

Russland verkauft Syrien 36 Bodenunterstützungsflugzeuge

PRESSCHAU SYRIEN #34

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Die atlantische Presse stellt die vom ad hoc Ministerkomitee beschlossene Agenda der arabischen Liga, als eine einvernehmliche Lösung der syrischen Krise dar. Damit vergisst sie alles, was sie zehn Monate lang gesagt hat: es handelt sich nicht mehr um eine Diktatur durch eine Demokratie zu ersetzen, sondern einfach um das Abdanken eines alauitischen Präsidenten zu erreichen und ihn durch eine sunnitische Persönlichkeit zu ersetzen. Soll man verstehen, dass die Gegner Syriens sich mit einem symbolischen Sieg begnügen, oder dass sie den Zerstörungsplan des Landes weiterführen, indem sie ein neues Manöver versuchen, einen konfessionellen Konflikt vom Zaun zu brechen?

Über diese rhetorische Wende hinaus ist die wesentliche strategische Frage die Position Russlands. Ein Teil der Presse gibt die einem Vertreter des Präsidenten Medwedew zugeschriebene Meinung wieder, wonach Moskau den Präsidenten el-Assad nicht weiter unterstützen werde. Ein anderer Teil der Presse betont im Gegenteil den Verkauf von 36 Yakolew 130 Apparaten für 550 Millionen Dollar. Diese Flugzeuge können sowohl für Jagdpilot Ausbildung benutzt werden, als auch für Feuerunterstützung bei Bodenkämpfen. Die Breite dieses Abkommens bezeugt zugleich die Unterstützung Syriens durch Moskau und die Gewissheit, dass die Assad Regierung lange genug dauern wird, um sie vollkommen zu würdigen.

- *The National* berichtet über das Zeugnis eines Emiratbürgers, der Beobachter der arabischen Liga war. Er erklärt, von beiden Seiten gut empfangen worden zu sein, aber bedauert, dass die Rebellen nicht gewünscht hätten, weiterhin mit den Beobachtern zusammenzuarbeiten. Der Artikel, der die Mission positiv einstuft, wurde veröffentlicht, bevor die Vereinigten Emirate, zugleich mit den anderen Staaten des GCC [Kooperationsrat des Golfes] ihren Austritt aus dem Kontrollapparat melden.
- *Al-Asharq Al-Awsat* (Saudi-Arabien) gibt das Wort dem Führer der syrischen Muslimbrüder Mohammed Riad al-Sakfa. Er ist über einen baldigen Sieg zuversichtlich. Er besteht auf dem „salafitischen“ Charakter der „syrischen Revolution“, behauptet, dass die Rebellen nur defensive Waffen brauchen und versichert, dass das el-Assad Regime fallen werde, sogleich es vollkommen allein dastehen wird (woher die Notwendigkeit kommt, die Botschaften zu schließen, wie es die USA aus einem Sicherheitsvorwand gerade getan haben).

Le Monde (France)

La Ligue arabe présente sa feuille de route pour une transition en Syrie

Le texte prévoit que le vice-président, Farouk Al-Charaa, assure l'intérim avant des élections

Clin d'œil du calendrier arabe : le jour même où le président yéménite, Ali Abdallah Saleh, quittait Sanaa pour se faire soigner aux Etats-Unis – un départ emblématique de son retrait du pouvoir, désormais assumé par le vice-président Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi –, la Ligue arabe présentait un nouveau plan de règlement de la crise syrienne, inspiré du modèle de transition yéménite.

Réunis au Caire dimanche 22 janvier, pour statuer sur la suite à donner à leur mission d'observation en Syrie, les ministres des affaires étrangères arabes ne se sont pas contentés de renouveler ce dispositif, dont le bilan est pour le moins maigrelet. Pour pallier ses déficiences, le nombre d'observateurs sera augmenté, et la formation des observateurs formation sera assurée par le Haut-commissariat aux droits de l'homme de l'ONU. Ils ont également appelé le président Bachar Al-Assad à transférer une partie de ses pouvoirs à son vice-

sécurité des Nations unies. Le secrétaire général de la Ligue, l'Egyptien Nabil Al-Arabi, devrait simplement rencontrer dans les prochains jours son homologue de l'ONU, Ban Ki-moon, afin d'obtenir « le soutien » de l'ONU au plan arabe. Dans la conférence de presse qui a clos les débats, le cheikh qatari a pris la liberté de préciser que, dans l'hypothèse où le régime syrien ne se conformerait pas à ce plan, « nous irions au Conseil de sécurité où des décisions seraient prises ».

Cette menace est-elle susceptible de faire bouger la maison Assad ? Les Comités locaux de coordination (CLC), l'un des artisans de la mobilisation sur le terrain, ne nourrissent aucun espoir. Partisans d'un transfert immédiat du dossier syrien à l'ONU, ils ont affirmé que le plan arabe donnait un « nouveau délai au régime pour poursuivre la répression » de la contestation. Selon eux, cette initiative ne « dispose pas de mécanisme d'application d'où la difficulté qu'elle aboutisse ».

Egalement favorable à l'internationalisation de la crise, le Conseil national syrien (CNS), l'une des deux plates-formes de représentation de l'opposition, qui regroupe notamment les mouvements islamistes, a prudemment salué les déclarations du Caire, en précisant que « toute transition en Syrie devra être précédée d'une annonce de départ de M. Assad ».

En revanche, aux yeux du Comité de coordination nationale pour le changement démocratique (CCNC), un courant d'opposition marqué à gauche qui s'oppose à toute intervention étrangère, les propositions arabes constituent une avancée positive. Son représentant à Paris, Haytham Manna, se félicite du fait qu'elles partagent « beaucoup de points communs avec les positions de Moscou ». « On ne fera pas avancer ce plan sans le soutien de l'armée et celui des alliés traditionnels de la Syrie en premier lieu la Russie », dit-il. Il faut désormais faire pression pour que Moscou s'engage. L'autre défi, c'est de créer un divorce entre l'armée et la famille Assad. Sur la base de ce plan, l'armée a la possibilité de renouer avec la population, comme une force de transition pacifique. »

Sur le terrain, les affrontements entre l'armée régulière et les milices de l'opposition se sont multipliés ces derniers jours. Plus de 5 400 personnes ont perdu la vie en dix mois de révolte, dont plusieurs centaines depuis le début de la mission arabe, fin décembre 2011. ■

BENJAMIN BARTHE

« On ne fera pas avancer ce plan sans le soutien de l'armée et de la Russie »
Haytham Manna
opposant syrien

président, le summite Farouk Al-Charaa, un vétéran du parti Baas, qui fut ministre des affaires étrangères entre 1984 et 2006. Dans l'esprit de la Ligue arabe, l'effacement progressif du chef d'Etat syrien devrait permettre l'ouverture d'un dialogue entre l'opposition et le régime « sous deux semaines » et la formation d'un gouvernement d'unité nationale « dans les deux mois », dont la tâche consisterait à organiser des élections présidentielles et législatives « libres et pluralistes ».

Selon le cheikh Hamad ben Jassim Al-Thani, le chef de la diplomatie qatari, qui assure la présidence tournante de l'organisation panarabe, cette feuille de route, qui est une version enrichie du plan de sortie de crise élaboré par les vingt-deux pays membres durant l'automne 2011, vise à « un départ du régime syrien de manière pacifique ». Un appel immédiatement rejeté par Damas, qui a dénoncé, lundi, une « ingérence flagrante dans ses affaires intérieures ».

L'assentiment des Etats membres de la Ligue arabe, pourtant très divisés sur la question syrienne, a été rendu possible par le fait que leur initiative ne prévoit pas de saisie explicite du Conseil de

Le Figaro (France)

Syrie : la Ligue arabe tente la diplomatie

Les Européens invitent l'ONU à soutenir le nouveau plan, qui appelle el-Assad à s'effacer.

GEORGES MALBRUNOT
Envoyé spécial à Doha

MOYEN-ORIENT Après les menaces d'envoi de troupes arabes en Syrie, place à la diplomatie. La nouvelle initiative, adoptée dimanche par la Ligue arabe, vise à « un départ du régime syrien de manière pacifique », selon Hamad Ben Jasssem, le ministre des Affaires étrangères du Qatar, qui dirige le comité ministériel de l'organisation panarabe. On est loin du ton guerrier de l'émir du Qatar, qui appelaient au déploiement de soldats en Syrie, il y a dix jours seulement, pour forcer Bachar el-Assad à stopper la sanglante répression contre son peuple.

Pourquoi ce nouveau ton ? Sur le fond, rien n'a changé. Les pays arabes réclament toujours le départ du bras syrien. Leur initiative appelle el-Assad à démissionner « des prérogatives au vice-président », Farouk al-Sharaa, figure sunnite bien connue en Occident. Son appartenance à la communauté majoritaire en Syrie et dans le reste du monde arabe doit permettre d'apaiser les craintes de ces deux composantes. Al-Sharaa devrait

« traiter avec un gouvernement d'union nationale », qui serait « formé dans les deux mois ». Ce cabinet serait « présidé par une personnalité de consensus » ayant pour « mission d'appliquer le plan arabe (retrait militaire des villes, libération des prisonniers) et de préparer des élections législatives et présidentielles ». Enfin, l'initiative demande au « gouvernement et à tous les courants de l'opposition d'engager un dialogue sérieux (...) dans un délai ne dépassant pas deux semaines » pour former ce gouvernement d'union nationale.

Opposition de la Russie

« Les décisions prises au Caire pourraient aussi changer la donne pour le Conseil de sécurité »
PETER WITTING, AMBASSADEUR ALLEMAND À L'ONU

gne un membre de l'opposition syrienne. En face, en revanche, l'Arabie saoudite a conduit le camp des opposants, Riyad allant jusqu'à retirer ses observateurs déployés en Syrie depuis trois semaines. Ce nouveau plan a-t-il des chances de réussir ? Dénonçant une « ingérence flagrante », Damas l'a rejeté au motif qu'il « porte atteinte à la souveraineté nationale ». Sans pressions renouvelées, el-Assad ne flétrira pas. « C'est aux alliés russes et même iraniens d'el-Assad de lui faire comprendre qu'il n'a pas d'autre choix qu'une sortie honorable », ajoute l'opposant. Mais ce plan divise déjà l'opposition. Si certaines figures de l'intérieur et des groupes à l'extérieur y sont favorables, les Comités locaux de coordination, qui organisent la mobilisation sur le terrain, dénoncent un « nouveau délai (accordé) au régime pour poursuivre la répression ». Quant au Conseil national syrien (CNS), qui regroupe les principaux courants de cette opposition, il est embarrassé. L'appel arabe à un soutien de l'ONU a été favorablement accueilli par le CNS, qui plaide pour une internationalisation de la crise. En revanche, son chef Burhan Ghalioun, rappelle que « toute transition devra être précédée d'une annonce de départ de M. el-Assad ».

Selon certaines sources, des responsables américains en Jordanie auraient mis en garde contre le projet d'appeler le prochain vendredi de manifestations « Journée de la guerre sainte en Syrie ». Face au risque accru de guerre civile, chaque camp doit calmer ses ultras pour qu'une lueur d'espoir renaîsse. ■

Libération (France)

«On torture pour détruire les gens»

Le Syrien George Sabra, figure de l'opposition au régime d'Al-Assad longtemps emprisonné, appelle à une aide internationale de toute urgence.

Recueilli par JEAN-PIERRE PERRIN

Membre du secrétariat général du Conseil national syrien (CNS), qui réunit les principaux courants de l'opposition et codirigeant du parti démocratique syrien (organisation issue du parti communiste syrien et aujourd'hui social-démocrate), George Sabra est un opposant historique du régime syrien qu'il combat depuis trente-cinq ans. Emprisonné pendant huit ans, dont quatre au secret sous le régime de Hafez al-Assad, puis à deux reprises depuis le début de l'intifada syrienne, ce chrétien de 64 ans a été relâché le 19 septembre. Après plusieurs mois de clandestinité, il vient d'arriver en France, dépêché par «l'opposition de l'intérieur» pour remettre de l'ordre au sein d'un CNS qui peine à établir une stratégie et n'est guère à la hauteur de l'enjeu syrien.

Avez-vous été maltraité lors de votre dernière détention? Non. J'étais isolé dans une cellule, sans le moindre matelas, mais je pouvais m'allonger. Cela dit, pendant cette période qui a duré deux mois, j'ai vu et entendu les tortures les plus affreuses. Du temps de Hafez al-Assad, on torturait aussi et je l'ai été. Mais c'était pour obtenir des informations. A présent, on torture des jeunes gens qui ne faisaient que manifester et uniquement pour détruire leur personnalité, leur humanité, briser leur di-

INTERVIEW



gnité. Songez qu'on entasse 300 personnes dans une seule cellule, les prisonniers ne disposant que d'un demi-mètre carré. Il faut donc que les détenus organisent des rotations pour pouvoir dormir. Pendant qu'un tiers d'entre eux est allongé, un autre tiers est assis et le dernier se tient debout. Chaque rotation est de deux heures. Et pour ces 300 prisonniers, il n'y a qu'un WC, ce qui veut dire des heures et des heures d'attente. Aller aux toilettes devient un rêve.

Pourquoi avez-vous été arrêté? Ils voulaient m'empêcher de pousser les gars à descendre dans la rue. Alors que le régime s'emploie à séparer les chrétiens, les Kurdes, les druzes et les sunnites, je faisais de mon mieux pour encourager ces minorités à participer à l'intifada. Quand la sécurité militaire m'a arrêté, les policiers m'accusaient de vouloir créer un emirat islamique à Qatana [la ville de l'opposant, près de Damas, ndlr]. Dans ma seule famille, pas moins de trois autres personnes ont été arrêtées: un fils, un frère et un neveu. Comment s'est passé votre départ hors de Syrie?

Avant d'être arrêté sous Hafez, j'ai vécu trois ans en me cachant, donc je suis habitué à la vie de clandestinité. En sortant de prison, je suis retourné dans la clandestinité, craignant qu'ils cherchent à me tuer. Quitter la Syrie n'a pas été facile. Je suis passé par la Jordanie mais une demi-heure avant et après



mon passage, il y avait des tirs à cet endroit. En plus, depuis 1979, le régime m'avait privé de papiers. Heureusement, l'ambassade de France m'a beaucoup aidé.

Dans l'opposition, les chrétiens sont bien peu nombreux... Seulement l'élite. Mais il y a eu des pas en avant faits par les patriarches orthodoxes et latins. Mgr Grégoire Laham vient de déclarer qu'il n'était lié à aucun régime.

Quelles sont vos relations avec l'ASL, l'Armée syrienne libre?

