Why Do Our Young Go to the Sound of the Battle?

Description

Todayâ€™s political, military and geo-political landscapes are a muddy, quicksand like consistency it seems some days. Little clarity, lots of â€œsuctionâ€• to keep the progress from occurring. From Hugh Hewittâ€™s radio show tonight, a moment of clarity, the words of a young man. His words, those of a freshly minted â€œbutter barâ€• provide the answer to the title of the post, and also convey some wisdom his elders might be wise to take counsel of.

Sadly, these words, most likely would have been doomed to being read by a few hundred or so people in passing on Lt Mark Dalyâ€™s MySpace page, but as the result of his death in combat on 1/15/2007, his readership will increase dramatically. Here they are. Pause to consider Mark says things not popular, yet in a professional and forthright manner:

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> Why I Joined: This question has been asked of me so many times in so many different contexts that I thought it would be best if I wrote my reasons for joining the Army on my page for all to see. First, the more accurate question is why I volunteered to go to Iraq. After all, I joined the Army a week after we declared war on Saddamâ€™s government with the intention of going to Iraq. Now, after years of training and preparation, I am finally here. Much has changed in the last three years.
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> The criminal Baâ€™ath regime has been replaced by an insurgency fueled by Iraqâ€™s neighbors who hope to partition Iraq for their own ends. This is coupled with the ever present transnational militant Islamist movement which has seized upon Iraq as the greatest way to kill Americans, along with anyone else they happen to be standing near. What was once a paralyzed state of fear is now the staging ground for one of the largest transformations of power and ideology the Middle East has experienced since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Thanks to Iran, Syria, and other enlightened local actors, this transformation will be plagued by interregional hatred and genocide. And I am now in the center of this. Is this why I joined? Yes.
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> Much has been said about Americaâ€™s intentions in overthrowing Saddam Hussein and seeking to establish a new state based upon political representation and individual rights. Many have framed the paradigm through which they view the conflict around one-word explanations such as â€œoilâ€• or â€œterrorism,â€• favoring the one which best serves their political persuasion. I did the same thing, and anyone who knew me before I joined knows that I am quite aware and at times sympathetic to the arguments against the war in Iraq. If you think the only way a person could bring themselves to volunteer for this war is through sheer desperation or blind obedience then consider me the exception (though there are countless like me). I joined the fight because it occurred to me that many modern day â€œhumanistsâ€• who claim to possess a genuine concern for human beings throughout the world are in fact quite content to allow their fellow â€œglobal citizensâ€• to suffer under

the most hideous state apparatuses and conditions. Their excuses used to be my excuses.

When asked why we shouldnâ€™t confront the Baâ€™ath party, the Taliban or the various other tyrannies throughout this world, my answers would allude to vague notions of cultural tolerance (forcing women to wear a veil and stay indoors is such a quaint cultural tradition), the sanctity of national sovereignty (how eager we internationalists are to throw up borders to defend dictatorships!) or even a creeping suspicion of Americaâ€™s intentions. When all else failed, I would retreat to my fragile moral ecosystem that years of living in peace and liberty had provided me. I would write off war because civilian casualties were guaranteed, or temporary alliances with illiberal forces would be made, or tank fuel was toxic for the environment.

My fellow â€œhumanistsâ€• and I would relish contently in our self righteous declaration of opposition against all military campaigns against dictatorships, congratulating one another for refusing to taint that aforementioned fragile moral ecosystem that many still cradle with all the revolutionary tenacity of the members of Rage Against the Machine and Greenday. Others would point to Americaâ€™s historical support of Saddam Hussein, sighting it as hypocritical that we would now vilify him as a thug and a tyrant. Upon explaining that we did so to ward off the fiercely Islamist Iran, which was correctly identified as the greater threat at the time, eyes are rolled and hypocrisy is declared. Forgetting that America sided with Stalin to defeat Hitler, who was promptly confronted once the Nazis were destroyed, Americaâ€™s initial engagement with Saddam and other regional actors is identified as the ultimate argument against Americaâ€™s moral crusade. And maybe it is. Maybe the reality of politics makes all political action inherently crude and immoral. Or maybe it is these adventures in philosophical masturbation that prevent people from ever taking any kind of effective action against men like Saddam Hussein.

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One thing is for certain, as disagreeable or as confusing as my decision to enter the fray may be, consider what peace vigils against genocide have accomplished lately. Consider that there are 19 year old soldiers from the Midwest who have never touched a college campus or a protest who have done more to uphold the universal legitimacy of representative government and individual rights by placing themselves between Iraqi voting lines and homicidal religious fanatics. Often times it is less about how clean your actions are and more about how pure your intentions are. So that is why I joined.

In the time it took for you to read this explanation, innocent people your age have suffered under the crushing misery of tyranny. Every tool of philosophical advancement and communication that we use to develop our opinions about this war are denied to countless human beings on this planet, many of whom live under the regimes that have, in my opinion, been legitimately targeted for destruction. Some have allowed their resentment of the President to stir silent applause for setbacks in Iraq. Others have ironically decried the war because it has tied up our forces and prevented them from confronting criminal regimes in Sudan, Uganda, and elsewhere. I simply decided that the time for candid discussions of the oppressed was over, and I joined.

In digesting this posting, please remember that Americaâ€™s commitment to overthrow Saddam Hussein and his sons existed before the current administration and would exist into

> our future childrenâ€™s lives had we not acted. Please remember that the problems that plague Iraq today were set in motion centuries ago and were up until now held back by the most cruel of cages. Donâ€™t forget that human beings have a responsibility to one another and that Americans will always have a responsibility to the oppressed. Donâ€™t overlook the obvious reasons to disagree with the war but donâ€™t cheapen the moral aspects either. Assisting a formerly oppressed population in converting their torn society into a plural, democratic one is dangerous and difficult business, especially when being attacked and sabotaged from literally every direction. So if you have anything to say to me at the end of this reading, let it at least include â€œGood Luckâ€• Mark Daily

Mark saw something we have missed or maybe dismissed, in the current debate on the â€œsurgeâ€• and defunding the war. He notes that action gets things done. He shut up (about his views held before), suited up and stepped up when it came time. I know there are many more like him. May those ones come home victorious and when peace is at hand in the Middle East.

Rest in peace, Soldier.

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