

'Human Rights' In The Cause Of Tyranny: Who Is To Blame?

There is some damning criticism of Human Rights Watch in **this** article by Alan Dershowitz. In regard to Lebanon, it leaves little room to regard HRW as more than a Hezbollah propaganda organ – and a crude one at that. And Amnesty International is even worse, says **Kenneth Anderson**, who also claims that:

It's not merely an organization or a movement that is at risk - it is the credibility of human rights itself.

If the very concept of protecting human rights is being eroded because its most prominent advocates insist on siding with tyranny, who is to blame? The 'moonbats' and '**idiotarians**' who run those organisations? Well, yes, of course. But also, no. For evil to triumph, it suffices that good people do nothing.

And good people are doing nothing. Where are the impartial human-rights organisations? The ones that conscientiously investigate alleged atrocities and then take a reputable view about what, factually, happened. The ones that support the liberation of Iraq and Afghanistan, support the existence and self-defence of Israel, recognise the need to use force to protect lives and liberties, and want it to be used morally. The ones that care *both* about the humane treatment of terrorists by the armed forces of the US and Israel and others who are trying desperately to save innocent lives *and* about the appalling violations of human rights perpetrated and planned by those terrorists and the tyrannical governments that support them. And keep those two issues in their morally proper perspective.

They are missing. And that is through no fault of the anti-war movement. It is entirely the fault of our side.

Update: Alan has further comments at **Elegance Against Ignorance**.

Further update: If you're interested in this issue it is worth reading **this** article by Dershowitz, mainly about Amnesty International's recent condemnation of Israel, and **this**

uncompromising but remarkably empty defence of both Amnesty

and HRW, entitled "Diversionary Strike On a Rights Group".

Sun, 08/27/2006 - 17:00 | [digg](#) | [del.icio.us](#) | [permalink](#)

Questions

I agree with your central statement. But two questions remain to be answered:

1. Why?--Why these sort of human-rights organizations have not been created? Are "good people" disillusioned with the whole idea of such organizations? Are they busy with other higher priority tasks? Have they put their trust with the existing ones? Are there enough "good people" committed to seeing such a (monumental) task through?

2. How?--How and by whom should such orgnaizations be created? What is the proper venue and foundation? Source of funding? Etc.

-- Cyrus Ferdowsi, <http://libiran.blogspot.com>

by [Liberal Iranian](#) on Mon, 08/28/2006 - 19:38 | [reply](#)

liberation of Iraq?

Any human rights organization that seriously claimed that Iragis have been "liberated" would be laughed out of town.

by a reader on Wed, 08/30/2006 - 01:46 | [reply](#)

Re: liberation of Iraq?

Why?

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/blog/>

by [Elliot Temple](#) on Wed, 08/30/2006 - 03:06 | [reply](#)

Re: Re: liberation of Iraq?

By most people's standards Abu Ghraib tortute, raping of young women by soldiers, and violence verging on civil war does not qualify as "liberty". Even by the World's own proclaimed standards Iraq is not "liberated". I invite you to do the "town square" test there Elliot. (if we restrict that test to Iraqi citizens, not an outsider like you would be, it would still fail.) Even by the World's weak standard of (at least) supporting Israel, Iraq fails (Mr. Maliki condemned Israel's actions in Lebanon)

To cite the "liberation" of Iraq in the same paragraph with the other cited actions merely serves to bring those into question as well.

by a reader on Wed, 08/30/2006 - 12:44 | [reply](#)

Re: liberation of Iraq?

Is passing the town square test your standard for qualifying for the term 'liberation'?

One problem with that is that very few countries pass the town square test completely. For instance, in Britain after World War 2, blasphemy was still a criminal offence. So according to the town-square standard of liberation, forcibly overthrowing Nazi rule in the Channel Islands was not a liberation because the new regime failed the town square test in regard to criticism of certain religious dogmas. That has the same logic as your claim that the overthrow of Saddam was not a liberation because the new regime fails the town square test in regard to (for instance) Israeli flags. In both cases (post-liberation Channel Islands and post-liberation Iraq) the region in question passes the town square test incomparably better than it did before.

We think that such transistions are indeed liberations under the prevailing usage of the term 'liberation'. But much more important than terminology is the substantive issue of whether human rights organisations ought to have been endorsing the overthrow of the Saddam regime (as we advocate) or working to keep it in place (as they did in the event).

by **Editor** on Wed, 08/30/2006 - 16:06 | [reply](#)

Re: Questions

Good questions.

by **Editor** on Wed, 08/30/2006 - 16:07 | [reply](#)

Shades of transition

If Elliot had gone to an Iraqi town square during Saddam's rule and denounced Islamic fundamentalism, he might very well have been applauded. Worst case he might have been deported.

