

MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE®

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

MID-TERM ELECTIONS COMMENT FOREIGN POLICY (CONT.)

TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE BROAD REPUBLICAN SWEEP OF NOVEMBER'S CONGRESSIONAL, GUBERNATORIAL AND STATE LEGISLATURE ELECTIONS WE MUST UNDERSTAND THAT VOTER DISCONTENT AND ITS FOCUS ON THE PRESIDENT HAD BEEN GROWING SINCE HIS REELECTION IN 2012 AND EVEN BEFORE.

SOME OF THIS DISSATISFACTION RESULTED FROM THE LONG RUNNING IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICTS THAT HAVE SO DEEPLY DIVIDED OUR COUNTRY, OUR TWO MAIN POLITICAL PARTIES AND OUR GOVERNMENT IN RECENT YEARS. BUT IN ADDITION TO IDEOLOGY THERE WERE MORE MUNDANE, MORE PRACTICAL REASONS FOR THE ELECTORATE'S SHIFT TO THE GOP. VOTERS TEND TO HAVE LONG MEMORIES ABOUT SOME THINGS AND SHORT ONES ABOUT OTHERS, AND THEIR RESPONSE IS OFTEN NEITHER CONSISTENT NOR PREDICTABLE.

WE MUST GO BACK TO PRES. OBAMA'S FIRST ELECTION WHEN HE PROMISED THE AMERICAN PEOPLE A TRANSPARENT AND ENERGETIC ADMINISTRATION THAT WOULD RID GOVERNMENT OF MANY OF ITS SELF-INFLICTED WOUNDS. IN POLITICS, PROMISES

TEND TO BE REMEMBERED AND, WHEN NEGLECTED, CAN RETURN TO HAUNT THOSE WHO MAKE THEM.

IN OBAMA'S CASE, FOLLOWING THE FAILED BUSH AND CLINTON ADMINISTRATIONS, HIS PROMISES CAME AT A TIME, AND WITH A MESSAGE, THAT ENCOURAGED AMERICANS TO BELIEVE HIM AND HIS STATED COMMITMENT TO OPEN, ACCOUNTABLE AND ETHICAL GOVERNMENT, BUT ALL TOO SOON AFTER MAKING HIS PROMISES OF HOPE AND CHANGE, IT BEGAN TO BE APPARENT THAT SOME TAWDRY ASPECTS OF POLITICAL POWER AND CONTROL WOULD REMAIN THE SAME.

OUR PROCESS OF CAMPAIGNING, ELECTIONS, LEGISLATION, FUNDING AND THEN ADMINISTRATION STARTS WITH RHETORIC AND, AFTER PASSING THROUGH THE VARIOUS FILTERS OF OUR GOVERNMENT PROCEDURE, ENDS IN LAWS OR REGULATIONS THAT ARE ADMINISTERED AT THE PUBLIC LEVEL. THE DEGREE OF OPENNESS BY WHICH THE PUBLIC IS ALLOWED TO VIEW THE VARIOUS STEPS IN THIS USUALLY LENGTHY AND COMPLICATED PROCESS IS DETERMINED IN MATTERS OF GOVERNMENT BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE CONGRESS; AND IN THE PUBLIC REALM

IN THIS ISSUE: WE COMMENCE WITH A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE 2014 MID-TERM ELECTION RESULTS AND THEN CONTINUE WITH FOREIGN POLICY CONCERNS IN THE NEAR EAST AND INFORMATION RELATIVE TO OUR GROWING CONTACTS WITH AFRICA AND CHINA.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE: WE WILL EXPLORE OUR PRESENT NATIONAL CULTURE AND IDENTITY AS ANSWERS TO OUR TITLE QUESTION ABOVE.

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MOSTLY BY OUR MAIN STREAM MEDIA (MSM). WE SAY "MOSTLY" BECAUSE THE MSM IS FAR LESS INDEPENDENT THAN IT HAS BEEN IN THE PAST AND NOW SHARES ECONOMIC AND IDEOLOGICAL TIES WITH OUR POLITICAL STRUCTURE.

FOR THE MOST PART, THE RHETORIC OF THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL IS AS NON-SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE, ITS SOARING IDEOLOGICAL FLIGHTS UNENCUMBERED BY THE REALITIES OF ELECTION AND THEN STAFFING AND MANAGING THE MULTIPLE OFFICES AND AGENCIES REQUIRED TO ADMINISTER THE LAWS THAT HAVE BEEN LEGISLATED AND TO KEEP THE PROMISES THAT WERE MADE.

IT IS IN THIS GAP BETWEEN HIS PROMISES AND PERFORMANCE, BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AS PROMISED AND GOVERNMENT IN OPERATION, WHERE THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY HAS MOST SERIOUSLY FAILED. IT WAS NOT A MATTER OF ONE FAILURE, BUT OF MANY INSTANCES FORMING A PATTERN OF INCOMPETENCY NOURISHED BY EACH SUCCEEDING FAILURE.

AT FIRST, THIS PATTERN WAS BARELY DISCERNIBLE, BUT IT GREW AND, LACKING TRANSPARENCY OR ACCOUNTABILITY, WAS CONFIRMED. EVEN AFTER THE USUAL RESORT TO OFFICIAL DENIALS, THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION FOUND ITSELF BURDENED WITH A RECORD OF ADMINISTRATIVE FAILURES THAT QUESTIONED WHETHER IT COULD MEET THE STANDARDS OF COMPETENCE EXPECTED BY THE NATION'S VOTERS.

WHATEVER YOUR OPINION OF OBAMA, HIS FALL FROM HIS FIRST ELECTION'S POPULARITY TO HIS PRESENT LEVEL REVEALS SUCH A PERSISTENT SQUANDERING OF VOTER FAVOR THAT IT IS UNLIKELY TO BE REGAINED WHILE HE REMAINS IN OFFICE. THERE ARE TOO MANY UNACCOUNTABLE FAILURES, UNKEPT PROMISES, CONSTITUTIONAL CONFLICTS AND WEAK EFFORTS; AND TWO YEARS IS NOT ENOUGH TIME IN WHICH TO WRITE A NEW RECORD TO REPLACE WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE.

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INCOMPETENCY REVEALS ITSELF IN DIFFERENT WAYS — IN SITUATIONS WHICH WE INITIATE AND BY THOSE TO WHICH WE RESPOND. EITHER WAY, IT CAN ONLY MAKE A BAD, OR A GOOD, CIRCUMSTANCE WORSE. THE OBAMA MODEL PLAYED NO FAVORITES; AT HOME OR ABROAD, IT COULD MISS THE MARK AND BY A STUNNING MARGIN.

AN EARLY AND ALMOST INCREDIBLE EXAMPLE WAS A PROGRAM ENTITLED FAST & FURIOUS CONDUCTED BY OUR DEPT. OF JUSTICE (DOJ) UNDER ATTORNEY GENERAL (AG) ERIC HOLDER IN WHICH NON-MILITARY AMERICAN GUNS (PISTOLS, RIFLES, SHOTGUNS, ETC.) WERE SENT TO MEXICO FOR DISTRIBUTION TO DRUG CARTELS THAT DOJ HOPED TO IDENTIFY AND TRACK BY

THEIR USE. SADLY, THIS PROGRAM RESULTED IN THE DEATH OF AN AMERICAN AGENT; EXTENSIVE PUBLICITY; DENIAL AND THEN ADMISSION OF COMPLICITY BY DOJ; CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS; AND FINALLY THE INVOCATION OF EXECUTIVE PRIVILEGE BY THE WHITE HOUSE AND DOJ TO MAINTAIN THE SECRECY OF KEY DOCUMENTS.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE WAS THE SPECIAL TREATMENT AFFORDED TAX DEDUCTIBILITY STATUS REQUESTS TO THE IRS BY POLITICALLY CONSERVATIVE GROUPS. THE FIRST RESPONSE WAS DENIAL; THEN DOWN-PLAYING; THEN THE DEPARTMENT HEAD TAKING THE FIFTH AMENDMENT IN RESPONSE TO ALL QUESTIONS POSED IN CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS; RESIGNATION OF THE IRS DIRECTOR; AND FINALLY, AS FURTHER INFORMATION WAS SOUGHT, THE EXPLANATION THAT ALL THE COMPUTERS OF THOSE INVOLVED HAD "CRASHED" SIMULTANEOUSLY.

THERE WAS THE LOSS OF HALF A BILLION DOLLARS INVESTED IN THE SOLYNDRA PROJECT IN CA UNDER THE SUPERVISION AND WITH THE APPROVAL OF THEN SECRETARY OF ENERGY STEVEN CHU.

