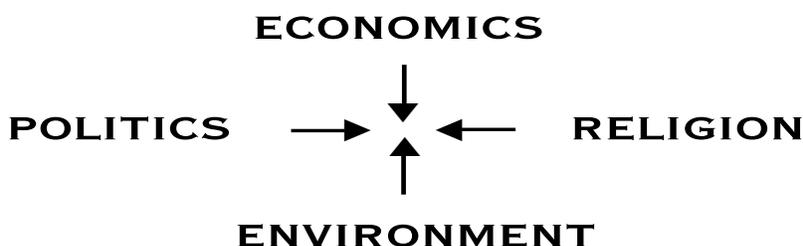


MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE®

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APPROACHING THE INTERSECTION



OURS IS A WORLD OF EXTREME AND IMMINENT DANGER. IT CRACKLES WITH MESSAGES OF POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICT AND, WHEN TENSIONS BUILD AND WORDS FAIL, AS THEY OFTEN DO, VIOLENCE IS VISITED BY ONE GROUP UPON ANOTHER. IF THAT WERE NOT ENOUGH, OUR PLANET SHUDDERS FROM THE SPASMS THAT CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY, POPULATION, WEALTH DISTRIBUTION AND OUR NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ARE FORCING UPON ITS SOCIAL STRUCTURES.

AS A FORMER SOLE SUPERPOWER, AND NOW STILL A LEADING ONE, AMERICA'S ROLE IN CROSSING THESE CULTURAL QUICKSANDS IS A RISKY ONE. IT IS MADE INCALCULABLY MORE SO BY THE FACT THAT WE WEAR TWO MASKS, THAT WE REGARD OURSELVES IN TWO DIFFERENT MIRRORS, THAT WE SPEAK WITH TWO VOICES AND THAT THE LANGUAGE OF ONE IS NOT THAT OF THE OTHER. THIS CONFUSION OF OUR IDENTITY POSES DIFFICULT POLITICAL POLICY QUESTIONS HERE AND ABROAD.

CONSIDER THIS EXAMPLE OF OUR CONFLICT IN AFGHANISTAN. THERE, AS ELSEWHERE, WE CONFRONT THE JIHADISTS THAT ARE DESCENDENTS OF THOSE WE ARMED AND SUPPORTED AGAINST THE RUSSIANS. OUR PRESENCE AND POLICY HAVE BEEN ENABLING FACTORS IN BOTH THE TALIBAN'S SUCCESS

AND THE SUBSEQUENT GROWING POPULARITY OF OSAMA BIN LADEN. UNFORTUNATELY, WHETHER IN IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN OR PAKISTAN, OUR EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MARKED BY WIDENING CONFLICT AND REGIONAL INSTABILITY.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE BOB GATES, IN SPEAKING OF TRANSFORMING OUR MILITARY POWER INTO MORE DEMOCRACY AND GREATER LOCAL AUTHORITY IN AFGHANISTAN, STATED "I'M LEERY OF TRYING TO CHANGE HISTORY IN DRAMATIC, SHORT STROKES. I THINK IT'S VERY RISKY."¹

THIS SUGGESTS THAT OUR POLICY IS ONE THAT CONTEMPLATES A LONG AND GRADUAL PROCESS, BUT THE TRUTH IS THAT WE ARE NEITHER MILITARILY NOR FINANCIALLY CAPABLE OF LONG TERM OCCUPATIONS AND NATION BUILDING IN REMOTE AREAS WHERE OUR EFFORTS FUEL LOCAL INSURGENCIES.

THE WORLD WATCHES AND ANALYZES EVERY MOVE WE MAKE AND WE CANNOT EXPECT TO GET THE RESULTS RIGHT UNLESS OUR POLICY IS A CLEAR EXPRESSION OF OUR IDENTITY.

AMERICA AND, INDEED, THE REST OF OUR WORLD FACE THE DISTINCT POSSIBILITY THAT THE FOUR FORCES SHOWN ABOVE ARE POSSESSED OF ELEMENTS SO POWERFUL AND VOLATILE THAT, SHOULD THEY COLLIDE, MUCH OF OUR PLANET

IN THIS ISSUE WE EXPLORE THE CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES THAT REQUIRE ISLAM AND THE U.S. TO MORE CLEARLY DEFINE THEMSELVES.

OUR NEXT ISSUE WILL CITE EXAMPLES OF HOW OUR NATIONAL ENDS OFTEN BECOME SELF-CONFLICTED AND OPPOSE OUR VALUES.

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COULD BE CONSUMED BY EVENTS OF EITHER NATURAL OR HUMAN ORIGIN.

OUR COUNTRY'S ROLE IN THIS IMPENDING CONFRONTATION OF INTERESTS IS MADE IMMENSELY MORE DIFFICULT BECAUSE WE HAVE BEEN THE WORLD'S SOLE SUPERPOWER FOR THE LAST TWO DECADES — A ROLE TO WHICH WE BROUGHT LITTLE IN THE WAY OF TRAINING OR SUITABILITY OTHER THAN MILITARY AND FINANCIAL SUPERIORITY, THESE BEING THE TWO ELEMENTS OF DANGER THAT PRES. EISENHOWER SPECIFIED WHEN HE ADVISED US TO "BEWARE THE MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX".

TODAY'S VARIETY AND REACH OF OUR NUCLEAR WEAPONRY IS FAR BEYOND ANYTHING IKE COULD HAVE IMAGINED AND NO LONGER IS OURS ALONE. THIS IS ONE OF THE COMMANDING FACTS OF OUR PRESENT STATUS — THE "SOLE" IN "SOLE SUPERPOWER" NO LONGER MEANS WHAT IT USED TO. IT HAS BEEN DIMINISHED OVER RECENT TIME BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER NATIONS AND SYSTEMS, AND THIS PROCESS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE UNTIL AN APPROXIMATE TECHNOLOGICAL PARITY EMERGES, BUT EVEN PARITY AMONG NATIONS OFFERS NO PROTECTION FROM THE SAME TECHNOLOGY IN THE HANDS OF AN EXTREMIST MARTYR-TO-BE.

THIS FLUX IN WORLD AFFAIRS, CAUSED BY DIFFERING ROLES OF ECONOMIC AND MILITARY GROWTH, IS AN HISTORICAL FACT OF LIFE WHICH, AS THE ADVANTAGE OF OUR RELATIVE POWER CONTRACTS, WE MUST BE ABLE TO GRASP BOTH INTELLECTUALLY AND POLITICALLY.

OUR FIRST STEP SHOULD BE TO RECOGNIZE THAT WE ARE NO LONGER THE SOLE SUPERPOWER AND THAT OUR REDUCED STATUS IS THE RESULT OF THE COMBINATION OTHERS' SUCCESSES WITH OUR FAILURES OF POLICY AND PRACTICE. "SOLE" SHOULD BE REMOVED FROM BOTH OUR SUPERPOWER CONCEPTION AND OUR VOCABULARY.

THE AREA IN WHICH READJUSTMENT WILL BE MADE MOST VISIBLE, AND FOR US NECESSARY, IS THAT OF FOREIGN POLICY WHERE ALL MAJOR POWERS WILL HAVE TO MOVE THEIR THINKING TOWARDS A MORE INTERNATIONALLY ORIENTED PROCESS.

IN ITS ORIGINAL CONCEPT THE UN WAS VIEWED AS BEING CAPABLE OF FACILITATING THE SHADING AND SHAPING OF ITS MEMBERS' POSITIONS IN A GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE WAY. BECAUSE THE PRESENT POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS AND INTELLECTUAL POLARIZATION OF THE UN MAKES SUCH A BROAD PROCESS OF ACCOMMODATION HIGHLY UNLIKELY, THE NECESSARY POLICY REVIEWS AND REVISIONS WILL HAVE TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY INDIVIDUAL

STATES OR REGIONAL GROUPINGS TO WHICH THEY ARE COMMITTED.

LOOKING AHEAD, AS MORE POWERS COME TO WEAR THE "SUPER" LABEL, THE FORMULATION AND EXPRESSION OF FOREIGN POLICY IS BOUND TO CHANGE. IT WILL HAVE TO SEEK SPECIFIED, ACHIEVABLE RESULTS THAT WILL ENLIST COOPERATION AND BENEFIT OTHERS AS WELL AS OURSELVES. AND IT WILL HAVE TO INCLUDE STATED AND AGREED TO COSTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

ENGLAND DOMINATED THE WORLD AND MOST FOREIGN POLICY IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. THAT PERIOD ENDED ABRUPTLY IN THE MUD AND BLOOD OF WWI, AND IS NO MORE. IN ITS WAKE, WWII, OUR ADVANCES IN COMMUNICATIONS AND WEAPONRY TECHNOLOGY AND THE EXISTENCE OF THE UN HAVE IMPOSED REAL CHANGES IN THE WAYS THAT WE, AND OTHERS, WILL EXPRESS AND EXERCISE OUR INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES.

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EACH ONE OF THE FORCES IN OUR TITLE ILLUSTRATION IS SUPREMELY POWERFUL IN ITS OWN WAY AND APPROACHES THEIR INTERSECTION WITH THE GATHERING MOMENTUM OF RECENT HISTORY. FUELED BY TECHNOLOGY, FAITH AND, ALL TOO OFTEN, EXTREMISM, THEY INDICATE THE LIKELIHOOD OF A HIGHLY DANGEROUS COLLISION.

UNDERLYING AND EXACERBATING ALL FOUR OF THESE GLOBAL ISSUES IS THE QUIET AND PERSISTENT PRESSURE OF POPULATION INCREASE. HOWEVER, AS COMPLEX AND INTERTWINED AS THESE CHALLENGES ARE, THERE ARE TWO QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE HEARD AND ANSWERED IN ORDER TO MAKE ANY REAL PROGRESS POSSIBLE.

DEFINITIONS

THESE ARE BEHAVIORAL QUESTIONS WHICH ARE RARELY ADDRESSED DIRECTLY BECAUSE OF THEIR POLITICAL/ CULTURAL DELICACY, BUT NOW MUST BE FACED.

THE FIRST DEALS WITH THE CONFLICTING NATURE OF ISLAM AND ITS VARIED INTERPRETATIONS. THERE IS THE VIOLENT, JIHADIST WAHHABI VIEW OF ISLAM AS THE FLAMING SWORD CONQUERING AND DESTROYING ALL DIFFERING FORMS OF FAITH, GOVERNMENT, ETHICS, ART, COMMERCE, ETC. AND THERE IS THE MODERATE ISLAM WHOSE FOLLOWERS SEE IT AS CAPABLE OF CO-EXISTING WITH OTHER BELIEF

SYSTEMS.

ISLAM IS A DOMINANT RELIGION IN SE ASIA, THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA AND IS AN EXPANDING PRESENCE IN GERMANY, FRANCE, ENGLAND, HOLLAND AND THE BALKANS. IN THE COURSE OF ITS MISSION, IT HAS DELIVERED A MIXED MESSAGE THAT HAS SERVED DIFFERENT PURPOSES IN DIFFERENT TIMES AND PLACES. AS CONFRONTATION AND VIOLENCE INCREASES, THIS TACTIC LOSES CREDIBILITY.

THE MODERATE ISLAMIC IDENTITY IS THE ONLY ONE CAPABLE OF PRODUCING LONG TERM PEACE AND POLITICAL/ECONOMIC IMPROVEMENT FOR ITS FOLLOWERS. TO DO SO, IT MUST DECLARE ITSELF OPPOSED TO THE JIHADIST MOVEMENT AND BEAR THE RISK OF INTERNAL DIVISION AND PERHAPS CONFLICT.

THE QUESTION OF WHICH ISLAM IS THE REAL ISLAM, OF WHICH VOICE SHOULD BE BELIEVED, IS ONE THAT MODERATE ISLAM HAS BEEN UNWILLING TO PUBLICLY ADDRESS. AGAIN, THIS IS A BEHAVIORAL MATTER WITHIN THE ISLAMIC FAMILY TO WHICH NO OUTSIDE AGENCY CAN BRING CREDENTIALS.

IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT THE MODERATE ELEMENTS WITHIN ISLAM FEAR THAT ANY CONDEMNATION BY THEM OF THEIR JIHADIST BROTHERS WILL PUT THEIR OWN LIVES AT RISK. THIS MAY BE SO AND THE PROSPECT OF AN INTERNAL MUSLIM WAR TO DETERMINE "THE TRUE FAITH" IS A BLOODY ONE.

NEVERTHELESS, THE CASE OF ISLAM'S TRUE IDENTITY IS ONE THAT SHOULD BE RESOLVED. IT MAY NOT YIELD AN INSTANT ANSWER, BUT CONTINUED SILENCE ON THE PART OF MODERATE MUSLIMS SEEMS UNSUSTAINABLE IN VIEW OF ISLAM'S GROWING NUMBERS AND VIOLENT POLITICIZATION.

THE SECOND BEHAVIORAL QUESTION OF GLOBAL CONSEQUENCE INVOLVES OUR OWN COUNTRY AND IDENTITY. THE LATTER WE HAVE DEALT WITH IN SOME DETAIL IN PREVIOUS CHAPTERS, BUT IN THIS CASE WE REFER TO THAT SPECIFIC ASPECT OF OUR IDENTITY THAT SEEMS TO HAVE GROWN OUT OF OUR ROLE AS "SOLE SUPERPOWER". THIS IS OUR ALMOST OBSSIVE COMPULSION TO RECREATE IN OTHER PLACES OUR OWN VALUES AND SOCIETY.

