

**Democratization after Iraq:
Expatriate Perspectives on new British agendas in the Arab Middle East**

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BRISMES

Graduate Section Annual Conference

2012

NB This paper forms part of a broader PhD study on the evolution of British democratisation policy in the Arab MENA since 2003, examining the contribution of Arab expatriates to foreign-policy development in their countries of origin. The thesis will discuss British policy interventions through four case studies - Iraq, Libya, Bahrain and Syria, and the findings in this project are based on the outcome of interviews conducted with diaspora from those countries in Britain in 2011-12.

‘Politically too, we rushed into the business with our usual disregard for a comprehensive political scheme. The real difficulty here is that we don't know exactly what we intend to do in this country. Can you persuade people to take your side when you are not sure in the end whether you'll be there to take theirs? It would take a good deal of potent persuasion to make them think that your side and theirs are compatible.’

- Gertrude Bell, Diaries, Basra 1916¹

'Our forces are friends and liberators of the Iraqi people, not conquerors. And they will not stay in Iraq a day longer than is necessary. I know from my meetings with Iraqi exiles in Britain that you are an inventive, creative people. It is in the spirit of friendship and goodwill that we now offer our help.'

- Tony Blair, Speech to the people of Iraq, 10 April 2003

Introduction

On 7 April, 2002, a year to date before Coalition forces meted out the last blows to the fall of Saddam Hussein's Baghdad, then British Prime Minister Tony Blair was delivering a speech at the Presidential library in the home state of American President George Bush. 'The plight of the Middle East would make the hardest heart break,' he said. 'Anyone with an ounce of humanity watching the current horrors unfold on TV screens across the world is willing the international community to help.'² And to anyone familiar with the history of civil or religious conflict, he claimed, the pattern was 'sickeningly predictable'. Against this bane of dictatorship and violence, and with an arsenal of idealism and realpolitik, Blair committed his government to defending the values at the basis of the transatlantic alliance: freedom, democracy, justice, tolerance and respect.

'The promotion of these values becomes not just right in itself but part of our long-term security and prosperity. We can't intervene in every case. Not all the wrongs of the world can be put right, but where disorder threatens us all, we should act. Like it or not, whether you are a utilitarian or a Utopian, the world is interdependent. One consequence of this is that foreign and domestic policy are evermore closely interwoven.'

The speech was prescient for a number of reasons, perhaps more than the former PM could then have known. Not least among them, because it signalled Britain's participation in an august military adventure that would check future governmental ambition towards foreign interventions in the name of liberation or democracy. So too, the pending war would unleash new patterns of civil and sectarian violence of the kind that Blair lamented – patterns which may well have been predicted with greater heed or historical acumen. More locally too, New Labour's adherence to grand foreign-policy strategies would indeed weave its way into domestic politics, as British democracy mobilised against the war in some of the largest manifestations of popular opposition the country had ever seen. And as would later be argued, events surrounding the United Kingdom's involvement in the

1 Cited in Sluglett, Peter., *Britain in Iraq, 1914-1932* (London: Ithaca Press for the Middle East Centre, 1976), 13.

2 Prime minister's speech at George Bush Senior Presidential Library, 8 April 2002. At: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2002/apr/08/foreignpolicy.iraq>

2003 war in Iraq laid bare some of the pitfalls of this democracy, as reflected in the foreign and domestic policies administered by Blair's government of the time.³

Today, the ramifications of these flaws continue to be felt on both a national and international level: in Britain, amongst disenchanted elements of an electorate who had vested greater hope in the ideals of the Blair leadership, and amongst policy-makers in Westminster still haunted by their predecessors' democratic interventionism in the Middle East. Abroad, the fallout of the 2003 Coalition campaign remains acutely, and violently, apparent in everyday Iraq, all be the precise features of its legacy still unclear. On Iraq's borders and in the wider region, its echoes can be heard in opposition to, or cynical appraisals of Western interference voiced by those struggling on the part of more indigenous campaigns for democratic regime change. It is the link between these two spheres of domestic and foreign policy in Britain, and their implications for the country's role in sponsoring values of freedom, justice and tolerance on an international scale, which will form the subject of this paper. Specifically, the export of British democratic ideals, or Blair's 'moral force', will be examined through the perspective of those who have approached it with one foot in the United Kingdom's parliamentary democracy and the other in some of the world's more resilient and oppressive systems; namely, members of the Arab diaspora in Britain.

Several weeks before Blair's Texas speech, ministers from his Foreign Office has been engaged in meetings with representatives of the Iraqi opposition in exile, among them, Ayad Allawi, who was to become the interim Prime Minister of Iraq in the years following the war, and Ahmed Chalabi, later the country's Oil Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. The former pressed a case for Britain's participation in a military intervention to remove Saddam Hussein, claiming that members of the Ba'ath party and military would be prepared to side with the Iraqi people against the regime in the event of armed conflict.⁴ Chalabi, meanwhile, advised that Britain could play a significant role in this future, through training in the administration of justice and democracy.⁵ Although policy-makers privately expressed some doubts about their credibility,⁶ exile figures such as these and their associated political groups figured prominently in New Labour's public construction of a humanitarian case for the invasion. Their real influence, however, came to bear after the fall of Saddam from 2004 onwards, when diaspora politicians were recruited by the Coalition to fill key leadership posts in the nascent Iraqi administration as part of a revised post-war strategy that prioritized expedient exit over state-building.⁷ The swift delegation of power to diaspora figures known to the Coalition, but with disputable reputation in and roots amongst the Iraqi population, was in the eyes of many to have direct ramifications for the violent trajectory of the country in the years following regime change. Moreover, perceptions of the disproportionate influence of key exile figures appears to have done much to alienate large elements of the Iraqi community in the UK from both the political institutions of their host country and efforts towards the socio-political reconstruction of Iraq. Despite the primacy of exiles as a justificatory premise for the Coalition's war, examination of de facto collaboration between policy-makers and Iraqi communities in Britain suggests that the consultative effort made by British authorities in forging pre and post-war policies

3 Kettell, Steven, *Dirty politics?: New Labour, British democracy and the invasion of Iraq* (London: Zed Books, 2006), 33

4 Letter to Mister Bradshaw's Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), 12 April 2002.

5 Ibid.

6 As noted in a memorandum to Mr Bradshaw's office, FCO, 25 March 2002.

7 Cockburn, Patrick, *The occupation: war and resistance in Iraq* (London: Verso, 2006), 57.

was limited in both depth and ambit. For all Blair's pre-invasion appeals to community as a framework within which to justify a war of liberation, efforts at co-operation with the Iraqi diaspora proved negligent at best, or self-serving at worst. Indeed, the New Labour record of dealings with Iraqi expatriates reveals that, however noble Blair's espoused vision for a democratic Iraq, his political means would betray his ends.