La révolution est le fait de trois entités: les gens qui défilent dans la rue et constituent la force la plus importante, le CNS, auquel revient le rôle politique, et l'ASL, qui a la mission spécifique de nous protéger. Il nous faut discuter avec l'ASL, car je doute qu'elle comprenne que l'avenir de la Syrie, c'est la démocratie. Un homme avec une arme, ce

n'est plus un civil. Nous nous employons à avoir de bonnes relations avec son leadership. Mais sans zones de repos, elle n'a aucune chance face à une armée d'environ 500 000 hommes. Il faudrait qu'elle ait un territoire sous son contrôle afin que les déserteurs puissent s'y regrouper.

Pourquoi de grandes villes comme Alep ne se révoltent-elles pas? Parce que le régime obtient le silence par l'argent, en versant les salaires. Et puis, ses alliés l'aident. Hugo Chavez [le président vénézuélien] a acheté 2 millions de mètres carrés de rideaux aux commerçants d'Alep. Bagdad y a envoyé des hommes d'affaires et l'armée irakienne y fait confectionner ses uniformes...

Sur le plan diplomatique, jusqu'où est prêt à aller le Conseil national? Nous avons soutenu le plan de la Ligue arabe, mais le régime lui a claqués toutes les portes au nez. Notre espoir, c'est

Extrait d'une vidéo postée sur YouTube et datée de samedi montrant des opposants qui prennent la fuite après des coups de feu tirés par l'armée, à Damas.
PHOTO AFP

REPÈRES



LE CONSEIL NATIONAL

Créé en août, le Conseil national syrien (CNS) est en activité depuis le 1^{er} octobre. Dirigé par Burhan Ghalioun, le CNS est composé de 190 membres et coordonne depuis Istanbul les opérations d'opposition contre le régime de Bachar al-Assad.

50 000

personnes sont actuellement portées disparues en Syrie, et 59 000 incarcérées dans les geôles du régime, selon le Conseil national syrien.



L'organisation appelle la Syrie à organiser des élections libres et menace de saisir le Conseil de sécurité.

La Ligue arabe prend position contre Damas

Le président Bachar al-Assad n'a pas encore commencé, mais les pays arabes l'ont déjà clairement annoncé. En adoptant hier un plan de transfert du pouvoir laissant entendre que le président syrien devait, à terme, s'en aller, la Ligue arabe a abandonné sa frilosité habituelle pour une prise de position absolument sans précédent. Une

décision prise au Caire dimanche soir à l'unanimité – à part le Liban, qui s'est abstenu – des 22 membres, témoignant bien que c'est l'ensemble du monde arabe qui se prépare à la transition. Le plan, que le régime baassiste a catégoriquement rejeté comme étant «une ingérence flagrante», appelle Bachar al-Assad à déléguer «des prérogatives au vice-président pour traiter avec un gouvernement d'union nationale» appelé à être «formé dans les deux mois». Il demande aussi au «gouvernement et à tous les courants de l'opposition d'engager un dialogue sérieux, [...] dans un délai ne dépassant pas les deux semaines», en vue de former ce nouveau cabinet. Celui-ci devra être «présidé par une personnalité de consensus dont la mission sera d'appliquer le plan arabe et de préparer des élections législatives et présidentielles pluridiplinaires et libres».

Audace. Selon le communiqué lu par le ministre des Affaires étrangères du Qatar, cheikh Hamad ben Jaber al-Thani, l'initiative arabe vise «d'un départ du régime syrien de manière pacifique» – une formule qui ne figure pas toutefois dans le texte final. «Si cette initiative n'est pas mise en œuvre, nous irons au Conseil de sécurité» de l'ONU, a-t-il menacé. C'est donc une internationnalisation de la crise syrienne que réclame la Ligue arabe.

L'appel à l'ONU vise en effet à donner plus de poids à son plan. Mais l'unanimité du Conseil de sécurité n'est pas acquise pour autant. Le régime syrien a sans doute été parmi les plus surpris de cette initiative qui consacre, comme jamais, son isolement. Il ne s'attendait probablement qu'à la prolongation de la mission

Le régime syrien a sans doute été parmi les plus surpris de cette initiative qui consacre, comme jamais, son isolement.

des observateurs déployée dans le pays depuis le 26 décembre – elle vient effectivement de voir son mandat prolongé. Une telle mission lui aurait encore permis de gagner du temps tout en continuant ses massacres. Outre le Qatar, l'Arabie Saoudite a jeté tout son poids dans la bataille pour convaincre les alliés de Damas, l'Algérie et l'Irak – le ministre irakien des Affaires étrangères étant, il est vrai, un Kurde sunnite. «Ce qui explique l'audace de Riyad,

c'est qu'il a constaté l'implication énorme de l'Iran dans la crise syrienne. Ensuite, le Souduiens craignent que l'enlisement actuel se transforme en guerre civile avec des conséquences dans toute la région. Sans doute avait-il régulièrement soutenu à la fois de Washington et de l'UE», explique le chercheur Khattar Abou Diab. «C'est le même scénario que le Yémen qui refait surface», la Ligue arabe remplaçant le Conseil de coopération du Golfe, qui avait préparé le plan de départ d'Ali Abdallah Saleh, ajoute-t-il.

Tueries. Ce que propose la Ligue, c'est une troisième voie – entre le départ de Bachar et son maintien au pouvoir –, qui mettrait fin à l'impasse actuelle. Façon de rassurer les Russes en ne demandant pas franchement le départ du dictateur, et en faisant valoir que le plan permet le maintien au pouvoir des membres du régime qui ne sont pas ou peu impliqués dans les tueries. Celles-ci se sont poursuivies hier. Fait nouveau : une immense manifestation a eu lieu à Douma, dans la banlieue de Damas.

J.-P.P.

L'ONU, à travers peut-être l'envoi de Casques bleus. Puisqu'ils mènent des missions à travers le monde, pourquoi n'interviendraient-ils pas en Syrie, qui est l'un des 42 Etats fondateurs des Nations unies ? Le peuple syrien mérite d'être protégé par l'ONU.

Aucun doute que la révolution gagnera ? Je ne peux imaginer qu'une révolution soutenue par les mondes occidental, arabe et islamique ne l'emporte pas. La question, c'est dans combien de temps et à quel prix ? Il faudra encore quelques mois, ou quelques semaines.

Reste que les défections au sein du régime sont rares...

Très rares. Deux députés seulement. Mais c'est parce que les gens ont peur. Ils se souviennent des éliminations d'opposants, même à Paris où le régime avait fait tuer [l'ex-Premier ministre] Salah Bitar.

Une guerre civile n'est pas à craindre ?

Je ne le crois pas. Cela fait dix mois que la révolution a débuté et elle n'est toujours pas en vue. Le peuple n'a pas oublié l'Irak et le Liban.

Quel va être votre rôle à présent ?

Mon parti m'a envoyé ici pour aider le CNS, pour qu'on y travaille en équipe. Burhan Ghalioun [le président du Conseil national syrien] est un homme parfait, mais c'est un universitaire, pas un politicien. Et il n'a pas l'habitude de travailler avec les autres. Nous devons renouveler la façon dont nous prenons nos décisions et régler les problèmes. Par exemple, l'aide aux opposants «de l'intérieur», qui nous ont accordé leur soutien et pour lesquels le CNS n'a pas fait assez. Ils ont besoin de médicaments, de vêtements, de nourriture. Ils attendent une nouvelle approche de notre part, sur le terrain et à l'extérieur, que nous fassions évoluer la position russe par exemple. ♦

«La Syrie devra former un gouvernement d'unité nationale dans les deux ou trois mois, dirige pas une personne de consensus.»

Cheikh Hamad ben Jassem al-Thani
Premier ministre du Qatar

«La décision du conseil de la Ligue arabe va à l'encontre du peuple syrien et n'empêchera pas la Syrie de continuer d'assurer la sécurité de ses citoyens.»

Un porte-parole du régime Al-Assad

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Financial Times Deutschland (Allemagne / Germany)

Russland provoziert den Westen

Moskau verkauft Syrien 36 Trainingskampfjets

Benjamin Dierks, Brüssel,
Andre Ballin, Moskau, Nils Kreimeier
und Silke Mertins, Berlin

Während die EU die Sanktionen gegen Syrien verschärft und die Arabische Liga Präsident Baschar al-Assad zum Rücktritt auffordert, hat Moskau einen Rüstungsdeal mit Damaskus abgeschlossen. Syrien soll 36 Trainingskampfjets vom Typ Jak-130 erhalten. Das berichtete gestern die Moskauer Tageszeitung „Kommersant“ unter Berufung auf den staatlichen Rüstungsexporteur Rosoboronexport. Das Geschäft habe ein Volumen von 550 Mio. Dollar und trete in dem Moment in Kraft, in dem die syrische Seite eine erste Anzahlung leiste.

Moskau unterläuft damit die Bemühungen des Westens, das syrische Regime unter Druck zu setzen. Seit Beginn des Aufstands in Syrien vor zehn Monaten sind bereits mehr als 5000 Menschen getötet worden.

Neue EU-Sanktionen

Wenn die Nachricht stimme, sei sie „sehr schlecht“ und werde „zum Thema“, sagte Bundesaußenminister Guido Westerwelle gestern in Brüssel. Russland gilt in der EU ohnehin als Problem, weil es sich im Uno-Sicherheitsrat gegen Sanktionen stellt. „Es ist dringend und notwendig, dass die internationale Gemeinschaft mit einer Stimme spricht“, so Westerwelle. Die EU-Außenminister haben gestern eine Verschärfung der europäischen Strafmaßnahmen gegen das Assad-Regime beschlossen. Sie haben Einreiseverbote gegen 22 weitere Personen verhängt. Damit sind nun 108 Mitglieder der syrischen Führungsriege betroffen.

Syrien ist seit Langem einer der wichtigsten Abnehmer russischer Rüstungsgüter im arabischen Raum. Das Modell Jak-130 ist zwar ein Trainingsjet, das für echte Luftkämpfe nicht geeignet ist. Es kann aber für Einsätze gegen Bodenziele umgebaut werden und Waffen transportieren.

Der aktuelle Vertrag hat vor allem strategische Gründe. Russland unterhält im syrischen Tartus seine einzige Marinebasis im Mittelmeerraum, die zur Unterstützung der Schwarzen Meerflotte eingesetzt wird. Einem Abkommen zwischen beiden Ländern folge soll die Basis sogar ausgebaut werden. „Syrien ist nach dem Wegfall Libyens der letzte Stützpunkt für Russland in der arabischen Welt“, sagte Gerhard Mangott, Experte für russische Sicherheitspolitik an der Uni Innsbruck. „Diese Beziehung wird Moskau nicht aufs Spiel setzen.“

Moskau verbietet sich Kritik

Schon vergangene Woche hatte ein russisches Schiff 60 Tonnen Munition nach Syrien geliefert – was bekannt wurde, weil das Schiff in Zypern zwischenlanden musste. Zudem sorgte die Entsendung russischer Kriegsschiffe zu der syrischen Marinebasis für Spannungen mit dem Westen. Außenminister Sergei Lawrow ließ verlauten, man habe „keinerlei internationale Vereinbarungen“ verletzt, und verbat sich jede Kritik.

Dass das Geschäft über den Kauf der Jets ausgerechnet jetzt abgeschlossen wird, da der Westen um ein härteres Vorgehen gegen Syrien im Uno-Sicherheitsrat ringt, hält Mangott für „eine bewusste Provokation“. Lawrow habe erklärt, dass „Russland einen Angriff auf Syrien nicht verhindern könne, aber alles tun werde, damit er nicht legitimiert ist“, sagt zudem Fjodor Lukjanow, Chefredakteur des Magazins „Russia in Global Affairs“. Ohne Syrien habe Russland keinen arabischen Partner mehr in der Region. „Das hat man in Moskau erkannt.“

MITARBEIT: GERHARD HEGMANN

Tageszeitung (Allemagne / Germany)

Assad will Macht nicht abgeben

SYRIEN Die Arabische Liga fordert eine neue Regierung und will ihre Beobachtermision verlängern. Ihr Scheitern ist auch ein Problem für die internationale Diplomatie

VON KARIM EL-GAWHARY

KAIRO taz | Der jüngste Syrien-Plan der Arabischen Liga war gerade verkündet, da wurde er auch schon in Damaskus beerdig. Es dauerte fünf Stunden hinter verschlossenen Türen, bevor die Außenminister der Liga in Kairo hinsichtlich ihrer Beob-

Der große Schwachpunkt ist die Durchsetzung der neuen Forderungen

achtermission zu einer Einigung kamen und diese kurz vor Mitternacht verkündeten. Das syrische Staatsfernsehen war schneller. Denn kurz darauf verkündete es, dass die Entscheidung dem Willen des syrischen Volkes widerspreche und eine „schamlose Einmischung“ in die inneren Angelegenheiten des Landes sei.

Tatsächlich war der Beschluss der Liga, wie ihn der Emir von Katar, Jassim al-Thani, nach dem Treffen in Kairo verlas, wahrscheinlich das bisher am weitesten gehende Einmischung in einen arabischen Bruderstaat. Die Liga fordert, dass der syrische Präsident Baschar al-Assad die Macht an seinen Stellvertreter übergibt. Innerhalb von zwei Wochen soll dann die Regierung in Damaskus mit der Opposition in einen Dialog treten, um eine Regierung der Nationalen Einheit zu bilden. Zwei Monate später sollen dann unter internationaler Beobachtung Wahlen abgehalten werden.

Die früheren Forderungen der Liga bleiben bestehen. Danach soll sich das syrische Militär aus den urbanen Zentren zurückziehen, friedliche Demonstrationen sollen erlaubt, politische Gefangene freigelassen und die Einreise von Journalisten ermöglicht werden. Die 165-köpfige Beobachtermision der Liga soll mit besserer Ausrüstung um einen weiteren Monat verlängert werden.

Mit dem Beschluss von Sonntagabend hat die Arabische Liga den Ton gegenüber Assad verschärft. Doch der große Schwachpunkt ist die Durchsetzung der neuen Forderungen.



Syrische Oppositionelle protestieren vor dem Gebäude der Arabischen Liga in Kairo Foto: dapd

Das syrische Regime hat bereits die früheren nicht erfüllt. Seit Beginn der Mission sind nach Angaben von syrischen Aktivisten fast tausend Menschen bei Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Regimegegnern und dem Sicherheitsapparat ums Leben gekommen. In der Erklärung der Liga wird die Unterstützung des UN-Sicherheitsrats für die Durchsetzung der neuen Forderungen angemahnt. Gleichzeitig spricht sich die Liga aber gegen

Bei dem Treffen in Kairo wurden die Risse im arabischen Lager deutlich

eine militärische Intervention aus.

Der zweite Schwachpunkt ist die Forderung nach einem Dialog mit der Opposition und der Bildung einer Regierung der Nationalen Einheit. Abgesehen von der Ablehnung dieser Forderung durch das Regime in Damaskus sieht auch ein großer Teil der Opposition in einem Dialog mit der Regierung keinerlei Sinn. Denn für sie ist die Arabische Mission eine Zeitverschwendug. Der

größte oppositionelle Block, der Syrische Nationalrat, fordert, die ganze Angelegenheit im Namen der Liga an den UN-Sicherheitsrat weiterzurichten. „Erst dann wird sich die Lage in Syrien ändern“, erklärte Basma al-Kadamy, eine Sprecherin der Organisation in Kairo.

