

MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE®

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II WHO ARE WE? AND WHY ARE WE NOT WHO WE WERE?

FOREIGN POLICY VIEWS FROM A CENTURY GONE WRONG, 1914-2014

PREFACE

TO LOOK AT OUR WORLD TODAY AND TO TRY TO COMPREHEND IT WE MUST TRACE, BALANCE AND UNDERSTAND MANY LINES OF CONNECTION THAT ARE SOMETIMES SUBJECT TO OUR CONTROL, AND OTHER TIMES NOT.

TO HOPE TO UNDERSTAND OUR TITLE QUESTIONS FOR THIS SERIES WE MUST VIEW OUR LAST CENTURY AS AN EXERCISE IN GOVERNMENT BY WHICH WE CANNOT HELP BUT BE DISAPPOINTED.

“NEVER AGAIN”

NO MATTER ONE’S AGE, THIS PHRASE, SO OFTEN ISSUED AND REISSUED BY MEMBERS OF CONGRESS, THE MEDIA AND OUR DIPLOMATIC AND DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENTS, IS INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE WHETHER IT REFERS TO WWI (THE WAR TO END ALL WARS), PEARL HARBOR, 9/11 OR THE CONTINUING TERRORIST THREATS MOSTLY POSED AND PRODUCED BY COUNTRIES HOME TO PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM POPULATIONS.

WHEREAS IN THEORY ISLAM CLAIMS TO BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE CHRISTIAN WEST, IN PRACTICE IT PROVIDES A LEGAL, PHILOSOPHIC AND RELIGIOUS PLATFORM FROM WHICH DISAFFECTED EXTREMISTS CAN LAUNCH ATTACKS UPON THEIR CHOSEN TARGETS. THESE ATTACKS MAY TAKE THE FORM OF SUDDEN AND VIOLENT JIHAD AGAINST CIVILIAN OR GOVERNMENT TARGETS; OR LESS VISIBLE AND MORE SUSTAINED FORCE AGAINST COMMERCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, ELECTORAL AND BUREAUCRATIC INSTITUTIONS.

WE MUST VIEW THE PAST CENTURY 1914-2014 IN ITS ENTIRETY, ITS ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FAILURES AND ITS PROMISES AND THREATS. FOR INSTANCE, WE CAN CITE OUR CONTINUING TECHNOLOGICAL SUPERIORITY AS A PROTECTION FOR OURSELVES AND DETERRENT TO OTHERS, BUT IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT WE HAVE NO MONOPOLY ON NEW WEAPONS, TARGETS AND WAYS OF WAGING WAR.

ONLY A CENTURY AGO THE FIRST MOBILE AND ARMORED TANKS BEGAN TO REPLACE HORSE CAVALRY IN THE RITUALIZED

IN THIS ISSUE: WE DEAL WITH OUR PRESENT FOREIGN POLICY WEAKNESS IN THE NEAR EAST.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE: WE WILL CONTINUE TO COMMENT ON THE NEAR EAST AND ON FOREIGN RELATIONS REGARDING AFRICA AND THE ORIENT.

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TRENCH WARFARE OF WWI. AIR WARFARE, TOO, COMMENCED THEN, AND HAS PROGRESSED TO OUR CURRENT NUCLEAR ARMED MISSILE SYSTEMS.

BUT ARE WE SAFER ? TARGETS CHANGE TOO, MOST NOTABLY THE MASS DESTRUCTION OF THE WORLD TRADE CENTER TOWERS IN 2001, AND WE HAVE BEEN BOTH FORTUNATE AND SKILLFUL SINCE THEN IN THWARTING SOME ATTACKS AND APPREHENDING THE PERPETRATORS OF OTHERS. OVER ALL, OUR SECURITY ENFORCEMENT AND DETECTION RECORD HAS BEEN VERY GOOD, AS THERE HAVE BEEN OTHER EFFORTS THAT CANNOT BE PUBLICIZED WITHOUT COMPROMISING ONGOING INVESTIGATIONS.

THE DETROIT “SHOE BOMBER” AND THE 9/11 CONSPIRATORS CREATED A NEW MARKET FOR JIHAD — CIVILIAN AIR TRANSPORT VEHICLES AND FACILITIES — IN RESPONSE TO WHICH OUR POLITICIANS REPLIED IN PREDICTABLE UNISON, “NEVER AGAIN” — FAILING TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT (AT LEAST IN THEIR PUBLIC COMMENTS) THE PROLIFERATION OF TARGETS IN OUR HOMELAND AND THE GROWING EASE AND STEALTH WITH WHICH THEY CAN BE ATTACKED.

WILL THE NEXT ATTACK BE DIRECTED AT AN UNGUARDED NUCLEAR PLANT ? OR POWER STATION OR CHEMICAL PLANT ? WILL IT SEEK TO COMPROMISE OUR EXPOSED ELECTRIC GRID ? TO DISRUPT OUR COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS BY EMP (ELECTROMAGNETIC PULSE) ? TO PUT LARGE POPULATIONS AT RISK BY MEDICAL OR CHEMICAL AGENTS THAT CAN BE SPREAD BY TOUCH OR BY AIR ?

“NEVER AGAIN” ONCE STATED IS ALREADY TOO LATE. THE TRUTH IS THAT WE HAVE A GROWING LIST OF HIGHLY VULNERABLE TARGETS, AND TO OFFER EVEN A MODEST DEGREE OF PROTECTION FOR THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE, TRANSPORTATION AND SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS WOULD REQUIRE THE EXPENDITURE OF MANY BILLIONS OF DOLLARS.

THE UNWILLINGNESS OF BOTH OUR GOVERNMENT AND OUR PRIVATE SECTORS TO FUND THE DEFENSE OF CIVILIAN TARGETS IS IN STARK CONTRAST TO THEIR SEEMINGLY UNLIMITED COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT AND FUND MILITARY AND OTHER “DEFENSE” PROJECTS.

THIS IS A CONTRADICTION THAT CAN HAVE ONLY DISASTROUS CONSEQUENCES. IT IS A VERY CLEAR EXAMPLE OF HOW CONTRADICTIONS CAN BECOME SO ESTABLISHED AS TO TRANSFORM THEMSELVES INTO POLICY.

IN ADDITION TO OUR PORT, PLANT AND POWER SYSTEMS’ VULNERABILITY WE HAVE THE MOST RECENT, AND PERHAPS MOST DIFFICULT, CHALLENGE IN THE VAST CYBER WORLD OCCUPIED AND USED SIMULTANEOUSLY BY INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS AND GOVERNMENT ENTITIES. HERE, THE TECHNOLOGICAL, PRIVACY AND DETECTION CONCERNS ARE SO BROAD THAT THEY

SEEM BEYOND CONGRESSIONAL ATTENTION. BUT THIS IS NOT A MINOR MATTER. IT SHOULD BE PUBLICIZED AND ADDRESSED AS THE SERIOUS AND GROWING ISSUE THAT IT IS, WITH ROLES, COSTS AND CONSEQUENCES IDENTIFIED AND OPINION SOUGHT.

THERE IS NO SHELTER HERE FOR REPUBLICANS OR DEMOCRATS. THEY ARE BLINDED BY IDEOLOGY, SELF-INTEREST AND POLARIZATION. ACCORDINGLY, THEY MORE THAN OTHERS, SHOULD TRY TO ADDRESS “WHO ARE WE? AND WHY ARE WE NOT WHO WE WERE?”

MARE NOSTRUM

THIS TERM, TRANSLATED AS “OUR SEA”, WAS USED BY THE ROMANS TO DESCRIBE WHAT WE HAVE SINCE COME TO CALL THE MEDITERRANEAN. IT STRETCHES EAST FROM ITS NARROW GATEWAY AT GIBRALTAR TO ITS TERMINUS AT THE COAST WHERE SYRIA, JORDAN, ISRAEL, PALESTINE AND LEBANON ENGAGE IN SEEMINGLY ENDLESS CONFLICT.

IT WAS THEN, AND REMAINS STILL, A MOSTLY ENCLOSED SPACE FOR WHICH IN ROMAN TIMES THERE WAS ONLY ONE SOURCE OF ACCESS/EGRESS AND TO WHICH THE SUEZ CANAL WAS ADDED IN THE 19TH CENTURY. ALL OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE MEDITERRANEAN RIM FACE THIS BODY OF WATER WHICH HAS DOMINATED THE TRADE, POLITICS AND WARFARE OF SOUTHERN EUROPE AND NORTHERN AFRICA FROM THE TIMES OF THE GRECO/ROMAN CIVILIZATIONS UNTIL TODAY. TRADE WAS THE COMMERCIAL LIFE BLOOD OF THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD ENGAGED IN BY THE MULTIPLE NATIONS WHOSE TERRITORIES EXTENDED TO ITS SHORES PLUS THOSE DEDICATED MARINERS PORTUGAL AND BRITAIN.

RELIGIOUS WARFARE HAS BEEN CONSTANT IN THE NEAR EAST (NE) FOR CENTURIES — JEWS VS. ROMANS, CHRISTIAN VS. ROMANS AND, COMMENCING IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY, ISLAM VS. CHRISTIANS AND JEWS. AS TIME PASSED AND TECHNOLOGY AND POPULATIONS GREW, THESE INTER-RELIGION CONFLICTS FOR SPIRITUAL SUPERIORITY EXPANDED TO INCLUDE INTERNAL STRUGGLES OVER DOGMA, JURISDICTION AND AUTHORITY.

“BETWEEN THE CALLS OF FAITH AND TRADE
THERE WAS NEVER A SHORTAGE OF
CONFLICT IN MARE NOSTRUM.”

IN THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN THE HOLY LAND HAS PLAYED HOST TO RELIGIOUS WARFARE OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER FOR MOST OF ITS EXISTENCE. AS ISLAM’S QURAN PROCLAIMS EXPANSION BY CONQUEST, WHEN AGGRESSIVE LEADERS HAVE APPEARED, THEY HAVE LED EFFORTS TO BREAK OUT OF THEIR MEDITERRANEAN ORIGINS AND TO

ESTABLISH SPIRITUAL HEGEMONY IN EUROPE AND ASIA. THIS HAS RESULTED IN OCCASIONAL PAN-ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS WHICH SPREAD RAPIDLY AND BROUGHT CONQUESTS OVER CHRISTIANS AND MONGOLS FROM SPAIN EAST TO RUSSIA'S ARAL SEA AND FROM THE TIP OF THE ARABIAN PENINSULA NORTH TO SOUTHERN FRANCE. THE TWO FURTHEST AND MOST THREATENING OF THESE REACHED FRANCE (TOURS) IN 732 AND JUST OUTSIDE VIENNA IN 1687. BETWEEN THE CALLS OF FAITH AND TRADE THERE WAS NEVER A SHORTAGE OF CONFLICT IN MARE NOSTRUM.

"ISLAM IS AN ENORMOUS
PRESENCE IN OUR WORLD !"

WHILE THE WESTERN WORLD DOMINATED THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL HEADLINES OF THE LAST THREE CENTURIES, ISLAMIC FAITH AND POWER CONTINUED TO GRADUALLY EXPAND. TODAY IT PREVAILS IN ALL OF NORTHERN AFRICA SOUTH ALMOST TO THE EQUATOR; EXTENDS NORTHEAST THROUGH THE NE TO KAZAKHSTAN (RUSSIA) AND SINKIANG PROVINCE (CHINA); AND FURTHER EAST TO INCLUDE THE HIGHLY POPULATED, MULTIPLE ISLANDS OF INDONESIA AND THE PHILIPPINES. ISLAM IS AN ENORMOUS PRESENCE IN OUR WORLD !

THE NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, FOLLOWING OUR DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE (1776) AND VICTORY IN OUR REVOLUTIONARY WAR (1783), AND BEFORE THE WRITING OF OUR CONSTITUTION, THE FLEDGLING AMERICAN NATION FOUND ITSELF WITH NO MONEY, FORMAL GOVERNMENT OR NAVY WITH WHICH IT COULD ESTABLISH PARITY WITH THE OLDER, STRONGER AND ESTABLISHED NATIONS OF EUROPE.

HAVING BOTH AGRICULTURAL AND MANUFACTURED PRODUCTS AVAILABLE FOR EXPORT, WE SENT A SERIES OF UNARMED TRADING VESSELS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN TO COMPETE WITH THOSE WHO HAD DOMINATED ITS TRADE ROUTES FOR CENTURIES.

OUR EFFORTS WERE UNDERSTANDABLY MET WITH LESS THAN GRACIOUS ACCEPTANCE BY THE SETTLED TRADING COMMUNITY WHICH ATTACKED OUR SHIPS AND CAPTURED THEIR CREWS AND CARGOES. SHIPS COULD BE REFLAGGED, CARGOES COULD BE SOLD AND CREWS EITHER IMPRESSED FOR FORCED SERVICE OR SOLD TO RULERS OF NORTH AFRICAN COUNTRIES AS SLAVE LABOR.

THIS BECAME AN INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT COMMERCIAL AND DIPLOMATIC PROBLEM FOR YOUNG AMERICA. OUR WARTIME BENEFACTOR, THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, ATTEMPTED TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE, BUT HIS EFFORTS WERE MARGINALIZED BY POWERFUL FRENCH COMMERCIAL INTERESTS AND OVER TIME HIS POLITICAL STATUS WAS GREATLY DIMINISHED BY FRANCE'S REVOLUTION. OUR EFFORTS AT THE DIPLOMATIC LEVEL YIELDED MOSTLY CONVERSATIONAL BENEFITS WHICH DID NOT TRAVEL WELL AND GENERALLY FAILED TO PRODUCE A MEANINGFUL CHANGE OF BEHAVIOR AT SEA.

THE NEWLY BORN AMERICAN NATION FACED ITS FIRST MAJOR FOREIGN RELATIONS CRISIS. HOW TO DEAL WITH THE PIRATES THAT OPERATED FROM THE FOUR BARBARY STATES OF THE RIM OF NORTH AFRICA — MOROCCO, ALGIERS, TUNIS AND WHAT WAS THEN KNOWN AS TRIPOLI, BUT WHICH WE CALL LIBYA TODAY ? THEY STRETCHED IN AN UNBROKEN COASTAL LINE

FROM THE ATLANTIC OCEAN TO EGYPT'S WESTERN BORDER AND THEIR RELIGION WAS PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM.