The joint campaign to remove Saddam Hussein was supposed by many to signal a reconfigured approach to international relations in Western foreign policy; a new paradigm infused with confidence, democratic possibility and ideals of global justice and co-operation. Its legacy, however runs counter to this vision. A decade on from the war, Iraq remains dysfunctional, oppressive and violent, and Western governments more reticent to engage in murky humanitarian or democratic expeditions abroad. Events of the so-called Arab Spring meanwhile have revealed that several months' peaceful protest may yet prove more effective than a decade of hard Western power in toppling dictators and seeding democratic change in countries in the region.⁸ With the Coalition's narrative of Western moral and military power in demise, it appears that policy-makers have recently grappled to respond to more organic campaigns for Arab democracy, and their many potent and ambiguous implications. As has been noted, social, economic and political mobilisations by diaspora communities have the potential to effect the course of such struggles in their home countries; to promote reconstruction, support armed conflict and hinder peace initiatives.⁹ Arab expatriates in Britain, who have adopted key roles in representing or lobbying on the part of local movements over the past year, therefore represent both a potential asset and a peril in the political re-envisioning of modes of intervention and co-operation: a project in which the Iraq example is instructive.

All the Dangers of War: the Iraqi diaspora in Britain

Two days before Coalition forces launched their first military attack on Iraq in March 2003, Prime Minister Blair, opened a House of Commons parliamentary debate on the invasion with an anecdote about an interaction with an Iraqi exile living in the UK:

'Four million people out of a population of just over 20 million are living in exile. I recall a few weeks ago talking to an Iraqi exile and saying to her that I understood how grim it must be under the lash of Saddam. 'But you don't', she replied. 'You cannot. You do not know what it is like to live in perpetual fear.' And she is right. We take our freedom for granted. But imagine what it must be like not to be able to speak or discuss or debate or even question the society you live in. To see friends and family taken away and never daring to complain. To suffer the humility of failing courage in face of pitiless terror. That is how the Iraqi people live. Leave Saddam in place, and the blunt truth is that that is how they will continue to be forced to live. We must face the consequences of the actions that we advocate. For those of us who support the course that I am advocating, that means all the dangers of war.'¹⁰

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Britain came to play host to the largest number of Iraqis seeking refuge from the Ba'athist regime of any state, and the Iraqi exile presence was central to the politics

⁸ Tisdall, Simon, 'Lessons from Libya', *The Guardian*, 13 October 2011

⁹ Smith, H. and Stares, P. (eds), *Diasporas in conflict : peace-makers or peace-wreckers?* (New York : United Nations University Press, 2007)

¹⁰ House of Commons Hansard Debates, 18 March 2003. Available at:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmhansrd/vo030318/debtext/30318-09.htm>

of New Labour's involvement in the purported liberation of the country.¹¹ By the time Britain began contemplating a military campaign in Iraq in 2002, Iraqis were seeking refuge in the UK at greater numbers than any other nationality, representing some 17% per cent of total claims made to the Home Office.¹² Following the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003 and Britain's concurrent suspension in assessing claims from Iraq, asylum applications dropped sharply, but increased again with the surge in sectarian violence in Iraq from 2007. By 2009, Iraqis were once more amongst the more numerous applicants for asylum in Britain.¹³

The Iraqi population in Britain is distinguished not only by communities of diverse ethnic backgrounds and religious affiliations, but also economic and social means related to the time and manner of their arrival. It is therefore a diverse and multifaceted diaspora. At its most extreme, this diversity is reflected in the disparity between settled communities with high levels of education, employment and social mobility, and more recent failed asylum applicants living transiently or sometimes illegally on the margins of British society. Generalisations about social status, ideological outlook or politics are thus difficult. This study does not attempt a survey of general community opinion, but rather seeks to document the specific perspectives of those who have evinced a concern with politics or development in their countries of origin according to which they have attempted to influence British policy. The research does, however, seek to account for a diversity of perspectives and experiences amongst Iraqi expatriates and interviewees have been selected to reflect a representative range of ethnic and religious backgrounds as well as political alignments.¹⁴ The majority of those interviewed for this research migrated to the UK during the 1970s and 80s, either as independent students or as small children with their parents, and their social profiles reflect the broad characteristics of the settled British-Iraqi population.¹⁵ Although political beliefs and activities varied to some extent in accordance with individual backgrounds, all participants stressed the non-denominational nature of their relationship to Iraqi communities in Britain. As was immediately apparent from interviews, the Iraqi diaspora is riddled with political and ideological fissures (and often long-standing grudges), many of which are a corollary of the country's history of conflict, repression and revolt. By contrast, ethnic and religious differences did not seem to inspire the same division amongst members of the settled diaspora, with socialising and collaboration apparently taking place across different cultures and faiths.¹⁶ Characteristically,

11 The history of emigration from Iraq is one of a continuum of economic incentives and forced migration that rose steadily over the course of the 20th century with the country's various political transitions and conflicts. □ Two distinct waves of expatriation are identifiable, with emigration increasing exponentially following the rise to power of Saddam Hussein in the late 1980s and again after the US-led invasion of Iraq of 2003, climaxing in 2007. Concurrently, specific dispersions or relocations of Iraq's various ethnic and religious populations have taken place over the past century, notably with the exodus of Iraqi Jews following the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1948 and ongoing persecution of Assyrian Christians, Mandeans, Kurds and Turkomen.

12 '200 Iraqis a month seek asylum in Britain', *Telegraph.co.uk* 12 February 2004 (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1454027/200-Iraqis-a-month-see-asylum-in-Britain.html>)

13 However, the Home Office resettlement quota of 750 per annum has meant the majority of Iraqis arriving in the UK have had their claims rejected or are awaiting the outcome of appeals.

14 A total of 16 Iraqi expatriates, including Shia and Sunni Muslims, Christians, Kurds, Turkomen and secular Muslims, were formally interviewed for this study, with participants representing asylum seeker, economic migrant and exile backgrounds.

