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## THEY SAID IT

In a country whose chief domestic imperative for 50 years has been ending racism and righting long-standing wrongs against blacks—with such success that we now have an expanding black middle class, a black secretary of state, black CEOs of three top corporations, a black Supreme Court justice, and a serious black presidential candidate—how can there still exist a large black urban underclass imprisoned in poverty, welfare dependency, school failure, nonwork, and crime? How even today can more black young men be entangled in the criminal-justice system than graduate from college? How can close to 70 percent of black children be born into single-mother families, which (almost all experts agree) prepare kids for success less well than two-parent families?

The legacy of slavery and racism isn't the reason, economist Thomas Sowell has long argued. That legacy didn't stop blacks from raising themselves up after Emancipation. By World War I, Sowell's data show, northern blacks scored higher on armed-forces tests than southern whites. After World War II and the GI Bill, black education and income levels rose sharply. It was only in the mid-1960s that a century of black progress seemed to make a sudden U-turn, a reversal that long-past events didn't cause. Beginning around 1964, the rates of black high school graduation, workforce participation, crime, illegitimacy, and drug use all turned sharply in the wrong direction. While many blacks continued to move forward, a sizable minority solidified into an underclass, defined by self-destructive behavior that all but guaranteed failure.

What was going on in the mid-sixties that could explain such a startling development?

--Myron Magnet, "In the Heart of Freedom, in Chains," *City Journal*, Summer 2007.

## LOVE MEANS NEVER HAVING TO SAY YOU'RE SORRY.

We don't exactly consider ourselves pioneers, but it is quite possible that the following sentence has never before been written; indeed, it is likely that most people thought it never could be written. Still, *John Kerry started an interesting conversation the other day*. Not that he intended to, mind you. What he meant to do was to deny reality and falsify history in order to justify his and his party's wartime fecklessness. The net effect of what he said, though, was to start a conversation about political ideology and its potential impact on the lives of millions of people worldwide.

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What Kerry said, in effect, was that the American retreat from Vietnam in the early 1970s had no detrimental effect on the people of Southeast Asia; certainly, he said, it did not lead to the oppression, torture, and mass slaughter that many opponents of the withdrawal had predicted. *The Chicago Tribune* reported Kerry's take on the American retreat from the region thusly: "We heard that argument over and over again about the bloodbath that would engulf the entire Southeast Asia, and it didn't happen," Kerry said, dismissing the charge out of hand . . ."

In the interests of historical accuracy, one might feel compelled to point out that the "bloodbath" that the Democratic Party's most recent presidential nominee declares "didn't happen" nevertheless cost millions of people their lives and many millions more their freedom and their families. Fortunately, we don't need to spend a great deal of time on those details today, since we have documented them before and since others, namely *OpinionJournal's* James Taranto, have documented them again, this time in excruciating detail (<http://www.opinionjournal.com/best/?id=110010376>, <http://www.opinionjournal.com/best/?id=110010372>).

What we are left with, then, is the aforementioned conversation about political ideology and its relationship to "democide," a term coined by the historian R.J. Rummel (whose book, *Death by Government* we reviewed just over a decade ago) to describe the 20th Century phenomenon of government-sponsored mass murder. Taranto, for his part, thinks that Kerry's comments, coupled with those made last week by the presidential wannabe Barack Obama concerning the United States' responsibility (or lack thereof) to stop genocide/democide (see article below), suggest that the Democratic Party is perilously close to abandoning the moral high ground on human rights, if not abandoning human rights altogether.

Others, most notably J.R. Dunn, a consulting editor at *American Thinker* (an online magazine) and the former editor of the *International Military Encyclopedia*, have joined the conversation, arguing that the Obama-Kerry indifference to genocide/democide is part

of a broad historical pattern, rather than merely a contemporary phenomenon. Dunn notes that of the roughly thirteen "major genocides and democides" in the twentieth century, each costing at least a million lives, "no fewer than eleven occurred during the administrations of Democratic presidents." He continues:

In fact, partially excepting John F. Kennedy, there's no Democratic president following Franklin D. Roosevelt whose term was not marred by at least one massive foreign bloodletting. In contrast, Republican administrations feature only two: Mao's Great Leap Forward, in which a nationwide artificial famine wracked China from one end to the other, and the Ethiopian famine, an almost identical episode that struck the ancient African kingdom in the mid-80s.