AND MORE RECENTLY, WE WITNESSED THE LAUNCH OF THE OBAMA HEALTH CARE PROGRAM. NO MATTER WHAT THE AFFORDABLE CARE ACT (A/K/A ACA, OBAMACARE) MAY PRODUCE IN THE WAY OF RESULTS FOR PATIENTS, DOCTORS, INSURERS, HOSPITALS, ETC, ITS INITIATION AND ATTEMPTED ROLL-OUT WAS A HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEBACLE OF THE FIRST ORDER THAT REQUIRED THE HIRING OF EMERGENCY PERSONNEL AT THE COST OF MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS TO GET IT RIGHT. GIVEN THE AMOUNT OF TIME AND THE EXTENSIVE HUMAN AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE DEPT. OF HEALTH & HUMAN WELFARE AND OTHER AGENCIES, THE INCOMPETENCE OF THOSE ENGAGED IN THE ACA LAUNCH WAS EXTRAORDINARY.

AND THEN THERE'S THE VETERANS' ADMINISTRATION (VA) WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE ESTABLISHED ITS OWN SCALE OF INCOMPETENCE WITH NOTABLE FAILURES OF ITS STANDARDS IN THE CLINTON, BUSH AND, NOW, OBAMA ADMINISTRATIONS.

THE VA IS UNIQUE IN MANY WAYS, ONE OF WHICH IS THAT IT IS HOME TO THREE VERY DISTINCT AND DETERMINED CULTURES — MEDICAL, MILITARY AND MANAGERIAL — WITH THEIR OWN LONG STANDING ATTITUDES AND TECHNIQUES. USUALLY HEADED BY A POLITICAL APPOINTEE, THE VA HAS NOT RECEIVED FROM CONGRESS THE CAREFUL ATTENTION IT DESERVES. INDEED, IT HAS OFTEN BEEN THE TARGET OF BUDGET CUTS WHEN CONGRESS HAS BEEN CALLED TO REDUCE EXPENDITURES. BUT IT IS A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN OUR BUREAUCRACY WITH LEGITIMATE CLAIMS ON ITS EXPANDED ASSETS, PERSONNEL AND SERVICE CAPABILITY, AS

OUR NUMEROUS WARS RETURN THEIR MENTALLY AND PHYSICALLY WOUNDED TROOPS FOR TREATMENT.

THERE CAN BE NO REAL ARGUMENT WITH THE NEED FOR, OR THE PURPOSE OF, THE VA, BUT SOMEHOW OVER TIME IT DEVELOPED AND MAINTAINED A CORRUPT, AUTHORITARIAN STRUCTURE THAT PERSISTED IN ACTIONS ANTITHETICAL TO ITS VETERANS' HEALTH AND WELL BEING. WHEN THE BRIGHT LIGHT OF PUBLIC AND MEDIA SCRUTINY CALLED ATTENTION TO THE VA, IT WAS MET BY SPEECHES, PROMISES, INQUIRIES, PHOTO-OPS AND OCCASIONAL REPLACEMENTS OF SOMEONE DESIGNATED TO "TAKE THE FALL". BUT WITHIN THE VA, ITS INSTITUTIONAL MODEL WAS ALWAYS ABLE TO REVERT TO "BUSINESS AS USUAL".

THE MOST RECENT VA UPEHAVAL LAST YEAR BROUGHT FORTH CLAIMS THAT VA PERSONNEL HAD DELAYED OR WITHHELD MEDICAL TREATMENT/APPOINTMENTS FROM VETS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE THEIR OWN SERVICE/PERSONNEL AND COMPENSATION RECORDS. IT WAS EVEN CLAIMED THAT THIS PRACTICE RESULTED IN A FEW DEATHS.

PUBLIC OUTRAGE WAS IMMEDIATE AND JUSTIFIED, AND VA DIRECTOR GENERAL SHINSEKI WAS ALLOWED TO RESIGN AND WAS REPLACED BY ROBERT McDONALD, FORMERLY CEO OF GLOBAL CONSUMER PRODUCTS MARKETER PROCTER AND GAMBLE. WHILE GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO BRING FORTH A FULL AND FAIR REPORT CONTINUE, McDONALD HAS ANNOUNCED THAT HE HAS TAKEN ACTION AND MARKED FOR ELIMINATION, ABOUT A THOUSAND EMPLOYEES SUBJECT TO THE FEDERAL REGULATIONS THAT COVER THEM.¹

McDONALD'S WILLINGNESS TO EMBRACE ACCOUNTABILITY COULD BE A DC GAME CHANGER THAT MIGHT EVEN SPREAD TO OTHER PARTS OF OUR CAPITAL'S #1 INDUSTRY — ITS BUREAUCRACY. BUT DON'T BET ON IT.

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INCOMPETENCY APPEARS NOT ONLY IN SITUATIONS OF OUR OWN INTENT AND ACTION, BUT ALSO THOSE DELIVERED TO US BY OTHER PARTIES OR INTERESTS TO WHICH WE MUST RESPOND. SOMETIMES UNEXPECTED AND OFTEN CONTRADICTORY, THESE CIRCUMSTANCES LIE AT THE HEART OF MANY OF OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS PROBLEMS.

INCOMPETENCE IS SECOND TO NONE IN ITS ABILITY TO START WITH A MINOR EVENT OR ATTITUDE AND THEN BE MAGNIFIED BY POLITICAL OR PERSONAL OPPOSITION WITH FULL MEDIA ATTENTION TO A NATIONAL, OR SOMETIMES INTERNATIONAL, CRISIS LEVEL. IN THIS PROCESS CONTROL OF FACTS AND CONSEQUENCES CAN QUICKLY PASS FROM GOVERNMENTS AND/OR POLITICAL PARTIES TO THE REALM OF PUBLIC OPINION; AND ANY SUGGESTION OF INFORMATION BEING SUPPRESSED OR OF CONFLICTING VERSIONS OF EVENTS BECOMES AN INSTANT ACCELERATOR.

THERE HAS BEEN NO SHORTAGE OF ACCUSATIONS OF INCOMPETENCE OF THIS TYPE IN THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATIONS. THE EARLY INDICATIONS OF POLITICAL CHANGE IN LIBYA AND EGYPT, PREMATURELY LABELED "THE ARAB SPRING", HAVE FALTERED AND REVERTED TO THE TRIBAL/RELIGIOUS POWER STRUGGLES THAT SEEM UNABLE TO TOLERATE EVEN MODEST EFFORTS TOWARDS CENTRAL, REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF NORTH AFRICA HAS BEEN A DOMINANT FACTOR IN ITS LIFE FOR CENTURIES. POPULATION, WAR, COMMERCE AND TRANSPORTATION SURVIVED THE RULE OF

EARLY EMPIRES ALONG ITS SLIM MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL STRIP, BUT THE ROOTS OF THE REGION'S THREE LARGEST COUNTRIES — ALGERIA, LIBYA AND EGYPT — EXTENDED FAR TO THE SOUTH IN THE SAHARA DESERT.

IN LIBYA, HAVING DISLODGED THE GHADDAFI REGIME WITH AIR POWER AND WITH NO EFFECTIVE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ITS PLACE, WHAT RESULTS TODAY IS A BATTLEGROUND FOR COMPETING MILITIAS, SOME ARMED AND JOINED BY AL QAEDA FORCES.

THE FAILURE OF THE "ARAB SPRING" IN LIBYA CANNOT BE ASCRIBED TO INCOMPETENCE, BUT RATHER TO OUR HAVING A POLICY WITH A STATED GOAL OF REPLACING GOVERNMENT, BUT NOT THE MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH IT. ONCE OUR AIR POWER WAS GONE AND WE BECAME BYSTANDERS, THE OLD WAYS RETURNED.

LIBYA, HOWEVER, WAS THE SOURCE OF ONE OF THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S MOST SERIOUS AND PUBLICIZED COMPETENCY ISSUES — THAT OF THE JIHADIST ATTACK ON OUR CONSULATE IN BENGHAZI AND THE ACCOMPANYING DEATHS OF AMBASSADOR STEVENS AND SOME MEMBERS OF HIS SECURITY STAFF. FOR MANY REASONS, INCLUDING THE ISSUANCE OF FAULTY INFORMATION AND THE POSSIBILITY OF A COVER-UP PRIOR TO NATIONAL ELECTIONS, THE BENGHAZI STORY GAINED IMMEDIATE ATTENTION AND TRACTION AND IS STILL, TWO YEARS LATER, A HEADLINE ISSUE THAT HAS SPAWNED MULTIPLE INTERVIEWS, COMMENTS AND CONGRESSIONAL INVESTIGATIONS AND HEARINGS.

SOME KEY TESTIMONY BY STAFF/SECURITY PERSONNEL HAS NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC BECAUSE OF POLITICAL OR SECURITY CONCERNS, BUT, AS TIME PASSES, MORE EMERGES, AND SEVERAL BOOKS OFFER CONSIDERABLE DETAIL PROVIDED BY ON-SCENE PARTICIPANTS. ONE THAT IS SURPRISINGLY FULL IN ITS REPORT IS 13 HOURS IN BENGHAZI² BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH OUR DIPLOMATIC AND MILITARY SECURITY OFFICERS.