15 By contrast to more recent waves of immigration from Iraq, these individuals are predominantly from middle-class backgrounds with the economic resources to migrate as students or professionals without reliance on British welfare or protection mechanisms. □ The majority of the Iraq-born participants had been foreign educated, either in Britain or elsewhere, and gone on to work as professions in medicine, engineering or commerce - fields in which the British-Iraqi community in Britain has gained prominence. Participants in the study represented a range of ethnicities and religious backgrounds, including Kurds, Sunni and Shi'ia Muslims, Christians, Turkomen and non-practising Muslims.

16 It is significant that this observation applies only to more established Iraqi communities in Britain who emigrated before the 2003 conflict and subsequent rise of sectarian conflict. Needless to say, many of those who have left Iraq since the war have been more closely affected by ethnic and religious divisions.

participants were emphatic that their friendships were not dictated by cultural identities, but rather described themselves 'first and foremost as Iraqis'.

The context in which many Iraqis left the country means that the diaspora in Britain is distinguished by a strong culture of activism in civic and political life, with a wide range of civil society organisations founded since the expansion of the community from the 1970s. Many of these have developed in line with the different concerns related to their reasons for migration, for example, the ethnic rights of Turkomen and Kurdish groups, while others have been associated with political groups or causes in Iraq such as trade unionism or communism. A number of interviewees had been involved in the vibrant student activist scene of the 1970s, which spawned seminal political networks in the Iraqi community, and had since taken up roles in politics and community leadership in addition to professional employment. Involvement in campaigning had enabled them to maintain strong ties to politics in Iraq, and their activism was premised partly on the belief that they would return to their home country after what were perceived as temporary political instabilities or threats had subsided. However, for many who had come as privately-financed or government-sponsored students, it was their political activism in Britain that later prohibited returning to Iraq following the rise of the evermore repressive Saddam Hussein regime. As one journalist and activist who came to Britain in 1976 explained:

'some of us went back to Iraq and some were imprisoned or disappeared there. But a lot of people stayed in Britain for longer than anticipated by virtue of their political activities. We effectively became exiles.'¹⁷

Despite the impossibility of return for many Iraqis, continuing personal and political ties to Iraq and cultural diversity within the diaspora, combined with specific local factors led Britain to become what is described as the political and cultural centre of the Iraqi diaspora.¹⁸ So too, the historic links between Britain and Iraq and the UK government's continued involvement in the once colonial outpost, have generated channels through which diaspora communities might influence political conditions in Iraq. This potential has manifest throughout the duration of Iraqi settlement in Britain, but with increasing prominence since the 1970s, in campaigns directed at specific aspects of British foreign policy in Iraq and the wider region. Much of the early British-Iraqi activism of the 1970s and 80s centred around issues of human and civil rights in Iraq through raising awareness about ethnic minority abuses or political repression under the Ba'athist regime. Campaigns united activists from across the political and ethnic spectrum, and founded continuing links between the diaspora and British civil society and parliamentary bodies. As one community leader explained:

'our activities put us very much in contact with different institutions, whether it was Westminster, the media, trade unions, local authorities or the women's movement. We were received by MPs, mainly liberals from the left and Labour parties like Ann Clywd, and together we built up a number of campaigns, partly lead led by MPs. We were no stranger to them and they showed solidarity with us, whether Kurds, Arabs, Islamists or Communists.'¹⁹

Following Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, political involvement increased, with energies crystallising around the foreign policy response of Western governments, namely, the United Nations imposition of economic sanctions and the United States-led invasion, both of which received British backing. The increasing tyranny of the regime throughout the 1980s broadened the scale and demography of the British-Iraqi diaspora, however, opposition to the sanctions and ensuing military action was prevalent throughout the community. Yet despite endorsement for anti-sanctions campaigns by a range of civil society bodies and elements of the left-wing political

17 Interview with Sami Ramadani, 14 October 2011.

18 Al-Ali (2007), 117.

19 Interview with Jabbar Hasan, London, 1 September 2011.

establishment, the influence of lobbying efforts within Westminster was limited. The endurance of British policies perceived as detrimental to Iraqi civilians in the face of diaspora opposition and humanitarian indicators reinforced the doubts held by many about British foreign policy motives in the region: views that were affirmed by Western responses to democratic uprisings across Iraq in the aftermath of the Gulf War. Many politically-active members of the British Iraqi diaspora, in particular Kurds, retained strong links to groups participating in the wave of anti-government rebellions that swept through Southern and Northern Iraq from March 1991. Like those inside Iraq, diaspora activists were inspired by a perception that Saddam Hussein's regime had been weakened by a decade of war and was vulnerable to destabilisation or even overthrow by domestic forces, with outside backing. Interviewees characteristically portrayed this moment as a missed opportunity, lamenting their inability to affect military support from either London or Washington, despite both countries having encouraged the uprisings inside Iraq.²⁰ As one Kurdish activist explained:

'It was just like the Arab Spring now. All the towns and villages fell into power of the uprising, from Kurdistan to Basra. But Saddam still had the military advantage, and Britain did nothing, absolutely nothing, even though their armies were right there on the border.'

The brutal repression of the uprisings and subsequent massacre of thousands of civilians under the watch of US and UK forces, described as mere 'audiences' to the bloodshed, was formative in shaping Iraqi attitudes towards any Western attempts to advocate humanitarian intervention in the country. The perceived failure of British policy-makers to help realise the democratic potential of the movement or to forestall its violent defeat was a key theme in diaspora responses to later claims by the New Labour government to be concerned with democratising Iraq. However earnest the Prime Minister's determination that the Coalition would seed freedom in Iraq, diaspora views were not generally clouded by the same idealism. Lasting impressions of British democratisation policy as selective or insincere were encapsulated by one interviewee who described his reaction to the first suggestions of a coalition campaign to liberate Iraq:

'Britain did not have this policy of intervening in Iraq in 1991. That was a totally different scenario and the time when there could have been a more constructive intervention, but they allowed Saddam to return to power again. Britain needn't have done even 50 per cent of what they were planning in 2003 for it to have succeeded. Instead, they wait 13 years and suddenly wake up in the morning and want to bring democracy to Iraq? To us, this was ridiculous.'²¹