Dunn argues that there is a clear correlation between "large-scale atrocities and Democratic administrations." "There's no point in denying it," he writes. Though Dunn admits that correlation does not necessarily imply causation, he nonetheless implies that he believes causation does indeed exist. He notes, for example, that he doubts that the "evidence" he details and the relationship between democratic administrations and mass governmental murder is "merely the product of pure chance." In any case, he argues that the questions raised by his research (and by the Obama-Kerry statements) are worthy of further investigation.

More power to him, we say. If Dunn (or anyone else, for that matter) wants to spend his time and energy researching this correlation, we're all for it. We don't think it will come to much, but that's no reason not to investigate. For our part, we think that there are a handful of problems with Dunn's theory that Democratic administration's in the United States lead to mass murders in other countries.

For starters, though the incidence of such atrocities are staggering from a human perspective, they are less significant from a statistical standpoint. It is, other words, hard to differentiate causation from

coincidence with so small a sample. We suspect that the timing of at least some of these atrocities was, in fact, coincidental. It is far more likely, we think, that domestic political conditions played a greater role in these events than did the state of American partisan politics.

Additionally, in order to make the theory work, one must ignore the genocides/democides halted or prevented by the actions of presidents, including Democratic presidents. Roosevelt, after all, ended the Holocaust, however belatedly. And though he did so slowly and reluctantly, it is likely that the actions that Bill Clinton took in the Balkans (Bosnia, Kosovo) actually helped keep those mass slaughters from making Dunn's list of "major" atrocities.

That's not to say that Democrats – or "liberals" more generally – bear no responsibility at all for facilitating the conditions that have led to mass slaughter. But the argument that there is a direct relationship between Democratic administrations and governmental mass murder seems to us a stretch. Dunn would, we think, be far better off pursuing his original hypothesis, namely that "liberal policies taken to their logical conclusion tend to create large piles of bodies in a process that might be called mass negligent homicide." This hypothesis, while mildly more inflammatory, is similar in basic principle to many other theories and studies cataloging the unintended consequences of liberal shortsightedness.

With regard to domestic policies, such giants as Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Thomas Sowell, and Charles Murray have amply and brilliantly recounted the monstrously destructive effects that the liberal policies of the 1960s (the War on Poverty, the Great Society) have had on American society, most especially on American minorities, principally blacks. As the quote in the "They Said It" section above suggests, the combination of liberal white guilt, liberal arrogance, and liberal intrusiveness created a potent witches' brew in the 1960s that all but destroyed the black family, reversed a century of progress in moving "up from slavery" (to borrow the name of Booker T. Washington's autobiography), and created a permanent underclass doomed to remain in poverty and despair.

Though the connection between liberal foreign policy and subsequent death and destruction is somewhat less clear cut, and may be more difficult to establish, examples abound and can be used to bolster such a contention. Certainly, from Southeast Asia to Iran to the Soviet Union, liberal capitulation bolstered America's enemies and encouraged them to undertake aggressive and, in some case, murderous actions. But beyond this indirect and inadvertent encouragement of "bad actors," liberal policies have also directly facilitated destruction and mayhem. Just as with the domestic policies of the 1960s, the unintended consequences of liberal foreign policies have adversely affected many nations, in some cases bringing to power and cementing in power the very monsters who would commit mass murder.

Perhaps the most striking and most contemporary example of liberal meddling and its deadly consequences can be seen in the African nation of Zimbabwe, where the dictator Robert Mugabe continues to sow death and destruction, both killing his enemies directly and implementing policies the net effect of which has been the death and displacement of tens of thousands, with tens of thousands more to come. Zimbabwean dissident Arnold Tsunga has called Mugabe's regime "a system of terror for the majority and patronage for the elite few." And *Newsweek* (among countless others) recently described the situation in this once successful southern African nation in even starker terms:

The lush green country once boasted Africa's highest literacy rate. Now, statistically, a Zimbabwean woman can expect to live only to the age of 38. The government says inflation is running at 3,700 percent, but experts say the actual figure is closer to 19,000 percent. Last week two separate U.N. bodies estimated that by early next year some 4 million Zimbabweans – one third of the population – could go hungry. An additional 3 million are living abroad now, and as many as 2,000 more flee each week. South Africa, worried about stability as it prepares to host the 2010 World Cup, has stepped up deportations of Zimbabwean migrants back across the border.

AIDS is rampant in Zimbabwe, as are Mugabe's goon squads. Last fall, Mugabe displaced nearly a million of his nation's poorest and most vulnerable by bulldozing their homes, principally because he feared that they could present a political threat to him.