WE HAVE LABELED THIS "NATION BUILDING", BUT THAT DOES NOT INDICATE THE EXTENT OF OUR INSISTENCE UPON HAVING OUR OWN HOMEGROWN EXTENSION OF SELF IN FOREIGN LANDS. THE SITUATIONS IN WHICH WE DISPLAY THIS FEAR OF SEPARATION USUALLY COMMENCE, AND ARE FIRST PRESENTED, AS SECURITY THREATS, BUT IT IS NOT LONG BEFORE WE ARE CALLED UPON TO ENGAGE IN NATION BUILDING AND TO PROVIDE THE INSTITUTIONS, TRAINING, ETHICAL GUIDELINES, PERSONNEL AND FUNDING THAT IS REQUIRED TO REPLICATE OUR SYSTEMS.

FACED BY WHAT WE VIEW AS A SECURITY CHALLENGE, OUR RESPONSE REVEALS A PSYCHOLOGICAL INSECURITY THAT INSISTS UPON THE FAMILIAR PATTERNS AND PROPS OF OUR FREE MARKET, DEMOCRATIC, CAPITALISTIC, NON-SECTARIAN MODEL.

WE ARE, IT SEEMS, UNABLE TO VIEW OTHER COUNTRIES' LANDSCAPES WITHOUT WANTING TO ATTACH TO THEM THE MALLS, CONDOS, HIGH RISES, SUPER HIGHWAYS, SPORTS STADIA, JET PORTS AND UBIQUITOUS MEDIA FORMS THAT WE HAVE BUILT IN EXCESS AT HOME. THIS QUESTIONABLY BENEFICIAL APPROACH TO OTHER LANDS AND PEOPLE IS ONLY PARTIALLY A MATTER OF POLITICS, AS BEHIND THE POLITICAL DRAPERY THOSE WHO

REPRESENT OUR COMMERCIAL SECTOR CAN BE HEARD AS THEY PERSUADE, ADVISE AND DEMAND THE ACTION THAT BEST SERVES THEIR INTERESTS.

NATION BUILDING IS DIFFICULT AT BEST AND IS MADE MORE SO WHEN DEEP CULTURAL DIFFERENCES ARE PRESENT. IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES OUR ATTITUDES CLASH HEAD-ON WITH LOCAL ONES REGARDING SUCH BASICS AS THE HUMAN BODY, SEX, MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, CLOTHING, PUNISHMENT, ART, FAITH, ETC. AND THE LATTER, WE HAVE FOUND, CEDES LITTLE TO INTERPRETATION.

THERE IS NOTHING NEW ABOUT THE COMBINATION OF FOREIGN POLICY WITH COMMERCIAL GOALS. WHAT IS DIFFERENT IS THE ABILITY BY WHICH THE INCREASING POPULATION AND TECHNOLOGY OF A LEADING SUPERPOWER SUCH AS OURSELVES CAN MOVE MASS MARKETING IN A WAY THAT ALTERS CENTURIES-OLD LIFESTYLES AND CULTURES.

OUR ARMED INTERVENTIONS ARE NOT RISK FREE FOR US. AT A TIME WHEN OUR ECONOMY IS IN AN EXTREMELY PRECARIOUS CONDITION THEY CONSTITUTE A VIABLE ECONOMIC THREAT. A RECENT REPORT² INDICATES THAT WE HAVE SPENT \$53 BILLION IN IRAQ SINCE 2003 FOR RECONSTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND RELIEF. AND YET MANY OF THE HOSPITALS, H₂O TREATMENT AND ELECTRICAL PLANTS, SCHOOLS, BRIDGES, ETC. ARE NOT OPERATING AS PLANNED, OR AT ALL, BECAUSE IRAQIS ARE NOT ABLE ENOUGH OR AVAILABLE FOR THEIR OPERATION, AND AMERICAN CONTRACTORS HAVE BEEN PAID AND RETURNED HOME.

STUART BOWEN, INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO) FOR IRAQ, HAS REPORTED THAT THE GAO "REGULARLY RAISED CONCERNS ABOUT THE POTENTIAL WASTE OF US TAXPAYER MONEY RESULTING FROM RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS THAT WERE POORLY PLANNED, BADLY TRANSFERRED, OR INSUFFICIENTLY SUSTAINED BY THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT"³.

BEAR IN MIND THIS \$53 BILLION IS ONLY FROM ONE SOURCE OF WASTE. THERE WERE ADDITIONAL BILLIONS LOST BY PRIVATE CONTRACTORS AND THE MILITARY. STILL, TODAY "MORE THAN 40% OF IRAQIS LACK ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER" AND "90% OF IRAQ'S 180 HOSPITALS DO NOT HAVE BASIC MEDICAL AND SURGICAL SUPPLIES"⁴.

INDEED, THE USE OF PRIVATE CONTRACTORS HAS CHANGED OUR WAY OF WAR. THERE ARE ABOUT 600 CONTRACTORS IN IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN WHOSE EMPLOYEES NUMBER ABOUT THE SAME AS OUR 260,000 MILITARY PERSONNEL.⁵ IN ADDITION TO NORMAL CIVILIAN FUNCTIONS THEY PROVIDE SECURITY, SPECIAL OPS, SNATCH & GRAB ABDUCTIONS AND TARGETED ASSASSINATIONS WHICH CAN POSE ETHICAL OR CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.

THE LINE BETWEEN PRIVATE CONTRACTORS AND OUR MILITARY'S TASKS IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY BLURRED WITH PRIVATE SERVICES MOVING HIGHER UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND AND OFTEN WITHOUT CONGRESS' KNOWLEDGE OR APPROVAL.

THIS IS NOT GOOD. THESE GROUPS OPERATE IN THE CONFUSION OF WARTIME, WHEN LEGAL/SOCIAL RESTRICTIONS ARE NOT IN PLACE, AND ARE ABLE TO ESTABLISH EXTRALEGAL POWERS THAT BECOME THE BASIS FOR A MILITARY/POLITICAL COMPLEX. CONSIDER ROME'S PRAETORIAN GUARDS, HITLER'S

SS AND SADDAM HUSSEIN'S AND IRAN'S REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS. THEY ALL PROVIDED POLITICAL SECURITY IN RETURN FOR SPECIAL AUTHORITY CAPABLE OF BEING EXERCISED AT THE HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVELS.

BUT IRAQ IS ONLY THE BEGINNING. THERE IS NOW AFGHANISTAN WITH ITS OWN PECULIAR PROBLEMS SUCH AS THE EXTREMELY HIGH DESERTION RATE OF 20% TO 25% IN ITS SECURITY FORCES⁶ WHICH REQUIRE A CONTINUING NEW SUPPLY OF THOUSANDS JUST TO AVOID TROOP LOSS. AND, NUMBERS ASIDE, SUCH HIGH TURNOVER AND ITS CONSTANT DRAIN MUST CAUSE A LOSS OF EFFICIENCY.

INCREASINGLY, OUR PLANS IN AFGHANISTAN ARE COUCHED IN NATION BUILDING TERMS, AND OUR PARTICIPATION IN THE SPREADING CONFLICT IN NUCLEAR CAPABLE PAKISTAN MAY BE SEEN IN WASHINGTON AS HAVING TO BE INCREASED. POVERTY THERE IS ENDEMIC AND EXTENSIVE AND BILLIONS COULD BE SPENT WITHOUT ANY NOTABLE EFFECT. WE SHOULD NOT CONFUSE RESULTS WITH PURPOSE, BUT OUR PRESS RELEASES OFTEN MAKE NO DISTINCTION.

THIS PATTERN OF DESTROYING INFRASTRUCTURE SO THAT WE CAN REBUILD IT ONLY MAKES SENSE TO THOSE WHO PROFIT FROM IT, WHETHER THERE OR HERE. THE SADDEST PART IS THAT AMERICA NEEDS REBUILDING, THAT MANY OF THE SAME INSTALLATIONS WE PAY FOR ABROAD ARE ON OUR LIST OF THINGS THAT WE MUST PROVIDE TO OUR OWN SOCIETY AT LOCAL, STATE AND FEDERAL LEVELS.

THROUGHOUT OUR HISTORY OUR GOVERNMENT HAS OBSERVED A GENERAL SENSE OF FAIRNESS IN ITS CONDUCT TOWARDS MOST OF THE PEOPLE. IN THE LAST HALF CENTURY THIS ATTITUDE HAS CHANGED AND THE TAXPAYER HAS BEEN INCREASINGLY BURDENED WITH UNWELCOME AND UNNECESSARY EXPENSES.

THERE IS CONSIDERABLE ELECTORAL ANGER IN OUR COUNTRY NOW, MOST PROMINENTLY ABOUT THE WALL STREET BAIL-OUTS. WHETHER GOVERNMENT CAN SEE IT OR NOT, THE TAXPAYER, CONTEMPLATING MASSIVE INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES WHERE WE HAVE ELECTED TO WAGE WAR, MAY NOT REGARD THIS ADDITION TO HIS BURDEN AS JUSTIFIED OR OF PRIMARY IMPORTANCE. SOMETIMES GOVERNMENT CAN MAKE A PERSUASIVE CASE, BUT OUR CONGRESSES' ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE AMOUNT AND TYPE OF EXPENSE THE TAXPAYER SHOULD BE FORCED TO ASSUME HAS BUILT REAL AND WIDE RESENTMENT, NOT SO MUCH BECAUSE OF THE AMOUNT, BUT BECAUSE OF THE FAIRNESS FACTOR.

AMERICANS ARE FAIR AND PAY THEIR SHARE WHEN IT IS CALLED FOR. UNFORTUNATELY, THE CONGRESS CAN NO LONGER ACT CREDIBLY AS AN ARBITER OF FAIRNESS.

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FOR THOSE WHO MAY CHOOSE, OR BE FORCED, TO ANSWER THESE TWO DEFINING QUESTIONS THERE ARE CONSIDERABLE, ALTHOUGH DIFFERENT, RISKS INVOLVED. REGARDING ISLAM — WHETHER IN ITS WARS OF CONQUEST OR IN THE CONDUCT OF SHARIA LAW AT ITS MOST LOCAL LEVEL — ALL MUSLIMS ARE AWARE OF THE PHYSICAL VIOLENCE AND

TERROR IT HARBORS AND JUSTIFIES AS DIVINELY SANCTIONED. AND THEY HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT IN THE EVENT OF AN INTERNAL STRUGGLE OVER THE CONTROL OF DOGMA OR IDENTITY THEY WOULD BE SPARED.

MUST IT NOT BE A SOBERING EXPERIENCE FOR THE CLERGY OR MEMBERS OF A MOSQUE TO CONSIDER THE RANDOM DESTRUCTION OF THEIR FRIENDS, FAMILIES AND SELVES THAT WOULD RESULT FROM A BOMB'S DETONATION AT THEIR MOSQUE? AND MIGHT IT NOT CAUSE THEM TO SEEK THE SAFETY OF AVOIDANCE, TO TURN AWAY AND TO LEAVE THE EXTREMISTS TO THEIR OWN INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM?

BUT, WITHOUT CONTROL FROM MODERATE ELEMENTS, IT IS THE WAY OF VIOLENCE, THE WAY OF THE FLAMING SWORD THAT IS EXTENDING ISLAM'S GRIP ON MINDS AND TERRITORY.

THIS THREAT OF FRATERNAL VIOLENCE IS ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT BECAUSE IT IS GROUNDED IN SHARED FAITH. IT IS A KIND OF SPIRITUAL BLACKMAIL FROM WHICH THE ONLY RELIEF, ALTHOUGH MODERATES RESIST IT, IS ITS RECOGNITION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT. EVEN THEN LIVES WILL BE LOST AND BROTHER WILL FIGHT BROTHER.

“ IT MUST BE A MATTER OF THEIR CHOICE,
NOT OUR DOLLARS AND SOLDIERS.”

OUR RESPONSE IS CRUCIAL TO THE WORLD. OUR MANY SPEECHES OF RESPECT, AFFECTION AND TOLERANCE FOR ISLAM HAVE NOT HAD ANY SUCCESS IN CONTAINING ITS EXTREME ELEMENT. AT ALL OUR POLICY LEVELS WE SHOULD NOW CALL FOR AN AUTHORITATIVE MUSLIM STATEMENT OF IDENTITY. MUSLIM POLITICAL LEADERS WILL RESIST, BUT THIS STEP IS ONE THAT ONLY THEY CAN TAKE. WE CANNOT TAKE IT FOR THEM. IT MUST BE A MATTER OF THEIR CHOICE, NOT OUR DOLLARS AND SOLDIERS.

THIS RAISES SOME DELICATE QUESTIONS FOR EVERYONE. DOES MODERATE ISLAM'S LEADERSHIP KNOW THE REAL NUMBERS OF EXTREMISTS? DO THEY CARE? DO WE KNOW? AND DO WE CARE? ENOUGH TO ASK? FINALLY, IS THERE A MODERATE ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP?

MATTERS OF FAITH HAVE A RIGHT TO PRIVACY, WHILE MATTERS OF BEHAVIOR IN OUR CONFLICTED WORLD ARE ALL TOO OFTEN PUBLIC. THE PERSUASION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR HAS BEEN THE GOAL OF ALL INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL COOPERATIVE EFFORTS — THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS, THE UN, NATO, EU, ETC. AT ITS INCEPTION THE UN WAS STRUCTURED TO PLAY SUCH A ROLE, BUT IT HAS ALLOWED THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO BE HIJACKED AND SPLIT ALONG THE SAME IDEOLOGICAL AND PAROCHIAL FAULT LINES THAT PLAGUE ITS INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS WITH THE RESULT THAT IT IS LARGELY UNABLE TO BRING ABOUT SOLUTIONS ACCEPTABLE TO ALL OR MOST OF ITS VARIOUS POWER BLOCS.