WITHOUT ACCESS TO ALL THE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AN ACCURATE JUDGMENT OF WHAT PART WAS PLAYED BY INCOMPETENCE CANNOT BE MADE, BUT IT DOES SEEM THAT BOTH OUR DEPT OF STATE AND OUR MILITARY MISJUDGED THE URGENCY OF THE SITUATION AND COULD HAVE, OR SHOULD HAVE, BEEN ABLE TO RESPOND MORE QUICKLY AND FORCEFULLY. THE COMPETENCY QUESTION IS A LEGITIMATE ONE HERE. WE CANNOT ANTICIPATE EVERY ATTACK BY HOSTILE FORCES, BUT IN INSTANCES WHEN WE HAVE SECURITY PERSONNEL IN PLACE THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO ACT IN WAYS CONSISTENT WITH THEIR DESIGNATED FUNCTION.

INCOMPETENCY HAS BEEN A LEGITIMATE CHARGE IN OTHER AREAS OF OUR FOREIGN RELATIONS. ACCORDING TO NEW YORK TIMES INVESTIGATIVE REPORTER JAMES RISEN, "AS MUCH AS \$14 BILLION IN CASH WAS FLOWN TO IRAQ BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT — ONLY TO HAVE MUCH OF IT STOLEN. APPROXIMATELY \$2 BILLION OF THE MONEY WAS SECRETLY TRANSPORTED OUT OF IRAQ ... MORE THAN \$1 BILLION OF THAT CASH IS NOW SITTING IN A BUNKER IN LEBANON, BEYOND OUR REACH DESPITE THE FACT THAT WE HAVE KNOWN ABOUT IT FOR YEARS." RISEN ADDS THAT THE CIA, THE FBI, THE PENTAGON AND OUR DEPT. OF STATE HAVE BEEN INFORMED OF THE MONEY'S THEFT AND PRESENT LOCATION, BUT HAVE MADE NO EFFORT IN EITHER THE BUSH OR OBAMA ADMINISTRATIONS TO RETRIEVE IT; AND THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT OF N. AL-MALIKI HAS RESPONDED SIMILARLY. OFFICIALS IN WASHINGTON, AND THE NEAR EAST, RISEN CONCLUDES, NOW VIEW THIS AS SOMETHING THAT SHOULD BE KEPT SECRET.³

IN IRAQ, AS IN LIBYA, WE WERE UNABLE TO FOLLOW OUR REMOVAL OF SADDAM HUSSEIN WITH ACTIONS THAT WOULD HAVE REALIZED OUR STATED POLITICAL GOALS. INSTEAD, WE PERMITTED THE INSTALLATION AND CONTINUATION OF A SHIITE GOVERNMENT THAT IGNORED THE INTERESTS OF IRAQ'S SUNNI POPULATION.

IN SYRIA, OUR POLITICAL RHETORIC STAYED WELL AHEAD OF OUR MINIMAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ANTI-HASSAD FORCES AS THEIR RESISTANCE GREW FROM DEMONSTRATIONS TO CIVIL WAR IN THE COURSE OF WHICH, WHEN EVIDENCE OF USE OF POISON GAS SURFACED, PRES. OBAMA DREW HIS FAMOUS "RED LINE". IT SOON WAS CROSSED, AND WITHOUT ANY RESPONSE FROM US OPENED THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR TO ALL WHO WISHED TO PARTICIPATE. AMONG THE LATTER WAS THE RISING ISLAMIC STATE (IS) WHICH PRES. OBAMA DISMISSED AS A "JUNIOR VARSITY" ORGANIZATION.

HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE, IT SEEMS, OUR REPUTATION AND PERFORMANCE IN MATTERS OF COMPETENCY HAVE SUFFERED.

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COMPETENCY IS NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH EXCELLENCE. IT IS OF A MUCH LOWER ORDER IN LIFE AND THE SCHEME OF HOW THINGS WORK. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONAL AWARDS FOR COMPETENCE COMPARABLE TO THE NOBEL PRIZES, THE MACARTHUR AWARDS, OUR MEDAL OF HONOR OR BRITAIN'S VICTORIA CROSS. IN THOSE AREAS OF OUR SOCIETY THAT OFFER THE GREATEST REWARDS OF MONEY AND POWER WE EXPECT TO FIND COMPETENCE AND TAKE IT FOR GRANTED.

GOVERNMENT IS SUCH AN AREA, AND BECAUSE OF THE EXTRAORDINARY RESOURCES AT ITS COMMAND WE QUITE RIGHTLY EXPECT COMPETENCY IN RETURN. AND YET THE CONDUCT OF OUR GOVERNMENT IN RECENT YEARS CAN SUPPORT AN ARGUMENT THAT INCOMPETENCE IS GAINING GROUND.

ONE PRACTICAL EXPLANATION IS THAT, AS THE SIZE, REACH AND TECHNOLOGY OF GOVERNMENT HAS EXPANDED, THE KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND PEOPLE REQUIRED FOR COMPETENCY HAVE TO BE SPREAD EVER MORE THINLY.

INCOMPETENCY IS A WORK PLACE ELEMENT ALWAYS PREPARED TO SPREAD INTO THE EMPTY SPACE LEFT BY LAZINESS, LACK OF SKILLS/MOTIVATION/DIRECTION OR RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP. IT IS A HIGHLY CORRUPT AND CONTAMINATING FORM OF DECAY.

AS A POLITICAL ISSUE IT LACKS THE GUT-PUNCH POWER OF "JOBS", "GROWTH", "ECONOMIC INEQUALITY", "THE AMERICAN DREAM", "JUSTICE", "RACISM" AND OTHERS THAT MARK OUR CONTEMPORARY CAMPAIGN TRAILS. IT IS A CHARGE THAT CAN BE FAIRLY LEVELED AGAINST BOTH DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN ADMINISTRATIONS AND, FOR EASE OF APPLICATION, IS USUALLY LAID AT THE DOOR OF THE OVAL OFFICE. BOTH PARTIES INVOKE IT IN THE BLINK OF EYE AND AVOID ANY DEFENSE WHEN CHARGED WITH IT.

OUR POPULATION, BUDGET AND BUREAUCRACY NUMBERS HAVE BEEN ACCELERATING FOR HALF A CENTURY, FOLLOWING A LINE OF EXCESS, PAUSING BRIEFLY AT THE NEXT MOMENT OF CONSCIENCE, AND MOVING ON AGAIN ALONG THE PATH DETERMINED BY OUR COMMERCIAL, POLITICAL, MEDIA AND MILITARY LEADERS.

THE STRAIN ON OUR GOVERNMENT AND SOCIETY IMPOSED BY THE COSTS OF TOO MUCH INCOMPETENCY AND BUREAUCRACY

WILL TURN OUT TO BE UNBEARABLE. WE FIT THE IMAGE OF A MAN WITH A COAL SACK ON HIS BACK CLIMBING A HILL WITH SOMEONE ADDING ANOTHER LUMP OF COAL EVERY FEW STEPS.

IN OUR GOVERNMENT, BUREAUCRACY AND INCOMPETENCE HAVE BECOME BOTH SIDES OF THE SAME COIN DUE TO THE WAY IN WHICH THE MACHINERY OF GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PUT TO USE BY OUR ELECTED POLITICIANS. THAT MACHINERY RUNS LIKE NO OTHER WITH A SELF-GENERATING MOMENTUM THAT DEFIES ANY REAL LIMITATIONS OR SAVINGS, AS "REDUCTIONS" ARE ALMOST ALWAYS APPLIED AGAINST ANTICIPATED INCREASES RATHER THAN PRIOR EXPENSES.

EVERY RECENT PRESIDENT, ACTING IN RESPONSE TO HIS PERCEPTION OF EITHER EXTERNAL THREATS OR VOTER PREFERENCE, HAS ADDED PEOPLE, AGENCIES, DEPARTMENTS, FUNCTIONS, OVERHEAD, ETC. TO OUR BUREAUCRATIC STRUCTURE. FOR INSTANCE, MICHAEL SHEAR OF THE NY TIMES REPORTED THAT TEN DAYS FOLLOWING HIS EASING OF IMMIGRATION STATUS FOR 5 MILLION RESIDENT ILLEGALS PRES. OBAMA REVEALED THAT THE CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES (CIS) AGENCY WOULD OPEN A NEW OFFICE IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA STAFFED WITH A THOUSAND NEW WORKERS.

SHEAR CITES A "LIKELY COST OF NEARLY \$8 MILLION A YEAR IN LEASE PAYMENTS AND MORE THAN \$40 MILLION FOR ANNUAL SALARIES". HISTORY STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT THIS OVERHEAD INCREASE WILL NOT BE TERMINATED WHEN THE 5 MILLION NEW ARRIVALS HAVE BEEN PROCESSED, BUT RATHER IT WILL BECOME ANOTHER ADDITION TO OUR GROWING GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY WHICH, SHEAR INDICATES, NOW HAS 4.3 MILLION FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.

"THE NUMBERS AND CONSEQUENCES OF OUR POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO BUREAUCRATIC EXPANSION ARE RELENTLESS."