But what does all of this have to do with liberalism, you ask? Most people today choose to ignore the ignominious origins of the Mugabe regime, preferring instead to cling to the lie that Mugabe was a "hero" who "led a brutal war of liberation against the white-rule government of Ian Smith," to quote *Newsweek*. But the fact of the matter is that Mugabe's government was, by and large, the creation of liberal meddling, most notably on the part of former President Jimmy Carter (naturally) and his United Nations ambassador Andrew Young.

The tale of the Mugabe regime's origin was recently retold by James Kirchick, the assistant to the editor-in-chief of *The New Republic*, a liberal-left publication. As Kirchick points out, the original Rhodesian elections in 1979 produced a result unacceptable to liberals in Europe and the United States because it did not include the avowed Marxist Mugabe. Kirchick writes:

The Carter administration, the Labour government in Britain, and the international left all insisted that Mugabe and Nkomo be part of the negotiating process--on its face a concession to terrorism. Presaging the edicts of Al Qaeda in Iraq, both guerrilla leaders pledged violence against any black Zimbabwean who dared take part in the April balloting. Nkomo called for a "bloodbath." A year earlier he had ridiculed the "all party nonsense" advocated by the moderate black leaders and said, "We mean to get that country by force, and we shall get it." Mugabe, not to be outdone, issued a public death list of 50 individuals associated with the internal settlement, including the three black leaders of the executive council. ZANU described these individuals as

"Zimbabwean black bourgeoisie, traitors, fellow-travelers, and puppets of the Ian Smith regime, opportunistic running-dogs and other capitalist vultures." Mugabe also expressed his belief that "the multiparty system is a luxury" and said that if Zimbabwean blacks did not like Marxism, "then we will have to reeducate them." This was the same Mugabe whom Young, in that 1978 interview with the *Times of London*, had called "a very gentle man," adding, "I can't imagine Joshua Nkomo, or Robert Mugabe, ever pulling the trigger on a gun to kill anyone. I doubt that they ever have."

Nevertheless, in April 1979, in a scene reminiscent of the recent Iraqi elections, nearly 3 million blacks came out to vote under a state of martial law and with armed guerrillas actively seeking to disrupt the balloting. Although 100,000 soldiers protected the polling places, 10 civilians were killed by Mugabe and Nkomo's forces. Even so, the election was a resounding success and produced a clear verdict. An overwhelming majority of voters chose Muzorewa to become the first black prime minister of Zimbabwe Rhodesia, as the country was now called.

Sadly, this democratic outcome was a chimera. Muzorewa--spurned by the West, deemed illegitimate by the African dictatorships, and forced to contend with Communist-armed insurgents--would hold power for a mere matter of months. The betrayal of Muzorewa is one of the more craven episodes in American foreign policy.

Liberal international opinion condemned the election before it ever took place. Andrew Young called the interim

government “neofascist,” and the *New York Times* editorialized that the election would be a “moral and diplomatic disaster.” . . .

The appearance of a popularly elected, black-led, anti-Marxist government in Africa confronted Western liberals with a challenge: Would they accept this interim agreement, widely endorsed by the country’s blacks, as a step on the path to full majority rule, or would they reject the democratic will of the Zimbabwean people in favor of guerrilla groups that supported Soviet-style dictatorship.

Sadly, we know how this story ends. As Kirchick concludes, “History will not look kindly on those in the West who insisted on bringing the avowed Marxist Mugabe into the government. In particular, the Jimmy Carter foreign policy – feckless in the Iranian hostage crisis, irresolute in the face of mounting Soviet ambitions, and noted in the post-White House years for dalliances with dictators the world over – bears some responsibility for the fate of a small African country with scant connection to American national interests.”

Over the last few years, global liberalism has exacerbated the problem. The United Nations recently made Mugabe’s Zimbabwe the chair of its “Commission on Sustainable Development.” For years, European liberal-Luddites feted Mugabe for his refusal to allow the importation into his starving country of genetically-modified “ Frankenfoods” (peddled, of course, by the dastardly United States). And up until recently, Mugabe was hailed as a hero by the French, whose former president Jacques Chirac embraced the dictator openly, in large part because of their similar stands in opposition to the American “war on terror.”

Sadly, Zimbabwe is hardly the only example of disastrous liberal meddling in Africa, although it is the most prominent example of *American* liberal meddling. Indeed, as we have noted many times in these pages,

the entire history of post-colonial Africa was perhaps best forecast by the British satirist Evelyn Waugh. Though his book *Black Mischief* is generally considered offensively politically incorrect these days, because of its mocking of post-colonial African leaders, as far as we’re concerned no better guide to liberal foreign policy has ever been written.

