

Adria

Thank you. These are good questions and deserve good answers. I'm not at all sure I can do them justice in 3 or 4 pages, but I'll try. Jonathan wrote me a note with some related ideas. I will use my comments to you as background to my reply to him.

You wrote:

I think your comment raises some interesting and important issues. Perhaps you have some insight into the following questions/comments or can suggest further reading.

- 1) It is easy to confuse correlation of events with causation. What evidence do we have that wars (particularly WWII) have caused the spread of democracy rather than been associated with other conditions (education/technology/successful democracies in place/???) that were the primary cause of the spread of democracy?
- 2) Clearly not all wars result in democratic government for the nations involved. What conditions are associated with wars that do have "happy" endings? How many of those factors are present in the current situation?
- 3) While wars may sometimes result in the spread of respect for human dignity and greater protections for the environment, what evidence do we have about the relative effectiveness of war compared to peaceful methods for achieving these goals? What method most protects these goals in the long run? As in Question 2), which conditions lead to one method being more likely to succeed?

My reply:

Lets begin with some premises:

- 1) In any human society there are two somewhat equal somewhat opposite forces. They are
 - a) the desire to be independent
 - b) the desire to control others

In the "normal" human society, the desire to control others usually wins over, because those who have that desire are often willing to exercise force to obtain their purposes. So the politics of human society usually can be described in terms a king in Egypt, an emperor in Rome, a duke in medieval England, or a gang leader in the streets of New York.

The most potent "mechanical" force to disrupt the political power of those who wish to control is the market. A good example is to observe that when Rome was no longer able to protect its trade routs and enforce its military-imposed peace, the vacuum of its power was filled by local thugs who dominated local areas. (For example, the dukes of Normandy were descended from pirates who raided ships in the English channel, built a fort in the cliffs, and subdued the local people so they would not threaten the fort from the land.) The crusades changed all that when the introduction of eastern spices, silk, et. al, into medieval Europe literally brought an end to the

local dictatorial dukedoms, and their power was transferred to kings who ruled in cities that were centers of trade. All that took two thousand years, and while there was an apparent change in the power structure, there was no change in the persons who held the power. The present queen of England is an heir of the wealth and power of the first dukes of Normandy and also a descendant of the emperors of Rome and the kings of Egypt.

Premise 2) unless it is changed by some external force, the power to control others remains in the same hands from generation to generation. Those external forces are:

- a) foreign invasion (in which case the power is transferred to whomever controls the foreign country, city, or castle.
- b) internal revolution (in which case the power is transferred to whatever demigod can control the “mob” and use the masses to get control of the country, as in the French Revolution)

So in those two instances, there may be a change in the ruling families, but not in the fact that some family rules.

c) The third is one brought about by the assertion of those who want to be independent – so it is, by definition, a revolution based on ideas rather than on power. This is exceedingly rare, and except for isolated instances such as the ill fated Roman Republic, and the city states in Switzerland, has only been successful once in human history – that was in England.

Five things came together in England to create the most amazing revolution in human history

- 1) England is an island which is insulated from attack by foreign footsoldiers, and in its isolation created its own European subculture
- 2) British Common Law asserted that common people should be ruled by law rather than by the whims of an overlord.
- 3) growth of power by the merchant class as the result of the Renaissance
- 4) The invention of the printing press and the publication of the English Bible spread the idea that ordinary people were of worth to God. The press first focused on religious issues, then on the political philosophies of Greece and Rome.
- 5) Calvin Protestantism produced a different kind of fruit in British soil. The Protestant Work Ethic combined with the Common Law to create an economic and political philosophy which said people were capable of intelligent thought and action and were responsible for what they did. Those ideas were perfected in the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and were transplanted in America in full bloom of their glory. A hundred years later they produced the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution which asserted that people were free by right, not by privilege. As I drove to work this morning I heard president Bush express the single most important doctrine of American thinking: “Freedom is not a gift to the people of Iraq from America – it is a gift to all mankind from God.” That says all there is to say. The most fundamental of all questions is this: Is individual freedom a privilege granted by government or is it a right given by God and protected by government.” The latter idea is the gift to the world by our British ancestors.

6) that idea – the amalgam of the Greek idea that people are capable of rational thought and responsible for their own actions; the Roman idea of participatory government; the

Judo/Christian belief that individuals are of worth to God; the English system of Common Law; Calvin's Protestant Work Ethic that asserts that if one works hard, makes a profit, is frugal and generous that is in evidence that one is in good with God (which evolved into a philosophical/theological justification and impetus for free enterprise and the free market system) – all those things together came to be what Americans think of as “freedom.” But in America the union of those ideas created the parallel idea that free people have the obligation to help other people become free.

