



Why America Cannot “Save” Mankind

The Founding Fathers formed America as a republic. The interests of government were limited primarily to protecting freedom, and in those relatively few instances in which the “general welfare” was involved, the interests of government might include other duties as well. Post roads, the regulation of weights and measurements, the enactment of laws to protect copyrights and patents, a navy to protect American shores and shipping, the regulation of new territories until they could become states — these were the sorts of general welfare functions that the Constitution allowed the federal government to undertake.



The American republic was intended, of course, to help promote ordered liberty around the world, but the mechanism was not the imposition of its values upon other nations but simply its example which could light the way for other nations which wished to emulate it. When America pursued that limited government, its system of leading by example worked. The new republics of Latin America formed government structures similar to their large northern neighbor. So Mexico is the “United States of Mexico” and Brazil is the “United States of Brazil.” Australia has a Senate and a House of Representatives.

This emulation did not always work. Socialism is an insidious vice which often enters a nation’s politics posing as the friend of the poor, yet which soon cripples and addicts these poor to both the welfare system and the psychological system of victimhood and dependency. But if emulation does not work, then this country’s efforts to impose Americanism have been dangerous flops. The rest of the world is divided largely into bitter and bickering tribes. During WWI, while America accommodated in brotherly citizenship, Germans, Italians, Russians, French, Austro-Hungarians, Serbians — these and other nationalities of Europe — embroiled their continent in a smoldering nightmare, a charnel house the likes of which the modern world had never seen.

Asia and Africa are even more splintered into religious, racial, and tribal factions that create unending wars and misery. International efforts through foreign aid to lift peoples out of poverty have not worked. Attempts to bring goodwill and peace have seemed to inflame opposite feelings. The rest of the world has always held the keys to its own salvation, and some peoples — such as the Swiss — have grasped the keys. The Swiss confederation — divided into three major nationalities, lacking a strong central government, and guided by a principle of respect for the rights of the other fellow’s canton — “works” in a sense that few other nations do.

The lust for power — for hegemony over others and holding onto sections of empire — has made many pseudo-states into living nightmares. Iran, for example, is a conglomerate of different peoples held together by central power. Iraq, where America attempted “nation-building,” is likewise an uneasy confrontation between three hostile groups. Even U.S. “allies” such as Turkey have lived by holding



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on April 21, 2011

other peoples captive.

When one dreams of how other nations could be made peaceful, he should consider the Kurds as an object lesson in failure. These people stretch from Iran all the way to Syria. A large chunk of the Kurdish population lives in Iraq, and a larger part in Turkey. They are a very old people, mentioned by Xenophon and other ancient historians. Most Kurds are Muslims, but some are Christians or even Jews. They are not Arabs, and their language is not Turkish, Arabic, or Farsi.

The empires of the Old World never saw fit to create a Kurdish nation, even though that is manifestly what most Kurds have wanted. This is no defense of Kurds per se. Many are terrorists; some have participated in Muslim massacres of Christians; Marxism also has a hold of many of their young people. But they do want their own country — why not grant it to them? Instead, century after dreary century, the Kurds, like so many other peoples, have lived as subjects of some greater empire.

And their woes continue. In Bismal, Turkey, on Wednesday, police opened fire on Kurdish protesters. The Turkish government had barred Kurds from running in some recent parliamentary elections. Among those barred was iconic Kurdish activist Leyla Zana, winner of the European Parliament's human rights award, who spent 10 years in Turkish prisons before her release in 2004. The Turkish police, according to reports, first opened fire with plastic bullets and then lethal ammunition. The Kurds, other witnesses reported, had thrown Molotov cocktails at the police. The street battles stretched all across that big chunk of Turkey which Kurds would claim as their homeland. Kurds have claimed that Turks forbid the use of the Kurdish language and torture Kurdish prisoners; Turks insist that that part of "Kurdistan" which is in Turkey is part of the nation and that Kurds must assimilate.

According to the infamous principles of a pure democracy or majority rule, the Kurds, who are outnumbered in Turkey (as they are in Iran, Iraq, and Syria), are in the wrong: the will of the people, expressed in elections, insists that Kurds be good Turkish citizens. According to the principles of "nation building," the Turks are in the wrong: They oppress minority rights.

In truth, the best approach to this ancient conflict is the same as the best approach to perceived unfairness in the distribution of national wealth: Government does not solve the problem in either case; it can only make things worse. No peacekeeping forces, no package of international aid, no condemnation of world opinion, no outside pressure at all will resolve this very old problem.

How can the problems of the Turks and Kurds be ended? By embracing the notion of personal liberty, as in America, so that people cease calling each other "Kurds" or "Turks" but rather fellow children of a loving God. That works — always.

Map with military figures depicting U.S. presence abroad: AP Images



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