

The Frontiers of Loyalty: Do They Really Change?

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In December 1914, Tomas Masaryk, the future first president of Czechoslovakia, departed Austria-Hungary for Switzerland, convinced that Czech self-determination under the Habsburgs' rule was impossible. First from England and then from the United States, Masaryk agitated for Czechoslovakia's independence while forming ties with Czech and Slovak communities in the United States that forcefully lobbied the White House and Congress for national liberation. Masaryk seized upon the American entry into the First World War to persuade his friend Woodrow Wilson to award his people an independent, democratic state. Czechoslovakia, in many ways, was the creation of exiles and diaspora members who signed the famous Pittsburgh Agreement of May 1918 as the founding document of their country. Historian Avieli Roshwald wrote that Masaryk is "the most striking example of how war-time exiles in the Allied countries could propel a hitherto respected but relatively powerless figure into the seat of power" in his homeland.¹

Today, even though Iraq's territorial integrity and the right of its people to govern themselves are taken for granted, the future role of Iraqi exiles and diaspora members in the post-Saddam Hussein era must withstand a withering test of loyalty among Iraqis and Arabs, many of whom charge Americans with harboring imperial intentions. In the debate over who ought to speak on behalf of the Iraqi people and who ought to govern post-Saddam Iraq, returning expatriates hope to be at the forefront of nation building. While abroad, Iraqi exile groups were seminal in arguing the case to overthrow the

¹ Avieli Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empire: Central Europe, Russia, and the Middle East* (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 129.

tyrant. They in turn were nurtured and sponsored by the United States and Britain as critical assets in the international campaign to isolate the regime in Baghdad and were presented as the future leaders of Iraqi democracy. As they find their way back home, the returned exiles face a fundamental dilemma. On the one hand, they must demonstrate their loyalty and usefulness to their American patrons within the U.S.-led interim administration. On the other hand, they must simultaneously develop a modicum of independence from the powers that installed them, in order to combat the lingering suspicion of desertion and collaboration with the Western Allies. This echoes in many ways the experiences of politicians like Willy Brandt, who fled Nazi Germany and spent the wartime years in Norway.

As we contemplate the future of Iraq and the prospects of democracy in the Middle East, we must wonder whether Iraqi exiles such as Ahmad Chalabi, head of the American-backed Iraqi National Congress (INC), are harbingers of newfound political orientations that may help salvage their people and their states. Indeed, throughout history, political exiles have challenged traditional boundaries of authority and loyalty. As external opponents to the regimes of their native homelands, political exiles have always served as ready instruments for host governments wishing to intervene in the affairs of their enemies. Because of the difficulty of their situation, having to depict their struggle from abroad to unseat a native home-regime as a patriotic mission, political exiles tend to test the limits of and reshape concepts such as loyalty, obligation and the national interest.

But the perceived relevance of exile communities is rising in other ways. By the beginning of the 1990s, the argument that nationalism is the sole surviving claimant on primary loyalties began to erode. Since the Cold War, many have questioned the durability of the nation-state in the modern era as a supreme source of loyalty and belonging. With the structural shifts in the global economy, the digital revolution, the decline of ideologies and the perceived triumph of liberal democratic governments worldwide, there was a sense that exilic politics was also becoming irrelevant. With many declaring the control of territory and the attachment to one homeland obsolete, diasporas became celebrated as the epitome of “transnationalism” and “multiple identities and citizenship” and as representatives of the new era of “deterritorialization.”

Over the 1990s, a shift from exile politics to diaspora/ethnic politics became apparent in the international system, reflecting a growing acceptance by liberal democracies (and the United States in particular) of the need to accommodate more diverse polities and to allow a greater voice to ethnic identity, even in their foreign policy. After Mohammad Khatami and other reformist politicians won elections in Tehran, and as Iranian radicalism was said to be waning, Iranian-American Negar Akhvi wrote that twenty years after the revolution that brought Khomeini to power, the younger generation of Iranians in the United States were no longer affected by “the fatigue and the stress that enveloped the [exile] generation that fled Iran and can now see

themselves as ‘American enough’ to organize as an ethnic American lobby, yet ‘Iranian enough’ to care about what happens in our homeland.”² Indeed, by the year 2000, the signs of a more flexible world of multiple loyalties were evident in many countries with an ethnic-based identity, such as Germany. Countries which until recently prohibited dual nationality, such as Turkey and Mexico, have now extended dual citizenship and even voting rights to their kin abroad in the hope of fostering homeland loyalties from afar and harnessing financial and political support from their organized diasporas.³