All that was background, now let me address your question directly.

In 1789 there were only three free countries in the whole world – England, the United States, and the city states of Switzerland. (Also the Netherlands, if one considers the political power exercised by their commercial class as constituting political freedom.) In the next century a few more were added if one considers individual parts of the British Empire as separate entities that early – Canada, Australia, New Zealand. Mexico had a constitution, but hardly a democratic form of government. France, after a series of revolutions finally came up with a government that roughly approximated England's. That was about it. The kingdoms of Germany, Austria, Russia, and Eastern and Southern Europe were fully entrenched. Japan had an emperor who was a god, and those people had no concept of what Americans called “freedom.” South America, Africa, and India had colonial governments. It is not coincidental that the only countries where the Mormon missionaries had success were in the countries which had political, or economic freedom, or both.

After WW I forward looking leaders in several nations attempted to establish democratic governments, but their cultures had not prepared their people for its responsibilities. The emperor of Germany was replaced by “democratic” government that Hitler eventually took over. The Czar of Russia was replaced by a “democratic” government that was replaced by Communism. Revolutions in Italy produced a “democratic” government that Mussolini took over.

Communism was exceedingly important– not because it was good, but because it was evil. It destroyed “the traditions of the fathers,” promised the people what it could not deliver, and left them hungering for the real thing.

At the end of WW II freedom (including women's votes, labor unions, and all the rest) was imposed on Germany and Japan by military dictatorship. (The first time in history a military government had forced people to learn how to be free) The Korean war did the same for South Korea. At about the same time, revolutions in South America and Africa, and “the rule of reason” in the British empire, brought an end to colonialism – except for those nations behind the Iron curtain. When the Russian economic system failed, its political system collapsed also, and by then the nations behind the Iron curtain had watched freedom work elsewhere for long enough that they wanted to try it also.

Before WW I there were fewer than a dozen nations, world wide, who had representative constitutions. Now, less than a hundred years later, there were more than a hundred nations, that had some semblance of a free government and economic system. That is an average of about one a year – that is surely the most amazing revolution in human history. Some of those changes

came as a direct result of war, some came in the shadow of war, but none of them (except the change of the British Empire to the British Commonwealth) occurred without bloodshed.

Incidentally, there is another sub-textual story in all that also. The changes in the world map which show the growth of free states and free people, also shows the world's slow accessibility to the restored gospel. The reason is simple. People cannot learn the gospel if they are physically, politically, or spiritually oppressed – if they are economically deprived, and systematically ill-educated. For that reason (among others) it is my firm belief that the God of Heaven is as concerned about the political and economic wellbeing of his children as he is about their spiritual welfare, and the story I have just outlined is no less about the one as it is the other.

It would be absurd to assert that all wars bring people to freedom. Viet Nam was a bad war – conducted by two presidents, Kennedy and Johnson, whose motives were questionable (major understatement). I heard the live press conference at which Johnson said he couldn't end the Viet Nam war because if he brought the American troops home they would flood the labor market and ruin the economy. (Nixon ended the war without ruining the economy)

All that is my rationale behind the little statement I made to Johathan. If the purpose of the present war is to establish a foothold for freedom (with all its multifaceted meaning) in the middle east, then that purpose is perfectly consistent with, not only long standing American policy, but more important, with the long standing sense of American responsibility.

Thank you for your frankness. It answers some of my questions. I see the expediency of some of your views, and it will help me refine my stance. Some of these historical questions I have to ask to understand how to act in the future. If this war is being carried out for the right reasons, I believe it is necessary because of a history of evil choices, so help me refine this view also. The parts I've erased are the parts you've more or less convinced me on, so I'm not ignoring them by focusing on where I still lack understanding.

3) "I would like to hear such an argument accounting for the many lives that will be lost in the warfare,..." Before you ask for that, can you demonstrate that there will be more lives lost in this war than there have been men, women, and children already murdered by Saddam, or can you show that if we left him alone that there would be more people killed in this war than he would yet murder?

This may be a necessity now, but we put him in power. Sanctions were tried for a long time, but they were strict economic sanctions and weak military sanctions. What would have happened had that been reversed? F.W. de Clerk told how sanctions made the end of apartheid in South Africa come later because it kept the blacks poor and uneducated longer. The lasting change came from within, when the blacks were making money and were getting educated. They did it themselves because they weren't starving. Is it impossible to maintain targeted military sanctions without starving a people economically? F.W. de Clerk didn't think so, so how far could that analysis be transferred to Iraq?

