

Diasporas, Foreign Governments, and American Politics

An Excerpt from “Merging America with the World,” in *Who Are We? The Challenges to America’s National Identity*

Samuel P. Huntington, PhD

Editor’s note: In a March 2017 speech given by General of the Russian Army Valery Gerasimov, he observed that modern wars would likely be fought mainly by means other than martial weapons.

Samuel P. Huntington, PhD, was the Albert J. Weatherhead III University Professor at Harvard and chairman of the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies, as well as a political scientist, U.S. government consultant, and political commentator. He held a bachelor’s degree from Yale University, a master’s from the University of Chicago, and a doctorate from Harvard University. Huntington authored or edited over a dozen books. He died in 2008.

He alluded to the concept that the primary purpose of war is to achieve a nation’s political objectives, and there are increasingly a host of other potential means, informational and sociological, to achieve such objectives without resorting to violent military conflict. Such an observation highlights that the traditional concept of national security in the twenty-first century is being severely tested along with the very concept of the nation-state itself

as the global population continues to explode, cheap and available mass communication proliferates, and international borders are weakened by a range of factors including ease of transnational transport and shifting political allegiances.

As the United States grapples with planning its own defense in the face of the emerging pressures of an ethnically complex world, the salience of the nation-state and national security concepts are sorely in need of refinement and clarification to facilitate effective future policy formulation and execution. With the above in mind, a plethora of serious political, economic, or social factors related to competition among political adversaries have emerged that might be decisive in determining the outcome of future conflicts in ways other than those that might previously have been decided by war. These include not only economic, diplomatic, and informational means to affect and undermine an adversary but also sociological and demographic changes that, if exploited in an effective manner, may have the potential to achieve political objectives by decisively collapsing the political will of an adversary state from within. Such “war by other means” has the potential to render previous concepts associated with national security as well as the



nation-state obsolete and deserves close analysis by serious students of war.

*The below chapter excerpt from the book *Who are We?*, published in 2006 by now deceased Harvard political scientist Samuel B. Huntington, details the challenges one such sociological phenomenon—ethnic diasporas—may pose to the national security and continuity of modern nation-states in general, and to the United States in particular.*

*As agreed upon with the publisher of *Who Are We?*, Simon & Schuster, Military Review has not edited this work for style; it is presented word-for-word as it was originally published.*

Diasporas, Foreign Governments, and American Politics

Excerpt from Chapter 10, “Merging America with the World,” of *Who Are We?*

Diasporas are transnational ethnic or cultural communities whose members identify with a homeland that may or may not have a state. Jews were “the classic

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi addresses approximately twenty thousand Indian-Americans 28 September 2014 at Madison Square Garden in New York. Modi’s speech promoted Indian-American diaspora support for advancing India’s policy interests through the U.S. political and economic system. India’s diaspora is the second largest in the world after China, with more than thirty million nonresident nationals or persons of Indian origin living outside India in a variety of countries globally, according to the Indian Ministry of External Affairs (see table 1, page 26). Mexico and Russia have the third and fourth largest diasporas respectively. (Photo by Lucas Jackson, Reuters)

diaspora”; the term itself comes from the Bible and was for long primarily identified with Jews as a people who, following the destruction of Jerusalem in 586 B.C., were uniquely dispersed. They were the prototype of the “victim” diaspora, several of which exist in today’s world. More important now, however, are migrant diasporas, people who voluntarily leave their homeland to live and work elsewhere but also identify primarily with a transnational ethnic-cultural community that encompasses

their homeland. The essence of the diasporan mentality was well expressed in 1995 by the American Jewish Committee: “Although geographically dispersed and ideologically diverse, Jews are indeed one people, united by history, covenant, and culture. Together we must act to shape the Jewish destiny; let no one, in Israel, America or elsewhere, erect barriers among us.”¹ Diasporans thus differ conceptually from ampersands. Ampersands have two national identities, diasporans one transnational identity. In practice, however, the two often merge and individuals easily shift from one to the other.

Diasporas differ from ethnic groups. An ethnic group is an ethnic or cultural entity that exists within a state. Diasporas are ethnic or cultural communities that cut across state boundaries. Ethnic groups have existed in America throughout the nation’s history. They have promoted their economic, social, and political interests, including what they have seen as the interests of their ancestral country, and have competed with each other and with business, labor, agricultural, regional, and class groups. In doing so, they were engaging in national politics. Diasporas, on the other hand, form transnational alliances and engage in transnational conflicts. The central focus of diasporas is their homeland state. If that state does not exist, their overriding goal is to create one to which they can return. Irish and Jews have done this; Palestinians are in the process of doing so; Kurds, Sikhs, Chechens, and others aspire to do so. If a homeland state does exist, diasporas strive to strengthen it, improve it, and promote its interests in their host societies. In today’s world, domestic ethnic groups are being transformed into transnational diasporas, which homeland states have increasingly seen as the communal and institutional extension of themselves and as a crucial asset of their

Table 1. Countries with the Largest Indian Population

	Country	Indian Population	Percent of total population
1	Saudi Arabia	4,100,000	13.22%
2	Nepal	4,000,000	14.7%
3	United Arab Emirates	3,500,000	27.1%
4	United States	3,456,477	1%
5	Malaysia	2,012,600	7.5%
6	Pakistan	2,000,000	.95%
7	United Kingdom	1,451,862	2.3%
8	Canada	1,374,710	3.55%
9	South Africa	1,274,867	2.7%
10	Myanmar	1,030,000	2.0%
11	Mauritius	994,500	68.3%
12	Sri Lanka	839,504	4.4%
13	Oman	796,001	50%
14	Kuwait	700,000	50%
15	Qatar	650,000	35.7%

(Graphic courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; various data from 2001–2017)

country. This close relation and cooperation between state diasporas and homeland governments is a key phenomenon in contemporary global politics.

