

Martyrs to Fear

Cast your mind back a few months. The year is 2002, the world is still reeling from the attacks on 9/11. The US has invaded Afghanistan in a hunt for Bin Laden, and a discussion rages about what they should do when they catch him. One thing is clear in everybody's mind however – whatever the legal or ethical arguments about killing him, the last thing we should do is make him a **martyr**.

Stop.

Back to the present day. The Coalition has all but destroyed the Iraqi regime, and attention has turned away from the question of whether we can win this war (can you believe we ever had this discussion?) and onto the subject of Saddam.

Things are a bit different this time. The Coalition has made it clear that the moment they catch so much as a whiff of him, the last thing he will see is the smiley face painted on the nose of a 2000-pound bomb. And yet, until recently, people were still saying "The last thing we should do is make him a martyr." Some are still saying it. Today's **John O'Groat Journal** reads:

[T]his war, in a cack-handed way, will have given Saddam Hussein what he does not deserve. If [...] he has been killed [...], he will become a martyr fighting for the Arab cause[...]

In the light of news footage of crowds of Iraqis passionately hitting the fallen statue of Saddam with their shoes, this idea seems preposterous, so why did anyone think it in the first place?

Haven't we just swallowed this whole concept of martyrdom without really thinking? In a culture that worships death (no, not Islam, we mean something authentically Western here),

it becomes all too easy to believe that what our enemy really wants is for us to kill him so that he can rise up, Obe-Wan-Kenobe-like, more powerful than ever.

What rubbish. Where did this idea come from? Was it Jesus? Or did it predate that? Many influential people in history have indeed been willing to die for what they believe in, but so have a great many

more losers. Che Guevara springs to mind as a symbol that trendy

college students will gladly sport on their T-shirts, yet what he stands for is the triumph of (relatively) civilised society over an ~~upstart Fascist wannabe dictator~~ idealistic revolutionary – failure.

Did Che Guevara's brave sacrifice set off a global fascist uprising that would descend upon the capitalist pigs and bring them to their knees? No, actually all it set off was an opportunity for some handy T-shirt revenue for those capitalists smart enough to capitalise on it.

So why exactly were we afraid to martyr Saddam? His death (or trial, or ignominious flight) will not mark the dawning of a new wave of Islamic terrorism or super-Ba'athism or anything of the sort. All the terrorists that are going to rise up have risen up already: that is what started all this. The end of Saddam will mark the dismal failure of yet another uppity dictator who fucked with the Western world and got his arse kicked for the privilege.

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Anglosphere

You said "the Western world". Are the Weasels still part of the Western world, or do we need a new term? "Anglosphere" doesn't work, because it excludes the eastern Europeans, who are ok.

by [Rob Klein](#) on Thu, 04/10/2003 - 20:55 | [reply](#)

New Term

How about *Good Guys*?

And it needs to include Israel, too.

by [Gil](#) on Thu, 04/10/2003 - 23:42 | [reply](#)

This "martyr" business is jus...

This "martyr" business is just one of the many absurd memes floated ad nauseum by the mass media parroting the arab propaganda.

Any time such a junk idea is re-examined, it turns into a dud.

by [Boris A.Kupershmidt](#) on Sun, 04/13/2003 - 00:09 | [reply](#)