So ist der Plan der Liga eine Totgeburt. Deutlich wurden bei dem Treffen in Kairo auch die Risse im arabischen Lager im Hinblick auf Syrien. Die Golfstaaten fordern wie die syrische Opposition eine Internationalisierung beim Vorgehen gegen das Regime und eine Weiterleitung des Problems an den Sicherheitsrat, wohl auch in der Hoffnung, damit Druck auf dessen Mitglieder China und Russland auszuüben, an denen bisher schärfere Resolutionen scheiterten. Einem Bericht der Tageszeitung *Kommersant* will Moskau sogar 36 Kampfjets an Syrien liefern.

Staaten wie Ägypten, Algerien und der Irak wollen dagegen eine Internationalisierung verhindern. Schon vor der Bekanntgabe des Beschlusses der Liga hatte Saudi-Arabien, der wichtigste Finanzier der Beobachter-Mission, dieser seine Unterstützung entzogen mit dem Argument, dass die Delegation ihre Aufgabe,

Blutvergießen zu verhindern, nicht erfüllt habe.

Mit der Ablehnung der arabischen Initiative durch die syrische Regierung und die Opposition sowie der Auflösung des arabischen Konsenses über das weitere Vorgehen steht die Diplomatie vor einem Scherbenhaufen. Individuelle arabische Initiativen wie die des Emirs von Katar, der kürzlich laut über eine arabische Militärintervention nachgedacht, dürften derzeit kaum arabische Zustimmung finden.

Die syrische Opposition sollte sich jedoch nicht über das Scheitern in Kairo freuen und nun auf eine Internationalisierung hoffen. Denn in diesem Falle kann der UN-Sicherheitsrat derzeit nicht mit einer einheitlichen arabischen Unterstützung rechnen. Das Scheitern der Arabischen Liga wird sich für jeden, der in Syrien politisch oder militärisch intervenieren will, als großes Problem erweisen. Denn ohne regionale Legitimität wird es kaum jemand wagen, einen Fuß in das syrische Minenfeld zu setzen. Daher wird es vorerst bei Strafmaßnahmen wie jenen bleiben, die die EU am Montag gegen 22 Vertraute der syrischen Führung sowie acht Unternehmen beschlossen hat.

Le Temps (Suisse / Switzerland)

La Ligue arabe prépare l'après-Assad

> Syrie Damas a rejeté le plan arabe qui vise un départ du président «de manière pacifique»

L'après-Assad n'a pas encore commencé, mais les pays arabes l'ont déjà clairement annoncé. En adoptant un plan de transfert du pouvoir, en laissant entendre que le président Bachar el-Assad devait à terme s'en aller, la Ligue arabe a abandonné sa frilosité habituelle pour une décision absolument sans précédent. Une décision prise au Caire dimanche soir à l'unanimité, sans le Liban qui s'est absentié, des 22 membres qui témoignent bien que c'est l'ensemble du

monde arabe qui se prépare à l'après-Assad.

Le plan, que le régime baassiste a catégoriquement rejeté hundi comme étant «une ingérence flétrante, appelle l'homme fort de Damas à déléguer «des prérogatives au vice-président pour traiter avec un gouvernement d'union nationale» appelé à être «formé dans les deux mois». Il demande aussi au «gouvernement et à tous les courants de l'opposition d'engager un dialogue sérieux [...] dans un délai ne dépassant pas les deux semaines» en vue de former ce nouveau cabinet. Celui-ci devra être «présidé par une personnalité de consensus dont la mission sera d'appliquer le

plan arabe et de préparer des élections législatives et présidentielle pluralistes et libres». Selon le communiqué lu par le ministre des Affaires étrangères du Qatar, cheikh Hamad ben Jaber al-Thani, l'initiative arabe vise «à un départ du régime syrien de manière pacifique» – une formule qui ne figure toutefois pas dans le texte final. «Si cette initiative n'est pas mise en œuvre,

nous irons au Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU», a-t-il menacé. C'est donc une internationalisation de la crise syrienne que réclame la Ligue arabe. L'appel à l'ONU vise en effet à donner plus de poids à son plan. Mais l'unanimité du Conseil de sécurité n'est pas acquise pour autant.

«Scénario» du Yémen

Le régime syrien a sans doute été parmi les plus surpris de cette initiative qui consacre, comme jamais, son isolement. Il ne s'attendait probablement qu'à la prolongation de la mission des observateurs déployée en Syrie depuis le 26 décembre – elle vient depuis de voir son mandat effectivement de voir son mandat prolongé par la Ligue. Une telle mission lui aurait encore permis de gagner du temps tout en continuant ses massacres. Outre le Qatar, l'Arabie saoudite a jeté tout son poids dans la bataille pour convaincre les alliés de Bachar el-Assad, l'Algérie et l'Irak – il est vrai aussi que le ministre irakien des Affaires étrangères est un Kurde

summite. «Ce qui explique l'audace de Riyad, c'est qu'il a constaté l'implication énorme de l'Iran dans la crise syrienne. Ensuite, les Saoudiens craignent que l'enlisement actuel ne se transforme en guerre civile avec des implications dans toute la région. Sans doute avaient-ils reçu le soutien à la fois de Washington et de l'UE», explique le chercheur Khattar Abou Diab. «C'est le même scénario que le Yémen qui refait surface», la Ligue arabe remplaçant le Conseil de coopération du Golfe – qui avait préparé le plan de départ d'Ali Abdallah Saleh, ajoute-t-il.

Obsèques

Plus de 150 000 personnes se sont rassemblées lundi à Dourma, près de la capitale Damas, pour participer aux funérailles de 12 civils tués à l'aube et les jours précédents, a rapporté l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'homme. Les manifestants scandalaient des slogans en faveur de l'Armée syrienne libre. AFP

Corriere della Sera (Italie / Italy)

Nel cuore delle città siriane in rivolta tra raffiche di mitra e spie del regime

Da Homs a Deraa: «Se i vivi si arrendersero, i morti combatterebbero»

DAL NOSTRO INVIA TO

HOMS — Se è vero che ogni rivoluzione ha un mito fondativo, quella siriana lo riassume nei 18 ragazzi di Deraa. Lo avevano dovunque nelle piazze insanguinate del Paese facendo dalle violenze. Negli ultimi sei giorni ce lo hanno raccontato sempre gli attivisti delle sommosse nelle zone più calde. Ieri è accaduto a Homs. «Le prime mobilitazioni di massa qui sono cominciate tra febbraio e marzo dell'anno scorso, quando si venne a sapere che 18 alunni delle scuole superiori di Deraa, non lontano dal confine con la Giordania, erano stati arrestati dalle forze speciali del presidente Bashar Assad per aver scritto slogan sui muri inneggiatori alla Primavera araba», fa notare Hassen. «La nostra ribellione è cresciuta allora col diffondersi delle notizie di torture, e soprattutto con le dichiarazioni ofensive di Alef Naqib, capo delle forze di sicurezza e cugino di Assad. Il quale disse pubblicamente alle famiglie che dimostravano i loro bambini: E altri, se ne avessero voluti di nuovi, che portassero le mogli nelle caserme: ci avrebbero nominato i suoi uomini e ingraziavano le donne», ricorda Hassen, uno studente incontrato presso la Piazza dell'Orologio, dove a metà aprile vennero massacrati centinaia di manifestanti. Qualcuno sosteneva ieri fossero passati 500.

La novità è che la gente parla, vuole raccontare. Nulla a che vedere con la cappa oppressiva di paurosi consumatori che dominava sino a un anno fa. Nella città vecchia di Damasco un giovane negoziante di antichità afferma che il



In prima linea Una ragazzina davanti a un tank a Homs. Le rivolte in Siria sono durate 10 mesi fa con l'amico di un gruppo di giovani [Bassam Khabieh/Anadolu]

professoresca di inglese nel liceo locale, chiedeva con le lacrime agli occhi si giornalisti stranieri che «per favore» smettesse di raccontare «catifiverio» sul nostro «umano presidente che rappresenta l'unica garanzia contro i wahabiti, Al Qaeda e chi vuole imporre il velo per le donne. Vincere a lei il proprietario summa di un negozio di elettronici planifica per contro alla necessità che la dittatura cadesse presto. Ma al silenzio minaccioso dell'opposizione raffica di mitragliatrici nello vicinanza aggiungono: «Le proteste devono assolutamente restare pacifiche». Nei giorni scorsi le azioni del nuovo Esercito siriano libero, composto da disertori delle forze armate regolari. Non fanno altro che utilizzare la repressione violenta del regime, che entusiasca gli effetti drammatici dello scenario: per criminalizzare l'intero movimento per la democrazia».

Anche la questione dello storico trucco di terrore tra la minoranza sunnita (una setta scissa) legata alla famiglia presidenziale e la grande maggioranza sciita è ormai entrata di forza nel lessico nazionale. «Ci stanchiamo di essere chiamati i musulmani», denunciano i ragazzi armati. È la fine della propaganda baptista, che nascondeva gli anticlericali ed estremisti in nome del nazionalismo umanitario e però ignorava il malcostume diffuso contro i privilegi dei circoli legali alti della difesa.

Le viste sui luoghi dello scontro rivaleggiano così anche un Paese lucido, imparziali. Homs è or-

mai una città divisa in due. Alle 14, la gente si ritorna nelle case, i tagli alla corrente elettrica sono la norma. I quartieri misti hanno vissuto una vera e propria pulizia etnica. Gli alveoli si concentrano in quelli di Zabadi, Arman, Majrib, Sabir. Di fronte a loro, spesso muro contro muro, i sunniti trincerati rispettivamente a Jib Janabi, Ashraf, Der Balbek, Qadida.

A Deraa le violenze sono quotidiane quasi sempre verso l'Imbrunire. Ma il venerdì le manifestazioni sono ormai un rito collaudato dopo mezzogiorno all'uscita dei fedeli dalla moschea vecchia già anni di Al Omar. Le prime manifestazioni in mano furono guidate dal popolare sciaco Al Salasam. «Il nostro capo storico. Ma la polizia ha ucciso un suo figlio, poi lo hanno arrestato per sei mesi. Una volta liberato, hanno minacciato di uccidere il suo secondo figlio. Lui allora ha accettato di rifugiarsi alla televisione di Stato una dichiarazione di sostegno ad Assad. E da allora face, non viene più aggredito alla preghiera del venerdì», raccontano i due ventimila che, con la premessa dell'annessione, accettano di accomodarsi nei quartieri di Nasir al Balad, dove si trova l'ultimo edificio in pietra nera vulcanica circondato da postazioni militari diffuse da sacchetti di sabbia e fili spinati.

I conti partono dalla piccola scuola religiosa Hamm al Al Attas, scendono verso il letto di un torrente in socca e vengono regolarmente confrontati dalle forze speciali della Shabiba (le milizie filogovernative) nei pressi un ponticello circondato di pali della luce visibilmente danneggiati

dalle pallottole. «Noi giornalisti non dovete ascoltarci credere alle menzogne di questa dittatura fascista e comunista. Ci ammazzano, ci torturano ogni giorno. Con le loro azioni hanno annullato qualsiasi possibilità di soluzio- ne negoziata della crisi. Se anche noi vivi accettassimo di parlare con Assad e i suoi scongiuri, sa-

rebbero i nostri morti a uscire dalle tombe per implorarci di non trattarci così i loro assassini», quasi grida nella fogna l'antilana preferito di un negro di generazione che si dilunga nel descrivere cosa avviene ai prigionieri feriti. «Un mio cugino era stato colpito alle gambe. Lo hanno caricato su di un Suv. Tre ore dopo era un po-

vano cadavere violentato, con i genitali grotti, insanguinati e abbandonati in una discarica». Contro di loro il governatore Mohammad Khalaf al Hazunus, sostituito dal regime dopo che il suo predecessore in aprile aveva voluto il massacro a sangue fradolo di oltre 150 manifestanti, lanciò parole di fuoco contro i ribelli: «Sono terroristi pagati da Stati Uniti e Israele. Vogliono il male della Siria. Ma li batteremo. Anzi, sono già finiti».

Tutto diverso lo scenario tre giorni fa a Zabadi, la cittadina di 35.000 abitanti interamente sommersa una trentina di chilometri a nord di Damasco, appena prima del confine con il Libano,

Città divisa

Homs è una città divisa in due. Alle 14 la gente si ritorna in casa, alcuni quartierl hanno vissuto una vera pulizia etnica

dove la ribellione sostiene di aver scacciato molti militari lo forte governativo. In realtà i soldati della temibile Quarta Brigata sono appostati tutto attorno sul semicerchio di montagne bianche di neve. Nel centro i ragazzi della rivolta — ma anche altri, ambedue hanno pianificato un'offerta di abete da Varsavia con tanto di pannelli colorati e striscioni con messaggi di una ventina dei loro morti. Nella piccola piazza a troncaggio la bandiera della Siria che negli anni Quaranta si era liberata dal giogo del regime mandarino francese. Abbiamo quattro cliniche clandestine, nessuno dei nostri feriti può ricorrere negli ospedali statali. Chi lo fa viene ammazato immediatamente e sparato», spiega un giovane volontario medico. La parola maggiore è che Damasco possa invitare la milizia sciita libanesa dell'Hizbollah a dare manforte ai soldati. «Noi non siamo terroristi. Vogliamo libertà e democrazia. Dio al mondo che non siamo terroristi», grida un gruppo di ragazzi sventolando bandiere. Ma i pochi giovani armati hanno comprato il kalashnikov al mercato nero: costo unitario 2.000 dollari) non si fanno illusioni: «Tra poco l'esercito si riorganizzerà e rioccuperà Zabadi, per noi sarà la morte certa».

Situazione molto simile a Duma. Il villaggio (50.000 abitanti) posto alle periferie orientali della capitale è stato al cuore delle viol-

Fronti aperti

1 ZABADI

«I ribelli hanno preso il controllo della città dopo il cessate il fuoco concordato con i lealisti. Ma gli abitanti vivono una nuova atmosfera»



2 HOMS

«Epicentro dei scontri e città madre di attivisti segnalate come solidamente nelle mani dei ribelli. I 18 aprile massacrato oltre 300 persone in poche ore»

3 DUMA

«Da mesi nelle strade del villaggio sono presenti per poche ore sulle strade dei ribelli»

4 DERAA

«Qui sono partite a marzo le proteste di massa dopo l'arresto e la tortura di 16 ragazzi, accusati di essere gli autori di gravi atti di violenza. Almeno 500 le persone uccise in 10 mesi di rivolta»

Loro più recenti. Posti di blocco ovunque, costringono sui palazzi più alti, puntigliose baionette che si aggirano per le strade deserte con il corpo in cima e miliziani altrettanti uomini. I ribelloni sostengono di aver completamente «allargato» Duma. Ma non è così. I soldati controllano la zona centrale della municipalità, l'ospedale, il cimitero e le periferie. Di notte è terra di nessuno. Porte e finestre sono chiuse dalle tre del pomeriggio alle sette di mattina. Scansoglia il cibo, scuole serrate da una settimana. Secondo il locale comitato rivoluzionario i morti degli ultimi tre giorni sarebbero una quindicina. «Non ci lasciano nappure suppelli i nostri curi», racconta una dozzina di uomini che mi accolgono con le borse e biscotti in un appartamento dalle persiane chiuse e rinchiuso dalle candele. Le raffiche isolate sono continue, alcune molto vicine. Al piano di sopra un bambino piange in continuazione.

