlayan. A sa gauche, son successeur, Nihat Zeybekçi. - Photo Adem Atlan/AFP

situation malvenue pour l'AKP, dont le nom signifie blanc et pureté. Ce dernier s'était engagé, lors de sa création en 2001, à mettre fin au climat corrompu de la précédente administration.

Mercredi, 3 ministres ont été contraints de démissionner parce que leurs fils avaient été interrogés sur ces affaires. Dans la soirée, à peine revenu du Pakistan, le Premier ministre a annoncé un remaniement et le limogage de la moitié du gouvernement. « Il a choisi des hommes qui lui seront obéissants. Il n'y aura aucune discussion dans le parti », assure Yusuf Ziya Irbeç, un député du parti MHP à Antalya, qui est dans l'opposition. Parmi les nouveaux membres du gouvernement

Efkan Ala, le ministre de l'Intérieur, est un très proche du Premier ministre. Le ménage s'est poursuivi hier : « Le procureur d'Istanbul Muammer Akkas s'est vu retirer l'enquête sur les trafic d'influence et la corruption, il a dit qu'il avait subi trop de pressions pour continuer », raconte Yusuf Ziya Irbeç.

Quelques jours auparavant, Tayyip Erdogan avait déjà commencé à purger les forces de police - soupçonnées d'agir sur l'ordre de la confrérie du prêcheur Fethullah Gülen, installé aux Etats-Unis. La lutte est ouverte avec cet ancien allié. Elle a démarré après que le gouvernement a décidé de ne plus soutenir les établissements de soutien sco-

laire privés, qui sont l'une des sources de revenus de la puissante confrérie.

### « SITUATION DE PLUS EN PLUS FRAGILE »

Tout le monde s'interroge désormais sur l'avenir d'Erdogan et sur celui du modèle turc en général : une démocratie au gouvernement islamo-conservateur qui a montré près de onze ans d'ouverture économique qui l'ont propulsé au 17e rang mondial en termes de PIB. Les marchés n'ont pas été rassurés par les dernières mesures du gouvernement. Ils ont fermé une nouvelle fois en baisse hier (- 2,1 %), alors que la livre turque a chuté de 1,8 % par rapport au dollar, pour tomber à 2,12 livres pour 1 dollar.

Depuis cet été, et les manifestations du parc de Gezi contre un régime de plus en plus autoritaire, le Premier ministre a perdu la coalition qui l'avait mené au pouvoir, regroupant nationalistes, islamistes et libéraux. Depuis le jour de Noël, une scission s'est ouverte dans son propre parti : le ministre de l'Environnement, Erdogan Bayraktar, a réclamé la démission du Premier ministre - un fait quasi inimaginable. Et il y a désormais la lutte au couteau avec Gülen. « La situation est de plus en plus fragile », constate Yusuf Ziya Irbeç. « C'est une grande déception. Il y a un Etat dans l'Etat. la justice n'est pas indépendante, le régime est de plus en plus autoritaire et la perspective européenne se perd », regrette l'écrivain Nedim Gürsel. ♦

# Turquie : le gouvernement et les juges face à face

Par Jean Marcou

<http://ovipot.hypotheses.org>

**D**eux semaines après la vague d'arrestations pour corruption qui a frappé son entourage provoquant la démission de trois de ses membres et son remaniement, le gouvernement turc intensifie sa riposte contre ceux qu'ils accusent d'avoir ourdi un complot à son encontre. A l'issue d'une reprise en main dans l'urgence de la police, la cible de cette contre-offensive est désormais la justice (cf. nos éditions des 18 décembre 2013, 26 décembre 2013, 27 décembre 2013 et 28 décembre 2013)

## Le HSYK, sur la sellette

Pour avoir publiquement critiqué la décision du gouvernement d'obliger les policiers à référer, à leurs autorités de tutelle administrative, de toute nouvelle arrestation ordonnée par des procureurs, le HSYK (Hakimler ve Savcılar Yüksek Kurulu - Conseil supérieur des juges et des procureurs, équivalent du Conseil de la Magistrature, en France) a été pointé du doigt par plusieurs ministres à commencer par le premier. Lors d'un meeting à Manisa, le 29 décembre 2013, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, s'en est ainsi pris à cette institution, estimant avoir commis une erreur, en ayant modifié son statut lors du référendum du 12 septembre 2010, pour lui donner plus d'indépendance. Le porte-parole du gouvernement, Bülent Arınç, a fait écho à cette opinion le lendemain en déclarant : «En augmentant le nombre de ses membres, nous avons pensé que nous en faisons un organe démocratique. Nous avons considéré cela comme une étape importante vers la démocratisation... Je ne peux pas dire pour le moment si un changement juridique ou constitutionnel sera nécessaire. Mais tout ce qui doit être fait, le sera au sein du Parlement, qui est l'émanation de la volonté nationale.» Pour l'heure, le nouveau ministre de la justice, Bekir Bozdağ, a demandé au HSYK de ne plus faire de déclarations publiques sans qu'il en ait été préalablement informé. En réalité, le HSYK est désormais présenté par le gouvernement comme le cœur de la machination dirigée contre lui par des procureurs proches «d'une structure parallèle au sein de l'Etat» (devlet içinde paralel yapılanma), une expression vulgarisée depuis les débuts de la crise, qui désigne la confrérie Gülen.

## La réforme du HSYK suite au référendum de 2010

A bien des égards, en l'occurrence, l'AKP apparaît comme un arroseur, arrosé, puisqu'il n'a eu de cesse de réformer le HSYK et la Cour constitutionnelle, considérés avant le référendum du 12 septembre 2010 qui le lui a permis, comme le dernier repère avec l'armée de l'establishment kémaliste. La recomposition de ces instances à l'issue de cette consultation électorale a permis aussi de restructurer, dans les mois qui ont suivi, le Conseil d'Etat et la Cour de cassation. Ainsi depuis son ultime reconduction, après les législatives de juin 2011, le gouvernement a cohabité avec une hiérarchie judiciaire et des hautes cours beaucoup moins turbulentes que lors de la législature précédente, pendant laquelle le procureur général de la Cour de cassation avait tenté de faire dissoudre l'AKP, tandis que le ministère de la justice était en conflit presque permanent avec le HSYK à propos des nominations de magistrats. Sensé avoir été mis au pas, ce pouvoir judiciaire réformé est donc redevenu aujourd'hui la «bête noire» du gouvernement, et se révèle même plus coriace que celui que l'on accusait naguère d'être au service de «l'Etat profond». Est-ce parce qu'il est devenu effectivement indépendant, ou parce qu'il est tombé sous l'influence d'un «Etat parallèle»? C'est la question que beaucoup se posent aujourd'hui.

## Un procureur mis en cause

Pour le gouvernement néanmoins, il ne doit faire aucun doute que les affaires qui l'assaillent aujourd'hui sont l'œuvre d'un «gang» (örgüt), le terme le plus souvent employé est celui par lequel il désigne habituellement



le PKK. Dans ce registre, devant ses partisans rassemblés à Manisa, le 29 décembre, le premier ministre s'en est pris directement au procureur- Muammer Akkaş, qui a tenté d'ouvrir, il y a une semaine, une seconde manche dans la révélation des affaires de corruption. Une initiative dont les effets auraient pu être dévastateurs pour le gouvernement, si la procédure était allée à son terme. Accusant le procureur Akkaş, d'avoir manqué aux devoirs de sa fonction lorsqu'il s'est exprimé publiquement après avoir été dessaisi de l'affaire, le premier ministre a déclaré : « Qu'est-ce que c'est, Monsieur le Procureur. Attendez, nous n'en avons pas fini avec vous. Vous faites des déclarations devant un palais de justice...Un procureur sort comme cela et use de ses pouvoirs de façon très particulière. Il transforme de nombreux innocents en boucs émissaires en les diffamant après avoir livré des documents confidentiels à des médias partisans. Comment ces personnes pourront-elles réparaître en public même si elles sont blanchies ?» Dans une nouvelle déclaration le procureur Akkaş a démenti avoir divulgué des documents confidentiels et il a justifié ses déclarations publiques par la nécessité de se défendre des accusations portées contre lui. Il a ajouté que «ceux qui sont responsables de la violation du secret de l'instruction sont ceux qui ont refusé de se conformer aux décisions de justice».

## La légitimité électorale contre celle de la justice ?

Un peu comme il l'avait fait face aux manifestations de Gezi, le gouvernement fonde donc sa contre-offensive contre la justice sur sa légitimité électorale, se présentant comme celui qui exprime la volonté du peuple. Concernant la justice et l'Etat de droit, cette posture n'est pas sans rappeler que la Turquie (qui a suivi le modèle français de sacralisation de la loi dans ses premiers textes constitutionnels) n'a pas de tradition d'indépendance de la justice. Dans la Constitution de 1924, les tribunaux ne sont que des émanations du parlement qui détient seul officiellement la souveraineté nationale. Cette situation quelque peu particulière, liée aussi aux exigences d'un régime de parti unique, a gêné par la suite le développement du pouvoir judiciaire, même lorsqu'un régime pluraliste a commencé à se développer. De sorte qu'il a fallu attendre la Constitution de 1961 pour voir la séparation des pouvoirs enfin reconnue. Depuis la justice est néanmoins restée l'un des maillons faibles de la démocratie turque. Si elle a gagné en autonomie au cours des deux dernières décennies, elle a aussi montré qu'elle pouvait être traversée par les phénomènes de polarisation qui se manifestent dans la société turque.

L'offensive gouvernementale contre une justice présentée comme illégitime dans ses prétentions à l'égard du gouvernement et du parti majoritaire, apparaît toutefois comme une stratégie périlleuse. Ce n'est pas parce qu'un Etat de droit est imparfait qu'on est légitime à le transgresser. En se soustrayant au contrôle d'un juge-arbitre parce que ce dernier ne serait pas indépendant, on supprime en réalité tout arbitrage et on s'attribue une compétence qui peut être sans limite. La justice quelle qu'elle soit reste sans doute imparfaite, mais elle est au moins un contre-pouvoir qui limite les excès. En outre, cette situation peut déboucher sur des conflits entre institutions publiques comme l'ont montrés les développements des derniers jours, opposant la police à la justice, voire des entités de la police entre elles.

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# U.S. quietly funnels weaponry to Iraq during Qaeda affiliate's terror surge

WASHINGTON

## Action comes as group gains ground in western region and also in Syria

BY MICHAEL R. GORDON  
AND ERIC SCHMITT

The United States is quietly rushing dozens of Hellfire missiles and low-tech surveillance drones to Iraq to help Iraqi forces combat an explosion of violence by a Qaeda-backed insurgency that is gaining territory in both western Iraq and neighboring Syria.

The move follows an appeal for help in battling the extremist group by the Iraqi prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, who met with President Obama in Washington last month.

But some military experts question whether the patchwork response will be sufficient to deal with the sharp downturn in security that led to the deaths of more than 8,000 Iraqis this year, 952 of them security force members, according to the United Nations.

Al Qaeda's regional affiliate, Al Qaeda in Iraq and the Levant, has become a potent force in northern and western Iraq. Riding around in armed convoys, the group has intimidated towns and assassinated local officials.

In a notorious episode last week, it used suicide bombers and hidden explosives to kill the commander of the Iraq Army's 7th Division and more than a dozen of his officers and soldiers as they raided a Qaeda training camp near Rutbah.

The three bombings on Christmas in Christian areas of Baghdad, which killed more than three dozen people and wounded at least 60 others, bore the hallmarks of a Qaeda operation.

With the upsurge, violence is at its highest level since 2008. It also stands in sharp contrast to the assurances senior Obama administration officials have given that Iraq was on the right path despite the failure of American and Iraqi officials in 2011 to negotiate an agreement that would have provided a legal basis for a limited number of United States forces to remain in Iraq.

In a March 2012 speech, Antony Blinken, who is currently Mr. Obama's deputy national security adviser, asserted that "Iraq today is less violent" than "at any time in recent history."