What distinguishes political exiles from other diaspora members is not only the exiles’ continuous struggle to facilitate the conditions for their return, but also their determination not to establish life abroad as a comfortable option, even temporarily. In fact, the pain of being away and the fear of offspring’s losing their ancestral identity may lead some of political exiles to return even under conditions of surrender. One scholar of post-Tiananmen Chinese exiles observed that those who stayed abroad were forced “to create a mythology about their activities and successes to maintain their credibility. For many of them, any collapse of their identity as political exiles would cast doubt not only upon the value of their present situation, but also upon the meaning of the sacrifices made in June 1989 by their fellow dissidents.”⁴

In the case of Iraq, some who fled the country fearing repression or death at Saddam’s hand were eventually lured back by false promises of amnesty, forgiveness, and the imminent inauguration of pluralistic politics. Others, because of fatigue or continuous fear of retribution abroad or against relatives at home, abandoned their anti-regime agitation over time and melted into an essentially diasporic life. No doubt the domain of exile political activity provides the focus of identity, purpose, and hope to counter the fear of being forgotten and stained by the home regime, as well as the guilt of being away from the day-to-day suffering of the people for whom the political exiles always claimed to fight. The destination of exiles, far or close to the homeland, and the nature of their host society—its culture and politics—are critical factors in mitigating or exacerbating the separation anxiety.

Many states hardly function as sovereign, let alone control their boundaries. Moreover, the demarcation of boundaries on the basis of ethnic or geographic criteria is often arbitrary and completely ineffective, “because sovereignty is many times not an innate attribute of state, but something conferred by international society and that is based . . . at least partially on how leaders hope to govern.”⁵ To a large extent, this has been the historical

² Negar Akhvi, “Exile,” *New Republic*, June 12, 2000.

³ See e.g. the special issue of *Foreign Service Journal*, Oct. 2000, “A Question of Loyalty in a Multicultural World: What Does Loyalty Mean?”

⁴ Shu-Yun Ma, “The Exit, Voice, and Struggle to Return of Chinese Political Exiles,” *Pacific Affairs*, Fall 1993, p. 384.

⁵ Jeffery Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 269.

challenge of Iraq since it was forged by the British—not out of a unitary territory or peoples, but out of London’s desire to have its Hashemite ally securing its interest by proxy. The establishment of modern Iraq lumped together people with little interest in sharing a state. It immediately created a diaspora of Kurdish, Shiite, Jewish, and Christian communities (Chaldeans)—who were massacred and driven into exile when they demanded recognition and better treatment under the newly independent state. Today, though many nation-states are by all accounts failed political entities, the nation-state still remains the desired form for representing the aspirations of people who consider themselves, or are declared by aspiring rulers to be, a distinct community that ought to govern itself within its “homeland.” This reality enables all states (and many aspiring nations) to employ the rhetoric of “national loyalty” as the ultimate tool for mobilizing the sacrifice of their people in defense of the homeland.

The Iraqi Challenge

The experience of Iraq shows that in the twenty-first century, despite the advances of globalization and democracy, totalitarian states are still capable of insulating themselves from the outside world while promoting a nationalist idea that equates loyalty to the regime and its leader with loyalty to the nation. Such regimes establish a total monopoly on their societies, controlling information and using brutality to undermine any unauthorized connection to the outside world. In that respect, they elevate the notion of sovereignty to its totality by making it impenetrable. When the Baathist regime finally gained power in 1968 (after an unsuccessful coup in 1963), it moved quickly to establish totalitarian rule through show trials, public executions, secret assassinations (targeting real and alleged opponents), and the establishment of a pervasive network of secret police and informants. The internal forces that initially challenged the Baaths’ drive to hegemony (most of all the Iraqi Communist Party) soon succumbed and its leaders were executed or fled the country. When in 1979 Saddam consolidated his dictatorial rule, he created a reality in which virtually the only durable opposition in these conditions was from abroad, by Iraqis who managed to escape the regime or were abroad upon the Baaths’ consolidation of power. Even abroad, though, exiles did not enjoy complete safety, as Saddam’s agents were able to assassinate opposition figures around the globe and intimidate those who went abroad by harassing, arresting, or executing family members who remained in Iraq. Sargon Dadesho, an Iraqi exile leader in California who escaped Saddam’s hit men in 1990, recently collected \$2.4 million from Iraqi frozen assets to compensate for his emotional distress. He now promises to use the money to rebuild Iraq.