The new significance of diasporas is primarily the result of two developments. First, the large migrations from poor to rich countries have increased the numbers,

wealth, and influence of diasporans with both their home and host countries. The Indian diaspora, it was estimated in 1996, consisted of 15 to 20 million people, with net assets of \$40 billion to \$60 billion and a “brain bank” of 200,000 to 300,000 highly skilled “doctors, engineers and other professionals, academics and researchers, managers and executives in multinational corporations (MNCs), high tech entrepreneurs, and graduate students of Indian origin.”² The 30 to 35 million members of the long-standing Chinese diaspora play key entrepreneurial roles in the economies of all East Asian countries except Japan and Korea and have been indispensable contributors to mainland China’s spectacular economic growth. The rapidly growing Mexican diaspora of 20 to 23 million in the United States is, as we have seen, of increasing social, political, and economic importance to both countries. The Filipino diaspora, largely in the Middle East and the United States, is crucial to the Philippine economy.

Second, economic globalization and the improvements in global communications and transportation make it possible for diasporas to remain in close contact economically, socially, and politically with their homeland governments and societies. In addition, the efforts of homeland governments, like those of China, India, and Mexico, to promote economic development, to liberalize their economies, and to become increasingly involved in the global economy all increase the importance to them of their diasporas and create a convergence of economic interests between diasporas and homelands.

As a result of these developments, the relations between homeland governments and diasporas have changed in three ways. First, governments increasingly view their diasporas not as reflections on but as important assets to their country. Second, diasporas make increasing economic, social, cultural, and political contributions to their homelands. Third, diasporas and homeland governments increasingly cooperate to promote the interests of the homeland country and government in the host society.

Historically, states have had varying attitudes toward their members who migrate elsewhere. In some cases, they have attempted to prevent emigration and in others adopted ambivalent or permissive attitudes toward it. In the contemporary world, however, massive migration from poor to rich countries and the new means of maintaining contact with migrants have led homeland governments to view their diasporas as key contributors

to the homeland and its goals. Governments see it in their interest to encourage emigration, to expand, mobilize, and organize their diasporas, and to institutionalize their homeland connections so as to promote homeland interests in host countries. Developed countries exert influence in world affairs through the export of capital, technology, economic aid, and military power. Poor overpopulated countries exert influence through the export of people.

Homeland government officials increasingly hail diasporans as vital members of the national community. Beginning in 1986, Philippine governments regularly encouraged Filipinos to migrate and become OFWs, “overseas Filipino workers,” and as of 2002, up to 7.5 million had done so. “Educated families and young professionals—nurses, doctors, computer analysts” supplemented the poorly educated, manual workers who had dominated previous emigration. While in exile in the United States in the early 1990s, former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, according to Yossi Shain, identified Haitian “diaspora members as Haiti’s ‘tenth department’ (Haiti is divided into nine), to which they responded enthusiastically.”³ In the late 1990s, a significant change occurred in the Israeli government attitude toward the Jewish diaspora. Earlier its policy had been, as J. J. Goldberg, author of the book *Jewish Power*, observes, “to replace Jewish life elsewhere, rather than reinforce it.” In 1998, concerned about the worldwide erosion of Jewish culture and identity, the government of Benjamin Netanyahu adopted a new approach and launched efforts to revitalize Judaism outside Israel. Netanyahu became, in Goldberg’s words, “the first Israeli prime minister to show an interest in supporting Jewish life in the Diaspora.”⁴ An even more dramatic indicator of the new importance of diasporas was the change in the policies of the Cuban government toward the overwhelmingly anti-Castro Cuban community in the United States. “Aware of the hostile attitudes, the government in the mid-1990s,” Susan Eckstein reports, “modified its public stance toward the diaspora, facilitated transnational bonding, and more openly supported economically motivated migration. The émigrés whom Castro previously had pejoratively portrayed as *gusanos*, worms, to be spurned by good revolutionaries, were redefined as the ‘Cuban community abroad.’”⁵

For most of the twentieth century, Mexicans, including government officials, also looked down on their countrymen who had migrated to the United States. They were disparaged as *pochos* or, in the term used by

Octavio Paz, *pachucos*, who had lost their “whole inheritance: language, religion, customs, beliefs.” Mexican officials rejected them as traitors to their country. By “imposing penalties,” Yossi Shain says, “Mexico sought to warn its citizens against the perils of departing their native country and forsaking their culture in search of a better life in the United States.” In the 1980s, that attitude changed dramatically. “The Mexican nation extends beyond the territory enclosed by its borders,” President Ernesto Zedillo said in the 1990s. “Mexican migrants are an important, very important part of it.” President Vicente Fox described himself as president of 123 million Mexicans, 100 million in Mexico and 23 million in the United States, a figure that includes Mexican-Americans not born in Mexico.⁶ Homeland leaders drench with encomiums those

who leave the homeland. “You yourselves are heroes,” President Mohammad Khatami of Iran told eight hundred Iranian-Americans in September 1998. “We want to salute these heroes,” President Fox of Mexico said in December 2000, who went to the United States searching “for a job, an opportunity they can’t find at home, their community or their own country.”⁷

Homeland governments encourage their people to leave their country and facilitate their doing so.