THESE STATES WERE REMNANTS OF THE GREAT OTTOMAN EMPIRE WITH ITS CAPITAL AT CONSTANTINOPLE THAT HAD EXTENDED FROM IRAN TO THE ATLANTIC OCEAN AT THE SOUTHWESTERN TERMINUS OF MOROCCO'S BORDER. THEY WERE RULED BY LOCAL LEADERS WHO MADE ANNUAL TRIBUTE PAYMENTS TO THE OTTOMAN CALIPH; AND THEIR ECONOMIC MODEL WAS A SIMPLE, BUT SUCCESSFUL, ONE, AS THEY PROFITED FROM THEIR RAIDS ON COMMERCIAL VESSELS THAT ENTERED THEIR WATERS AND AT THE SAME TIME RECEIVED "PROTECTION" PAYMENTS FROM SOME EUROPEAN NATIONS NOT TO ATTACK THEIR SHIPS.

FROM 1785 WHEN TWO AMERICAN SHIPS WERE CAPTURED UNTIL 1815 WHEN WE SIGNED A TREATY THAT PROVIDED SECURITY FOR OUR MERCHANT SHIPS FROM ATTACKS BY BARBARY PIRATES, WE HAD TO THREAD OUR WAY THROUGH A MAZE OF COMMERCIAL, DIPLOMATIC AND FINANCIAL CONFRONTATIONS WITH BOTH EUROPEAN AND NORTH AFRICAN STATES. THESE RANGED FROM COMIC OPERA TO TRAGIC, BUT WE WERE ABLE TO SURVIVE AND ENDURE, PRIMARILY BECAUSE THOMAS JEFFERSON, AS SECRETARY OF STATE PRIOR TO HIS PRESIDENCY, CONVINCED CONGRESS THAT AMERICA NEEDED TO BUILD AND DEPLOY WARSHIPS TO PROTECT ITS TRADE ROUTES.

THEN AND NOW — 200 YEARS LATER

FOREIGN RELATIONS AMONG NATIONS ARE UNIQUE IN SOME WAYS. THE FIRST IS THAT, NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME, MONEY AND TECHNOLOGY WE APPLY TO THEM, THEY CAN REAPPEAR AT SOME LATER TIME AND CIRCUMSTANCE IN THEIR ORIGINAL, OR NEARLY ORIGINAL FORM.

THE SECOND, WHICH ALSO APPLIES TO ALL PARTIES, IS THAT NEW LABELS CANNOT CONCEAL OLD WOUNDS ROOTED IN TRIBAL, CULTURAL AND ETHNIC HISTORIES.

AND THE THIRD HAS BEEN THE FAILURE OF OUR DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL ENDEAVORS TO ACHIEVE A MEANINGFUL PRACTICE OF PEACE THAT CAN REPLACE THE USE OF VIOLENCE TO SETTLE DISPUTES. NOWHERE IS THIS MORE EVIDENT THAN IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATIONS WHERE TECHNOLOGY'S COMPRESSION OF THE TIME BETWEEN CHALLENGE AND RESPONSE ROBS BOTH SIDES OF A USEFUL ELEMENT.

THIS, OF COURSE, CAN WORK BOTH WAYS. IN OUR BARBARY COAST NEGOTIATIONS ONE OF OUR NEGOTIATORS, FACING A CLAIM FOR OVER A MILLION DOLLARS TO FREE SOME U.S. CAPTIVES, REPLIED THAT HE WOULD SUBMIT THE DEMAND TO WASHINGTON AND RETURN WITH AN ANSWER IN SIX MONTHS. SHIP TRAVEL WAS SLOW, CONGRESS WAS NOT IN SESSION FOR MOST OF THE YEAR AND DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW HAD TO BE HEARD AND RESOLVED. UNFORTUNATELY, THE SLOW PACE, WHICH TENDED TO COOL TEMPER AND MODERATE ACTION, WORKED AGAINST AMERICAN PRISONERS WHO WERE TREATED HARSHLY BY THEIR MUSLIM CAPTORS. UNEXPECTED BY BOTH PARTIES, SOME AMERICAN CAPTIVES FOUND THAT THEIR PERIODS OF FORCED LABOR AND INCARCERATION EXTENDED TO OVER TEN YEARS DURING WHICH TIME THEY WERE DENIED EVEN THE MOST BASIC ELEMENTS OF CLOTHING, SHELTER AND NUTRITION AND WERE SUBJECTED TO VARIOUS FORMS OF PHYSICAL ABUSE AND TORTURE.

TWO HUNDRED YEARS LATER, AMERICA FINDS ITSELF REVISITING SOME OF THE SAME MEDITERRANEAN ISSUES IT FACED IN ITS INFANCY. WE ARE AGAIN ENGAGED IN CONFLICT WITH MULTIPLE MUSLIM POPULATIONS — THIS TIME MORE TOWARDS THE EAST, BUT LIBYA HAS MANAGED TO BRIDGE BOTH TIME PERIODS AND ITS NORTH RIM NEIGHBORS MOROCCO, ALGIERS AND TUNISIA ALL HAVE VOLATILE MUSLIM POPULATIONS WHICH HAVE PRODUCED VIOLENT REVOLTS IN THE LAST HALF-CENTURY.

THE PROXIMITY OF THESE PEOPLES TO THE “SOFT UNDERBELLY OF EUROPE”¹ HAS DIRECTED THE GREATER PART OF THEIR POPULATION AND RELIGIOUS FORCE AGAINST THOSE NATIONS THAT FORM THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF EUROPE AND/OR HAVE HAD PRIOR COLONIAL POSSESSIONS IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES.

LOOKING AT THE NORTH AFRICAN AND NE MAPS WITH THEIR MANY COUNTRIES AND BORDERS, IT IS TEMPTING TO RECALL TIP O’NEILL’S PRONOUNCEMENT THAT “ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL”², BUT THE BOUNDARIES DRAWN BY THE GREAT POWERS FOLLOWING WWI ALWAYS LACKED AUTHENTICITY. THEY HAVE BEEN MOSTLY DYSFUNCTIONAL FOR TWO GENERATIONS AND HAVE NOW BEEN BLOWN AWAY BY THE CURRENT WARFARE.

O’NEILL’S COMMENT FITS A SURPRISINGLY BROAD RANGE OF POLITICAL CIRCUMSTANCES, BUT THE PRESENT RISE OF ISLAMIC TERROR IS NOT ONE OF THEM. EXTREMIST ISLAM IS FIRST, LAST AND ALWAYS A RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT. WITH LITTLE DIFFERENTIATION, IT WILL ELIMINATE WHATEVER POLITICAL, CULTURAL OR RELIGIOUS FORMS IT FINDS IN ITS WAY AND WILL REPLACE THEM WITH VERSIONS DERIVED FROM ISLAMIC SCRIPTURE, TRADITION AND LAW. AND WE MUST BEAR IN MIND THAT IN THE MILITANT MUSLIM MOVEMENT THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.

THERE IS AN EERIE REPLAY TODAY OF WHAT TOOK PLACE TWO CENTURIES AGO. THE FORCES OF THE NEWLY DECLARED ISLAMIC STATE (IS), NOW RAGING THROUGH SYRIA AND IRAQ, GIVE THE OCCUPANTS OF THE AREAS THEY OVERRUN A STARK CHOICE — CONVERT, FLEE OR DIE.

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FEW THINGS DON’T CHANGE; MOST DO, ESPECIALLY OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS ‘THOUGH THERE IS ONE NOTABLE EXCEPTION — THE MONROE DOCTRINE ISSUED BY PRESIDENT JAMES MONROE IN 1823.

EVEN THIS EARLY IN OUR REPUBLIC’S EXISTENCE THE GREATER PART OF OUR ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ENERGY WAS FOCUSED ON OUR WESTERN FRONTIER AND WOULD REMAIN THERE UNTIL AZ ACHIEVED STATEHOOD (1912) AND WWI BROKE OUT IN EUROPE IN 1914. FOLLOWING OUR WAR OF 1812 WITH ENGLAND, THE MONROE DOCTRINE SERVED AS A “BEWARE OF THE DOG” SIGN POSTED ON OUR ATLANTIC FENCE. THIS MOVE, WHICH EFFECTIVELY PROCLAIMED AMERICAN HEGEMONY IN OUR HEMISPHERE, WAS A BRAVE ONE. NONE OF THE EUROPEAN POWERS KNEW WHAT, IF ANY, MEASURES WE COULD OR WOULD TAKE TO ENFORCE IT, BUT IT HAS SURVIVED MOSTLY UNCHALLENGED AS A CORNERSTONE OF US FOREIGN RELATIONS INTO OUR PRESENT TIME.

OUR PROTECTION FROM FOREIGN INTRUSION WAS AIDED BY THE 19TH CENTURY’S EXPLOSION OF COLONIAL EXPANSION BY THE EUROPEAN POWERS. PUSHED BY TRADE AND INDUSTRIALIZATION, THEY SOUGHT RESOURCES, WEALTH

AND MARKETS IN AFRICA, INDIA AND ASIA WHERE LAND AND LABOR WERE BOTH ABUNDANT AND CHEAP.

IN THE PROCESS, TERRITORIAL ANOMALIES WERE CREATED, MOST NOTABLY, PERHAPS, TINY BELGIUM’S CONTROL OVER ONE OF AFRICA’S LARGEST AREAS, FORMERLY THE BELGIAN CONGO, NOW THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO. ALTHOUGH WE MOSTLY AVOIDED THE TEMPTATION, WE DID EMERGE FROM THE SPANISH AMERICAN WAR WITH THE PHILIPPINES AND PUERTO RICO IN TOW, AND WE FURTHERED THE CAUSE OF WORLD TRADE IMMENSELY BY CONSTRUCTION OF THE PANAMA CANAL.

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COMMENCING IMMEDIATELY IN THE 20TH CENTURY OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS WORLD EXPERIENCED SOME MAJOR CHANGES. IN THE LATER YEARS OF THE 19TH CENTURY WE HAD YIELDED TO THE ATTRACTIONS OF GLOBAL POWER AND HAD UNDERTAKEN A VIGOROUS NAVAL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM WHICH ALLOWED PRES. T. ROOSEVELT TO SEND “OUR GREAT WHITE FLEET” AROUND THE WORLD TO DISPLAY OUR CREDENTIALS AND LEAVE OUR “CALLING CARD”. OUR MESSAGE OF GLOBAL POWER AND AUTHORITY WAS STRONGLY, BUT PEACEFULLY, DELIVERED AND CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD.

STILL EARLY IN THE CENTURY, OUR ROLE IN WWI WAS BRIEF, BUT DECISIVE, AND EXPANDED OUR GLOBAL INFLUENCE. PRIOR TO WWI, IN 1913, A MAJOR FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT HAD TAKEN PLACE AT HOME THAT WOULD ALTER OUR CONDUCT OF FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS. WE INSTALLED OUR INCOME TAX WHICH, WHILE MODEST AT FIRST, WOULD EXPAND IN ITS RATE AND REACH.

BEFORE PASSAGE OF THIS TAX, OUR GOVERNMENT HAD BEEN FUNDED BY TARIFFS LEVIED AGAINST OUR TRADE IMPORTS. AS ALL COUNTRIES ENGAGED IN THIS PRACTICE, FOREIGN AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS WERE JOINED, AND THE IMPOSITION OR RELAXATION OF TARIFFS WAS AN ACCEPTED METHOD OF EXPRESSING FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTION.

THEY MAINTAINED THEIR SIGNIFICANT PRESENCE UNTIL WWII AND, INDEED, ONE SUCH TARIFF (I.E., SMOOT-HAWLEY) HAS BEEN CREDITED BY SOME ECONOMISTS AS BEARING PARTIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR GREAT DEPRESSION. WITH THIS IN MIND, AND THE LOSS OF ECONOMIC AND PRODUCTION ASSETS IN MANY COUNTRIES DURING WWII, POSTWAR EFFORTS WERE MADE BY THE UN AND BY INDIVIDUAL TRADING RELATIONSHIPS TO REDUCE AND/OR ELIMINATE TARIFFS AND CREATE AN ERA AND AURA OF FREE TRADE. SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, BUT THERE ARE POCKETS OF RESISTANCE AROUND THE WORLD WHERE LOCAL POLITICS, CULTURES AND LIVELIHOODS HAVE PREVAILED.

CURIOSLY, AS WEAPONS AND THEIR DELIVERY SYSTEMS EXPAND THEIR DESTRUCTIVE POWER, SPEED AND EASE OF DELIVERY, ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AND OTHER TRADE RELATED METHODS MAY OFFER WAYS TO BRING FOREIGN POLICY BACK FROM THE BRINK. THE PRESENT CONFRONTATION WITH RUSSIA OVER ITS ACTIONS IN UKRAINE OFFERS A CLEAR VIEW OF HOW DISCIPLINE MAY BE APPLIED WITHOUT RESORT TO ARMS. EUROPE’S COMMITMENT HAS BEEN SOMEWHAT LESS THAN OURS AND RESULTS ARE NOT IMMEDIATE, BUT MOUNTING A STRONG, COMMON EFFORT MIGHT PROVIDE A USEFUL TEST OF THE POWER OF CONCERTED ECONOMIC ACTION TO THWART MILITARY/POLITICAL AGGRESSION.

THIS, HOWEVER, IS A SLOW AND LESS SPECTACULAR WAY TO FORESTALL LAWLESS EFFORTS BY ONE NATION AGAINST OTHERS. NOT ONLY DOES IT LACK THE “PUNCH” AND MEDIA COVERAGE OF VIOLENT METHODS, BUT IT ALSO INVITES RETALIATION SO THAT THE ECONOMIES AND POPULATIONS OF BOTH SIDES ARE PENALIZED.