In contrast, after a recent spate of especially violent attacks against Iraqi forces, elected officials and civilians, Jen Psaki, the State Department spokes-



JONATHAN ERNST/REUTERS

Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki of Iraq with President Obama in Washington. During the November visit, Mr. Maliki appealed for help in battling a Qaeda affiliate.

woman, issued a strongly worded statement Sunday warning that the Qaeda affiliate was "seeking to gain control of territory inside the borders of Iraq."

Pledging to take steps to strengthen Iraqi forces, Ms. Psaki noted that the Qaeda affiliate is a "common enemy of the United States and the Republic of Iraq, and a threat to the greater Middle East region."

But the counterterrorism effort the United States is undertaking with Iraq has its limits.

Iraq's foreign minister has floated the idea of having American-operated, armed Predator or Reaper drones respond to the expanding militant network. But Mr. Maliki, who is positioning himself to seek election to a third term as prime minister and is sensitive to nationalist sentiment at home, has not formally requested such intervention.

The idea of carrying out such drone attacks, which might prompt the question of whether the Obama administration succeeded in bringing the Iraq war to a "responsible end," also appears to have no support in the White House.

"We have not received a formal request for U.S.-operated armed drones operating over Iraq, nor are we planning to divert armed I.S.R. over Iraq," said Bernadette Meehan, a spokeswoman for the National Security Council, using the initials for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance.

For now, the new lethal aid from the United States has consisted of a shipment of 75 Hellfire missiles, which were delivered to Iraq last week. The weapons are strapped beneath the

wings of small Cessna turboprop planes and fired at militant camps, with the C.I.A. secretly providing targeting assistance.

In addition, 10 Scan Eagle reconnaissance drones are expected to be delivered to Iraq by March. They are smaller cousins of the larger, more capable Predators that used to fly over Iraq.

American intelligence and counterterrorism officials say they have effectively mapped the locations and origins of the Qaeda network in Iraq and are sharing this information with the Iraqis.

The Obama administration has also donated three sensor-laden Aerostat balloons to the Iraqi government, has provided three additional reconnaissance helicopters to the Iraqi military and is planning to send 48 Raven reconnaissance drones before the end of 2014.

### The Qaeda affiliate took advantage of the departure of American forces to rebuild its operations in Iraq.

The United States is planning to deliver the first of the F-16 fighters Iraq has purchased next autumn.

The lack of armed drones, some experts assert, will hamper efforts to dismantle the Qaeda threat in Iraq over the coming weeks and months.

"Giving them some Scan Eagle drones is great," said Michael Knights, an expert on Iraqi security at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.



“But is it really going to make much difference? Their range is tiny.”

“The real requirement today is for a long-range, high-endurance armed-drone capability,” added Mr. Knights, who frequently travels to Iraq. “There is one place in the world where Al Qaeda can run a major affiliate without fear of a U.S. drone or air attack, and that is in Iraq and Syria.”

In an effort to buttress the Iraqi military’s capabilities, the Obama administration has sought congressional approval to lease and eventually sell Apache helicopter gunships. But some lawmakers have been hesitant, fearing that they might be used by Mr. Maliki to intimidate his political opponents.

A plan to lease six Apaches to the Iraqi government is now on hold in the Senate. Frustrated by the United States reluctance to sell Apaches, the Iraqis have turned to Russia, which delivered four Mi-35 attack helicopters last month and plans to provide more than two dozen more. Meanwhile, cities and towns like Mosul, Haditha and Rawa that United States forces fought to control during the 2007 and 2008 “surge” of American troops in Iraq have been the scene of bloody attacks by Al Qaeda.

Using extortion and playing on Sunni grievances against Mr. Maliki’s Shiite-dominated government, the Qaeda affiliate is largely self-financing. One Iraqi politician, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid retaliation, said that Qaeda militants had even begun to extort money from shopkeepers in Ramada, Anbar’s provincial capital.

A number of factors are helping the Qaeda affiliate. The terrorist group took advantage of the departure of American forces to rebuild its operations in Iraq and push into Syria. Now that it has established a strong foothold in Syria, it is in turn using its base there to send suicide bombers into Iraq at a rate of 30 to 40 a month, employing them against

Shiites but also against Sunnis who are reluctant to cede control.

The brutal tactics, some experts say, may expose Al Qaeda to a Sunni backlash, much as in 2006 and 2007 when Sunni tribes aligned themselves with American forces against the Qaeda extremists.

But Mr. Maliki’s failure to share power with Sunni leaders, some Iraqis say, has also provided a fertile recruiting ground.

Haitham Abdullah al-Jubouri, a 40-year-old government employee in Baquba, said that “the policy of the sectarian government” had “contributed to the influx of desperate young elements from the Sunni community to the ranks of Al Qaeda.”

In Mosul, most of the security force members who are not from the area have left the city, and Al Qaeda controls whole swaths of territory.

“In the morning we have some control, but at night, this is when we hide and the armed groups make their movements,” said an Iraqi security official, who spoke

on the condition of anonymity.

Ayad Shaker, a police officer in Anbar, said that Al Qaeda had replenished its ranks with a series of prison breakouts and that the group had also grown stronger because of the limited capabilities of Iraqi forces, the conflict in Syria and tensions between Mr. Maliki and the Sunnis.

Mr. Shaker said that three close relatives had been killed by Al Qaeda and that he had been wounded by bombs the group had planted.

“I fought Al Qaeda,” he said. “I am sad today when I see them have the highest authority in Anbar, moving and working under the sun without deterrent.”

International New York Times DECEMBER 23, 2013

## Turkey hints at U.S. role behind graft investigation

ISTANBUL

BY TIM ARANGO

Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is continuing his embrace of what has traditionally been the strategy of Turkish politicians facing a crisis: Blame foreign powers, in this case the United States.

On Saturday morning, four pro-government newspapers featured the American ambassador on their front pages, suggesting that the United States, a strong ally of Turkey, was behind an escalating corruption investigation that has ensnared several businessmen and others in the prime minister’s inner circle. One headline said, “Get out of this country.” Other news media reports also suggested a plot by Israel.

The widening inquiry has unfolded over several days and has quickly become a political crisis for Mr. Erdogan, perhaps the worst he has faced in more than a decade in power.

On Sunday, Interior Minister Muammer Guler told the Anadolu Agency that he had offered his resignation to Mr. Erdogan, The Associated Press reported. Mr. Guler’s son, Baris, and the son of Turkey’s economy minister are among 24 people arrested on bribery charges last week.

Thousands took to the streets of Istanbul on Sunday to demonstrate against the government over the corruption scandal before they were largely dispersed by police officers firing tear gas and water cannons, Reuters reported.

But in a series of speeches on Saturday, Mr. Erdogan threatened to expel foreign ambassadors for what he called “provocative actions.” Mr. Erdogan did not specifically mention the United States. But referring to unnamed “ambassadors,” he said, “We are not compelled to keep you in our country.”

“If our ambassadors in your countries were involved in these kinds of games, tell us,” he continued. “You do not need to send them away. We would take them back. We would take back our

own ambassadors.”

In response to the newspaper headlines — but before Mr. Erdogan spoke — the American Embassy in Ankara, the Turkish capital, posted several messages in Turkish on its Twitter account.

“The United States has no involvement in the ongoing corruption probe,” one said.

“All allegations in news stories are lies and slander,” another said.

Trying to tamp down tensions with an important ally, a spokesman for the Turkish Foreign Ministry said Saturday that it had accepted the embassy’s statement as “sufficient.”

The conspiracy theories advanced by the pro-government media — which resonate with certain segments of the population because anti-American sentiments and anti-Semitism are widespread in Turkey — center on the fact that one of the targets of the investigation, the state-owned bank Halkbank, has in the past been accused by the United States of helping Iran evade sanctions over its nuclear program.

Commentators and government officials have linked the investigation to a popular imam who lives in Pennsylvania, Fethullah Gulen, whose followers are said to have taken up high-level positions in the Turkish police and judiciary over the years.

Mr. Erdogan and Mr. Gulen, who represent different Islamic traditions in Turkey, were once allies, and they teamed up to push the military from politics through a series of trials that landed a number of generals and officers in prison in recent years.

Mr. Gulen, who rarely speaks to the news media, denied any involvement in the corruption case in a statement released by his lawyer last week. On Saturday, though, he released an emotionally charged video in which he appeared to denounce the government’s efforts against his supporters, raising the stakes in what has become a huge political fight between the two former partners.

Mr. Erdogan has simultaneously blamed foreigners — as he did during mass protests in the summer against what opponents called his government’s heavy-handed efforts to raze a park — and begun a purge of the police forces.

Some 25 police chiefs were removed from senior positions at the Istanbul police headquarters, the Anadolu Agency reported on Sunday, according to The A.P., in addition to dozens of others dismissed from posts since the investigation began last week.



# 3 Turkish cabinet ministers resign amid corruption inquiry

ISTANBUL

## Growing graft inquiry edges close to Erdogan as aide says he should quit

BY TIM ARANGO

A corruption investigation that has encircled the Turkish government moved an ominous step closer to Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan personally on Wednesday, as three of his top ministers whose sons have been implicated abruptly resigned — and one of them, on his way out the door, said Mr. Erdogan should step down as well.

The triple resignation, coming only hours after the three ministers participated in the welcoming committee that greeted Mr. Erdogan as he returned from Pakistan late Tuesday night, was enough in itself to inspire new talk of a deepening crisis, which Mr. Erdogan has repeatedly denounced as a foreign plot.

But the seemingly spiteful utterance from one of the departing ministers was considered stunning, coming from a political party known for silencing dissent. That instantly raised the significance of the entire inquiry and left members of the Turkish public wondering whether they were witnessing the collapse of the Islamist-rooted government, which has been in power for the last decade.

By Wednesday evening, large crowds gathered on the Asian shore of Istanbul and in some other cities and chanted for the government to resign.

The corruption investigation became public a week ago with dawn police raids on the offices of businessmen and others close to the prime minister. But Wednesday was the first time that someone who had been in the hierarchy of Mr. Erdogan's government — a confidant, even — left the implication that the prime minister had been involved in the real estate deals that are at the heart of the case.

Analysts questioned whether Mr. Erdogan's strategy of containing the damage — blaming foreign powers, appealing to the religious sentiments of supporters and evoking the ghosts of Turkey's past by likening the crisis to the war for independence it fought after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire — was enough to weather the crisis.

"Now it seems the situation has changed completely," said Kerem Oktem, a Turkey expert and research fellow at the European Studies Center at the University of Oxford. "It seems the ring around Erdogan has gotten tighter."

The developments Wednesday came

amid rumors in the local media that more damaging allegations from the investigation were forthcoming and linked directly to Mr. Erdogan and his family.

"We can see the prime minister is trying to take precautions against something that could be bigger," said Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, the head of the Ankara office of the German Marshall Fund of the United States, a research organization. Mr. Unluhisarcikli said that as the investigation inched closer to Mr. Erdogan personally, he would "have more difficulty containing the damage."

The public has been riveted by a seemingly endless flow of sordid details of the investigations leaked to the press — with photographs of piles of cash in the bedroom of a minister's son and reports that the chief executive of a state-owned bank had \$4.5 million in cash packed in shoeboxes.

The scandal has quickly become a greater challenge to Mr. Erdogan's power than even last summer's antigovernment protests, which were set off by a state plan to raze Gezi Park, a beloved green space in Istanbul, and convert it to a shopping mall. The police repression of that protest developed into a backlash that evolved to a larger denunciation of Mr. Erdogan's government.

On Wednesday morning, Economy Minister Zafer Caglayan and Interior Minister Muammer Guler, whose sons are among 24 people arrested in the anticorruption investigation, stepped down. A few hours later the environment and urban planning minister, Erdogan Bayraktar, who is personally the closest among the three deposed ministers to Mr. Erdogan, said in a live television interview that he had resigned under pressure and that Mr. Erdogan was personally involved in unspecified property deals that are a focus of the corruption investigation.

"The prime minister has the right to work with the ministers he prefers," Mr. Bayraktar said in the television interview. "But I can't accept this pressure on me to resign. The prime minister, too, has to resign."

Soli Ozel, a columnist and professor at Istanbul's Kadir Has University, said that "this is extraordinarily dramatic. Bayraktar was someone who was very close to the prime minister. This is someone you'd expect to fall on his sword without question."

