

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? Omar Khadr deserved what he got

The headline caught my eye which, of course, is what headlines are designed to do.

There it was, in a recent Toronto Star, for all to see: ?We are all to blame for Omar Khadr's mistreatment.?

Well, being the simple guy that I am, I had thought all along that Khadr himself had something to do with what happened to him. But apparently not, at least not according to the author of the piece Omer Aziz, a visiting researcher at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto.

Here's how Aziz sums up Khadr's activities:

?The trial of Omar Khadr ? Omar K. In a Kafka work, or an ?alien unprivileged enemy belligerent? in Guantanamo code ? is a permanent stain on Canada's record. Khadr was raised by a family with ties to Al Qaeda, trained to take up arms, accused of lobbing a grenade at a U.S. soldier at age 15, thrown into a secret prison without adequate legal assistance, beaten and tortured, forced to choose between an unjust plea deal and an unfair trial, until finally, one day 13 years later, he was released on bail.?

Aziz then goes on to write that there are ?at least 300,000 child soldiers currently serving in militaries and militias around the world,? and points out that ?forced recruitment of minors is considered slavery by the International Labour Organization.?

And then this: ?To fault Khadr for falling in with Al Qaeda as a boy is to fault him for being born to the wrong parents.?

Oh my. Where to begin?

Let's start with the line about being ?accused of lobbing a grenade at a U.S. soldier.? That's one way of putting it. Not to get too technical or anything, but another way of putting it ? and a more honest way ? would be to point out that the grenade he ?lobbed? actually killed the U.S. soldier. There's a body. And a host of bereaved loved ones.

Which is why the soldier's family is current launching a lawsuit against Khadr for the action, and action, by the way, that he admitted. And why Prime Minister Stephen Harper and two Liberal administrations before him had no sympathy for the radical jihadist.

It is true that Khadr was 15 when he killed that soldier. What is not true is that automatically makes him a ?child soldier? as his legion of apologists claim. He doesn't fit the definition, mainly because he wasn't part of a recognized military force fighting against another one.

As for the notion of Khadr being the victim of ?forced recruitment,? well, the history of his family and his own history don't seem to support that notion. They seemed to be true believers and Khadr and others in his family were out there lobbing lots of grenades and other things at the evil West, an army which, lest we forget, included Canadian input as well.

Many Canadians aged 15 have been tried and convicted for murder and other serious crimes which they committed when they were 15 or in some cases younger. This is not unique to Khadr and should not be portrayed as if it was.

For sure, Guantanamo wasn't a pleasant place to be, but they had to put these guys somewhere, and when you go around ?lobbing? grenade at soldiers, nothing good is going to come from it.

And now the real corker, the argument that ? let's repeat it again ? ?To fault Khadr for falling in with Al Qaeda as a boy is to fault him for being born to the wrong parents.?

Really? Lots of people are born to the ?wrong parents,? and while many don't live the lives they may have hoped, they don't automatically take up arms against the West and hope to kill the infidels.

Khadr tossed the grenade, not his father or mother or any of the other radical islamists in his family. He was old enough to know what he was doing and he did it. Period.

The great irony here is that in the battle Khadr was badly injured, yet the evil Americans actually saved his life. They could have left him there to die but they didn't. And while they carried him off to a hospital, they had to transport the body of his victim back to his loved ones in the U.S.

Aziz said, ?It was we, Canadians, who wanted Khadr locked up in Guantanamo and us who kept ourselves ignorant when the facts became uncomfortable.?

Not quite. It's the Khadr apologists who, from the outset, have glossed over the ?uncomfortable facts,? making him out to be the victim when, in fact, he was a victimizer and deserved what he got.