THERE ARE OTHER VERY SIGNIFICANT SOCIETAL FACTORS AT WORK IN OUR CONDUCT OF EMERGING 21ST CENTURY FOREIGN RELATIONS THAT CHALLENGE US IN WAYS PECULIAR TO OUR COUNTRY. FOR MOST OF ITS HISTORY, THROUGH WWII AND THE 1950S, AMERICA WAS PRIMARILY A HOMOGENEOUS SOCIETY. WE HAD POLITICAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN REPUBLICANS/DEMOCRATS, BLACKS/WHITES, URBAN/RURAL, INDUSTRIAL/AGRARIAN INTERESTS, BUT THESE WERE OVERSHADOWED BY THE UNITY CREATED BY THE LARGER NATIONAL MOMENTUM THAT GREW OUT OF OUR 19TH CENTURY WESTWARD EXPANSION, OUR PARTICIPATION IN TWO WORLD WARS, THE JUBILATION OF THE 1920S AND THE PAIN OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

HOWEVER, IN RESPONSE TO THE NEW POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FORCES THAT RESULTED FROM WWII, AMERICA CHANGED ITSELF IN CONCEPT AND CONSCIENCE AND BECAME A VERY DIFFERENT PLACE. THERE WERE ADDITIONAL FORCES, OTHER THAN OUR INTERNAL ONES, THAT PUSHED US TO NEW ACHIEVEMENTS, MOST NOTABLY THE CONTINUING TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS BY WHICH THE WORLD’S ECONOMIES WERE CHANGED, WEALTH AND COMFORT INCREASED AND LIVES WERE TRANSFORMED.

THESE WERE MACRO-FORCES THAT, ONCE UNLEASHED, STIRRED GLOBAL POLITICALS WITHOUT REGARD TO LOCAL PREFERENCES OR TIES TO PAST PRACTICES AND WHICH, TO ITS CREDIT, THE UN HAS ADDRESSED WITH SOME SUCCESS.

THE LATTER HAS BEEN ONE OF THE ENIGMAS OF OUR TIME, A KIND OF RUBIK’S CUBE OF POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY. CREATED IN THE WARM AFTERGLOW OF THE ALLIED VICTORY IN WWII, IT WAS SUPPOSED TO PROVIDE A DEMOCRATIC FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH PEACE COULD BE NURTURED AND ENABLED TO SURVIVE. BUT INSTEAD, WE FOUND THE POWERFUL SECURITY COUNCIL ALMOST EVENLY DIVIDED BETWEEN TOTALITARIAN AND FREE IDEOLOGIES AND DENIED MAJORITY RULE BY THE EXERCISE OF ITS VETO POWER.

THE RESULT WAS THE COLD WAR — A LONG AND CONSTANT GLOBAL CONFRONTATION BETWEEN COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY FOUGHT MOSTLY BY PROXY WARS IN UNDEVELOPED COUNTRIES AND/OR FORMERLY COLONIAL POSSESSIONS SUDDENLY PUSHED TO CAST THEIR LOT WITH EITHER MARXISM OR DEMOCRACY. THE FRUIT THAT FELL FROM THIS SHAKING OF COLONIAL TREES EMERGED AS THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES WHICH READILY OBTAINED UN MEMBERSHIP.

THIS TRANSFORMATION HAD NOT BEEN ANTICIPATED AT THE TIME OF THE UN’S FOUNDING AND BOTH SIDES OF THE COLD WAR CONFLICT PLIED THESE NEW MEMBERS WITH ARMS, LOANS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS TO SECURE THEIR COOPERATION AND VOTES IN THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SECURITY COUNCIL.

NEW STATES, IT TURNED OUT, CREATED NEW LINES OF DIVISION. THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THEM WERE LOCATED IN AFRICA, THE NE AND SOUTHEAST ASIA WHERE ISLAM WAS THE DOMINANT RELIGION. THIS REFLECTION OF ISLAM’S SPIRITUAL DOMINANCE IN THE UN’S POLITICS WAS NOT ONLY UNEXPECTED AT ITS INCEPTION, BUT CREATED FISSURES TO WHICH OTHER

CAUSES AND CHALLENGES COULD ATTACH THEMSELVES SO THAT THE LARGELY MUSLIM THIRD WORLD BECAME A DISTINCT VOTING BLOCK ON MANY MATTERS. THIS WAS NOT “THE HAND” WE HAD ENVISIONED, BUT WAS THE ONE THAT WE FACED AND HAD TO “PLAY”.

DURING THE COURSE OF FOUNDING AND PROMOTING THE UN, RINGING RHETORIC WAS USED BY BOTH COMMUNIST AND FREE WORLD SUPPORTERS WHICH SPREAD BEYOND THE CONFINES OF ITS CHAMBERS IN NYC TO MANY DIFFERENT PARTS AND PEOPLE OF THE WORLD.

WE TOOK OUR TASK SERIOUSLY, BUT FAILED TO EXERT THE FULL FORCE OF OUR POSTWAR STATUS IN THE WRITING OF THE UN CHARTER. WE WERE INTENT ON BEING SEEN AS UNFAILINGLY COOPERATIVE, MAGNANIMOUS AND DEMOCRATIC IN OUR DEALINGS WITH OTHER NATIONS AND, HAVING “TALKED THE TALK” AT UN PLAZA WE ALSO HAD TO “WALK THE WALK” IN OUR DOMESTIC POLICIES.

WITH THE COMBINATION OF WORLDWIDE MEDIA, MILITARY AND MARKETING OUTREACH UNDERTAKEN BY US AT THE UN AND THROUGH REGIONAL ALLIANCES, THE BOOMERANG EFFECT AT HOME COULD NOT BE AVOIDED. OTHERS TOOK FULL ADVANTAGE OF WHAT OUR CONSTITUTION AND BILL OF RIGHTS HAD PROMISED TO AMERICAN CITIZENS, AND WE HONORED THEIR CLAIMS, OFTEN WITHOUT REASON OR RESPONSIBILITY, TO PROVE OUR CREDENTIALS FOR WORLD LEADERSHIP AT PEACE AS IN WAR.

THE TROUBLE WAS WE COULD NOT SATISFY EVERYONE AND WE CONSTRUCTED FOR OURSELVES AN IMPOSSIBLE ARGUMENT DESIGNED TO DELIVER UNITY AT UN PLAZA AND DIVERSITY FOR DIVERSITY’S SAKE WITHIN OUR OWN NATION. WE CHOPPED OURSELVES UP INTO MANY AND INCREASINGLY SMALLER PIECES, DISTORTING OUR TRADITIONS AND IDENTITIES WITH EQUAL DISREGARD. THIS COULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED IN AN EARLIER TIME, AS IT REQUIRED THE GREATLY EXTENDED MEDIA REACH MADE POSSIBLE BY 24 HOUR SATURATION EXPOSURE TO PRINT, RADIO AND TELEVISION IN THE POSTWAR GENERATION. IT WAS THROUGH THESE INSTRUMENTS THAT OUR POLITICAL SLICING AND DICING WAS PRESENTED TO OUR PEOPLE.

“BY VOICE WE COURTED UNITY ABROAD WHILE OUR ACTIONS DISCOURAGED IT AT HOME.”

THE TALK, OF COURSE, WAS OF PEACE, BUT IT WAS IN SHORT SUPPLY. FIRST, THERE WAS THE KOREAN WAR; THEN VIETNAM, INTERVENTIONS IN HONDURAS, NICARAGUA, GRENADA, NUMEROUS PROXY CONFLICTS IN AFRICA, AND SUBSEQUENT VARSITY EFFORTS IN IRAQ, KUWAIT, AFGHANISTAN AND LIBYA. THERE WERE 20TH CENTURY VOICES WHO OCCASIONALLY REFERRED TO THE POSTWAR WORLD AS A PAX AMERICANA, BUT IT DIDN’T ALWAYS READ THAT WAY. THE IRONY IS THE SAME IN BOTH THE UN AND OUR DOMESTIC POLITICS. BY VOICE WE COURTED UNITY ABROAD WHILE OUR ACTIONS DISCOURAGED IT AT HOME.

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WE HAVE ARRIVED AT WHERE WE ARE AS THE RESULT OF A COMBINATION OF MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND MISTAKES. UNFORTUNATELY, IN HISTORY ONE DOESN’T JUST CANCEL OUT

THE OTHER. THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES, POWERFUL ONES, THAT CAN LINGER FOR YEARS, DECADES OR CENTURIES. THEY HAVE THE POWER TO UNIFY OR DIVIDE US, DEPENDING UPON HOW GOVERNMENT PERCEIVES AND RESPONDS TO THEM.

AN INTERESTING EXAMPLE IS FOUND IN OUR RESPONSE TO THE TWO GREATEST ISSUES OF OUR 19TH CENTURY — SLAVERY AND WESTWARD EXPANSION. EACH WAS DIFFICULT IN ITS OWN WAY AND BOTH HAD CULTURAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ELEMENTS. SLAVERY HAD SUCH A CUTTING EDGE THAT ITS DIVISIVENESS AND PERILS INCREASED WITH EVERY ATTEMPT TO RESOLVE IT UNTIL WAR RESULTED JUST BEYOND THE MID-CENTURY DATE.

QUITE TO THE CONTRARY, WE MAINTAINED OUR WESTERN EXPANSION THROUGHOUT THE FULL CENTURY READILY BESTOWING ON IT THE STATUS OF NATIONAL PURPOSE. IT CREATED INSTANT BONDS BETWEEN ALL WHO PARTICIPATED, THOSE WHO SETTLED IN COMMUNITIES ALONG THE WAY, THE PRESS WHOSE FUNCTION WAS TO RECORD THE HISTORY BEING MADE AND THE POLITICIANS WHO SAW ITS CELEBRATION AS A WAY TO ADD TO THEIR GROWTH AND POWER.

NO UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT AMERICA IS TODAY IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THE MAGNETIC POWER OF OUR WESTERN EXPANSION TO ATTRACT AND GATHER TOGETHER THE MANY ASPECTS OF OUR EMERGING NATIONAL IDENTITY DURING THE BITTERNESS OF OUR CIVIL WAR AND THE RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD THAT FOLLOWED IT.

THIS VERY REAL SENSE OF NATIONAL PURPOSE CONTINUED TO FORM OUR CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE OUR DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN RELATIONS UNTIL WE CHOSE TO REPLACE IT IN THE MID-TWENTIETH CENTURY'S POSTWAR PEACE EXHILARATION.

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AS ALWAYS, TECHNOLOGY WAS A KEY FACTOR. WWI INTRODUCED NEW WEAPONS WITH DESTRUCTIVE POWER THAT COULD INSTANTLY DESTROY ENEMY EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL ON LAND OR AT SEA. THIS WAS A MAJOR DEPARTURE FROM PREVIOUS EUROPEAN WARS AND WAS FOLLOWED, WHEN THE DUST HAD SETTLED, BY THE CULTURE SHOCK OF THE COLLAPSE OF THE RUSSIAN, OTTOMAN AND AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRES. THIS PROCESS WAS MAGNIFIED AND REPEATED IN WWII WHICH ENDED WITH AMERICA'S FINGER ON THE ATOMIC TRIGGER.

LOOKING AHEAD FROM THE DECK OF THE BATTLESHIP MISSOURI TOWARDS THE CENTURY'S SECOND HALF, NOTHING WOULD BE THE SAME. GOVERNMENTS HAD TOPPLED, BORDERS HAD BEEN ERASED, ECONOMIES DESTROYED, COLONIES SEVERED, MAPS REDRAWN, ETHNIC/TRIBAL CONFLICTS UNLEASHED AND THE MULTIPLE MONARCHIES BUILT ON MARRIAGE AND HEREDITY THAT STRETCHED FROM VLADIVOSTOK TO GIBRALTAR HAD BEEN DEALT A DEATH BLOW.

THE OLD ORDER, WITH ITS ELABORATE THEATRE OF CORONATIONS, COSTUMES, PALACES, CHRISTENINGS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS, WAS NO MORE; IT WAS DISPATCHED BY A WAR THAT CLAIMED 60 MILLION LIVES, THAT ENTHRONED SELF-DETERMINATION AND YET IN REALITY OFTEN CAME TO NARROW THAT CHOICE TO ONE BETWEEN COMMUNISM AND DEMOCRACY.

WHILE AMERICA'S HOMELAND WAS UNSCATHED BY BATTLE, ITS CULTURE WAS CHANGED ALMOST AS MUCH AS THOSE OF ITS EUROPEAN ALLIES. IN THE 1914-45 HISTORICAL MOMENT, WE CHANGED FROM HAVING BECOME A NEWLY POWERFUL

NATION TO THE WORLD'S SOLE NUCLEAR SUPERPOWER AND PUT IN PLACE A STRONG CONTRADICTION THAT STILL PLAGUES US.

“ . . . WE ARE STRONGLY AND HISTORICALLY UNSUITED BY BOTH THE MOOD AND LANGUAGE OF OUR CONSTITUTION.”

GIVEN THE WAR'S EXTENSIVE DECIMATION FROM WHICH ONLY THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE WAS SPARED, IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT WE BE ASSIGNED THE ROLE OF THE WORLD'S POLICEMAN. ON ONE HAND, POWERFUL POLITICAL, MILITARY AND ECONOMIC CONSTITUENCIES, ADDICTED TO POWER AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL, RELISHED THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND AND EXERCISE THEIR WARTIME AUTHORITY IN PEACETIME. BUT ANOTHER EQUALLY IMPORTANT SEGMENT OF OUR POPULATION SAW THIS CHANGE IN OUR CULTURE AS SOMETHING TO WHICH WE ARE STRONGLY AND HISTORICALLY UNSUITED BY BOTH THE MOOD AND LANGUAGE OF OUR CONSTITUTION.

THE END RESULT WAS THAT THROUGHOUT THE POSTWAR PERIOD DIFFERENT ADMINISTRATIONS RESPONDED IN DIFFERENT WAYS TO FOREIGN RELATIONS CRISES. OVER TIME, OUR PRESIDENTS AND CONGRESS ATTEMPTED TO RESOLVE THIS DILEMMA BY REDEFINING THE LANGUAGE RELATING TO THEIR SUPERPOWER CHOICES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, BUT SUCH TWEAKING AT THE EDGES COULD NOT RESOLVE THE DIFFERENCES AT THE HEART OF THIS FUNDAMENTAL MATTER.

THIS CONTRADICTION LED TO SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR GOVERNMENT. HAVING BROUGHT THE ERA OF POLITICAL POLLING INTO FULL FLOWER, OUR POLITICIANS INCREASINGLY CAST THEIR VOTES WITH THEIR DECIDING MECHANISMS TUNED TO MESSAGES FROM THREE DIFFERENT SOURCES — THE VOTER, THE POLLSTER AND THE LOBBYIST.

