



11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Phone (703) 934-6101 Fax (703) 352-3678

[fff@fff.org](mailto:fff@fff.org) [www.fff.org](http://www.fff.org)

## **The Birth Pangs of Rosemary's Baby** **by Jacob G. Hornberger**

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice employed an interesting metaphor to describe the death and mayhem in Lebanon. She said that the world was witnessing the “birth pangs of a new Middle East.”

Why is that an interesting metaphor? Well, she’s obviously referring to a pregnant woman’s labor pains and the pains of delivering a baby.

Yet, as painful as having a baby may be, most of the time the birth of a baby involves the celebration of life. That is, except in the rare case when a mother or baby dies during childbirth, other people are not dead or maimed in the process of bringing a baby into the world. The birth of a child is usually a matter of great happiness and joy.

What Rice is obviously suggesting is that governments are much like parents in the sense that governments are able to give birth to democratic nations, just as human parents are able to give birth to human babies.

Of course, the birthing process for democratic nations is somewhat different from that employed by human beings. It employs bombs, missiles, mortars, and bullets to bring the new “democracy baby” into existence. Unlike the birth of a human baby, the birth of a democracy baby involves chaos and the death, destruction, and maiming of hundreds or even thousands of other people. And whereas most human babies are born alive, democracy babies always seem to be stillborn.

Are there many people in the Middle East happily celebrating the birth of their new democracy baby? Are all those tears being shed in that part of the world actually tears of joy over the birth of a new democracy baby?

Once a new democracy baby is delivered, all the other deaths, including the deaths of real human children during the “birthing process,” are supposed to be considered “worth it,” to employ the words of another U.S. official, Madeleine Albright (when she was ambassador to the UN), who said that the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi children from the [brutal sanctions](#) that had been used to bring a new democratic Iraq into existence had been “[worth it.](#)”

Meanwhile, the *New York Times* reported this week that U.S. forces in Iraq had killed two Iraqi “militants” with either a bomb or a missile fired from an airplane. The airstrike also killed a child, which Lt. Col. Barry Johnson, a military spokesman, justified, saying, “We believe that countless more Iraqis would have been at risk had we not taken immediate action.” Johnson might also have added that the death of the child was just part of the “birth pangs” of a new, democratic Iraq that the Pentagon was still giving birth to some four years after the birthing process was initiated with the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Is it possible to arrive at sicker metaphors and reasoning to justify the deaths, maiming, mayhem, and chaos in the Middle East? How long will the American people continue to tolerate their government’s involvement in all this moral perversity?

*Jacob Hornberger is founder and president of The Future of Freedom Foundation.*

**This article was originally published in August 2006.**