Diasporas are increasingly a global phenomenon. In Brazil, the Liberdade neighborhood of Brazilian capital São Paulo is locally referred to as “the Little Tokyo” (shown in this 2014 photo). More than 1.6 million Japanese nationals reside in Brazil, the largest population of Japanese outside mainland Japan. (Photo courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

Immediately after his election, Vicente Fox announced his long-term goal of an open border with the free movement of people between Mexico and the United States. As

Table 2. Countries with the Largest Chinese Population

	Country	Chinese Population	Percent of total population
1	Thailand	10,392,792	15%
2	Malaysia	7,417,800	23%
3	United States	5,081,682	1.5%
4	Indonesia	2,832,510	1%
5	Singapore	2,547,300	76.2%
6	Canada	1,769,195	5.1%
7	South Korea	1,643,611	1%
8	Myanmar	1,637,540	2.5%
9	Philippines	1,350,000	1%
10	Australia	1,213,903	5.6%
11	Peru	~1,000,000+	~3%
12	Vietnam	823,071	0.96%
13	France	700,000	1%
14	Japan	674,871	<1%
15	United Kingdom	466,000	1%

(Graphic courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; various data from 2011–2017)

president, he supported legal status for the several million Mexicans who have entered the United States illegally, argued the need to provide “humane working conditions for Mexicans already in the United States,” and urged the United States to provide up to \$1 billion in Social Security benefits to Mexicans who had worked in the United

States.⁸ Homeland governments have developed formal institutions and informal processes to bolster their diasporas and link them more closely to their homelands. The countries to America’s south, Columbia University Professor Robert C. Smith pointed out, “are the site of extremely interesting diasporaic experimentation, with Mexico, Colombia, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and other states attempting to cultivate and institutionalize relations with what one Mexican official called their ‘global nations.’”⁹ In January 2003, the Indian government and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry organized in New Delhi “the largest gathering of the Indian diaspora since independence in 1947.” The two thousand “non-resident Indians” who came from sixty-three countries were “politicians, scholars, industrialists, and jurists,” including the prime minister of Mauritius, the former prime minister of Fiji, and two Nobel Prize winners. Four hundred came from the United States, representing the 1.7 million Indian-Americans, who have an aggregate income equal to 10 percent of India’s national income.¹⁰

In the last decade of the twentieth century, the Mexican government became a leader in developing intensive relations with its diaspora. President Carlos Salinas took the first major step by creating in 1990 the Program for Mexican Communities Abroad as a subsidiary of its foreign ministry. It was designed, in the words of Robert Leiken, “to build an institutional bridge between the Mexican government, on the one hand, and U.S. Mexicans and Mexican-Americans.” The PCME carried out a widespread range of activities, sponsoring Mexican-American groups, promoting the interests of Mexican immigrants in the United States, enhancing

their status in Mexico, founding cultural centers, and encouraging federations of the Mexican hometown associations in the United States. The personnel and budgets of Mexico’s forty-two consulates in the United States were significantly expanded to carry out these functions. President Zedillo continued these activities.



On taking office, President Fox appointed a prominent state governor to a new post in his cabinet to coordinate activities relating to the U.S.-Mexican border. Six months later, he laid out a six-year National Development Plan that included the goal of protecting Mexican immigrants in the United States and the creation of a special prosecutor's office for that purpose.¹¹

The enhanced role of Mexican consulates was dramatically evident in Los Angeles with its huge Mexican population. In 2003, Consul General Martha Lara claimed, "I have more constituents than the mayor of Los Angeles." In one sense she is right: about 4.7 million Mexican-Americans live in greater Los Angeles, while the total population of the central city is 3.6 million. The consul general and her staff of seventy, according to the *New York Times*, provide "a range of services," which "often makes Ms. Lara seem more like a governor than a diplomat. She inaugurates immigrant-owned businesses, certifies births, marries lovers, and crowns beauty queens."¹² The most significant "governing" role of the consulates, however, is providing certification to illegal Mexican immigrants that they are American residents.

September 11 reduced the salience to the United States of its relations with Mexico, and the U.S.

Mexico's President Vicente Fox (left) speaks with his Bolivian counterpart Evo Morales 4 November 2006 during the first working session of the XVI Ibero-American Summit in Montevideo, Uruguay. As president of Mexico, Fox declared that he was not only president of Mexicans living in Mexico but also of those persons of Mexican ethnic extraction, whether they were born in Mexico or not, living in the United States. Leaders at the summit were set to rebuke the United States for its plan to build a fence along the Mexican border to keep out illegal immigrants. (Photo by Pablo La Rosa, Reuters)

government did not move forward with the anticipated "normalization" of the several million Mexicans in the United States illegally. The Mexican government responded by promoting its own form of legalization: the issuance by its consulates of registration cards, the *matricula consular*, certifying that the bearer was a resident of the United States. Some 1.1 million of these were issued in 2002. Simultaneously, Mexican agencies launched a major campaign to get general acceptance of these cards. By August 2003, they had succeeded with "more than 100 cities, 900 police departments, 100 financial institutions, and with thirteen states."¹³

Legal Mexican immigrants have no need for a *matricula consular*. Possession of such a card, consequently,

is presumptive evidence that the bearer is in the United States illegally. Acceptance of that card by American public and private institutions cedes to the Mexican government the power to give to illegal immigrants the status and benefits normally available only to legal residents. A foreign government, in effect, determines who is an American. The success of the Mexican *matricula consular* prompted Guatemala to start issuing them in 2002, and other homeland governments have been rushing to follow.