Lorenzo Cremonesi

Le vittime



10
mesi di rivolta:
le proteste di massa



Noi non siamo terroristi! Vogliamo libertà e democrazia. Dite al mondo che non siamo terroristi

“

La Stampa (Italie / Italy)

No di Damasco al piano della Lega Araba senza Assad

IL CAIRO

Mentre l'Unione europea ha approvato nuove sanzioni contro il regime siriano per la repressione dell'opposizione, Damasco ha respinto, giudicandolo «una flagrante ingerenza negli affari interni», il nuovo piano presentato dalla Lega Araba che prevede l'uscita di scena del presidente Bashar al-Assad. Il ministro degli Esteri italiano, Giulio Terzi, ha espresso «delusione» per il rifiuto, affermando che «il caso deve essere discusso nel Consiglio di Sicurezza dell'Onu». Domenica i ministri degli Esteri della Lega Araba, riuniti al Cairo, hanno chiesto alle Nazioni Unite di sostenere un nuovo piano in base al quale entro due mesi Assad trasferirebbe i poteri al suo vice e a un nuovo governo di unità nazionale. Intanto continuano le violenze: 10 civili sono stati uccisi ieri dalle forze di sicurezza in diverse città, mentre 5 soldati sono morti in combattimenti contro disertori. Lo riferisce l'Osservatorio siriano dei diritti dell'Uomo. E ieri oltre 150 mila persone hanno partecipato a Duma, nei pressi di Damasco, ai funerali di 12 civili uccisi nei giorni scorsi. [P.DM.]

ABC (Espagne / Spain)

RUSIA ADVIERTE QUE «NO HARÁ MÁS» POR ASSAD

Los opositores se hacen fuertes cerca de Damasco

DANIEL IRIARTE
CORRESPONSAL EN ESTAMBUL

Más de 150.000 personas protestaron ayer contra el régimen del presidente sirio Bashar el Assad en el barrio de Douma, en el extrarradio de Damasco, durante los funerales por los manifestantes muertos en los días previos. Al menos 18 personas fueron abatidas ayer a manos de las fuerzas de seguridad en todo el país, según los activistas, y cinco soldados murieron en combates

con la insurgencia. En total, el número de muertos desde el viernes en ambos bandos es casi cien.

La situación parece estar acelerándose: los insurgentes del Ejército Sirio Libre mantienen una presencia tanto en Douma como en la localidad de Zabadani, a unos 30 kilómetros de Damasco, duramente contenida por el ejército sirio. No obstante, los desertores carecen de capacidad para la victoria.

Por su parte, un portavoz gubernamental calificó de «conspiración»

la propuesta emitida este fin de semana por la Liga Árabe de iniciar una transición política, convocando elecciones y formando un gobierno «de unidad nacional» que incluyese a la oposición.

Pero el tiempo corre contra el régimen. El Gobierno ruso ha dado por primera vez muestras de impaciencia con Assad. «Nuestro voto en el Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU era el último instrumento que permite a Bashar el Assad mantener el *status quo* en la arena internacional. Este voto ha agotado nuestro arsenal de recursos», declaró ayer Mijail Margelov, enviado especial del presidente Dimitri Medvédev para África y encargado de la diplomacia con Siria. «Assad debe leer nuestra posición sin equivocos: reformas, fin de la violencia, elecciones libres».

La Razon (Espagne / Spain)

Asad se aferra al poder en Siria

Considera una «conspiración intolerable» la propuesta de la Liga Árabe para que deje el poder ■ Compra aviones de combate «Yak-130» a Rusia

Ethel Bonet

Corresponsal en el mundo árabe

Una vez más, el presidente sirio, Bachar Al Asad, vuelve a hacer oídos sordos a los llamamientos de la comunidad internacional y de la Liga Árabe a poner fin a la represión, y reitera su continuidad en el poder. De poco ha servido la última resolución adoptada por el organismo panárabe, que se reunió el domingo en El Cairo, en la que los ministros de Exteriores instaron a Asad a transferir sus poderes al vicepresidente del país, y la formación de un Gobierno de unidad nacional en dos meses para celebrar elecciones

libres. Damasco lo calificó ayer de «interferencia flagrante» en sus asuntos internos. El nuevo plan es similar al que se adoptó para solucionar la crisis en Yemen, que llevó a la dimisión del presidente, Ali Abdala Saleh y la celebración de elecciones el 21 de febrero.

Las autoridades sirias rechazan la resolución y además atachando «violación» de su soberanía nacional. Queda por ver si ahora Damasco aceptará la ampliación de la misión árabe en su país, de la que se ha retirado Arabia Saudí. Siria también criticó que algunos miembros de la Liga, en una clara alusión

LA CRUEL REPRESIÓN Los opositores cifran las muertes causadas por el régimen en 6.581

negociaría hasta que renuncie Asad. El Ejército Libre Sirio sigue avanzando posiciones y ya controla la estratégica ciudad de Duma, uno de los bastiones rebeldes.

La reticencia llevó ayer a la UE a ampliar sus sanciones contra el régimen de Asad. La medida afectará a otros 22 cargos sirios, la mayoría militares, y ocho empresas que se suman a los 108 dirigentes del régimen, incluido el presidente y su hermano Maher, que ya fueron sancionados por la UE en diciembre. Mientras, Rusia firmó ayer un contrato de venta con Siria para la entrega de 36 aviones «Yak-130».

a Qatar, pretendiendo que se acuerde sea a través de «un llamamiento a una intervención extranjera en los asuntos internos» del país.

Por su parte, el opositor Consejo Nacional Sirio, que cifra en 6.581 las muertes, dio a bienvenida al nuevo plan árabe, aunque aclaró que no

El Mundo (Espagne / Spain)

La UE apoya a la Liga Árabe y amplía la 'lista negra' siria

Veta la entrada y congela activos de 8 empresas y 22 personas

J. G. / Bruselas
Corresponsal

Bashar Asad y establezca nuevas sanciones al país.

La Liga Árabe tendrá aún más legitimidad para llevar a cabo las negociaciones con Siria después de que la Unión Europea haya decidido concederle todo el protagonismo para lograr una resolución por parte del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU que condena la violencia del régimen de

El objetivo es «lograr en el plazo más breve posible una resolución que condena la actitud desenfadada [de Damasco] en materia de derechos humanos», tal y como explicó ayer el ministro de Exteriores español, José Manuel García-Margallo.

Para acelerar el proceso, los Veintiún miembros permanentes del Consejo de Seguridad más reticentes han acordado ampliar las sanciones contra el país, an-

diendo otros 22 individuos y ocho empresas a la lista negra de la UE, que prohíbe su entrada en suelo comunitario y congela sus activos financieros.

Estas medidas se suman a las ya aprobadas, como el embargo militar y energético y el bloqueo de las operaciones financieras con su Banco Central. La jefa de la diplomacia comunitaria, Catherine Ashton, cree que esta decisión «aumentará la presión sobre los responsables de la inaceptable violencia y represión, que ha dejado ya como balance más de 6.000 víctimas mortales».

El plan de la Liga Árabe, respaldado por la UE, pasa por forzar al Gobierno de Assad a establecer conversaciones con el movimiento opositor lo antes posible y lograr que el presidente delegue sus funciones en su segundo y forme un Ejecutivo de concertación nacional, como paso previo a la convocatoria de elecciones democráticas.

Pero de momento este plan cuenta con la rotunda oposición del Gobierno sirio, que tacha de «conspiración» el intento de la Liga Árabe de que su presidente renuncie en favor de un Gabinete de unidad. Al menos Damasco ha admitido a los observadores permanecer un mes más en el país, aunque de momento su presencia no ha detenido la represión contra los opositores.

Assad rejeita “demissão pacífica” e Liga Árabe pode pedir a intervenção da ONU na Síria

Não só o mandaram sair do poder, como lhe deram um mapa com o caminho a seguir. Os países árabes dizem ao Presidente sírio que perdeu legitimidade

● A Síria rejeitou ontem a proposta da Liga Árabe para que o Presidente Bashar al-Assad se demita “de forma pacífica” e seja formado um governo de união nacional. A decisão pode ter aberto o caminho para a entrada das Nações Unidas, através do Conselho de Segurança, na resolução da crise neste país.

Para o executivo de Damasco, a proposta árabe é uma interferência e uma conspiração. “A Síria rejeita as decisões adoptadas (...) e considera que são um atentado à sua soberania”, adiantou uma fonte à televisão estatal. Segundo a agência oficial SANA, a proposta é uma “conspiração contra a Síria”.

O plano, aprovado no domingo no Cairo, pede a Assad que delegue poderes ao vice-presidente para este “negociar um governo de união nacional”, a ser formado “em dois meses”, diz um comunicado do ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros do Qatar, xequé Hamad ben Jassim bin Jabr al-Thani. “Se esta iniciativa não for adoptada – acrescenta o documento –, iremos ao Conselho de Segurança”.

O governo de união seria “presidido por uma personalidade de consenso” e teria por missão a aplicação do plano de paz da Liga Árabe, que chegou a ser aceite por Bashar al-Assad em Novembro do ano passado e que previa o fim da violência.

o regresso das tropas aos quartéis, a libertação de presos políticos e o início do diálogo com a oposição. A preparação de eleições legislativas e presidenciais “plurais e livres, sob supervisão árabe e internacional”, seria outra tarefa do governo de unidade, segundo a AFP.



Cada vez mais encorralado, Bashar al-

Assad recusou

a criação de

um governo

de unidade

nacional

com o balanço das Nações Unidas. O regime defende que “grupos terroristas” estão na origem da contestação, sendo responsáveis pela morte de dois mil soldados e polícias. Para Rami Khouri, comentador político ouvido pela Reuters em Berlim, este plano invulgarmente duro, é claramente uma “má notícia para Assad”. “O facto de países árabes terem proposto uma intervenção tão clara e, essencialmente, lhe terem ordenado que se demita e apresentado um mecanismo para o fazer, é um sinal muito forte da sua perda de credibilidade e legitimidade na região.”

A Liga Árabe está ainda disposta a alargar por um mês a presença dos seus observadores, na Síria desde 26 de Dezembro, apesar da sua incapacidade em deter a violência. Não está clara a posição de Damasco sobre este prolongamento.

Desde Março de 2011 que os sírios se manifestam, exigindo a saída do Presidente Assad e o fim do regime totalitário do partido Baas. As forças de segurança governamentais estão a reprimir a contestação e já morreram mais de cinco mil pessoas, de acordo

Diario de Noticias (Portugal)

Assad rejeita transferir poder e reforça segurança na capital

SÍRIA O regime de Bachar al-Assad recusou o plano da Liga Árabe, segundo o qual o Presidente delegaria prerrogativas ao vice-presidente para que este possa dialogar com um governo de união nacional a ser formado dentro de 60 dias. Ao mesmo tempo que rejeitou o plano, aplaudido pelos Irmãos Muçulmanos sírios, o regime reforçou a segurança na capital, quando em muitos bairros da periferia já foi hasteada a bandeira da independência (as estrelas são vermelhas e não verdes como as da bandeira do regime).

“A Síria rejeita as decisões tomadas contra si fora do trabalho de plano árabe e considera que elas lesam a sua soberania nacional”, afirmou, ontem, à televisão estatal um responsável do regime.

O plano da Liga Árabe “contém propostas sérias” e merece um “exame aprofundado”, afirmou Zouheir Salem, porta-voz dos Irmãos Muçulmanos sírios, em comunicado emitido em Damasco.

Em Bruxelas, os 27 chefes da diplomacia da UE aprovaram novas sanções dirigidas contra 22 personalidades sírias e oito organizações do país com o objetivo de levar Assad a abandonar a violência e dialogar com os manifestantes que, há dez meses, exigem na rua um regime democrático.

Mas enquanto a UE faz um esforço para alterar a política de Bachar al-Assad, a Rússia – como revelou ontem o diário económico *Kommersant* – assinou um contrato de venda de 36 caças a Damasco. L.R.

The Irish Times (Irlande / Ireland)

The Arab League and Syria

ON THE ground in Syria the Arab League observer mission appears to have had little impact on the 10-month uprising, either in restraining the authorities' brutality or reassuring beleaguered protesters. As Saudi Arabia announced over the weekend its intention to pull out of the mission because of Syria's failure to co-operate with its mandate, league foreign ministers meeting in Cairo sought to up the pressure on Damascus and regain the political initiative with a transition plan that the latter yesterday rejected and dismissed as outside interference.

EU foreign ministers yesterday applauded the initiative and tightened sanctions, adding 22 people and eight entities to a list of banned people and groups.

Although the 22-member league has appeared divided, with the Saudis particularly critical of what it sees as chair Qatar's overly conciliatory approach, all but Lebanon backed the plan. They also backed a renewal for a month of the observer mission's mandate.

The transition plan, with an ambitious timetable, requires President Bashar al Assad to hand over power to a deputy, to open talks with the opposition within two weeks on a government of national unity which should be formed within two months, to be followed by presidential and parliamentary elections within five months. The assembly so elected would draft a new constitution. It is a framework that appears to be modelled on the agreement recently signed by President Ali Abdullah Saleh of Yemen and follows an earlier, less ambitious plan from the league, supposedly agreed by Syria in November but then ignored.

"We ask that the Syrian regime leave and hand over power," Qatar's foreign minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim al-Thani, said bluntly in Cairo. "We are with the Syrian people, with their will and with their aspirations." It is a remarkable statement and a position that would have been inconceivable only a year ago from the once-staid league. It makes reform demands of Damascus, as a Syrian spokesman noted sourly, which would challenge "many of the Arab states leading the hostile campaign against Syria". The Arab Spring has made strange bedfellows indeed for the democracy movement.

Yet, despite optimistic opposition statements about the spread of insurrection, and evidence of a steady flow of army defections to the Free Syrian Army militia, reports from inside Syria seem to support government claims that the rebellion may be being contained. While individual cities, towns and districts have thrown out the army, albeit temporarily and at a heavy price – human rights groups talk of 5,000 dead – wide areas appear to remain largely unaffected by the uprising. A more confident regime this month freed hundreds of detainees, announced an amnesty, struck a ceasefire deal with rebels in one town, and allowed observers and some journalists into some trouble-spots. Assad also renewed his pledges of reform.