The actions that we advocate: the Coalition campaign

It has been suggested that narratives surrounding Britain's involvement in the 2003 war broadly align with two differing interpretations of the New Labour campaign.²² On one hand, the 'lap-dog' account' argues that the foreign policy of Blair's newly re-elected government was dictated by its subservient relationship to the US and a desire to further British national interests through the transatlantic alliance. The second account suggests that London saw regime change in Iraq as an effective means of promoting global security and regional democratisation and that policy-makers

20 On February 15, 1991, Bush made an announcement on the US official external radio broadcaster, Voice of America, claiming that: 'there is another way for the bloodshed to stop. And that is, for the Iraqi military and the Iraqi people to take matters into their own hands and force Saddam Hussein, the dictator, to step aside and then comply with the United Nations' resolutions and rejoin the family of peace-loving nations.' A week later and several days before the signing of the Gulf War ceasefire, a Saudi-based Iraqi opposition radio station that was funded and operated by the CIA issued a similar call for Iraqis to overthrow their leader. Broadcast by a defected Ba'ath party member, the statement urged people across the country to 'start a revolution... and rise to save the homeland from the clutches of dictatorship.'

21 Interview with Jabbar Hasan, London, 1 September 2011.

22 Kettell (2006), 42.

were motivated by sincere intentions and concrete convictions, irrespective of their bungled realisation. These two trajectories were broadly echoed in British-Iraqi perceptions of the campaign. However, formative prior experiences of British policy-making in Iraq meant that the overwhelming diaspora response to proposals about a liberation campaign was one of cynicism. By contrast to the limited awareness of Britain's record of involvement in the region amongst non-Arab Britons, interviewees emphasised the long historical memory of the Iraqi community whose views were formulated by decades of political participation and common experiences as the subjects of imperialism. Even those who had left Iraq at a young age were affected by a heightened consciousness of their national past and Britain's colonial engagement in the Middle East over the past century. As one respondent summarised:

'Our judgement is not built on today only, we are talking about history. Since the British came to Baghdad during WW1, they always said they came as liberators, not occupiers. But that is absolutely the opposite way they dealt with people. I remember people telling me how the British army treated Iraqis, their use of our resources, how they supported the monarchy against the will of the people and what they did during my time in the 70s and 80s. So we were very sceptical. A lot of people in Iraq think that the Western position in the Middle East is a corrupt one and had no faith that the Coalition was coming over because they wanted the people to be free. Those powers that supported sanctions and waged war against us had almost no credibility.'

Despite this cynicism, many were undeterred from actively supporting Coalition efforts to depose Saddam and backing for British participation in the invasion thus came from members of the diaspora with positive views of New Labour's intentions, as well as others willing to set aside their mistrust for the prospect of national liberation from Saddam. Many of those from the latter category were Kurds or other exiles who viewed the war as a rare, and perhaps final opportunity to free Iraq from the potentially eradicable Ba'athist grip. One Kurdish interviewee described his community's support for Blair's campaign as inspired by a sense of cumulative despair about the future of Iraq:

'We are not fools but we were hopeless: we were shattered, physically and psychologically. Every family was touched by the regime, even here in England. We couldn't do anything alone, so that is why many of us suspiciously convinced ourselves that they wanted to replace Saddam's regime with a democratic one and we took this chance: sometimes when the devil comes to help you, you will just take his hand and say 'let's go'.'

This willingness to endorse the Coalition democratization effort thus drove a wedge in the diaspora between supporters and opponents of the pending invasion, with both sides apparently driven by an overriding concern for the welfare of the Iraqi people and nation. While all seemed to share a desire for the democratic vision espoused by Blair, perspectives diverged dramatically on the capacity and importantly, commitment of the Coalition to realising this ends. While pro-war diaspora voices dominated political and mainstream media campaigns around the war, many of those who opposed it expressed a preference to remain silent rather than risk articulating views perceived as taboo by elements of the Iraqi community. As one long-standing human-rights activist explained:

'we became two big camps: for the war and against it. Those who opposed the war were often portrayed as supporters of Saddam which was a big problem for us. We did not hear any rational voice that could distinguish between this camp and that one – it was very black and white. But really we were all just tired and wanted an end to the regime.'

Others spoke of the challenges of forging a unified lobby or political front in such a heterogeneous and internally conflicted diaspora. A former member of the Iraqi Islamic Party in the UK described his campaign against the invasion as hampered by community opposition and the perceived bias of policy-makers towards pro-war voices.

'We saw so many possible alternatives and submitted reports to MPs talking about change from inside Iraq. But we could not build a campaign. If you talked about being against an attack on the Iraqi army, people would straight away say you were a Saddam supporter. There were so many differences in the political agendas of the Iraqi diaspora, each had their own interests depending on the background of the political group they were associated with.'²³

However, whether because of their relative efficiency or parallel interests, a number of established Iraqi opposition groups in-exile were able to gain more traction for their regime-change agendas amongst policy-makers in Britain and the US. Among the most prominent figures, was the exiled politician and businessman Ahmed Chalabi. Later described as 'the most important source of unrealistic optimism about post-war Iraq', Chalabi left Iraq as a child and was raised in the UK and US, before returning to the region. After being convicted of fraud in relation to a banking venture in Jordan, he came back to London in the wake of the Gulf War, where he founded the Iraqi National Congress (INC) – a lobbying umbrella group comprising a loose coalition of different opposition parties. Although Washington's relations with the INC were apprehensive, information (later proven to be false) provided by the group appeared in intelligence dossiers on both sides of the Atlantic in the lead up to the Iraq campaign and became pivotal to the pro-war case. With respect to Chalabi's role, one former American senior military expert described the suspicion with which the INC cohort was regarded by intelligence advisors, noting that their sources were 'always looked at very, very sceptically by the analysts. But that wasn't the case with the policy-makers.'²⁴