The resignations came after a dramatic week in which Mr. Erdogan's government sought to purge the police forces of those it believes are behind the investigation, which has been linked to Fethullah Gulen, a popular Muslim spiritual leader in exile in Pennsylvania who has

millions of followers in Turkey, including some who have taken high positions within the police and judiciary. The Gulen-affiliated officials have been linked to the corruption inquiry, and Mr. Erdogan and others have called them a "criminal gang" and a "state-within-a-state."

In a speech Wednesday afternoon broadcast on live television, Mr. Erdogan used some of his strongest language yet to denounce his former allies in the Gulen movement, and promised to purge them from the state.

"If there are some within state institutions who do not fulfill their duties, or misuse their power, or who are in a parallel organization, we will confront them; too, and we are confronting them," he said. "We will act in accordance to the constitution and laws. We will root out the bad apples or whatever is necessary."

Dozens of high-level police officials, and hundreds of other officers, have been removed from their jobs, as reports emerged Wednesday in the Turkish press that prosecutors were pursuing other high-level officials, but that new police officials installed by the government had resisted pursuing them. This indicates that Mr. Erdogan's government has had more success in clamping down on the police than it has the judiciary, and essentially highlights a power struggle going on within state structures.

Turkey has faced many upheavals in its politics before, with coups and crass power struggles that sometimes turned violent in the streets, but its current crisis is something new: a clash between two Islamist rivals that had once been united in reforming the political system by pushing the military from politics through several contentious trials.

Turkey, once ruled by hard-line secularists backed by powerful military generals, has seen the rise over the last decade of Mr. Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, known by its Turkish initials A.K.P., that was rooted in political Islam but also had other partners, including liberals and some on the nonreligious right.

Most of the liberals and the nonpious no longer support the A.K.P., and now that Mr. Erdogan and Mr. Gulen, who represent two different Turkish Islamist traditions, are basically at war, the party is at risk of collapsing, analysts said.

"It seems that within the A.K.P. things are spiraling out of control," said Mr. Oktem, the research fellow at Oxford.

More broadly, the clash is also seen as a contest over the viability of political Islam, and comes after Islamist movements struggled to maintain power in post-revolution Egypt and Tunisia.



“What we have seen in Egypt and Tunisia was a fight between Islamists and non-Islamists,” Mr. Oktem said. “What we are seeing in Turkey is between two Islamist movements.”

The question is whether the clash will completely upend the Turkish political system. “This kind of power struggle between two different Islamist groups

might make the non-Islamist, secular groups more powerful, in Turkey’s case,” Mr. Oktem said.

**“Now it seems the situation has changed completely. It seems the ring around Erdogan has gotten tighter.”**

While pushing his rivals from the state, Mr. Erdogan has also blamed a foreign plot for the crisis. By implying American and Israeli involvement, Mr. Erdogan has also alienated the United

States, an important ally, and damaged his once-strong personal bond with President Obama. The State Department, in a statement issued Tuesday, said the attacks in the pro-government Turkish media against American officials were “deeply disturbing.”

*Dan Bilefsky contributed reporting from Paris, and Mahmut Kaya from Istanbul.*

International New York Times DECEMBER 23, 2013

# Don't get in bed with Assad

Emile Hokayem

**BEIRUT** One might think that America’s policy toward Syria couldn’t get any worse, but the rise of extremists there is generating dangerous thinking in Western capitals. High-level advisers and former officials have recently started to talk about Bashar al-Assad as a lesser evil than whatever comes next; some even see him as a potential partner in fighting jihadi terrorists.

Rebuilding bridges with Mr. Assad, the reasoning goes, would allow Western intelligence agencies to penetrate and disrupt the activities of extremist groups and help identify the many hundreds of Western jihadis who are flocking there.

Such simplistic analysis whitewashes the Assad regime’s record. It could also lead the Obama administration, for whom success in Syria is seemingly measured in terms of how uninvolved it is, to revert to the narrow, reactive counterterrorism strategy it has adopted in other troubled countries, like Yemen.

The latest exponent of this reasoning is Ryan C. Crocker, a former American ambassador to Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. “We need to start talking to the Assad regime again,” he told *The New York Times*, referring to counterterrorism and other issues of shared concern. “Bad as Assad is, he is not as bad as the jihadis who would take over in his absence.”

An increasing number of Western officials and analysts now cynically see Syria as, in Mr. Obama’s words “someone else’s civil war,” where bad guys (Al Qaeda and other Sunni jihadis) are killing other bad guys (Hezbollah and Shiite jihadis). The vital Western interest is to prevent their fight from spreading and Western jihadis from becoming a domestic threat.

Sunni jihadi groups are gaining a foothold. In particular, the “Islamic State in Iraq and Greater Syria” has grown in

size, reach and ambition. The group has driven away activists, journalists and aid workers; killed local rebels; and imposed puritanical Islamic rule in several areas. Poorly armed Syrian rebels fighting on several fronts have struggled to contain the extremists; at times, they’ve reached uneasy accommodations or even joined forces with them against government troops — more out of opportunism and necessity than ideology.

This was all too predictable. Mr. Assad jailed and killed peaceful civilian activists but released many Salafis from prison soon after the uprising started, with the goal of altering the nature and strategy of the opposition. The West’s failure to train and equip Syrian rebels weakened them relative to the extremists. Most conveniently for Mr. Assad, jihadi groups have tarnished the Syrian revolution, validating the then-false narrative of Islamist terrorism he propagated in the early stages of the uprising.

Viewing Syria primarily or uniquely through a counterterrorism lens after two years of civil war is a monumental error. Renewed intelligence cooperation is exactly how Mr. Assad hopes to lure back Western support. Some European intelligence agencies have already resumed discussions with their Syrian counterparts. Mr. Assad himself reportedly offered such assistance to Mr. Obama through the Iraqi prime minister, Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, who recently visited Washington.

Offering information about Western hostages and Western jihadis, Mr. Assad calculates, will give rise to quid pro quos and bolster him just as the chemical weapons deal did. Presenting himself as pragmatic and magnanimous will force the West to reckon with its original sin of having opposed him. Engagement will shore up his legitimacy and further demoralize his internal foes.

Mr. Assad has successfully played such mind games before. He hoodwinked European and American officials after sending jihadi fighters to kill

thousands of Iraqis — and many Americans — in Iraq, destabilizing Lebanon and building a nuclear reactor. Mr. Assad’s relationship with Sunni jihadi groups is long and well documented: He groomed and manipulated them not only in Iraq but also in Lebanon. Even today, there are strong suspicions that the regime’s intelligence has penetrated extremist groups.

Ultimately, Mr. Assad expects that the fear of future jihadi terrorism will make the world forget his massacres. That he may succeed after killing tens of thousands of his own people would

**Anti-terror cooperation with the Syrian regime would be immoral and misguided.**

be a damning indictment of Western policy. By now, his regime’s atrocities — which vastly surpass those of the rebels — and his crude sectarian strategies should have obliterated the long-held fallacy that he is secular because

he dresses in Western clothes, has an unveiled wife and allows other sects to pray as long as they give up all other freedoms. In these circumstances, “secular” means nothing.

Beyond being morally bankrupt and politically unsound, restoring counterterrorism cooperation with the Assad regime will only exacerbate the jihadi problem. It will validate Sunni suspicions that the West was always in cahoots with Mr. Assad; it will drive more Syrians into jihadi hands; and it will make it more difficult to cultivate local partners to counter extremists.

The best counterterrorism strategy remains the empowerment of mainstream Syrian rebels as part of the broader, more assertive policy that the White House has repeatedly rejected.

**EMILE HOKAYEM** is a Middle East analyst at the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the author of “Syria’s Uprising and the Fracturing of the Levant.”



# Rattrapé par les affaires, Erdogan dénonce une conspiration contre la Turquie

Par Nare Hakikat

**Les scandales de corruption qui ont provoqué en fin de semaine des manifestations à Istanbul contre le premier ministre turc pourraient peser sur les prochaines échéances électorales.**

Vendredi, les spectateurs des chaînes télévisées turques, qui transmettent en direct tous les discours de Recep Tayyip Erdogan, ont pu voir et entendre au moins cinq fois le premier ministre. On pourrait croire que le chef du gouvernement, en tournée dans différentes villes du pays, tente de battre une sorte de record. Face au scandale de corruption qui secoue le pays depuis une douzaine de jours, il tente de mobiliser son électorat et essaye de convaincre l'opinion publique que les accusations, qui le concer-

nent aussi avec la mise en cause de son fils, ne sont que le résultat d'un complot.

Il martèle en hurlant que le dossier en cours d'instruction est une «trahison», un «sale jeu» et une «attaque contre la volonté nationale». Des théories de complot, accusant les pays occidentaux d'être derrière cette «tentative de coup d'État», fusent dans tous les sens au rythme des shows de soutien. Des milliers de militants de l'AKP ont ainsi accueilli Erdogan à Istanbul vêtus de linçons, symboles de leur dévouement à leur leader «jusqu'à la mort». Mais tous ces efforts ne suffisent pas à cacher l'ampleur des dégâts. Le premier ministre et l'AKP sont sonnés, tout comme l'économie turque. La Bourse d'Istanbul et la livre turque dégringolent. La baisse de la monnaie rappelle la crise économique de 2000 en Turquie, qui, également sur fond de corruption, avait balayé tous les partis politiques en coalition à l'époque, emmenant ainsi l'AKP au pouvoir.



Recep Tayyip Erdogan, lors d'un discours devant ses partisans, dimanche à Istanbul. Crédits photo : OSMAN ORSAL/REUTERS

## GUERRE ENTRE ANCIENS ALLIÉS

Au début de la crise, certains observateurs imaginaient qu'Erdogan tenterait de faire la paix avec Fethullah Gülen, le guide de la confrérie religieuse Hizmet qui vit aux États-Unis, cet ex-allié de l'AKP, qui aurait joué un rôle clé dans la révélation du scandale de corruption. Or Erdogan semble avoir brûlé les ponts. La joute verbale entre Erdogan et Gülen au cours de laquelle l'on s'est même maudit à distance est allée trop loin pour espérer un accord. À chaque initiative d'Erdogan pour contrôler la justice et la police, deux institutions où la communauté Gülen est très influente, le camp adverse riposte par de nouvelles révélations.

Le dessaisissement du procureur qui menait l'enquête impliquant le fils d'Erdogan a provoqué une réaction indignée

de l'organe gérant la désignation des magistrats, le Conseil supérieur des juges et des procureurs. La pression effectuée sur la justice pour étouffer le dossier a été tellement évidente qu'il sera difficile pour Erdogan de faire oublier cette affaire à l'approche des élections en 2014 et 2015. «En menant une lutte de survie sans merci, Erdogan et ses flagorneurs provoquent des dommages politiques et économiques difficilement réparables en Turquie», écrivait dimanche le chroniqueur Cengiz Çandar dans le journal Radikal. «Erdogan, qui a été la plus brillante image de la Turquie sur la scène internationale, devient malheureusement ces jours-ci un poids impossible à porter pour son pays.» ■



December / 27 / 2013

# Iraq ups oil flow to Turkey to block Kurdish oil

<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com>

**I**STANBUL / Baghdad has ramped up the crude oil it pumps to Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline in order to block the incipient oil flow between Turkey and the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), according several media reports.

"As the test flows at the pipeline coming from Northern Iraq are completed and normal flow has begun, the central [Iraqi] government has raised the oil flow though the line that used to run with low capacity," Reuters quoted a source close to the matter as saying, without specifying the amount.

The Kirkuk-Yumurtalik pipeline was reported as carrying 400,000 barrels of oil per day, which is far below its actual capacity of 1.5 million barrels, according to Turkish energy ministry statements.

Desperately seeking alternative energy resources, Turkey has signed an agreement with the KRG for the establishment of a separate 300,000-barrel capacity pipeline.

On Dec. 23, Turkish Energy Minister Taner Yildiz said test flows for Northern Iraqi oil have been completed up to Ceyhan, Turkey's southern coastal district in the Mediterranean province of Adana, adding oil flow would start after

the tests.

