

Arab Nationalist Expresses Resentment over a historical Kurdish Victory

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It is evident that clouds of history follow the Kurd's right to their very hearts. The past have left some Kurds for the better as they advanced in society and gained economically via becoming members of the Ba'th party or most have been left poorer as they have had to cope with living in unpleasant conditions due to their nationalist beliefs.

In the 1930s the British colonised Iraq and divided a rich and wealthy land once known as the most beautiful and modernised country amongst the Arab nations. Since then some 7 decades have passed leaving Iraq to be one of the poorest and most dangerous countries in Middle East; even more so than Palestine.

Moreover, it has taken 30 years for the Iraqis to be able to vote democratically and elect the government they rightfully believed in, a government reflective of every race and religious beliefs in the country, a government that would hopefully develop the country and not disappoint the people all over again.

As an Iraqi Kurd I took it with great pride when I ascertained that Mr Jalal Talabani was elected as the President of the Republic of Iraq and when I contacted my relatives and close friends in Kurdistan they were also overjoyed. The delight was not because we supported the Talabani leadership; neither had I had any political ties with the PUK but this joy and sheer pride came from the fact that Mr Talabani was a Kurd.

Here was a moment where words could do more harm than any other weapon; what surprised me most despite being close friend with these people for over 10 years is the fact that they did not even hold back from their bitterness towards the election of Mr Talabani as President.

When studying the world map one can see that Iraq is neighbored by countries of mixed nationalities, i.e. Iran, Syria and Turkey. In addition, there are millions of Kurds residing within Iraq's neighbouring countries. Therefore, why should it be prohibited for a state such as Iraq to be governed by a Kurd? Are Kurds not considered as Iraqis or as part of Iraq? If it is stated on the Iraqi passport of a person that s/he is an Iraqi subject, then s/he has the right as much as the majority of the Iraqi population to be elected to run the country. Moreover, a large Kurdish community is living in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities in the middle and south of Iraq. Furthermore, the majority of Kurdish Faylees have resided in cities predominantly of Arabic origins.

I hope and pray that the new leadership does not disappoint the Iraqis in general and the Kurds in particular. The people who lived in Iraq for the last 35 years witnessed and many were subjected to mass executions, the Anfal campaigns, the ethnic cleaning and a constant fear of being murdered for no reason. From my perception at this instance it did not make a difference if you are an Iraqi Kurd or Arab. However, this perception turned black as days proved to me.

When Mr Talabani took Oath as the newly elected President of the Republic of Iraq the celebrations grew larger and louder amongst the Kurds; as everyone congratulated one another for this historical achievement I began to notice the undercurrents of dissatisfaction between my close friends of many years who were Arab Nationalists. The main issue of dispute being; how can a Kurd become the leader of an Arab state? i.e. how was it possible for Mr Jalal Talabani to be elected the President of the Republic of Iraq?

I was not only surprised to hear such words and questions coming from an Iraqi person, but what is more extraordinary and shocking is that they are considered to be my close friends. This made me believe in the old saying about only knowing the true colours of people will show in the good and bad times we have. Clearly here was a moment of celebration for the Kurds after so many years of oppression. Fair enough the Arab Nationalists did not share our suffering or offered any help or sympathy when we were suffering in the hands of the Iraqi regime. But why condemning a Kurdish leader?

So if it is agreeable by these Arab Nationalists for a Kurd to die and fight for Iraq, to reside in the cities ranging from the north to the south of Iraq, then why is it so unacceptable for a Kurd to be elected to govern the country?

Furthermore, it is not just the Arab nationalists in Iraqi who were abominating against the new Kurdish President of the Republic of Iraq. But the majority of the Gulf Countries withheld the same perception. When contacting my friends from the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and etc, they raised questions like **"how can we have a Kurdish President to rule an Arabic country, why and on what grounds?"**

There are ancillary comments such as **"the Kurds benefit from having oil and wealth by controlling the oil supplies as it has been a dream for the Kurds for years"** or **"the Kurds in Iraq have finally achieved their goal by becoming the President of the Republic of Iraq; soon they will be encouraging other Kurds from Turkey, Iran and Syria"** or **"Kurds are people of the mountains and should not be given the right to vote in a civilised society"**. I can sit here and write an endless list of remarks I continuously receive, even to this present date, **three months after the election.**

In my opinion and the opinion of many open minded people, it should not make a difference if you are Kurdish, Assyrian, or Arabic as we are all Iraqis and will continue to be so to the end. Obtaining other passports of naturalisation does not change anything for many of us; what matters is our origins and nothing else. It must be said that all Arabs are not nationalists nor am saying that all Kurds agree with my opinions on this matter. However, the time we live in is changing; people are working for a better future and are demanding equal opportunities in life. Not surprisingly, certain individuals still remain narrow minded, racists and fundamental in their nationalistic ideologies in Iraq, the United Kingdom and around the world.

On the other hand no matter what is said against this Kurdish victory the fact that will remain is that Iraq now has a Kurdish President. Despite the suffering of the Kurds in the hands of successive Iraqi regimes the word of Kurdistan has been ascertained internationally, especially to the Western world, which by itself is another wondrous achievement in its own right.

If one looks at the history of the Kurds, no question is raised as to the millions of Kurds who died to free their people and their land, Kurdistan. It is now our dream to have our land returned to us and we claim like billions of other people on this planet that we belong to our land, Kurdistan and not Syria, Iraq, Iran or Turkey.

Our achievements have turned the dreams of our ancestors into reality. We have done. This through our sheer determination, bravery, enthusiasm, strong will, faith, patience and energy. We stood united and made history in One Day, by One Vote, during One Election.

It is sad to ascertain that Saddam Hussein not only split the Iraqi people but made them enemies of one another... We worked together in building and developing Iraq. However, our glory was short lived and was ended by the dictatorship.

Let us renew those bonds and work together tirelessly to rebuild this beautiful land, boost its economy, improve the standard of living and educate and invest in the new/young generation so we can rise to the days of glory.

This is my message to the Muslims around the world and the Arab nationalists. The unwelcome and bitter remarks towards Mr Jalal Talabani are unnecessary. They have no hindrance and have no advantages either. In my opinion this is what enemies of Iraq contented for; dividing the Iraqis, stealing our resources and our oil and driving the country into a civil war.

To conclude, I hope from the bottom of my heart that Mr Jalal Talabani does not disappoint the Kurdish cause (our name and our voice); successfully manages his post and fights the internal and external obstacles that face Iraq. I am aware that he is currently facing and will be facing complex disputes and obstacles. However; I hope his strength is maintained through his time of leadership. I also hope that he encourages the Iraqis to rebuild our treasured land. But regretfully if I and my fellow Kurds are disappointed this time round then I personally will never forgive, believe and trust another Kurdish leader, Kurdish politician or the Kurdish government.