**Soros’s Anti-Human-Rights Agenda**

Republicans and conservatives must stop leaving the important field of human rights to anti-American relativists.

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George Soros’s enormous gift of $100 million to the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch is a serious shot across the bow for Republicans and conservatives. Billionaire Sheldon Adelson once said he would become “the Right’s answer to George Soros,” but he has not. Although “human rights” is the most powerful political currency of our time, no one on the right has stepped up to the plate, and Soros has the playing field to himself.

The significance of his gift can be understood only by appreciating the web of connections associated with this human-rights organization and its resulting influence.

Thirty years ago, the undisputed leader among international human-rights NGOs was Amnesty International. Founded in order to shine a spotlight on individual prisoners of conscience and victims of torture, Amnesty had a focused purpose and succeeded in pressuring governments and liberating real people.

But corrupt governments in developing countries, Communist regimes, and the despotic rulers of Arab and Islamic states pushed back. Under the guise of protecting their sovereignty and natural resources from the ravages of Western imperialism, they commandeered the United Nations, disputed its foundational human-rights framework, and rolled out new and improved “human rights,” such as the right to development, the right of peoples to “international solidarity,” and the right to be free of “the adverse effects of toxic wastes.” No matter that the beneficiaries of such rights were essentially governments and not individuals, or that the rights of women and minorities were then trampled for the sake of maintaining a united front against the West.

Amnesty International jumped on the bandwagon. It expanded its original mandate to include rights violations which it says result from globalization, “business,” and a wide gambit of social issues. Amnesty’s leaders, who bear the title of secretary general, harbored an anti-Western bias and a penchant for conceiving of developing countries as sympathetic underdogs whose inability to institute the rule of law was permanently someone else’s fault. In 2005, Secretary General Irene Khan, from Bangladesh, likened Guantanamo Bay to the Soviet Gulag. In 2010, after the head of Amnesty’s gender unit criticized Amnesty for its links to a major supporter of the Taliban, Amnesty reacted by suspending and then severing its relationship with the employee, not by severing its links to the Taliban devotee.

Arab and Muslim states were masters at this form of political gamesmanship. Anxious to rid themselves of the presence of a Jewish and democratic state uncomfortably close to them, and worried about the threat that universal human-rights norms posed to their legitimacy, they recast their extremism in terms of human rights. Though one-fifth of Israel’s people are Arabs, and they have more democratic rights than they would in any Arab state, these states accused Israel of apartheid. Arab and Muslim states, meanwhile, rendered themselves Judenrein, outlawed public displays of Christianity, and turned non-Muslims into second-class citizens in the name of protecting cultural rights, religious identity, and “national particularities.” To complete the metamorphosis, the Organization of the Islamic Conference seized effective power at the U.N.’s lead human-rights body, the Human Rights Council.

As human rights were being rewritten, the U.S.-based Human Rights Watch wrongly believed it had only two options. It could find itself defending the governments of the United States, Israel, and other allegedly colonialist-imperialist regimes — a tack that seemed to be at odds with the mandate of a human-rights NGO, for which governments are supposedly the adversaries by definition. Or it could join the party, trash Israel and America, and prove its bona fides on the world stage.

As Robert Bernstein, the founder of Human Rights Watch and its active chairman for 20 years until 1998, complained in the New York Times last October, Human Rights Watch chose the latter. Bernstein lamented the fact that the organization had jettisoned the crucial distinction between open democratic societies and closed societies, between societies that are willing to acknowledge and correct abuses and ones that deny and ignore them. Distancing itself from its American roots and embracing the timeworn strategy of scapegoating Jews, the organization began to rival the made-over Amnesty.

Human Rights Watch defended the U.N.’s “anti-racism” Durban Declaration despite its blatant discrimination against Israel and cast its lot with those who have painted the defenders of Jewish self-determination as racists. HRW supported the U.N.’s Goldstone report, a modern-day blood libel that claims Israel “deliberately” aimed to murder Palestinian civilians under the guise of defending its own people against Hamas terror. HRW championed the U.N. Human Rights Council and strongly advocated U.S. membership, in the full knowledge that the council has adopted more resolutions and decisions condemning Israel than all the other 191 U.N. member states combined.

Last year, representatives of Human Rights Watch unashamedly traveled to one of the world’s worst human-rights abusers, Saudi Arabia, to raise money by casting the organization as an antidote to what they labeled “pro-Israel pressure groups.” Since HRW had, as Bernstein put it, itself produced “far more condemnations of Israel . . . than of any other country in the region,” he rightly concluded that it had turned its back on its founding mission and significantly diminished its moral force.

Why, then, did George Soros deem it worthy of the largest gift he has ever made?

Because Soros has recognized what Republicans ignore at their peril — namely, the power of human-rights claims, legitimate or not.

Soros, logged as one of President Obama’s frequent White House guests, appreciates that a human-rights mantra, particularly when amplified with the U.N.’s global megaphone, is a formidable tool for manipulating public policy. A tool, mind you, and not a principle.

President Obama has styled himself a champion of the victims of human-rights violations. But he is the president who went to Egypt and spoke in support of Muslim women who want to cover their bodies while saying nothing in defense of those who want the freedom to do otherwise. He is the president who has let Iranian dissidents die in vain. The president who keeps mumbling about reset buttons while Russian human-rights defenders are systematically eliminated.

The U.N.’s Human Rights Council — which, in its earlier incarnation, was once presided over by Eleanor Roosevelt — opened its current session this week in Geneva with Libya taking a seat as a full-fledged voting member. Next week the General Assembly, which once adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, will again permit a call for the destruction of Israel to be made from its podium, as Mahmoud Ahmadinejad delivers his annual diatribe about Jewish global domination.

And outside the General Assembly Hall, the only NGO allowed to speak at microphones reserved for states is Human Rights Watch — which has specialized in delivering congratulatory messages to the U.N.

So Soros’s acquisition of Human Rights Watch, coupled with his legendary support of the Democratic party and the United Nations, creates the perfect storm. He has brought together the unelected, unaccountable NGO claiming to represent “civil society,” the Democratic party and its sitting president, and the world’s chief global organization, each supportive of the others in a plethora of financial and personal interrelationships, and all sharing common goals: diminishing American power and mothballing the idea of unadulterated universal values.

Soros makes no attempt to hide his agenda. As he wrote in The Bubble of American Supremacy: “People have different views and . . . nobody is in possession of the ultimate truth . . . [P]eople are supposed to decide for themselves what they mean by freedom and democracy. . . . What goes on within individual states can be of vital interest to the rest of the world, but the principle of sovereignty militates against interfering in their internal affairs.” The same speech has been made by China and Cuba and thugs the world over.

Soros’s view is the antithesis of human-rights protection. It directly contradicts the vision of common, inviolable rights and freedoms, which the visionaries who founded America, the United Nations, and Human Rights Watch understood. It is high time to launch an equally well-endowed human-rights organization not beholden to the rapacious relativism and anti-Americanism of George Soros.