The difficulty of identifying indigenous Iraqi leaders who have not been tainted by the Baathist regime gives these expatriates added value after the regime's collapse, but the downfall of Saddam also imposes serious liabilities upon them. The double-edged dilemma of national loyalty for those who lived abroad during Saddam's reign is a function of realities and perceptions; many of the political exiles may have difficulty earning the "credential" of victimhood required by those who stayed behind. Worse still, they could be perceived to be agents of foreigners who have inflicted great pain not only on the regime, but on the people. At the same time, it is clear that indigenous contenders to power are themselves suspect of collaboration and complicity with the *ancien regime* and thus may lack a valid claim to power. Yet for years, fidelity to the dictator was a matter of life and death for the Iraqi people, as fear and expediency drove many of Saddam's "loyalists." And the false equation of national loyalty with loyalty to the tyrant quickly collapsed with the American victory.

Who deserves the future, therefore, hinges to some extent on the question of who owns the past. Many of the exiles may be perceived as lacking the valor of endurance under suffering, while those who endured may have acquiesced to the regime, and, in order to survive, made unacceptable compromises.

The return of exile groups on the heels of the coalition invasion of Iraq highlights the potentials and pitfalls inherent in nationalism and the politics of exile. The Iraqi exile opposition groups who are competing for positions of power inside the homeland are burdened with the legacy of tainted loyalties that the Baathist regime constantly attributed to its opponents, especially those abroad, who were charged with treason and desertion. For those now returning to Baghdad after long years in London, Tehran, Beirut, and Detroit, the challenge of time and destiny is highly complicated. While they enjoyed safe havens in foreign lands and even developed new affinities, time has been frozen for them in regard to the homeland. Their advantage in being away, where they could prosper and assemble a challenge to the home regime, could not forestall the fact that they and their offspring had grown distant from the realities inside their *patrie*. The passage of time has made many of them foreign to their native land while fearful of becoming too comfortable in their new country of domicile.

Obviously, the discrediting of political exiles by the home regime as "nationally disloyal" has its limits. When the regime itself completely loses its stature in the international community, as Saddam Hussein's did, safe haven and exile political activity may become immense assets if the forces with which the political exiles allied are depicted as liberators. In the Iraqi case, political exiles in the United States and England played a crucial role in discrediting Saddam in the international arena. Over the years, these exile groups demonstrated their usefulness to the American cause by corroborating

allegations of Iraq's possession of WMD, Iraq's connection to international terrorism, and by providing testimonials to Saddam's flagrant human rights abuses and atrocities. By organizing opposition bodies abroad, they also signaled to the world that Iraq had a functional alternative once Saddam was deposed. Indeed, the exile's role upon returning directly relates to how the outgoing regime collapsed and what remnants of incumbent power remained available.

As the United States tries to establish its control over Iraq through the auspices of the UN-sanctioned Coalition Provisional Authority, it is not clear to what extent exiles will actually play a role in the post-Saddam future. Early on, some in the Bush administration saw Iraqi exiles as upholders of America's cause and interests abroad and planned to use them in positions of authority in the interim administration. Just as in Afghanistan, there were appeals to the respective diaspora communities (particularly in the United States) to assume a leading role in the politics and economics of their native land and in the exportation of democratic values and entrepreneurial spirit to the homeland. However, as lawlessness descended in Baghdad and other cities in the wake of the Baathist collapse, many began to doubt the exiles' effectiveness in forging ties with remaining indigenous power bases, combating the remnants of pro-Saddam resistance, and blocking the spread of Iranian-inspired fundamentalism. Indeed, although Iraqi exiles have served as emissaries to such prominent figures as Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, the highest Shiite religious authority in the country, who had refused to either support or oppose the U.S. actions, they were also marginalized from decision-making bodies of the administration, for which the United States sought to recruit indigenous figures or retain power for itself.