As was documented in Chapter 8 [of the Huntington book], ampersands promote dual citizenship laws to legitimate their dual loyalties and dual identities. Homeland governments also find it in

their interest to allow diasporans to be homeland citizens as well as citizens of their host country. This establishes another tie to the homeland and also encourages them to promote homeland interests in their host country. In 1998, a Mexican law took effect that permitted Mexican migrants to retain their Mexican nationality while becoming U.S. citizens. “You’re Mexicans—Mexicans who live north of the border,” President Zedillo told Mexican-Americans. By 2001, as part of their extensive outreach to their diasporans, Mexican consulates were actively “encouraging Mexican nationals in the United States to naturalize as U.S. citizens, while keeping their nationality as Mexicans as well.”¹⁴ Candidates for political office in Mexico campaign in the United States to raise money, to induce diasporans to get their family and friends in Mexico to vote for them, and to get Mexican citizens to return to Mexico to vote. President Fox has supported

Mexican citizenship for U.S. citizens of Mexican origin, including those born in the United States, which would enable them to vote in Mexican elections. They would constitute about 15 percent of all potential Mexican voters. If they can vote at their consulates in Los Angeles, Chicago, and elsewhere, the campaigns in these locations by candidates for office in Mexico are likely to be at least

as, and possibly more, intense than the campaigns by candidates for office in America.

The promotion of their diasporas by homeland governments is paralleled by and has encouraged diasporas to contribute to and support their homeland. This takes many forms. Most obvious are huge remittances diasporans send home. Historically, emigrants have sent money back to their families



The *matricula consular* is a document issued by the Mexican government to illegal aliens that certifies that the bearer is a legal resident of the United States under Mexican law. It is often used in attempts to circumvent U.S. laws and regulations governing immigration by implying illegal immigrants have official U.S. government recognition. The Mexican government attempts to leverage this perceived status at the state and local governing level to obtain benefits for Mexicans in the United States normally available only to legal U.S. residents and citizens. (Image courtesy of the Government of Mexico)

and communities.¹⁵ The extent and the institutionalization of these transfers took on new dimensions in the late twentieth century. In this process, diasporans as well as ampersands—and, of course, the two often overlap—have played active roles. The transfer of funds becomes not just an effort to help family and friends, but a collective effort to affirm a diasporan identity with the homeland and to support it because it is their homeland. Estimates of the global amount of migrant remittances from \$63 billion in 2000, exceeding the \$58 billion in official aid, to \$80 billion in 2001, with \$28.4 billion of this coming from the United States. Reportedly, Jewish Americans contribute \$1 billion or more a year to Israel. Filipinos send more than \$3.6 billion home. In 2000, Salvadorans in the United States sent \$1.5 billion to their home country. Vietnamese diasporans reportedly send home \$700 million to \$1 billion a year. Even remittances

