

Maybe It's Time for Libertarian Countries

Why have there been no libertarian countries? It's a popular question from those skeptical of libertarianism.

On the face of it, it seems a reasonable question. Until you understand what they're asking; then it makes less sense.

How can there be geographic, forced collectives based on voluntary associations and unanimous consent? Coercively voluntary? Enslaved freedom? Where one exists, the other can't. It's like asking why there are no frozen fires.

While libertarianism is essentially personal, there is a political version of libertarianism that would allow government to exist, as long as it is vastly less intrusive. In this case, some historians would dispute the claim of there never having been libertarian countries.

The more individuals respecting life, liberty, and property in an area, the more libertarian the country, regardless of government. Early America, as one example, was pretty libertarian, but inconsistent. Too few residents sufficiently respected the equal and identical rights of all people. The Declaration of Independence is a reflection of better intentions, but just over a decade later they messed up a good thing by writing a constitution; imposing an anti-libertarian government on America. There went the potential.

Libertarians are responsible and don't try to govern, or otherwise violate, their neighbors. When enough people are this responsible a tipping point is reached where the country is largely libertarian. The more libertarian a country is, the more resilient it becomes. Fewer things can go wrong enough to damage it. Alternatively, the less libertarian a country, the more brittle. A foreign or domestic bad guy only needs to seize and use the institutions of governance already in place to defeat the entire country. When none exist to be taken over, every individual must be defeated. It's not worth it.

Contrary to the fears of the skeptics, a libertarian country could provide anything people want. There could be roads, parks, and libraries. The poor could be cared for and people kept safe. Everything provided voluntarily instead of at the barrel of government guns. If you want to make sure only those who paid for a service use it, charge user fees or sell memberships. It would be more ethical, and probably cheaper, than the current system.

Why have there been no libertarian countries? Why have there been no cities on Mars? The time wasn't right. The technology didn't exist. Times change. Whether or not they've existed before, maybe it's time for libertarian countries to happen. I don't know about you, but I'm ready.