Renewed external political and economic pressure may help to tip the balance, but it will be a slow and painful process. Assad remains firmly entrenched.

The Daily Telegraph (Royaume-Uni / United Kingdom)

UN split as Russia sells warplanes to Syria

By Richard Spencer
and Andrew Osborn in Moscow

SYRIA angrily rejected Arab League calls for President Bashar al-Assad to hand over power yesterday, leaving a split United Nations Security Council the task of finding a solution to the crisis.

The Assad regime showed no sign of compromise despite strongly worded condemnation by the league, which on Sunday accused him of responsibility for the violence sweeping the country.

The Arab League asked the UN to approve its demand that Mr Assad form a unity government with the opposition prior to free elections within six months.

But the UN has been hamstrung by the refusal of Russia, and to a lesser extent China, to condemn Mr Assad unequivocally let alone allow measures to be taken against him. In a further sign of Russia's support, it was said yesterday to be selling 36 Yak-130 light attack aircraft to Damascus.

The first response to the Arab League resolution came from the state news agency, which quoted a government source saying: "Syria rejects the decisions of the Arab League ministerial council and considers them a violation of its national sovereignty."

The resolution split the Syrian opposition, with some suspecting that its "unattainable" demands of the regime were an attempt to hide the weakness of the league's position.

Arab ministers were deeply divided over whether to extend their monitoring mission, which the opposition says is being used as a cover for continued violence against protesters but which is also one of the few practical measures they have so far been able to agree.

"The Syrian people have lost confidence in the Arab League's ability to stop the regime's ongoing bloodshed," said a statement by the local co-ordination committee, an umbrella group of protest organisers.

The Syrian National Council's leader, Burhan Ghalioun, said he welcomed the league's position as confirming that "all Arab countries today consider the tyrannical regime of Bashar al-Assad to be finished".

Moscow has already demonstrated Syria's strategic importance by sending an aircraft carrier into port at Tartous, the Russian navy's only base on the Mediterranean. The sale at such a sensitive time of the Yak-130s, a trainer aircraft that can also carry a full arsenal of air-to-air and air-to-surface missiles, will irk Washington and its Western allies as they try to force Mr Assad's hand.

Moscow media quoted experts as saying it was a show of support for Mr Assad. "With this contract, Russia is expressing confidence that President Assad will manage to retain control of the situation, because such deals are not signed with a government whose hold on power raises doubts," Igor Korotchenko, head of the Centre of Analysis of the Global Arms trade, told the RIA Novosti news agency.

The Independent (Royaume-Uni / United Kingdom)

Syria rejects Arab League plan to end conflict as a 'violation of sovereignty'

By **BASSEM MROUE**
in Beirut

Syria rejected the Arab League's wide-ranging new plan to end the country's 10-month crisis yesterday, saying the League's call for a national-unity government in two months is a clear violation of Syrian sovereignty.

Meanwhile, thousands of people poured into the streets in a suburb of the capital, Damascus, to mourn 11 residents who were either shot dead by security forces or killed in clashes between army defectors and troops a day earlier, activists said. The crowd in Douma – which one activist said was 60,000-strong – was under the protection of dozens of army defectors who are in control of the area after regime forces pulled out late on Sunday, Samer al-Omar, who lives in Douma, said.

The reports could not be independently confirmed.

President Bashar al-Assad blames the uprising that erupted in March on terrorists and armed gangs who are part of a foreign conspiracy to destabilise the country. Mr Assad's regime has retaliated with a brutal crackdown that the UN says has killed more than 5,400 people. But there is growing urgency to find a resolution to a crisis that is



Outside Damascus, thousands mourned the deaths of 11 residents DEMOTIX

growing increasingly violent as regime opponents and army defectors who have switched sides have started to fight

back against government forces.

The Arab League has tried to stem the bloodshed by condemning the crackdown, imposing sanctions and sending a team of observers to the country. On Sunday, the League called for a unity government within two months; it would then

prepare for parliamentary and presidential elections to be held under Arab and international supervision.

The proposal also provides for Mr Assad to give his Vice-President full powers to co-operate with the proposed government to enable it to carry out its duties during a transitional period.

The state-run news agency, Sana, said Damascus considers the plan "flagrant interference in its internal affairs".

It was not clear what steps, if any, Syria could take to counter the Arab League's stance. The EU backed the Arab plan on Monday and extended existing sanctions against Syria. AP

President Bashar al-Assad blames the uprising on a foreign plot involving terrorists

Le Journal de Montréal (Canada)



PHOTO REUTERS

■ Un jeune Syrien se tient devant la carcasse d'un tank de l'armée syrienne dans la ville de Homs, où des affrontements ont fait plusieurs morts hier.

Damas rejette un plan de sortie de crise

DAMAS | (AFP) Les autorités syriennes ont rejeté hier une nouvelle initiative arabe prévoyant à terme le départ du président Bachar al-Assad, les pays européens estimant que ce plan pourrait « changer la donne » à l'ONU.

Ces développements politiques n'ont cependant pas influé sur la situation sur le terrain, où les forces du régime continuent de réprimer la révolte populaire lancée il y a plus de dix mois, avec la mort de 18 civils hier à travers le pays, selon l'Observatoire syrien des droits de l'Homme.

Face à la répression sans répit malgré la prolongation de la mission des observateurs arabes, l'Union européenne a adopté de nouvelles sanctions frappant 22 membres de l'appareil sécuritaire syrien et huit organisations supplémentaires syriennes.

« Ingérence flagrante »

Le régime Assad a rejeté le plan annoncé dimanche au Caire après une réunion ministérielle de la Ligue arabe, le qualifiant d'« ingérence flagrante dans ses

affaires intérieures ».

L'initiative appelle M. Assad à déléguer «des prérogatives au vice-président pour traiter avec un gouvernement d'union» nationale appelé à être «formé dans les deux mois» avec «une personnalité de consensus» à sa tête et chargé de préparer des élections législatives et présidentielle «pluralistes et libres».

Mission d'observation prolongée

Il demande en outre au «gouvernement et à tous les courants de l'opposition d'engager un dialogue sérieux dans un délai ne dépassant pas les deux semaines» pour former le cabinet d'union.

Le chef de la diplomatie du Qatar, cheikh Hamad ben Jassem ben Jabr al-Thani, a déclaré après la réunion du Caire que l'initiative visait «un départ du régime syrien de manière pacifique». «Si elle n'est pas mise en œuvre, nous irons au Conseil de sécurité» de l'ONU, a-t-il averti.

La mission des observateurs en Syrie, pourtant critiquée pour son incapacité à faire cesser l'effusion de sang, a été en outre prolongée.

The Globe and Mail (Canada)



A Syrian boy in Homs stands in front of a damaged armoured vehicle belonging to the Syrian army on Monday. Syria called the Arab League's new plan 'a conspiracy.' AHMED JADALLAH/REUTERS

MIDEAST

Arab League's new plan for Syria rejected

Both al-Assad regime and opposition balk at proposal to end violent conflict

PATRICK MARTIN

The Arab League's bold new plan for ending the killing in Syria and ushering in a democratic regime is being criticized by both sides in the conflict. Syria called the plan, which envisions President Bashar al-Assad handing power to his Vice-President to hold negotiations with a national unity government, part of the compromise the regime has been fighting against for the past 10 months.

"Syria believes that much of the international campaign against it is because of its relationship with Iran," said Mohamed Marandi, a professor of political science at the University of Tehran, currently a visiting professor at the American University of Beirut. "All these countries attacking Syria is just another way of getting at the regime in Iran."

That is the reason Qatar and Saudi Arabia are leading the charge for a Syria settlement, he added, referring to the two countries who most often have objected to Iranian policies in the region, and now are the most outspoken critics of Mr. al-Assad. "Do you think they'd be doing this if

“

Syria believes that much of the international campaign against it is because of its relationship with Iran. All these countries attacking Syria is just another way of getting at the regime in Iran.

Mohamed Marandi
Professor of political science
at the University of Tehran

Syria wasn't an ally of Iran?" Mr. Marandi asked.

"Syria's rejection of the plan was to be expected. But look closely and you'll see the Syrian National Congress, the main opposition organization outside the country, also has rejected it as presented, insisting that Mr. al-Assad must first resign before the group would engage in negotiations with anyone in the regime."

That condition is a deal breaker for the Syrian President. Many Syrians and Syria watchers acknowl-

edge that unless there's something in it for Mr. al-Assad, he'll fight to the death rather than surrender his power.

They make the point that negotiations between a representative of the President and representatives of the opposition would focus on the kind of system that would replace the autocratic leader. Perhaps conducted under guarantees offered by a country such as Russia, the negotiations also would allow for Mr. al-Assad to leave office over a period of time – with that period to be determined – and with a guarantee of safety. All of those are points that the SNC, the opposition group, says it can't accept.

"The opposition is badly divided," says Salim al-Hoss, a former Lebanese prime minister with considerable connections to Syria. "They don't seem to know what they stand for."

Indeed, some opposition groups inside the country, such as the National Co-ordination Committee for Democratic Change, already have said they are prepared to enter negotiations. "There isn't yet a critical mass one way or the other," says Mohamed Chatah, a

former Lebanese ambassador to Washington and a foreign-policy adviser to Saad Hariri, leader of the opposition Future Movement in Lebanon.

Both Mr. Hariri and Mr. Chatah are rooting for the opposition in Syria, hoping that the ouster of Mr. al-Assad will weaken Syria's support of Hezbollah, their political nemesis.

"For the negotiated settlement to succeed there needs to be three things," said a former senior Syrian official with inside knowledge of the regime. First, the President must recognize that he can't win by violent means, he said. Second, the opposition, or at least most of it, must agree on how to proceed, and third, there must be an outside party that can bring both sides to the table and guarantee them that there will be a handover of power and that all parties, including the President, will be safe from harm or prosecution.

"Russia," the former official said, "is the only party that could effectively play that role." For its part, Russia said Monday that the use of its UN Security Council veto to block international sanctions and armed intervention in Syria was as

far as Moscow could go in defence of the al-Assad regime. Moscow called for the Syrian leader now to take what it termed appropriate action.

Mr. al-Assad "should read this position unequivocally: reforms, an end to violence, free elections," said Mikhail Margelov, a senior lawmaker and a frequent emissary to Syria of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. "This is what the Syrian leadership should do immediately, today."

The statement clearly sets out Russia's support for both sides in the Syrian conflict. With a large and loyal army, and the grudging support of the majority of Syrians too afraid to stand up and protest against him, Mr. al-Assad could hold on to his office for a long while. "In that event, a lot of people will die," the former Syrian official said. "He has to be made to see that negotiations are preferable."

Paul Salem, head of the Beirut-based Carnegie Middle East Center, agreed. "The Arab League plan is significant because it offers a third way, a solution that marks neither a complete victory for the Assad regime nor a complete victory for the protesters."

The Washington Post (USA)

Fear of war is palpable in divided Syrian city

Tensions grow after government rejects plan for Assad to cede power

BY LIZ SKY

HOMS, SYRIA — It was late at night on Monday in this frightened, divided city and the streets were emptying fast. As gunfire crackled ominously in the air, merchants pulled down their shutters, soldiers peered nervously over sandbagged positions and people scurried home down deserted alleys.

On Monday, it seemed to come just a little closer, in Homs and beyond. An Arab League blueprint for President Bashar al-Assad to surrender power was rejected by the Syrian government, raising the stakes dramatically both for the beleaguered regime and for an increasingly emboldened opposition.

The unexpected Arab proposal also intensified pressure on the international community, which has struggled for months to formulate a coherent response to the Syrian crisis. By seeking U.N. Security Council endorsement for the plan, which envisages a transition of power similar to the one underway in Yemen, the Arab League appeared to open the door for broader international involvement in the Syrian crisis, including, perhaps, military intervention.

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Victoria Nuland called the Arab move "really quite remarkable." America's priority now, she added, is to seek a Security Council resolution that would add to the pressure on Assad.



A Syrian man walks past damaged buildings in Homs, where hostility is rising between pro-government forces and the opposition.

BY LIZ SKY
HOMS, SYRIA — It was late at night on Monday in this frightened, divided city and the streets were emptying fast. As gunfire crackled ominously in the air, merchants pulled down their shutters, soldiers peered nervously over sandbagged positions and people scurried home down deserted alleys.

United Nations and Joey Warick In Washington contributed to this report.

Quair was fighting for his life. The director of the hospital, Brig. Gen. Ali Asef, said that 859 members of the security services had been killed in Homs since the uprising began in March and that four to five typically had been killed each day. In the past three weeks, however, the daily average has climbed to 10 to 12 as the conflict appears to be intensifying, said orthopedic surgeon Hissam al-Habib.

"This is war," he said. "And it is the worst kind of war in the military sense, because everyone in the world is against us and there are people fighting us from inside."

In the Homs Revolutionary Council, the leading opposition group in the city, asserts that 2,052 people have been killed by government security forces in the past 10 months.

In the ancient Christian neighborhood of Hamidiyah, residents seemed as confused as they were afraid. The conflict is rapidly taking on sectarian overtones, with majority Sunnis lining up behind the protesters and Alawite-affiliated Alawite president.

Khalidyyah, one of two Sunni neighborhoods that has come under the control of the Free Syrian Army, is a short walk away, and Christians say they feel squeezed between the two sides. Four have been kidnapped from the neighborhood in recent weeks. One was killed, even though his family paid a ransom.

Fireights have become a daily occurrence, and the shooting seems to be closing in, said a man working in a sweet shop who was too frightened to give his name. "It's not a real war, but there are clashes every day and it's getting worse," he said. "We don't know who is shooting who. It's both sides. It's very scary!"

Staff writers Colleen Lynch at the Washington Post contributed to this report.

At the military hospital on the edge of the city, the toll that the burgeoning armed insurgency is taking on the Syrian security forces was clear. At a solemn ceremony on the hospital grounds, soldiers and police escorted three of their comrades, slain the previous day in ambushes, toward the cemetery nearby.

In the cemetery, doctors

shoved journalists the charred remains of four corpses stuffed into plastic bags, among 11 victims of a separate ambush the same day that had incinerated a minibus. In the intensive care unit, a soldier shot in the head

that morning in the town of

Homs contacted by telephone, said he expected the government to escalate the use of force. "Assad feels the world is against him, and so I think he will get mad and it will be very dangerous," he said.

On a government-supervised visit Monday to Homs, which has emerged as the epicenter of the protest movement and also the fledgling armed rebellion, the dangers were vividly apparent. This once-vibrant city, Syria's third largest, resembles a war zone, with earthen mounds blocking streets and protecting government buildings, and sandbagged checkpoints dotting residential neighborhoods.