*Black Mischief* is the farcical story of Seth, ruler of the fictional African empire of Anzania, who, after studying at Oxford, sets about to “modernize” his country through the implementation of the progressive ideas propounded by Europe’s great leftist thinkers. To make a long story short, the propositions of Europe’s lefties prove to be hilariously disastrous, and Seth’s efforts to “modernize” Anzania fail miserably.

Fools, what do they know? What can they understand? I am Seth, grandson of Amurath. Defeat is impossible. I have been to Europe. I know. We have the Tank. This is not a war of Seth against Seyid, but of Progress against Barbarism. And Progress must prevail. I have seen the great tattoo of Aldershot, the Paris Exhibition, the Oxford Union. I have read modern books — Shaw, Arlen, Priestley. What do the gossips in the bazaars know of all this? The whole might of Evolution rides behind me; at my stirrups run woman’s suffrage, vaccination and vivisection. I am the New Age. I am the Future. . . .

He handed Mr. Youkoumian a chit which had just arrived from the Palace: For your information and necessary action, I have decided to abolish the following:

Death penalty.  
Marriage.  
The Sakuyu language and all native dialects.  
Infant mortality.  
Totemism.  
Inhuman butchery.  
Mortgages.  
Emigration.

Please see to this. Also organize system of reservoirs for city's water supply and draft syllabus for competitive examination for public services. Suggest compulsory Esperanto. Seth.

Of course, the true foils in Waugh's book are not the hapless Anzanians, but the liberal Westerners, who help Seth impose upon Anzania the dumbest and least intellectually sound theories of economics and sociology to be found in the Western world. As Waugh's biographer Douglas Lane Patey put it, "Seth's efforts at modernization are foolish both because they are out of place in a primitive nation and because the 'progressive' ideas on which they are based – all European, and heavily Leftist in origin – are foolish in themselves."

And so has it been with virtually the entirety of Africa in the post-colonial period. "Progressives" continue to meddle in the continent's business, forgiving debt, funding corrupt and ineffective "economic development" plans, instituting countless programs and strategies, all based on failed principles and all virtually guaranteed to make matters in Africa worse, not better. Just as the liberalism of the 1960s created a permanent black underclass in the United States, so the liberalism of the '60s, '70s, '80s, and '90s has created a global black underclass that comprises nearly the entire continent of Africa.

Not that one should expect liberals to apologize for what has been done to Africa. Indeed, we'd be surprised if too many even noticed. After all, if the liberal establishment – including not just John Kerry, but the likes of Teddy Kennedy, and Chris Dodd as well – can publicly deny the existence of the Vietnamese boat people or the millions slaughtered by Khmer Rouge in "Year Zero," then we certainly can't expect them to acknowledge the poor, slaughtered, and exiled of Africa.

Kerry may well have started an interesting conversation when he claimed that the atrocities in Southeast Asia "didn't happen." But we doubt seriously whether he or any other Democrats will have the guts to engage that conversation seriously.

## PEACE IN OUR TIME.

One of the big news events last week, not as exciting as, say, the Dempsey Tunny fight in 1926 or Lucky Lindy's flight to Paris in 1927, but clearly in that same exalted category, was the dust up between White House hopefuls Mrs. William Jefferson Clinton and Barack Hussein Obama over the wisdom of presidential meetings with foreign tyrants.

Like most of humanity, we were overwhelmed for several days by the excitement of the moment. But after we calmed down a little and had time to reflect on this knotty and complex issue, we concluded that the advisability of such meetings is directly related not to the relative wickedness of the foreign leader involved but to the nature of the message that our hypothetical President carries to the meeting and the skill with which he or she is likely to deliver said message. To put this in more concrete terms, we believe that the problem with Neville Chamberlain's ill-fated visit with Adolf Hitler in late September 1938 was not the visit itself, but Chamberlain's effete approach to dealing with the killer.

Thus, to be more specific, if the President of the United States is, as the British might say, a big girl's blouse, then it might be better for the citizens of the good old U.S. of A if he or she simply stayed at home. If, on the other hand, our hypothetical president were carrying a message that would be viewed by the entire world, as well as by the tyrant involved, as a firm outline of the nature of the response that the United States would likely make to various aggressive actions by the tyrant, then routine meetings between Presidents and tyrants might save lives and promote peace.

As regards the kind of message that we would find commendable, we are thinking in terms of something like the following. "Given that you are a self-proclaimed enemy of the United States, I must inform you that if you don't voluntarily stop building nuclear weapons, I, as Commander in Chief of the U.S. military, will stop you myself, immediately and with prejudice."