Until recently, Baghdad has been explicitly opposed to the autonomous Kurdish region's direct oil deals with foreign companies and the export of Kurdish oil and gas to Turkey.

However, some fresh negotiations between the parties have appeared to be yielding some solutions over the issue.

The KRG Prime Minister Nechirvan Barzani was reported as saying on Dec. 25 the central government is leaning toward resolving energy rows with its autonomous Kurdish counterpart.

Iraq is keen to see oil shipped via pipeline from the northern Kurdish region but any exports must be approved by Baghdad, Deputy Prime Minister for energy Hussain al-Shahrastani had said, after flows on the pipeline started on Dec. 17. □

# Les rêves de grandeur du Kurdistan d'Irak

Depuis 1991, cette région du nord de l'Irak connaît un boom économique sans précédent et s'est largement affranchie de la tutelle de Bagdad

AGNÈS ROTIVEL (à Erbil)

<http://www.la-croix.com>

À Erbil, capitale politique et économique de la région autonome du Kurdistan, dans le nord de l'Irak, les grues s'élancent à la conquête du ciel kurde. « Empire City » est un vaste chantier ouvert par la société irakienne Empire world, qui verra l'érection, d'ici à 2017, d'un ensemble d'une douzaine de tours de bureaux, plus de 300 maisons de luxe, des espaces verts et un hôtel de la chaîne américaine Marriott.

**N**on loin de là, le « Downtown Erbil » devrait réunir tours de bureaux, immeubles d'habitation, centres commerciaux à l'occidentale, cinéma, restaurants, centre de loisirs. Après un village anglais et un village italien, ensemble de villas de luxe pour les expatriés, un village libanais devrait lui aussi sortir de terre.

Le Kurdistan d'Irak est en construction. Quand ces chantiers seront achevés, les dirigeants kurdes pourront se vanter d'avoir leur « petit Dubaï », référence absolue dans cette région. Ils auront aussi réussi leur pari de faire de cette région autonome un havre de paix et de prospérité dans un environnement régional tumultueux.

## LE VOISIN TURC EN PROFITE

Le voisin turc en profite, en tant que premier partenaire économique, et de loin, du gouvernement d'Erbil : 80 % des sociétés établies dans la « capitale » viennent de Turquie. Le commerce entre ce pays et le Kurdistan s'est établi à 12 milliards de dollars (8,8 milliards d'euros) en 2012. C'est une entreprise turque qui a construit le nouvel aéroport international, où 23 compagnies aériennes du monde relient désormais le Kurdistan à 15 pays. Et les produits turcs inondent les supermarchés.

Mais les Kurdes eux aussi profitent du boom économique. Les jeunes et la classe moyenne naissante découvrent les temples de la consommation comme le « Family Mall », avec ses chaînes de magasins, de cafés et de restaurants. Carrefour a ouvert un supermarché où même les Irakiens de



Estelle des Dorides

Fête de fin d'année dans un centre commercial d'Erbil, organisée par une compagnie de téléphonie mobile.

Bagdad viennent faire leurs courses.

Ziyad est originaire de Zahlé au Liban, à seulement une heure et demie en avion. Comme beaucoup de ses compatriotes, il a été attiré par les promesses économiques de ce petit territoire où tout est à faire. Il est arrivé il y a deux ans pour monter « Delar », une société de recrutement.

## « LES LOIS CHANGENT VITE DANS CE PAYS OÙ TOUT EST NEUF »

Sur son bureau, un ordinateur et un téléphone. Et il paie un intermédiaire pour faire le lien avec les administrations « car les lois changent vite dans ce pays où tout est neuf, il faut s'adapter constamment ». La plupart de ses clients sont les compagnies pétrolières. « Je recrute une main-d'œuvre qualifiée avec une expérience d'au moins dix ans. » Pour cela, il fait appel aux travailleurs étrangers car « les Kurdes ne sont pas formés dans ce secteur ».

Il recrute aussi médecins, ingénieurs, comptables et informaticiens indiens, infirmières philippines ou népalaises pour les hôpitaux kurdes. « Plus de mille personnes par mois. Au Kurdistan, il y a plus de possibilités qu'à Dubaï ou au Qatar, poursuit-il, et les gens que je recrute sont payés trois fois plus que dans les pays du Golfe. S'il n'y a pas de guerre, ce pays a un fort potentiel. »

Ce n'est pas Qassem Khidir, journaliste

kurde indépendant, qui le démentira. « Les médias sont en plein boom, avec plus de 300 quotidiens et magazines, et surtout plus de 100 chaînes de télé. Mais elles appartiennent toutes à des partis ou des gens riches qui l'utilisent pour leurs propres intérêts », s'empresse-t-il de préciser.

## TROUVER DU TRAVAIL N'EST PAS DIFFICILE

Trouver du travail n'est pas difficile mais tous ceux qui veulent gagner de l'argent recherchent un emploi dans le pétrole. Comme Leïla, réceptionniste dans un hôtel, qui a bien l'intention d'aller voir du côté des compagnies pétrolières étrangères où son anglais parfait sera un atout. Elle en est sûre, elle pourra ainsi doubler, voire tripler son salaire. Aussi les familles aisées encouragent-elles leur progéniture à étudier en priorité ce qui a trait à l'or noir.

Conscient toutefois des limites d'une économie basée essentiellement sur la consommation et l'extraction du pétrole, le gouvernement soutient par un programme d'incitations financières les entrepreneurs qui veulent ouvrir des usines. Et finance, à hauteur de 100 millions de dollars par an, 2 000 bourses pour les étudiants qui veulent étudier à l'étranger en master ou en doctorat. « Des bourses généreuses », selon Bayman qui, lui, fait ses études en France en stylistique et devra, comme tous les jeunes boursiers, travailler pendant ➔



⇒ cinq ans pour l'État kurde à son retour.

« La contrepartie de ce développement rapide, c'est que tout est plus cher, le logement, la nourriture, l'éducation, rappelle Qassem Khidir. Et les Kurdes veulent tout, tout de suite : s'acheter une maison, une voiture et gagner beaucoup d'argent. » La population a vu le changement. Même si l'expansion économique participe largement à l'augmentation des inégalités entre les plus riches et les plus pauvres, chacun a le sentiment d'avoir sa part du gâteau.

### LES RÊVES DE GRANDEUR DES KURDES NE S'ARRÊTENT PAS LÀ

Aujourd'hui le Kurdistan d'Irak s'étend sur trois gouvernorats, Dohouk, Souleymanieh et Erbil. Mais les rêves de grandeur des Kurdes ne s'arrêtent pas là. Leur pays, disent-ils, s'étend au-delà, dans les « territoires disputés », dont certains quartiers de la ville de Mossoul, majoritairement sunnite, Kirkouk, Salaheddine et les villages de la plaine de Ninive.

Le contentieux avec le gouvernement central de Bagdad sur ces territoires est ouvert. Les Peshmergas kurdes (forces armées) occupent déjà certaines zones disputées, comme Kirkouk, mais n'arrivent pas encore à y maîtriser la sécurité.

Politiquement, la zone autonome est à un moment charnière. Depuis les élections législatives de septembre, le Kurdistan n'a toujours pas de gouvernement. Le premier ministre sortant, Netchirvan Barzani, neveu de Massoud Barzani, le président du Kurdistan et chef du Parti

démocratique du Kurdistan (PDK), majoritaire, devrait être reconduit.

### COMPTER AUSSI AVEC LES PARTIS ISLAMIQUES, EN PROGRESSION

Mais il devra former un gouvernement de coalition avec le deuxième parti du pays, Goran, laïc et chantre de la lutte contre la corruption, arrivé en deuxième position derrière le parti historique et concurrent du PDK, l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan (UPK). Et il doit compter aussi avec les partis islamiques, en progression, ce qui inquiète les laïcs car ils ont de l'influence sur les jeunes et reçoivent de l'argent du Qatar, d'Arabie saoudite ou d'Iran.

Enfin, le Kurdistan, bien que largement autonome, fait toujours partie de l'Irak. L'instabilité qui règne au-delà des frontières kurdes est également source d'inquiétude. Des élections législatives nationales sont toujours prévues pour avril 2014, « les élections de la dernière chance pour l'intégrité territoriale de l'Irak », estime un diplomate.

« Si elles ne se tiennent pas, la dictature chiite s'imposera et le pays éclatera. Si elles se tiennent et que le premier ministre Nouri Al Maliki s'en va, que l'Iran et la Turquie, ses voisins, améliorent leurs relations, ça peut changer la donne. »

En attendant, depuis 1991, début de l'instauration d'une zone autonome dans le nord de l'Irak, jamais le vent n'aura été aussi favorable pour le Kurdistan. « Plus question pour eux d'être une minorité, prévient un observateur. De Bagdad, ils n'accepteront jamais moins que ce qu'ils ont déjà gagné. »

### UNE AUTONOMIE CHÈREMENT ACQUISE

L'Irak est découpé en 18 provinces. Les trois les plus septentrionales (Dohouk, Erbil et Souleymanieh) constituent la Région autonome du Kurdistan.

L'identité kurde y a toujours été forte et rebelle par rapport au pouvoir central de Bagdad. En 1991, les Kurdes avaient pris part à un soulèvement contre l'armée irakienne, rapidement réprimé par le président de l'époque Saddam Hussein. C'est alors que le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU décide d'interdire à l'aviation irakienne de survoler le 36e parallèle, permettant peu à peu aux Kurdes de s'organiser politiquement au nord de cette ligne. Après le renversement de Saddam Hussein par une coalition anglo-américaine en 2003, la Constitution irakienne de 2005 reconnaît le Kurdistan comme une entité politique, fédérale et autonome.

Le président du gouvernement régional du Kurdistan est aujourd'hui Massoud Barzani, fils de Mustapha Barzani, chef historique du mouvement national kurde en Irak. Le Parlement compte 111 sièges, répartis entre le PDK de Massoud Barzani (38 sièges), Goran (24 sièges), l'Union patriotique du Kurdistan de Jalal Talabani, président de l'Irak (18 sièges), et les partis islamiques (17 sièges). ■



DECEMBER 31, 2013

## Iraqi Kurds export first heavy oil to global market

By: Julia Payne

- \* KRG sells first cargo of Shaikan heavy crude
- \* Gulf Keystone operates Shaikan oilfield
- \* Taq Taq oil going into new pipeline for exports

**LONDON, Dec 31 (Reuters)** - Iraq's Kurdish region has started exports of heavy crude to world markets, traders and industry sources said, a further step to wrestle more control of its lucrative oil sector from the central government in Baghdad.

Trucked through Turkey to a waiting tanker, the sale of Shaikan crude comes just ahead of planned exports of light crude Taq Taq via a new pipeline.

The Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) began selling its oil independently of Baghdad in 2012, first with very light oil condensate, followed by Taq Taq, produced by London-listed oil company Genel.

These exports enraged Baghdad, which considers them smuggling as selling oil falls is handled by under the purview of Iraq's State Oil Marketing Organization (SOMO).

Talks are underway between Iraq and the Kurds to find an agree-

ment over oil exports and revenue sharing, after Arbil and Ankara signed a multi-billion dollar energy package at the end of November, including gas pipelines and exploration deals. Iraq's oil minister said Baghdad would retain control over the oil revenues.

But despite Baghdad's threats of legal action against potential buyers over the last year, the KRG has moved ahead with exporting Shaikan, the first international exports for AIM-listed Gulf Keystone in Kurdistan.

Trading company Powertrans, an intermediary used by the KRG to export its oil from Turkey, has sold a 30,000 tonne cargo of Shaikan loading Jan 6-10, trading sources familiar with the matter said.

The cargo will load at the Delta Rubis terminal at Doryol on Turkey's bay of Iskenderun, one of the sources said.

Details of the ultimate buyer were unclear as a trader was re-offering the grade.

The Shaikan oilfield is operated by Gulf Keystone, with Hungarian MOL holding a 20 percent interest. Commercial production began in July 2013 with an initial capacity of 10,000 barrels per day (bpd) and output is expected to reach 40,000 bpd in early 2014.

Gulf Keystone was not immediately able to provide a comment to Reuters after several enquiries.