THE (TOO?) NEAR EAST

SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN POLICY DEMANDS BOTH FORCE AND CLARITY, BUT EVEN, AS IN THE CASE OF OUR INVASION OF IRAQ, THEY MUST ALSO BE JOINED BY AN ELEMENT OF TRUTH WHICH WAS ABSENT IN THE BUSH-RUMSFELD-RICE-CHENEY-WOLFOWITZ NEOCON SCENARIO. WE ARE ON FULL DISPLAY AROUND THE WORLD AND SUBJECT TO SCRUTINY BY THE UBIQUITOUS MEDIA STRUCTURE WHICH WE AND OTHERS HAVE BUILT AND NOURISHED. OTHERS KNOW MUCH OF WHAT WE DO AND HOPE TO DO. PRIVACY IS A REMNANT OF THE PAST.

JUST AS OUR FOREIGN POLICY IS NOW HAMPERED BY HESITANCY IN OUR EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES, IT ALSO SUFFERS FROM THAT OTHER CULTURAL LEGACY OF THE POSTWAR PERIOD — OUR TRANSFORMATION IN FULL VIEW OF THE WORLD FROM CHIEF CREDITOR TO ITS LARGEST DEBTOR. OUR NATIONAL DEBT OF NEARLY \$18 TRILLION IS ANOTHER ISSUE THAT DEEPLY DIVIDES THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. IT WAS ESTABLISHED, LEGISLATED AND EMBRACED BY EVERY PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS FROM REAGAN TO THE PRESENT AND HAS INCREASED SO MUCH THAT NEITHER POLITICAL PARTY IS ABLE TO FORMULATE A REPAIR PROGRAM THAT APPEARS POLITICALLY FEASIBLE. DEBT BEGETS DEBT, AND OUR BORROWING MECHANISM SEEMS TO HAVE BECOME AN ACCEPTED AND POPULAR TOOL IN THE HANDS OF OUR ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES.

AMERICA HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN FINANCIALLY PROFLIGATE; INDEED, ITS EARLY COLONISTS WERE KNOWN FOR

THEIR PRUDENT AND CONSCIENTIOUS ATTENTION TO PUBLIC SPENDING, AND EVEN AS RECENTLY AS WWII WE REPAID OUR THEN RECORD WARTIME DEBT LOAD WITHIN A DECADE. TODAY, IT IS NO SECRET TO THOSE WITH WHOM WE MUST NEGOTIATE THAT OUR POLICIES AND POSSIBLE ACTIONS ARE LIMITED BY OUR FINANCIAL STATUS. THIS IS NOT A GOOD POSITION FOR US TO BE IN, BUT THERE IS LITTLE CHANCE THAT IT WILL CHANGE.

“ . . . WE CANNOT PROVIDE FUNDS FOR ALL PURPOSES AND WE CANNOT BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE. ”

THE POSTWAR WORLD HAS SHOWERED AMERICA WITH ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE WEALTH AND POWER WHICH HAVE DIVIDED RATHER THAN UNITED US. AND UNTIL WE CAN HEAL THESE DIVISIONS, THEY WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES AT HOME AND ABROAD. MEANWHILE WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT WE CANNOT PROVIDE FUNDS FOR ALL PURPOSES AND WE CANNOT BE ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE.

APPROXIMATELY TWO CENTURIES AFTER OUR FIRST FORAY INTO THE WORLD OF MEDITERRANEAN TRADE AND DIPLOMATIC CONTROVERSY WE FIND OURSELVES IN CONFLICT OVER MANY ISSUES OF POLITICAL, CULTURAL, SPIRITUAL, ECONOMIC, GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL ORIGIN. BUT, OF COURSE, WHILE MANY OF THESE PROBLEMS GO BACK FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS (I.E., ISLAM) WITHOUT CHANGE, OUR CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE CHANGED DRASTICALLY.

THESE TWO RECENT DOMESTIC CIRCUMSTANCES, OUR UNCONTROLLED SPENDING/DEBT AND THE POLITICAL UNCERTAINTY POSED BY OUR DEEPLY DIVIDED GOVERNMENT AND ELECTORATE, REQUIRE THE PRESIDENT TO CAST A WARY EYE OVER HIS SHOULDER TO GAUGE HIS SUPPORT AND STANDING.

TODAY, OUR PRIMARY CHALLENGE AND FOCUS IS IN THE NE WHERE EVERY ASPECT OF FOREIGN POLICY PLAYS OUT DAILY. IT CAN BE ARGUED THAT THE RUSSIA VS. WESTERN EUROPE CRISIS IN THE UKRAINE IS NOW OF EQUAL OR GREATER IMPORTANCE AND, INDEED, IT MAY TURN OUT THAT WAY. THE NE NOW “HAS EVERYTHING” THAT HEADLINES DEMAND, BUT THE AGE-OLD RUSSIAN/EUROPEAN CONFLICT IS FUELED AND READY TO ROLL AGAIN WITH AN EVEN GREATER POTENTIAL FOR GLOBAL DESTABILIZATION.

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WITH THE DEMISE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE FOLLOWING WWI SOME KIND OF POLITICAL ORDER HAD TO BE APPLIED TO THE VARIOUS ECONOMIC, TERRITORIAL, TRIBAL, POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS THAT HAD CO-EXISTED UNDER THE OTTOMAN CALIPHATE.

IN VERSAILLES THE VICTORIOUS ALLIES DREW NEW LINES ON OLD MAPS, MISTAKENLY ASSUMING THE VARIOUS IDENTITIES AFFECTED WOULD ADJUST THEIR LIVES, BELIEFS AND EMOTIONS ACCORDINGLY.

IT DID NOT WORK THAT WAY. MANY OF THE NEWLY FORMED COUNTRIES WERE BACKWATERS FROM WHICH THE EUROPEAN POWERS WERE CONTENT TO EXTRACT NATURAL RESOURCES WITH ONLY MINIMAL RETURN TO THE LOCAL ECONOMIES. THREE FORCES OVER THE CENTURY THAT FOLLOWED WWI COMBINED TO CHANGE LARGE AREAS OF AFRICA AND ALL OF THE NE EXTENDING NORTH TO TURKEY AND EAST TO

PAKISTAN.

THEY WERE THE THE DISCOVERY OF RICH PETROLEUM SOURCES AND INCREASING GLOBAL DEMAND FOR OIL; THE WWII OCCUPATIONS BY BOTH ALLIED AND AXIS FORCES WITH THE SUBSEQUENT LIBERATION OF COLONIAL HOLDINGS; AND, IN THE POSTWAR WORLD, THE IMPACT OF MASS COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING TECHNIQUES.

“ . . . LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE THAT PASSES THROUGH THE NE, (IT) MUST PAY A TOLL OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER.”

THE NE HAS FOR CENTURIES BEEN THE GATE THROUGH WHICH PEOPLE OR TRADE MOVING ON LAND BETWEEN EUROPE AND ASIA HAD TO PASS. AND FOR THE LAST TWO CENTURIES SINCE THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SUEZ CANAL MOST OF THE WORLD’S SHIPPING ALSO IS ROUTED THROUGH IT. IT IS LAYERED OVER WITH CULTURES, AND THE REMNANTS OF CULTURES, ALMOST AS NUMEROUS AS ITS TRADE ROUTES; AND THEY, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE THAT PASSES THROUGH THE NE, MUST PAY A TOLL OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER.

IN THE FIVE HUNDRED YEARS FROM 1300 TO THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT, AS EUROPE STRUGGLED TO ESTABLISH TERRITORIAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL BOUNDARIES, THERE WERE SO MANY WARS AND COMBATANTS THAT THEY WERE OFTEN ASSIGNED TITLES SUCH AS THE HUNDRED YEARS WAR, THE THIRTY YEARS WAR, ETC.

THIS IDENTIFICATION BY THEIR DURATION MAKES A FAR STRONGER STATEMENT THAN USING OPPONENTS’ NAMES, I.E., THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR. IT EMPLOYS THE DIMENSION OF TIME IN THE SAME WAY THAT WORLD WAR USES SCOPE.

TIMELINE NOTE: AMERICA’S FIRST POSTWAR MILITARY VENTURE IN THE NE INVOLVED OUR SUPPLYING NATIVE AFGHANS WITH MILITARY ADVISORS AND EQUIPMENT (NOTABLY SURFACE TO AIR MISSILES) TO USE IN THEIR WAR WITH RUSSIA IN THE 1980s. WE HAVE HAD A COMBAT ROLE IN THE NE FOR ALMOST THIRTY YEARS NOW IN AFGHANISTAN, IRAQ, LIBYA AND KUWAIT AND HAVE SUPPLIED WEAPONS TO MANY OTHER COUNTRIES THERE.

TODAY, THE IMPRINT OF OUR FOREIGN POLICY, AS WELL AS OUR CULTURE AND COMMERCE, IS INESCAPABLE. THE HISTORY OF THE REGION IS ONE THAT FUTURE HISTORIANS MAY RIGHTFULLY FIND HARD TO BELIEVE. IT IS PACKED WITH ERROR, DECEIT, ARROGANCE AND BLINDNESS BY ALL INVOLVED.

AND CONTRADICTIONS TOO NUMEROUS TO LIST; FOR INSTANCE, THE AFGHAN “PATRIOTS” WE ARMED TO RESIST RUSSIA’S INVASION LATER BECAME AL-QAEDA AND TURNED OUR “STINGER” MISSILES AGAINST US TO BRING DOWN OUR HELICOPTERS AS THEY HAD THE RUSSIANS. THIS MILITARY REVERSAL CANNOT BE SEPARATED FROM OUR FOREIGN POLICY, AND IT IS, UNFORTUNATELY, A RECURRING NOTE, AS WE SHALL SEE LATER.

“WAR LOOKS BIG. PEACE LOOKS SMALL.”

WHAT DO WE FACE IN THE NE? WHAT IS OUR PROPER ROLE? AND WHAT SHOULD OUR POLICY BE IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE REASONABLE NATIONAL AND REGIONAL OBJECTIVES? IS “REASONABLE” EVEN POSSIBLE? AND “REASONABLE”

TO WHOM? PEACE USED TO BE “REASONABLE”, BUT RECENT EVENTS STEMMING FROM THE SUCCESS OF THE IS ARMED FORCES RELEGATED PEACE TO THE BACKGROUND. WAR LOOKS BIG. PEACE LOOKS SMALL.

WHAT ARE WE REALLY DEALING WITH IN THE NE? THE US HAS MANY TOOLS IN ITS KIT AND WAYS TO USE THEM. WE HAVE DIPLOMACY, COMMERCE, TECHNOLOGY, NATO, THE EU, INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION, WEALTH, SATELLITE SURVEILLANCE AND SEEMINGLY UNLIMITED INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITIES, SOME ACKNOWLEDGED AND OTHERS NOT. THIS IS AN AMAZING ARRAY OF CAPABILITIES TO BE ABLE TO BRING TO BEAR ON ANY PROBLEM. WHY HAVE WE FAILED? WHY IS OUR POSITION AND THE STATE OF THE REGION WORSE OFF THAN TWO, OR FIVE OR TEN YEARS AGO. THE ANSWER IS THAT WE HAVE NOT CLEARLY IDENTIFIED THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM AS BEING A RELIGIOUS ONE UPON WHICH MANY OF OUR TOOLS MAY HAVE ONLY LIMITED, IF ANY, EFFECT.

FROM CASABLANCA ON THE WEST COAST OF NORTH AFRICA MOVING EAST TO KARACHI, CLOSE TO THE PAKISTAN/INDIA BORDER, THERE ARE ABOUT TWENTY COUNTRIES OF DIFFERENT SHAPES, SIZES, LANGUAGES, CLIMATES, TRIBES AND RESOURCES. THEY ARE ALL PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM. THE EASTERN END OF THE MEDITERRANEAN IS WHERE EAST AND WEST, AND WATER AND LAND ROUTES, MEET. IN AND AROUND THIS AREA THE GREAT RELIGIONS, EMPIRES AND DYNASTIES OF THEIR DAY HAVE RISEN AND FALLEN.

IRAQ HAS SEEN IT ALL — FROM THE BEGINNINGS OF AGRICULTURE TO OUR WORLD’S PRESENT DEPENDENCE UPON PETROLEUM. THROUGHOUT HISTORY IRAQ AND ITS NEIGHBORS DEALT WITH CONFLICT ON A CONTINUING BASIS. BENEATH WHATEVER APPEARED ON THE SURFACE AS THE IMMEDIATE CAUSE, THERE WERE CERTAIN TO BE DEEPER LAYERS OF DIFFERENCE — ETHNIC, TRIBAL, CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, POLITICAL AND THE EVER PRESENT RELIGIOUS ONES. IT WAS INTO THIS HORNET’S NEST OF TURMOIL THAT G. W. BUSH PLUNGED AMERICA’S HAND BY INVADING AND OCCUPYING IRAQ.

WITH ONE QUICK BLOW WE LOOSENED AND/OR DESTROYED WHAT FEW PATTERNS OF CO-EXISTENCE, GOVERNANCE AND STABILITY EXISTED THERE. AND, AS THE REAL RELATIONS IN THE NE DO NOT FOLLOW THE NATIONAL BOUNDARIES SHOWN ON MAPS, THE CONSEQUENCE OF OUR POORLY TIMED AND CONCEIVED MILITARY INTERVENTION WAS A POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ETHNIC DESCENT INTO REGIONAL CHAOS.

THE RELIGIOUS ISSUE, IN THE NE OR ELSEWHERE, IS ONE THAT GENERALLY DEFIES RESOLUTION BY OUTSIDE FORCES. THE MESSAGE DELIVERED BY DIPLOMATS AND/OR POLITICIANS RARELY RESONATES WITH LIFE “ON THE STREET” OR “IN THE SQUARE” — ESPECIALLY WITH THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF AGE-OLD ENEMIES. OF COURSE, THE DIPLOMATS ARE BACKED BY POLITICIANS, AND POLITICAL LEADERS BY THEIR MILITARY FORCES, SO THAT, IF THINGS DON’T GO AS PLANNED, THEY CAN USE MILITARY FORCE TO PROVE THEIR POINT. THIS IS A FALLACY IN TERMS OF CONTEMPORARY FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND ESPECIALLY AS REGARDS OUR OWN.