Even prior to the adoption of regime change as official UK policy, advisers from the Foreign Office had stated the importance of maintaining ministerial contact with a number of Iraqi diaspora groups who had approached government to lobby for a Coalition intervention.²⁵ In addition to the INC, amongst these parties were the Iraqi National Accord (INA), Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), all of whom had representation amongst the UK Iraqi diaspora. Reports from the time note that talk of military action against Iraq amongst senior policy-makers identified these groups as a focus for any attempt to overthrow Saddam, despite awareness that some lacked credibility as an opposition force due to having been outside Iraq for the major part of Ba'athist rule.²⁶ The then Foreign Office Minister Ben Bradshaw, and other Downing Street representatives subsequently agreed to requests for meetings from figures including Chalabi, the UK-based former Ba'athist Ayad Allawi (INA) and Kurdish Latif Rashid (PUK), who jointly pressed for British support for a programme of regime change. In a March 2002 meeting with Minister Bradshaw, Dr Allawi stated that the UK needed to move beyond UN resolutions on Iraq, reiterating the desire of the Iraqi population for external intervention, as well as the alleged backing of some additional 15 opposition groups who agreed that Saddam should be dealt with militarily. He also noted that fears of sectarian disintegration or regional spill-over as a result of an invasion were unfounded.²⁷ Emphasis was placed by a number of diaspora representatives on the high-number of regime defections taking place and the importance of harnessing support from the existing Iraqi army, retaining Iraq's existing infrastructure and avoiding retributive de-Ba'athification measures. The danger inherent in dismantling the Iraqi bureaucracy and army was restated at subsequent meetings with other prominent British-Iraqi cultural and political figures in London.

In a separate meeting with the Minister in March 2002, Chalabi said that the Iraqi opposition which had been disregarded by Britain in 1991 should now be afforded a role in the overthrow of Saddam.

23 Interview with Fareed Sabri, London, 11 October, 2011.

24 Cited *ibid*.

25 Letter to Mister Bradshaw's Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), 12 April 2002.

26 As noted in memorandum to Mr Bradshaw's office, FCO, 25 March 2002.

27 Minutes from meeting of Mr Bradshaw with Iraqi opposition, FCO, 20 March 2002.

Stating the INC's main priority as a concrete plan for a viable, democratic replacement to the regime, Chalabi suggested that the UK could assist in securing support from other European countries. All representatives agreed on the need to involve the Iraqi people in regime-change and reconstruction and suggested they could recruit piers from within Baghdad-controlled Iraq to participate in such planning. The Minister in turn, outlined the role the exiled Iraqi opposition might play in promoting the cause of regime change by reminding the world of the repressive nature of Ba'athist rule while generating a clear vision for post-Saddam Iraq - goals which were partly facilitated by London's hosting an Iraqi opposition conference in December 2002. Whitehall officials present at the conference noted the fractious character of debates amongst opposition attendees, whose ability to represent diverse ethnic and religious constituents in Iraq had been called into question by other diaspora groups. In the US, however, the diversity reflected in the conference was hailed by White House officials who pledged to work with the delegated coordinating committee to achieve its goals.²⁸ Two days after the conference, Downing Street received a visit from leaders of the KDP and PUK, Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani, and also expressed support for the opposition's role in mapping the future of a post-Saddam Iraq, including questions of constitution-drafting and reconciliation.

Despite Washington and London's public advocacy of a representative and unified Iraqi opposition in exile, large elements of the British-Iraqi population viewed Coalition alliances with diaspora figures as both narrow and selective. Where the London conference had included a diverse range of political affiliations and broad debate on an Iraqi transition to democracy, many interviewees suggested that official endorsement of the final INC-dominated programme cemented the exclusion of representative voices from both the diaspora and inside Iraq. The prevailing view amongst those who supported the invasion as well as those who opposed it was that official dealings with the exiled opposition were inspired by a drive to gain legitimacy for the Coalition campaign rather than an informed, nuanced picture of Iraqi opinion. That diaspora politicians retained more credibility within policy-making circles than amongst the Iraqi population they claimed to represent, was reflected in frank appraisals of these relations by other exiles and opposition activists. As one interviewee described:

'The 2002 London conference supports a thesis of coincidence, rather than co-operation between the diaspora and policy-makers and the manner opposition was used was totally unethical. Chalabi, Allawi and others at the congress were very well supported by the US and British who pumped resources into them. The Coalition dealt primarily with these sort of people who suited their agenda – they were capable politicians, but they were ultimately self-serving and did not have very deep roots on the ground.'

Even those who were engaged in lobbying efforts in support of regime change were candid about the pragmatic nature of relations between exiled opposition members and policy-makers. One former member of the British KDP and now MP in the KRG described that:

'By the time we were having the discussion about the war, it was already a done deal. The debate and conferences which took place in London were largely discussions for our own convenience. The decision had already been made and unofficially, ministerial posts for the new Iraq were being given out. It was not a question of if, but how and when.'²⁹

Beyond relations with elite elements of the exiled Iraqi opposition, it appears there was little effort to collaborate with diaspora views and politics on a more grass-roots or community level. As a

28 Days earlier, press reports revealed that George W. Bush's administration had released \$92 million to train 1,000 Iraqis screened by the Iraqi National Congress (INC).

29 Interview with Muhammad Kayani, London, 29 August, 2011.

former leader of the Iraqi Association UK explained: 'they involved some influential individuals and met with opposition and other political groups, but there was no broader consultation. I wouldn't say they involved the community at all and to whoever claims this, I would say, give me examples.'

For those Iraqis who sought to lobby UK officials from an anti-war perspective, this sense of exclusion was all the more striking. 'The decision to go to war was taken not in consultation with Iraqis, but very high up in Washington and Westminster,' says one exile member of the Stop the War Coalition. 'After that, policy-makers worked very actively to recruit Iraqis they had befriended over the years. They put up the smokescreen that they were listening to Iraqis but in fact were just listening to the echo of their own voices.' This apparent disregard by British policy-makers for anti-war lobbying-efforts appears to have reinforced perceptions that the Coalition campaign in Iraq was forged not only beyond the reach of the majority of British Iraqis and the public in general, but also of many in Westminster. One prominent journalist and academic who was among Britain's most public anti-war Iraqi voices aptly expressed this cynicism about British involvement and its connotations for democracy more broadly:

'Most members of parliament were under heavy pressure to vote for Blair's government. Some were taken in by the lies about WMDs and some were actually enthusiastic to liberate Iraq. There was a lot of opposition amongst rank and file members of parliament who supported us, but they had little influence. It is important that we did not stop the war – it shows what kind of democracy Britain is: even when you have millions of people on the street, you find the rulers still do not listen to what their people want.'³⁰