Taq Taq crude is being tested in a newly completed pipeline that links Kurdish oilfields to the Turkish border and then into an existing pipeline already exporting Kirkuk crude for state marketer SOMO to the port of Ceyhan.

The oil successfully reached the Turkish port of Ceyhan for the first time last week. ♦

# Things look a lot better in Iraqi Kurdistan than they do in federal Iraq

But the Kurdistan Regional Government's hold on stability is complicated by campaigns for Kurdish rights next door in Syria.

Josh Wood

www.globalpost.com

**ERBIL, Iraq** — Many of the men who hold positions of power in Iraqi Kurdistan spent their lives struggling for a Kurdish state, from fighting in the hills to languishing in jails to lobbying for support in distant Western capitals.

What they accomplished is impressive.

Today, Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) acts like it's running a country of its own, with an organized military, diplomatic missions and a host of other institutions. Business is booming, with new hotels and shopping malls lining the wide boulevards of Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan's capital and the fourth largest city in Iraq.

In fact, things look a lot better in Iraqi Kurdistan than they do in federal Iraq. But as Iraq's Kurds settle into their hard-won comfort, power and stability, they find themselves stuck in a balancing act.

Next door, where Syria's civil war continues with no end in sight, Syrian Kurds have carved out their own slice of territory in the northeast, with pockets elsewhere. For the first time in modern history, two out of four areas stretching across Iraq, Turkey, Iran and Syria claimed by the Kurds as Greater Kurdistan are enjoying some level of autonomy.

But with the ascent of Syria's Kurds, Iraq's KRG finds itself weighing the aspiration for a pan-Kurdish state against the risk of getting involved in Syria's vicious conflict.

"I look around myself, I see everybody has a nation-state, everybody has a flag at the United Nations, yet the Kurds are denied that. And that's painful, damn painful," said Barham Salih, former prime minister of Iraqi Kurdistan and former deputy prime minister of the Iraqi federal government in Baghdad.

At the same time, the KRG sees that direct involvement in Syria could backfire. Kurdish leaders in Iraq are understandably reluctant to gamble with the peace and prosperity they have struggled to win.

"We would provoke a lot of people, we would create a lot of problems and it would be counterproductive," said Falah



This Oct. 12, 2013 photo shows the citadel and City Park in the center Iraq's Erbil, the capital of semi-autonomous Iraqi Kurdistan, where things look a lot better than they do in federal Iraq. (Safin Hamed/AFP/Getty Images)

Mustafa Bakir, the head of the KRG's Foreign Relations Department and de facto foreign minister.

"We support and sympathize with the rights of the Kurdish people in each part" of Greater Kurdistan, he added, "but it's for each part to reach an agreement through a political and peaceful way with the governments they live with."

KRG officials are acutely aware intervention in Syria on the Kurds' behalf could potentially harm relations they have established with Turkey and other regional powers.

Historically, Iraqi Kurds distrusted Turkey, given the country's heavy-handed repression of Kurds within its own borders and its opposition to a Kurdish state.

Just a decade ago, as the United States prepared to invade Iraq, there was considerable concern among Iraqi Kurds that Turkey could intervene militarily to nip hopes of Kurdish autonomy.

"10 years ago, 20 years ago, the word Kurdistan — the K-word — was prohibited. We were northern Iraqis," said Salih.

But in recent years the KRG has fostered a strong and increasingly warm relationship with Turkey built on mutual security and economic interests.

The KRG and Turkey recently agreed on an oil pipeline deal that could bring oil revenue directly to Iraq's Kurds, potentially loosening Baghdad's already-frayed tether on the north, with which federal Iraq is obligated to share oil revenues.

But while Turkey maintains friendly relations with the KRG, there are indications that the country would not take kindly to any other Kurdish regions emerging along its borders.

For now, the KRG says its support should be limited to encouraging Syrian Kurdish groups toward unity within their respective nations.

"We would welcome autonomy for the Kurds of Syria to have the control over their own area, but in coordination and in cooperation with the rest of the Syrians," said Bakir, the head of the foreign relations department.

"The best thing we can do is offer them an example," said Salih. "We have proved in Iraqi Kurdistan that we could not move beyond our miserable past until we got united ... [and] took advantage of a new environment after the Gulf War."

But getting Kurds in Syria to agree with that may be difficult.

The KRG has found itself at odds with the Democratic Union Party, the dominant Kurdish faction in Syria with a monopoly on power in most Kurdish areas.

Commonly referred to by its Kurdish-language acronym PYD, the group has close ties to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is considered a terrorist organization by the US, European Union, Turkey and others.

In 2012, fighting between the PKK and Turkey was the deadliest in more than a decade. Earlier this year, the PKK agreed to a ceasefire and said it would withdraw its guerrillas from southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq.

The militant strain of Kurdish nationalism embraced by the PKK and PYD, hostile to both Turkey and the mainstream Syrian opposition, clashes philosophically with the KRG — whose officials say they have forsaken militancy in favor of



peaceful solutions to the Kurdish question.

But on the ground in Syria, PYD is popular among many Kurds, and its militia has proved to be a formidable fighting force.

In November, the PYD unilaterally announced the formation of an interim government in Kurdish areas of Syria, a move seen as a first step toward autonomy — which the KRG and Turkey quickly condemned.

"The PYD wants to control everything," said one senior KRG official involved in Syria policy who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "The way they behave represents a dictatorship."

The KRG backs a group of 16 Syrian-Kurdish political parties under the umbrella of the Kurdish National Council. But the groups are small and remain unable to form a cohesive unit.

"It is not easy for them to make decisions together," said Mohammed Rasho, a senior PYD representative in Iraqi Kurdistan. "The revolution cannot wait

for these conflicts. ... You have to think quick." The PYD considers "the revolution" to mean a Kurdish push for autonomy and security in Syria.

Rasho believes that Iraq's KRG did not do enough for Syria's Kurds because of its relations with other countries.

"They are still not free. They have autonomy, but they are under the influence of Turkey and Iran ... countries that are not the friends of the Kurds," he said.

While the KRG claims it is only offering moral support and guidance to Syria's Kurds, it has been quietly training a militia of Syrian Kurds that could possibly be used to intervene in the country. Multiple KRG officials acknowledge its existence, though most are tight-lipped on details.

"[The militia] is supported by President Barzani," said Ibrahim, a 30-year-old Syrian Kurdish member of the force living in Iraq's largest refugee camp, Domiz. He withheld his surname because he is not authorized to speak to the media. "We are a regular military force, we are a national Kurdish army."

Ibrahim, a lieutenant, said that while the enlisted men and lower officers in the force are Syrians, senior officers are exclusively Iraqi Kurds. Neither Ibrahim nor KRG officials would go into detail on the size or armaments of the force, beyond saying it numbers in the thousands and is well equipped.

The intended mission of the military force is unclear. In August, Iraqi Kurdistan's President Masoud Barzani raised the possibility that the KRG could intervene militarily in Syria if extremist factions threatened Kurdish populations. While other KRG officials maintain that the force is simply preparing Syria's Kurds for their future, skeptics say the group could be leveraged as a counterweight to the PYD.

"If we go on a mission inside our homeland, we will defend our homeland against anyone who attacks our region," said Ibrahim, the Syrian lieutenant.

□□□



December 30, 2013

## Kurdistan Peshmerga forces ready to move towards Iraq's Anbar desert

**ERBIL-Hewlêr, Kurdistan region 'Iraq',**— Ministry of Peshmerga in Kurdistan Region announced on Monday that its troops are ready to move towards the desert of Anbar and support the Iraqi troops in pursuit of al-Qaeda militants if Baghdad asked for their help.

The Iraqi forces of the army and police have started a military campaign with the participation of a wide heavy machinery and military aircraft in the desert of Anbar province, adjacent to the Syrian border to hunt down al-Qaeda.

The campaign has been launched a few days ago when a prominent officer was killed by militant groups in the Iraqi army and a number of soldiers.

"Peshmerga forces are ready to participate in military operations carried out by Iraqi forces in Anbar desert, if requested by the federal government," The Secretary General of the Ministry of Peshmerga in Kurdistan region, lieutenant general Jabbar Yawar said.

The Ministry of Peshmerga has offered on Baghdad last August to deploy its forces in the hot areas of the country, especially the capital within an initiative to restore missing stability in Iraq.

The initiative came after a dramatic escalation of violence in Iraq, that shows the big failure of Iraqi forces to maintain security.

Yawar said that his ministry did not have any orders or any agreements or any request from any party to move on any specific unit of Peshmerga forces from any area of Kurdistan region to any other area.

On the existence of the reports refer to the escape of a number of al-Qaeda militants from Anbar desert towards Hamrin mountain adjacent to Kurdistan, www.Ekurd.net Yawar said that Hamrin area is considered a haven for those groups since several years.

Yawar stressed that Peshmerga forces are now ready to "deter"



Kurdish Peshmerga troops and tanks. Photo: Reuters

any "terrorist" force want to inter to Kurdistan to carry out "terrorist" acts.

Iraq had relied on Peshmerga forces in Baghdad and other forces during the sectarian tensions a few years ago, as the Kurdish forces has received the population's praise for its "Neutrality" and "professionalism."

The analysis say that the process of breaking into Abu Ghraib prison a period ago revealed that the Iraqi forces trained and armed by Washington that paid almost \$ 25 billion and trained more than one million security component are "unable" to confront its enemies.

The coordinated attack waves that killed dozens of civilians have become part of the daily routine in Iraq in recent months. The main defendant in most of these attacks is the local wing of al-Qaeda, which merged this year with Syrian wing and formed the "Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (al-Sham)", known as "Daash." □

# Syrian Kurds agree to disagree



Author Wladimir van Wilgenburg  
www.al-monitor.com

**WASHINGTON** — Leaders of the Syrian Kurdish parties agreed Dec. 24 to participate in the Geneva II peace conference on Jan. 22 with a single Kurdish voice as either part of the Syrian opposition bloc or as an independent Kurdish delegation. But differences remain over how to administer the Kurdish areas in the future, which could again lead to tensions among them.

The Democratic Union Party (PYD), the Syrian branch of Turkey's Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Kurdish National Council (KNC), a coalition of 16 Kurdish parties backed by Massoud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), concluded the Erbil agreement in 2012 to administer Syria's Kurdish areas together through the Supreme Kurdish Council (SKC).

The agreement between the two main Kurdish nationalist blocs in Syria never came to fruition. The Syrian Kurdish parties failed to share power, and the PYD remained the strongest Kurdish party on the ground in Syria and gained more popularity by fighting al-Qaeda.

The PYD was also one of the founding members of the National Coordination Body (NCB) that calls for a dialogue with the regime to solve the conflict peacefully.

Most of the KNC leaders moved to Iraqi Kurdistan outside of Syria and decided to join the Western-backed Syrian National Coalition (SNC) last summer. Like the KNC, the SNC doesn't have a big presence on the ground in Syria. As a result, the KNC parties grew weaker and weaker inside Syria.

On Dec. 8, the KNC decided in Qamishli to stop recognizing the authority of the SKC and not support the self-management plan of the PYD to form an interim Kurdish administration in Syria.

The KNC said that no decision can be made by the SKC, while the PYD wants the SKC to represent the Kurds in Geneva II. The pro-PYD media criticized the KNC's decision, and the PYD planned to replace the KNC parties with other parties in the SKC.

"The KNC has proved to fail again by participating under the name of the Syrian coalition in Geneva II and has lost their remaining credibility, because no one supports this ineffective stance," UK-based PYD spokesman Alan Semo told Al-Monitor on Dec. 9.

The PYD saw the decision of the Kurdish parties backed by Barzani as an attempt to derail their Kurdish administration project. But the PKK and Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) decided to end these tensions and reached a four-point agreement to unite the Syrian Kurds.

"What is important is that Kurds move together and go to Geneva under a common representative and demand a status. Whether it is a federation or democratic autonomy is not very important," said Mustafa Karasu, an influential member of the executive council of the PKK, as reported by the Firat News Agency.

This was followed by bilateral meetings between the KNC and PYD on Dec. 17. After negotiations that lasted more than a week, the parties reached a 10-point agreement on Geneva II on Dec. 23.