In order to avoid being accused of failing to address the specifics of the quarrel mentioned above, we would posit the view that, given the propensity of both Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Obama to consider surrender as the most attractive option when the going gets tough, neither should, if elected to the presidency, endanger American security by engaging in any sort of conversation whatsoever with any foreign leader who is more aggressive and more capable of inflicting harm on the United States than, say, the Sultan of Brunei.

Now, we will admit that we have engaged in a bit of hyperbole here; that the dispute between Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Obama wasn't really as exciting as we have portrayed it; that, in fact, the entire exchange was rather "silly," just as Mrs. Clinton later described it, largely because both participants failed to note that the real issue here is the message, not the messenger.

On the other hand, whether these two candidates for the position of Commander in Chief of the most powerful military in the world knew it or not, both provided interesting clues as to their respective attitudes toward the use of the military, and in doing so, offered some valuable insights into the kinds of foreign policy dangers that may loom in America's future.

For her part, Mrs. Clinton hewed to the traditional, safe, and almost old-fashioned view that direct talks between Presidents and tyrants should be avoided. Specifically, she said, "I don't want to see the power and prestige of the United States President put at risk by rushing into meetings with the likes of Chavez, and Castro, and Ahmadinejad." To be entirely in keeping with the conventional, she should have included a standardized assertion that if she were President she would deal assertively and decisively with such folks, whether directly or indirectly. But she didn't say that.

In contrast, Mr. Obama broke some interesting new ground in the area of American foreign policy, arguing that he would go anywhere and talk to anyone, being unafraid of "losing the p.r. war to dictators." And then, as a kicker, he forcefully asserted that in his

opinion the U.S. military should not be used to solve humanitarian problems around the world, even if these problems involve genocide.

Certainly, this refusal to use U.S. military force to address humanitarian problems is in keeping with the policies of most of the nations of the world throughout most of human history. In fact, the notion that the United States has some special, moral obligation to come to the aid of nations in distress for purely humanitarian considerations is a relatively new one. President Roosevelt, for example, wanted desperately to join the war against Nazi Germany in the opening days of World War II, but was not initially able to convince Americans to go along with this involvement in a "foreign war" until the attack on Pearl Harbor seemed to make it all personal.

Still, Mr. Obama's public assertion that the United States is not obligated to concern itself with the death and destruction in other parts of the world unless it directly involves U.S. interests came as a sort of shock to Americans who have grown accustomed to modern presidents asserting that the United States does indeed have a moral obligation to act, on occasion at least, as a defender of the oppressed.

Of course, it isn't clear whether Mr. Obama would actually refuse such help if he were in office. But it is very clear that his position on the war in Iraq and the use of America's military power is reflective of the enormous influence that the "peace-now" folks have within the Democratic Party. Indeed, this large, growing, and angry contingent is arguably more powerful within the Party than any individual, including Mrs. Clinton.

In fact, in fairness to Mrs. Clinton, she seems quite uncomfortable with this strange, deeply anti-American pacifism, having clawed her way to the top of the American political heap with visions of someday being able to impose her noble views on the entire world as President of the most progressive, liberal, goodest, proudest, and most beneficent nation in the universe and backed up by one hell of a big Army. How, Mrs. Clinton must wonder, can she be "Big Brother" to the entire world if she must forego the use of the sword?

But it appears that, at least for the time being, she has knuckled under to the “peace-now” crowd, which we think explains why she gave up a perfect opportunity in the above-mentioned dustup with Mr. Obama to assure Americans that simply because she is a woman no one should believe that she would not be as assertive and tough as any man. Whereas some political pundits once considered this to be her most urgent task, it appears now that it is more important for her to assure the antiwar crowd in her party that she is just as gentle as “the Breck girl,” John Edwards.

Now it is extremely difficult to figure out how all of this would translate into policy if Hillary, or Barack, or, say, John Edwards, were to win the presidency next year. It seems clear, however, that any one of the three would be in instant trouble with the grass roots of his or her Party if he or she did not adopt a very passive and accommodative attitude toward America’s self-proclaimed enemies. Which brings us back to the subject of meeting with tyrants.

The problem, as we see it, isn’t that the next Democratic President wouldn’t eventually defend the nation and its interests with military force if necessary. The problem is this hypothetical Democratic president would be forced by prior promises to the party faithful to spend an enormous amount of valuable time on fruitless diplomacy before he or she could take the necessary steps to defend the nation, which would make the subsequent military action bloodier and longer lasting.

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