The darkness will close back over: the aftermath of war

The arguably mercenary manner of Iraqi diaspora involvement in the 2003 regime change was widely perceived to have had direct implications for the socio-political environment in post-war Iraq, and specifically, the capacity of expatriates for continued engagement with their country of origin. Most prominent amongst these associations, was the link between the sectarian violence that has gripped Iraq in the years since the war and the political agenda of diaspora figures with whom Coalition forces collaborated. According to a number of interviewees, policy-makers in both the US and UK failed to recognise the broader political and cultural context in which reconstruction would take place, and in reconstituting the country's political system along sectarian lines, opened Iraq up to a new scourge of foreign intervention and religious division. The narrow agendas of opposition figures selected for leadership in the new administration, which focused on regaining the influence of hitherto marginalised ethnic or religious groups rather than promoting national unity, was seen as key in this process. As one former member of the Iraqi Islamic Party expressed:

'From a geopolitical point of view, the US and UK should have known that there was a vacuum in Iraq that would be filled by regional powers. Figures sprung out of the diaspora community, supported by Iran and other powers, and showed the Coalition that they would support their campaign one-hundred per cent. The Coalition was oblivious to the strength of emotional, historical and religious ties and was easily drawn in by those who told them they would be welcomed with open arms in Iraq. They failed to see that interests of these groups were transient and not long term.'

In the years prior to the Coalition campaign, no statistical surveys had been conducted in Iraq to determine the sectarian composition of the country. However, seats in the Iraqi Governing Council (IGC), established as the official transitional authority in Iraq and lead between 2003-4 by a number of diaspora figures including Chalabi, Allawi and Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, were assigned along religious and ethnic lines based on assumptions that 60 percent of the population was Shia, 20

percent Sunni, and 20 percent Kurds (mostly Sunni). From July 2003, the breakdown of the 25 member council included 13 Shi'ites, five Sunni Arabs, five Kurds, one Turkomen and an Assyrian, with three of its members women. Not only did this reconstitution of Iraqi leadership encourage political power struggles that were exacerbated with the first elections in 2005, but it was also viewed as having seeded sectarian tensions hitherto largely alien to Iraqi society. One interviewee from the Assyrian General Conference who had supported the Coalition campaign to remove Saddam, expressed disappointment at the programme implemented in its aftermath and its ramifications for Iraq's Christian population.

'We were happy about the invasion because we knew nobody could topple him unless the international community assisted. But after liberation, the Iraqi opposition established a political process on the basis on sectarianism and ethnicity and now everyone is loyal not to a unified Iraq, but to their narrow affiliation. The government is very weak because everyone wants to be in power, and those like the Assyrians who have no political power or militia to protect them are the weakest link in the society. There is nothing we can do.'³¹

This sense of political disenfranchisement was strongest amongst members of minorities from the diaspora who had welcomed the intervention in the hope of alleviating persecution, but had been neither empowered by regime change nor able to affect support from the British government in the years since 2003. One long-standing member of the Iraqi Turkomen Front (ITF), explained how their cause was eclipsed post-invasion by that of more influential minority groups vying to compensate for their marginalisation under Saddam.

'Even before 2003, there was a strong Iraqi opposition in London with significant Iraqi Turkomen involvement. But after the invasion, Turkomen did not get the rights or position they should have because the US and UK had no effective post-war plan. They gave sectarian control to one of two groups, the Shi'ia or Kurds, who had been successful in promoting their case around the world. But visibility of one group should not mean that their situation is any better. We have to remember that 98 per cent of Iraqis suffered under Saddam. We are all Iraqis and the rights of one minority should not come at the expense of another.'

It is doubtless that those from the Iraqi Kurdish community in Britain who had contributed to or supported the Coalition campaign viewed its outcomes in more positive terms. However, many noted that failures in the seminal phases of planning for regime change had resulted in a divisive and corrupt legacy in Iraq which would be difficult to remedy. One former exile and member of the KRG had supported Blair's participation in the Iraq war and continued to endorse the campaign as a valid liberation. However, he harboured no idealism about the campaign and condemned the foreign and sectarian influences which have been allowed to tarnish Iraqi politics and society since the intervention.

'Kurdish interests converged with those of the Coalition and we had a lot of co-ordination with other groups before the war, but there was no consensus about how to solve the Iraqi problem or a cohesive approach politics. If we want a common idea of Iraq, we needed each component of Iraqi society to recognise the rights of the other. But this was not encouraged and there was no such discourse amongst the political elites. Instead Arabs were told to stick to Arabs, Sunni to Sunni and Kurd to Kurd.'

This sectarian approach was perceived as having bred a corrupt political culture that was not only adverse to economic and democratic development, but had also corroded efforts to create a cohesive vision of an Iraqi national government. 'Sometimes I define Iraqi politics as the convergence of

interests of big blocks with various foreign lobby groups and regional powers backing them,' he explained. 'It is the convergence of interests, not people.'

For other diaspora opponents of the war, the interplay of foreign and diaspora forces in the machinery of regime change had produced a post-Saddam Iraq that was overwhelmingly hostile to efforts towards structural or socio-political advancement. According to many interviewees, the large-scale culture of corruption, permeating most facets of politics and industry in Iraq, had both inhibited progressive local movements and delimited the potential for more direct diaspora involvement in reconstruction. As an interviewee from the KRG explained:

'In all of Iraq, including Kurdistan, outsiders have not been given the opportunity to contribute. Some expatriates went back, but have lost out as a result because there is no good business culture, with corruption and nepotism on every level. If you are honest in Iraq, you are in trouble. And after a while you realise it's better to be dirty with them or leave the party.'

Many British-Iraqis with backgrounds of activism between both countries criticized the continued influence of Western agendas in democratisation projects in post-Saddam Iraq, with civil-society building efforts dominated by the dictates of Coalition authorities and limited scope for expatriate or local input. While British and US organisations invested significant resources in developing a range of civil society organisations, some expatriates felt that the ownership and implementation of projects was defined by the political programmes of their Western sponsors. As one academic and activist explained:

'They wanted to manipulate the process of development by controlling institutions. Anyone who wanted to do anything positive needed to cooperate with Coalition forces, who made attempts to control civil society rather than encourage it. Hundreds or thousands of pounds were handed out to organisations in the name of feeding civil society: youth, women, public awareness, education, provided you talked about anything other than politics, war or occupation.'³²

One human-rights campaigner expressed this view as part of an overarching pessimism about the immediate prospects for Iraqi democratic government – an outlook which encapsulated the unfavourable, and often despairing forecast of many of British-Iraqis:

'The system that was created after the overthrow is not capable of addressing any of the Iraqi people's needs because it was founded on ethnic and religious lines. The Coalition set up a system that breeds division and any political group, even if it supports reform, will be incapable of change because of the rife conflict and corruption. All this is an environment which is not capable of producing anything positive with regard to basic services or something more fundamental.'

