

Democracy in Iraq?

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Rush Limbaugh has often said that a pure democracy would be a disaster...! The graphic story he references is: Given an island with a total population of three men and two women and the power to vote, the men would be empowered to legalize raping the women. My less graphic model includes an island with ten people. One is an industrious farmer who worked to build a sturdy home for shelter, and the other nine are content to pick and immediately consume pineapples and bananas that are available, and “sleep under the stars” at night. Give the group the power to vote, and then under lean food-supply times or inclement weather, the group of nine will coerce hard-earned goods from the industrious farmer. In either event, you can see it is **not** the Democracy; it is the **PRINCIPLES** that must come first.

Some fundamentally important principles are:

- Rule of Law
- Property Rights
- Individual Freedom
- Capitalism (including a right to profits, interest, competition, a market based economy, etc.)
- Free market

Without these principles systemically embedded and enforced within our country, we would live in a chaotic barbarous state. To “embed” these principles requires WORK to create them and then entrepreneurial initiatives and WORK to build factories and cities, and enhance the general standard of living. Most of all we must have the intellectual capacity to recognize principles in contrast to agendas.

In Iraq, we have expressed the importance of Democracy first and foremost in our efforts to gain a peaceful Middle East. Unfortunately, “Democracy” has grown to be the international banner of nirvana. We have pitched democracy as the “Holy Grail” to Iraq... “Yes, my fellow Iraqi citizens, once democracy is in place the power-grid will be restored, running tap water will flourish, jobs will exist for all, the Americans will leave, and peace will be restored...”. Sure.... To date, principles, and WORK have been pitched as a **distant** second and third to Democracy. Wouldn't you line up to vote and celebrate, if that was your vision??

The risk? If your cultural roots are firmly established in passionate religious beliefs that are fundamentally opposed to capitalism, rule by another religious authority, property rights, and individual freedom, might there be a disconnect between what Iraqis are expecting from a democratic state vs. what Americans are expecting from the same?

Clearly, some Iraqi intellectuals know the need for principles to trump popular agendas, and will do their best to incorporate them into a constitution, but do most Iraq citizens know that? A democracy will **not** get the power-grid turned back on. It will energize and disproportionately empower the majority party (Shiites in Iraq). Could this be a golden opportunity for them to pursue a religious state designed after their narrow beliefs and an agenda?? Do the key political figures in Iraq have the wisdom and public support to institutionalize principles over popular agendas?

In our “best of intentions” effort to control the world supply of oil (invade Iraq), and stamp out Islamic extremism (invade and conquer Iraq) and thus “democratize” a kingdom of extremists

and warlords (Iraq), we have treaded into an incredible quagmire of risk. What happens, if they use Democracy to further an extremist agenda? Have we enabled that? What happens, if they associate a failure to improve the basic services (power, water, sewage, and etc.) with Democracy? Do you feel more secure??

What is a better approach??

- Focus first upon free-market principles. These concepts bridge gaps and sooth political differences more than any other mortal power.
- Encourage and support international education. Invite their younger generation into our universities and visa versa to learn cultures, principles, and results from each other.
- Position individual freedom above all else...! The U.S. began with a democratically elected Republic to develop and uphold PRINCIPLES for many of the reasons stated above.
- Encourage Peace Corps (and equivalent) initiatives between the nations involved.

By Russell Randall; 12-21-2005