4) "...and accounting for why we are continuing to support leaders throughout the world that are worse abusers of human rights than Saddam." Are you suggesting that because

there are other bad political leaders in the world we should either take them all out at once or else leave them all alone.

I am suggesting that we should cease to actively support them militarily, as we have a 40 year history of doing. I am suggesting that putting in a friendly dictator is no more conducive to freedom than allowing an unfriendly, but elected, communist regime take power would have been. You could tell me more about countries where we have done that than I could tell you. My history on this needs fleshing out.

ÊÊ Would you and your friends be any less against "war" if we went after the rulers of North Korea or the oppressive leaders of some African countries.ÊÊ Or if we went after the leaders of North Korea just now, would you argue that we had no right to do that because we were not also going after Saddam.

I personally would be less against war if I could see consistency and honesty in my leaders. I recognize that Ghandi was not, and I am not strictly a pacifist. I believe the peace movement would have much less force if there were not so many inconsistencies in our human rights policy, both historically and currently.

5) "If we are willing to sacrifice thousands of other peoples lives and hundreds of billions of dollars to achieve regime change, and then rebuild Iraq by paying corporate america (and only a select subset that have donated heavily to GOP political campaigns),..."

I am noting that the usual bidding process was sidestepped, and only a subset of potentially qualified groups were invited to bid, and that the selection was political, not technical.

Are you suggesting that of the persons who might have the technical qualifications to rebuild Iraq, corporate Americans are disqualified if they voted for Bush - are only corporate Americans who are Democrats qualified to help rebuild Iraq.ÊÊ Would you also disqualify the corporate French and Germans who have been helping Saddam build his present war machine, or in the eyes of the peace movement, do the French and German corporate leaders qualify as "good guys" on the grounds that they are now opposed to Americans' dismantling Saddam's abilities to spread gas, and perhaps also smallpox and atomic bombs.

I'm still waiting for evidence that Saddam has serious capability to deploy weapons of mass destruction. If it comes, I'll admit my error, and hopefully I won't have done too much harm in the mean time. My second concern is--there will be dictators with weapons of mass destruction and ambitions to rule and to hurt America. If this is the only way we can deal with it, they will be used on America.

6) "...why do we hear no talk from these 'moral' leaders about peaceful ways we can sacrifice to accomplish these same goals? Can we not sacrifice lives and money in attempts at peaceful change?"ÊÊ Whose lives would you sacrifice to demonstrate that Saddam can be convinced with smiles that he should stop killing his own people, paying people to kill Jews, and assist terrorists who would like to kill us?

I don't know on this one. This isn't something my friends have said, this is me grasping at straws. Looking beyond Saddam, there will always be terror aimed at America for many reasons. I've been reading about the societies and cultures where terror finds its support. The largest groups are ones that feel oppressed economically and spiritually. It is there that leaders can build a broad base of support for terror. As long as we are determined to hang on to our exploitative economic

domination of the world, we will not eliminate terror. Getting rid of one supplier will have little effect. Denying people constitutional rights will have little effect.

How would you accomplish these sacrifices. There is no legal way any philanthropist can or any nation can give to a poor people without obeying the laws of the nation those poor people live in. What influence would you use to force Saddam to let other nations give assistance to the citizens of Iraq whom he is murdering.

Short term, you're right. Long term, there are sacrifices that would make a difference. They are the sacrifices that the Gospel of Christ calls for, I believe. They would involve Americans giving up much of our extravagantly consuming lifestyles (i.e. living sustainably), ceasing to put millions of dollars and hours into having people make us feel good about ourselves and entertain us, supporting community and local economies, and supporting people who go out and serve throughout the world. There are a few non-profit organizations that have expertise and commitment to do parts of the rebuilding, although it will take corporations to do other parts. They will almost without question do as little as they can at as large a profit margin as possible, however. I don't know what to think about that. Where we do have power as a country, we can stop using it selfishly, and stop blaming others for the consequences of its selfish use. No major political leaders are pushing for any of these things in significant ways. My dad reminded me: "We gain power

only at a price, with great uncertainty, and only by committing ourselves to something: to money, to a group, to God, or to Satan. The questions to ask are always these: is this commitment righteous, is the group or person to whom we are committing worthy of our commitment, is this group or person likely to accomplish the things we want to accomplish, are the agendas (both visible and hidden) of the group or person truly the agendas in which we believe?"

