

Kees van der Plas (*)

Koerden betalen voor Trump's cadeautje aan Iran

Peter W. Galbraith was als voormalig Amerikaans diplomaat na de Golfoorlog nauw betrokken bij de politieke ontwikkelingen in Irak. Hij bespreekt deze week in het prestigieuze [New York Review of Books](#) de recente overname door Bagdad van Kirkuk. Hij laakt, evenals [Hüseyin Baybasin](#) in het vorige week geplaatste interview, de rol van Iran én het falen van de Verenigde Staten.

Galbraith hoorde van de gouverneur van Kirkuk, Najmaldim Karim ([Koerd én Amerikaans staatsburger, voormalig neurochirurg in Washington, lid van PUK](#)), dat deze vlak voor de overname door Amerikaanse strijdkrachten werd gewaarschuwd voor een Iraks/Iraans moordcommando dat hem kwam vermoorden:

*"Karim, an ethnic Kurd who had twice been elected governor of this ethnically mixed province, understood that they were not coming to oust him or even to arrest him. They were coming to kill him. The Americans knew there would be an attack on Kirkuk because their **special forces were embedded** with the Iraqi army outside the city of Kirkuk and with Kurdish troops, known as Peshmerga, within the city. While US soldiers gave Karim the warning that enabled him to escape, the Trump administration did nothing to prevent an attack in which the Iraqi army and the Iranian-commanded militias used American weapons, **including Abrams tanks.**"*

Galbraith is uiterst kritisch over het gebrek aan krachtadig optreden van de VS. Zij hadden veel eerder tussenbeide kunnen komen en verprutsten het definitief op 6 oktober, in Suleimaniya bij de begrafenis van de Iraaks-Koerdische leider Jalal Talibani. Iran was daar prominent aanwezig, de VS stuurden hun plaatselijke consul. *"On October 6, Iraqis gathered in Sulaymaniyah, about sixty miles east of Kirkuk, to **bury Jalal Talibani**. Although Talibani was the Iraqi leader most supportive of American goals in the country, the United States was represented only by its local ambassador. Iran sent its foreign minister, Mohammad Javed Zarif, and the commander of the elite al-Quds Force of the Revolutionary Guards Corps, Qassem Salimani. Zarif returned to Iran but **Salimani stayed on**"*

Qassem Salimani is de oprichter van de beruchte sjiiitische PMF-militie, die meevocht tegen IS, maar zich daarna in Tigris en Mosul ernstig heeft misdragen: *"... they burned Sunni homes, massacred prisoners, and killed civilians thought to have collaborated."*

Galbraith schrijft: *"After leaving Talibani's funeral last month, Soleimani met with PMF commanders and the Iraqi army to plan how Iraq might reassert its authority in Kirkuk. The Iraqis were particularly keen to get rid of Governor Karim. Karim, who had won a measure of support from Kirkuk's Arab and Turkmen communities, had angered Bagdad by supporting Kurdistan's recent independence referendum."*

Galbraith bekritiseert Trump, die nog steeds lijkt te denken dat Irak een buffer zal blijven vormen tegen een mogelijke doorbraak van Iran naar Syrië en daarmee Israël. Maar Trump vergeet dat in Irak al jarenlang Iran-gezinde Sjiieten aan de macht zijn. De Dawapartij van de Iraakse president Abadi: *"was supported by Iran for decades. One of **its coalition partners**, the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, was founded in Tehran in 1982. Neither Iraq nor Iran has hidden Iran's involvement in the country. Abadi's spokesman confirmed Qassem Soleimani's presence in Iraq, explaining that Iraq had both American and Iranian military advisers."*

Ook de Koerdische regio's verliezen nu hun rol als bufferzone:

“The Kurdistan Region in Iraq—much diminished in territory and economic resources, and no longer in control of its borders—does not now have the capacity to counter Baghdad or Tehran. If the US objects to Iraq’s pro-Iran policies, the Iraqis always have the option of asking the US to leave.”

Galbraith eindigt met een wrange uitsmijter:

“Speaking as an American, the ousted governor of Kirkuk Najmaldin Karim observed: The US has already **spent trillions to accomplish Iran’s objectives in Iraq**. As long as we keep doing it, why would Iran want us to leave?”

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