"The participation in Geneva II is solved. If the Kurds are invited as their own delegation they will represent themselves in a joint [PYD-KNC] independent delegation with agreed demands. If Kurds have to go with the opposition, then whoever attends from the [Syrian National] Coalition or the NCB would represent Kurdish demands," said Semo.

Zara Saleh, a UK-based member of the Kurdish Unity Party, affiliated with the KNC, told Al-Monitor the KNC and PYD agreed that Syria should be a secular and federal state.

"If the KNC goes with the Syrian [National] Coalition, they will ask for these demands. If the PYD goes with the NCB, they will have the same message. This agreement may be the best decision that has been



Delegates are pictured prior to a meeting on Syria at the United Nations offices in Geneva, Dec. 20, 2013. (photo by REUTERS/Fabrice Coffrini)

made."

It's most likely that the international community will not allow the Kurds to have their own delegation at Geneva II, and that's the reason why the PYD and KNC decided to coordinate similar demands for Kurdish autonomy.

Nuri Brimo, a member of the Barzani-backed Kurdish Democratic Party of Syria (KDP-S), pointed out that the international community decided that there will be two Syrian delegations to Geneva II: the delegation of the opposition and that of the regime. He said, "The Kurdish Council made the decision to be a part of the national coalition, and they will attend Geneva [II] with the coalition if there are no multiparty delegations."

Moreover, the PYD and KNC agreed to open the Kurdish-controlled Semalka border crossing for political delegations and humanitarian aid, closed from both sides after PYD leader Salih Muslim was refused entry into the KRG from Syria on Oct. 23.

Furthermore, they agreed to release political prisoners arrested by the security police of the PYD, known as asayish. But this point already might face its own hurdles.

In a statement to the media, asayish spokesman Ciwan Ibrahim said it does not have any political prisoners, only those who were arrested on the basis of relationships with terrorists and other illegal acts.

The pro-PYD media has accused some members of the KNC before of participating in attacks against Kurds in Aleppo.

But Mustafa Cummaa, leader of the Kurdish Freedom Party, told the Kurdish news channel Rudaw that there are 17 political prisoners from the Freedom Party and five from the KDP-S.

Asharq Al-Awsat reported that the two sides failed to agree on a Kurdish administration and the reactivation of the SKC, and postponed a decision on this issue until Jan. 15.

Leader of the KDP-S Mohammed Ismail said in an interview with Welati that the two sides did not reach a final agreement, blaming the Syrian regime for "not allowing the Kurds to unite."

Although the Kurds demand unity from the Kurdish parties, Ismail blamed the PYD for "not wanting a true partnership and seeking everything to be in its hand."

Kurdish activist Nizar Mistefa from the Syrian Kurdish Youth Movement told Al-Monitor that the agreement was a "good step" than can be used to reach a new deal by both sides, even though it did not reach the expectations of the Kurds in Syria.

"Unfortunately, the days are passing and the situation is as it was before, so Hewler II [the Erbil agreement] will be like Hewler I."

It seems that for now, the Kurdish parties from Syria will continue to agree to disagree on a Kurdish interim administration while having an united Kurdish voice at Geneva II. ♦

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# Iran, Turkey's new ally?

**Vali R. Nasr**

Contributing Writer

**WASHINGTON** A bribery and corruption scandal has plunged Turkey into crisis, seriously undermining Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's authority. Mr. Erdogan now faces serious challenges from both secularists suspicious of his Islamist agenda and his erstwhile ally turned rival, the cleric Fethullah Gulen, who leads a powerful Islamic movement from his perch in Pennsylvania. Sluggish economic growth and setbacks in foreign policy have only spurred the critics.

The political bickering is unlikely to let up before next year's crucial presidential election, in which Mr. Erdogan is expected to run. He will have a difficult time repairing the tarnished image of his Justice and Development Party, or A.K.P. The economy will not give him a boost, but foreign policy might — if he can show that Turkey will once again play a central role in the Middle East.

For over a decade, Turkey cultivated ties with its Arab neighbors. Turkish diplomats and businessmen were ubiquitous across the region, opening borders and trade routes, promoting business and brokering political deals. Turkey's spectacular economic success and its stable Muslim democracy were hailed as a model for the whole region.

In the past year, however, Mr. Erdogan's Middle East policy has gone adrift. Tumult across the region has eroded Turkey's influence and dented its economic aspirations.

Disagreements over Syria and, more so, over Egypt have alienated the Arab world, placing a wedge between Turkey and Saudi Arabia in particular. The Turkish model for Muslim democracy is, after all, a milder version of the former Muslim Brotherhood government in Egypt — which, with Saudi help, the Egyptian military and secularists have done away with.

Turkey has denounced the ouster of Egypt's Brotherhood government, but it can do little more than protest. Even

doing that too volubly led to the expulsion of Turkey's ambassador to Egypt.

At the same time, disapproving Persian Gulf monarchies have cut back trade ties, hurting Turkey's economy. All this has come at a difficult time for Mr. Erdogan.

Turkey's relations with Israel have remained strained since a clash in 2010 over an aid flotilla to Gaza. And as Turkey's pivotal role in the region declined, the United States stopped looking to Ankara for advice on how to manage the Middle East. Instead, Washington became concerned that the antigovernment protests sweeping the Arab world might destabilize Turkey, too.

On the foreign policy front, at least, Mr. Erdogan's luck may have changed. Now that America and Iran are talking seriously, things could be different. In sharp contrast to Israel and the Persian Gulf monarchies, which have been alarmed by the interim deal on Iran's nuclear program, Turkey sees benefit in serving as a bridge between Iran and the West and in providing the gateway to the world that Tehran needs as it emerges from isolation.

The Iranian turn has come at an opportune time for Turkish foreign policy in other ways, too. Iran has influence with Iraq's Shiite-led government and Syria's Alawite elite. In Iraq, where a crucial oil deal hangs in the balance, Turkey needs Iranian cooperation. It also needs Iran's help on Syria.

Turkey initially tied its policy to America's demand that President Bashar al-Assad quit. It was disappointed when the Obama administration signed on to a Russian-brokered deal with Mr. Assad on chemical weapons. With violence menacing across the border, Turkey wants to see an end to Syria's civil war. The new moderate government in Tehran is Turkey's best hope for leveraging a settlement.

Economic ties between Turkey and Iran have been strengthening, with trade now estimated to be worth \$20 billion. The real number may be still higher, since the recent corruption charges allege that Turkish officials and the state-owned Halkbank have been helping Ira-

nian businesses dodge international sanctions. In any case, Iranian exports still reach Turkey, and the proceeds fund the purchase of gold and silver that flow back to Iran. In turn, Turkey's economy depends on Iran's oil and gas, its investments dollars and large export market.

If Iran does conclude a long-term nuclear deal with the West, it still cannot expect a warm welcome from the Sunni Arab world. With the region divided by a widening sectarian rift, the Persian Gulf monarchies will become only more fretful about Iran's regional ambitions. That makes Turkey potentially a key strategic partner for Iran, especially if its economy starts to grow as sanctions are relaxed.

**Erdogan needs a major foreign policy boost. Iran might just supply it.**

With American influence in the region in decline, and with Israel and the Persian Gulf monarchies finding themselves united in their opposition to Iran, Turkey could find itself playing a

central role thanks to its links with Iran. A new Turkish-Iranian partnership could be a welcome development for the West: Turkey's economic ties could boost Iran's commercial development, which would help consolidate the political position of the moderates in Tehran. The real gains would come if a closer relationship with Turkey began to erode the alliance of militias and radical religious forces on which Iran has relied to project its influence.

To play this enlarged regional role, though, Turkey must first reassure the West that it will remain a trusted NATO ally and not demonize Western allies as a way of managing political dissent at home. However Mr. Erdogan's domestic difficulties fall out, Turkey has an opportunity to restore its international standing. It will have to show that it is not simply an advocate for Iran, but has used its influence to shift Iran's foreign policy and facilitate a permanent nuclear deal.

VALI R. NASR is dean of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

THE DAILY STAR  
LEBANON

December 27, 2013

## Kurdish militia has 35,000 fighters: spokesman

www.dailystar.com.lb

BEIRUT: A leading Kurdish militia that has fought against rebels trying to topple Syrian president Bashar Assad now

numbers 35,000 members, according to a spokesperson for the group.

Redur Khalil, quoted by the Carnegie Endowment, said the YPG, or People's Protection Units, had grown in number

after a recent general mobilization.

The figure would place the militia, which is comprised of men and women, as being among the largest in the war-torn country.

The YPG works closely with the PYD, a political party that has advocated federalism for Syria's Kurds.



Dossier

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## Irak, la rupture annoncée

### Le premier revers de l'arabisme.

Menée par le chérif Hussein de La Mecque, la Révolte arabe contre l'Empire ottoman (ici, patrouille battant pavillon chérifien en 1917 au 1918) auroit dû déboucher, selon les promesses de la Grande-Bretagne, sur la formation d'un grand État arabe. Celui-ci ne verra jamais le jour.

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PHOTONONSTOP



État bancal aux frontières dictées par les intérêts britanniques, l'Irak naquit avec, à sa tête, une élite sunnite minoritaire, héritière en droite ligne des cadres du défunt Empire ottoman. Porteuse d'un projet national importé, cette minorité sera, à quelques brefs épisodes près, inlassablement combattue par les Kurdes et les Chiites, grands perdants du nouvel État.

Le destin du nationalisme arabe en Irak est intimement lié à la nature de la société irakienne et à celle de l'État fondé par les Britanniques en 1920, sur les ruines des trois provinces ottomanes. En Irak, ni l'islam (56% de chiïtes, 42% de sunnites, divisés entre Arabes et Kurdes) ni l'arabité (75% d'Arabes, 22% de Kurdes) ne sont des facteurs d'unité. La politique des puissances européennes contre l'Empire ottoman avait été de faire émerger les nationalismes (arabe, arménien, kurde et même assyro-chaldéen) pour miner les bases religieuses qui fondaient le lien entre le sultan-calife d'Istanbul et ses sujets. Contrairement au Levant ou à l'Égypte, la Mésopotamie ottomane était restée largement à l'écart des influences européennes. Le concept de nation ethnique y était pratiquement inconnu. Le sentiment d'être arabe n'en existait pas moins de façon puissante. Mais il se référait à une arabité (*'arūba*) vécue à travers les liens du sang (la tribu, le clan, la famille) et non pas comme

par **Pierre-Jean Luizard**

une idéologie d'appartenance exclusive (*al-qawmiyya al-'arabiyya*). Les seuls à avoir milité pour une telle conception appartenaient aux cercles restreints des officiers (sunnites) qui avaient suivi leurs études dans les académies militaires d'Istanbul.

### Les germes de la division

Mis en place par la Grande-Bretagne qui affirmait son souci de respecter le principe du droit des peuples à disposer d'eux-mêmes, l'État irakien moderne n'en a pas moins été fondé sur un double paradoxe : Londres a joué la carte du nationalisme arabe, alors que celui-ci était peu répandu dans le pays, en s'appuyant sur les élites du défunt Empire ottoman, c'est-à-dire les grandes familles sunnites, mais en écartant du pouvoir



les chiïtes qui s'étaient opposés par les armes au mandat. Peu après, le pétrole découvert dans la région de Kirkouk amena les Britanniques à s'intéresser de près au Kurdistan inclus dans le vilayet de Mossoul, malgré les promesses d'indépendance faites aux Kurdes par les Alliés. En 1925, les Kurdes furent ainsi rattachés, contre leur gré, à un État-nation arabe.

Ce nouvel État, dont les frontières ont été artificiellement définies, portait donc en lui les germes de la division. Pendant plus de quatre-vingt années, en dépit des coups d'État et des révolutions, il a assuré la domination d'élites issues de la minorité arabe sunnite du pays (20% de la population) et exclu du pouvoir les trois quarts restants, chiïtes et Kurdes. L'armée devint la colonne vertébrale de cet État, dominée durant la période de la royauté hachémite (1920-1958) par les officiers chéri-fiens qui, à l'instar de Nouri Sa'ïd et de Ja'far al-Askari (le fondateur de l'armée irakienne en 1921), avaient servi dans l'armée mise sur pied au Levant et au Hedjaz, avec l'aide des Britanniques, et s'étaient donc facilement ralliés à leur retour en Irak.

