

AMSPECBLOG**Re: Chalabi**

By John Tabin on 2.27.10 @ 6:35PM

It is unlikely to surprise our longtime readers to learn that Doug Bandow and I see America's role in the world rather differently, so normally I wouldn't comment on one of his periodic calls for a "humble" foreign policy. But on the specific issue of Ahmed Chalabi I think it only fair to bring up Christopher Hitchens's 2004 defense of the man -- though I freely confess that, because Chalabi was never as important as anti-war polemicists made him out to be, I haven't followed him closely enough to know whether, in the years since Hitchens wrote that, new evidence has come to light one way or the other on either the bank fraud charge or the espionage charge.

P.S. One thing that I do know has happened in Iraq since 2004 is that politics have gotten somewhat less sectarian, so Hitchens's everyone-does-it defense against the sectarianism charge that his "Iraqi and Kurdish comrades" make against Chalabi is beginning to ring a bit hollow. I certainly don't want to suggest that it's crazy to worry that Chalabi might use de-Baathification as a pretext to advance Shiite political interests, just that the counterarguments to the more serious charges against him are worth reading.

John Tabin is a frequent contributor to *The American Spectator online*.