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TOP COP ?

THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ARGUMENTS MADE FOR OUR

INVASION OF IRAQ — COMMERCIAL, SECURITY, POLITICAL AND, OF COURSE, THAT WE WOULD BE WELCOMED AS LIBERATORS. THERE TURNED OUT TO BE NO TRUTH IN THE LATTER AND NOT MUCH MORE IN THE OTHERS. BUT THEY WERE ALL FORCEFULLY PRESENTED AND USUALLY OFFERED THE BENEFIT OF A REWARD TO THEIR BACKERS.

EXTREMIST ISLAM DOES NOT SEEK TO NEGOTIATE AN OUTCOME, BUT AIMS TO APPLY THE CONSIDERABLE FORCE AT ITS DISPOSAL TO EXPAND ITS ABSOLUTE POLITICAL, SPIRITUAL AND SOCIAL CONTROL. IN ANY CONFRONTATION IT FRAMES THE ISSUE IN A VARIETY OF WAYS — NATIONAL, TRIBAL, ETHNIC, POLITICAL AND, FINALLY, RELIGIOUS. IT IS AT THIS LAST, MOST FUNDAMENTAL LEVEL WHERE OUR DIPLOMATS, POLITICIANS AND MILITARY LEADERS ARE LEAST EFFECTIVE FOR TWO REASONS. THEIR SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE ARE NOT DERIVED FROM A RELIGIOUS VIEW OF LIFE, AND EVEN THE IDEA OF AMERICA BEING INVOLVED IN A RELIGIOUS WAR CONTRADICTS MUCH OF OUR HISTORY AND MANY OF OUR VALUES.

SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE WEST’S DESIRE FOR FUTURE PEACE IN THE NE AND ISLAM’S INABILITY TO RELINQUISH ITS HISTORIC CONFLICTS, BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL, AND GIVEN THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR PAST ACTIONS, IT HAS FALLEN UPON THE US TO PLAY THE ROLE OF TOP COP IN THE REGION.

ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT THE TYPE OF ROLE WE ANTICIPATED WHEN WE INVADDED IRAQ, AND NOT ONE WE ENJOY OR LOOK FORWARD TO, IT NOW SEEMS UNAVOIDABLE.

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WE SHOULD MAKE NO MISTAKE ABOUT THE WAR THAT NOW RAGES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA BETWEEN THE ISLAMIC EXTREMISTS OF THE IS AND OTHER GROUPS BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT ISLAM.

WE SHOULD RECALL THAT TWO CENTURIES AGO CAPTURED AMERICAN SAILORS WERE GIVEN THE CHOICE BY TUNISIA’S MUSLIM RULER TO CONVERT TO ISLAM, TO FLEE OR TO BE EXECUTED. THIS IS THE SAME CHOICE (“CONVERT, FLEE OR DIE”) THAT THE IS SOLDIERS NOW GIVE TO POPULATIONS IN TOWNS AND CITIES IN NORTHERN IRAQ THAT ARE FALLING TO THEIR CONTROL. NOTE THAT THE FIRST CHOICE, “CONVERT”, IS A RELIGIOUS ONE AND THE ONLY ONE THAT OFFERS ANY CONTINUITY OF LIFE; “FLEE” MEANS ABANDONING HOMES, BUSINESSES, LAND, FRIENDS, EDUCATION, CHURCH AND PERHAPS EVEN FAMILY, AND CAN ALSO MEAN DEATH. THE LAST CHOICE, “DIE”, IS NOT JUST AN END TO LIFE, BUT ONE CONDUCTED IN BRUTAL WAYS SUCH AS BEING BEHEADED, HACKED OR BURIED ALIVE. GENDER OR AGE EXCEPTIONS ARE NOT AVAILABLE.

IN AUGUST THE IS FORCES MADE RAPID ADVANCES, MOVING OUT FROM EASTERN SYRIA AND ACROSS NORTHERN IRAQ. THESE FORCES ARE WELL SUPPLIED WITH ARMS, MONEY AND FIGHTERS AND CAN MOVE QUICKLY. THEY HAVE PROVED MORE THAN A MATCH FOR THE IRAQI TROOPS WE HAVE ARMED AND TRAINED. THEY HAVE ALSO INFILTRATED THE IRAQI MILITARY AND CAN EXERT VERY EFFECTIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE UPON ITS MEMBERS BY THREATENING THEM WITH THE DEATH OR TORTURE OF THEIR FAMILIES.

ONE NIGHT IN AUGUST A TV NEWS PROGRAM SHOWED PICTURES OF OUR CARRIER-BASED F-18S LAUNCHING MISSILE ATTACKS AND DESTROYING A NUMBER OF IS TANKS AND TRUCKS.

A HORRIBLE MOMENT FOLLOWED WHEN THESE VEHICLES WERE IDENTIFIED AS MODERN AMERICAN EQUIPMENT CAPTURED FROM OUR IRAQI “PARTNERS” !

“THE AMERICAN WAY”

THIS IS A PHRASE THAT HAS BEEN IN USE IN OUR COUNTRY FOR SOME TIME, BUT WITH DIFFERENT MEANINGS AT DIFFERENT TIMES. THE 21ST CENTURY “AMERICAN WAY” BEARS LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO THE ONES OF THE 20TH AND 19TH CENTURIES THAT PRECEDED IT.

IS THERE SUCH A THING AS AN “AMERICAN WAY” IN FOREIGN RELATIONS? THE ANSWER, UNFORTUNATELY, IS “YES” AND IT DERIVES, LIKE MUCH ELSE IN OUR PRESENT CULTURE, FROM EXCESS. IT EXPRESSES ITSELF MOST UNSUCCESSFULLY WHEN WE UNDERTAKE, BY INVASION OR PEACEFUL MEANS, TO ALTER THE GOVERNMENTS OR FUTURES OF OTHER COUNTRIES.

WE LITERALLY DUMP ENORMOUS AMOUNTS OF MONEY INTO USUALLY SMALLER AND/OR MORE PRIMITIVE STATES. WE ALSO LOAD THEM WITH A VARIETY OF MILITARY, PUBLIC RELATIONS, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC “ADVISORS” MANY OF WHOSE PRIMARY FUNCTION IS TO GATHER INTELLIGENCE AND REPORT BACK TO VARIOUS AGENCIES IN WASHINGTON.

THE INVARIABLE PROBLEM WITH THE MONEY WE PRESS UPON THESE STATES IS THAT IT IS WITHOUT DOUBT THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY POSSIBLE TO ENCOURAGE AND INCREASE LOCAL CORRUPTION. MANY OF THE COUNTRIES WHERE WE COME TO CALL ALREADY HAVE TRADITIONS OF CORRUPTION AND CAN IMMEDIATELY SNIFF OUT THE KIND OF OPPORTUNITIES OUR RECKLESS INFUSIONS OF DOLLARS PRESENT.

THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT, WHETHER BUSH, CLINTON, OBAMA OR SOMEONE ELSE, WITH ONE EYE ON THE POLLS DOES NOT WANT TO EITHER TAKE OR REJECT DECISIVE ACTION FOR WHICH HE MIGHT PAY AN UNNECESSARY POLITICAL PRICE IN FUTURE ELECTIONS. ERGO, LAYER THE SITUATION OVER WITH MONEY AND LOOK THE OTHER WAY. IRAQ WAS A CLASSICAL EXAMPLE. MONEY DISAPPEARED LIKE WATER IN THE SAND AND QUITE A FEW IRAQI LIFESTYLES IMPROVED VERY QUICKLY.

BUT THERE WAS ANOTHER, EVEN MORE DEADLY, ASPECT OF THE AMERICAN WAY ON DISPLAY THERE. IN OUR ATTEMPT TO MAKE IRAQ OVER IN MORE OF OUR OWN IMAGE WE DESTROYED ITS MILITARY AND POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, AS WELL AS ITS INFRASTRUCTURE. WHAT REMAINED WAS A VACUUM WHICH EXTREMIST ISLAMIC GROUPS WERE EAGER TO FILL. THEY FOUGHT US, SHIITES, CHRISTIANS, KURDS, THEIR FELLOW SUNNIS. THEY WERE SMALL, BUT GROWING, RELENTLESS IN PURPOSE AND COULD ATTRACT MONEY, ARMS AND MORE JIHADISTS FROM BOTH THE MUSLIM AND THE WESTERN WORLDS.

OUR NEXT MAJOR FOREIGN RELATIONS ERROR AND SECOND VACUUM CREATION TOOK PLACE DURING THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION IN THE SETTING OF THE EXPANDING SYRIAN CIVIL WAR. IN THE EARLIEST DAYS OF THE UPRISING AGAINST BASHAR AL-ASSAD, WHEN THE REBELS DESPERATELY NEEDED WEAPONS, OBAMA, WITH EYES ON THE POLLS, PROMISED ONLY NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT (I.E., BLANKETS, GOGGLES, FLASHLIGHTS, TENTS, ETC.) TO AVOID ANY RESPONSIBILITY FOR ARMED CONFLICT. AS WORLD LEADER, HAD THE US MADE THE CASE FOR A STRONGER POSITION, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (IC) WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE LIKELY TO FOLLOW.

SYRIA IS A CLASSIC EXAMPLE OF CONFLICT BETWEEN POLITICS AND POLICY IN FOREIGN RELATIONS. OUR ORIGINAL INVOLVEMENT STEMMED FROM OUR OPPOSITION TO THE HASSAD REGIME AND WE ENCOURAGED LOCAL RESISTANCE GROUPS TO TAKE ACTION. OUR RHETORIC NOT WITHSTANDING, HOWEVER, WE LIMITED OUR ASSISTANCE BY NOT PROVIDING EFFECTIVE WEAPONS AT A TIME WHEN THEY WOULD HAVE MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE. THIS LIMITATION WAS THE RESULT OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION’S POLITICAL AVERSION TO BEING VIEWED AS REENGAGING IN NE WARFARE.

THE HOSTILITIES ESCALATED; THE IS FORCES INSERTED THEMSELVES AS OPPONENTS OF BOTH HASSAD AND THE FREE SYRIAN ARMY; AND THE PRICE AND PROSPECT OF PEACE ARE NOW OUT OF SIGHT AS WE COMMIT TO A NEW COALITION AND THE SUSTAINED USE OF OUR AIR POWER.

FOR POLITICAL REASONS WE ALLOWED A VALUABLE MOMENT OF POLICY ACHIEVEMENT TO SLIP BY, BUT WE ARE NOT ALONE IN OUR ERROR. THE IS LEADERSHIP THOUGHT THAT RELEASING THE VIDEOS OF AMERICAN JOURNALISTS’ EXECUTION WOULD SERVE THEIR RECRUITING AND PR PROGRAMS, BUT THEY HAVE ALSO SERVED AS A CATALYST TO CREATE A STRONG, UNIFIED AMERICAN RESPONSE. IN THIS CASE IT WAS PUBLICITY THAT OVERCAME POLICY — ALSO A MAJOR FOREIGN RELATIONS ERROR.

THE SYRIAN ANTI-GOVERNMENT FORCES DID SURPRISINGLY WELL CONSIDERING THEIR LACK OF ARMS AND TRAINING, BUT WITHOUT A VERIFIED POLITICAL FORCE AND CHAIN OF COMMAND ANOTHER VACUUM BEGAN TO TAKE SHAPE AND ATTRACT AL-QAEDA AND OTHER JIHADISTS FROM THE NE AND WIDER SOURCES.

AS CHARGES OF THE USE OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS BY BOTH SIDES SURFACED, BHO DREW HIS RED LINE IN THE SAND STATING THAT ANY FURTHER USE OF THESE OUTLAWED SUBSTANCES WOULD ENTAIL MAJOR CONSEQUENCES. WHEN EVIDENCE OF FURTHER USE BECAME AVAILABLE, THE RESULT WAS — NOTHING!

APPARENTLY TRANSFIXED BY HIS OWN POLITICAL IMAGE, THE RED LINE DISAPPEARED, THE VACUUM EXPANDED AND THE MUSLIM EXTREMISTS JOINED THE WAR, TAKING THEIR FIGHT TO BOTH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SYRIAN REBELS, BUT WREAKING MOST HAVOC ON THE LATTER’S INADEQUATELY FINANCED, EQUIPPED AND TRAINED FORCES.

WITHIN A FEW MONTHS THE MOMENTUM OF THE FIGHTING FOR A HASSADLESS, FREE AND REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT WAS STALLED. THE REBELS AND THE CIVILIANS IN THE AREAS THEY HELD WERE SHOT OR, EVEN WORSE, DISPOSED OF BY PUBLIC HANGINGS, BEHEADINGS OR OTHER FORMS OF BRUTALITY.

HAVING SEIZED THIS SECOND VACUUM, THE JIHADISTS WERE ABLE TO QUICKLY PUSH EASTWARD FROM SYRIA ACROSS NORTHERN IRAQ AND TO CLAIM STATUS AS THE ISLAMIC CALIPHATE — NO MORE JUST A MOBILE FIGHTING GROUP, BUT A POLITICAL AND MILITARY ORGANIZATION CONTROLLING BOTH TERRITORY AND POPULATIONS WITH A HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY CLAIM TO STATEHOOD.

FAST FORWARD TO THE PRESENT; WHERE ARE WE TODAY ? HAVING ONCE DECLARED IRAQ AS OUR DIPLOMATIC/POLITICAL CENTER IN THE NE (AND SPENT \$800 MILLION ON OUR NEW EMBASSY THERE), IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TRIPARTITE IRAQI STATE OF SHIITES, SUNNIS AND KURDS THAT WE FOUND AND DESTROYED CAN PROBABLY NOT BE RESURRECTED. THE KURDS

IN THE NORTH HAVE LONG WANTED EITHER SIGNIFICANTLY MORE AUTONOMY OR OUTRIGHT INDEPENDENCE. SHIITE/SUNNI ANTAGONISMS ARE SO ENTRENCHED IN THE REGION'S BLOOD AND LAND THAT THEY WILL NOT BE MADE TO VANISH INSTANTLY. AND THE SUNNIS HAVE DEEP DIFFERENCES WITHIN THEIR OWN RANKS AS WELL AS THOSE WITH SHIITES AND KURDS.