Face à l'État-nation arabe et son corollaire, la domination britannique à travers le mandat (1920-1932), les dirigeants religieux chiïtes avaient défendu le projet d'un Irak musulman indépendant, sans lien avec une quelconque puissance étrangère. La défaite des chiïtes fut consom-



mée en 1925, avec la mort de l'ayatollah al-Khâlîsî, envoyé en exil en Iran par les Britanniques. Quant aux Kurdes, la révolte de Cheikh Mahmûd en 1919-1920, matée par la Royal Air Force (RAF), avait laissé la place à des insurrections périodiques, aussitôt réprimées.

### Deux poids deux mesures

Les textes constitutionnels votés en 1924 ne faisaient officiellement aucune distinction entre

les citoyens irakiens arabes et semblaient considérer de la même façon sunnites et chiïtes. En réalité, le code de la nationalité irakienne adopté en 1924 recelait une évidente discrimination confessionnelle. Selon ce code, en effet, seuls les Irakiens qui avaient eu la nationalité ottomane, ou dont les parents ou les grands-parents l'avaient eue, étaient considérés comme des citoyens irakiens de plein droit. Les autres durent faire la « demande » de la nationalité irakienne et, pour cela, « prouver » leur « irakité », même si leur famille avait vécu en Irak depuis des générations. Or, il en était ainsi de l'immense majorité des chiïtes : beaucoup n'avaient pas été de nationalité ottomane, les uns la considérant comme illégitime, car attachée au sunnisme, les autres, les plus nombreux, parce qu'ils appartenaient à un monde rural et tribal opposé à celui des villes et qu'ils n'avaient souvent même pas l'idée de ce que signifiait une nationalité. D'autres, enfin, qui avaient (ou dont

**Muhammad al-Jawâhiri** (1899-1997). Poète fameux, membre d'une éminente famille irakienne de souche, il fit néanmoins les frais, à la création de l'État irakien, d'un code de la nationalité particulièrement défavorable aux chiïtes, qui contestait son « irakité ». D.R.



**La révolution irakienne de 1958.** Le 14 juillet 1958, le coup d'État du général Abdul Karim Qassem et du colonel Abdel Salam 'Aref renverse la monarchie hachémite. Le pays va dorénavant se rapprocher de l'URSS, ennemi d'hier. Ci-contre, 'Aref, désormais vice-Premier ministre et ministre de l'Intérieur, s'adresse à la foule à Najaf. © BETTMANN/CORBIS



## Dossier

Les années Nasser Une histoire du panarabisme

**Les militaires au pouvoir.** Abdul Karim Qassem (à droite) et Abdel Salam 'Aref lors d'une réunion à Bagdad, en 1958, après le coup d'État. © BURT GUNN/MAGNUM PHOTOS

Ci-dessous : **Le premier coup d'État baassiste**, le 8 février 1963, renverse le général Qassem et sonne le glas du relatif apaisement qui semblait s'instaurer entre chiïtes et sunnites d'Irak. Ici, des gardes nationaux – qui n'ont pas encore reçu d'uniformes – lors d'une opération de ratissage à Bagdad, le 22 février 1963. © BETTMANN/CORBIS



l'un des parents ou grands-parents avait) la nationalité persane, étaient considérés comme de « rattachement iranien ». Parmi ces derniers, il y avait des Irakiens d'origine persane, religieux ou non, qui étaient installés en Irak, parfois depuis des siècles, mais aussi des Arabes qui n'avaient d'autres racines que l'Irak: religieux et commerçants chiïtes qui avaient opté pour la nationalité persane afin d'échapper à la conscription ottomane, tribus vivant à cheval sur les deux frontières. Des milliers de familles de « rattachement iranien » durent

entreprendre des démarches invraisemblables pour prouver qu'elles étaient bien irakiennes.

Cette discrimination créa des situations aberrantes, puisqu'un Arabe non irakien, du fait qu'il était sunnite, avait davantage de droits qu'un Arabe chiïte installé en Irak depuis des générations. La polémique entre le célèbre poète irakien Muhammad al-Jawâhiri et Sâti' al-Husri, alors ministre de l'Enseignement, est restée célèbre. Muhammad al-Jawâhiri fut destitué de son poste d'enseignant par Sâti' al-Husri, alors principal théoricien du nationalisme arabe. Membre d'une célèbre famille de *sayyids* chiïtes de Najaf, Muhammad al-Jawâhiri se voyait nier son irakité par un fonctionnaire de nationalité syrienne, né au Yémen! La propagande de l'État contre les chiïtes recourut souvent à l'accusation de *shu'ûbiyya*, terme qui dénonçait sous le règne abbasside ceux qui contestaient la suprématie des Arabes en terre d'Islam. Par ces accusations, les chiïtes se voyaient contester non seulement leur irakité, mais aussi leur arabité.

### Des promesses du baassisme...

Ainsi, bien avant l'arrivée au pouvoir de nationalistes arabes, nassériens d'abord avec les deux 'Aref (Abdel Salam puis Abdul Rahman, 1963-1968), puis baassistes (1968-2003), le nationalisme arabe était fondateur d'un État que chiïtes et Kurdes s'étaient évertués à combattre de façon acharnée. À partir des années 1930, l'illusion commença à se répandre qu'il était possible de résoudre les problèmes sociaux et confessionnels par des





réformes. Implanté en Irak par des militants syriens, le parti Baas fut ainsi fondé en Irak par un chiite en 1952 et attira à lui de nombreux militants de toutes origines confessionnelles. Face à Nasser et aux mouvements nassériens, l'autre tendance du nationalisme arabe, le Baas présentait l'avantage de symboliser un ancrage plus irakien qu'arabe, ce qui satisfaisait les chiïtes. En effet, les chiïtes sont majoritaires en Irak, mais minoritaires à l'échelle de la « nation arabe ». Ceci explique leur volonté de préserver l'identité de l'Irak à travers des projets « irakistes », là où les sunnites tentaient de contourner leur statut minoritaire en Irak en se référant à un monde arabe majoritairement sunnite. À ses débuts, le Baas réussit une réelle symbiose entre les deux communautés musulmanes d'Irak. Sous le premier régime républicain, celui du général Qassem (1958-1963), le Baas est dirigé par des chiïtes et de nombreux chiïtes militent dans les rangs du parti, qui exprime un sentiment nationaliste arabe alors répandu en Irak.

Cependant, la grande masse des chiïtes se rapprochait plutôt du parti communiste et soutenait le régime de Qassem. Ce dernier voulait affirmer une identité irakienne spécifique dans un monde arabe majoritairement sunnite dont le héraut était alors Nasser. L'adhésion en masse des chiïtes aux idéaux du parti communiste, le principal adversaire des baassistes, en arriva à un tel point que le communisme fut même assimilé à une forme moderne du chiïsme.

### ... à la désillusion

Le premier coup d'État baassiste, qui renversa Qassem en 1963, mit un terme brutal à ces illusions. Les milices baassistes qui partirent à l'assaut des quartiers communistes, majoritairement chiïtes, ne firent pas mystère de la haine confessionnelle qui les animait. Aux cris de « *Min al-yawm, lâ shî'î, lâ shuyû'î walâ sharâgwa!* »

(À partir de ce jour, plus de chiïtes, plus de communistes, ni d'Orientaux! – du nom, *sharâgwa* en dialecte irakien, des chiïtes originaires des campagnes du Tigre, qui avaient massivement migré vers les bidonvilles de Bagdad), ils s'engagèrent dans une répression anti-communiste féroce. La conséquence immédiate fut le divorce brutal entre le Baas et les chiïtes. En quelques semaines, la représentation des chiïtes dans les organes dirigeants du parti chuta vertigineusement. Dès lors, nationalisme arabe en Irak rimera avec sunnisme. Quant aux chiïtes, dont beaucoup avaient combattu dans les rangs du parti communiste, ils se virent offrir une autre option qui semblait renaître de ses cendres : le mouvement religieux chiïte.

Après des décennies de traversée du désert, de jeunes oulémas chiïtes, à l'instar de Muhammad Bâqer al-Sadr (exécuté sur ordre de Saddam Hussein en 1980), entendaient reconquérir les chiïtes d'Irak. Ils le firent d'abord contre la domination des idées du parti communiste. Mais, à partir du milieu des années 1970, le vieil antagonisme était de retour : le Baas au pouvoir, qui avait proclamé sa laïcité à ses débuts, se réislamisa pour affirmer son sunnisme face à une communauté chiïte majoritaire dont les dirigeants religieux furent galvanisés par la victoire de la révolution islamique en Iran. Les huit années de guerre entre l'Irak et l'Iran furent aussi le prolongement, au-delà des frontières, d'une guerre civile larvée qui avait débuté en 1977 entre le pouvoir baassiste et le mouvement religieux chiïte renaissant. La suite, avec l'occupation du Koweït, conséquence directe de l'endettement irakien dû à la guerre avec l'Iran, la décennie de mise sous tutelle de l'Irak par les grandes puissances et, finalement, la guerre de 2003, est connue.



La « question irakienne », ce rapport de domination ethnique et confessionnel (inavoué pour ce dernier), trouvait donc un épilogue tragique plus de quatre-vingt années après sa conception par la Grande-Bretagne. La chute du régime de Saddam Hussein a aussi été celle d'un État qui aura généré un lot impressionnant de répressions, de soulèvements et une succession de guerres intérieures et extérieures. Qui se réclame encore du nationalisme arabe dans l'Irak déchiré par les conflits confessionnels d'aujourd'hui ? ●

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**La résurgence chiïte de l'après-Saddam Hussein.** Bagdad, 9 avril 2006 : manifestation en mémoire de Muhammad Bâqer al-Sadr, ouléma chiïte exécuté sous la dictature, vingt-six ans auparavant.

© KHALID MOHAMMED/AF/SIPA



## Dossier

**Les années Nasser** Une histoire du panarabisme



# La surenchère nationaliste au pouvoir

Dès les années 1920, les dirigeants d'Irak et de Syrie sont appelés à construire un État capable de fédérer des régions et des communautés hétérogènes.

L'armée prendra le pas sur les institutions politiques et fera de l'unité arabe la source principale de légitimité.

par **Malik Mufti**

**Fayçal, premier roi d'Irak.** Bagdad, 20 octobre 1921 : le fils du chérif Hussein de La Mecque est placé par les Britanniques sur le trône d'Irak, qu'il occupera jusqu'à sa mort en 1933.

Il se fait le chantre du « panarabisme expansionniste », appelant à l'unification des pays du Croissant fertile sous sa férule.

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Deux phénomènes étroitement liés dominent l'histoire moderne de la Syrie et de l'Irak : l'instauration d'un ordre politique à l'intérieur, et l'affirmation de l'intérêt national à l'extérieur. On peut distinguer trois phases dans leur déroulement, la première monarchique, la deuxième prétorienne et la troisième bonapartiste. À chaque étape, les difficultés entraînées par la création d'un ordre politique à l'intérieur du pays se répercutent sur la ligne de conduite suivie dans les affaires étrangères : un unionisme expansionniste pendant la phase monarchique, puis défensif pendant la phase prétorienne et, enfin, pendant la phase bonapartiste, la voie « normale » prédite par la théorie réaliste des relations internationales, consistant à soupeser et contrecarrer les menaces extérieures.

### Les ambitions hachémites

Le régime monarchique ne dure guère en Syrie, entre la proclamation du roi Fayçal en mars 1920 et son éviction par les Français en juillet de la même année. En Irak, en revanche, Fayçal et ses héritiers règnent de 1921 à 1958, assez longtemps pour préciser les contours de leur mode

de gouvernement. Les Hachémites se trouvent d'emblée en porte-à-faux, car ils règnent sur un pays où ils n'ont pas de racines et qu'ils considèrent comme un simple tremplin pour l'accomplissement de leur ambition dynastique suprême : la réunification de la péninsule Arabique sous leur autorité.