THERE ARE OCCASIONS WHEN AN ENTITY CAN BE CLOSED DOWN AND ITS ACTIVITIES TERMINATED, BUT THESE ARE RARE AND, EVEN WHEN THEY OCCUR, SOME FAVORED STAFF, ALONG WITH THEIR COMPENSATION AND DUTIES, CAN BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER AREAS AND/OR PROJECTS WITH CIVIL SERVICE GRADES AND RETIREMENT BENEFITS INTACT. THE NUMBERS AND CONSEQUENCES OF OUR POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO BUREAUCRATIC EXPANSION ARE RELENTLESS, AND YET GO LARGELY UNNOTICED.

IN WASHINGTON THERE ARE MANY AGENCIES, DEPARTMENTS, TASK FORCES, BUREAUS, MINISTRIES AND GOVERNMENT SERVICE CORPS. CALL THEM WHAT WE MAY — THEY ARE FIEFDOMS. THEY EXIST FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES AND RARELY ACT IN A COMBINED WAY IN THE NATIONAL INTEREST. WE NEED ONLY RECALL THE NON-SHARING OF INFORMATION AND THE BUREAUCRATIC RESISTANCE THAT MARKED THE CIA/FBI EFFORTS RE 9/11.

". . . AND LIFE PROCEEDS AS THE STRUCTURE AND THE CULTURE OF THE BUREAUCRACY DEMAND."

THESE ENTITIES HAVE NO COMPELLING REASON TO ACT AS COMPLEMENTARY PARTS OF GOVERNMENT. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN PEOPLE, PURPOSES AND POWERS WHICH ASSURE THEIR FUNDING SO THAT, WHEN A BUREAUCRATIC HEAD IS REMOVED, ANOTHER TAKES ITS PLACE, AND LIFE PROCEEDS AS THE STRUCTURE AND THE CULTURE OF THE BUREAUCRACY DEMAND.

THE ANSWERS TO THE TITLE QUESTION FOR THIS SERIES, WHO ARE WE; AND WHY ARE WE NOT WHO WE WERE?, CAN BE FOUND IN MANY PLACES ALONG THE PATH OF OUR COUNTRY'S SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PROGRESS. IN THE COURSE OF OUR CIVIC DEVELOPMENT IT HAS HAD TO ABSORB THE IMPACT OF WARS, ASSASSINATIONS, IMMIGRATION, ECONOMIC BOOMS/CRASHES, INDUSTRIALIZATION, TAXATION, SLAVERY, SUPERPOWER STATUS AND THOSE RARE MOMENTS WHEN WE RECOGNIZE HOW WE HAVE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO BECOME SEPARATED FROM OUR EARLY VALUES AND INTENTIONS.

OUR HISTORY IS RIDDLED WITH FALSE STARTS AND MISSTEPS WHICH WE MUST LATER CORRECT; AND IN THIS WE ARE NO DIFFERENT FROM ANY OTHER NATION THAT HAS CHOSEN THE WAY OF REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT.

BUT IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICA WE FIND SOMETHING NEW — THE MASSIVE SIZE AND REACH OF OUR GOVERNMENT APPARATUS WHICH WE HAVE BUILT UP OVER THE LAST HALF-CENTURY BY RELENTLESS TRANSFUSIONS OF MONEY, POWER, DEBT AND AMBITION SO THAT WE NOW FACE A CRISIS OF SCALE.

SCALE, LIKE TECHNOLOGY, CHANGES EVERYTHING. IT IS CURRENTLY DETERMINED BY THE 537 ELECTED MEMBERS OF OUR EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT. THEY CAN VIEW OUR NATIONAL "PIE" AND DECIDE WHO GETS WHAT AND, IF THEY CHOOSE TO ENLARGE IT, THEY CAN DO SO BY ORDERING THE PRINTING (I.E. BORROWING) OF MORE MONEY.

SCALE HAS TIPPING POINTS, LIMITS, WHICH ARE OFTEN REACHED, AND BREACHED, WITHOUT WARNING WHEREUPON THE COMMUNAL STRUCTURE IS PENALIZED AND ENOUGH PUBLIC PAIN IS CREATED TO PRODUCE A CHANGE OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP AND, PERHAPS, EVEN THOUGHT, ALTHOUGH MOST LIKELY WE WILL HAVE TO SETTLE FOR ANOTHER CHORUS OF "MISTAKES WERE MADE! NEVER AGAIN!"

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THE SIZE OF OUR GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY IS EXCESSIVE; ITS SHAPE IS BLOATED; ITS EFFORTS ARE MARKED BY INCOMPETENCE AND ARE LESS EFFECTIVE THAN THEY SHOULD BE.

WE THINK THE RECENT ELECTIONS REVEALED A HEALTHY PRESENCE OF VOTER REJECTION OF THE PATTERN OF INCOMPETENCY AND EXCESS OFFERED BY PRES. OBAMA'S FIRST SIX YEARS IN OFFICE. IT WOULD BE COMFORTING TO BELIEVE THAT WHEN THE GOP TAKES OVER CONTROL IN JANUARY OF 2015 IT WILL IMMEDIATELY EMBARK UPON A SERIOUS AND SEARCHING REVIEW OF THE DC BUREAUCRACY AND TAKE WHATEVER STEPS ARE NECESSARY TO REDUCE STAFF, FACILITIES AND "PROJECT CREEP" TO MORE EFFICIENT LEVELS.

PAST EXPERIENCE DOES NOT FAVOR THIS HAPPENING, BUT ROBERT McDONALD'S ACTIONS AT THE VA ARE A SIGN OF HOPE. THE OLD MOLD HAS BEEN BROKEN AND MAY EVEN ALLOW FOR CHANGE THROUGHOUT THE SYSTEM. IF YOU ARE TEMPTED TO MAKE A BET, IT SHOULD BE A SMALL ONE.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

THE PACE OF NEAR EASTERN (NE) POLITICS HAS QUICKENED IN THE PAST QUARTER CENTURY. THE ISLAMIC STATE (IS) WAS BORN IN 2004 AND TEN YEARS LATER HAD CAPTURED

WIDE SWATHS OF TERRITORY IN IRAQ AND SYRIA. SUCH SPEED AND DECISIVENESS BLUR OUR POLITICIANS' PERCEPTIONS AND WE ARE LEFT TO GRAPPLE WITH THEIR SELF-SERVING CLAIMS, POSTURING AND LENGTHY RESPONSES THAT AVOID THE QUESTIONS ASKED.

OUR "LEADERS" WATCH POLLS AS MUCH, IF NOT MORE, TO DETERMINE THEIR ACTIONS RATHER THAN TO SEEK OPINION ON THEIR RESULTS. THEY WANT TO LEAD WITHOUT LEADING, PREFERRING A ROLE IN A COALITION AND THE SAFETY OF A GROUP. THEY WANT REWARD WITHOUT RISK AND HAVE BECOME SPOILED BY OUR NATION'S GREAT WEALTH AND THE PROFLIGATE WAYS IN WHICH THEY CAN ADMINISTER IT.

"LEADING FROM BEHIND" IS AN OXYMORON OF OUR TIME. IT ALLOWS THE LEADER WHO ENGAGES IN IT TO CLAIM BOTH POSITIONS — LEADER AND FOLLOWER — AND THE PROTECTIONS THEY PROVIDE. OXYMORONS PROPOSE WHAT IS EITHER CONTRADICTORY OR IMPOSSIBLE.

IN OUR NUCLEAR ARMED, MULTI-MEDIA, 24/7 NEWS CYCLE RISK CIRCLES THE GLOBE. EVER PRESENT, WITH NO ROOM FOR ERROR, IT HAS ALTERED THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND POLICY. WHEREAS THE LATTER USED TO CONNOTE A STRONG, PATIENT, DELIBERATIVE PROCESS, IT IS NOW OFTEN EXPRESSED BY A HURRIED OR WORRIED POLITICIAN'S COMMENT ON THE DAY'S FAST-BREAKING NEWS REPORTS. ANY ERROR, ANY MISINTERPRETATION, ANY MISSTATEMENT CAN BE A THREAT TO POLICY.

WE ARE WINDING DOWN OUR SECOND WAR IN AFGHANISTAN, AS WE DID IN IRAQ UNTIL THE IS REVEALED ITS PRESENCE AND PLANS AND WE FOUND OURSELVES BACK IN THE FAMILIAR POSITION OF ANNOUNCING WE WERE SENDING "ADVISORS" TO HELP THE IRAQI FORCES.

SO FAR WE HAVE SET THEIR NUMBER AT 3,000, BUT IT'S LIKELY, GIVEN THE TERRITORY INVOLVED AND THE MANPOWER, MOBILITY AND ARMAMENTS OF IS, THAT ANOTHER 6,000 WILL BE NECESSARY. OR MORE? AFTER TWENTY YEARS OF TRAINING IN AFGHANISTAN AND TEN IN IRAQ, WHICH RECEIVED "ROUGHLY \$25 BILLION WORTH OF AMERICAN TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT"⁴, THOSE COUNTRIES' MILITARY FORCES WERE UNABLE TO FUNCTION EFFECTIVELY ON THEIR OWN.