STILL A NEW GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN FORMED AND IRAQ IS A LEAD TOPIC ON THE EVENING NEWSCASTS. THE QUESTION THAT LINGERS IS "WHAT WILL THEY EXPECT/DEMAND OF US AND VICE-VERSA ?"

IT IS THIS DOUBLE QUESTION THAT LIES AT THE HEART OF OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS FAILURES IN THE NE AND ELSEWHERE. REGARDLESS OF A WIDE VARIETY OF CIRCUMSTANCES, WE EXPECT OUR POLICY AND INTERVENTIONS TO COMPLETELY ALTER THE POLITICS AND GOVERNMENTS OF COUNTRIES WE TARGET FOR CHANGE.

WE EXPECT THEM TO DISPOSE OF THEIR OLD WAYS AND STRUCTURES; TO DISCARD TRIBAL POWERS AND PRACTICES OF LONG STANDING AND REPLACE THEM WITH REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT; TO TURN THE DESERT'S POLITICAL LANDSCAPE DEMOCRATICALLY GREEN; AND TO WATER IT WITH FREQUENT DOSES OF MODERN CAPITALISM.

THE SUPPOSITION IS THAT, HAVING ACHIEVED ALL THESE THINGS OURSELVES, THEY WILL WORK FOR OTHERS AS THEY HAVE FOR US. IN THIS WE ARE WRONG. IN OUR COUNTRY WE WORKED FROM A CLEAN SLATE, A RICH-IN-RESOURCES, SPARSELY INHABITED CONTINENT UPON WHICH BY DINT OF ARMS AND ENERGY WE COULD WRITE HISTORY. NO SUCH SLATE EXISTS IN THE NE. WHEREVER WE TURN OR DIG, THERE IS ANOTHER, OLDER LAYER OF RELIGION, HISTORY, ETHNICITY OR TRIBALISM WITH PRIOR CLAIMS TO RECOGNITION AND EXISTENCE. THESE LAYERS PROVIDE CONNECTING TISSUE FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT, SOMEHOW MANAGING TO GAIN STRENGTH IN THE PROCESS. TO DISMISS THEM IS FOLLY.

THERE ARE A FEW AREAS THAT STILL EXIST TODAY WHERE LIFE IS TRULY PRIMITIVE — THE AMAZONIAN RAIN FOREST, THE INTERIOR DESERT OF AUSTRALIA, PARTS OF AFRICA AND REMOTE AREAS OF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN ARCHIPELAGO. AS TECHNOLOGY AND POPULATION INCREASE AND RESOURCES GROW SCARCE, THEY MAY OR MAY NOT SURVIVE; AND WHETHER THEY DO OR DON'T WILL NOT DEPEND ON DEMOCRACY, CAPITALISM OR THE INTERNET.

"WE MUST BE MORE CAREFUL ABOUT HOW AND WHERE WE DRAW THE LINE."

BETWEEN THEM AND US EXIST MANY SOCIETIES OF DIFFERENT DEGREES OF ADVANCEMENT AND THE ABILITY TO PARTICIPATE IN OUR 21ST CENTURY. TOO OFTEN OUR POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY ATTEMPT TO DECIDE WHICH WILL SUCCEED AND WHICH WILL NOT. WE MUST BE MORE CAREFUL ABOUT HOW AND WHERE WE DRAW THE LINE.

TO PUT IRAQ BACK TOGETHER IN A TIMELY MANNER AND PRODUCE A REPRESENTATIVE, INCLUSIVE GOVERNMENT NOT GIVEN TO THE OLD WAYS OF CORRUPTION AND STEALTH WOULD BE A HUMPTY-DUMPTY ACT SECOND TO NONE. IT IS NOT EVEN AN IMAGINABLE RESULT OF THE FORCES NOW AT WORK.

THE AVOIDANCE OF POLITICAL AND OTHER FORMS OF POWER VACUUMS HAS BEEN A CONSTANT DIPLOMATIC PRIORITY SINCE THE EARLIEST PRACTICE OF STATESMANSHIP. IT'S A DIPLOMACY 101 NO-NO, AND YET IN THE SPAN OF ONLY A FEW YEARS, OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS TEAM (THE EXECUTIVE,

STATE AND DEFENSE DEPTS.), WITH INPUT WHEN NEEDED FROM TREASURY AND OUR UN AMBASSADOR, HAVE CREATED TWO VACUUMS IN WHAT CAN REASONABLY BE VIEWED AS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST VOLATILE AND IMPORTANT REGIONS.

ON A DAY TO DAY BASIS THE NE SIMPLY HAS MORE SOURCES OF CONFLICT AT WORK THAN ANYWHERE ELSE. TO SOME DEGREE, THESE HAVE BEEN HELD IN CHECK OR MODERATED BY A VARIETY OF CONSTRAINTS — LEGAL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SPIRITUAL, TRIBAL, COMMERCIAL, MILITARY, SOCIAL, CULTURAL, ETHNIC AND EVEN NATIONAL. THIS WEB OF TIES, WHILE NOT SUCCESSFUL IN PREVENTING WAR, PROBABLY HAS SERVED TO PREVENT MORE WAR.

THE VACUUMS WE CREATED IN IRAQ AND SYRIA HAVE BLOWN APART THE FRAGILE TIES THAT RESTRAINED JIHADISTS AND OTHER SOURCES OF VIOLENCE SEEKING POWER. WE SHOULD RECALL THAT IS DID NOT EXIST WHEN WE INVADDED IRAQ AND ONLY CAME INTO BEING A YEAR LATER IN 2004. IT WAS BORN AND NURTURED, AND HAS BEEN ABLE TO EXPAND, BECAUSE OF THE REGIONAL CHAOS WE CREATED. WHAT KIND OF FUTURE CAN WE EXPECT TO PLAY OUT FROM THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES?

FIRST, THE IS FORCES HAVE CAPTURED A WIDE SWATH OF TERRITORY FROM EASTERN SYRIA TO THE KURDISH AREA OF IRAQ. THESE ARE NOT A BUNCH OF BANDITS BLOWING THROUGH TOWN ON CAMELBACK FIRING THEIR RIFLES IN THE AIR AS IN SOME "ARAB WESTERN" MOVIE. THEY ARE PURPOSEFUL AND ADEPT AT USING MODERN MEDIA AND MILITARY TECHNIQUES. THEY EMPLOY A WORKABLE MANAGEMENT MODEL WHICH SERVES THEM EQUALLY WELL AT THE HIGHEST AND LOWEST LEVELS OF THEIR STRUCTURE FROM ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI TO THE SMALLEST CAPTURED VILLAGE. THEY DO NOT CARE ABOUT TRUST, PUBLIC OPINION OR FAIRNESS; IT IS FEAR THAT DRIVES THEIR MARKETING PROGRAM. WE HAVE COMMENCED AIR STRIKES AGAINST THEM WHICH SHOULD ENABLE THE KURDS TO HOLD FAST AND PROTECT THEIR LAND. BUT THE JIHADISTS HAVE TASTED BOTH BLOOD AND SUCCESS; THEY HAVE MONEY AND WEAPONS AND ARE ANXIOUS TO USE THEM. THEY RUN ON THE FUEL OF RELIGIOUS FERVOR AND WILL NOT GO AWAY UNLESS THEY ARE DESTROYED.

AND, NEXT, IN THE PROCESS OF INSERTING THEMSELVES INTO THE NEWLY FORMED VACUUMS THEY HAVE CREATED A MASS OF DISPLACED, TRAUMATIZED, FEARFUL REFUGEES SEPARATED FROM ALL ASPECTS OF THEIR FORMER LIVES.

ACCURATE NUMBERS ARE NOT EASY TO COME BY, BUT ESTIMATES SUGGEST THAT THE HOMELESS SEEKING REFUGE FROM THE WAR IN SYRIA MAY NOW HAVE REACHED THREE MILLION, AND IN IRAQ ONE MILLION³. IN THE SOUTH, SOME OF THOSE FLEEING SYRIA HAVE FOUND REFUGE IN JORDAN, BUT FOR MOST THE WARFARE IN NORTHERN SYRIA AND IRAQ DETERMINES THAT THEIR NEAREST POINT OF RELIEF IS THE TURKISH BORDER. HERE TOO, REFUGEE TENT CAMPS HAVE SPROUTED, BUT THEY ARE ONLY A TEMPORARY SOLUTION, STRUGGLING TO PROVIDE EVEN THE BASICS OF COMMUNAL WATER AND SANITATION FACILITIES AND IRREGULAR FOOD DELIVERIES OF MOSTLY PACKAGED ITEMS. COOKING ON A PORTABLE STOVE FOR A FAMILY OFTEN WITH FOUR OR MORE CHILDREN DOES NOT WORK WELL IN CAMPS ORIGINALLY DESIGNED TO HOLD 1,500 PEOPLE, BUT WHICH HAVE BEEN EXPANDED TO TEN TIMES THAT AMOUNT. THESE ARE FABRIC TENTS WITH SIDES THAT FLOP IN THE WIND AND DIRT FLOORS. AT BEST, THEY NOW PROVIDE MINIMAL SHELTER AND THE COLD TURKISH WINTER IS COMING SOON.

HOW WILL THESE MILLIONS OF REFUGEES BE ABSORBED

INTO THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES OF WHATEVER HOST COUNTRIES RECEIVE THEM ? HOW WILL FUNDS BE GENERATED TO PROVIDE FOOD, EDUCATION, JOBS AND HEALTH CARE IN ECONOMIES MARKED MORE BY SCARCITY THAN AVAILABILITY ? THESE ARE VERY DIFFICULT PROBLEMS NOT SUBJECT TO LOCAL SOLUTIONS. MIGRATION IS A MAJOR WORLD DILEMMA — WITH ITS NUMBERS GROWING RELENTLESSLY. HOW WILL THE REFUGEES FROM SYRIA & IRAQ FIND ASSISTANCE WHEN EUROPE AND AFRICA ARE ALREADY OVERBURDENED AND THREATENED BY NUMBERS THAT ONLY INCREASE ?

“YOU ARE ALL A LOST GENERATION”

THESE WORDS FROM GERTRUDE STEIN TO THE YOUNG ERNEST HEMINGWAY IN POST-WWI PARIS WERE HER WAY OF EXPRESSING HOW DIFFICULT A BURDEN THE WAR HAD IMPOSED UPON THE LIVES BEING LIVED AFTER IT BY HAVING DESTROYED THE CULTURAL/HISTORIC CONTINUITY AND CONNECTION SO ESSENTIAL TO IDENTITY.

SIMILARLY, THERE IS NOW IN THE NE A WHOLE GENERATION OF CHILDREN, COMBATANTS AND CIVILIANS SO EMOTIONALLY AND PSYCHOLOGICALLY SCARRED BY THE SYRIAN WAR’S VIOLENCE AND THE IS’S RANDOM BRUTALITY THAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO BECOME DYSFUNCTIONAL ELEMENTS OF WHATEVER SOCIETY TAKES THEM IN. BENEATH THEIR FIXED, VACANT FACIAL EXPRESSIONS THEIR MINDS AND SOULS HAVE BEEN PERMANENTLY BRANDED WITH ANGER, FEAR AND DOUBT IN TERRIFYING AMOUNTS. THEY ARE TICKING TIME BOMBS WHICH MAY FUEL THE NEXT GENERATION OF VIOLENCE.

DEPRIVED OF THEIR HUMAN, ECONOMICAL AND PHYSICAL TIES TO HOME AND LIFE, THEY ARE ANOTHER “LOST GENERATION”. TODAY, IT IS NOT UNUSUAL FOR MEDICAL SOURCES TO COMMENT THAT SUCH TRAUMA CAN RESPOND TO THERAPY OVER TIME. BUT FOR THE “WALKING DEAD” OF THE SYRIAN/IRAQI HOSTILITIES THERE WILL BE NO THERAPY, NO COUNSELING, NO HEALING — ONLY A LIFETIME OF FEAR AND PAIN FROM THE MEMORIES OF SIGHTS AND SOUNDS SO HORRIBLE THAT THEY MUST EITHER BE REPRESSED OR RELEASED TO EXPLODE.

IS IN ITS CURRENT FORM IS IN AN EARLY STAGE. IT HAS MONEY, WEAPONS AND A SEEMINGLY STEADY SUPPLY OF FIGHTERS HUNDREDS OF WHICH HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS PASSPORT BEARING RESIDENTS OF THE UK AND THE US. ITS ATTACKS, LIKE ITS “JUSTICE”, MAKE USE OF SPEED AND RUTHLESSNESS. CONVERT, FLEE OR DIE, AND MAKE IT QUICK! RELIGION IS THE ROOT THAT FEEDS THE ISLAMIC MILITANTS 24/7. THEY DO NOT WANT ARGUMENT, OR DISCUSSION OR NEGOTIATION. THEY ARE WARRIORS OBEYING THEIR GOD’S COMMANDS; AND THEY ARE RIGHT ! IF THEY PREVAIL HERE ON EARTH, THEIR FERVOR WILL BE REWARDED. IF THEY DON’T AND ARE KILLED IN PRESSING THEIR CAUSE, THEY WILL BE TREATED IN THE AFTERLIFE WITH BOTH MARTYRDOM AND EARTHLY PLEASURES.

HISTORY MAY BE HELPFUL. MUHAMMAD LAUNCHED HIS CAMPAIGN TO EXPAND ISLAM FROM ITS EARLY CENTER IN MECCA. ITS SUCCESS WAS RAPID BECAUSE MUSLIM FIGHTING FORCES MOVED QUICKLY ACROSS THE OPEN DESERT SPACES, ATTACKED TOWNS AND IMPOSED ISLAM ON THEIR INHABITANTS. THERE WAS LITTLE OPPOSITION AND WITHIN THE SPAN OF A FEW HUNDRED YEARS ISLAM’S TERRITORY REACHED EAST TO

INDIA AND NORTH INTO EUROPE. IT POSED A MAJOR THREAT TO EUROPE, AND HAD NOT CHRISTIAN FORCES HELD FIRM IN FRANCE AND AUSTRIA, THE HISTORY OF EUROPEAN ART, ARCHITECTURE, LAW AND LIFE WOULD HAVE BEEN UNIMAGINABLY DIFFERENT.

