

Ask A Genius 5 - Repressive Takeover

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Let's take the opposite view, let's say Western countries tend to be more free and democratic, etc, people can do more here. With greater science and technology, we have power. That can be a positive thing for general human flourishing and expansion of possibilities. What if it doesn't happen here and happens in repressive areas?

More of this is inevitable, more than people think. Along with the inevitability of tech, there are a lot of large-scale projects that are tech projects. Every big movie involves like a thousand people working on them. In the future, it will be mostly small-scale groups because the technology will allow small groups to do great stuff.

We already have individuals or small groups working together or on their own. Twitter helped take down dictatorial governments in the Middle East. Egypt fell a couple times. I don't know its state now. It was individuals working on their own with technology thwarting the actions of larger groups.

Tech is small. Tech is as small as a thumb drive or a smart phone. So, you won't be able to keep it out of repressive countries or repressive places. Developed countries will keep on being free. Although, privacy will increasingly erode. In England, there's a camera on every street corner and various agencies, or algorithms, are looking for weird behaviour.

Things as trivial as people walking weird. That might betray some suspicious activity. People are going to have to get used to giving up a lot of privacy. Maybe, we'll have islands of explicit privacy with the expectation of privacy most of the time. The general expectation will be that you only have privacy when you walk into your cone of silence.

When you explicitly set up your own privacy, public life will have almost no privacy. One reason we want America to survive is the values that it was revered and known for in the 20th and 21st century. They have been attacked by demagogues and A-holes in government that are willing to talk tough and act like jerks in the name of American safety.

I hope that demagoguery will be defeated. people can see it is preferable to go with the traditional American values of freedom, everyone having a shot, economic mobility, as opposed to sacrificing that stuff for some illusory safety based on terrorist incidents.