



## **“We” Aren’t Responsible for Solving the World’s Problems**

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What do you do after you brought your party’s control of government to a dramatic end? You become an international scold, blaming the world’s problems on everyone else—who have no ability to solve any of them.

Former British Prime Minister Gordon Brown is the UN Special Envoy for Global Education. He recently unburdened himself, declaring that we all are responsible for the depredations of Nigeria’s murderous BokoHaram. “The World Should Be Ashamed of the Failure to #BringBackOurGirls,” he titled his article.

It’s been more than two years since the group kidnapped 276 girls from the town of Chibok. The militants kill moderate Muslims but typically target Christians, as in Chibok. Despite promises from the Nigerian government, proffers of Western assistance, and a twitter campaign led by First Lady Michelle Obama, none of the girls have been rescued.

Two years on Brown offered his opinion: “we have all done far too little to secure their release.” Indeed, those enslaved “are now a symbol of our apparent weakness to protect young lives.”

I didn’t realize that I should have spent the last two years attempting to “secure” the girls’ release. Moreover, I shudder to admit, I didn’t view my inability “to protect” their lives—kind of hard given geography and nationality—as a result of my “weakness.”

It’s an awful tragedy committed by moral monsters, but “we” should not gloss over the ugly realities of Boko Haram’s activities. The mass kidnapping was a conscious attack by armed insurgents/terrorists. It succeeded because the security forces that should have been guarding the school and students failed to fulfill their responsibility.

Moreover, this atrocity is like those occurring across the Middle East and North Africa. Small but dedicated bands of radicals are committing murder and mayhem against Christians and other religious minorities in the name of Islam.

Brown offered the sort of answer one would expect from a “UN special envoy” with little connection to the real world. He insisted that “emergency aid funding” for education should be increased, which would have done nothing to help the Chibok girls.

Moreover, he opined that “the United Nations Security Council could intervene and encourage the Nigerians—with the support of the Americans, the French, the Chinese and the British—to undertake enhanced air surveillance and potential action on the ground to secure the release of the girls.” Actually, the U.S. government, among others, encouraged Abouja to do more to confront Boko Haram.

Certainly the Nigerian people desire more effective action—which is one reason they ousted incumbent Goodluck Jonathan in favor of former dictator Muhammadu Buhari in last year’s election. Unfortunately, the Nigerian government is part of the problem. UNSC “encouragement,” whatever that means, merely creates the appearance of doing something.

Brown then asserted: “we could and should do far more to protect children from attacks and abductions when in school.” Who is “we”? Should I pick up an AK-47 at the local flea market in northern Virginia, hop on a plane for Chibok and head to a local school to take up picket duty?

Moreover, how do “we” prevent “attacks and abductions” at, presumably, not just Nigerian schools, but schools in every nation around the world? After all, children are shot and killed in schools in poor neighborhoods in Washington, D.C.

Brown also suggested: “To show the kidnapers will be punished, the Security Council should adopt a resolution that holds the perpetrators of future child abductions accountable so that the full weight of international pressure is brought to bear.” Who will enforce this resolution? What is needed to defeat Boko Haram is a competent and honest national government able to govern fairly and apply military force where necessary.

Finally, “All governments should now support a ‘Safe Schools Declaration,’ stating that attacks on schools, colleges and universities are crimes against humanity. And the international community should ensure the funds for guards, for cameras and simple gates to protect schools in conflict zones.”

Does Brown really believe that Boko Haram would have stopped if confronted by cameras, gates, and guards, let alone an international declaration? The group has prospered by defeating Nigeria’s security forces in combat.

What’s going on in Nigeria and in so many other war-ravaged states is tragic. Instead of blaming the rest of us for problems well beyond anyone’s control, however, Brown and others like him should bring their ambitions back to earth.

Millions of kids around the world currently denied the chance to prepare for a better future need practical help in their local communities, not UN resolutions, international declarations, and pompous proclamations from special envoys.

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