International recognition and sponsorship is of immense importance to the political exiles' ability to distinguish between loyalty to their people and opposition to the native regime that had controlled the homeland. Lewis Edinger, a scholar of anti-Nazi exiles during World War II, described this conundrum when he wrote that the political exile is "torn between an almost instinctive desire to see his people spared the agony of death, destruction, and defeat and the wish to see the annihilation of the regime which drove him into exile and which to him represented the incarnation of evil."⁶ During the 2003 war in Iraq, the INC pleaded that allowing the exiles to join the fight would be both more effective for the U.S. campaign and help in the postwar rebuilding:

The coalition needs the Iraqis—Iraqis who can sneak into the cities and help organize other Iraqis, who know how to communicate with their entrapped compatriots, who can tell them why Hussein really is finished, and who are able to root out his cronies when they try to melt away into the civilian population. One cannot liberate a people—much less facilitate the emergence of a democracy—without empowering the people being liberated. It is much easier for an Iraqi soldier to join other Iraqis in rebellion than

⁶ Cited in Shain, *The Frontier of Loyalty*, ch. 7.

it is to surrender his arms in humiliation to a foreigner. . . . The more that Iraqis help, the less the coalition soldiers will have to engage in house-to-house fighting in cities.⁷

When the issue of who constitutes the people is itself at stake, and when state boundaries are challenged by secessionist claims, divisions among exiles may become even more explosive. Saddam Hussein governed under the veneer of pan-Arabism and spared no repressive means to erase minority, religious, and secessionist aspirations. In fact, his ideology altered even the original pan-Arab Baathist concept and instead developed a vision of nationalism that elevated the Iraqi people as the supreme body of the Arab world “who would never dissolve and disappear.” Amatzia Baram wrote that Saddam’s ideology described an Iraqi nation that “had been born many thousands of years ago: it had established the earliest and greatest civilization on earth . . . culminating in the Baathist regime. [Thus] it would be more important to pursue Iraqi interests than to sacrifice Iraq on the altar of Arab causes.”⁸

With Saddam’s adventures into Iran and Kuwait, and with his final confrontation with the United States in 2003, the exile opposition had great difficulty articulating a comparable vision or a convincing alternative to Saddam’s version of national unity. The Shiites labored under the suspicion of being *shuubi* (self-hating Arabs) or Iranian agents. The Kurds were widely assailed as secessionist and, as a non-Arab ethnic group, hardly evoked sympathy from other Iraqis.⁹ Saddam’s cult of personality and his recruitment of direct loyalties within all ethno-sectarian groups inside Iraq successfully split and undermined indigenous Iraqi affinity for exile leaders.

In the post-Saddam era, the question is how much of the secessionist spirit maintained by some of the exile group will feed divisions at home or whether the exiles’ desire to establish a united front will eventually help promote domestic unity. During the Spanish transition from Franco’s authoritarianism to democratic rule in the mid-1970s, pacts between antagonists were required to reduce nationalist tensions. It was at this juncture that the country benefited from the collaboration between Josep Tarradellas, the exiled president of the Generalist de Catalunya, and Spanish transitional prime minister Adolfo Suarez. The two agreed to provide the Catalans with an autonomous stature in return for Catalan’s loyalty to Spain. Despite his thirty-eight years in exile, the aging Catalan leader returned as a victor to Barcelona and was perceived by the majority of Catalans as the legitimate embodiment of Catalanism.¹⁰ Similarly, after the disastrous suppression of the March 1991 uprising, the INC adopted a vision for a

⁷ Kanan Makiya, “Iraqis Must Share in Their Liberation,” *New York Times*, Mar. 30, 2003.

⁸ Baram, “Broken Promises,” *Wilson Quarterly* (Spring 2003), p. 51.

⁹ Ofra Bengio, *Saddam’s Word: Political Discourse in Iraq* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 103–6.

¹⁰ See Javier Tusell and Alicia Alted, “The Government of the Spanish Republic in Exile: (1939–1977),” in Yossi Shain, ed., *Governments-in-Exile in Contemporary World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991), p. 160.

federated democratic Iraq that would provide significant autonomy to the Kurds and Shiites. Whether this pact is adhered to by other post-Saddam contenders will determine Iraq's fate in the years to come.