The prices our national political leaders pay is huge, and requires compromise of principle that I don't think I'm willing to make. On one hand this makes me very judgemental, and on other days it makes me recognize the difficulty of their position. How do you tell if a leader is a good man other than by his actions? And which actions do you look at? I know the president has more information on some issues than I do, so which actions do I use as a guide to tell me if I should trust him or not on the other issues? Many of my friends base it on sexual orientation and abortion. I can't do that. How much hypocrisy is necessary to play the game and have influence for good, and when is the line crossed? If I'm not willing to commit to money or various political movements (which I'm not long term), that means I need to draw lines myself and say, I've chosen this path, so I won't have influence on these other issues. I just don't want to do that in a completely arbitrary way.

Fundamentally, the problem with the peace movement is that they are also willing to talk about violating international law and the laws of sovereign countries, but they do it under the guise of peace and happiness and offer no way to either achieve or enforce their "good works." They talk about the blessings of liberty to a people for whom liberty is not a realistic option.

Getting out of poverty is not a realistic option for those kept in economic bondage by us. What are our priorities on freedom? I know the message is mixed from the peace movement. I disagree with much of what is said, I disagree with some of what is done. I hope it eventually breaks into

factions with one that I can support wholeheartedly, but I don't expect that.

ÊÊÊ They can not take their freedom banners into Iraq and change Saddam's laws. The only real ways the laws of a sovereign nation can be changed externally is by using economic or military power. The UN tried economic power and it resulted in starving the people but in no fewer palaces or weapons factories for Saddam.

Some peace activists have been arguing for a decade that the sanctions were never really targetted at Saddam, so I don't believe economic power was ever exerted in a way designed to accomplish change in Iraq. Bush never supported peaceful means of change, maybe because he knew they wouldn't work (and maybe he was right), but neither of the Bush's, nor Clinton in between, supported targetted sanctions or weapons inspections (they used them as a tool for spying, which surprises no one, I'm sure). Bush has known he was going into Iraq since Afghanistan. Maybe before. I don't believe that peaceful means were ever given a real chance. I don't see this as enforcing attempts at peace and freedom, but enforcing failed attempts at securing national interest. A side effect may be providing freedom for the Iraqi's, but how? By military occupation? By allowing a fundamentalist muslim government to be elected? By showing Iraqi's the joys of American economics?

So now, the only way to achieve the objectives of the peace movement is to enforce them by using military force. The options proposed by the peace movement are either not rational, or not legal, or neither rational nor legal - unless they are enforced by external military power. So we are back where we started: The only way to achieve the objectives of the peace movement is to first achieve the objectives of the war.

I promised I would address the principles of Gandhi, so let me do that. He said he could defeat the British government by using the principles of British freedom. He also said that if Hitler's Germany or if the Russians had control of India, he would have been thrown in jail and that would have been the end of his civil disobedience movement. He was correct. His way of gaining peace and independence can only work in a free environment. Gandhi understood that his principles actually employed the English respect for human life and freedom. His assessment was correct: because of the English respect for life and freedom they had no weapon that they could use against Gandhi. (Neither Gandhi nor anyone like him could ever pose a threat to Saddam's regime)ÊÊÊ Because of our respect of human life and freedom, the American government has no weapon it can use against the peace movement - no matter how rational or irrational its leaders might be. But the reverse is not true. The peace movement does have the power to destroy a government whose people and leaders insist on giving free voice to everyone who chooses to talk. Our founding fathers understood that. That is why they left local and state governments to be as democratic as they wished.ÊÊ And that is why they made the House of Representatives a democratic institution. But that is also why they insulated the US Senate and Presidency from the whims of the masses by making them republican institutions.

The whole thing boils down to two questions: What are the issues? and what are the principles?

Issues are the immediate questions: war, death, destruction, happiness, peace: all the

things the peace movement calls attention to.

Principles are the long term questions: self determination, economic freedom, political freedom -ÊÊ and the two you mentioned that can only be enforced through the consequences of war and imposed regime changeÊÊ - relieve poverty and educate Iraqis children.

I guess my biggest problem may be that I don't trust that these are the objectives of America. I don't believe we will follow through on the good ones effectively. I do believe we will continue to economically abuse Iraq. I don't believe we will allow self determination in either government or education. I don't trust the staying power of the US government to relieve poverty. I do believe that a humble peace movement should now be pushing for these things to be done well and generously at the conclusion of the war, but I don't believe it will as a whole. There are too many agendas and many of them hidden. I think parts will, and I hope I can lend them a bit of my support.

I write this in part because I learn by having my ideas contradicted. I need it, especially when I'm so confused. I only see pieces of the world, and my family tends to reinforce many of those, although they wake me up to others. My acquaintances rarely correct me because they either haven't thought much about the issues or they don't believe I'll really listen, or more often they just aren't used to this type of argument.

Love, Jonathan