"Violence will escalate because

this Free Syrian Army will think

they have won a lot and that now it's a piece of cake to take power," said a Syrian journalist in Damascus who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the situation.

Omar Shakir, an activist in

Syria's revolutionaries in Syria, is also demanding," said a statement by the Syrian Revolution Coordinators Union. "We will persist until the fall of the regime, believing in God and trusting the heroic Free Syrian Army," the group added, referring to the loosely organized rebel army that

New York Times – International Herald Tribune (USA)

What's left to do about Damascus?



Judy Dempsey

LETTER FROM EUROPE

BERLIN So far, it is hard to fault the Europeans.

Since pro-democracy demonstrations began in Syria more than 10 months ago, the European Union has ratcheted up the pressure on President Bashar al-Assad's regime. It has imposed sanctions on Syrian oil companies. It has frozen the assets of several top officials. It has prohibited E.U. businesses from trading in Syrian state debt.

It has also banned Syria from having its own banks operate in E.U. countries or investing in European banks. This week, E.U. foreign ministers agreed to place travel and other restrictions on 22 more individuals and eight more companies.

But still the fighting continues. According to the United Nations, more than 5,000 people have been killed since the demonstrations began last March. Nearly 20,000 have fled to neighboring Turkey.

Secretary General Ban Ki-moon of the United Nations said last week that

Although the Europeans have rejected military action, there are measures they could take.

Rime Alfaf, a Middle East specialist at the London-based research organization Chatham House, "If significantly tougher measures are not taken, then I expect nothing to change. There will be a further deterioration of the situation. At the moment, there are no other realistic scenarios."

Faced with a similar situation in Libya last year, Britain, France and some other European countries opted for military intervention. With the help of the United States, they enforced a no-fly zone and bombed the regime's troops, which precipitated the downfall of Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi.

This month, the Free Syrian Army, a group of army defectors trying to topple Mr. Assad, also asked the U.N. Security Council to intervene, but to no avail. But neither Mr. Ban nor any European leader has spoken out in support of military action to stop the killing.

There are several reasons for that. Russia, a longtime supporter of the Assad regime, and China — both permanent members of the Security Council — would veto any such move. Neither wants a NATO-style intervention in Syria.

Nor has the United States any appetite for another military mission. Without U.S. support, the European Union and NATO can do nothing militarily. In the region, only Qatar, a member of the Arab League, has called for military action.

On Jan. 15, the emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, proposed

an Arab military intervention to halt the crackdown by Syrian security forces. "Some troops should go to stop the killing," he told CBS, a U.S. television network. He received no support from other Arab states, nor the European Union.

As it is, the Arab League is divided over Syria, and it has no experience of such intervention. The idea of Arab fighting Arab could have untold consequences for the region, according to analysts. They point to the rise of sectarianism in Iraq as a catastrophic example.

Moreover, the Arab League has lost much of its credibility after its monitoring mission in Syria failed to persuade the regime to abide by the League's peace proposal, which Damascus initially accepted. That plan envisaged the withdrawal of tanks and troops from towns and cities, the release of protesters, access to the news media and the beginning of talks between Mr. Assad and the opposition.

Then, on Sunday, during a summit meeting in Cairo, the Arab League called for Mr. Assad to step down, open a dialogue with the opposition and form a national unity government. Damascus rejected the proposal.

But even though the Europeans have excluded the option of military action, there are measures they could take. Apart from applying more sanctions, they could step up humanitarian and intelligence assistance for the Syrian opposition, along the lines of Europe's help last year for the Libyan rebels.

The Union could also target Mr. Assad's supporters. Its proposal to impose a new batch of sanctions against Iran because of its nuclear program could become crucial for Syria. Iran provides extensive military and economic assistance to Syria, and it supports the militant Hezbollah movement. Hezbollah has rallied behind Mr. Assad.

Finally, the Union could work more closely with Turkey, providing assistance for the refugees, and with Qatar.

"It's being mooted among some European capitals about the E.U. establishing some kind of humanitarian aid corridor," said Anthony Dworkin, a human rights expert at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Turkey and Qatar could support such measures, say their diplomats. Turkey is no novice in the region. It tried to mediate between Syria and Israel over the Golan Heights after Israel captured them during the 1967 Middle East war. It also was one of the first countries to call on Mr. Assad to step down.

"Ankara feels betrayed by Damascus," said Ozgur Unluhisarcikli, director of the Turkey office of the German Marshall Fund of the United States. "Ankara invested much energy in trying to persuade Assad to resign, but without any result."

But Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey is another one of those who do not support military intervention. He considers the risks too high.

Ankara is concerned that an intervention would bring in even more refugees. It could also encourage the Kurds in Syria to seek more autonomy. Mr. Unluhisarcikli says that could set off a Kurdish insurgency in Turkey, where tensions between the government and the Kurdish community are already extremely high.

The NATO mission in Libya was complicated enough; it is still far from certain that after the military intervention and the downfall of Colonel Qaddafi, the country will manage to return to stability. Syria is a far more intractable case.

"When it comes to Syria, the Europeans are not being consistent, but they are trying to do as much as they can without a military intervention," said Ms. Alfaf of Chatham House.

But she has few illusions that that will be enough.

E-MAIL: jdempsey@iht.com

L'Orient-Le Jour (Liban / Lebanon)

Amine Gemayel à « L'OLJ » : « La chute du régime de Damas entraînera la radicalisation, puis la normalisation du Hezbollah »

Démocratie Le chef des Kataëb défend le maintien des observateurs arabes pour paver la voie à « l'internationalisation » du terrain syrien.

Sandra NOUJEIM

Si le chef du parti Kataëb Amine Gemayel évoque la crise en Syrie, c'est pour rappeler que le terrain libanais a longtemps couvert les préceptes démocratiques, et trouve dans l'évolution régionale l'opportunité de les exploiter. Dans un entretien accordé à *L'Orient-Le Jour*, en marge d'une rencontre informelle avec la presse, l'ancien président de la République a estimé que « le Liban demeure en état de blocage » tant que la crise syrienne ne s'est pas dénouée. Il a néanmoins répondu par l'affirmative à la question de savoir si l'éventuelle chute du régime de Damas amènerait la reconversion du Hezbollah en parti politique. M. Gemayel a tracé ainsi le possible scénario des répercussions sur le parti chiite de l'émergence d'un nouveau régime en Syrie. Rappelant que le parti de Dieu a « un potentiel intrinsèque et autonome », M. Gemayel a estimé qu'il « peut rester en vie, mais devra se reconvertis pour se maintenir ». Pour ce faire, il traversera trois phases consécutives, « d'abord la radicalisation de sa position dans le but de renforcer sa présence, ensuite la tentative d'assurer sa survie, et enfin sa normalisation à travers un dialogue sérieux ». Prié de diagnostiquer le critère qui a historiquement permis le maintien, envers et contre tout, d'une certaine cohésion du Liban, M. Gemayel a évoqué « la nostalgie de la démocratie qui prévaut chez la majorité des Libanais et qui ressurgit tôt ou tard chez les communautés mues par une volonté d'étendre leur influence sur l'Etat ».

Pour une « internationalisation » du terrain syrien

Par ailleurs, c'est une approche « dénuée de sur-

prises » que M. Gemayel adopte pour analyser la scène syrienne actuelle. Il a estimé que « la violence qui la secoue s'inscrit dans la logique des choses, puisque la patience des peuples a des limites ». Néanmoins, « il faut attendre longtemps avant de cerner les tenants et les aboutissants d'une situation qui vire au chaos », a-t-il prévenu. C'est

connivence avec le régime, M. Gemayel a rappelé que « jamais nous nous sommes fait d'illusions sur l'efficacité des missions arabes, qui ressurgissent, à chaque conflit, comme un refrain ».

Charte régionale pour les droits de l'homme

Quoi qu'il en soit, c'est une confiance certaine dans la profonde démonstration de la région qu'aura exprimée M. Gemayel. La figure de l'opposition proche, au niveau interne, « un exercice politique constructif, sans volonté d'obstruction », et défend, au niveau régional, « les mouvements proprement populaires qui se démarquent des nationalismes des années 50 ». Cette analyse modérée du terrain régional se traduit à la fois par une sérenité quant à l'avenir des minorités de la région, mais surtout par sa conviction que « le Liban ne doit pas être impliqué dans la crise syrienne ». M. Gemayel a insisté en effet sur le souci des

acteurs internationaux, notamment le secrétaire général des Nations unies Ban Ki-moon et le ministre turc des Affaires étrangères Ahmet Davutoglu, de « préserver la sécurité du Liban ». C'est le message que ces derniers ont voulu transmettre lors de leur visite récente, selon M. Gemayel, qui a rejeté, en réponse à une question, toute intention de transformer le Liban en zone tampon en faveur des opposants syriens. Rappelant que « les relations diplomatiques sont une composante essentielle des activités de chaque parti », il a fait l'annonce d'une charte qu'il a « minutieusement rédigée » à la lumière de sa récente tournée régionale, qui avait inclus notamment l'Egypte et la Turquie. « C'est la Charte des droits

de l'homme, transposée aux spécificités régionales », qui tente de concrétiser « une vision lucide de l'avenir des révoltes », a expliqué M. Gemayel, insistant sur les entretiens « très fructueux » qu'il avait eus notamment avec cheikh Ahmad al-Tayeb, l'imam d'al-Azhar, ou encore M. Davutoglu, dont il a fait part de la « visite prochaine au Liban, qui adviendra plus tôt qu'on le croit ». En outre, la charte annoncée doit être révélée vendredi, dans le cadre d'un séminaire conjoint du parti Kataëb et de l'Internationale des partis démocrates du centre, à laquelle appartient le parti.

Ce séminaire a la spécificité de poursuivre la réflexion sur l'avenir de la région, en s'articulant sur deux thèmes, « les mutations et incertitudes » liées au

printemps arabe, ainsi que « les défis démocratiques de la gestion du pluralisme ». Plusieurs intervenants de Tunisie, d'Egypte, d'Algérie et du Kurdistan irakien se joindront aux intervenants européens, notamment l'ancien Premier ministre belge et actuel président du Parti populaire européen, Wilfried Martens, et l'ancien ministre italien des Affaires étrangères, Franco Frattini. De même, l'ancien Premier ministre Fouad Siniora, le chef du Parti socialiste progressiste Walid Joumblat et l'ancien ministre de la Culture Tarek Mitri apporteront leur contribution au séminaire.

Il s'agit d'amorcer « une dynamique régionale qui traduise l'aspiration à la modernité, qui n'est autre que le pluralisme dans la démocratie », a conclu M. Gemayel.



The Daily Star (Liban / Lebanon)

‘Best case scenario’ sought for Assad

Western, Arab officials look for new forms of pressure that would see president ceding power

By Nicholas Blanford

The Daily Star

security services to crush the uprising. The deadlock at the U.N. Security Council over issuing a resolution on Syria and the international reluctance to opt for a military solution leaves little choice in the medium-term, officials and diplomats say, but to plump for measures that steadily isolate Damascus and possibly erode the backing of Moscow and Beijing for the regime.

One Western official closely involved with Syria policy said that increased foreign currency reserves, the escalating pressure over the next three months was intended "to achieve the best possible outcome."

"At some point the look is at the dwindling foreign currency reserves, the increased violence in the Damascus suburbs, international allies abandoning him and, we hope, he takes the decision just to take off," the official said.

The Arab League proposal that Assad step down followed by the formation within two months of a national unity government is but one step to squeeze the regime. Others include the recent taboo-breaking proposal by Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa, Qatar's ruler, to send Arab troops into Syria to end the regime's crackdown. A third is

the continuation of the Arab League

observer mission in Syria. The mission has been heavily criticized for its inability to stop the violence and risks making the Arab League look impotent at a time of unusual assertiveness by the 22-member body. More than 5,600 people have died according to the United Nations, several hundred of them since the observer mission began last month. Saudi Arabia announced that it was withdrawing its monitors from the mission, claiming that Syria had "not respected any of the clauses" of the original agreement.

Government seems to be hunkering down for a long-drawn-out struggle

On the other hand, the presence of the monitors has cast an international spotlight on some of the more troubled areas of confrontation in Syria, including Homs and more recently Zabadani. One Western diplomat said the mission was valuable as an "annoyance" to the Assad regime and should be expanded in terms of monitors on the ground and logistical support.

The potential alternatives to a campaign of heightened diplomatic pressure either have little chance of succeeding, are insufficient, or risk escalating the crisis even more. A week or two prior to the Arab League meeting Sunday, it was generally believed that the observer mission would be scrapped and the League would formally petition the U.N. Security Council to redouble its efforts to issue a resolution.

However, events on the ground may have overtaken the U.N. Security Council's value as a means of helping resolve the crisis. Even if Russia and China can be persuaded to endorse a resolution demanding the Assad regime end its repression, it is unlikely that Damascus will pay much attention. The U.S. and its allies, including Turkey, are hoping to persuade Russia to dampen its support for the Assad regime. They calculate that the more uncompromising Damascus appears to be in publicly rejecting each proposal from the Arab League and others, the more Moscow may be inclined to distance itself from the Syrian president, or at least use its influence to help each other later use, the sources say.

A continued reliance on diplomatic pressure will dissatisfy many elements within the opposition who are openly calling for international intervention to stop the bloodshed. But there is no appetite in the West nor in the Arab world (despite Qatar's suggestion) to adopt a Libya-style model for Syria which some believe would only aggravate and complicate an already fraught situation.

Ultimately, diplomats and officials quietly concede that the chances of the Assad regime succumbing to heightened diplomatic pressure alone is unlikely to work. If the situation remains the same in three months' time, diplomats say there will be a fresh look at the possibility of assisting armed rebel groups, perhaps through the provision of arms, equipment and training. Diplomatic sources say that the flow of weapons into Syria is higher than generally believed. Much of it comes from Iraq on a "tribe-to-tribe" basis, meaning the Sunni tribes of Al-Anbar province in Iraq supplying their brethren in eastern Syria, and from "Kurd-to-Kurd," the Kurds of Iraq to the Kurds of northeast Syria. But the armaments are being stockpiled for later use, the sources say.

Al Mustaqbal (Liban / Lebanon)

(وسيا: الجيش السوري يتفاكر ولا يعكنا فعل المزبد لمساعدة الأسد



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Gulf News (EAU / UAE)

Syria rejects League's power transfer proposal

EU tightens sanctions against Al Assad regime

BY DURAID AL BAIK
UAE Editor

Dubai Syria yesterday rejected an Arab League plan for President Bashar Al Assad to transfer power to his deputy and clear the way for a national unity government in two months.

“Syria rejects the decisions taken which are outside an Arab work plan, and considers them an attack on its national sovereignty and a flagrant interference in internal affairs,” an official said on state television.

