

OPINIONS & LETTERS

Spreading Freedom Begins At Home

By Alon Barlevy, PhD., President,
Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

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pressing, we are willing to look the other way, as in the cases of dictatorships such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Uzbekistan. If the results of a free and democratic election are not in line with our interests, as in the case of Iran, then Republicans will make baseless accusations questioning the elections' fairness.

COLUMN LEFT

Bush came up with an even worse excuse for the war in Iraq. He claimed that we have to stay in Iraq in order to spread freedom and democracy around the world, for the sake of our security at home.

Although he probably knows the excuse does not make much sense, and he has added some more outlandish excuses for the war in Iraq, Bush has not completely abandoned the "spread freedom and democracy" excuse, as demonstrated in his June 28th address to the nation. He used the word "freedom" no less than 21 times, and the words "democracy"/"democratic" 11 times in his speech.

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Freedom and democracy are great concepts, and rather than sending our troops to die in Iraq in the name of those concepts, we should work to increase those concepts here at home. With over a half million residents, Washington D.C.'s population is larger than Wyoming's, yet D.C. voters do not get to have representation in Congress. With just under four million people, Puerto Rico's population is slightly higher than Oregon's population, yet they too do not have congressional representation. Unlike residents of D.C., who got the right to vote for president with passage of the 23rd Amendment, Puerto Ricans do not enjoy this right. Puerto Ricans only get to vote in presidential primaries.

D.C. voters get to send a delegate to the House of Representatives, and Puerto Rico voters get to send a resident commissioner to the House. In both cases, delegates and commissioners get to vote in committees, but not on the floor of the House. This violates the concepts of freedom and democracy that the president supposedly wants to spread around the world. One of Bill Clinton's last acts as president was to put a "taxation without representation" licence plate on the presidential limousine. Bush's first act as president was to remove that same frame.

If D.C. and Puerto Rico were awarded full congressional representation, Democrats would most likely gain four additional senators, and six or seven additional representatives in the House. It therefore appears that Republicans seem to like the concepts of freedom and democracy only as sound bite words to use as excuses for their failed policies, but not when those same concepts would threaten their grip on power.

Text of Article

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Alon Barlevy, PhD.
President, Hubert Humphrey Democratic Club

After not finding any weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, President Bush had to find some other excuse for the war. Much like a young child who gets caught in a lie and then makes up an even more implausible lie, George W. Bush came up with an even worse excuse for the war in Iraq. He claimed that we have to stay in Iraq in order to spread freedom and democracy around the world, for the sake of our security at home.

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Of course, the spreading of freedom and democracy applies only to Iraq. When other interests are more pressing, we are willing to look the other way, as in the cases of dictatorships such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. If the results of a free and democratic election are not in line with our interests, as in the case of Iran, then Republicans will make baseless accusations questioning the elections' fairness.

Freedom and democracy are great concepts, and rather than sending our troops to die in Iraq in the name of those concepts, we should work to increase those concepts here at home. With over a half million residents, Washington DC's population is larger than Wyoming's, yet DC voters do not get to have representation in Congress. With just under 4 million people, Puerto Rico's population is slightly higher than Oregon's population, yet they too do not have congressional representation. Unlike residents of DC who got the right to vote for president with passage of the 23rd amendment, Puerto Ricans do not enjoy this right. Puerto Ricans only get to vote in presidential primaries.

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