Today he would most likely be shot before opening his mouth. Is this an example of "liberation transition"?

Perhaps the "town square test is completely invalid if it is not an objective pass/fail but subjective shades of "transition".

by a reader on Thu, 08/31/2006 - 22:46 | [reply](#)

Re: Shades of transition

I believe I understand what you are asserting. But I don't understand why I am supposed to deem it to be true. Nor have you revealed why you do.

-- Elliot Temple

<http://www.curi.us/blog/>

by **Elliot Temple** on Fri, 09/01/2006 - 00:45 | [reply](#)

Liberation and Liberty

The anonymous reader is confusing, (1) the stable (and evolving) prevalence of liberty in a society and, (2) the initiation of the gradual (and painful) movement towards that situation. "Liberation" is the name of the latter; the former is called "freedom." A near always passing of the town-square test is necessary and sufficient for (1), but not for (2). I am not sure what a good objective measure for "liberation" is. I suggest it must include the increasing "volume" of debate taking place on the pressing issues of the society. This has certainly been the case in Iraq. That situation can be contrasted with the situation in Iran, which is the reverse. (Say, for the policies adopted by the government on its nuclear program.)

-- Cyrus Ferdowsi, <http://libiran.blogspot.com>

by [Liberal Iranian](#) on Fri, 09/01/2006 - 10:46 | [reply](#)

Re:Liberation and Liberty

Which is which? Here is a list of a dozen countries, Which are in a state of "freedom" and which are in a state of "liberation" and which are neither?

Pakistan

China

Russia

Ukraine

Serbia

U.A.E.

France

Philipines

Vietnam

Nepal

Bolivia

South Korea

by a reader on Fri, 09/01/2006 - 12:14 | [reply](#)

Re: Re:Liberation and Liberty

Although some of them are plainly clear, I cannot claim I have adequate information at the moment to answer your question accurately in all instances. This information can be found out given

enough time. Before expending that time, however, I would like to

know what purpose would such an exercise serve in our discussion.

-- Cyrus Ferdowsi, <http://libiran.blogspot.com>

by **Liberal Iranian** on Mon, 09/04/2006 - 08:19 | [reply](#)

Re: Shades of transition

"If Elliot had gone to an Iraqi town square during Saddam's rule and denounced Islamic fundamentalism, he might very well have been applauded. Worst case he might have been deported.

Today he would most likely be shot before opening his mouth. Is this an example of "liberation transition"?"

Let us suppose this were true (it probably isn't, but lets say it is). Is this evidence that Iraq as run by Saddam was more liberal, or would it simply be evidence that the offenses that would get you shot in Iraq have changed since the invasion?

Do you suppose that shouting "Saddam is an oppressive dictator" in the pre-invasion Iraqi town square would have been a safe thing to do? People were reputedly dragged from their beds and tortured to death for much less.

It's also important to consider who would be doing the shooting. In the pre-invasion Iraq you would be shot by the republican guard - in the new Iraq you would be shot by a criminal. Granted you're just as dead either way, but at least in the latter case there's a slim chance that the culprit may be prosecuted for their crime, instead of getting a promotion.

I think in the end it is better to live in a free country with a legitimate government that isn't coping well with terrorism, rather than an oppressive regime where even the terrorists are too afraid to step out of line.

by a reader on Tue, 11/14/2006 - 13:45 | [reply](#)

Jack Bauer

I think in the end it is better to live in a free country with a legitimate government that isn't coping well with terrorism, rather than an oppressive regime where even the terrorists are too afraid to step out of line.

I agree. Let's consider what Jack Bauer would do in each situation.

1) a free country, with a legitimate government, but poor security forces

Jack would personally take over security and kill the terrorists, thus creating a free country with no downsides.

2) an oppressive regime with terrorists too scared to step out of line

Jack would personally kill the oppressive regime, *then* personally

take over security for the country. He'd kill the oppressor and the terrorists. We'd end up with the same final result: a free country with no downsides.

So, what's the difference? In scenario 2, Jack has to kill more people. Thus, scenario 2 is further away from a good, free country.

-- Elliot Temple

curi@curi.us

Dialogs

by **Elliot Temple** on Tue, 11/14/2006 - 21:53 | [reply](#)

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