TODAY WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI, THE RECENTLY SELF-APPOINTED CALIPH OF THE IS, INTENDS IN THE WAY OF EXPANSION. BECAUSE HE WOULD LIKELY BE OPPOSED BY FELLOW SUNNIS IN SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT IN THE SOUTH, HE IS LESS LIKELY TO TURN IN THAT DIRECTION. LOOKING NORTH, WE CONFRONT SOME VERY INTERESTING AND, FOR THE IS, PERHAPS COMPELLING POSSIBILITIES.

THERE, BOTH SYRIA’S AND IRAQ’S NORTHERN BORDERS ARE CONTIGUOUS TO TURKEY’S SOUTHERN EDGE. TURKEY AND ITS CAPITAL, ISTANBUL (FORMERLY CONSTANTINOPLE), WERE IMPORTANT ISLAMIC CENTERS IN THE TIMES OF THE SELJUK AND OTTOMAN CALIPHATES, BUT AFTER WWI KEMAL ATTATURK ASSUMED ITS POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND EMBARKED ON A BROAD PROGRAM OF SECULARIZATION WHICH GREATLY REDUCED ISLAM’S STATUS. HIS PROGRAM WAS SUCCESSFUL IN IMPROVING ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE FOR THE TURKISH PEOPLE AND ENABLED TURKEY TO JOIN THE 20TH CENTURY WHILE MANY OF ITS MUSLIM NEIGHBORS CONTINUED TO EXIST IN THE TRIBAL AND NOMADIC PATTERNS OF THE PAST.

RECENTLY, CONSISTENT WITH THE ISLAMIC UNREST IN SYRIA AND IRAQ, TURKISH MUSLIMS HAVE CALLED FOR GREATER INFLUENCE AND RELIGIOUS RECOGNITION IN THE AFFAIRS OF THEIR GOVERNMENT, AND WE CAN BE CERTAIN THAT THIS PROCESS WILL BE SUPPORTED AND INFLAMED BY THE JIHADISTS NOW FIGHTING FOR CONTROL OF THE LAND ON TURKEY’S SOUTHERN BORDER.

THE BIG PRIZE, AS YET UNMENTIONED AND HIGHLY IMPROBABLE, WOULD BE THE REVERSION OF TURKEY TO AN ISLAMIC STATE AND A COMMANDING MUSLIM PRESENCE IN ISTANBUL WHERE EAST MEETS WEST, BUT TURKEY HAS APPLIED FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP WHICH WOULD BE JEOPARDIZED BY ANY MOVE TOWARDS A JIHADIST ASSOCIATION.

“IT LIES AT THE CENTER OF THE RUSSIAN, EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN NEXUS. IT IS THE PIVOT OF PIVOTS.”

IT SHARES BORDERS WITH SYRIA, IRAQ, IRAN AND RUSSIA; AND IT CONTROLS RUSSIA’S ACCESS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN AND, THROUGH THE SUEZ CANAL, TO EAST AFRICA FROM CAIRO TO CAPE TOWN AND FURTHER EAST TO THE ORIENT. NOT SURPRISINGLY, IT HAS BEEN COURTED “WITH MONEY AND SONG” BY THE WEST. IT LIES AT THE CENTER OF THE RUSSIAN, EUROPEAN AND AFRICAN NEXUS. IT IS THE PIVOT OF PIVOTS.

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THE GOTTERDAMMERUNG OF THE EUROPEAN MONARCHIES AND THEIR HEREDITARY POWER STRUCTURE IN WWI CREATED A POLITICAL AND CULTURAL POWER VACUUM THAT TOUCHED ON MANY ASPECTS OF EUROPEAN LIFE AND WHICH BOTH FASCISM AND COMMUNISM FOUGHT TO FILL. IN THE PROCESS, EUROPE AND THE WORLD WERE EXPOSED FIRST TO HITLER’S AND THEN STALIN’S EVILS. GERMAN OR RUSSIAN, EVIL IS EVIL THE WORLD OVER, AND THAT OF THE IS TODAY

IS MORE OF THE SAME WITH ONE HIGHLY IMPORTANT ADDED ELEMENT — RELIGION.

THE IS RECENTLY TOOK A MAJOR STEP WHEN ITS LEADER, ABU BAKR AL-BAGHDADI, DECLARED HIMSELF CALIPH IBRAHIM WITH AUTHORITY OVER ALL MUSLIMS. THIS CLAIM IS NOT WITHOUT SOME SUBSTANCE, AS THE IS FIGHTERS HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OBTAIN CONTROL OF OIL FIELDS, BANKS AND MILITARY HARDWARE, WITH MUCH OF THE LATTER “MADE IN THE USA”. AND MONEY IS NO OBJECT, AS SOME ESTIMATES OF IS RESOURCES GO AS HIGH AS \$2 BILLION.⁴

WHILE AL-BAGHDADI’S CLAIM TO GLOBAL MUSLIM AUTHORITY IS OVERBLOWN, IT ESTABLISHES HIM AS A LEADER, A PERSON AND, MOST IMPORTANTLY, A MEDIA FOCAL POINT. TO THE EXTENT THAT HE WISHES HE WILL BE QUOTED, INTERVIEWED, PHOTOGRAPHED, RESEARCHED AND TRACKED. THROUGH HIS ANNOUNCEMENT THE IS GAINED A NEW AND CRITICAL DIMENSION WHICH IT CAN EMPLOY BOTH OFFENSIVELY AND DEFENSIVELY. IT WILL ENABLE HIM TO ATTACK HIS ENEMIES AND DEFEND HIMSELF FROM HIS CRITICS WHICH IN OUR AGE OF PERVERSIVE MEDIA ARE INVALUABLE WEAPONS.

BUT IT IS NOT JUST THE MEDIA AS BULLY PULPIT THAT SERVES THE IS. IT’S LEADERS ARE HIGHLY SKILLED IN THE USE OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, TWITTER ET AL) THAT HAVE BECOME THE FIRST LANGUAGE FOR MANY OF OUR YOUNGER GENERATION. IS PROPONENTS ARE SKILLED AT USING THIS ONLINE CAPABILITY FIRST TO IDENTIFY AND THEN TO PERSUADE AND CONVERT PROSPECTIVE JIHADISTS. ONCE INDOCTRINATED AND CONVERTED, A DISAFFECTED YOUTH ARMED WITH RELIGIOUS FERVOR BECOMES A POWERFUL AND POSITIVE FORCE — FOR JIHAD ! AND IT IS NOT UNUSUAL IN THIS PROCESS FOR JIHAD TO BE PRESENTED AS A FORM OF REDEMPTION FOR PAST SINS OR FAILURES.

THE FREE WORLD, THE GREAT WESTERN DEMOCRACIES OF EUROPE AND AMERICA, MUST NOW COME FACE TO FACE WITH AN EXTREMELY UNCOMFORTABLE SET OF FACTS. THE FIRST IS THAT OIL AND THE SUEZ CANAL HAVE REINVIGORATED ISLAM, WHICH IS NOW A MAJOR ECONOMIC/POLITICAL, AS WELL AS RELIGIOUS, PRESENCE IN THE WORLD; AND IT IS GROWING. THE HIGHER THE PRICE OF OIL, THE STRONGER ISLAM BECOMES.

THE SECOND IS THAT “MODERATE” ISLAM HAS SEEMED UNABLE TO REIN IN THE VIOLENT AND BRUTAL MEANS OF CONQUEST AND SUBJECTION PRACTICED BY ITS FELLOW EXTREME MUSLIMS. ITS EVENING NEWSCASTS CARRY THE SAME IMAGES OF BEHEADINGS, HANGINGS, SHOOTING AND OTHER KILLING OR TORTURE TECHNIQUES AS OURS DO, BUT THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE RESPONSE. PERHAPS “MODERATE” ISLAM FINDS ITSELF TRAPPED BETWEEN FAITH AND FEAR, KNOWING THAT ITS EXTREMIST OFFSHOOT CAN ELIMINATE MODERATE FELLOW MUSLIMS “WHO DO NOT BELIEVE” ALMOST AS READILY AS IT DOES CHRISTIANS AND JEWS. RETALIATION IS AN INCREASINGLY PROMINENT FEAR AS THE ISLAMIC PRESENCE EXPANDS.

WE HAVE CITED THE IMPORTANCE OF “MODERATE” ISLAM’S SILENCE BEFORE AND WERE RECENTLY (AUGUST) ENCOURAGED TO NOTE THAT THE HIGHEST ISLAMIC AUTHORITY IN EGYPT, THE GRAND MUFTI SHANKI ALLAM, HAS CALLED OUT THE IS FOR VIOLATING ALL ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES AND LAWS AND HAS DECLARED IT A THREAT TO ALL ISLAM. ALLAM HAS A LARGE FOLLOWING OUTSIDE OF EGYPT AND MADE HIS COMMENTS ONLINE. HIS IS AN EXTREMELY EFFECTIVE VOICE, AND HE WAS JOINED BY EGYPT’S PRESIDENT, ABDEL-FATTAH EL-SISSI, WHO, IN ADDRESSING AN AUDIENCE OF NEWSPAPER EDITORS,

ACCUSED THE IS OF ATTEMPTING TO “UNDERMINE ISLAM AS A BELIEF” THIS SHIFT IS A VERY IMPORTANT AND WELCOME DEVELOPMENT.⁵

HOW WILL NON-ISLAMIC, DEMOCRATIC STATES REACT TO A GROWING JIHADIST PRESENCE ? ON THEIR BORDERS? IN THEIR CITIES OR TOWNS ? CALLS FOR JOINT ACTION UNDER TREATIES DID NOT WORK WITH HITLER. COULD WE EXPECT THEM TO DO BETTER TODAY BEARING IN MIND THAT COALITIONS DO NOT ALWAYS REFLECT EQUAL PARTICIPATION ?

THERE IS A TRAP HERE IN THAT WHATEVER RESISTANCE IS DIRECTED AGAINST IS, WILL BE SEEN BY MANY AS ENGAGING IN A RELIGIOUS WAR. IN THE US, THE WAGING, WHETHER ON THE GROUND OR IN THE MEDIA, OF ANY WAR SEEN AS “RELIGIOUS” IS BOUND TO BUMP UP AGAINST SOME OF OUR MOST BASIC CONSTITUTIONAL DECLARATIONS.

WE HAVE CREATED INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS TO PROTECT INDIVIDUAL AND COMMUNAL RIGHTS — THE EU, THE COURT OF JUSTICE AT THE HAGUE AND THE UN, FOR EXAMPLE, BUT THEY ARE UNLIKELY TO BE OF MUCH USE AGAINST A GROUP OF ARMED JIHADISTS IN A PUBLIC SQUARE GIVING ORDERS TO “CONVERT, FLEE OR DIE”.

THE IS FORCES ARE THOSE NOW DOMINATING HEADLINES AND TV NEWSCASTS WITH MULTIPLE ATROCITIES. THIS GLOBAL PUBLICITY MOSTLY ENGENDERS CONDEMNATION, BUT IT PROVIDES STATUS AND ATTRACTION TO MANY OF THE DISAFFECTED WHO LIVE ON THE FRINGES OF THEIR SOCIETIES AND WHO ARE DRAWN TO THE IS VISION OF WAR IN THE NAME OF GOD.

IS IS NOT THE ONLY EXTREMIST FORCE WITHIN GREATER ISLAM. ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCALE THERE IS ALSO AL-QAEDA AND THE TALIBAN WHOSE METHODS MAY DIFFER SOMEWHAT, BUT THEIR GOALS ARE THE SAME — THE CREATION OF AN ABSOLUTE ISLAMIC STATE UNDER SHARIA LAW. WHILE WE HAVE USED IS AS AN EXAMPLE, THE PROBLEM POSED BY EXTREME ISLAM INCLUDES OTHER GROUPS.

AND TO FURTHER COMPLICATE THE REGION’S POLITICAL SITUATION, A NEW, EVEN MORE OMINOUS, NOTE HAS BEEN ADDED BY ANNOUNCEMENTS BY TALIBAN FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN AND AL-SHABAAB IN SOMALIA THAT THEY MIGHT FIND SUFFICIENT COMMON CAUSE WITH IS TO JOIN FORCES WITH IT IN THE IMPOSITION OF ISLAMIC SHARIA LAW THROUGHOUT THE WORLD BY WHATEVER MEANS ARE NECESSARY.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW EVEN A CONCERTED WESTERN MILITARY ACTION MIGHT ELIMINATE THE PROBLEM. IT MIGHT RAMP UP THE MARTYR COUNT, ALTHOUGH THE SUPPLY OF NEW RECRUITS SEEMS CONSTANT AFTER MORE THAN TEN YEARS OF ENGAGEMENT BY US AND OTHER NATIONS. ANY REAL AND PERMANENT RESOLUTION OF ISLAMIC POWER WILL REQUIRE FORCES FROM WITHIN ITS OWN STRUCTURE.

ISLAM HAS A POWER VACUUM AT ITS TOP. THERE IS NO ONE VOICE OR PERSON TODAY THAT CAN SPEAK AUTHORITATIVELY FOR ALL ISLAM ACROSS THE LINES DRAWN BY NATIONS, TRIBES AND SECTS. THIS INVITES OPPORTUNISTS TO ATTEMPT IS-LIKE POWER GRABS WHOSE CHANCES OF SUCCESS HAVE BEEN AIDED IN THE PAST BY THE RELUCTANCE OF “MODERATE” ISLAM TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THEM.

“ONLY ISLAM CAN MOVE ITSELF TO NEW DIRECTIONS.”

THIS IS A BAD SITUATION, BAD FOR THE REGION AND BAD FOR ITS NEIGHBORS IN EUROPE AND AFRICA; AND FOR AMERICA, TOO. AS TOP COP, MANY PEOPLE EXPECT US TO WAVE A NIGHTSTICK AND MAKE THINGS RIGHT. THIS CANNOT AND WILL NOT HAPPEN; FOR WE ARE COMPLETELY UNSUITED TO POLITICALLY AND RELIGIOUSLY PURIFY ISLAM VILLAGE BY VILLAGE. ONLY ISLAM CAN MOVE ITSELF TO NEW DIRECTIONS.

