

Iraq? Nothing, if that breakup is consensual and does not entail an escalation in the violence tearing the country apart. But such is not the case. The debate in Parliament over the Constitution was extremely polarized and artificially cut short by the majority. Moreover, if a mere 83,283 people in the province of Nineveh had voted no instead of yes, the draft constitution would have been defeated.

Sunni opposition to the new order will continue. Crushing it by force, as some Shiite hotheads in the Parliament's majority bloc are calling for, will be an extremely bloody business. Even if the long-term outcome of an all-out Iraqi civil war is not in doubt, the body count and destruction would make Lebanon's war look like a picnic. No moral person can condone the parliamentary majority that makes this happen.

The 2003 Iraq war has indeed brought about an irreversible transformation of politics and society in Iraq. But this transformation has not consolidated power, as the great revolutions of the past have tended to do (in France, Russia and even Iran), nor is it distributing power on an agreed upon and equitable basis, as happened after the American Revolution and as Iraqi liberal democrats like myself had hoped would happen after the fall of Saddam Hussein. Rather, it is dissipating it. And that is a terrifying prospect for a population whose primary legacy from the Saddam Hussein era is a profound mistrust of government in all its forms.

By ceding and dismissing centralized power, Iraqis may end by ceding all their power. Iran in the short run, and the Arab world in the long run, will fill the vacuum with proxies, turning the dream of a democratic and reborn Iraq into a dystopia of warring militias and rampant hopelessness.

The reaction against tyranny in Iraq was always going to take the form of a new kind of state in the Middle East, one that in the minds of those who struggled against the regime of Saddam Hussein had to be profoundly decentralized. And federalism did not have to entail the dissipation of power. As it was first envisioned, a federal Iraq promised to safeguard against despotism while furnishing a framework both strong and flexible enough to reconcile the competing demands of its citizens.

Federalism first entered the lexicon of the Iraqi opposition in 1992, when the newly created Kurdish Parliament voted in favor of it as a way of governing the relation of Kurdistan to the rest of the country. That vote was ratified a few months later by a conference of the Iraqi opposition in Salahuddin, in northern Iraq.

Remarkably, the idea of federalism survived the bitter infighting among Iraqi exiles in months before the 2003 war, becoming one of the few common denominators in the discourse of the opposition about the future of Iraq. The fact that there was no literature in Arabic on federalism to speak of, and that Iraqi parties and organizations did not know or agree upon what federalism meant, and that Iraqi politicians did not bother themselves with thinking about what it might mean, did not deter individuals, parties and organizations from continuing to advocate it.

I was one of the idea's most ardent Arab advocates. In Salahuddin, I delivered the keynote speech on the subject, not only endorsing the Kurdish Parliament's decision, but presenting federalism as a general solution to the problems of the Iraqi state. A federalism based on Iraq's existing 18 governorates broke the rotten mold of Iraqi and Arab politics, I argued. No Iraqi political organization could afford not to be for it, especially not one that called itself democratic. Without a system of government in

which real power devolved away from Baghdad, the autonomous, predominantly Kurdish north must sooner or later opt for separation. And how could any Iraqi expect otherwise, after all the terrible things that had been done to the Kurds in the name of Arabism?

Some Arabs argued that one must concede federalism in the interest of getting rid of Saddam Hussein and because the Kurds are in a position to force it upon us. And we must accept federalism, some Kurds said, not because we really want it, but because the regional situation does not allow us to secede. But utilitarian calculation did not lie behind the democratic argument.

Federalism in Iraq would both separate and divide powers. Painstakingly negotiated arrangements would distinguish the powers of the parts from those of the center, taking care to leave important functions in the hands of the federal government.

We thought it wise to define regions territorially, according to the relative distribution of the population, and to include in the constitution the claim that the country's resources (in particular oil revenues, the only real source of income for the foreseeable future), would belong to all Iraqis equally and would be managed by the federal government. Different ethnicities and sects would almost certainly form majorities in particular regions. The point was not to change such distributions, but to emphasize the equality of citizenship.

Such a federalism, Iraqi democrats said, was the logical extension of the principle of human rights. It was based on the notion that the rights of the part—whether that part was a single person or a group—should not be sacrificed to the will of the majority. What people like myself failed to appreciate, or understand, before 2003, were the powerful forces driving toward purely ethnic and sectarian criteria for the definition of the "parts" of the new federal idea. The consequence of those forces has been a tremendous weakening of the political idea of Iraq, which the new Constitution has converted into hostility toward central government *per se*.

A decentralized, federal state system that devolves power to the regions is not the same as a dysfunctional one in which power at the federal level has been eviscerated. The former preserves power while distributing it; the latter destroys it. At the moment Iraqis have a dysfunctional and powerless state. The Constitution does not fix this; it makes it worse.

What began as an American problem is today an Iraqi one. To steer the country away from anarchy and manage the furies that have been unleashed, the following measures need to be undertaken by the new Iraqi Parliament the moment it reconvenes after the elections:

Recognize that at the moment only Kurdistan fulfills the conditions for being a region. Using the Kurdish experience as a model, the Constitution must define the minimum conditions that need to be met by any group of provinces that desire to form themselves into a region. Then set a moratorium of 10 years on the establishment of new regions, this being the time necessary to crush the insurgency, establish properly accountable institutions of law and order and ensure that those applying for such status have met the criteria.

Limit the size of any new region formed after the 10-year period to a maximum of three governorates and fix the existing unmodified boundaries of the 18 governorates of Iraq as the basis for the establishment of new regions.

Delete Article 109, which allocates extra oil revenues to the regions that generate

them. There is no defensible case for imposing special reparations on the Sunni populace for the crimes of Iraq's former leaders.

Appoint a committee of expert constitutional lawyers to make the necessary amendments reconciling the legislature with the executive and the different parts of the executive with each other. This is not a matter that can be resolved by the politicians alone.

Democracy is not reducible to placing an Iraqi seal of approval upon a situation that is manifestly worsening by the day. The 79 percent of people who voted in favor of a constitution that promotes ethnic and sectarian divisions are unwittingly paving the way for a civil war that will cost hundreds of thousands of Iraqi lives. Nothing is worth that.

Without the return of real power to the center, the ascent of sectarian and ethnic politics in Iraq to the point of complete societal breakdown cannot be checked. We cannot fight the insurgency, rebuild Iraq and live in any meaningful sense as part of the modern world without a state. There are no human rights, no law, and no democracy without the state; there is only anarchy and a state of insecurity potentially much worse than what Iraqis are experiencing today. For democracy to emerge out of the current chaos in Iraq, the state must be saved from the irresponsibility of the Iraqi parties and voting blocs that are today killing it.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ENGLISH of Pennsylvania addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

HONORING MAJOR GENERAL DAVID E. TANZI

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time of the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. ENGLISH).

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Utah?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Utah (Mr. BISHOP) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BISHOP of Utah. Mr. Speaker, it is my great pleasure to introduce to this body Major General David Tanzi, the Vice Commander of the United States Air Force Reserve, and to honor him on his forthcoming retirement, which will be January 11, 2006, at Robins Air Force Base in Georgia.

In his duties as Vice Commander, General Tanzi is responsible for the daily operations of the Command, which consists of 76,000 Citizen Airmen, 400 aircraft, guiding 36 wings, three flying groups, one space group, 620 mission support units and two draft