Precedents and Prospects

There are many examples from recent years of successful or frustrated returns by exiles and diaspora members, some of whom had been absent from their homelands for decades. In the 1990s, Eastern European countries invoked kinship ties when inviting their expatriates in the West to take leading posts in helping to democratize homelands emerging from the shadow of communism. Whether the returnees ascend to positions of power inside their homelands with the blessing of their people often depends on the circumstances leading to their departure and the symbolic and real status they maintained while abroad. The past democratic mandates of deposed leaders always help, as in the case of Jean-Bertrand Aristide in Haiti, although by no means are they a guarantee of renewed access to power and legitimacy. Sometimes, democratic prestige may endure for generations, even if only symbolically. In December 1990, Poland's newly elected president Lech Walesa sent a plane to London to carry home members of the Polish government-in-exile, who since 1939 had maintained the seemingly pointless body that preserved the ghost of the free Poland betrayed to Stalin at Yalta. These émigrés brought back with them the state insignia that their distant predecessors had salvaged in 1939.¹¹

The challenge for the future Iraq is the conflicting messages the exiles transport from their host societies, ranging from liberal democracy to constitutional monarchy to a workers' state to Islamic republicanism. Indeed, a critical component of this equation will be the behavior of returning Shiite exiles from Iran. These exiles are in principle less susceptible to charges of national disloyalty because they draw largely upon religious (and not national) affinity. However, the posture of some returnees from Iran, where they have formed affinities and alliances with Tehran's theocrats and come out in favor of an Islamic republic for Iraq, may be unpalatable to secularists and non-Shiites and ultimately undermine the creation of a unified, democratic society.

Political exiles who have found refuge in liberal democracies, where they have gained access, knowledge, and appreciation of free societies, may become a great asset in the rebuilding of their homelands. Broad-based diasporic support is also vital to the rebuilding process, especially when diaspora members are ready to invest economic and intellectual resources in the renewal of their homelands. At a time when financial flows from diasporas and their entrepreneurial spirits serve as engines for many economies around the world, new enthusiasm among awakened expatriate

¹¹ *Economist*, Dec. 21, 2001.

communities may turn diasporas into vanguards in the rebuilding of the homeland.

The Iraqi case shows the great impact host countries have in shaping the exile opposition. Host countries can hamstring exiles and keep them subservient to their own national interests. As one scholar wrote about the pre-1991 Iraqi exiles, “The removal of Saddam Hussein’s regime was not a foreign policy objective for [Syria and Iran]. What they really sought was a weak but territorially integrated Iraq, stripped of its capacity to pose a regional threat or foment crisis. It was within this context that regional countries offered their support to the Iraqi opposition. Consequently, the opposition camp fell hostage to the national agenda of these countries.”¹² Additionally, affiliation with countries hostile to the home regime can brand political exiles as nationally disloyal and put their families inside the homeland at grave danger. Ayatollah Muhammed Baqir al-Hakim, a high ranking Najaf cleric who established the Iranian-backed Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), had eighty family members arrested and several executed by Saddam as retribution for his refusal to stop his anti-Baathist activities. However, al-Hakim’s command of the Badr Brigade—a militia recruited from, among others, the 100,000 Iraqi Shiite refugees expelled because of their “Persian heritage”—may haunt his future leadership in Iraq.

Al-Hakim’s group is reminiscent of André Andreyevitch Vlasov’s exile army during World War II. Vlasov, a former general of the Red Army and the heroic defender of Moscow, was taken prisoner by the Germans and ultimately recruited by them, with many other Soviet POWs, to join the Nazi war effort against Stalin. Vlasov collaborated with the Nazis as leader of an independent Russian army and portrayed himself as a Russian loyalist. “It became clear to me,” he said, “that Bolshevism has involved our people in a war for interests that are not our people’s. . . . Is it not the first, and sacred, duty of every honor-loving Russian to take up arms against Stalin and his gang?”¹³ The foot soldiers that joined the Badr Brigade made choices similar to those of Vlasov, who was ultimately executed for “treason and espionage” against his homeland. The members of the Badr Brigade have yet to answer for their future national loyalty. And no matter the cause, when would-be loyalists side with other nation-states in a war against their own country, suspicions of disloyalty linger. Those Iraqi exiles thought to have supported the American invasion are likely to confront similar suspicions.

The political exile may be instrumental in his host country’s efforts to bring the downfall of the regime at home, but this does not ensure his sponsor’s future support, let alone his homeland’s appreciation. Questions of authentic representation and perceptions of disloyalty are constantly hovering and are

¹² Robert G. Rabil, “The Iraqi Opposition’s Evolution: From Conflict to Unity?” *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Dec. 2002, p. 13.