ISLAM IS BASED ON THE QURAN, AN ALMOST 1,500 YEAR OLD BOOK AUTHORED BY ONE MAN THAT PROCLAIMS A RELIGION BASED ON HIS REVELATIONS FROM THE ARCHANGEL MICHAEL. AN ISLAMIC STATE WITH SHARIA LAW MUST ALSO BE COMMITTED TO THE COMMANDS OF THE QURAN, IGNORING THAT TIME, TECHNOLOGY, CULTURES AND POLITICS HAVE ALL UNDERGONE ENORMOUS CHANGE SINCE ITS WRITING AND THAT GOVERNMENTS AND RELIGIONS NOW FUNCTION DIFFERENTLY

AND YET "MODERATE" ISLAM CANNOT DISSOCIATE ITSELF FROM ITS MORE VIOLENT COUSIN. NOTICE WE SAY "MORE", AS THE VIOLENCE EVEN IN "MODERATE" ISLAM CAN REACH CORPORAL PUNISHMENT LEVELS THAT ARE UNCONSCIONABLE BY WESTERN STANDARDS — CUTTING OFF HANDS, STONINGS, WHIPPINGS, PUBLIC EXECUTIONS, ETC.

IN ISLAM, THERE REMAIN TODAY MANY LAYERS OF BELIEF AND BEHAVIOR THAT SUPPORT AND SEPARATE THE FAITH IN ITS PASSAGE THROUGH THE MODERN WORLD. ONE PARTICULARLY DAMAGING FORM OF INSECURITY IS THE WIDESPREAD CONFUSION OR LACK OF IDENTITY IN ITS YOUTH, AND ESPECIALLY ITS YOUNG MALES.

IDENTITY IS IMPORTANT AS IT IS A PRODUCT OF BOTH GENES AND LEARNING WITH THE LATTER INCLUDING LESSONS LEARNED IN THE CLASSROOM AND THOSE IN OUR PROGRESS THROUGH LIFE THAT SHAPE OUR THOUGHTS, ACTIONS AND CHARACTER. IN THE CLASSROOM, WESTERN STUDENTS CAN EXTRACT MEANING FROM ALL THE WORLD'S RECORDED CULTURES AND BOOKS. THE YOUNG MUSLIM HAS NO SUCH CHOICE; HE IS LIMITED TO THE ISLAMIC RANGE OF HISTORY AND TO ITS SOURCE — THE QURAN WHICH CONTROLS ISLAMIC THOUGHT IN WAYS THAT FUSE CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS AUTHORITY. THIS IS A DIFFICULT CONCEPT IN OUR CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION AND IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT IT LEADS YOUTHFUL SEEKERS INTO DANGEROUS PLACES.

IDENTITY CONFLICT COMES EASILY IN THE NE'S ATMOSPHERE OF MIXED AND COMPETING TRIBES, SECTS, CULTURES, TRADITIONS AND HISTORIES, OFTEN WITH THE RESULT THAT YOUNG ISLAMIC MALES CAN EASILY BE DRAWN AND JOINED TO EXTREME GROUPS THAT ESTABLISH PERSONAL POWER THROUGH SOCIAL VIOLENCE; STATUS THROUGH MEMBERSHIP; LAW THROUGH SHARIA; FAME THROUGH THE MEDIA; AND SPIRITUAL SALVATION THROUGH THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD'S WRITINGS. PRESENTED AS CERTAINTIES, THESE PROMISES CAN RADICALIZE THE DISAFFECTED AND UNCERTAIN.

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SENSIBLE FOREIGN POLICY REQUIRES AS CLEAR A VIEW AS POSSIBLE OF THE CONDITIONS WE FACE AND WHAT WE HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO ARTICULATE THESE MATTERS AT LEAST IN A GENERAL WAY TO WHICH OUR FRIENDS, FOES AND OUR OWN CITIZENS CAN RELATE. ANY SUCH STATEMENTS WOULD HAVE TO BE GENERAL ENOUGH NOT

TO REVEAL SENSITIVE OR CONFIDENTIAL INITIATIVES, BUT COULD SERVE TO PREVENT THE IMPRESSION THAT OUR POLICY IS FORMED BY THE DEPT. OF STATE ONE DAY, THE DEPT. OF DEFENSE THE NEXT AND THEN OUR COMMERCIAL PRIVATE SECTOR. THERE IS AMPLE ROOM FOR A PRESIDENT TO LEAVE HIS IMPRINT, BUT IT SHOULD NOT BE THE OVER-THE-SHOULDER, EYES ON THE POLLS VARIETY. NO FOREIGN POLICY IS EVER FREE OF POLITICAL CALCULUS, BUT NOR SHOULD IT BE HOSTAGE TO IT.

THE PROBLEM IS THAT POLICY IS A PRODUCT OF OUR POLITICAL CLASS AND ITS FORMATION IS SUBJECT TO FEW RESTRAINTS FROM SOURCES OUTSIDE GOVERNMENT. EVEN THE MEDIA REPORTS ON IMPORTANT EVENTS TEND TO BE FRUSTRATINGLY VAGUE REGARDING POLICY MATTERS EITHER BETWEEN US AND OUR ALLIES OR THOSE WHO OPPOSE US.

IN FOREIGN RELATIONS ALLIES ARE INVALUABLE, AND WE SHOULD MAKE THE CASE WITH OURS IN EUROPE THAT THE UNDERLYING PROBLEM IN THE NE IS A RELIGIOUS ONE AND CANNOT BE EFFECTIVELY DEALT WITH BY DIPLOMATIC, MILITARY OR POLITICAL BAND-AIDS. THIS IS WORRISOME FOR SPAIN, FRANCE, GERMANY, BRITAIN, ITALY, NORWAY AND SWEDEN ALL OF WHOM HAVE INCREASING MUSLIM POPULATIONS AND MIGRANT PROBLEMS.

IN BELGIUM AND THE NETHERLANDS THE OLD DEMOGRAPHICS ARE GONE, AND IT IS LIKELY THAT THEIR TRADITIONAL POLITICAL ORDERS WILL SOON FOLLOW THEM. MUSLIMS THERE ARE AT OR NEAR MAJORITY STATUS AND ONLY HAVE TO WAIT PATIENTLY UNTIL THEIR QURAN-MANDATED HIGH FERTILITY RATES ENABLE THEM TO CHANGE THE COMPOSITION OF THEIR ELECTIVE GOVERNMENTS.

EACH COUNTRY IN EUROPE HAS DEALT WITH ITS GROWING MUSLIM POPULATION (AND ITS CONSEQUENCES) SOMEWHAT DIFFERENTLY, BUT NOT REALLY SUCCESSFULLY. AS TIME AND FERTILITY ARE ON THE MUSLIM SIDE OF THIS ISSUE, MANY POLITICIANS AVOID IT ON THE BASIS THAT MUSLIM CONTROL MAY BE INEVITABLE IN THE FUTURE; IN WHICH CASE IT'S BETTER NOT TO CAUSE SEVERE POLITICAL REACTIONS NOW.

MORE BEHEADINGS ARE ALMOST CERTAIN TO TAKE PLACE; AND IS CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE ITS ATTACKS ON AMERICAN CITIZENS OR PROPERTY AT HOME OR ABROAD. LOOKING AHEAD, THE REMAINDER OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION, AND WHATEVER PRESIDENCY FOLLOWS IT, WILL FACE SERIOUS FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES. HOPEFULLY, WE CAN RESPOND MORE SUCCESSFULLY THAN WE HAVE UNDER PRESIDENTS CLINTON, BUSH AND OBAMA.

"BOOTS ON THE GROUND"

THIS IS A FREQUENTLY REPEATED PHRASE OF OUR TIME, AND ALSO AN ARTFUL DODGE IN DESCRIBING OUR NE INVOLVEMENT. IT ATTEMPTS TO DEFINE OUR PARTICIPATION IN WAR AS A MATTER OF DEGREE — I.E., LOTS OF BOOTS, WE'RE AT WAR; FEWER, BUT UNSPECIFIED, BOOTS, WE'RE NOT AT WAR. THIS IS A SEMANTIC DISTINCTION NOT AVAILABLE TO THOSE WHO WEAR THE BOOTS.

OUR PRESENCE IN IRAQ HAS INCLUDED FROM ITS BEGINNING A BODY OF ADVISORS, TRAINERS, SPECIAL OPERATIONS GROUPS, INFILTRATORS, TARGET CO-ORDINATORS,

AND COUNTER INSURGENCY EXPERTS THAT WE HAVE DEEMED NECESSARY EVEN AFTER OUR MAIN BODY OF GROUND TROOPS WAS WITHDRAWN.

AS RECENTLY AS LAST JUNE, OUR ADVISORY GROUPS NUMBERED ABOUT 500; NOW THEY ARE FAST APPROACHING 2,000⁶ AND ARE ESSENTIAL TO THE CONDUCT OF THE MODERN, SANITIZED, HIGH TECHNOLOGY AIR WAR WHICH WE HAVE COME TO RELY ON AS BEST SUITED TO DEAL WITH THE MOST LIKELY NUMBER OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS.

COST IS, OF COURSE, AN IMPORTANT FACTOR AND ONE WHICH EASILY ESCAPES OUR CONTROL. WE POURED MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO CLOTHING, TRAINING AND EQUIPPING AN IRAQI ARMY THAT DID NOT FIGHT. WE ARE APPROACHING A SIMILAR DECISION WHETHER TO SPEND \$500 MILLION TO TRAIN SYRIAN FORCES⁷ THAT WE HOPE WILL BE ABLE TO FIGHT BOTH THE IS AND ASSAD FORCES. DO WE DOUBLE DOWN ?

SEMANTICS ASIDE, WE ARE AT WAR AND MUST FACE THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES AT HOME THAT INEVITABLY ARISE.

EPILOGUE

EVENTS IN WAR CREATE A TIME FRAME OF THEIR OWN. WE CAN LOOK BACK AT BOTH THE RAPID MECHANIZED ADVANCES BY THE ALLIES AND NAZIS IN WWII AND THE SEEMINGLY ENDLESS STALEMATE OF THE GREAT WAR'S TRENCH WARFARE WHICH, AS DIFFERENT AS THEY WERE, WERE "STATE OF THE ART" OF THEIR TIMES. IN THE NE THE IS GROUND FORCES HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ATTACK, CONSOLIDATE AND MOVE AGAIN AT A PACE WE HAD NOT EXPECTED. IN THEIR WAKE, CIVILIAN POPULATIONS BAND TOGETHER TO TRY TO SALVAGE WHAT THEY CAN FROM THE WRECKAGE OF THEIR LIVES AND PROPERTY.

EVERY EFFORT, EVERY CRISIS IS REPORTED AS PART OF OUR CONTEMPORARY 24/7 NEWS CYCLE, SOMETIMES SO PROMPTLY AND FREQUENTLY THAT THEY BLEND TOGETHER AND CREATE A BLUR IN OUR MINDS THAT OVERWHELM OUR NORMAL SENSORS OF CONSCIENCE. EVENTS, PLACES, HORRORS, NAMES, NUMBERS ALL COMBINE IN ONE MASS THAT CAN DEFY MEMORY AND OUR ABILITY TO MAKE SENSE OF THEM.

EXCEPT — THERE ARE TWO IMAGES THAT DO NOT BLUR. THEY STAND ALONE ! THEY SHOCK ! AND THEY WILL NOT GO AWAY ! THEY ARE THE IMAGES OF THE IS MASKED EXECUTIONER, KNIFE IN HAND, STANDING BY THE KNEELING JOURNALIST OR AID WORKER HE WILL SOON DISPATCH. AND THE OTHER IS THAT OF OUR WAR PLANES DESTROYING AMERICAN MADE TANKS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT CAPTURED FROM IRAQI FORCES.

EACH DEALS WITH A DIFFERENT ASPECT OF THE WAR IN WHICH WE ARE NOW CERTAIN TO PLAY A LARGER AND LONGER ROLE. AS PAINFUL AS THEY ARE, EACH CARRIES WITH IT A WARNING OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES FROM WHATEVER HOSTILITIES OR PEACE PROCESS THE FUTURE HOLDS.

ECD 9/29/14

END NOTES

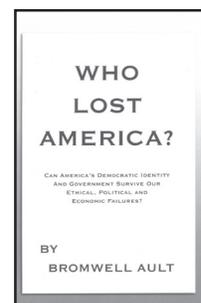
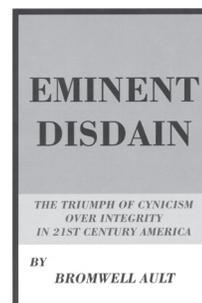
- ¹ WINSTON CHURCHILL USED THIS PHRASE TO DESCRIBE EUROPE'S MILITARY VULNERABILITY IN WWII. IN RECENT YEARS IT HAS COME TO ALSO REFER TO THE HORDES OF MIGRANTS FROM AFRICA AND THE NE SEEKING E.U. RESIDENCE.
- ² WHILE THIS STATEMENT IS GENERALLY ATTRIBUTED TO TIP O'NEILL IN 1980S AND SERVED AS THE TITLE OF A BOOK HE CO-AUTHORED, IT APPEARED IN THE FREDERICK, MD DAILY NEWS OF 7/1/32 AND PRIOR TO THAT IN THE WASHINGTON POST IN 1904; VIA FRED R. SHAPIRO, YALE ALUMNI MAGAZINE, JULY/AUGUST 2014
- ³ THE NEWS HOUR, CPB 8/14
- ⁴ CIVILIZED WORLD MUST UNITE AGAINST . . . BY RABBI SHOLOM CIMENT, PALM BEACH POST 8/18/14
- ⁵ TOP ISLAMIC AUTHORITY IN EGYPT . . . BY SARAH EL DEEB, ASSOCIATED PRESS VIA PALM BEACH POST 8/25/14
- ⁶ CONGRESS MUST SHUT DOWN . . . BY WILLIAM D HARTUNG. PALM BEACH POST 9/29/14
- ⁷ IBID

EDITOR'S BIO

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; EMINENT DISDAIN: THE TRIUMPH OF CYNICISM OVER INTEGRITY IN 21ST CENTURY AMERICA. ; AND WHO LOST AMERICA? CAN AMERICA'S DEMOCRATIC IDENTITY AND GOVERNMENT SURVIVE OUR ETHICAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FAILURES?

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