

Mission Ready

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Why Saddam's Mass Graves Should Disturb Us More Than 120,000 Tsunami Dead

The outpouring of world sympathy in the aftermath of one of the greatest natural disasters in recorded history is both gratifying and practical. The opportunity to actively help those in desperate need creates a reciprocal tsunami of goodwill from all corners of the globe, and an outpouring of resources. The relief effort will, no doubt, find a place in recorded history equal to the magnitude of that terrible disaster.

Implicit in the world news coverage is a call to action; reporters from every nation stand before the wreckage and the piled dead, exhorting those governments capable of giving, to give more. Of course, the United States, being the most capable, is expected to lead the relief effort. Watching the news reports, we can't help but wonder at the lack of moral urgency on the part of the news media as they covered an even greater disaster—the mass graves in Iraq, where an even greater number of human beings perished—not by an indiscriminate act of Nature, but by the hands of sadistic murderers, many of whom are still roaming the streets of Baghdad, Mosul and Fallujah.

The opportunity to actively help the people of Iraq existed, and still exists, just as surely as it does in South Asia. Yet the world's journalists and reporters apparently see a difference between these two very commendable relief efforts, and apparently a difference between the victims—hundreds of thousands of murdered

dead, and the hundred and twenty thousand (and still counting) of those who perished, tragically, by accident.

We're not trying to minimize the human cost attributable to giant waves generated by an undersea quake, but we do think it's important to remember the moral distinction between innocents lost to an arbitrary act of nature, and innocents deliberately tortured and murdered by thugs and killers who want to keep on torturing and murdering.

We're also not trying to minimize the relief effort in South Asia, but we do think it's important to remember that an equally important - and morally superior - relief effort is in effect right now in the traumatized cities of Iraq. Morally superior? Yes, because the victims in Iraq died, or suffer today, at the hands of those who would still be in power, were it not for the intervention of the American and British soldier, who entered the scene at the risk of their own lives. Morally superior because the killing would have gone on and on and on, had they not stepped between the people of Iraq and the terrorists.

Both relief efforts are commendable, and pleasing, as they say, to the angels. But it is interesting that the news media not only does not recognize the moral distinction between the two, but actually strives to rally world opinion in favor of one, and against the other.