¹³ Shain, *Frontier of Loyalty*, ch. 7.

likely to increase with the length of the time abroad, which can stretch over generations. The case of Elián González in 2000 reminded us that some Cuban diaspora leaders have tried to safeguard the exile mentality against the atrophy that would be natural after a community of immigrants had been in the United States for two generations. Many Cuban-Americans found themselves torn between an attitude of political exiles nurturing the old exilic rhetoric and the hope of return and reconciliation to their new life in America. The difficulty was further exacerbated when some of the Cuban exile activists were perceived as acting outside American laws of child custody and against the best interest of a helpless Cuban child. Abiding by the wishes of the host country can come at the cost of loyalty to the exile's cause.

These problems can persist after exiles return. In Iraq, the United States has delayed plans to establish broad consultative assemblies and constitutional committees that the exiles hoped would strengthen their claims to be the legitimate voice of the Iraqi people. Still, the exiles have hesitated to confront the United States for fear of being further sidelined in the post-war administration. The longer the occupation continues, however, the greater the chance that the United States will circumvent the exiles and cede power to a newly recruited indigenous leadership.

One of the most critical factors making Iraqi exiles important at this stage is that some in the American administration see them as upholders of the American cause. As they seek to create a democratic Iraq, Americans must contend with the power vacuum produced by the lack of incumbent claimants to power and determine the extent to which the former exiles can forge strong ties with well-positioned insiders. In Iraq, the challenge is less failed-state syndrome than achieving reliable and effective control while dealing with newly reemerging ethno-sectarian cleavages.

Conclusion

There are striking similarities and yet very serious differences between Masaryk and Chalabi's political careers that may hint at the prospects for a future democratic Iraq. Whereas Masaryk played a definitive role in the history of his nation, Chalabi and the INC may yet prove an ephemeral force in Iraq, a forgotten footnote in the history of the American occupation and reconstruction effort. Unlike Masaryk, Chalabi, the scion of a prominent Shiite family, left Iraq in the late 1950s as a student, not an activist, and did not have an Eduard Benes to organize a clandestine network of underground operatives at home. Yet, like Masaryk, Chalabi, for a moment, was able to harness American interest in containing and eventually deposing Saddam by creating a durable exile coalition and building the support of large sectors of the Iraqi diaspora. Chalabi was the first to provide a voice to the sizable community of expatriates in the West who hated Saddam but were

too timid either to speak against the tyrant or to organize abroad as a diasporic lobby. He found a sympathetic ear in the corridors of power in Washington and ultimately in the White House as he sold his vision of an Iraq in concert with American principles, presenting himself and his movement as secular, democratic, and Western-oriented. He stressed his own Shiite roots, Western education, and liberal ideology as proof that Iraq's Shiites were secularly oriented, not fundamentalists like the Shiites of Iran. He argued that, unlike Afghanistan, which was always a patchwork of warring tribes, Iraq has historically enjoyed a high standard of living, gender equality, and a tradition of multi-ethnic parliamentary democracy dating from the monarchial era.

As political exiles, Masaryk and Chalabi could not afford to present their views on the shape of their multiethnic states too specifically. Masaryk was so successful and influential among the Western states that the Slavophilic wing of the party conceded control of the nationalist movement to him. This triumph effectively yoked the Slovak's demands for self-determination to the Czechs, but also guaranteed that those demands could never be completely fulfilled.¹⁴ Masaryk paid tribute to both Czech and Slovak contributions to the cause of independence, but he was mute on questions like the greater integration of the poorer Slovak community, or the large German minority in the Sudetenland, into the political and educated elite, and often lapsed into mild forms of Czech chauvinism. Similarly, Chalabi's vision for a federal structure uniting Shiites, Kurds, and Sunnis in Iraq for now lacks crucial details, such as whether representation will be based on geographic or confessional bounds and how smaller minority groups, such as the Assyrians and Turcomen, will be represented at the provincial and national level.

In one crucial way, though, Masaryk and Chalabi's tasks are dramatically dissimilar. Where Masaryk "invented" a state from the diplomatic anarchy of the disintegrating Habsburg Empire, Chalabi has to convince Iraq's occupying powers that Iraqis believe in the state as it was devised eighty years ago and that the country will not disintegrate along ethno-sectarian lines without Saddam's iron grip. Of equal importance, he must also continue to develop a version of Iraqi nationalism that can mobilize the various ethnically aligned opposition groups but keep them within the Iraqi umbrella.