NOW THERE ARE CONFLICTING SIGNS OF BOTH CHANGE AND RIGIDITY. WITH REGARD TO THE LATTER, TURKEY, WITH THE LARGEST ARMY IN THE REGION, REFUSES TO COMMIT GROUND TROOPS UNTIL THE US DOES THE SAME AND THE US, BY DIRECTING MOST OF ITS AIR WARFARE AGAINST IS, HAS GIVEN SYRIA'S HASSAD AT LEAST A TEMPORARY "GET OUT OF JAIL FREE" CARD. WE SHOULD RECALL THAT, WHILE THE STRUGGLE IN SYRIA HAS BEEN ENLARGED BY NUMEROUS OUTSIDE GROUPS, IT WAS THE RESISTANCE TO HASSAD, AT LEAST ON THE SURFACE, THAT ATTRACTED OUR INTEREST AND EARLY EFFORTS.

THOSE EFFORTS HAVE ESCALATED TO OUR DAILY, USE OF AIR POWER AGAINST IS IN BOTH SYRIA AND IRAQ. THIS POWER HAS BEEN A THREAT WHICH WE HAVE EMPLOYED ALONG WITH GROUND FORCES; OR WITHOUT THEM WHEN PUBLIC OPINION FAVORED A "NO BOOTS ON THE GROUND" POLICY.

AS IT BECOMES MORE EVIDENT THAT AIR POWER ALONE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO LOCATE AND DESTROY THE MANY SMALL MOBILE GROUPS THAT COMPRISE THE IS, THE DECLARATIONS OF "NO BOOTS ON THE GROUND" FROM OUR MILITARY AND CIVILIAN LEADERS IN DC AND EUROPE ARE BEING QUALIFIED AND MODIFIED BY REFERENCES TO NUMBERS, ATROCITIES, REFUGEES AND OTHER CONSTANT CIRCUMSTANCES OF WAR. AT THE SAME

TIME THERE IS A GROWING ARGUMENT WITHIN OUR GOVERNMENT AS TO WHETHER THE LEVEL OF OUR AIR POWER USE SHOULD BE RAISED.

AMERICANS LIKE AND EXPECT PROMPT RESULTS. ONE OF THE PROBLEMS OF OUR PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE WAR IN VIETNAM WAS THAT EVERY NIGHT ON TV THE IMAGES OF THE VIET CONG MOVING ALONG JUNGLE PATHS IN THEIR PAJAMA SUITS AND FLAT, STRAW HATS RARELY SHOWED SIGNS OF AMERICAN PROGRESS. “NO BOOTS ON THE GROUND” IS NOW BOTH A MILITARY AND POLITICAL POLICY THAT EXPRESSES VOTER OPINION THAT OUR SEEMINGLY ENDLESS INVOLVEMENT IN NE GROUND WARS SHOULD EITHER END OR BE LIMITED TO MINIMAL RISK ENGAGEMENT.

CRUSADES AND COALITIONS

WHILE COALITIONS HAVE BEEN AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY FOR CENTURIES, THEY ARE LESS SPONTANEOUS THAN THEY USED TO BE. FOR INSTANCE, DURING THE CRUSADES IN THE 11TH TO 13TH CENTURIES, LAUNCHED BY CHRISTIANS IN EUROPE TO RECAPTURE THE HOLY LAND FROM ITS MUSLIM CONQUERORS, NOBLEMEN VOLUNTARILY TOOK UP ARMS, ASSEMBLED THEIR FORCES AND LEFT HOME FOR ABSENCES MEASURED IN YEARS.

IN RECENT TIMES COALITIONS HAVE BECOME MORE DIFFICULT TO PUT TOGETHER. PRES. BUSH I WAS VERY EFFECTIVE IN FORMING THE COALITION FOR THE KUWAIT WAR AGAINST SADDAM HUSSEIN IN 1990, BUT EVEN WITH THE IRAQI DICTATOR’S OBVIOUS AND UNCALLED FOR AGGRESSION, BUSH HAD TO EXPEND CONSIDERABLE TIME AND EFFORT TO ASSEMBLE THE SUPPORT THAT HE NEEDED.

WE HAVE HAD MEDIA REPORTS OF A COALITION OF INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (IC) FORCES COMMITTED TO WAR AGAINST IS, BUT MOSTLY NO NAMES HAVE BEEN GIVEN AND, WHEN THEY HAVE, THERE HAS BEEN AMBIGUITY ABOUT THEIR ROLES AND FORM OF ENGAGEMENT.

THE US STALEMATE WITH TURKEY IS A DELICATE ONE. BOTH COUNTRIES HAVE POLITICAL/MILITARY INTERESTS IN THE CONFLICT — SOME SHARED, OTHERS NOT. BOTH CAN SEE THAT THEIR CHANCES OF SUCCESS FOR SECURING THESE INTERESTS WOULD BE IMPROVED BY THEIR USE OF GROUND FORCES, BUT BOTH MUST CONTEND WITH DOMESTIC POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS THAT HAVE SO FAR PREVENTED EITHER FROM “GOING IT ALONE” AND TAKING THE FIRST STEP.

WHERE, WE MAY WELL ASK, IS THE SENSE OF HUMAN OUTRAGE AND COMMON RESPONSIBILITY, SHOWN SO SPONTANEOUSLY BY CRUSADEERS A THOUSAND YEARS AGO, THAT DECLARES THAT RAPE, MURDER, TORTURE, KIDNAPPING AND EXECUTION OF MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN, OF SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS, FOR TERRITORIAL, ECONOMIC, RELIGIOUS OR POLITICAL GAIN WILL NOT BE TOLERATED BY OUR 21ST CENTURY CIVILIZATION, AND THAT FORCE WILL BE MET WITH GREATER, OVERWHELMING FORCE?

IN THIS CIRCUMSTANCE THE UN’S GLOBAL MEMBERSHIP COULD SPEAK WITH A POWERFUL VOICE, BUT THE UN’S POLITICAL POWER RARELY LEAVES THE DELEGATES’ LOUNGE; IT IS EXPRESSED THROUGH COMMITTEES, REPORTS AND SUGGESTIONS WHILE ITS PEACE KEEPING MISSIONS, ALTHOUGH WELL-INTENDED, ARE RARELY STRONG ENOUGH TO DOMINATE THE SITUATIONS TO WHICH THEY ARE ASSIGNED.

WHETHER WE CHOOSE TO ADMIT IT OR NOT, THE MUSLIM BLOC IN THE UN WIELDS ENORMOUS, AND SOMETIMES DECISIVE, POWER, AND WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY CLAIM THAT ANY CONCERTED ACTION AGAINST IS OR ANY UN PARTICIPATION WOULD CONSTITUTE AN ATTACK ON ISLAM AND DENIAL OF MUSLIM HUMAN AND RELIGIOUS RIGHTS.

THE CRUSADEERS KNEW INTUITIVELY, AND FROM ANCESTORS HAVING HAD TO DRIVE MUSLIMS OUT OF FRANCE AND SPAIN IN THE 8TH CENTURY, THAT TOTAL VICTORY WAS NEEDED. EVEN WITH IT, ISLAM HAS MANAGED TO REPRODUCE, REGROUP AND USE VIOLENCE TO SPREAD ITS MESSAGE THROUGH AFRICA, EUROPE AND ASIA.

OUR RELIANCE UPON “PROCESS” IN OUR TIME AND PLACE REPRESENTS A TECTONIC SHIFT IN MANKIND’S CONCEPT OF BOTH SOCIAL AND LEGAL JUSTICE. AT THE APEX OF OUR PRESENT SYSTEM SITS THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE (ICJ) AT THE HAGUE TO WHICH CAPTURED POLITICAL AND MILITARY LEADERS, WHEN ACCUSED OF MASS CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, DIRECT THEIR APPEALS FOR RELEASE OR CLEMENCY.

FOR THOSE IS LEADERS WHO MIGHT BE CAPTURED AND REMANDED TO THE ICJ FOR TRIAL, IT TAKES LITTLE IMAGINATION TO ANTICIPATE THEIR POSSIBLE DEFENSES. THE ICJ, CONSISTING OF JUDGES FROM DIFFERENT NATIONS, IS A SLOW AND DELIBERATIVE BODY. ACCORDINGLY, ITS JUSTICE IS NOT OF THE SWIFT VARIETY PROMISED BY POLITICIANS. SOME OF THE CASES CURRENTLY BEFORE IT ARE THOSE THAT STEM FROM THE ATROCITIES OF THE RELIGIOUS STRUGGLES IN THE BALKANS A QUARTER OF A CENTURY AGO.

HISTORICALLY, OUR CIVILIZATION’S PRACTICE OF JUSTICE HAS FOCUSED ON THE DETERMINATION OF GUILT AND THE ASSIGNMENT OF PUNISHMENT, BUT IN THE LAST COUPLE OF CENTURIES IN THE WEST, AT LEAST, OUR PROCESS OF JUSTICE HAS EXPANDED TO ALLOW WIDER CONSIDERATION OF AGE, MOTIVATION, PARENTING, MENTAL HEALTH, POVERTY, ABUSE, SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND OTHER FORCES THAT ARE ENCOUNTERED IN VARYING WAYS ON THE PATH OF DEVELOPMENT FROM INFANCY TO ADULTHOOD. THIS CONSTITUTES AN AWAKENING OF HUMAN CONSCIENCE IN SOME WAYS, BUT IT CAN BE APPROPRIATED AND USED IN EXCESS BY SPECIAL INTERESTS TO ADVANCE THEIR SELF-SERVING AGENDAS.