Qatar’s Premier Shaikh Hamad Bin Jasem Al Thani had earlier on Sunday said: “If this initiative [Arab League plan] is not put in place [by Damascus], we will go to the [UN] Security Council, where the decisions will be taken.”

EU foreign ministers tightened sanctions against Syria yesterday, adding 22 people and eight entities to a list of banned people and groups.

Meanwhile, in a comment that sparked much outrage, the controversial Sudanese General Mohammad Al Dabi, who is heading the monitors’ mission said that violence had dipped since observers arrived.

The comments contradict reports from Syrian activists who have said

If this initiative is not put in place [by Damascus], we will go to the [UN] Security Council, where the decisions will be taken.”

Shaikh Hamad Bin Jasem Al Thani
Qatar prime minister

that more than 600 people have been killed during the monitors’ mission.

Observers say that Al Dabi as well as many others in the mission are being heavily manipulated by the Syrian government.

Assad Mustafa, the former minister of agriculture, who served under Bashar’s father Hafez Al Assad for 20 years said Al Dabi’s report was “worse than the killing of protesters itself”.

Speaking to *Gulf News* he said that the regime will not hesitate to kill millions of people.

He called on the international community to intervene and avoid further bloodshed.

See also Page 13

Khaleej Times (EAU / UAE)

Syria's other alternative

Syria has promptly rejected the Arab League's power transfer call, terming it as an infringement of sovereignty. The pressure on the regional council to manage the Syrian crisis is expected to grow as it is dealt another blow by Saudi Arabia's exit from the observers' mission. Being the leading sponsor of most Arab League missions, Saudi Arabia's decision to quit stems from concerns regarding Damascus's reneging on promises to adopt peace initiatives. This puts the League's plan of extension of the monitors mission in jeopardy as well. The Syrian opposition groups have already called it ineffective in deterring government's brutalities though there has been a decline in the killings since the observers went to Syria.

In view of the divisions within the council itself and President Bashar Al Assad's refusal to cede further ground, the Arab League's foreign ministerial meeting called upon Damascus to consider a national unity government after holding political dialogue with the opposition within two months. The final objective on the cards is to hold multiparty elections under the auspices of a new unity government. A Syrian rejection of this latest initiative was expected, given how Assad has warned of intervention in Syria's internal matters even before. While allowing observers' teams in was an obvious concession to soften the Arab states' stance towards Syria, any further political concessions that too on the lines proposed just now may be out of question for Assad. As stated by Qatar's ruler Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani, the League's power transfer plan aims to secure "a peaceful departure of the Syrian regime". For Assad to consider such a plan would be tantamount to accepting defeat, something he is not considering at this point in time, despite the growing opposition and defections. Sheikh Thani has however clarified that the League is not seeking military intervention. The point is how to get the Syrian regime to accept this proposal that is also to be put forward to the UN, without the threat of use of force. The other option is wider sanctions, which in itself are being opposed by Russia and China, who hold vetoing powers to any Security Council resolution. With the situation locked down in a stalemate at present, only internal pressure brought by further defections coupled with greater diplomatic pressure from regional states can get Assad to consider an alternative.

Assad himself has promised elections in early summers based on a multiparty political system. This initiative if taken up and developed may be the key to defusing the crisis and at least paving the way to reforms through the ballot.

A new strategy needs to be employed after Syria's rejection of the League's power transfer proposal

The Khaleej Times (EAU / UAE)

EU backs Arab League on Syria

Bloc targets 22 individuals and eight firms in fresh round of sanctions

BRUSSELS — EU foreign ministers adopted fresh sanctions against Syria's military brass on Monday, targeting a large number of security officials on a new list of people and firms hit by a travel ban and asset freeze.

Ministers targeted 22 people and eight companies in this 11th round of EU sanctions to protest the ongoing repression in Syria, said a diplomat who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"We call again for the violence to stop, for the (Arab League) monitors to be able to do their job unheeded," said European Union foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton as she went into talks with the EU's 27 foreign ministers.

"We're deeply concerned with the situation in Syria," she added. "There needs to be a peaceful transition in that country."

No details were immediately available on the identities of the new targets.

The EU has already agreed 10 rounds of sanctions against the regime of President Bashar Al Assad, with some 120 people and companies targeted so far by an assets freeze and travel ban.

It is also enforcing an arms embargo and a ban on imports of Syrian crude oil. In December, it expanded its sanctions list to include Syria's finance and economy ministers, state-owned oil companies and two media organisations.

The EU move comes after Syria rejected an Arab League plan for Al Assad to transfer power to his deputy and make way for a national unity government.

"Syria rejects the decisions taken which are outside an Arab working plan, and considers them an attack on its national sovereignty and a flagrant interference in internal affairs," state TV quoted an official as



Demonstrators take part in a protest against President Bashar Al Assad in Baba Amro, near Homs. — AFP

saying. Meanwhile, a newspaper is reporting that Russia has signed a contract to sell combat jets to Syria in a show of support for President Bashar Assad's regime.

The business daily *Kommersant* said on Monday without identifying its source that the \$550-million deal envisages the delivery of 36 Yak-130 aircraft. A spokesman for

Russia's Rosoboronexport state arms trader refused to comment on the report. If confirmed, the deal would mark an open defiance of international efforts to put pressure on Assad's regime, which has faced broad condemnation for its brutal crackdown on an uprising. The UN says more than 5,400 people have died over 10 months. Russia's for-

eign minister said last week that Moscow doesn't consider it necessary to offer an explanation or excuses over suspicions that a Russian ship had delivered munitions to Syria despite an EU arms embargo. The Arab League on Sunday asked the United Nations to support a new plan for resolving the crisis in Syria that would see Assad

transfer power to his deputy and a government of national unity within two months.

Assad should "delegate powers to the vice president to liaise with a government of national unity," to be formed in two months, according to a statement read by Qatari Premier Shaikh Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani. — AP, AFP

The National (EAU / UAE)

Observations of a Syria monitor

It was Mohammed Salim Al Kaabi's first visit to Syria since the revolt began. As an Emirati observer for the Arab League he was warned by protesters it was not safe to visit their villages. 'It was a very different Syria this time. There was fear in people's eyes,' **Rym Ghazal** reports

DUBAI // Mohammed Salim Al Kaabi will not soon forget the face of the Syrian teenager he met in Deraa... Even as his parents pleaded with him to remain silent, Abu called out to Mr Al Kaabi and his fellow observers at a hospital: "Sir, I want to talk." He lifted his hair for their cameras, pulled himself up, lifted a blood-soaked towel from his bandaged wrist and said: "I was shot." The deputy chairman of the Emirates Human Rights Association was the only Emirati in the first group of 50 observers sent to Syria by the Arab League to ensure authorities were sticking to the terms of their peace deal.

Mr Al Kaabi returned last week from a 21-day posting in the southwestern city of Deraa, dubbed the cradle of the Syrian revolt. Since protests against President Bashar Al Assad began in March, the United Nations says at least 5,600 people have been killed.

"That boy was braver than most of the adults we met in hospitals, who were obviously shot but gave other excuses for their injuries," said the retired army officer in an exclusive interview with *The National*.

Mr Al Kaabi and the rest of the team stayed at the White Rose Hotel. "Every morning outside the hotel, we were greeted by hundreds of pro-government protesters," he said. "It felt like a sang'd-show."

The 12 Deraa observers left in

cliques of a village to get a different perspective to that of the protesters. Having travelled to Syria before the conflict began, Mr Al Kaabi said that the situation there was now "dangerous", but added that how it got to this point was "not clear-cut". "There are two many agendas with too many factors and players," he said. "Yes, we saw armed men on roofs of houses, who might be snipers. Yes, we saw those they call shabiha - armed ununiformed men - but we didn't see them use their guns. We also didn't see any armed opposition nor any armed protesters."

"It was a very different Syria this time," he admitted. "There was fear in people's eyes."

The observers were promised bullet-proof vests, but did not get them.

Instead they wore fluorescent orange vests and white ear-

'UAE's reputation opened doors'

Mohammed Salim Al Kaabi, the first Emirati peace observer in Syria, said his nationality helped pave the way for him in Deraa. "I would say I am from the Emirates and right away I was welcomed by all the different sides - whether pro or against. They felt comfortable meeting with me and sharing their stories," he said. "UAE's reputation there really helped open many doors."

Videos posted on the internet back up his claims, where a mob of Syrians can be seen yelling,

"We came, we came, Dubai. We love the Emirates."

* Rym Ghazal



Mohammed Salim Al Kaabi, deputy chairman of the Emirates Human Rights Association, was among a group of 50 observers the Arab League sent to Syria. Above, at the association's headquarters in Dubai. Sarah Daa / The National

22 members observer mission is not entirely clear. Another 15 Emirati monitors have since been sent and, during Sunday's meeting of Arab foreign ministers in Cairo, officials said they would extend the mission to Syria for another month.

However, this could change in the coming days after Saudi Arabia's announcement it will be pulling its monitors out of the mission.

✉ rghazal@thenational.ae
↳ Monitor mission, page 27

protests against Mr Al Assad erupted in March. Mr Al Kaabi said the team wanted to reduce local tensions by trying to get them released from "cell-like detention" and returned to his home to be kept under house arrest. They were not successful.

The fate of the Arab League's

team in Deraa, the elderly imam of the Hayasoon, the elderly imam of the Omari Mosque, where the first big

villages, the people would greet us with an olive branch of peace, encircle us and tell us they would be our human shields," he said.

The team met Sheikh Ahmad Hayasoon, the elderly imam of the Omari Mosque, where the first big

monitors from civic societies, subsequently pulled out, saying the mission had become "inadequate and one-sided".

Mr Al Kaabi stressed, however, that

"the government protesters stopped" meeting with us, he explained. "They told us, 'don't come to our villages any more, it is not safe'." He, along with 22 other

The National (EAU / UAE)

Transition plan in Syria forges a new consensus

The Arab League's decision to call for a national unity government to steer a transition towards democracy in Syria is, by many accounts, a moral victory for protesters.

According to the plan, President Bashar Al Assad must delegate authority to his deputy to form a government within two months. That government would then draft a new constitution and prepare free parliamentary and presidential elections.

That scenario, of course, is highly unlikely in that timetable. As expected, the Syrian regime categorically rejected the plan, describing it as "violation of the national sovereignty". It is hard to imagine Mr Al Assad ceding power under almost any circumstances after the bloodshed of recent months.

Arab states seem to have realised that Damascus believes only in tank-borne solutions. With the exceptions of Lebanon and Algeria, Arab countries have finally backed a plan that bypasses Mr Al Assad. The plan might not work, but it is an important step out of the impasse.

There were two options for the Arab states on Sunday: either refer the case to the Security Council or merely extend the observer mission. The latter would have been a failure because the observer mission has become almost irrelevant. By now it is clear that Damascus refuses to take any meaningful steps to curb the violence.

But a quick UNSC referral would have taken the issue back to square one, with countries divided over how to act. Most Arab countries, not to mention Russia, are opposed to military intervention.

Sunday's decisions, on the other hand, redefines the argument for future action against the regime. The consensus of Arab states is now that Mr Al Assad must begin a transitional process to leave. The question is only how to make that happen.

Critics of the regime in Damascus might have taken this for granted, but for the Arab League to take a clear position – Mr Al Assad must leave, and Syria embark on a political transition – is a stronger step than many expected.

For the opposition in the Syrian National Council, the ideal move would have been to refer the case to the Security Council. And, as Qatar foreign minister Hamad bin Jassim Al Thani said on Sunday, the case will be referred to the Security Council if Damascus rejects the plan. That should be all but inevitable now.

The consensus is clear that Mr Al Assad must leave. The Arab League must now focus on exerting pressure either directly, through sanctions and diplomatic efforts, or at the Security Council.


*The Syrian regime
categorically
rejected the plan*

رئيس الوزراء العراقي يعرض وساطة.. ويؤكد استعداده لقاء المعارضين السوريين
الملكي: إطاحة الأسد أو قتله سيؤدي إلى حرب أهلية

وأضاف المالكي «بفضل سياساتنا.. العراق لم ولن يتبع سياسات أي دولة أخرى».

لكن الماكفي حرص على التأكيد على أن العراق يريد علاقات جيدة مع إيران التي تربطه بها علاقات ثقافية واقتصادية ودينية، وقال في هذا السياق «لسنا عدوا لإيران ولا نقبل أن يستخدمنا البعض معمن لديهم مشاكل مع إيران كساحة معركة». البعض يريد أن يحارب إيران بموارد عراقية كما حدث في السابق. نحن لا نسمح بأن تستخدمنا إيران ضد الآخرين، كما لا نسمح للأخرين بأن يستخدمنا ضد إيران».

إلى ذلك، قال مستشار للمالكي
إن العراق مستعد للوساطة بين
الأسد وعارضيه. ونقلت وكالة
«رويترز» عن علي الموسوي
المستشار الإعلامي للمالكي أن
العراق مستعد لاستقبال المعارض
السورية في محاولة للتوصيل
إلى حل لتحقيق مطالب الشعب
السوري.



نوری المالکی (أب)

إن الرعيم الشيعي مقتنى الصدر
يضمى معظم وقته حالياً في إيران.
لكن المالكى أكد أن «العراق لا يتبع
أى دولة»، مورداً في هذا السياق
امثلة على كيف أن العراق تصرف
ضد رغبات إيران، ومن ذلك توقيعه
عام 2008 اتفاقية أمنية مع الولايات
المتحدة نصت على انسحاب قوات
الأخيرة بنهاء العام الحالى، فيما
كانت طهران ترى انسحاباً فورياً.

قد ولی. وكشف المالكي عن أن بعض المعارضين السوريين طلبوا أخيرا زيارة العراق، وأن حكومته ستلتقيهم، لكنه نأى بنفسه عن الدعوات إلى إسقاط الأسد، محدرا من أن ذلك سيدفع سوريا نحو حرب أهلية. وقال «إن قتل الأسد أو إزاحته بأي شكل سيتفجر إلى صراع داخلي بين مجموعتين، وهذا سيؤثر على المنطقة». وتابع «أرىـ وانا أيضا عشت في سوريا 16 عاماـ أن ذلك سيؤدي إلى حرب أهلية، وهذه الحرب الأهلية ستؤدي إلى تحالفات في المنطقة. لأننا بلد عانى من حرب أهلية ذات خلفية طائفية، فإننا نخشى على مستقبل سوريا والمنطقة برمتها».

ويحذر مسؤولون أميركيون من أن النفوذ الإيراني في العراق سيزيد بينما تنسحب القوات الأمريكية منه، علمًا بأن الكثريين من زعماء العراق الشيعة الحاليين كانوا أيام المعارضة يستخدمون من إيران مقراً لهم، بل

بغداد: «الشرق الأوسط»

حضرنوري المالكي رئيس الوزراء العراقي من حرب أهلية في سوريا إذا سقط نظام بشار الأسد. وقال المالكي إن «الوضع في سوريا خطير»، مضيفاً أنه «يمكن التعامل مع الأمور بشكل مناسب حتى لا يتحول الربيع في سوريا إلى شتاء».