Any possibility of liberation: Britain and the diaspora after Iraq

On the eve of the war, in the face of widespread opposition within Labour party ranks, Blair concluded his speech to the House of Commons with a word of caution to detractors of his campaign:

'For others who are opposed to this course, it means—let us be clear—that for the Iraqi people, whose only true hope lies in the removal of Saddam, the darkness will simply close back over. They will be left under his rule, without any possibility of liberation—not from us, not from anyone.'³³

Some in the Iraqi diaspora have been willing to give Blair the benefit of the doubt regarding his

32 Interview with Sami Ramadani, 14 October 2011.

33 House of Commons Hansard Debates, 18 March 2003.

high-minded goals for the liberation of Iraq, notwithstanding its outcomes. However, the perspectives documented in this research constitute an appraisal of the 2003 war and its legacy that is unequivocally bleak, both with respect to the future of democracy in Iraq and the cynicism British involvement in the campaign had generated amongst British-Iraqis. Nonetheless, interviewees' pessimism about the state of their home country or regrets over the results of regime change had not necessarily overshadowed individual investment in a British-Iraqi identity or a continuing desire to engage with the politics of either country. One interviewee described these attachments with reference to his former efforts to lobby British MPs for a troop surge during the height of sectarian violence in Iraq from 2006:

'For those of us in Britain, taking part in Iraqi politics is driven by an emotional link, rather than a matter of life and death. You remember your people and try to support them with advice and through contributing to charity, education or retraining. Meanwhile, as a Brit I still have to participate in politics in this country. Mistakes were committed on all sides and we should look to the future instead of backwards. Participating in political life means taking part in our own destiny.'³⁴

Similarly, resistance to the failed, exogenous attempt to install democracy in Iraq did not imply a generalised opposition to models of Western-style democracy *per se*. Citing the repression of recent 'Arab-Spring' style protests across Iraq, one prominent British-Iraqi trade unionist described his disenchantment as a frustration with the machinery of British policy-making and imported regime-change, but not as a wholesale rejection of the democratic model:

'We opposed the war because no attempts were made to consult groups outside the key faces of the opposition at the time. We were calling for internal unity, but we were not listened to and preference was given to figures like Chalabi whose agenda was simply to remove Saddam through phoney information and with no view to the future. Now we are all paying for it: we have a corrupt system which arrests and murders people who are merely calling for reform. This is not a failure of democracy, but of the way it was organised – a failure of planning and consultation and the arrogance of decision makers.'³⁵

Hazel Smith notes that diaspora communities, when mobilised in international policy-making, have the capacity to serve as both peace-makers and peace-wreckers in national conflicts in their countries of origin.³⁶ As a complex of diverse strains of religion, ethnicity and politics, as well as of intense regional and international strategic interests, the Arab Middle East is a magnifier of these potentialities, to which the campaign in Iraq stands testament. The 2003 war has therefore heightened the - in many cases already stark - realism of Iraqi perspectives on British foreign and domestic policy, generating further obstacles to the engagement of groups from Iraq in collaboration around democratisation policy. Although the implementation and ethos of the Coalition's Iraq campaign remains contested by Arab communities in the UK and elsewhere, Britain's response to uprising in the region over the past year suggests a degree of applied learning from the intervention, as was noted by expatriates from Iraq, Libya and Syria. By contrast to the Coalition campaign of militarised, externally-enforced regime change with limited local or diaspora engagement, policy-makers have in this instance taken a more measured approach to foreign intervention, emphasising co-operation rather than co-option and an autonomous, internally-generated process of democratisation. However, the outcomes of the Libya campaign are as yet ambiguous and much of the shift in Britain's approach to the events of 2011 can be attributed to the pursuit of ulterior national interests. Moreover, many of the perceived failings of the Iraq intervention as emphasised

34 Interview with Fared Sabri, London, 11 October 2011.

35 Interview with Abdullah Muhsin, London, 29 June 2011.

36 Smith, H. 'The analytical and conceptual framework – Diasporas in international conflict', in Smith & Stares (2007) 12.

by diaspora members remain relevant, as policy-makers have continued to engage selectively with local and diaspora opposition figures from Libya, Syria and Yemen and let foreign-policy allegiances override their commitment to sponsoring democracy in cases such as Bahrain. One Iraqi interviewee summarised his view of the strategies employed by British policy-makers in the case of Iraq – an approach which was perceived as ongoing in relations with other exiled representatives of Arab Spring movements:

'Once you are in favour of a particular policy, you like what people who support that policy have to say, so you are not really interested in what the broader diaspora thinks. Therefore any kind of collective efforts are undermined'.

Research on diaspora communities has highlighted how experiences of war, repressive government and other forms of civil conflict can inform divergent political programmes within exile and expatriate communities.³⁷ The risks inherent in generalising the views or interests of one facet of the diaspora, namely those whose goals coincide with those of policy-makers, as representative of the community as a whole has been made clear in the instance of Iraq. A more even-handed approach to relations with diaspora groups must therefore include attempts to consult with and represent the full spectrum of opinion in policy-making, encouraging unity and consensus in diaspora political programmes as priority in political engagement above other foreign policy objectives. Similarly, in cases of competing minority claims, policy-makers must make realistic appraisals of the long-term implications of supporting different ethnic or religious groups. For example, Western recognition of the Kurdish need for protection in Iraq, manifestly obscured the vulnerability of other groups such as Assyrian Christians and Turkomens, generating perceptions of inconsistency and bias. Moreover, by addressing the Kurdish question in Iraq in isolation from that in neighbouring states like Turkey, intervening governments undermined their own democratic credentials in the eyes of many Kurds in the wider region. As one Assyrian interviewee explained, support for democratization 'it is not a matter of just believing in democracy in principle or word, but in practising it, which means looking after minorities and not a simple majority-rules equation.'³⁸