THE U.S. SITUATION IS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT, AS BOTH ITS NATURE AND PENALTIES ARE MORE POLITICAL. THE LEADER(S) WHO WOULD ATTEMPT TO BREAK FREE OF THE POLITICAL PACK MENTALITY WOULD SUFFER LOSS OF SUPPORT FROM THE MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX WHICH, IN SPITE

OF PRES. EISENHOWER'S FAIR WARNING, HAS BECOME THE DOMINANT VOICE IN OUR ECONOMIC AND FOREIGN POLICY DECISIONS. IN HIS TIME NO ONE COULD HAVE IMAGINED OUR RECENT EMBRACE OF GLOBALISM AND ITS EFFECT OF SUCKING OUT OUR ECONOMIC INNARDS. WE HAVE BECOME WHAT WE WERE WARNED AGAINST, AND TO REGAIN OUR FREEDOM WILL NOT BE EASY. TALK, OF COURSE, WILL BE PLENTIFUL, BUT OUR POLITICAL STRUCTURE IS NOW LARGELY SUPPORTED BY SPECIAL INTERESTS AND, AS THE CHANCE FOR ANY MEANINGFUL MOVEMENT AWAY FROM THIS CONTROL AND TOWARDS POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE IS REMOTE, OUR GOVERNMENT MAY FIND ITSELF BEHIND THE CURVE IN THE MAJOR ISSUES OF OUR TIME AND BE FORCED TO DEAL WITH THEM BY REACTION RATHER THAN FORESIGHT.

* * *

ENTWINEMENT

ONE CANNOT CONTEMPLATE OUR SITUATION FOR LONG WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THE IMPACT OF HOW THOROUGHLY THE FOUR ISSUES IN OUR DIAGRAM ARE INTERCONNECTED. CONSIDER THE ALMOST INSEPARABLE RELIGION/POLITICS QUANDARY OF THE MIDDLE EAST, THE MIX OF MONEY, NATURE AND GEOPOLITICS IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUE AND MANY OTHERS.

IN MOST MAJOR ISSUES OF OUR TIME, NATIONAL AND GLOBAL, THERE ARE TWO, THREE, OR EVEN ALL FOUR OF THESE ELEMENTS PRESENT. AND, AGAIN, UNDERLYING ALL IS THE UNIQUE AND UBIQUITOUS PRESSURE OF OUR PLANET'S EXPANDING POPULATION FOR WHICH BOTH ITS CAUSE AND SOLUTION ARE MATTERS OF PERSONAL CHOICE.

IT IS TRUE THAT OVER TIME MOST OF OUR PLANET'S CULTURES HAVE BEEN CONDITIONED TO PROMOTE AND ACCEPT UNRESTRICTED POPULATION INCREASE, AND THIS HAS ESTABLISHED A GLOBAL CULTURAL MOMENTUM THAT WILL NOT BE REVERSED EASILY, ESPECIALLY AS EXCESSIVE POPULATION'S PENALTIES STILL APPEAR VAGUE AND REMOTE IN TIME TO MOST INDIVIDUALS. BUT THEIR RESISTANCE WILL HOLD THE DAY ONLY UNTIL NATURE'S ARITHMETIC DECIDES OTHERWISE AT WHICH TIME ITS IMPACT WILL BE ANYTHING BUT VAGUE AND REMOTE. ALTHOUGH WE ARE AT THE EARLY BEGINNING OF THIS MOMENT OF CIVILIZATIONAL DESTINY, THERE ARE FEW SOUNDS, AND FEWER ACTIONS, TO INDICATE WE ARE AWARE OF IT.

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WE MUST NOW TAKE A REALISTIC LOOK AT OUR WORLD AND HOW SOME OF ITS KEY PARTS REACT TO EACH OTHER. TO DO THIS WE MUST NOTE SOME EVIDENT SIMILARITIES AND EVEN MORE EVIDENT DISTINCTIONS.

GLOBAL WARMING (CC/GW), FOR INSTANCE, IF IT PROGRESSES WILL IMPACT ALL PARTS OF OUR PLANET, BUT WILL BE FELT FAR MORE SEVERELY BY THE ATOLL ISLAND NATIONS IN THE INDIAN AND PACIFIC OCEANS WHICH FACE COMPLETE

DESTRUCTION. SIMILARLY, AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT, FOOD PRICES AND INSTITUTIONAL VALUES WILL BE ALTERED IN DIFFERENT WAYS IN DIFFERENT AREAS AS THE RESULT OF WIDESPREAD CHANGE IN THE NATURAL PROCESSES THAT DETERMINE THE QUANTITY AND QUALITY OF WATER, AND THE AVAILABILITY OF LIGHT AND MODERATE TEMPERATURES THROUGHOUT OUR WORLD. AS CC/GW IS NOT LIMITED BY OUR MAN-MADE BOUNDARIES, IT CAN INTENSIFY HUMAN ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS WHEREVER THEY EXIST.

THE HISTORY OF OUR WORLD'S HUMAN CIVILIZATIONS OVER THE PAST 5,000 YEARS IS WITNESS TO A VARIETY OF CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND MILITARY MOVEMENTS MOST OF WHICH HAVE TAKEN PLACE HORIZONTALLY IN AN EAST/WEST OR WEST/EAST DIRECTION.

IN THE TEMPERATE ZONES TRAVEL AVOIDED THE THREATS TO NAVIGATION, HEALTH AND FOOD AVAILABILITY POSED BY THE EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS OF OUR NORTHERN AND SOUTHERN POLAR ZONES. IN CENTURIES OF EARLY EXPLORATION TRADE WAS THE MOTIVATING FORCE, AND FOR EUROPEANS THAT MEANT MOVING EAST BY LAND. LATER IN THE GREAT AGE OF EXPLORATION OF THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES, AS NAVIGATIONAL SCIENCE AND INSTRUMENTATION IMPROVED DRAMATICALLY, THE LURE OF ORIENTAL TRADE LED TO EASTERN SEA ROUTES AROUND THE CAPE OF GOOD HOPE AT AFRICA'S TIP AND WESTWARD ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

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THE NORTHERN TIER

OUR CULTURAL/HISTORICAL REFERENCE TO OUR WORLD DIVIDES IT INTO ZONES — EUROPE, THE ORIENT, THE MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA AND THE NEW WORLD OF THE NORTH, CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN AMERICAS WHICH, BECAUSE OF EUROPE'S EXPORTATION OF GOVERNMENT, RELIGION AND LANGUAGE TO THEM, HAVE BECOME EXTENSIONS OF THEIR PARENTS.

THE NEAR EAST HAS LONG BEEN A UNIQUE PART OF THE WORLD THAT WAS THE ONLY LAND BRIDGE BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE ORIENT. IT WAS POPULATED BY A MIXTURE OF AFRICANS, EUROPEANS, ORIENTALS, MONGOLIANS AND NATIVE OR NOMADIC TRIBES ALL OF WHOM SERVED, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THE GREAT TRADE ROUTE BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA. ITS CONJOINED INTERESTS OF POLITICS AND ECONOMICS ARE OBVIOUS AND WITH THE BIRTH OF ISLAM IN THE EARLY SEVENTH CENTURY A NEW, VOLATILE AND EVENTUALLY DEFINING ELEMENT WAS ADDED TO THE MIX.

LINES CAN JOIN AND THEY CAN JUST AS EASILY SEPARATE. TRADE ROUTES, PHONE LINES, HIGHWAYS ALL JOIN. LINES OF GEOMETRY AND GENETICS BOTH JOIN AND SEPARATE. FORTIFICATIONS, BOUNDARIES AND ETHNIC LINES MOSTLY SEPARATE. WHETHER JOINING OR SEPARATING, LINES HAVE THE ABILITY TO MAKE DISTINCTIONS, AND ARE SO USED WITH REGARD TO PLACES, PEOPLE, POLITICS, RESOURCES, RELIGIONS AND OTHER ELEMENTS. OUR NATIONAL POLICIES, ESPECIALLY OUR FOREIGN POLICY, ARE GENERALLY DRAWN TO RECOGNIZE SUCH DISTINCTIONS.

LOOK AT A WORLD MAP AND IMAGINE A LINE DRAWN FROM CALIFORNIA'S MOST SOUTHERN AND WESTERN POINT ALONG OUR BORDER WITH MEXICO, THEN EAST THROUGH THE GULF OF MEXICO, AROUND FL, NORTH AND EAST TO GIBRALTAR, THROUGH THE MEDITERRANEAN, THROUGH THE BOSPORUS AND BLACK SEA AND EASTWARD ALONG THE SOUTHERN BORDER OF RUSSIA TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN NORTH OF JAPAN, ACROSS THE PACIFIC TO ALASKA AND THEN SOUTH ALONG CANADA'S AND OUR WESTERN COAST TO OUR STARTING POINT.

THIS IS A LINE THAT CANNOT BE FOUND ON ANY MAP. IT IS A LINE OF DISTINCTION AND SEPARATION THAT REVEALS STARTLING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN WHAT LIES ABOVE AND BELOW IT. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THESE DIFFERENCES ARE STRONGLY PRESENT IN THE FOUR FORCES OF OUR INTERSECTION ILLUSTRATION.

BY CITING THESE DIFFERENCES WE WILL SEE WHAT AN EXTRAORDINARILY IMPORTANT LINE THIS IS. THE COUNTRIES NORTH OF IT LIE MOSTLY IN THE TEMPERATE ZONE. THEY INCLUDE THE U.S., CANADA, EUROPE AND THE RUSSIAN CONFEDERATION, ALTHOUGH THEIR NORTHERN RIMS ARE NOT TEMPERATE, BUT POLAR BY CLIMATE, FLORA AND FAUNA.

THIS LARGELY TEMPERATE TERRITORY IS BLESSED WITH NATURAL BENEFITS FOR AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND HUMAN PRODUCTIVITY, MOST IMPORTANTLY PROVIDING ITS HUMAN POPULATIONS WITH ABUNDANT ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE PROTEINS AND RELIABLE SUPPLIES OF CLEAN WATER FROM INFANCY ON.

BELOW OUR LINE VASTLY DIFFERENT CONDITIONS PREVAIL IN THE TROPICAL ZONES WHOSE DEBILITATING HEAT IMPOSES LESS PRODUCTIVE LIFE STYLES AND FAR MORE PRECARIOUS COMMUNITY HEALTH STANDARDS. IN MANY ARID AREAS THE WATER SUPPLY IS THREATENED AND REDUCED BY EXTENSIVE DRY SEASONS AND HAS TO BE RENEWED BY RAINFALL TO PROVIDE FOR THE NEXT YEAR. THIS IS USUALLY ACCOMPLISHED BY MONSOONS WHICH CARRY THEIR OWN HEALTH RISKS AND CAN REMOVE MUCH NEEDED TOPSOIL.

ANOTHER CLEAR DISTINCTION DRAWN BY THIS LINE IS CULTURAL. ABOVE ARE THE COUNTRIES THAT HAVE GIVEN THE WORLD WHAT WE CALL WESTERN CIVILIZATION — MOSTLY CHRISTIAN AND WHITE WHICH DERIVED FROM ROME AND GREECE AND THEN EMBRACED CHRISTIANITY AND SPREAD EAST THRU RUSSIA AND WEST TO THE "NEW WORLD".

THIS COMBINATION OF CLASSICAL AND CHRISTIAN BACKGROUNDS, AS EUROPE MOVED OUT OF THE DARK AGES THAT FOLLOWED THE COLLAPSE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, PROVIDED EUROPE WITH AN IMPORTANT CULTURAL IDENTITY AND UNITY WHICH FLOURISHED IN ITS SYSTEM OF MONARCHICAL STATES AND SURVIVED, ALTHOUGH SOMEWHAT ALTERED, THE MAJOR UPHEAVALS OF THE MOORISH INVASION AND THE INTERNAL SCHISM OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION.

EQUALLY AS SIGNIFICANT NORTH OF THE LINE IS ITS POLITICAL CHARACTER AND ITS ECONOMIC RESOURCES. POLITICALLY, MOST OF THE NATIONS HAVE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENTS OF A DEMOCRATIC NATURE WITH THE LARGEST, RUSSIA, BEING THE LEAST CONFORMING, AS IT SUFFERS FROM A LINGERING ATTACHMENT TO THE CENTRALIZED POWER AND METHODS OF ITS COMMUNIST PAST.

AS RUSSIA'S SIZE AND CLIMATE ARE INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM ITS POLITICS, THEY PLACE IT IN A CATEGORY ENTIRELY BY ITSELF IN TERMS OF NATURAL RESOURCES. IT ENJOYS AN ABUNDANCE OF OIL, GAS, TIMBER, FISHERIES, RARE METALS, DIAMONDS, WATER AND AGRICULTURE WITH SPACE FOR GROWING AND GRAZING.

LIKE CHINA, INDIA AND THE U.S., ITS INDUSTRIALIZATION HAS CAUSED POLLUTION AND WASTE, AND IT MUST SET ABOUT REPAIRING THE ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE IT HAS CAUSED, BUT RUSSIA IS UNIQUELY SPARED THE VIEW OF FUTURE SCARCITY THAT FACES MANY OTHER NATIONS, AS IN A WORLD OF WIDESPREAD, OUT-OF-CONTROL POPULATION INCREASE RUSSIA'S POPULATION HAS REMAINED STABLE OR DECLINED SOMEWHAT. THIS IS A CONTRADICTION IN OUR TIME THAT RESULTS FROM THE POLITICAL/ECONOMIC HARSHNESS REMAINING FROM COMMUNISM AND FROM RUSSIA BEING MOSTLY SUCCESSFUL IN CONTROLLING ITS BORDERS, ALTHOUGH THERE NOW EXISTS A SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM ALONG ITS SOUTHEAST BOUNDARY WHICH WE WILL DISCUSS LATER.