S'ils veulent se donner le temps de transformer l'Irak en une Prusse ou un Piémont arabe, ils ont besoin d'établir à Bagdad un pouvoir central à même de rassembler la population autour de lui. Pour cela, il leur faut consolider l'autonomie, l'efficacité et la légitimité des institutions nationales, en forgeant au passage une nouvelle identité irakienne qui supplantera toutes les attaches régionales, tribales ou sectaires, ainsi que les liens transnationaux avec la Turquie et l'Iran. Malgré tout, les Hachémites, soucieux de préserver leur avenir dynastique, tolèrent et même encouragent un courant transnational en concurrence avec le patriotisme irakien, en l'occurrence le panarabisme.

Il y a là une contradiction qui se reflète de deux manières dans la politique étrangère irakienne. D'abord, la large diffusion du sentiment panarabe au sein du peuple arabe représente à la fois une contrainte et un atout pour les Hachémites. Une contrainte, parce qu'elle rend la politique irakienne vulnérable aux ingérences des autres prétendants à la suprématie panarabe, notamment Nasser après 1954. Un atout, parce



qu'elle leur fournit un point d'appui dans leurs efforts incessants pour étendre leur souveraineté sur des pays voisins, principalement la Syrie, mais parfois aussi la Jordanie et le Koweït. Le panarabisme expansionniste devient ainsi la composante essentielle de la politique étrangère hachémite, qui se manifeste par des traités d'union avec des gouvernements étrangers accommodants et par des manœuvres de subversion ou d'intimidation militaire contre les plus récalcitrants.

Deuxième conséquence de son assise politique étroite, le pouvoir hachémite en Irak ne peut pas se passer de l'aide anglaise, à la fois militaire (contre les ennemis intérieurs et extérieurs) et financière (les revenus pétroliers ne leur assurant pas encore des moyens matériels suffisants). Or, cette assistance se paie au prix de l'autonomie du pays. Comprenant que les Hachémites ont trouvé dans le panarabisme un moyen d'échapper à leur influence, les Anglais s'ingénient à contrarier leurs efforts pour modifier le *statu quo* régional.

Pour autant, ni les réticences anglaises ni les mécontentements internes ne sont les principales explications de l'échec final des Hachémites en Irak. Il est vrai que les convoitises de l'Irak à l'égard de la Syrie et, plus encore, du Koweït en 1958 irritent les Anglais et en incitent quelques-uns à envisager un mini-putsch afin de remplacer Nouri Sa'ïd par un Premier ministre plus docile. L'assassinat de la famille royale semble quand même les avoir pris de court et, quoi qu'il en soit, le général Qassem et ses comparses préparaient leur coup depuis des années.

La prise de pouvoir par Qassem n'est pas non plus une « révolution » reflétant les aspirations de nouvelles forces sociales, comme on l'écrit souvent. Le gouvernement et sa politique économique, en particulier son incapacité à mettre en œuvre une véritable réforme agraire, ont certes engendré bien des mécontentements. C'est une malchance pour les Hachémites que les bouleversements de la modernisation économique

aient frappé l'Irak avant que les revenus pétroliers n'aient atteint un niveau suffisant pour les atténuer. Il n'en reste pas moins que le mécontentement populaire n'est pratiquement pas entré en ligne de compte en 1958. C'est un coup d'État militaire, perpétré par une clique d'officiers, et non pas un soulèvement du peuple, qui a renversé la monarchie irakienne. Le nouveau pouvoir en place a pu bénéficier dans un premier temps de l'appui anglais et de l'enthousiasme populaire, mais il n'était issu ni de l'un ni de l'autre.



En réalité, les Hachémites sont finalement tombés parce qu'ils n'ont pas réussi à franchir l'obstacle auquel tous les dirigeants irakiens, jusqu'à Saddam Hussein, se sont heurtés : le stade transitoire, dans la formation de l'État, où la mise en place d'un régime despotique (et surtout de son armée) précède les autres innovations institutionnelles destinées à assurer la stabilité et la légitimité du pouvoir. Pour contourner cet écueil, il faut de la chance, des moyens matériels et, par-dessus tout, de l'habileté – ce dont Abd al-Ilah et Nouri Sa'ïd ne manquaient pas. Ils se sont maintenus au pouvoir près de vingt ans, mais le vent a tourné lorsqu'un officier malin a saisi une occasion longtemps attendue.

**Une conférence panislamique** réunit l'ancien roi du Hedjaz Ali ben Hussein et l'émir Abdullah de Jordanie. Shunet Nimrin (Jordanie), 1931. © LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

**Présence britannique.** Sur les berges du Tigre, à Bagdad, en 1932. © LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



### « Cauchemar prétorien »

Quelle qu'en soit la cause exacte, le renversement de la monarchie hachémite est lourd de conséquences pour l'évolution politique de l'Irak. La destruction de l'ordre ancien ne débouche pas sur l'instauration d'un ordre nouveau, du fait même que les événements de juillet 1958 ne constituent pas une révolution reflétant les intérêts de groupes sociaux cohérents, ni même les aspirations d'un mouvement idéologique de type léniniste. L'Irak sombre dans un cauchemar prétorien

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# Dossier

**Les années Nasser** Une histoire du panarabisme

où des bandes rivales d'officiers se disputent âprement les rênes du pouvoir dix années d'affilée. Durant cette période (1958-1968), la construction de l'État entamée par les Hachémites est quasiment paralysée par la succession de cliques dirigeantes accaparées par leur combat pour la survie.

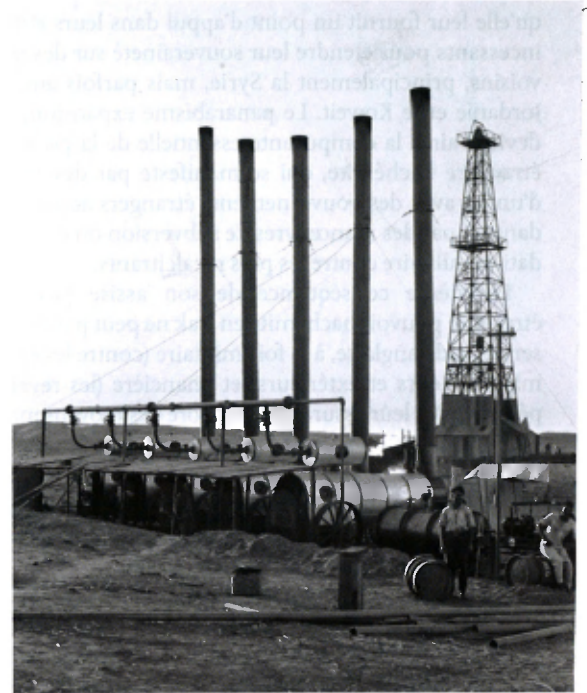
En Syrie, la phase prétorienne commence beaucoup plus tôt. Le premier coup d'État militaire survient en 1949, trois ans après la fin de l'occupation française. En chassant le roi hachémite, les Français avaient éliminé dès le début un facteur d'équilibre, laissant le personnel politique civil encore plus démuné qu'en Irak face au pouvoir despotique de l'armée. Vers la fin des années 1950, l'impuissance évidente de la société civile dans les deux pays aboutit à la victoire complète des officiers et leurs amis sur les représentants politiques de la bourgeoisie nationale (le bloc parlementaire de Khaled al-'Azam en Syrie, le parti démocratique national de Chadirji en Irak) et de la classe ouvrière (les partis communistes syrien et irakien).

Le prétorianisme à son tour donne lieu à un choix de politique étrangère caractéristique: l'unionisme défensif. La plupart des dirigeants qui arrivent à se hisser au sommet, trop occupés à préserver leur survie pour s'intéresser aux affaires économiques et sociales, et privés des privilèges dynastiques dont pouvaient se prévaloir leurs prédécesseurs royaux, cherchent des soutiens et une légitimité par le biais d'une stratégie d'union panarabe. Les sept projets d'union lancés par des régimes prétoriens font apparaître une corrélation directe entre l'instabilité du pouvoir et l'unionisme défensif.

**L'appétit britannique pour les richesses pétrolières** valut aux Kurdes d'être rattachés contre leur gré, à l'issue de la Première Guerre mondiale, au nouvel État irakien. Forage pétrolier par l'Iraq Petroleum Compagny près de Kirkouk, 1932.

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**Manifestation pro-Qassem à Bagdad**, le 12 juillet 1958, deux jours avant la révolution qui va porter le général au pouvoir. © ULLSTEIN BILD/ROGER-VIOLLET



## « L'unionisme défensif » au secours des élites

Cinq de ces projets interviennent moins d'un an, et souvent moins de six mois, après l'accession au pouvoir d'un régime qui se place sur le mode défensif. Le sixième, concernant la création de la République arabe unie (Syrie-Égypte) en 1958, se concrétise près de vingt mois après la formation d'une coalition nationaliste radicale par Sabri al-Assali, mais cet intervalle de temps est marqué par un remaniement ministériel, des concentrations de troupes à la frontière turque visant à déstabiliser le régime, une insurrection d'officiers baassistes à la garnison de Katana et quatre tentatives de coups d'État impliquant les États-Unis. Le dernier de ces complots est déjoué à la fin de l'été 1957 et les luttes de pouvoir continuent jusqu'au jour où Bizri s'envole pour Le Caire avec sa délégation.

Même la fédération arabe hachémite (Jordanie-Irak) de 1958, atypique parce qu'il est rare de voir une monarchie opter pour l'unionisme défensif, se conforme au modèle général. Le roi Hussein de Jordanie cherche l'union avec l'Irak pour parer aux contestations internes (sans que l'autorité royale soit réellement menacée). C'est toujours la même motivation, avec quelques







variantes, qui sous-tend les projets d'union : permettre aux élites gouvernantes d'écraser leurs adversaires à l'intérieur du pays. L'unionisme défensif reflète donc les intérêts de l'élite, pas ceux de l'État.

Les élites prétorienne jouent la carte de l'unionisme défensif en l'absence d'institutions nationales capables d'encadrer l'armée, de maintenir l'ordre et de gagner l'adhésion du peuple. Dans un contexte de pénétration étrangère, où la diffusion du sentiment panarabe et la fragilité des identités nationales exposent les affaires publiques aux ingérences extérieures, la tentation est grande d'éviter ce danger en nouant des alliances transnationales. D'autres facteurs y contribuent : la possibilité de s'allier avec des pays qui nourrissent des ambitions expansionnistes (d'abord l'Irak hachémite, ensuite l'Égypte de Nasser), et l'engagement d'une superpuissance (les États-Unis) dans le soutien actif d'un panarabisme perçu comme un antidote au communisme, qui a pour effet de neutraliser les acteurs régionaux (Israël, Turquie et Iran) susceptibles en d'autres circonstances de pousser la Syrie et l'Irak à mener une politique étrangère plus conventionnelle.

Le prétorianisme s'achève avec la montée au pouvoir de Hafez al-Assad et de Saddam Hussein, deux gouvernants assez habiles et inflexibles pour instaurer

un mélange viable de despotisme et d'infiltration de la société civile, de manière à transformer les services de renseignements et de sécurité en bras armés du pouvoir central. L'aubaine, pour eux, c'est qu'ils prennent les commandes de la Syrie et de l'Irak au moment où les revenus pétroliers vont atteindre des niveaux suffisants pour leur garantir une certaine indépendance financière à l'égard des intervenants étrangers et nationaux. Avec ces ressources, Hafez al-Assad et Saddam Hussein entreprennent de verrouiller leur mainmise sur le pouvoir en renforçant les institutions de l'État (ce qui améliore leur efficacité) et en les utilisant pour mettre en œuvre de vastes programmes de développement socioéconomique (ce qui augmente la légitimité des gouvernants vis-à-vis du peuple). C'est ainsi que la consolidation du régime et l'édification de l'État vont de pair en Syrie et en Irak. •

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**Choukri al-Quwwatli** (ici à gauche dans la voiture, au côté du ministre de la Défense Khaled ol-'Azam, lors d'un défilé militaire à Damas en 1957) redevient en 1955 le président d'une République syrienne en pleine instabilité politique. Sans grands pouvoirs, croyant trouver du soutien auprès d'un allié informel, il va bientôt unir son pays à l'Égypte de Nasser. Celui-ci le contraindra à l'exil. © BETTMANN/CORBIS