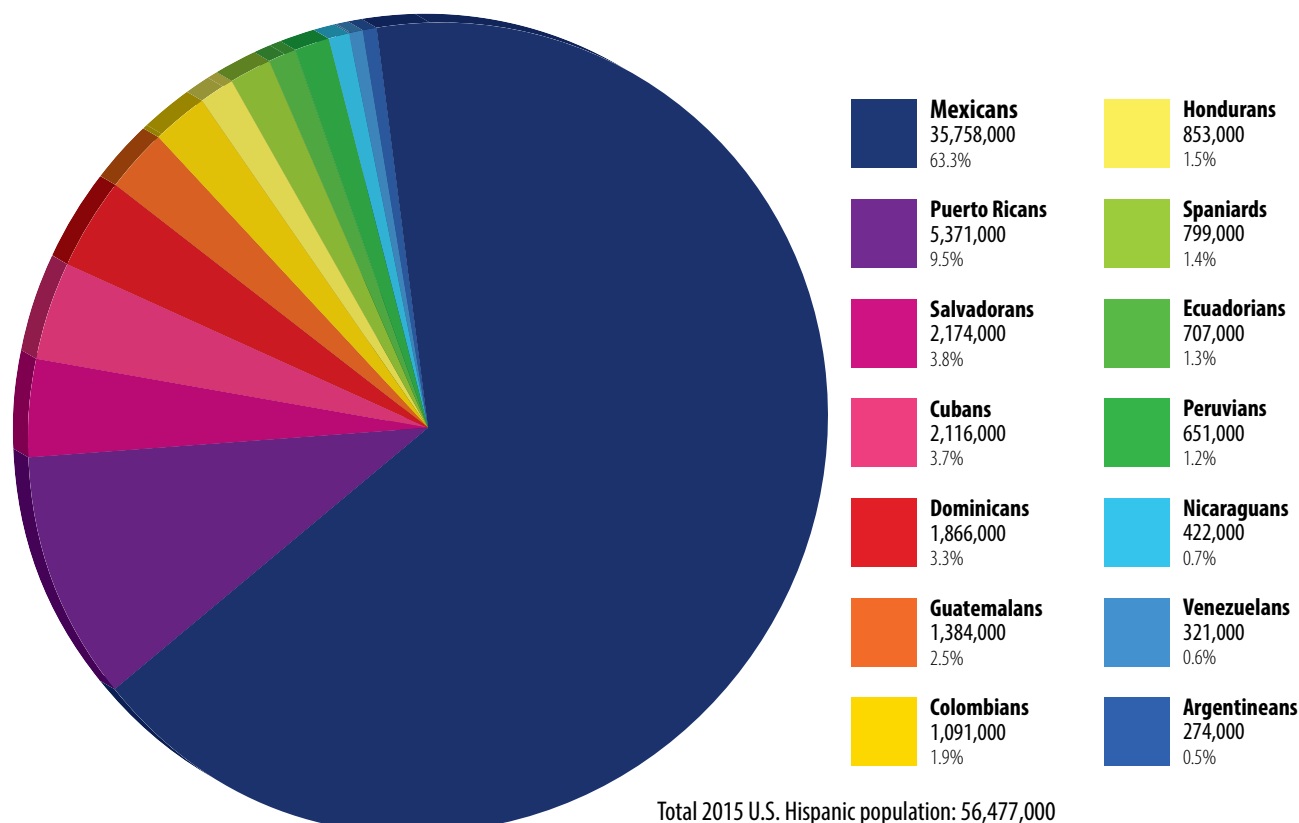


from the United States to Cuba amounted to \$720 million in 2000 and over \$1 billion in 2002. The largest U.S. remittances, of course, are to Mexico, which have grown dramatically. The Mexican government estimated that they would increase by 35 percent in 2001, exceed \$9 billion, and probably replace tourism as Mexico's second largest source of foreign exchange after oil exports. Estimates for 2002 and 2003 exceed \$10 billion.¹⁶

Diasporas contribute to the economic well-being of their homelands not just through large numbers of small remittances to those they have left behind to be spent as the recipients wish, but also increasingly by substantial investments in particular projects, factories, and businesses, ownership of which they may share with indigenous partners. The Chinese government has encouraged such investments from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Indonesia, and elsewhere. Indian, Mexican, and other successful immigrant entrepreneurs in the United States have been importuned for investments by their homeland governments. Beginning in the 1960s, some 25,000 Indian "top

Between one-half million and one million people march in *La Gran Marcha* (The Great March) 25 March 2006 in Los Angeles to protest the Sensenbrenner King Bill (HR 4437) Border Protection, Anti-terrorism, and Illegal Immigration Control Act. (Photo by Marcus, Los Angeles Indymedia, <http://la.indymedia.org/news/2006/03/151463.php>)

graduates" in engineering and related fields left for the United States, where many became extremely successful, among other things, running "more than 750 technology companies in California's Silicon Valley alone." They have responded positively to the Indian government's urging them to invest in educational programs, training institutes, and productive facilities in India. One 2002 survey found that half of foreign-born (largely Chinese and Indian) highly skilled technocrats and entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley had "set up subsidiaries, joint ventures, subcontracting arrangements, or other business operations in their native countries."¹⁷ Successful entrepreneurs and professionals from Mexico and other countries have acted similarly,



(Graphic by Arin Burgess, *Military Review*; data courtesy of Pew Research Center)

Figure. Breakdown of Latino Diasporan Groups in the United States

and the homeland governments vigorously attempt to direct such investments into projects that the governments deem essential.

Diasporas make noneconomic contributions to their homelands. Following the end of the communist regimes in eastern Europe, diasporans, many of them from the United States, provided presidents of Lithuania and Latvia, a prime minister of Yugoslavia, two foreign ministers, and a vice minister of defense who then became chief of the general staff in Lithuania, as well as numerous other lower officials in these countries. Support was expressed in Poland and the Czech Republic for Zbigniew Brzezinski and Madeleine Albright becoming presidents of these countries. Neither, however, evinced interest in that possibility, and Brzezinski commented that this suggestion forced him to examine his own identity and to conclude that while he was historically and culturally Polish, politically he was American. Diasporas also try to shape the policies of their homeland governments. As Yossi Shain has argued, on occasion they have attempted

to “market the American Creed abroad,” promoting American values of civil liberties, democracy, and free enterprise in their homelands. This certainly happens in some cases; nonetheless, as critics like Rodolfo O. de la Garza point out, Shain did not convincingly demonstrate this to be the case for three most important diasporas in the United States: Mexican-Americans, Arab-Americans, and Chinese-Americans, all of which “act counter to Shain’s assertion regarding the promotion of democratic practices in the homeland.”¹⁸ It would appear, however, that in 2000, Mexican-Americans overwhelmingly supported the end after seven decades of the monopoly of power in their homeland by a single party.

Diasporas take positions on their homelands’ foreign policy. In controversies involving the homeland country or homeland groups in conflict with other states or groups over the control of territory, diasporas have often, but not always, supported the more extremist of their homeland colleagues. Stateless diasporas, such as Chechens, Kosovars, Sikhs, Palestinians, Moros, and



Tamils have provided money, weapons, military recruits, and diplomatic and political support to their compatriots fighting to create independent homelands. Without external diasporic support, such insurgencies are unsustainable. With that support, they end only when the insurgents achieve what they want. Diasporas are important to the maintenance of homeland states; they are indispensable to the creation of such states.

