

## **Rumsfeld: Adelaide (Update)**

by cleaves *Friday, Nov 18 2005, 1:22am*

international / social/political / commentary

Activists asserted their democratic right to protest Rumsfeld's visit outside the heavily guarded Adelaide Town Hall regardless of Dr. Bob Such granting 'permission' to protest outside South Australia's Parliament House. Let's not miss a 'subtle' point; the right to protest is fundamental to a democratic society, let that right act as a barometer in any society that purports to uphold democratic values.

Howard's new laws have effectively eliminated the right to protest, as was demonstrated when all protest activity was initially banned. Is government sanctioned (permission granted) protest a true expression of democratic freedom? I think not! The worst possible scenario for protest activity is that it becomes a government (stage) managed social phenomenon, as almost occurred in Adelaide.

Activists of the past, present (and hopefully the future) have never shied from the potential illegality of protest activity. In fact, the political impact of protest activity is heightened by its potential illegality. Protest organisers should only seek permission when absolutely necessary, never as a submissive gesture. It should never be forgotten that our democratic rights are being slowly eroded by stealth. It is the oblique attack on the cultural consciousness that requires our vigilance. The Roman Empire was able to maintain (and extend) its rule by becoming an empire of the mind; the emperor Constantine found it extremely expedient to internalise social policing methods (with theological ideology) rather than maintain costly militaristic modes of social control. Let us not succumb to equivalent psychological incursions today.

An Australian provincial capital was thoroughly disrupted by a visit from a US Secretary of Defence. Terms such as "lockdown" were used to describe the unprecedented security that surrounded Rumsfeld's visit. In addition to local security Rumsfeld was accompanied by a minor army of his personal security staff. Previous visits by heads of state have not warranted the security that Rumsfeld demanded of his host.

It would seem that elements of the ultra-right (local and US) are painfully aware that they can "only fool some of the people some of the time". They are also acutely aware their criminal activities will inevitably attract a retaliatory response from those adversely affected by their violent and invasive policies.

[In view of the obvious consequences of invasive warfare, should Australia slavishly follow the US to a hell of its own making or should we chart our own course as a sovereign nation. The anachronistic colonial mentality of Howard and his conservatives has proven to be detrimental to the welfare of the nation.]

The extreme security surrounding Rumsfeld is symptomatic of a 'leader' who lacks the support of the people. The Corporate wars that Rumsfeld and Howard wage impact directly on the civil liberties and democratic rights of their own respective populations. The war of plunder they wage in Iraq is utilised to justify a war on democracy on the home front. These convoluted strategies are typical of right-wing regimes and the politics of inversion.

There exists however, a social space dedicated to dealing with the crimes of State leaders; it is a fully functional but under utilised apparatus. When the people realise their full potential and exercise all their prerogatives, sanity may once again prevail. The 'social space' to which I refer is the International Criminal Court at the Hague - it is at your service.

Persistent and unrelenting demands for justice will bear fruit; a socially aware population is prerequisite to the removal of corrupt ruling elites. The ultimate form of activism and protest is to surrender corrupt state leaders to the courts. Tremendous opportunities occur in nations that lack viable political opposition; at the present time the US, Britain and Australia qualify as nations ripe for change. The respective populations of these nations are thoroughly disillusioned/disgusted with their leadership. It is the lack of a concerted movement that fails to seize the opportunity. Dissemination and education are the foundation of social change - maintain focus in these areas, a constant, accurate, simple message reaps disproportionate rewards.

To the vanguard; to those who are difficult to intimidate, and to all who would never relinquish their rights and freedoms - we salute you.

We are One.

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