THE IS WILL HAVE NONE OF THIS. INDEED, THE BRUTALITY IT DIRECTS AGAINST MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN FOR NOT SHARING ITS BELIEFS IS AS WANTON AS THAT OF THE DARK AGES OF OUR PAST AND ELICITS REVULSION AMONG MEMBERS OF BOTH THE DEVELOPED AND THE THIRD WORLDS.

GIVEN THIS COMMON REACTION, WE MIGHT EXPECT THAT A COALITION OF GROUND FORCES MIGHT READILY BE FORMED AND DISPATCHED TO THE NE TO ERADICATE THE IS. FOR IT IS APPARENT THAT ONLY BY ELIMINATING ITS PRESENCE WILL THE PEOPLE IT TARGETS BE SET FREE FROM THE FEAR, DANGER AND DESTRUCTION THAT IT IMPOSES.

THE CRUSADES OF THE 11TH TO 13TH CENTURIES WERE SUCCESSFUL COALITIONS IN THEIR FORMATION AND THEIR RESULTS. WITH ALL OF OUR PROGRESS TOWARDS COOPERATIVE, INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENT, NO SUCH COALITION IS POSSIBLE TODAY FOR TWO POWERFUL REASONS.

THE FIRST IS THAT THE POLITICAL LEADERS OF THE IC IN TODAY’S DIFFICULT ECONOMIC CLIMATE DO NOT WANT TO IMPOSE A WAR ON THEIR POPULATIONS — ESPECIALLY ONE THAT MANY WOULD VIEW AS RELIGIOUS. POLITICAL CAPITAL IS CONSIDERED TOO DIFFICULT TO EARN, AND HAS TOO MANY CLAIMS UPON IT, TO SPEND IT ON WHAT IS PRIMARILY A LOCAL, SECTARIAN CONFLICT.

THE NE IS SEEN AS HAVING AN EXCESS OF RELIGIONS AND THEIR PROBLEMS CAN BEST BE RESOLVED BY ITS RESIDENTS.

THE SECOND REASON IS THE CONTINUING AND RAPID GROWTH OF MUSLIM POPULATIONS THROUGHOUT EUROPE AND NOW COMMENCING HERE AND IN CANADA. THERE IS NO COUNTRY IN EUROPE THAT HAS NOT HAD TO DEAL WITH MUSLIM MIGRATION OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER, INCLUDING SWITZERLAND. AWASH WITH ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WHO ENJOY THE EU'S DECLARED RIGHT OF FREE TRANSIT ACROSS NATIONAL BORDERS, ENGLAND AND FRANCE HAVE BECOME THE MOST FAVORED LOCATIONS FOR SETTLEMENT BECAUSE OF THEIR IMMIGRATION POLICIES AND THEIR FAVORABLE LAWS CONCERNING THE TREATMENT OF MIGRANT ARRIVALS.

IN THESE TWO COUNTRIES, WHOSE CULTURES AND HISTORIES HAVE DOMINATED THE EUROPEAN NARRATIVE SINCE CHARLEMAGNE, COMMUNITIES EXIST WHERE THEIR LAW, LANGUAGE, ECONOMIES, TERRITORIES AND RELIGION ARE ISLAMIC — WITH NO EXCEPTIONS. MAINTAINING PEACE BETWEEN THEIR INHABITANTS AND THE GREATER NON-MUSLIM PUBLIC IS NOT ALWAYS EASY, AND SOMETIMES IMPOSSIBLE. WHEN THESE CAULDRONS BOIL OVER, A POLITICAL ERROR OR ISSUE IS OFTEN THE CAUSE AND WHAT RESULTS IS URBAN ANGER AND WARFARE AT ITS WORST — MURDER, LOOTING, ARSON AND TRASHING OF WHATEVER PUBLIC OR PRIVATE PROPERTY IS AT HAND.

THE BALANCE BETWEEN CHAOS AND ORDER REQUIRED FOR GOVERNMENT TO FUNCTION IS A DELICATE ONE IN THESE WORSENING CIRCUMSTANCES, AS MILITANT ISLAM'S CALLS FOR RECOGNITION GROW LOUDER AND MORE FREQUENT. IN EUROPE TODAY THIS RECOGNITION IS TAKING THE FORM OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION.

ANY COALITION TO DESTROY THE IS COULD HAVE A BROAD RIPPLE EFFECT ACROSS ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES IN EUROPE, AND ESPECIALLY SO IF THE US IS VIEWED AS THE COALITION'S LEADER OR SPONSOR. WE TEND IN PERIODS OF LESSER ACTION AND ORATORY TO DISREGARD THE FACT THAT MANY MUSLIMS CONSIDER CHRISTIANS AND JEWS AS THEIR ENEMY, AS THE GREAT SATAN. WHETHER THIS VIEW IS HELD BY 10% OR 30%, OR WHATEVER NUMBER, IS NOT IMPORTANT. IT IS THERE AND THOSE WHO HOLD IT CITE THE QURAN AND ISLAMIC HISTORY AS ITS SOURCE.

OUR PAST THINKING HAS LED US TO VIEW ISLAM AS PRIMARILY A RELIGIOUS FORCE AND ISSUE, AND CERTAINLY THE IS'S REQUIREMENT THAT THE PEOPLE IT CONQUERS EITHER CONVERT TO ISLAM OR BE KILLED PUTS A TERRIFYING EMPHASIS ON RELIGION.

BUT ISLAM IS IN THE PROCESS OF OUTGROWING ITS RELIGIOUS CHARACTERIZATION. IT REACHES INTO AND ROILS OUR WORLD'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ARGUMENTS. IT ALSO NOW EXTENDS BEYOND THE PHYSICAL BOUNDARIES OF NATIONS AND REGIONS THAT HAVE PREVIOUSLY CONTAINED IT. WITHIN ISLAM THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A SHORTAGE OF ELEMENTS THAT VIEW ITS MESSAGE AS CIVILIZATIONAL IN SCOPE AND IS IS CERTAINLY ONE OF THEM. THE CONCEPT OF ISLAM AS AN ACTIVE, OR EVEN POTENTIAL, CIVILIZATIONAL THREAT REQUIRES NEW LENSES FOR OUR 21ST CENTURY WESTERN WORLD. (ED: MORE ON THIS IN OUR NEXT ISSUE.)

SUMMING UP

IN LOOKING AT THE NE'S INTENSE AND HISTORICAL CONFLICT BETWEEN MULTIPLE PARTIES, TRUTH TENDS TO BE SEEN

IN FLEXIBLE FORMS THAT CAN BE BENT AND FITTED TO THE CLAIMS OF THE PARTICIPANTS WHOSE LOYALTIES ARE FORMED, EXERCISED AND DELIVERED BY A BEHAVIORAL DNA THAT IS PARTLY TRIBAL AND PARTLY RELIGIOUS. WHERE IS THE TRUTH? IN THE NE, PERHAPS ONLY WHERE IT WAS LAST SEEN AND RECOGNIZED. AND EVEN THAT CAN BE FLEETING.

STILL, WITHOUT EVEN CLAIMING TRUTH, THERE ARE SOME ELEMENTS THAT EXHIBIT SUCH STRONG RESISTANCE TO RESOLUTION THAT THEY SUGGEST PERMANENCE:

1) AIR WARFARE IS A POWERFUL TECHNIQUE AND CAN REDUCE MAN'S WORKS TO RUBBLE, BUT IT CAN LEAVE PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS AND CUSTOMS INTACT IN ITS WAKE.

2) TO ERADICATE A BELIEF SYSTEM, AS WE DID AFTER WWII IN GERMANY AND JAPAN, WILL REQUIRE "BOOTS ON THE GROUND" DURING AND AFTER HOSTILITIES, AND A JUSTICE SYSTEM MORE LIKE NUREMBURG THEN THAN THE ICJ AT THE HAGUE NOW. THE USE OF THE WORD "ERADICATE" MAY CARRY WITH IT IN OUR TIME THE WHIFF OF GENOCIDE. THIS IS NOT OUR INTENTION. RATHER, WE REFER TO THE DEEP SOCIAL, MORAL AND ETHICAL CLEANSING THAT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR ISLAM AND THE WESTERN WORLD TO EXPUNGE FROM THEIR COLLECTIVE CONSCIENCE ANY TOLERATION OF IS'S MESSAGE AND METHODS.

3) AN EFFECTIVE COALITION SHOULD HAVE STRONG AND WIDELY RECOGNIZED LEADERSHIP QUALIFICATIONS. FOR SOME VERY REAL DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN CONSIDERATIONS THE ROLE OF COALITION LEADER SHOULD NOT BE AUTOMATICALLY ASSIGNED TO THE USA.