ECONOMICALLY, AGAIN, THE CIRCUMSTANCES THAT PREVAIL ABOVE OUR DIVIDING LINE ARE UNUSUALLY FAVORABLE. THE NATIONS IN THIS ZONE HAVE ALL THE NATURAL RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR THE OPERATION OF A DEVELOPED ECONOMY AND THE CAPABILITY TO FEED THEMSELVES — NOT THE REST OF THE WORLD, BUT THEMSELVES. THIS LAST IS IMPORTANT BECAUSE, IF CC/GW CONTINUES, IT WILL TURN ARID AND HOT MANY AREAS THAT ARE NOW TEMPERATE AND WILL SHIFT THE TEMPERATE ZONE NORTH. THIS WILL HAVE THE BENEFIT OF MODERATING TEMPERATURES AND CHANGING LAND USAGE IN LARGE AREAS OF NORTHERN CANADA, GREENLAND AND RUSSIA. IT WILL ALSO INCREASE THE PRESSURE FROM POPULATIONS TO THE SOUTH TO MIGRATE TO THESE NEWLY TEMPERATE REGIONS, BRINGING WITH THEM THEIR UNRESOLVED ECONOMIC, ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS.

IF THESE NORTHERN NATIONS ARE NOT BLOCKED BY POLITICAL INERTIA THEY WILL HAVE TO BE TECHNOLOGICALLY INVENTIVE ENOUGH TO ADAPT THEIR ECONOMIES AND PRODUCTION SYSTEMS TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL REALITIES OF OUR TIME. IT CAN BE DONE, AS THIS NORTHERN TIER HAS IN PLACE THE EDUCATIONAL AND MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE CAPABLE OF MEETING FUTURE DEMANDS.

THERE ARE, OF COURSE, ANOMALIES. AUSTRALIA LIES FAR TO THE SOUTH OF OUR DIVIDING LINE, BUT IS A STAUNCH INSULAR OUTPOST OF BRITISH CULTURE AND GOVERNMENT. ITS HERITAGE IS MORE DEFINING THAN ITS GEOGRAPHY. JAPAN, IS A CURIOUS HYBRID WITH TWO GENERATIONS OF WESTERNIZATION APPLIED TO IT'S TRADITIONAL ASIAN HISTORY.

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SOUTH OF THE BORDER

THE ATMOSPHERE AND VIEW SOUTH OF OUR LINE IS ENTIRELY DIFFERENT. THERE, FORCES WHICH WE ACCEPT WITH RELUCTANCE IN OUR ZONE, CONTROL ITS POLITICS AND CULTURES.

THIS SOUTHERN ZONE IS ENORMOUS. IT INCLUDES

CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA, AFRICA, THE NEAR EAST, INDIA, CHINA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA WITH SOME PENETRATION OF THE PHILIPPINES. ON THE GOVERNMENTAL SCALE IT RANGES FROM SMALL, ISOLATED TRIBES IN THE INTERIORS OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN AND AFRICAN JUNGLES TO THE HIGHLY CENTRALIZED AUTHORITARIANISM OF CHINA. IT IS A MOVING MASS OF DIFFERENT FAITHS, ACCUMULATIONS OF WEALTH AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS THROUGH WHICH A HIGH LEVEL OF CORRUPTION IS CONSTANT. AND IN EVERY ASPECT OF ITS EXISTENCE THERE IS REFLECTED THE PUNISHING EQUATORIAL HEAT OF ITS TROPICAL AREAS.

THE POPULATION THAT LIES TO THE SOUTH OF OUR LINE IS VASTLY LARGER THAN ITS NORTHERN COUNTERPART INCLUDING, AS IT DOES, BOTH INDIA AND CHINA, AND ALL ITS LARGE POPULATIONS ARE INCREASING.

WITHIN THIS AREA THERE IS NOTHING AS DOMINANT AS THE COMBINED CLASSICAL/CHRISTIAN INHERITANCE OF THE NORTH. INSTEAD WE ARE FACED WITH A MIX OF TRIBAL MYTHOLOGY, EGYPTIAN, HINDU, MUSLIM, CHRISTIAN AND COMMUNIST IDEOLOGIES AND RELIGIONS.

FOR PERSPECTIVE, WE SHOULD NOTE THAT WORLDWIDE THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH COUNTS ABOUT 1.1 BILLION NUMBERS. RANKED NEXT AMONG CHRISTIANS IS THE EASTERN ORTHODOX AND THEN THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION OF ABOUT 80 MILLION, HALF OF WHICH ARE LOCATED IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA⁷.

STARTING IN LATIN AMERICA, THE MAIN INFLUENCES ARE THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND IN THE INTERIOR JUNGLES THE LOCAL TRIBAL BELIEFS WITH SOME COMMUNISM ADDED WHERE LOCAL ACTIVISTS HAVE FORMED CELLS. MOVING EAST TO AFRICA, AGAIN THERE ARE TRIBAL SOCIETIES WITH THEIR PARTICULAR MYTHS, LEGENDS AND LAWS AND THE MISSIONARY EFFORTS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC, ANGLICAN AND OTHER CHRISTIAN CHURCHES.

BUT IN AFRICA EVERYTHING CHANGES BECAUSE OF THE WIDESPREAD PRESENCE OF ISLAMIC FAITH AND ITS COMPANION, SHARIA LAW. IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ISLAMIC SPLIT-OFF FAITHS EXIST ALONG WITH JUDAISM AND SOME CHRISTIAN SECTS WHICH MORE APTLY BELONG NORTH OF OUR LINE. AFTER THE MIDDLE EAST, INDIA PROVIDES A REFUGE FOR HINDUISM AND THEN FROM PAKISTAN ON THROUGH SE ASIA, ISLAM DOMINATES.

BECAUSE THE ISLAMIC FAITH CALLS FOR ADHERENCE TO BOTH ITS OWN SPIRITUAL AND LEGAL DEMANDS, ISLAM EXERTS A DUAL RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PRESSURE IN THE AREA OF ITS INFLUENCE. THAT AREA CONSTITUTES A SUBSTANTIAL SHARE OF OUR WORLD'S TERRITORY AND POPULATIONS. ISLAM IS NOT STATIC. IT IS VERY MUCH IN MOTION AND FLEXING ITSELF IN WAYS THAT IMPACT MUCH OF OUR WORLD AND OUR FOREIGN POLICY.

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THE ECONOMIES OF THE SOUTHERN ZONE ARE AS CURIOUS A MIX AS ITS FAITHS. THERE ARE THE EMERGING INDUSTRIAL ENGINES OF CHINA AND INDIA, THE OIL PRODUCING STATES MOSTLY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND SE ASIA, BUT ALSO IN AFRICA AND LATIN AMERICA, AND THE MORE BROADLY DEVELOPED

AND BALANCED SYSTEMS SUCH AS BRAZIL, ARGENTINA, TURKEY AND SOUTH AFRICA. SPREAD THROUGHOUT THIS ZONE, IN LATIN AMERICA, AFRICA AND ASIA ARE THE SUBSISTENCE ECONOMIES OF NATIVE TRIBES WHOSE WAYS RARELY CHANGE AND WHOSE LIVES ARE MARKED BY THEIR ARDUOUS POVERTY, CLIMATE AND TERRAIN.

CORRUPTION EXISTS IN ALL PLACES, AT ALL TIMES AND AT EVERY LEVEL FROM THE BAKSHEESH PAYMENT TO A MINOR STATE BUREAU FUNCTIONARY TO THE MILLIONS PAID BY DRUG CARTELS TO CABINET LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND, EVEN, HEADS OF STATE. IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES, FOR INSTANCE, WHERE PAYMENT OF INTEREST IS PROHIBITED, BAKSHEESH, "A LITTLE SOMETHING EXTRA", IS AN ACCEPTED ECONOMIC ELEMENT.

BUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION AND THE DEGREE TO WHICH IT CAN PENETRATE AND INFLUENCE AN ECONOMY ARE MOST CLEARLY EVIDENT IN OUR NEIGHBOR TO THE SOUTH, MEXICO.

THERE IS REASONABLE DOUBT THAT MEXICO CAN BRING ITS CORRUPTION AND VIOLENCE UNDER CONTROL. THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE POLICE AND MILITARY SECURITY BRANCHES HAVE BEEN COMPROMISED SO THAT THE DRUG LORDS OPERATE WITH IMPUNITY IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF WIDE LAWLESSNESS. THIS EXTENDS ACROSS OUR BORDER IN THE FORM OF INCREASED GANG ACTIVITIES AND DRUG COMMERCE.

WE HAVE A GROWING TRADE IN WEAPONS TO MEXICO, MANY OF WHICH ARE OBTAINED BY THE DRUG CARTELS AND THEN USED IN THE DRUG WARS. OUR RESPONSE SEEMS TO NOT BE WILLING TO SAY OR DO ANYTHING THAT MIGHT OFFEND MEXICO. THIS MAY BE LONG ON COURTESY, BUT NOT AN EFFECTIVE TACTIC IN A FIFTY YEAR OLD "WAR ON DRUGS".

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OUR MAP LINE IS ONE THAT DRAWS REAL RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL DISTINCTIONS. FOR THE OBSERVER, PERSPECTIVE IS EVERYTHING AND, LOOKING AT OUR WORLD DIVIDED HORIZONTALLY AS WE HAVE DONE, WE SEE TWO VERY DIFFERENT ZONES MARKED BY VARYING DEGREES OF COHESION OF WHICH THE UPPER ONE CONTAINS ABOUT A THIRD OF THE EARTH'S LANDMASS. PERHAPS WITHOUT UNDUE POLITICAL OR OTHER PRESSURE THESE TWO AREAS COULD SORT THEMSELVES OUT AND COEXIST AS TWO BENIGN ENTITIES PEACEFULLY PURSUING THEIR OWN FUTURES.

BUT THERE ARE PRESSURES — THE INCREASINGLY URGENT AND DIFFICULT ONES IN OUR DIAGRAM THAT LIE WITHIN THE PURVIEW OF OUR POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS, FINANCIAL AND SCIENTIFIC LEADERS. TO MEET THEIR ENDS, REGIONAL, GLOBAL AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGE IN CONTINUING, WELL-INTENTIONED DEBATE, BUT NOT ALL ISSUES ARE SOLVABLE BY DISCUSSION AND PRIORITY IS DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE.

"AND IT WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD."

THE UNDERLYING EFFECT OF POPULATION EXEMPLIFIES THIS DIFFICULTY. IT IMPACTS ALL PEOPLE AND ALL ISSUES AND YET HAS GAINED VERY LITTLE GOVERNMENTAL RECOGNITION

OR RESPONSE. IT OFFENDS AND IS IGNORED BY IMPORTANT CONSTITUENCIES, AND YET IT WILL BE HEARD. AND IT WILL HAVE THE LAST WORD. NOT THE LAST LAUGH, MIND YOU, AS IT IS NO LAUGHING MATTER, BUT THE LAST WORD.

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INCONVENIENT TRUTHS

WHY SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT THE WORLD LOOKS LIKE? IT HAS FOR CENTURIES HAD DIFFERENT APPEARANCES — SOMETIMES CREATED BY QUICK MILITARY REARRANGEMENTS OF POPULATIONS AND WEALTH AND, AT OTHER TIMES, MORE GRADUAL ACCOMMODATIONS OF CULTURES, RELIGIONS, LANGUAGES, ETC.

INDEED, THE CULTURAL/RELIGIOUS COHESION IN THE AREA NORTH OF OUR LINE PRESENTLY EXISTS IN SPITE OF CENTURIES MARKED BY FREQUENT POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS WARS. IS THE PRESENT PEACE ONLY A TEMPORARY TRUCE, A LULL BETWEEN WARS, OR IS IT A SOCIETAL MARKER OF FUTURE IMPORTANCE? ANSWERS TO DEFINING QUESTIONS SUCH AS THIS SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED IN DETERMINING OUR FOREIGN POLICY, BUT WITH ALL OUR CURRENT POTENTIAL CRISES THEY ARE OFTEN ASSIGNED LESSER PRIORITY THAN MORE IMMEDIATE ISSUES.

ON BOTH SIDES OF RUSSIA'S SOUTHEASTERN BORDER THAT RUNS FROM THE CASPIAN SEA TO MONGOLIA LIVE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF MUSLIMS, PROBABLY THE LARGEST ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS BORDER MINORITY IN THE WORLD. THEY HAVE INHABITED THIS AREA FOR CENTURIES AND HAVE BEEN GIVEN UNUSUAL AUTONOMY BY BOTH CZARIST AND COMMUNIST REGIMES. BECAUSE OF THEIR STRATEGIC LOCATION THE MUSLIM MEMBERS OF THE PRESENT RUSSIAN CONFEDERATION HAVE BEEN ASSIDUOUSLY COURTED BY BOTH RUSSIA'S AND OUR GOVERNMENTS.

BUT LIFE ALONG THIS BORDER HAS CHANGED GREATLY SINCE CZARIST DAYS, AND EVEN SINCE STALIN'S ERA. A FEW DAYS AFTER LAST THANKSGIVING, A BOMB DERAILED A MOSCOW TO ST. PETERSBURG TRAIN KILLING 26 AND WOUNDING MANY MORE. RESPONSIBILITY WAS CLAIMED BY A MUSLIM GROUP. CONFLICTS IN ARMENIA, GEORGIA, AND AZERBAIJAN REOCCUR FREQUENTLY AND THE CHECHEN REBEL MOVEMENT POSES A CONTINUING THREAT TO RUSSIAN CONTROL. IN ALL THESE AREAS THE MUSLIM RELIGIOUS ELEMENT IS A KEY FACTOR.