The third and in many ways the most significant new dimension of diasporas is the extent to which homeland governments have been able to mobilize and to establish close means of cooperation with them so as to promote homeland interests in host societies. This development is especially significant for the United States. First, America is the most powerful actor in global politics and is able to exercise some influence on events in almost every part of the world. Other governments hence have a special need to influence the policies and behavior of its government. Second, America is historically an immigrant society and in the late twentieth century opened its doors to tens

Chinese-American men sit outside a restaurant 21 September 2017 intently looking at their cell phones in Chinatown, Flushing, Queens, New York City. Historically, ethnically oriented traditional media such as newspapers, books, and magazines were employed by diaspora groups to preclude social assimilation and promote or maintain a separate linguistic, cultural, and national identity apart from the society within which they dwell. Modern mass media such as television, radio, the internet, and social media have greatly enhanced the effectiveness of such efforts by providing avenues for instantly connecting to homeland media. Moreover, modern mass media have greatly enabled the ability of ethnic diasporas to organize and agitate for ethnic political causes on behalf of motherland interests that may be contrary to the national interests of the host nation in which diaspora groups reside. (Photo by Ira Berger, Alamy)

of millions of new immigrants and thus became host to more and larger diasporic groups. It is clearly the world's number one diaspora hostland. Third, given the extent and variety of American power, foreign governments have only limited ability to affect American policies through conventional diplomatic, economic, and military means

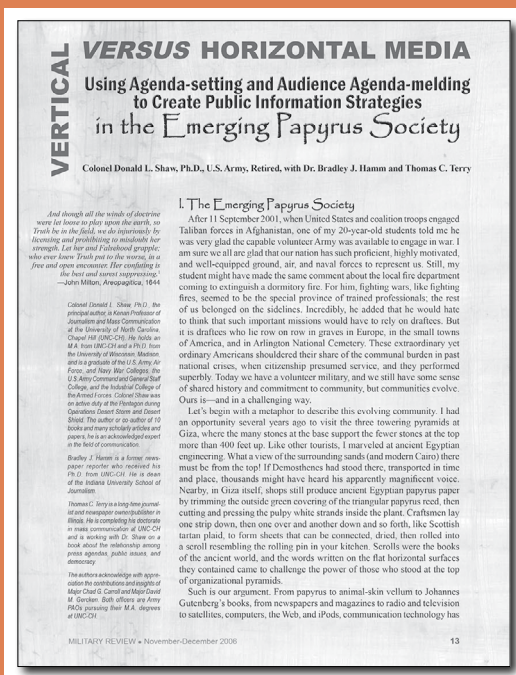
and hence must rely more on their diaspora. Fourth, the nature of American government and society enhances the political power of foreign governments and diasporas. Dispersion of authority among state and federal governments, three branches of government, and loosely structured and often highly autonomous bureaucracies provide them, as it does domestic interest groups, multiple points of access for promoting favorable policies and blocking unfavorable ones. The highly competitive two-party system gives strategically placed minorities such as diasporas the opportunity to affect elections in the single-member districts of the House of Representatives and at times also in statewide Senate elections. In addition, multiculturalism and belief in the value of immigrant groups' maintaining their ancestral culture and identity provide a highly favorable intellectual, social, and political atmosphere, unique to the United States, for the exercise of diaspora influence.

Fifth, during the Cold War, as Tony Smith has pointed out, the interests of refugee diasporas from communist countries broadly corresponded with the goals of American foreign policy.¹⁹ Eastern European diasporas promoted the liberation of their countries from Soviet rule; Russian, Chinese, and Cuban diasporas supported U.S. efforts to weaken or end communist control of their homelands. With the end of the Cold War, however, ideological opposition to homeland governments gave way (except for the Cubans) to renewed identification with and support for their homeland and its government, whose interests did not always coincide with American national interests. Sixth, during the decade between the end of the Cold War and the start of the war on terror, America had no overriding foreign policy goal, and hence the way was open for diasporas and economic interest groups to play more important roles in shaping American foreign policy. September 11 drastically reduced the power and status of Arab and Muslim groups and generated questioning attitudes toward immigrants generally. It is dubious, however, that in the absence of major additional attacks, it will have all that much of an effect in the longer run, given the powerful political, social, and intellectual forces deriving from both globalization and the nature of American society and politics that make the United States a fertile field for the exercise of influence by homeland governments and their diasporas.

As a result of these factors, in the late twentieth century, foreign governments greatly increased their efforts to affect American policies. These included expanding their lobbying efforts and public relations activity, providing support to think tanks and media, and mobilizing their diasporas to contribute funds and workers to political campaigns and

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For those interested in a related reading ... in the November-December 2006 edition of *Military Review*, three journalism professors trace the historic tendency of emerging media technologies to stimulate the formation and balkanization of group identities among media consumers in their article "Vertical versus Horizontal Media: Using Agenda-setting and Audience Agenda-melding to Create Public Information Strategies in the Emerging Papyrus Society." The article illustrates the essential role of emerging public communication technologies in various eras in building and cultivating group identity. The article is salient to the phenomenon of diaspora because modern technologies dramatically facilitate the enabling of diaspora groups to resist assimilation and to retain separate national and cultural ethnic identities apart from the national-states in which they may reside. To view this article, visit http://www.armyupress.army.mil/Portals/77/military-review/Archives/English/MilitaryReview_20061231_art005.pdf

“In today’s world, culture and ethnicity have replaced ideology. In America, many different diasporan constituencies that can be exploited by many different foreign governments have replaced the single ideological constituency exploited by the Soviet Union.”

to lobby congressional committees and bureaucratic agencies. These governments and their supporters also became much more sophisticated in their understanding of the dynamics of American government and the means of securing access to centers of power. The shift in the scale and sophistication of Mexico’s efforts is one example of these changes.