Indeed, the task for all returned Iraqi exiles is not to invent the Iraqi state, but to alter the definition of Iraqi identity from its previous meaning of loyalty to Saddam. The contest among Adnan Pachachi (a former foreign minister and the scion of a prominent Sunni family), Chalabi, and Ayatollah al-Hakim in many ways demarcates the essential debate over the Iraq's future political identity. Pachachi's leadership represents a sort of return to pre-Baathist Iraqi politics, the era in which a Sunni head of state arbitrated between the Kurdish and Shiite interests and maintained Iraq's connection and orientation to the Arab world. Al-Hakim and SCIRI propose making Iraq

¹⁴ Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism*, pp. 131–2.

into an Islamic Republic, similar (but not identical) to Iran's, giving a voice to Iraq's Shiite majority that they have never previously enjoyed. Chalabi and the INC's proposal for federalism, as vague as it is, would remove Iraq from the Arab fold and devolve the power of identity to the ethnic groups.

Revising the frontiers of national loyalty is always a difficult task, especially for political exiles. Where the state can use its control over educational system and citizenship laws to invite or expel those considered "foreign" from the national body, exiles lack the coercive power of the state and are already considered by many to be outsiders. Even when they have strong international patrons that advance their cause, they are usually treated not as players but as playing cards. Nevertheless, functioning outside the nation-state can provide political exiles the freedom to be intellectually innovative in ways that may be impossible inside the homeland.

Historically, Arabs and Muslims living abroad have produced significant political movements that ultimately led to the creation of new political identities in their countries of origin. Yet these identities were mostly incongruent with extant state boundaries; they were more ethereal and unbounded notions of "peoples" or "community of believers." The visions of Arab nationalism or Muslim brotherhood (that in principle adamantly oppose each other) tend to foster inter-Arab and inter-Muslim violence rather than Muslim or Arab solidarity. These dreams continue to plague efforts to conduct politics within the confines of the nation-state system.

Major exponents of pan-Arabism began their careers as student leaders in French universities, where they were deeply influenced by the notions of *Völkisch* nationalism espoused by Herder and Fichte. Exiles such as Michel Aflaq, the intellectual godfather of Iraqi Baathism, returned to their homelands bent on replacing the boundaries of the numerous Middle Eastern states, which they viewed as an imperially imposed artifice, with a single unified state incorporating all Arabic-speakers.¹⁵

Pan-Islamism, the notion that religion, not ethnicity, language, or country of origin, should unite Muslims around the world, has also played a prominent role in the intellectual life of exiles and diaspora members. In the past thirty years, at least, pan-Islamism has been the strongest competitor to the Muslim state, leading many states to seek the arrest, exile, or execution of Islamic activists. This state-mosque conflict has caused the Muslim emigrés to be swayed by dissident Islamists such as Osama bin Laden, Sheikh Omar Rahman, and Ayatollah Khomeini, who opposed the current Arab and Islamic state structure. In recent years, we have also seen Muslim and Arab diasporas in the U.S., Britain, France, and Germany prove ripe recruiting grounds and safe harbors for movements which violently attack their homelands for being too liberal.

¹⁵ Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation State* (New York: St. Martin's, 1997), pp. 142–8, 204.

At the same time, though, there are voices in the diaspora calling for a higher premium's being placed on freedom in the Arab and Muslim world, who wish to return and rebuild their homelands along democratic lines. Reviewing the career of Ayatollah Abd al-Majid al-Khoi, the son of the former Grand Ayatollah of Iraq, who lived ten years in London but was murdered upon his return to Najaf in April 2003, one scholar concluded that "the experience of exile in the United Kingdom [and elsewhere] . . . seems to make a rising number of Iraqi Shiites realize that a democratic solution in Baghdad may help them practice their legitimate rights in a future Iraq."¹⁶ If the example of Masaryk's Czechoslovakia is any indication, the ability of Iraqi exiles to win domestic and American appreciation for their leadership role depends on their ability to translate values and practices learned in the West into forms that resonate with the historical experiences of those who stayed behind.



¹⁶Jean-Uwe Rahe, "Iraqi Shi'is in Exile in London," in Faleh Abdul Jabar, ed., *Ayatollahs, Sufis, and Ideologues* (London, Saqi Books, 2002), p. 218.