“. . . A MESSAGE THAT MOSCOW NOW VIEWS WITH NEW AND LEGITIMATE CONCERN”

AND AL-QAEDA HAS NOT LIMITED ITS DESTABILIZING EFFORTS TO ATTACKS UPON THE US. FROM AFGHANISTAN IT IS ALSO ATTEMPTING TO SPREAD ITS MESSAGE OF JIHAD NORTH INTO RUSSIA AND CENTRAL ASIA — A MESSAGE THAT MOSCOW NOW VIEWS WITH NEW AND LEGITIMATE CONCERN.

IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD, AS IN OTHERS, WHERE RELIGION, ECONOMICS, POPULATIONS AND POLITICS ARE JOINED, THEIR RESULTING VOLATILITY POSES A CONSTANT THREAT TO WELL INTENTIONED EFFORTS TOWARDS COMPROMISE OR CONSENSUS.

ISLAM'S "FLAMING SWORD" IS AT WORK IN BOMBINGS IN IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN, INDONESIA, THE PHILIPPINES AND PARTS OF AFRICA, AND YET THERE SEEMS TO BE LITTLE EXPRESSED RECOGNITION OF THIS AT OUR POLICY LEVELS. THE SOUTHERN BORDERS OF EUROPE HAVE, LIKE THOSE IN RUSSIA, BECOME AREAS OF ENTRY AND OCCUPATION BY ANY MEANS POSSIBLE, LEGAL OR ILLEGAL. THIS HAS NOW PRODUCED A SECOND GENERATION OF NATIVE BORN MUSLIM EUROPEANS ARMED WITH CITIZENSHIP AND DETERMINATION TO FORGE AN ISLAMIC IDENTITY IN EUROPE BY BOTH PROCREATION AND POLITICS.

WERE RELIGION THE ONLY CHANGE APPLIED BY ISLAM, IT MIGHT BE ACCOMMODATED, BUT WITH FAITH OFTEN COMES THE LAW (ISLAMIC SHARIA) WHICH IS TOTALLY ANTITHETICAL TO OUR WESTERN VALUES. WESTERN DEMOCRACIES PRIDE THEMSELVES ON BEING ABLE TO HOST DIFFERING FAITHS AND CULTURES AND TO TOLERATE THE CHANGES IN DRESS, LANGUAGE, WORSHIP AND CUSTOM THEY BRING. IF THEY BELIEVE THEY CAN ALSO PROVIDE A HOME FOR A SECOND LEGAL SYSTEM DERIVED FROM A FOREIGN FAITH, THEY ARE DELUDING THEMSELVES.

IN A SURPRISING STATEMENT LAST YEAR THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY PROPOSED ALLOWING SOME ASPECTS OF SHARIA LAW TO BE RECOGNIZED IN ENGLAND. IN ALL PROBABILITY, THIS WOULD BE DEEPLY RESENTED BY MOST BRITISH CITIZENS AND WOULD CREATE STRONG ARGUMENTS OVER WHAT MIGHT CONSTITUTE PROPER SENTENCING, PUNISHMENT AND IMPRISONMENT PROCEDURES, BUT SOME LOCAL POLITICIANS' ACUTE SENSE OF HEARING HAS PICKED UP HIS MESSAGE IN THOSE NUMEROUS URBAN AREAS WHERE MOSQUES, LANGUAGE AND TRADE HAVE TILTED TO MUSLIM ADVANTAGE.

IN OUR COUNTRY OUR "LEADERS" ISSUE CALLS FOR MULTICULTURAL ACCEPTANCE OF ISLAM AND ITS FOLLOWERS. BUT WHICH ISLAM? WHAT IS NOT HEARD IS ANY DEMAND FOR CLARIFICATION OF ISLAMIC IDENTITY. IS THE ISLAM THAT MULTICULTURALISM REQUIRES US TO HONOR THE MODERATE ISLAM OF GRACIOUS WELCOME AND PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE? OR IS IT ISLAM OF "THE FLAMING SWORD"? WE CANNOT MAKE THIS DECISION. IT IS ONE OF ELEMENTAL DOGMA WHERE SHARPLY CONTRASTING INTERPRETATIONS DEFY OUR UNDERSTANDING.

ISLAM'S DIVISION WAS CLEARLY EVIDENT IN THE ACTIONS THAT FOLLOWED THE CHRISTMAS BOMBING ATTEMPT ON NORTHWEST AIRLINES #253 TO DETROIT. A 2006 INTERNET POSTING BY ABDULMUTALLAB STATED "I IMAGINE... HOW THE MUSLIMS ... WILL RULE THE WHOLE WORLD AND ESTABLISH THE GREATEST EMPIRE ONCE AGAIN"⁸. MEANWHILE, OUTSIDE THE COURTHOUSE WHERE HE WAS ARRAIGNED SOME ISLAMIC PROTESTERS CARRIED MESSAGES SUCH AS "WE ARE AMERICANS" AND "NOT IN THE NAME OF ISLAM"⁹. OTHER MAJOR FAITHS HAVE SHOWN DEEP DIVISIONS OVER THE YEARS. THE EARLY CHRISTIAN CHURCH SPLIT INTO ROMAN CATHOLIC AND EASTERN ORTHODOX BRANCHES AND THEN AGAIN WHEN

THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION SEPARATED FROM THE ROMAN PAPACY. LIKEWISE, JUDAISM HAS GROWN INTO TWO DISTINCT FORMS — ORTHODOX AND REFORM.

MOST OF THESE GROUPS HAVE A STRUCTURE OF AUTHORITY THAT RECOGNIZES AN INDIVIDUAL LEADER AND SPOKESMAN — I.E., THE POPE, THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, THE PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE — AND THIS PRACTICE EXTENDS TO OTHER GROUPS. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT THERE IS NO ONE PERSON WHO CAN SPEAK FOR ALL OF ISLAM, OR EVEN EACH OF ITS TWO VERY OPPOSITE IMAGES. THIS HAMPERS OUR, AND OTHERS', ABILITY TO DEVELOP REALISTIC AND EFFECTIVE POLICY IN ISLAMIC AREAS.

ANY MOVEMENT TOWARDS CLARIFYING THE NATURE OF ISLAM WOULD BENEFIT INTERNATIONAL POLICY FORMULATION, BUT IS UNLIKELY TO GAIN WIDE TRACTION FOR TWO REASONS. FIRST, THE LOCATION OF OIL AND GAS RESOURCES; AND, SECONDLY, THE FEAR OF VIOLENCE THAT TARGETS ANYONE WHO OPPOSES JIHADIST ISLAM.

THE LATTER CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED AS MODERATES WITNESS THE RANDOM KILLING AND MAIMING OF MUSLIM VS. MUSLIM WHEN SUICIDE BOMBERS DETONATE THEMSELVES IN MARKETS, IN MOSQUES AT TIME OF PRAYER OR OTHER PUBLIC PLACES.

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THE DIVIDED PERSONALITY OF ISLAM IS NO LESS THAN THAT OF OUR OWN CONFLICTED IDENTITY. CONSIDER OUR MILITARY, FOR EXAMPLE. IN OUR REVOLUTIONARY DAYS WE WERE THE LIGHT, QUICK FORCE THAT BY STEALTH, FLEXIBILITY AND HIT-AND-RUN TACTICS OUTMANEUVERED THE BRITISH IN THEIR DRESS PARADE COSTUMES AND BATTLE FORMATIONS.

LOOK AT IRAQ/AFGHANISTAN WHERE THE ROLES HAVE BEEN REVERSED. EVERY US SOLDIER CARRIES FIFTY POUNDS OR MORE OF EQUIPMENT AND IS ACCOMPANIED BY TANKS, TRUCKS, ARTILLERY, AIRCRAFT, ETC. OF WHICH THE COMBINED FIREPOWER IS TRULY AWESOME. OUR FOES HAVE NO UNIFORMS, NO MECHANIZED MOBILE FIRE POWER AND THEIR WEAPONS OF CHOICE CONSIST OF AK-47 AUTOMATIC RIFLES, ALONG WITH SMALL SCALE EXPLOSIVES SUCH AS ROCKETS AND BOMBS THAT CAN BE MOVED BY THEIR LIGHT TRUCKS AND QUICKLY PLANTED OR FIRED AND DISMANTLED BY TWO OR THREE FIGHTERS.

THE INSURGENTS THAT WE NOW FACE MOVE AS QUIETLY AND UNNOTICED THROUGH THEIR TOWNS AND CITIES AS WE DID IN OUR FORESTS. AT THAT TIME, ALTHOUGH ENGLAND WAS EMBARKING UPON A CENTURY OF BEING THE WORLD'S SUPERPOWER, WE WERE ABLE TO DELIVER A MILITARY DEFEAT AND WIN OUR FREEDOM.

THERE IS ANOTHER ROLE REVERSAL OF WHICH WE SHOULD BE AWARE THAT CRIES OUT FOR NOTICE, BUT TO WHICH WE DO NOT RESPOND. ABOUT TWENTY YEARS AGO THE SOVIET UNION COLLAPSED BECAUSE ITS CENTRALIZED ECONOMIC SYSTEM WAS UNABLE TO MEET THE INCREASINGLY EXPENSIVE DEMANDS OF ITS COLD WAR COMPETITION WITH THE US. TECHNOLOGY PLAYED TWO IMPORTANT PARTS IN THIS FAILURE, AS COLD WAR WEAPONS BECAME PROGRESSIVELY MORE COMPLEX AND EXPENSIVE TO PRODUCE, MAINTAIN AND OPERATE.

ITS SECOND CONTRIBUTION TO THE RUSSIAN IMPLOSION WAS THAT THE EMERGING COMPUTER/INTERNET/ COMMUNICATIONS WEB WAS BASED ON INFORMATION SHARING. SUCH OPENNESS WAS A DIRECT CHALLENGE TO THE DECADES OF SECRECY AND CONTROL THAT LAY AT THE HEART OF THE COMMUNIST SYSTEM, AND THOSE IN CHARGE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY, MEDIA AND INTELLIGENCE/SECURITY FUNCTIONS WERE UNABLE TO PART WITH THEIR PAST WAYS AND EMBRACE THE CYBER FUTURE.

THE COMPUTER/INTERNET PATH HAS CHANGED OUR SOCIETY IN WAYS WE COULD NOT IMAGINE AND, TO A MUCH LESSER DEGREE, RUSSIA'S ALSO, BUT THE PARALLEL THAT WE SHOULD BE AWARE OF IS THE ECONOMIC ONE. AS RUSSIA WAS IN THE 1980S, WE FIND OURSELVES ENGAGED IN EXPENSIVE OVERSEAS WARS OF OUR INITIATION THAT MUST BE PAID FOR BY AN EXHAUSTED ECONOMY.

THEN, IN AFGHANISTAN WE BACKED THE LOCALS AGAINST THE FOREIGN INVADER. NOW, WE ARE THE FOREIGN FORCE. THEN, WE ENGAGED IN AN ALLIANCE OF COMMON INTEREST. NOW, WE MUST PERSUADE THE AFGHAN PEOPLE THAT THE WAR IN THEIR HOMELAND IS IN THEIR INTEREST. THIS IS NOT AN EASY ARGUMENT TO MAKE AND THE AFGHAN PEOPLE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO FORCIBLY REJECT IT IN THE PAST.

THE PRICE OF EMPIRE EVENTUALLY BECOMES TOO HIGH. OUR SOLE SUPERPOWER ROLE HAS CONFUSED OUR POLICIES AND PRINCIPLES AND LED US TO TRY TO ESTABLISH COOKIE CUTTER COPIES OF OUR DEMOCRACY IN AREAS AND CULTURES WHERE OUR VALUES AND METHODS ARE ALIEN AND UNWANTED.

THIS THOUGHT PROCESS THAT "IF ITS GOOD FOR US, IT MUST BE GOOD FOR OTHERS" IS A POLITICAL CONCEIT THAT SERVES THE PURPOSES OF OUR MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX. IT PROVIDES NEW SPACE IN WHICH GENERALS CAN FIGHT, CONTRACTORS CAN BUILD, THE PRIVATE SECTOR CAN MARKET AND THOSE WHO MAKE UP OUR VOLUNTEER ARMED SERVICES CAN DIE.

“. . . OUR RELIANCE UPON GROWING DEBT TO FUND OUR EXPENSES.”

BUT LOOK AT THE MAP. THE WORLD IS VAST. WHO CAN SAY WHERE OUR NEXT PURSUIT OF SECURITY OR OUR "NATIONAL INTERESTS" WILL TAKE US? SOME WARS, SOME INVOLVEMENTS ARE MORE NECESSARY THAN OTHERS. WILL WE REACH OR PASS THE POINT WHEN WE CAN DISTINGUISH BETWEEN THE REAL AND THE BOGUS? THIS IS A QUESTION TO WHICH THE ANSWER WILL CHANGE AS OUR ABILITY TO FINANCE WAR ALSO CHANGES, BEARING IN MIND OUR WEAKENED FINANCIAL CONDITION AND OUR RELIANCE UPON GROWING DEBT TO FUND OUR EXPENSES.