In the mid-1980s, Mexico was spending less than \$70,000 a year on lobbying Washington, and President Miguel de la Madrid (a graduate of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government) lamented the difficulty he had getting his diplomats not just to deal formally with the State Department but to develop close relations with the congressmen who had the real power to affect Mexico’s interests. In 1991, under President Carlos Salinas (also a Kennedy School alumnus), the Mexican embassy in Washington was doubled in size and its press attachés and congressional liaison officers expanded even further. By 1993, Mexico was spending \$16 million on Washington lobbying, and Salinas was leading a multiyear \$35 million campaign to get congressional approval of Mexico’s joining the North American Free Trade Agreement. As has been pointed out, Mexican political and consular officials also began to make great efforts to mobilize and organize the Mexican diaspora to promote Mexico’s agenda in Washington. In 1995, President Zedillo explicitly urged Mexican-Americans to become as effective in promoting Mexico’s interests as the Jewish lobby was in promoting Israel’s. As one State Department official commented, “The Mexicans used to be invisible here. Now they’re all over the place.”²⁰

Mexico is a dramatic example of the intensified activity by foreign governments to influence American policy and to mobilize their diasporas for that purpose. Other governments making parallel efforts include those of Canada, Saudi Arabia, South Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Israel, Germany, the Philippines, and China, with annual spending by many of them reaching into

tens of millions of dollars and in a few cases probably exceeding a hundred million dollars.

Homeland governments exploit their diasporas in various ways. One is as a source of agents for espionage and influence. Throughout history, the desire for money has motivated people to turn against their country and to sell themselves to a foreign state. Americans working for the CIA, the FBI, and the military did this in the 1980s and 1990s. Spies also may have other motives. In the 1930s and 1940s, those who became Soviet agents, including U.S. officials, Los Alamos scientists, and the Cambridge coterie of diplomats, were motivated not by lucre but by ideology. In today’s world, culture and ethnicity have replaced ideology. In America, many different diasporan constituencies that can be exploited by many different foreign governments have replaced the single ideological constituency exploited by the Soviet Union. Immigrants whose primary loyalty is to America can provide and have provided important services, including espionage, to the United States in its relations with other governments. To the extent, however, that they see themselves as members of a diaspora encompassing their homeland society and its government, they also become a potential source of agents for that government. “Espionage,” Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan once observed, “is almost invariably associated with diaspora politics,” and as the Department of Defense reported to Congress in 1996, “many foreign intelligence agencies attempt to exploit ethnic or religious ties” of American diasporans to their homelands.²¹ Since the 1980s, the United States has successfully prosecuted Russian, Chinese, Cuban, South Korean, and Israeli diasporans as spies for their homelands.

Much more important than espionage and involving far more people are the efforts of diasporans to shape American policy to serve homeland interests. These efforts have been documented at length at a general level in studies by Tony Smith, Yossi Shain, Gabriel Sheffer, and others as well as in innumerable studies of specific

diasporic groups.²² In recent decades, diasporas have had a major impact on American policy toward Greece and Turkey, the Caucasus, recognition of Macedonia, support for Croatia, sanctions against South Africa, aid for black Africa, intervention in Haiti, NATO expansion, the controversy in Northern Ireland, and the relations between Israel and its neighbors. Diaspora-shaped policies may at

Studies show, Tony Smith argues, that “the organized leadership” of the Jewish, Greek, Armenian, and other diasporas are “strongly influenced by foreign governments to take positions that may contradict American policy or interests in the region” and are unwilling “to concede that any voice but theirs should be authoritative with respect to the area of the world that concerns them.” The claim of

diasporas of the right to dominate the shaping of American policy toward their homeland area usually rests on an underlying assumption that no possible conflict could exist between homeland interests and American interests, an attitude succinctly expressed by convicted Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard: “I never thought for a second that Israel’s gain would necessarily result in America’s loss. How could it?”²⁴

Diasporas achieve influence in Congress because they can affect elections to Congress by providing money and workers to their friends and campaigning vigorously against those opposed to their policies. The political action of the Jewish diaspora is credited with the defeat in 1982 of Representative Paul Findley (Rep.-Illinois), senior Republican on the Middle East Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, because of his support for the PLO, and in 1984 of Senator Charles Percy (Rep.-Illinois), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, for his backing the sale of F-15s to Saudi Arabia. In 2002, Jewish diaspora groups were central to the primary defeats for the reelection of Representatives Earl Hilliard (Dem.-Alabama) and Cynthia McKinney (Dem.-Georgia), because they had endorsed Palestinian and Arab causes. The Armenian National Committee of America gets some credit for the defeat in 1996 of two representatives whom it had la-

beled among the most pro-Turkish members of Congress: Jim Bunn (Rep.-Oregon) and Greg Laughlin (Dem.-Texas). Bunn’s successful opponent, Darlene Hooley, praised the ANCA “for mounting a nationwide campaign in support of my candidacy.”²⁵

Countries such as Israel, Armenia, Greece, Poland, and India have obviously benefited from the efforts of their mostly small but well-placed, affluent, and articulate diasporas in the United States. Countries opposing