“ . . . GROWING NUMBERS THAT WILL BE FELT IN EVERY CORNER OF OUR PLANET AND EVERY LIFE FORM IT SUSTAINS.”

4) TODAY ONE OUT OF EVERY FIVE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD IS MUSLIM. BY MID-CENTURY THIS IS EXPECTED TO GROW TO ONE OUT OF EVERY THREE.⁵ AS A POLITICAL, POPULATION, ECONOMIC AND SPIRITUAL FORCE, ISLAM CAN BE EXPECTED TO EXERT CONTINUING PRESSURE ON THE WEST IN COMING YEARS. MUSLIM TEACHING AND PRACTICE OF HIGH FERTILITY FAMILIES IS A FACTOR NOW ACCOMPANIED BY GROWING NUMBERS THAT WILL BE FELT IN EVERY CORNER OF OUR PLANET AND EVERY LIFE FORM IT SUSTAINS.

A SMALL MUSLIM FAMILY MAY HAVE 4 OR 5 OFFSPRING; LARGE ONES CAN READILY REACH 10, 12 OR MORE. AND THEN THERE'S ALWAYS THE NEXT GENERATION. THERE IS NO BETTER, NOR TERRIFYING, EXAMPLE OF GEOMETRIC PROGRESSION (EXPONENTIAL GROWTH) THAN THAT OF OUR HUMAN POPULATION.

5) MODERATE ISLAM: WHO AND WHAT IS IT? AND WHAT ROLE WILL IT CHOOSE TO PLAY IN ANY CONCERTED EFFORT TO REMOVE THE IS AND BRING ABOUT A PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE OF ENEMIES IN THE NE? THESE ARE NOT EASY QUESTIONS TO ANSWER. THERE ARE LONG-STANDING SECTARIAN ANTAGONISMS THROUGHOUT THE REGION WITH THE MOST VISIBLE AND FREQUENTLY EXPRESSED EXAMPLE BEING THE SHIITE/SUNNI DIVIDE. MOVING DOWNSCALE FROM IT, THERE ARE MANY OTHERS THAT ARISE FROM SECTARIAN ORIGINS BUT ARE ALSO LACED WITH POLITICAL, GEOGRAPHICAL AND TRIBAL CONTROVERSIES — EACH TYPE HAVING TO BE DEFENDED BY CUSTOM AND, OFTEN, "HONOR".

FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE NORTHWEST REGION OF PAKISTAN ALONG ITS BORDER WITH AFGHANISTAN TRIBAL RELATIONS

DOMINATE. THE PASHTOONS' LAW IS TRIBAL AND RECOGNIZES THE AUTHORITY OF FEUDS AND OTHER CUSTOMS THAT HAVE EXISTED FOR GENERATIONS. THERE ARE NO POLICE FORCES BECAUSE CRIME AND PUNISHMENT ARE DEALT WITH BY INDIVIDUALS OR FAMILIES ACCORDING TO TRIBAL CONCEPTS THAT FOCUS ON HONOR AND REVENGE. THE LATTER ARE CONSTANTS AND THEY DRIVE TRIBAL THOUGHT AND ACTION.

“MODERATE ISLAM” CAN WELL BE A EUPHEMISM USED TO SIGNIFY INDIRECT, FILTERED OPPOSITION TO IS — ENOUGH TO SHOW SOME COMMON CAUSE WITH THE IC, YET NOT ENOUGH TO BE SEEN AS A PRIMARY OPPONENT BY THE IS. THIS IS A DELICATE BALANCE TO MAINTAIN WHILE HOSTILITIES CLAIM TERRITORY AND LIVES IN IRAQ AND SYRIA. IT IS MADE EVEN MORE SO BY THE FACT THAT “MODERATE ISLAM” MEMBERS OR THEIR RELATED ENTITIES HAVE PROVIDED FUNDING FOR EQUIPMENT AND SERVICES TO BE USED AGAINST IS.

IDENTITY IS NOT AN OPEN OR SIMPLE MATTER IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD (I.E., WEARING OF THE BURKA BY WOMEN; USE OF DUAL NAMES AND PREVALENCE OF FACIAL HAIR BY MEN). IT CAN UNDERGO CLEAR OR SUBTLE SHIFTS FROM CHANGES IN PERCEPTION OR CIRCUMSTANCE, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS IN SYRIA WHERE AN INITIAL REBELLION AGAINST THE HASSAD REGIME HAS GROWN INTO BOTH A CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS WAR BETWEEN MULTIPLE PARTIES WITH MORE WAITING ON THE BORDERS.

6) THE IRAQI MILITARY QUESTION — MUCH OF OUR STRATEGY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST IS IS BASED ON IRAQ'S ARMY SERVING AS THE PRIMARY FIGHTING FORCE TO WHICH WE WILL CONTRIBUTE MONEY, EQUIPMENT AND ADVISORS AS WE HAVE IN THE PAST. IRAQ'S MILITARY LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, IS HOSTAGE TO THE SAME SHIITE/SUNNI DIVISION THAT PERVADES ALL THE OTHER AREAS AND FUNCTIONS OF IRAQ'S GOVERNMENT; AND, WHILE WE HAVE INSTALLED A DEMOCRATIC PROCESS FOR IT AND DISGUISED ITS TRADITIONAL LEVERS OF POWER, THEY STILL EXIST AND FUNCTION BENEATH THE SURFACE.

THIS HAS BEEN THE REALITY OF OUR NE MILITARY PRESENCE FOR OVER A DECADE AT A COST OF MANY BILLIONS OF DOLLARS. CORRUPTION WITHIN THE IRAQI MILITARY IS A FACT, AND THE QUESTION THAT CONFRONTS OUR POLICY IS “CAN THIS DEEPLY ENTRENCHED ABUSE OF POWER BE ELIMINATED BY OUR INTERVENTION AND, IF SO, AT WHAT COST?” THERE IS LITTLE EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT THIS QUESTION HAS BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN SETTING OUR RECENT MILITARY POLICY — AND EVEN LESS THAT IT WILL PLAY A PART IN FUTURE CHALLENGES.

7) MEGA-SCALE: THE FUTURE OF OIL. THE LAST CENTURY OF THE WORLD ECONOMY HAS BEEN DOMINATED BY THE AVAILABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING OF PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND THEIR MANY DERIVATIVES, SUCH AS CHEMICALS, TEXTILES, PLASTICS, FERTILIZERS, ADHESIVES, ETC. OIL, IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER, HAS BECOME A STAPLE IN MANY ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES.

BUT TIME AND PRICES AND RESOURCES ARE ALL CHANGING, AS ARE OUR CLIMATE, WATER, AIR, POPULATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE. TODAY MANY VOICES FROM PREVIOUSLY UNRECOGNIZED OR UNHEARD SOURCES CALL FOR PETROLEUM TO HAVE A SIGNIFICANTLY DIMINISHED ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESENCE IN THE CENTURY AHEAD. WITHOUT ASSIGNING DATES OR AMOUNTS, THIS POSSIBILITY SEEMS A REASONABLE ASSUMPTION.

OUR PAST “PETROLEUM” CENTURY HAS ALTERED LIFE IN THE NE FAR BEYOND WHAT WAS EVEN IMAGINABLE BEFORE WWI. THROUGH ITS OIL, IT HAS TRANSFORMED THE REGION'S

ECONOMY FROM POOR AND PRIMITIVE TO WEALTHY AND ADVANCED, CREATING COMMERCE, JOBS, CAPITAL AND POLITICAL POWER IN THE PROCESS. THE QUESTION OF HOW A LESSER WORLD ROLE FOR OIL WILL PLAY OUT IN THE NE CANNOT BE ANSWERED NOW — BUT IT MUST BE ASKED.

EVEN WITHOUT SPECIFIC ANSWERS, HOWEVER, IT IS ASSURED THAT THE FUTURE LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYDROCARBON RESOURCES AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION, TRANSPORTATION AND MARKETING EFFORTS WILL BE AS GREATLY CHANGED IN THE NEXT CENTURY AS THEY WERE IN THE LAST.

HOW MUCH OF THE COMMERCE, CAPTIAL AND REAL ESTATE IN TODAY'S WORLD ECONOMY DEPENDS UPON THE UNINTERRUPTED FLOW OF OIL FROM THE NE? HOW MANY SUPERTANKERS, SKYSCRAPERS OR CORPORATIONS THAT MARK THE EARTH'S SURFACE HAVE BEEN FINANCED BY OIL BENEATH IT? AND HOW MUCH DEBT REMAINS AND FLOATS ON OIL?

OUR FUTURE IS COMPRISED OF WALL-TO-WALL QUESTIONS TO WHICH WE STRIVE TO PROVIDE ANSWERS. HERE'S ONE MORE: CHINA HAS INDICATED THAT IT ANTICIPATES USING 98 MILLION BARRELS OF OIL PER DAY BY 2030, WHICH IS CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN OUR PRESENT GLOBAL USE OF 84 MILLION⁶. “HOW CAN THIS BE?”