IT IS A SOBERING THOUGHT, IN LOOKING AT OUR WORLD MAP, TO SEE HOW MANY LIVES AND DOLLARS WE HAVE INVESTED IN JUST TWO COUNTRIES IN WHICH THE FINAL RESULTS AND COSTS OF OUR INVOLVEMENT MAY NOT BE KNOWN FOR MANY YEARS.

AS OUR REDUCED FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES LIMIT OUR CHOICES, WE SHOULD BE FORMULATING A SPECIFIC POLICY FOR RESPONSE TO REAL SECURITY ISSUES. THIS SHOULD BE SHARED WITH OUR ALLIES AND MUST HAVE THEIR COMMITMENT AS WELL AS OURS. IF WE SPARE THE POLITICAL RHETORIC AND MAKE IT UNDERSTANDABLE TO ALL, WE MAY BE ABLE TO REACH A CONSENSUS — FIRST, PERHAPS, IN NATO, THEN IN THE EU AND THE UN.

IN AFGHANISTAN, POLICY PURSUED IS NO ASSURANCE OF POLICY ACHIEVED. THERE ARE TOO MANY ELEMENTS TO WHOM THE DISTANT CONFERENCE ROOMS IN BRUSSELS, LONDON, AND WASHINGTON MEAN NOTHING. THESE ARE THE WAR LORDS, DRUG DEALERS AND CORRUPT OFFICE HOLDERS WHO CONTROL THE FLOW OF POLITICAL POWER AND MONEY THERE. THEY MAKE UP THE HARD, SHARP EDGE OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE THAT LURKS BENEATH THE MORE FREQUENTLY AND PUBLICLY PRONOUNCED VALUES AND CUSTOMS.

“. . . THE MUSLIM MEMORY IS LONG.”

IT WAS RECENTLY ANNOUNCED THAT WE AND THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT HAVE SECURED THE LOYALTY AND SUPPORT OF A POWERFUL WARLORD WITH A PAYMENT OF A MILLION DOLLARS IN RETURN FOR WHICH HE WILL KEEP THE TALIBAN OUT OF HIS AREA. AND AFTER WE LEAVE? SHIFTING ALLIANCES LIE AT THE HEART OF MIDEASTERN POLITICS AND SUGGEST THAT DIPLOMACY OF THIS SORT IS AN EXERCISE IN NAIVETÉ. BOB GATES EXPRESSED DOUBT ABOUT CHANGING HISTORY IN SHORT STROKES. HE KNOWS THE MUSLIM MEMORY IS LONG.

WE THINK WE KNOW WHAT WE WILL FIND IF WE ONLY PRESS ON, “FINISH THE JOB”, ETC., BUT WE MAY NOT. AFGHANISTAN’S HISTORY, IT’S POLITICAL DNA AND ITS PREFERRING THINGS THE WAY THEY ARE TO BECOMING AN EXERCISE IN WESTERN NATION BUILDING MAY PREVAIL. IT’S POSSIBLE THAT, SAY, IN THREE, FIVE OR EIGHT YEARS WE COULD SEE A CLEAR ENOUGH IMPRINT UPON THE COUNTRY TO “DECLARE VICTORY” AND LEAVE. BUT IT’S EQUALLY POSSIBLE THAT SUCH A VISION WOULD BE FLAWED; THAT BENEATH OUR IMPRINT THE OUTLINES OF OLD AFGHANISTAN WOULD REMAIN FIRM AND INVITING; THAT, WHETHER GRADUALLY OR QUICKLY, THEIR INVITATION WOULD BE ACCEPTED, THE COUNTRY WOULD REVERT TO ITS ROOTS, AND THE VOICES OF EARLIER GENERATIONS WOULD BE HEARD AGAIN AT NIGHT IN THE HIGH, DARK MOUNTAIN PASSES.

MUSLIM EXTREMISM AND ACTIVISM IS A PROBLEM IN CHINA, RUSSIA, EUROPE AND AFRICA, BUT, LIKE US, NO ONE THERE HAS ASKED THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY TO DECLARE ITS IDENTITY. AGAIN, LIKE US, THEY MAY BE AFRAID THEY WILL OFFEND, BUT EXTREME ISLAM IS ACTIVE AND EXPANDING ITS NUMBERS AND TERRITORY. IT IS UNLIKELY THAT A COLLECTIVE SILENCE WILL ACT AS A DETERRENT.

ISLAM IS A DIFFICULT POLITICAL MIXTURE OF OIL AND RELIGION. WERE WE TO SUDDENLY RID OURSELVES OF OUR RELIANCE ON PETROLEUM, WE WOULD HAVE MORE FREEDOM IN DEALING WITH THE ISLAMIC MIDDLE EAST, BUT WITHOUT OUR PETRO-DOLLARS LIVING STANDARDS IN THIS AREA WOULD BE DEPRESSED, AND ANY SUCH ECONOMIC DISLOCATION COULD

WELL HAVE THE ADVERSE EFFECT OF FANNING FLAMES OF RESENTMENT AND INCREASING ACTIVIST FERVOR.

TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THE WORLD MAP AND ISLAM’S PRESENT BORDERS. IT MAY WELL BE THAT WE ARE POISED AT A MOMENT OF A MASSIVE EXPANSION WHICH WILL OVERRUN OUR WESTERN CIVILIZATION. OR WE MAY BE AT ITS ZENITH FROM WHICH IT WILL RETREAT, FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER, INTO INSIGNIFICANCE. OR IT MAY REMAIN, AS IT IS, AN OPPOSING AND VIOLENT FORCE, IN A STATE OF CONTINUING CONFLICT WITH OTHER FAITHS AND CULTURES. THESE ARE QUESTIONS ONLY HISTORY CAN ANSWER.

IN 732 AD AT THE BATTLE OF TOURS CHARLES MARTEL DECISIVELY DEFEATED THE SARACEN FORCES AT THEIR FURTHEST POINT OF MUSLIM PENETRATION INTO EUROPE, BUT THE LATTER ONLY BECAME EVIDENT MUCH LATER. THE MOST WE CAN KNOW IS WHERE WE NOW ARE AND HOW TO MAKE THE BEST OF IT AND NOT MAKE THINGS WORSE.

MORE OF THE EARTH IS HOME TO ISLAM TODAY THAN IT WAS AT THE TIME OF ITS REACH INTO EUROPE IN THE EIGHTH CENTURY. IT WILL NOT GO AWAY, BUT MUST BE DEALT WITH ON A CONTINUING BASIS. ARMED INTERVENTION MAY BE NECESSARY OR APPROPRIATE AT SOME TIMES AND PLACES, BUT NOT AT OTHERS. WHAT IS IN OUR REAL NATIONAL INTEREST IS TO OFFER A POLICY TO WHICH OTHERS CAN SUBSCRIBE THAT RECOGNIZES THE OVERALL REALITY AND CAN ALSO MAKE DISTINCTIONS AS TO THE TYPE OF RESPONSE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY SHOULD MAKE, BEARING IN MIND THAT ISLAM IN OUR PRESENT POLITICAL WORLD IS AN “ACTIVE INGREDIENT”.

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CORRUPTION IS EVER PRESENT IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES IN WHICH POWER IS CONTROLLED AND EXPRESSED BY TRIBAL ENTITIES RATHER THAN OPEN, PUBLIC ELECTIONS. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN ISLAMIC GOVERNMENTS IN WHICH POLITICAL OFFICE IS HELD OR TRADED AS THE RESULT OF PERSONAL POWER BASES.

THE ISSUE OF CORRUPTION IN AFGHANISTAN HAS BEEN ONE OF FREQUENT COMMENT SINCE OUR EARLIEST PRESENCE THERE, AND BURST INTO FULL BLOOM IN THE RECENT REELECTION OF HAMID KARZAI AS PRESIDENT THAT UN INSPECTORS DEEMED FRAUDULENT.

AFGHANISTAN’S INSTITUTIONS, POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL, ARE FAR FROM SEAMLESS. AT THE PLACES WHERE PEOPLE, POWER OR MONEY ARE JOINED THEY OFTEN HAVE TO BE STITCHED TOGETHER TO BRIDGE A GAP. THESE PLACES PROVIDE EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MONEY TO CHANGE HANDS, FOR IT TO LEAVE THE SYSTEM, FOR IT TO BE TRANSFORMED FROM PUBLIC FUNDS TO PERSONAL WEALTH.

A REPORT ISSUED BY THE UN OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME ON JANUARY 19 PROVIDES A MEASURE OF SCALE. IT STATED THAT IN THE PAST YEAR HALF OF ALL AFGHANS PAID AT LEAST ONE KICKBACK TO A PUBLIC OFFICIAL, AND THAT THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF BRIBES PAID REACHED \$2.5 BILLION. THIS FIGURE IS ALMOST EQUAL TO THE \$2.8 BILLION ESTIMATE OF THE AFGHANISTAN’S OPIUM TRADE, AND AMOUNTS TO ABOUT 25% OF THE COUNTRY’S ANNUAL GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT.¹⁰

ON MANY OCCASIONS WE HAVE MADE PUBLIC STATEMENTS COMMITTING OURSELVES TO THE ERADICATION OF CORRUPTION IN AFGHANISTAN'S GOVERNMENT AS PART OF OUR NATION BUILDING PROCESS. THIS IS A WORTHWHILE GOAL, BUT IT WON'T BE EASY. WE WILL HAVE TO FACE THE REALITY OF DIFFERENT LANGUAGE, METHODS, STANDARDS, VALUES, STRUCTURES AND PRACTICES. PERHAPS THE BEST WE CAN ANTICIPATE IS A FEW TOKEN ARRESTS AND/OR TRIAL CONVICTIONS WITH LIGHT SENTENCES AS PUNISHMENT. MORE LIKELY, THE AFGHAN SYSTEM WILL FIND WAYS TO MODIFY ITS CORRUPT PRACTICES, TO INCLUDE THEM IN OUR NATION BUILDING ACTIVITIES AND RETAIN THEM FOR THE FUTURE AFTER OUR DEPARTURE.

THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE TO THE CORRUPTION COIN AND IT HAS USA STAMPED ON IT. THIS IS THE GROWING AMOUNT OF THEFT, WASTE AND CORRUPTION THAT WE HAVE ALLOWED IN THE CONDUCT OF CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS EMPLOYED TO FEED, RECONSTRUCT, FUND, SECURE AND MANAGE AN INCREASING NUMBER OF PROJECTS AND PEOPLE WHERE WE HAVE UNDERTAKEN MILITARY INTERVENTION.

THE CIVILIAN CONTRACTOR HAS BECOME PART OF OUR MILITARY ACTION PLAN. IN AN OPERATING ATMOSPHERE WHERE REGULATION IS LOOSE AND OFTEN OF THE MOMENT, WHERE OVERSIGHT IS NOT POSSIBLE AND OPPORTUNITY EVER PRESENT, CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS HAVE BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN FINDING WAYS TO DIVERT MONEY/GOODS TO THEIR OWN USE. WHEN EXPOSED, MEDIA COVERAGE IS INTENSE FOR A BRIEF PERIOD, BUT THEN PASSES AND OFTEN, EVEN AFTER CONVICTION, THESE COMPANIES OR INDIVIDUALS ARE RETURNED TO BIDDING LISTS FOR FUTURE PROJECTS.

CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS ARE BIG BUSINESS, WITH THEIR CONTRACTS RUNNING INTO BILLIONS OF DOLLARS, AND HAVE CHANGED THE WAY OUR MILITARY OPERATES. AS THEY OPERATE IN AN AREA SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE PENTAGON AND THE DEPT. OF STATE, SCRUTINY TENDS TO BE LAX.

THEIR INCREASED PRESENCE HAS HAD A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT UPON OUR USE OF MILITARY FORCES. FIRST, MUCH, IF NOT ALL, OF THEIR FUNDING HAS BEEN "OFF BUDGET". THE WORK THAT HAS BEEN DONE BY THESE CONTRACTORS IN CONJUNCTION WITH OUR VOLUNTEER ARMY HAS REDUCED THE NUMBER OF ACTUAL MILITARY PERSONNEL REQUIRED AND HELPED TO MAKE OUR MILITARY EFFORTS POSSIBLE WITHOUT HAVING TO USE A NATIONAL DRAFT.

" . . . A NEW MEMBER WITH A LARGE APPETITE AND A LOUD VOICE."

ANOTHER IMPACT HAS BEEN CONFLICT BETWEEN THE MILITARY AND THE CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS OVER, AUTHORITY, DISCIPLINE, AREAS OF OPERATION, ETC. THE LAST, AND PERHAPS MOST IMPORTANT, IMPACT HAS BEEN CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS' EMERGENCE AS A NEWLY ACCEPTED ELEMENT IN THE FUNDING, BIDDING AND MANAGING OF WAR. IN PAST YEARS OUR FUNDING AND BIDDING PROCEDURES HAVE PROVED TO BE INEFFICIENT AND HIGHLY COSTLY WITH THE RESULT THAT THE NATION'S

SECURITY AND FINANCIAL INTERESTS HAVE SUFFERED, AND OUR MILITARY PROCUREMENT PROCESS HAS COME IN FOR MUCH JUSTIFIED CRITICISM. WILL THE ADDITION OF ANOTHER PROFIT SEEKING PARTICIPANT BE AN IMPROVEMENT? NOT LIKELY, IN OUR OPINION, BUT THE MILITARY/INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX NOW HAS A NEW MEMBER WITH A LARGE APPETITE AND A LOUD VOICE.