Table 3. Countries with the Largest Jewish Population

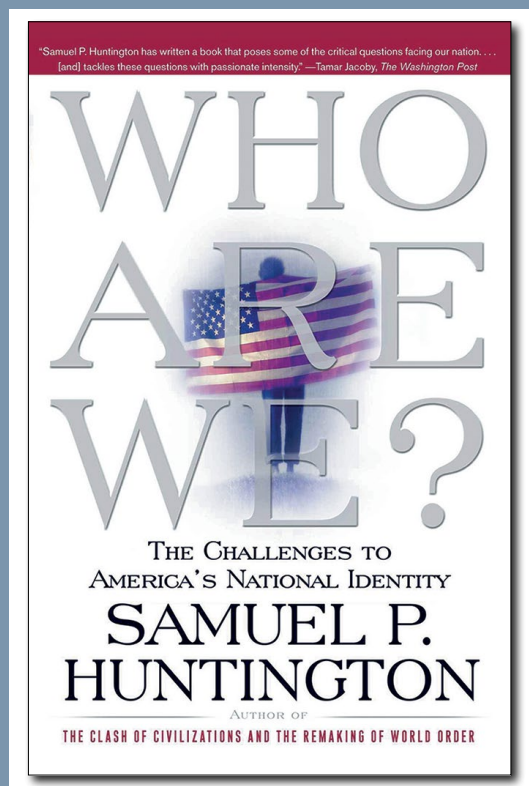
	Country	Core Jewish Population	Percent of total population
1	Israel	6,014,300	43.4%
2	United States	5,425,000	39.2%
3	France	478,000	3.5%
4	Canada	380,000	2.7%
5	United Kingdom	290,000	2.1%
6	Russian Federation	190,000	1.4%
7	Argentina	181,500	1.3%
8	Germany	118,000	0.9%
9	Australia	112,500	0.8%
10	Brazil	95,200	0.7%

(Graphic courtesy of Wikimedia Commons; stats from 2013)

times coincide with broader national interests, as could arguably be the case with NATO expansion, but they are often pursued at the expense of broader interests and American relations with long-standing allies. It can hardly be otherwise when diasporans identify themselves completely with their homeland, as in the case of Elie Wiesel: “I support Israel—period. I identify with Israel—period. I never attack, never criticize Israel when I am not in Israel. ... The role of a Jew is to be with our people.”²³

MilitaryReview

WE RECOMMEND



Samuel P. Huntington discusses social and political influences trending in a direction that could lead to the weakening and eventual dissolution of the United States. He poses the example of the Soviet Union as a case study demonstrating the weakness of mere ideology (communism) employed in an effort to unify different cultures and nationalities—an approach that eventually failed. To mitigate and reverse such trends in the United States, he proposes solutions to restore and stimulate American cohesion and national identity.

these homelands have often lost out as a result. Increased and diversified immigration to America is multiplying, however, the numbers of diasporic communities and their actual and potential political influence. As a result, conflicts abroad between opposing homelands increasingly become conflicts in America between opposing diasporas. One Arab-American leader described the congressional contest in Georgia in 2002 as “a little, Middle East proxy war.”²⁶ Such “proxy wars” fought politically between diasporas in America are tributes to America’s power to influence the real wars between homelands abroad and also evidence of the extent to which homeland governments and their diasporas believe they can affect the course of American foreign policy. As the diaspora universe becomes more diverse, proxy wars are also likely to multiply and become more diverse. One particularly intense conflict was the 1996 senatorial contest in South Dakota. This was as much a contest between Indians and Pakistanis as between Republicans and Democrats. Each candidate ardently solicited the support of a diasporan constituency. Indian-Americans contributed about \$150,000 to Senator Larry Pressler’s reelection campaign because he supported limits on U.S. arms exports to Pakistan. Pakistani-Americans gave a similar amount to his opponent. Pressler’s defeat produced elation in Islamabad and dejection in New Delhi. In 2003, a similar line-up and result occurred with the unsuccessful effort of an Indian-American, Bobby Jindal, to become governor of Louisiana. He was enthusiastically backed by Indians and Indian-Americans and vigorously opposed by Pakistani-Americans, who contributed substantial sums to his successful opponent.²⁷

The increasing numbers of Arab-Americans and Muslim Americans and their growing political involvement also pose challenges to the influence of the Jewish diaspora on American Middle East policy. In the 2002 Democratic primary in Georgia, incumbent Representative Cynthia McKinney, who had been a major supporter of Palestinian causes, “received campaign contributions from Arab-Americans around the country,” including “respectable lawyers, physicians and merchants” but also others who were “under scrutiny by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for possible terrorist links.” McKinney’s opponent, Denise Majette, was able to raise \$1.1 million, almost twice what McKinney raised, with the help of “contributions from Jews outside Georgia.” McKinney had other problems affecting her reelection campaign and lost by a vote of 58 percent to 42 percent. But, as the *Economist* commented two years earlier on the growing political role of Arab-Americans, “The pro-Israel lobby is far better organized and financed than its putative rival.

But now there is at least a putative rival—and that is quite a change in American politics.”²⁸

American politics is increasingly an arena in which homeland governments and their diasporas attempt to shape American policy to serve homeland interests. This brings them into battles with other homelands and their diasporas fought out on Capitol Hill and in voting precincts across America. An ineluctable

dynamic is at work. The more power the United States has in world politics, the more it becomes an arena of world politics, the more foreign governments and their diasporas attempt to influence American policy, and the less able the United States is to define and pursue its own national interests when these do not correspond with those of other countries that have exported people to America. ■

Notes

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