The doubts cast on the credibility of exiled Iraqi figures supported by the Coalition underscores the need to prioritize links between expatriates and home countries in order to promote greater accountability amongst diaspora representatives and prevent perceptions of 'parachuting in' amongst local populations. It is apparent that a number of diaspora political groups that retained strong links to democratic forces on the ground in Iraq, such as trade unions and women's rights groups, were overlooked in Coalition planning, thereby diminishing prospects for accurate and nuanced policy-development. As one exiled activist explained:

'when groups are abroad in isolation for long periods they can lose touch with ordinary people, making them more vulnerable to accept foreign influences. You need to be in your own community in order to sing in tune. Once you are not in tune, you are weaker to foreign pressure and in terms of your own local resources.'³⁹

The need for more grass-roots accountability within the diaspora, however, reflects the broader imperative for an overarching British strategy that prioritizes indigenous campaigns for democratisation. That is, that the best prospects for political stability in the context of democratic transitions lie in governments perceived as legitimate by local populations, as is becoming apparent in the case of post-Qaddafi Libya. In this instance, the internally-generated Libyan momentum for regime-change was cited by a number of Iraqi interviewees as part of a prevailing view that the best forms of foreign intervention are minimal interventions. As one exiled activist explained,

37 Smith (2007) 9.

38 Interview with Alin Bahram, London, 2 November 2011.

39 Interview with Sabah Jawad, London, 20 August 2011.

'sometimes foreign assistance is necessary, but it has to fit with call of the people themselves. Democracy frankly cannot be imported – it is a culture that needs to be nourished locally.' This proposition was underscored by the common Iraqi comparison between the potential inherent in the 1992 uprisings and the flawed, Western-led campaign to install democracy in 2003. As a corollary of this view and in the face of ongoing political repression in Iraq, there was repeated emphasis on the need for Western governments to support local forms of democratic opposition present in the country, irrespective of how such movements aligned with foreign policy interests there. The sponsorship of grass-roots, democratic opposition in Iraq in the aftermath of the Arab Spring was identified by many as the most constructive starting-point for redress of the Coalition's failings in 2003. As one Kurdish MP explained with relation to his own electorate:

'The good politics in Iraq is in the street now – it is not in the corridors of parliament or the diaspora. The lessons should be learnt by the West: the most important thing we can do to defend human rights and freedom of speech is to listen to those on the streets.'

Conclusion

Discussing Britain's involvement in the 2011 campaign to support rebels in Libya, a Manchester-based Libyan exile recently proposed that, 'it is part of the Arab mindset that if you fight on our side in a time of need, we will forget the past.' While such a notion may be a desirable creed for policy-makers in light of Britain's often duplicitous record of dealings with dictatorships in the Arab world, its tenacity is doubtful. It has been widely noted by commentators that the persistence of Western direct and indirect support for authoritarianism in the region betrays the democratic claims and practices of governments. That 'the West is no beacon of democracy' in the eyes of many Arabs and expatriates⁴⁰ was echoed strikingly by the findings of interviews and may prove one of the obstacles most difficult to redress, but most difficult to ignore in long-term efforts at positive collaboration with diaspora groups. The inconsistencies surrounding Britain's record of involvement in Iraq and the perceived servitude of British policy to the US has doubtless heightened the scepticism of many British-Iraqis, deterring efforts towards participation in or contribution to policy through parliamentary channels. More recently, this sense of disillusionment resonated in the views of many Bahraini activists who had ceased to invest confidence or energy in lobbying for a shift in British-policy which has continued to support the ruling al-Khalifa dynasty in the face of peaceful democratic opposition. Nor were these attitudes limited to national-sympathies within different Arab diaspora communities, but extended to cross-border regional sympathies, with interviewees from a range of backgrounds citing Britain's relations with Israel-Palestine and Saudi-Arabia as major sources of mistrust for UK policy. While the recent intervention in Libya had partially redeemed British approaches to democratisation in the region in the eyes of some, many viewed the failure of UK policy-makers to adopt uniform support for the protests, such as those in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Syria and Yemen, as further evidence of governmental hypocrisy.

In light of these realist appraisals of British foreign policy, many diaspora groups appeared to have adopted a pragmatic approach to relations with Westminster – one which looked upon claims about humanitarianism or democratization with increased cynicism. Typifying this sentiment, one Kurdish politician explained that:

'I don't think in foreign policy there is ever a humanitarian goal. First, there is a national interest and then on the backseat, there are humanitarian considerations. When these interests converge, that is for the better. In the Iraq campaign Kurdish interests converged with the US and Britain.' However, it was also made patent from this perspective that a more far-sighted approach to British national interest would necessarily produce a foreign policy that emphasised egalitarianism on an

40 Sadiki, Larbi, *The Search for Arab Democracy: Discourses and Counter-Discourses*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004) 24.

international scale. As was explained:

‘I too am after my national interest, but I want it to be allied with foreign policy. Democracy is a culture before anything else, and this is the way the West's interests are preserved in the long term - when they support the people to have democracy and economic prosperity, not corruption and repression. Only this will lead to stability.’

The record of diaspora activism around Britain's 2003 Iraq campaign and the continued mobilisation of Arab expatriates on the part of democratic movements highlights that policy-makers have access to the resources necessary to forge a more considered and progressive democratisation policy in the region. Not only can diaspora groups provide insight into the cultural, social and political context of policy interventions, they may also represent channels to collaboration with democratic forces on the ground in countries of origin. That the intervention in Iraq bore a number of definitively calamitous outcomes – materially and socio-politically as well as with respect to diaspora relations – underscores the need to reassess consultative practices alongside a broader reconfiguration of policy in the Middle East. The protest movements that unfolded with the Arab Spring have provided the British government with an opportunity to break long-standing patterns of engagement in the region and to foster a more consistent and independent foreign-policy to that which produced the Iraq campaign. Pivotal to this process will be an approach which encompasses openness to a range of alternative views and ideologies, as well as a recognition of the diversity inherent in the concept of democracy itself: that is, that autonomy and cultural specificity exist at the core of democratic cultures and that models cannot always be imported wholesale from a Western political milieu.⁴¹ Most significant perhaps, will be the task of convincing disaffected communities in and from the region that policy-makers intentions genuinely align with local democratic aspirations: not merely persuading people that we are on their side, but genuinely taking it.

41 Zakaria, Fareed., *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2003) 96.