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CRESCENT, CROSS AND CANDELABRA

THE MIDDLE EAST HAS BEEN THE BATTLE GROUND OF CHOICE AND HISTORY FOR THE WARS OF SURVIVAL AND AGGRESSION BETWEEN THE THREE MAJOR DESERT RELIGIONS — ISLAM, CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM. OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS THE CAST OF CHARACTERS HAS CHANGED FROM TIME TO TIME, BUT THE EVENTS AND TEXTS THAT INSPIRE RELIGIOUS FAITH HAVE ENDURED TO THE POINT WHERE THEY NOW SEEM TO BE PROTECTED BY GENETIC CODE AND TRANSFER. THEY CROSS AND RE-CROSS HISTORY'S STAGE, SOMETIMES AS PRAYERFUL MONKS AND AT OTHERS AS CONQUERING WARRIORS. HERE ARE SOME NOTES REGARDING PRESENT ROLES.

THE TALIBAN: ISLAM'S FAR LEFT. EXTREME ISLAM, WHETHER OF THE TALIBAN IN AFGHANISTAN OR THE WAHHABIS IN SAUDI ARABIA, IS HIGHLY EXPORTABLE TO AREAS WHERE ENTRENCHED POVERTY AND RESENTMENT PREVAIL.

SAUDI ARABIA: THIS MONARCHY PLUS MONEY IS NOW A DELICATELY BALANCED POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS AND ECONOMIC SYSTEM THAT LACKS THE RELEASE VALVES OF PUBLIC ELECTIONS AND POLITICAL ARGUMENT/CHANGE. IT IS LIKELY THAT "WHEN IT BLOWS, IT GOES".

OUR DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES POSE A REAL THREAT TO THE ELABORATE SAUDI MONARCHY WHICH MUST SPEAK WITH ONE VOICE TO DEMOCRACIES AND ANOTHER TO ITS MUSLIM CULTURE. IT IS CONSTANTLY ENGAGED IN A WARY DANCE WITH ITS RIGID WAHHABISM AND IS THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL CENTER OF ISLAM, ALTHOUGH ITS AUTHORITARIAN MONARCHY LEAVES IT VULNERABLE TO FORCES OF CHANGE.

PARADOX AND PETROLEUM ARE FRONT AND CENTER STAGE IN SA, BUT OFFSTAGE THESE FORCES WILL JOCKEY FOR POSITION AND AWAIT THEIR MOMENT OF DESTINY UNDER THE CONSTANT VIEW OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INTELLIGENCE/SECURITY FORCES.

AFGHANISTAN: SOUGHT BY THE TALIBAN AS AN IDEOLOGICALLY PURE AND SECURE HOME BASE. ITS MAIN SOURCES OF MONEY ARE ITS POPPY/HEROIN AGRICULTURE AND ITS PROTECTION/EXTORTION COLLECTIONS FROM US CONTRACTORS AND COMMERCIAL INTERESTS. WE PAY FOR BOTH DRUGS AND CORRUPTION.

A LOOK AT THE MAP REVEALS THAT AFGHANISTAN IS SURROUNDED BY MEMBERS OF THE NUCLEAR CLUB — PAKISTAN, INDIA, ISRAEL, IRAN (IN PROCESS) AND RUSSIA. IN MOST OF ITS HISTORY THE NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION HAS RELIED ON MAD (MUTUALLY ASSURED DESTRUCTION) TO PREVENT WAR. EXTREME, JIHADIST, MARTYRDOM-SEEKING ISLAM NULLIFIES THE MAD BALANCE.

IN THE NUCLEAR GAME THE CARDS IN THE ISLAMIC DECK HAVE NO IMAGES SUCH AS KING, QUEEN, JACK, ETC. — ONLY ARABIC LETTERING WHICH WE CANNOT READ — AND THE MARTYR-TO-BE IS THE WILD CARD. THE CARD GAME, THE ARMS GAME AND THE DIPLOMATIC GAME ALL GO ON SIMULTANEOUSLY. THERE IS NO TIME OR REASON FOR FRIENDLY JOKES, PATS ON THE BACK, COMPLIMENTS, TIME-OUTS, APPLAUSE, OR DEMONSTRATIONS. WHAT IS SHARED IS ONLY SILENCE, A CORROSIVE LACK OF TRUST, THE NEED TO CONTINUE AND THE KNOWLEDGE THAT ANY MISSTEP COULD BE FATAL FOR ALL.

IN SOME QUARTERS, AND AT SOME TIMES, THERE IS HOPE THAT IT CAN END, THAT ALL THE PLAYERS WILL THROW THEIR CARDS FACE DOWN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE TABLE AND WALK AWAY WITH THEIR BACKS TO EACH OTHER. BUT SUCH HOPES MUST BE KEPT AT A DISTANCE, LEST THEY INTERFERE WITH THE MATTERS OF THE MOMENT, THE CONTINUING PLAY, LEST THEY BECOME DISTRACTIONS AND CREATE WEAKNESS.

HERE, FOR THE PRESENT, IS THE PARADOX OF SUPERPOWER. ISLAM'S POWER TO CREATE MARTYRDOM, TO DESTROY MILLIONS OF LIVES, BOTH MUSLIM AND OTHERS, IS ONE THAT ONLY ITS FOLLOWERS CAN GRANT OR WITHHOLD. IF UNLEASHED, HOW DO SUPERPOWERS RESPOND? BOMB AFGHANISTAN? NOT MUCH THERE. OR DO WE RETALIATE AGAINST OTHER ISLAMIC NATIONS?

AND GOING BEYOND ACTUAL RETALIATION, ON A LEVEL WITH RELIGIOUS ROOTS, DO WE FACE THE POSSIBILITY OF WWII SCALE DESTRUCTION BECAUSE THE THREE DESERT RELIGIONS CANNOT PEACEFULLY COEXIST? JUST THIS MONTH IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, MUSLIM YOUTHS SET FIRE TO A CATHOLIC CHURCH FILLED WITH WORSHIPPERS. THIS SET OFF WIDESPREAD DESTRUCTION OF MOSQUES AND HOMES OVER A PERIOD OF SEVERAL DAYS DURING WHICH OVER THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE WERE KILLED, MANY MORE WOUNDED AND THOUSANDS LOST THEIR HOMES.¹¹

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HISTORY IN THE MAKING

THE ORIGINAL NUCLEAR CLUB CONSISTED OF THE FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL. NON-PROLIFERATION WAS THEORETICALLY EMBRACED BY ALL BUT NOT ENFORCED, AND OTHERS — SOUTH AFRICA, ISRAEL, IRAN (IN PROCESS), NORTH KOREA, PAKISTAN, INDIA — HAVE ENTERED WITHOUT KNOCKING AND TAKEN SEATS AT THE TABLE.

THE UN WAS UNABLE TO CONTROL THIS ISSUE DUE TO SOVEREIGNTY CONCERNS OF ITS MEMBERS AND TO PHILOSOPHIC/POLITICAL TENSIONS BETWEEN ITS GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SECURITY COUNCIL. ALSO IN THE UN, THE GHOST OF THE OLD COLONIALISM HAS BEEN JOINED BY A SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT CONTEMPORARY FORM IN WHICH THE FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL ACCOUNT FOR ABOUT A THIRD OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION AND FAR MORE OF ITS WEALTH AND LAND.

THIS IMBALANCE IS NOT LOST UPON THE GROWING NUMBERS OF THE WORLD'S POOR. THE DIMINISHING RESOURCES AND SHARES OF WORLD WEALTH AVAILABLE TO THEM MAY

ALSO BE FURTHER EXACERBATED BY ECONOMIC AND NATURAL DISTURBANCES SUCH AS THE PRESENT RECORD DROUGHT IN MUCH OF AFRICA AND THE TSUNAMIS AND EARTHQUAKES IN SE ASIA AND HAITI.

IN ATTEMPTING TO DEAL WITH THE BROAD CHANGES IN NATURE'S PATTERNS THAT ARE BECOMING MORE FREQUENT AND MORE EVIDENT, WE MUST PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO TWO FACTORS — TIME AND FLEXIBILITY.

EVEN IN ONLY THE FIRST DECADE OF OUR PRESENT CENTURY THINGS ARE MOVING MUCH FASTER THAN THEY DID IN THE PREVIOUS ONE. OUR OLD TIMETABLES FOR NATIONAL, REGIONAL OR GLOBAL ACTION ARE NO LONGER WORKABLE. OUR THOUGHTS, ACTIONS, METHODS AND MANAGERMENTS MUST BE CORRESPONDINGLY ACCELERATED. THIS IS NO EASY TASK, BUT NOR CAN IT BE AVOIDED. WE ARE WHAT WE ARE WHERE WE ARE — A THREATENED SPECIES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY FACED WITH THE NEED TO TAKE PROMPT, COOPERATIVE ACTION.

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MOST DEFINING MOMENTS IN HISTORY ARE NOT READILY RECOGNIZABLE AS SUCH WHEN THEY OCCUR. THEY MUST BE PUT IN THE KIND OF PERSPECTIVE THAT ONLY TIME AND HISTORY CAN PROVIDE.

OUR PRESENT MOMENT SEEMS TO BE CLEARLY DIFFERENT. NUCLEAR AND/OR ENVIRONMENTAL CATASTROPHES FUELED BY NATURE'S LAWS HAVE THE ABILITY TO EXTINGUISH URBAN LIFE, TO POISON THE AIR, THE GROUND AND THE WATER OF VAST AREAS AND TO REDUCE SOCIETIES TO INSIGNIFICANCE.

THERE IS A HORRIBLE IRONY IN THAT MANKIND'S GREAT PROGRESS IN PEACEFUL PURSUITS CAN BE TRUMPED BY WEAPONRY AND WARFARE. IN THE PAST WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO WORK OUR WAY AROUND THIS, BUT WE NOW FACE THE ANONYMOUS, RANDOM DESTRUCTION OF THE JIHADIST MIND.

RANDOMNESS IS PRESENT IN AN UNUSUAL DEGREE IN BOTH OUR NUCLEAR AND NATURAL THREATS. THE SUICIDE BOMBER, THE HIJACKED AIRLINER, THE ANTHRAX RELEASE, THE EXPLODED TRAIN OR TRUCK ALL COME WITHOUT WARNING AND DESTROY RANDOM VICTIMS. THE SAME IS TRUE OF NATURE'S INCREASINGLY DESTRUCTIVE PATTERNS. A TORNADO HERE, A TSUNAMI THERE, AN EARTHQUAKE OR A FLOOD — ALL ARE THE PRODUCTS OF NATURAL LAW, BUT STRIKE AT RANDOM.

RANDOM IS. RANDOM RULES! IN NATURE WE CAN PRECISELY MAP THE GENETIC CODE AND DEVELOP FORMULAS TO EXPRESS THE LAWS OF PHYSICS THAT GOVERN ELECTRICITY, BUT WE CANNOT KNOW IN WHAT FORM OR WHEN A MUTATION MAY OCCUR NOR WHERE LIGHTENING WILL STRIKE.

THE SAME IS TRUE IN POLITICS. TENSIONS CAN BUILD, DIPLOMACY INTENSIFY AND DEMANDS INCREASE, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE OR WHEN THE FIRST SPARK OF WAR OR REVOLUTION WILL IGNITE.

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THE FORCES SHOWN IN OUR DIAGRAM ARE ACTIVELY PRESENT THROUGHOUT OUR WORLD AND, NO MATTER HOW WE THINK OR WHAT WE DO, THEY WILL REQUIRE OUR ATTENTION.

NONE OF THEM WILL SIMPLY GO AWAY. WHILE OUR ILLUSTRATION SHOWS AN INEVITABLE HEAD-ON COLLISION, PERHAPS BY A CHANGE IN OUR THINKING WE COULD CHANGE THIS INTERSECTION TO A ROUNDABOUT. THE POTENTIAL FOR COLLISION WOULD STILL EXIST, BUT ITS DAMAGE COULD BE LESSENED.

ISLAM'S ACCEPTANCE OF VIOLENCE IN EXPANDING ITS FAITH AND IMPOSING SHARIA LAW COULD QUALIFY FOR DEBATE IN THE UN AS A MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT THE REALITY IS THAT THE UN IS NOT READY TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH A DISCUSSION. THERE ARE TOO MANY MUSLIM NATIONS IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY WHO WOULD TAKE OFFENSE AND LABEL EVEN SUCH A TENTATIVE EXERCISE IN GLOBAL GOVERNMENT AS AN INTRUSION UPON THEIR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

THIS IS THE UN'S MAIN WEAKNESS. ALTHOUGH CREATED TO ENGAGE IN MATTERS OF BROAD GLOBAL GOVERNANCE, IT CANNOT MUSTER THE NECESSARY OBJECTIVITY TO DO SO. IN THIS CASE, THE MUSLIM NATIONS WOULD ACT AS EXECUTIONER, BUT OTHER POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES ALSO HAVE STRONG CONSTITUENCIES OPPOSED TO THE DEGREE OF CHANGE THAT GLOBAL PROGRESS MAY REQUIRE.

OUR ROLE AS A LEADING, BUT NO LONGER SOLE, SUPERPOWER FINDS US NOW AT WAR IN SEVERAL MUSLIM COUNTRIES — IRAQ, AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND PERHAPS YEMEN — WITH NO READILY ACHIEVABLE GOALS IN SIGHT. ONE OF THE MAIN PROBLEMS OF THESE WARS IS THAT OUR STATED PURPOSE HAS BEEN NATION BUILDING — TO ESTABLISH A NEW DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL REALITY IN THE COUNTRIES IN WHICH WE INTERVENE. WE HAVE OFFERED AND PURSUED THIS GOAL WITHOUT MAKING IT CLEAR TO OURSELVES AND TO OTHERS WHAT AN ENORMOUS MAKE-OVER WE HAVE IN MIND.