وبيّنما يقول منتقدو المالكي إن إيران، حليف الأسد، هي التي تبني عليه موقف حكومته الذي يبدو داعماً للنظام في دمشق. أكد رئيس الوزراء العراقي في مقابلة مع وكالة «أسوشيتد برس» أول من أمس، أن العراق سينتهي بسياسات الخاصة مستقبلاً وبما تمليه مصالحه الوطنية ولن يقبل إملاءات من إيران أو أي دولة أخرى.

وقال المالكي إن العراق يؤمن
بضرورة حماية حق الشعب
السوري وإن حكومته أبلغت
النظام السوري بيان زمن حكم
الحزب الواحد والطائفة الواحدة

معارض سوري ينتقد دخول المالكي على خط الأزمة السورية

واعتبر الحمصي أن أي مبادرة يطروها المالكي هدفها إجهاض الجهود التي تقوم بها جامعة الدول العربية، مؤكدا أنه لا حوار مع نظام بشار الأسد ولا حوار مع قتلة الشعب السوري، وقال «الشعب قال كلمته (الرحيل والمحاكمة لكل رموز النظام) ولن تدخل عن ذلك أبدا».

المحصي أن «المالكي يخدم أجناد
إيرانية، وعليه أن ينأى بنفسه
عما يحدث في سوريا، لأن الشعب
لسيوري هو الذي يقول كلمته،
فسوريا التي قدمت مائة ألف شهيد
من أجل الاستقلال على استعداد أن
تدفع أكثر من هذا الثمن من أجل
استعادة حريتها واستقلالها».

وقال الحمصي لـ«الشرق الأوسط» أمس «على المالكي الذي صرّح بأنه لا يمكن أن يتخيّل سورياً من دون (الرئيس السوري بشار) الأسد أن يتذكّر اتهاماته السابقة لنظام الأسد بإيواء الإرهابيين ومخابرات التدريب الإرهابية التي تتشَّهّد حمماها ضد بغداد». وأضاف

القاهرة: صلاح حمزة

انتقد المعارض السوري محمد
مأمون الحمصي بشدة دخول
رئيس الوزراء العراقي نوري المالكي
على خط الأزمة في سوريا بعرضه
القيام بدور وساطة بين النظام
والمعارضة.

الشقة: حتى شعرة معاوية قطعت مع حزب الله.. ونقبل بالنموذج التركي وليس الإيرلندي للحكم
مراقب إخوان سوريا لـ التنمر الأوسط:
نظام الأسد في النزع الآخر.. رفعت الأقلام وجفت الصحف

A portrait of a man with white hair and a full white beard, wearing glasses and a dark suit. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

- نطمئن الجميع: لن ننتقم من أحد.. يمكن أن يأخذ القضاء دوره. ولكن لن نتجأ إلى الانتقام والتشفير
- تصريحات الأسد للصحافة البريطانية ما هي إلا عنتريات فارغة.. وهو يريد القول أنه يسيطر على البر والبحر والج

السوسي اوغر من ذلك تذكر
● لم يتمتعن بشؤون حرب
املية في سوريا؟
- استند اخراج حرب اهلية
في سوريا، وما يجري في مuhan
عابرة عن مجازات بريكتها النافذة
ضد المقاتلين المسلمين ولديهم
حرب طائفية ان المخدعون
لن ينتصروا اى مساعدة اسرى
الدولية، ويجب التنبه والقول ان
عدم اخذ النقماء السوري طفرات
مجلس الامن سوزان العرب سبيكة

ام المذكورة،
تركتيننتال
ساء اللائاء
على المكر

يم المساء في
ريكيه خالل
تفاقف أسماء
خ خالل أحد
+

تاكريمات
امل وطريقة
من استكمال

- ما أسباب تجربة النظام السوداني

إعلان عن حفل تكريم سعادة الأستاذ

دعا من الدارسين في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية خالد العريبي إلى إقامة حفل تكريمه.

ة الأستاذ / عبد العزيز بن محمد المتقى
مبعودي في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية خلال الأربع
أعوام السابقة تجاه وطنه ومواطنه.

نراي على البريد الإلكتروني: nangour@gmail.com إن الراغبين والراغبات في الحضور بذكر الاسم بالجوال أو البريد الإلكتروني، وذلك حتى نتمكن

حوسیاں

Réseau Voltaire / Voltaire.net.org / Voltaire Network

Today's Zaman (Turquie / Turkey)



REPORT: RUSSIA TO DELIVER JETS TO SYRIA

If confirmed, the deal would cement Russian opposition to international efforts to put pressure on Assad's regime over its attempts to snuff out the country's uprising.

The UN says more than 5,400 people have died over 10 months

Russia has signed a contract to sell 26 Su-30 fighter jets to Syria, it was reported Monday, in apparent support for President Bashar Assad and open defiance of international condemnation of his troops' bloody crackdown.

The respected business daily *Kommersant*, citing an unidentified source close to Russia's Rosoboronexport state arms trader, said the \$50-million deal involves delivery of 26 Su-30 aircraft.

A spokesman for Rosoboronexport refused to comment on the report. If confirmed, the deal would cement Russia's opposition to international efforts to put pressure on Assad's regime over its attempts to snuff out the country's uprising. The UN says more than 5,400 people have died over 10 months. The report of the sale comes the same day that Human Rights Watch called Russia's backing of the Syrian regime "immoral."

The Su-30 is a twin-engine combat maneuver jet that can also be used to attack ground targets. The Russian air force has recently placed an order for 55 such jets.

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said last week that Moscow doesn't consider it necessary to offer an explanation or excuses over accusations that a Russian ship had delivered munitions to Syria despite an EU arms embargo.

Russia was acting in full respect of international law and wouldn't be galed by unilateral sanctions imposed by others, he said.

Lavrov also accused the West of turning a blind eye to attacks by opposition militants and supplies of weapons to the Syrian opposition from abroad and warned that Russia will block any attempt by the West to isolate United Nations support for the use of force against Syria.

Russia has been a strong ally of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. It has supplied Syria with aircraft, missiles, tanks and other modern weapons.

Igor Korotchenko, head of the Center of Analysis of the Global Arms Trade, an independent think-tank, said the jet deal apparently reflects Moscow's view that Assad would stay in power.

"With this intention, Russia is expressing confidence that President Assad will manage to retain control of the situation, because such deals aren't signed with a government which has no power," Korotchenko was quoted by RIA Novosti news agency as saying. "We another factor by Moscow underlining its confidence that Damascus will remain its strategic partner and ally in the Middle East."

Another Moscow-based military analyst, Ruslan Pukhov, said, however, that Syria might be too optimistic about Assad's prospects.

"This contract comes at a very high danger of risk," Pukhov told *Kommersant*. "Assad's regime may fail and that would lead to financial losses for

Russia." *Caren Bogert*, the group's deputy executive director, said it's now too early to know what followed the release of HRW's annual report.

She added that the overwhelming number of victims in Syria is on the side of the demonstrators. "The continued support of this regime is immoral and not permissible," Bogert said. "The West has already made serious mistakes with the support of Afghanistan. Russia's repetition of those mistakes will lead to tragic consequences." *Moscow AP*



Syria rejects new Arab League call for Assad to step down in favor of unity government

Associated Press

The European Union backed the Arab plan Monday, and it extended existing sanctions against Assad's government by adding 22 more officials and eight companies to the blacklist.

Osama Al-Atrash, a spokesman for the Syrian National Council opposition group, said the Arab efforts do not go far enough. He and many other opposition leaders believe Assad must leave power and that anything less will just give the regime time to buy the revolution. But there are significant splits in the opposition about the way forward.

Hassan Abdul-Atta, who leads the National Coordination Body for Democratic Change in Syria, or NCB, said the Arab plan is an "advanced step" as the Arab League's members have agreed to extend the mandate of the mission for another month, according to a statement from the 22-member organization. The Arab League had three options Sunday: ending the mission and giving up its initiative, extending it, or turning the crisis over to the UN Security Council, as some opposition groups have urged. There, however, there was no agreement on the statement because of disagreements among members over how best to confront Assad's hand.

The mission's one-month mandate technically expired on Thursday.

Saudi Foreign Minister Saud al-Faisal told reporters that his country will pull out of observance because "the Syrian government did not implement the Arab plan." *Telegraph*

Moscow Times (Russie / Russia)

Report: Russia to Send Syria Jets

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russia has signed a contract to sell combat jets to Syria, *Kommersant* reported Monday, in apparent support for President Bashar Assad and open defiance of international condemnation of his regime's bloody crackdown.

The newspaper, citing an unidentified source close to the Rosoboronexport state arms trader, said the \$550 million deal envisions the delivery of 36 Yak-130 aircraft.

A spokesman for Rosoboronexport refused to comment on the report.

If confirmed, the deal would cement Russian opposition to international efforts to put pressure on Assad's regime over its attempts to snuff out the country's uprising. The United Nations says more than 5,400 people have died over 10 months. The report of the sale comes the same day that Human Rights Watch called Russia's backing of the Syrian regime "immoral."

The Yak-130 is a twin-engine combat trainer jet that can also be used to attack ground targets. The Russian Air Force has recently placed an order for 55 such jets.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said last week that Moscow doesn't consider it necessary to offer an explanation or excuses over suspicions that a Russian ship had delivered munitions to Syria despite an EU arms embargo.

Russia was acting in full respect of international law and wouldn't be guided by unilateral sanctions imposed by other nations, he said.

Lavrov also accused the West of turning a blind eye to attacks by opposition militants and supplies of weapons to the Syrian opposition from abroad and warned that Russia will block any attempt by the West to secure UN support for the use of force against Syria.

Russia has been a strong ally of Syria since Soviet times when the country was led by the president's father, Hafez Assad. It has supplied Syria with aircraft, missiles, tanks and other modern weapons.

Igor Korotchenko, head of the Center of Analysis of the World Arms Trade, an independent think tank, said the jet deal apparently reflected Moscow's belief that Assad would stay at the helm.

"With this contract, Russia is expressing confidence that President Assad would manage to retain control of the situation, because such deals aren't signed with a government whose hold on power raises doubts," Korotchenko told RIA-Novosti. "It's another gesture by Moscow underlining its confidence that Damascus will



Russia is to send 36 Yak-130 jets, like the one shown above, to Syria.



Syrians in Lebanon are angry at Russia's support for Bashar Assad.

Russia might be too optimistic about Assad's prospects.

"This contract carries a very high degree of risk," Pukhov told *Kommersant*. "Assad's regime may fall and that would lead to financial losses for Russia and also hurt its image."

Human Rights Watch warned Russia that by supporting Assad it is repeating the mistakes of some Western governments during the Arab Spring, saying they were too slow to recognize the popular desire for dem-

ent from government representatives shooting deliberately at unarmed civilians," Carroll Bogert, the group's deputy executive director, said at a news conference in Moscow that followed the release of HRW's annual report.

She added that the overwhelming number of victims in Syria is on the side of the demonstrators.

"The continued support of this regime is immoral and not permissible," Bogert said. "The West has al-

Kommersant (Russie / Russia)

Сирия отвоевала очередные Як-130

Москва и Дамаск подписали новый военный контракт

**Как стало известно „Ъ“,
Москва и Дамаск подпи-
сили новый контракт на постав-
ку 36 учебно-боевых само-
летов Як-130. Его исполне-
ние начнется сразу же по-
сле того, как Сирия перечис-
лит аванс. Однако эксперты
считают, что судьба заклю-
чаемых с Дамаском контрак-
тов на поставку оружия и во-
енной техники может повтор-
ить судьбу ливийских конт-
рактов, когда из-за санкций
Совета Безопасности ООН
Москва была вынуждена от-
казаться от контрактных обя-
зательств и потеряла потен-
циальные \$4 млрд.**

О подписании нового конт-
ракта на самолеты Як-130 меж-
ду Москвой и Дамаском „Ъ“
рассказал источник, близкий к «Рособоронэкспорту». По его
словам, в декабре стороны про-
вели предконтрактную работу,
после чего был подписан окон-
чательный контракт. По его
словам, сумма контракта соста-
вила около \$550 млн (пример-
но \$15,3 млн за одну машину).

Как отметил источник „Ъ“ в
авиапромышленном комплек-
се, загрузка Иркутского авиа-
строительного завода (входит
в корпорацию «Иркут») впол-
не позволит выполнить этот

контракт в сжатые сроки. «Не-
смотря на загрузку предпри-
ятия по производству 55 учеб-
но-боевых Як-130 в рамках го-
соборонзаказа, создать 36 нов-
ых машин для внешнего пот-
ребителя вполне по силам,—
говорит собеседник „Ъ“. — Как
только Сирия перечислит Рос-
сии аванс, завод сразу же при-
ступит к сборке второй партии
для Дамаска». Ранее BBC Си-
рии проводили обучение пи-
лотов на чешских самолетах
L-39 Albatros.

От официальных коммен-
тиков в «Рособоронэкспорте» и
корпорации «Иркут» вчера от-
казались.

«Это контракт с очень высо-
кой степенью риска,— считает
директор Центра анализа страт-
егий и технологий Руслан Пу-
хов. — С учетом нестабильной
политической обстановки в Си-
рии и сильного давления со сто-
роны США сложно предсказать,
что будет дальше. Ныне сущес-
твующий режим Башара Асада
может пасть, и это выльется в
финансовые и имиджевые по-
тери для России». Напомним,
что, по словам гендиректора
«Рособоронэкспорта» Анатолия
Исаикина, сумма потерь от по-
тенциальных невыполненных
заказов в Ливии из-за введенно-

го Совбезом ООН эмбарго соста-
вила около \$4 млрд.

Поводы для беспокойства у
России действительно есть. В нач-
але января постоянный пред-
ставитель США при ООН Сюзан
Райс открыто выразила обеспоко-
енность поставками Россией
оружия в Сирию. «Мы обеспоко-
ены поставками вооружения в
Сирию и хотим разъяснить свою
позицию любой стране, обеспе-
чивающей Дамаск оружием,—
заявила госпожа Райс. — Однако,
к сожалению, эмбарго на постав-
ки вооружения в Сирию не вве-
дено, хотя, по нашему мнению,
это стоило бы сделать». При этом
она подчеркнула, что ситуация
осложняется «нежеланием не-
которых членов Совета Безопас-
ности, включая Россию, вводить
любые санкции против сирий-
ского режима».

В ответ 18 января министр
иностранных дел РФ Сергей
Лавров заявил, что Россия не
считает необходимым объяс-
ниться и оправдываться, пото-
му что не нарушает «никаких
международных договореннос-
тей, никаких резолюций Сове-
та Безопасности». «Мы торгуем
с Сирией только тем, что не за-
прещено международным пра-
вом»,— говорит он.

Иван Сафонов-мл.