IN IRAQ WE FOUND THAT IN SPITE OF OUR UNLIMITED FIREPOWER, WHICH ENABLED US TO WIN BATTLES AND SKIRMISHES AND REDUCE TO RUBBLE ANYTHING WE CHOSE, OUR NATION BUILDING GOAL REMAINED FRUSTRATINGLY DISTANT.

THIS IS A DIFFERENT KIND OF WAR. WE TALK OF EXITING IRAQ IN A YEAR OR TWO WHEN IT SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN ITS OWN SECURITY WITH THE HELP OF "A FEW MILITARY ADVISORS" PRESUMABLY WORKING OUT OF OUR NEW \$800 MILLION EMBASSY. BUT WHAT IF IT CAN'T? IF AS TIME PASSES, EITHER QUICKLY OR SLOWLY, WHAT IF OLD DIVISIONS AND ENMITIES REAPPEAR? WHAT IF THE OLD TRIBAL LINES ARE REDRAWN AND EVEN REINFORCED BY THE PAIN WE HAVE IMPOSED AND THE MONEY WE HAVE SPENT IN THE COURSE OF A DECADE OF MILITARY OCCUPATION?

WHEN WE HAVE ANSWERED THESE QUESTIONS, IF WE CAN, WE WILL HAVE TO ASK THEM AGAIN OF AFGHANISTAN.

THE AMOUNT OF MONEY WE ARE SPENDING, AND THE WASTE AND CORRUPTION THAT ACCOMPANIES IT, IS STAGGERING. OUR POLITICIANS OF BOTH PARTIES PRETEND THAT WE HAVE THIS MONEY, THAT WHETHER OUR WARS ARE ONES OF CHOICE OR NECESSITY, THEY HAVE A CLAIM OF PRIORITY AGAINST OUR HUMAN AND PHYSICAL RESOURCES.

NONE OF THIS IS TRUE. THE COSTS OF THESE INTERVENTIONS ARE WREAKING HAVOC UPON OUR ECONOMIC SYSTEM WHICH WILL CONTINUE TO BE FELT BY OUR DEBT, OUR CURRENCY AND OUR STANDARD OF LIVING FOR MANY YEARS AFTER OUR DEPARTURE.

WHAT IS THE TRUE NATURE OF OUR INVOLVEMENT IN WARS SUCH AS AFGHANISTAN AND IRAQ? THIS IS NOT AN EASY QUESTION BECAUSE WARS CAN COMBINE MULTIPLE PURPOSES. THEY CAN BE FOUGHT TO PROVIDE ACCESS TO NATURAL RESOURCES (I.E. — IRAQ'S OIL), FOR THE CONTROL OF SEAWAYS OR FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MILITARY BASES IN STRATEGIC LOCATIONS. IT'S CLEAR THAT IN THESE DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES, AND MOST OTHERS ALSO, THE POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL CONSIDERATIONS ARE JOINED AND WOULD PROVE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO SEPARATE.

THIS PUTS TO THE US A QUESTION OF IDENTITY, NOT UNLIKE THAT FACING ISLAM, AS TO WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE WISH TO BE SEEN (AND JUDGED) BY OTHERS. OUR MILITARY/ INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IS A MAJOR PLAYER IN OUR FOREIGN POLICIES AND WARS. IT WOULD BE USELESS TO TRY TO DENY THIS IN VIEW OF THE RECORD OF HALLIBURTON'S AND BLACKWATER'S ACTIVITIES. THERE ARE MANY OTHERS.

THERE ARE ADMITTEDLY PRACTICAL PROBLEMS IN ANY ATTEMPT TO CLARIFY PUBLIC STATEMENTS ABOUT OURSELVES OR OUR STRATEGIES. SECURITY CONCERNS LIMIT ANY COMMENTS TO THE BROADEST GENERALITIES EXPRESSED IN TIME-WORN CLICHÉS LEST WE GIVE NOTICE OF OUR INTENTIONS THAT COULD GIVE ADVANTAGE TO THOSE WHO OPPOSE, OR WHO ARE LIKELY TO OPPOSE, US. SIMILARLY, GIVEN OUR DEBTOR STATUS, WE ARE FORCED TO PORTRAY OUR FINANCIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND INTENTIONS AS STRONGER THAN THEY ARE TO OUR CREDITORS TO AVOID AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE RUMORS OR COMMENTS CAPABLE OF ROILING THE GLOBAL MONEY MARKETS.

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“ . . . OUR CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT CANNOT BE MET BY A PIECEMEAL RESPONSE.”

WE HAVE EMPHASIZED, IN CALLING ATTENTION TO THE IDENTITY PROBLEMS OF ISLAM AND THE US, THE CLOSE CONNECTION BETWEEN RELIGION AND POLITICS. MORE RECENTLY THEY HAVE BEEN JOINED BY ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS THAT CROSS ALL BORDERS. PLANETARY IN ITS SCOPE AND IMPACT, OUR CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL THREAT CANNOT BE MET BY A PIECEMEAL RESPONSE.

THERE IS SOME TRUTH IN THE CLAIMS THAT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE DEVELOPED ECONOMIES SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION HAVE BEEN MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT CUMULATIVE LEVEL OF CARBON DIOXIDE (CO₂) AND OTHER POLLUTANTS. THERE IS JUST AS MUCH TRUTH THAT IN TODAY'S OVERHEATING WORLD THE DAMAGE DONE BY A MOLECULE OF DEVELOPING ECONOMY CO₂ IS THE SAME AS THAT OF A DEVELOPED COUNTRY. AND THAT DEFORESTATION IN UNDEVELOPED AREAS ANNUALLY PREVENTS THE ABSORPTION BY TREES OF MORE CO₂ THAN IS PRODUCED BY THE WORLD'S AUTOMOBILES.

OUR INTERSECTION SYMBOL CONVEYS THE TRUTH OF THE WORLD AS IT IS. THIS IS NOT THE WORLD WE WOULD LIKE. IT IS ONE, HOWEVER, THAT WE HAVE FASHIONED.

IN OUR COUNTRY WITH ITS MANY FORMS OF POLARIZATION

IT IS DIFFICULT TO BRING OURSELVES TO BELIEVE THAT WE MIGHT CREATE AN OPEN, MODERATE CONVERSATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE ABOUT ANY OF THE FOUR FORCES IN OUR ILLUSTRATION. AND YET, IT IS DESPERATELY NEEDED.

EVEN THE TWO THAT ARE CLOSEST TO THE CENTER OF OUR GOVERNMENT, ECONOMICS AND POLITICS, PROVE TOO INFLAMMATORY FOR A COOPERATIVE EFFORT. THIS WOULD BE ESPECIALLY TRUE OF ECONOMICS, WITH OUR EMOTIONAL AND DIFFERING VIEWS OF CAPITALISM'S FAULTS AND BENEFITS.

AND, AS IF THESE FOUR PRESSURES WERE NOT ENOUGH FOR US (AMERICA AND THE WORLD) TO CONTEND WITH, THEY ARE ALL SUBJECT TO THE CONSTANT PRESSURE OF OUT-OF-CONTROL POPULATION AND ITS NEGATIVE EFFECTS.

AUTHOR AND TEACHER FROSTY WOOLDRIDGE, IN AMERICA ON THE BRINK: THE NEXT ADDED 100 MILLION AMERICANS¹², STATES WE ARE PROJECTED TO INCREASE OUR POPULATION BY A THIRD, OR 100 MILLION, WELL BEFORE THE HALF CENTURY. THIS IS A PROJECTION THAT REQUIRES REAL THOUGHT AND THE ANSWERS TO SERIOUS QUESTIONS.

WHERE WILL THEY LIVE AND WORK? AND HOW CAN WE PROVIDE HOUSING AND JOBS FOR THEM? HOW WILL THEY BE EDUCATED? OUR SCHOOLS ARE ALREADY OVERCROWDED AND MANY PHYSICALLY DETERIORATED. THE NEW NUMBERS WOULD REQUIRE THOUSANDS OF NEW SCHOOLS, PARKING LOTS, TEACHERS, ETC., AS WELL AS HIGHWAYS, BRIDGES, SEWERS AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE ELEMENTS.

BUT POPULATION WILL CAUSE EVEN MORE PROBLEMS ELSEWHERE. BY 2050, ACCORDING TO THE UN, WORLD POPULATION IS EXPECTED TO GROW FROM 6.7 TO 9.2 BILLION, MOST OF WHICH WILL OCCUR IN LESS DEVELOPED AREAS WHICH WILL INCREASE FROM 5.4 TO 7.9 BILLION. THIS PROJECTED GROWTH OF 2.5 BILLION IN LESS THAN HALF A CENTURY IS EQUAL TO THE WORLD'S TOTAL POPULATION IN 1950.¹³

MOST IMPORTANTLY, HOW WILL THE US, FACING ENORMOUS DEFICITS FOR THE NEXT DECADE, BE ABLE TO PAY FOR THE ADDED COSTS OF THESE 100 MILLION? THERE WILL BE NO TAX INCOME FROM JOBS IN STEEL PLANTS, TEXTILE MILLS OR SHOE FACTORIES. OUR MANUFACTURING CAPABILITY HAS BEEN SOLD AND DISMANTLED.

WHERE WILL WE FIND THE NECESSARY ADDITIONAL WATER? AND HOW WILL WE PREVENT THE PRICE OF FOOD FOR ALL OF US FROM RISING AS LAND FOR GROWING AND GRAZING IS DIMINISHED WHILE DEMAND INCREASES?

OUR ATTITUDES, IF THEY EXIST, REGARDING THESE PROBLEMS RANGE FROM UNINFORMED TO UNREALISTIC ("IT CAN'T HAPPEN HERE") TO OUTRIGHT DENIAL. THESE ARE NOT ISSUES FOR WHICH WE CAN FIND SOLUTIONS BY THROWING AROUND A LOT OF MONEY WHICH WE DO NOT HAVE. THEY REQUIRE SENSITIVE AND DETERMINED DELIBERATION AMONG OURSELVES AND WITH OTHERS.

IN ALL OF THESE WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR AND OTHERS' ACTIONS. FOR TOO LONG WE HAVE ALL DANCED TO THE MUSIC IN OUR OWN HEADS AND NOW ARE APPROACHING A MIDNIGHT OF OUR OWN MAKING WHEN THE MUSIC WILL STOP AND ALL MASQUES WILL BE REMOVED.



IMPORTANT NOTICE

M.O.C., BY ITS ANALYSIS AND COMMENTS, HAS CONSISTENTLY TRIED TO MOVE OUR POLITICAL PROCESS IN THE DIRECTION OF BETTER GOVERNMENT.

WE HAVE RECENTLY COME ACROSS A VERY UNUSUAL ORGANIZATION, 10 AMENDMENTS FOR FREEDOM INC., FOUNDED BY WILLIAM FRUTH, WITH A PROGRAM THAT COULD LEAD TO IMPROVEMENT IN THE WAY OUR GOVERNMENT OPERATES.

FRUTH'S PROJECT PROPOSES THAT A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION BE CALLED BY OUR STATES TO ADOPT A PACKAGE OF TEN AMENDMENTS. OUR VIEW IS THAT, WHILE EVERYONE MAY NOT AGREE WITH FRUTH'S INDIVIDUAL SELECTIONS, THEY DO HAVE A BROAD RANGE OF INTEREST, AND THEIR COLLECTIVE EFFECT COULD IMPROVE THE TONE, FUNCTIONING AND STRUCTURE OF OUR GOVERNMENT. THIS IS AN INTERESTING AND AMBITIOUS PROGRAM. WE SUGGEST THAT YOU TAKE A LOOK AND GIVE IT SOME THOUGHT AS A WAY OF EXTRICATING OURSELVES FROM OUR PRESENT PARALYSIS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT FRUTH AT WWW.10AMENDMENTS.ORG OR 10 AMENDMENTS FOR FREEDOM INC., 2740 SW MARTIN DOWNS BLVD #235, PALM CITY, FL 34990. TEL. 772-781-6112

END NOTES

- ¹ PALM BEACH POST, 12/17/09 MAUREEN DOWD. VIA NY TIMES
- ² PALM BEACH POST 11/21/09 TIMOTHY WILLIAMS VIA NY TIMES
- ³ IBID
- ⁴ IBID
- ⁵ FRESH AIR, NATIONAL PUBLIC RADIO, 12/16/09
- ⁶ PALM BEACH POST – 11/6/09
- ⁷ PALM BEACH POST 12/25/09 GEORGE F. WILL VIA WASHINGTON POST
- ⁸ PALM BEACH POST 1/8/10 THOMAS FRIEDMAN VIA NY TIMES
- ⁹ PALM BEACH POST 1/9/10 VIA ASSOCIATED PRESS
- ¹⁰ PALM BEACH POST 1/20/10 VIA LOS ANGELES TIMES
- ¹¹ PALM BEACH POST 1/19/10 VIA POST WIRE SERVICES
- ¹² PUBLISHED 2009 BY AUTHORHOUSE, BLOOMINGTON, IN TEL 1-800-839-8640 WWW.AUTHORHOUSE.COM
- ¹³ UN POPULATION REPORT 2006 VIA NY TIMES 11/18/09 THOMAS FRIEDMAN

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MR. AULT IS RETIRED FROM BUSINESS, A GRADUATE OF YALE UNIVERSITY, AND THE AUTHOR OF A RETAIL FOOD STUDY (LA ROCHE & Co. NYC, NY 1957) WHICH DESCRIBED THE EMERGENCE AND GROWING DOMINANCE OF THE SUPERMARKET IN AMERICAN FOOD RETAILING.

ECD 1/25/10

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