* * *

WITHIN THE SPACE OF 48 HOURS IN MID-DECEMBER TERRORIST ATTACKS WITH LARGE LOSSES OF LIFE AND INJURIES TOOK PLACE IN YEMEN, PAKISTAN AND AUSTRALIA. MOST SHOCKING TO OUR WESTERN CONSCIENCE WAS THE PAKISTAN TALIBAN RAID AGAINST A SCHOOL IN PESHAWAR WITH A DEATH TOLL OF 148 YOUNG STUDENTS.

THE RESPONSE BY WESTERN LEADERS OBAMA AND CAMERON AND THE UN'S BAN-KIMOON WAS ONE OF SHARED OUTRAGE WRAPPED IN A SCOLDING. THERE WAS VERBAL CONDEMNATION, BUT NO CALL FOR ACTION. SOME OF THEIR PHRASEOLOGY WAS FROM THE SAME REPETITIOUS LEXICON FROM WHICH WE HEAR OTHER FAMILIAR COMMENTS SUCH AS “MISTAKES WERE MADE” AND “NEVER AGAIN”.

THE AUSTRALIAN HOSTAGE TAKINGS AND MURDERS, ALONG WITH PREVIOUS SECURITY OPERATIONS, DISPELLED THE COMMON CONCEPTION THERE THAT THE AUSTRALIAN CONTINENT WAS IMPERVIOUS TO TERRORIST PENETRATION.

IN ANOTHER GAME CHANGER, SONY FILMS' SCHEDULED OPENING OF THE INTERVIEW, WHICH RELATES AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON NORTH KOREA'S KIM JONG UN, HAS BROUGHT FORTH THREATS THAT ITS DISTRIBUTORS AND EXHIBITING THEATRES WILL BECOME TARGETS. THE FBI HAS IDENTIFIED N. KOREA AS THE SOURCE OF THESE THREATS AND PRES. OBAMA HAS PROMISED RELATIATION. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE WHAT FORM IS CHOSEN.

THIS IS THE AGE IN WHICH WE LIVE. IN MANY WAYS IT IS OF OUR OWN CREATION. IT SHOULD BE CLEAR THAT IT REQUIRES SOME FORM OF UNIFIED ACTION BY THE WEST, NOT THE SCATTERED, INDIVIDUAL COMMENTS OF LOCAL LEADERS PRIMARILY CONCERNED WITH POLITICS AT HOME.

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THERE ARE MANY OTHER NEAR TERM FOREIGN RELATIONS CONFRONTATIONS, MAJOR AND MINOR, WHICH BEG

FOR OUR PARTICIPATION IN A LEADERSHIP ROLE. FOR SOME, THEIR MOMENT IS BRIEF AS THEY ENTER, TRANSIT AND THEN EXIT THE STAGE OF INTERNATIONAL CONCERN. OTHERS LINGER, OR EVEN ENDURE, IN SPITE OF OUR AND OTHERS' BEST EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THEM; OR, FAILING THAT, TO ROB THEM OF THEIR MILITARY AND/OR MEDIA MOMENTUM BY IMMOBILIZING THEM IN A STATUS QUO AT LEAST GRUDGINGLY ACCEPTABLE TO ALL PARTIES.

WE CITE TWO THAT SERIOUSLY CHALLENGE OUR WORLD'S DIPLOMATIC SKILLS WITH EACH, FOR ENTIRELY DIFFERENT REASONS, HAVING THE POTENTIAL TO RENDER A JUDGMENT OF FAILURE ON OUR POSTWAR ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH A FIRM AND RESPONSIVE STRUCTURE FOR INTERNATIONAL ORDER.

UKRAINE

THE KEY TO THIS TRULY TRAGIC SITUATION LIES IN THE 1994 BUDAPEST MEMORANDUM ON SECURITY ASSURANCES AGREED TO BY RUSSIA, THE UK AND THE US. THIS PACT WHICH WAS PART OF OUR ONGOING EFFORTS TO PREVENT NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION, REQUIRED THAT UKRAINE (WHICH THEN POSSESSED THE WORLD'S THIRD LARGEST NUCLEAR POTENTIAL) DISMANTLE ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS APPARATUS IN RETURN FOR WHICH ITS CO-SIGNERS WOULD GUARANTEE UKRAINIAN SECURITY.⁷

THIS PROTECTION WAS UNEQUIVOCAL, STIPULATING THAT THE SIGNATORIES "RESPECT UKRAINE'S INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY AND THE EXISTING BORDERS"; "REFRAIN FROM THE THREAT OR USE OF FORCE AGAINST THE TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OR POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE OF UKRAINE"; AND "REFRAIN FROM ECONOMIC COERCION".⁸ IN DEFENSE OF ITS VIOLATION OF ALL OF THESE GUARANTEES IN BOTH UKRAINE AND CRIMEA, RUSSIA HAS CLAIMED THAT THE BUDAPEST MEMORANDUM LACKED THE STATUS OF AN OFFICIAL TREATY.

IN THIS MATTER IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT RUSSIA HAS GAINED ITS MILITARY, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL OBJECTIVES; UKRAINE HAS LOST TERRITORIAL AND POLITICAL SOVEREIGNTY; AND THE US AND UK, BY ACQUIESCING TO BOTH, WILL BE VIEWED AS HAVING SET AN EXAMPLE OF LESS TRUST AND HONOR THAN CALLED FOR BY THEIR SIGNATURES.

FOR THOSE OF US WHO CLEARLY RECALL HITLER'S STEP-BY-STEP SUCCESSFUL ABSORPTION OF THE SUDETENLAND, AUSTRIA AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA BEFORE MEETING ANY RESISTANCE BY ENGLAND AND FRANCE, PUTIN'S TACTICS AND STATEMENTS HAVE AN ALL TOO FAMILIAR FEEL TO THEM, AS DO OUR AND THE UK'S RESPONSES.

AT THIS WRITING, IT SEEMS THERE WILL BE TWO VERY NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR RESPONSE. CRIMEA WAS PUTIN'S FIRST BITE OF THE APPLE AND UKRAINE HIS SECOND. THE QUESTION THAT ALL OF EUROPE AND NATO MUST ANSWER IS WHETHER THEIR REACTION HAS BEEN SUFFICIENT TO DETER ANOTHER "BITE".

THE EU IS A RECENT CONSTRUCT AND NONE OF ITS LEADERS CAN RECALL HOW NAZI POWER, POLITICS AND DIPLOMACY WERE IMPOSED ON GERMANY'S NEIGHBORS IN THE LATE 1930'S. PUTIN'S ARGUMENT ON BEHALF OF RUSSIANS IN EASTERN UKRAINE IS IDENTICAL TO THAT OF HITLER'S CLAIMING TO ACT ON BEHALF OF GERMANS IN THE SUDETENLAND. HE WAS THE KEY HISTORY MAKER ON THE WORLD SCENE BETWEEN THE TWO WARS. IT WAS A RAW HISTORY AND IT REVEALS WIDE HUMAN

AND DIPLOMATIC ERROR. IN VIEW OF PUTIN'S CURRENT CLAIMS TO CZARIST GRANDIOSITY, REMINISCENT OF HITLER'S INVOCATION OF GERMAN'S TEUTONIC ANCESTRY, IT'S A FILM THAT SHOULD BE RERUN.

". . . IT EXISTS ONLY IN THE DISTORTED INTERIOR SPACES OF DAMAGED AND ALIENATED LIVES."

BUT THERE IS ANOTHER MOTIVATION IN THEIR BACKGROUNDS THAT THESE TWO AGGRESSORS SHARE. IT IS RESENTMENT OF THE WAY THEY BOTH WERE TREATED BY THE HOMETLAND POWER STRUCTURES OF THEIR YOUTH. BOTH WERE PRODUCTS OF POVERTY AND ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL STRUGGLE IN UNSETTLED POSTWAR PERIODS; AND THEY HAVE USED THEIR POWER IN THE FORMS OF PUBLIC SPECTACULARS, MILITARY PARADES, SPEECHES, INTERNATIONAL FORUMS, UNIFORMS, ATHLETIC EVENTS TO DISPLAY THEIR NEW STATUS, ETC. AFTER ALL THESE "PEACEFUL" METHODS, AGGRESSION BECAME THE NEXT, LOGICAL STEP ON THE PATH OF SETTling OLD SCORES AND BEING SEEN IN A BETTER LIGHT. THIS PATH IS NOT A PUBLIC ONE; IT EXISTS ONLY IN THE DISTORTED INTERIOR SPACES OF DAMAGED AND ALIENATED LIVES.

THE OTHER POSSIBLE NEGATIVE RESULT OF HOW THE UKRAINE SITUATION HAS PLAYED OUT IS THAT IT CASTS REAL DOUBT ON THE VALUE OF OUR, OR OTHER NATIONS', SIGNED AGREEMENTS OTHER THAN TREATIES. THE BUDAPEST MEMORANDUM WAS NOT ON THE MINOR LEVEL OF A TARIFF AGREEMENT OR CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM. IT WAS A SECURITY AGREEMENT SIGNED BY FOUR NUCLEAR ACTIVE GOVERNMENTS BY WHICH ONE VOLUNTARILY SURRENDERED ITS WEAPON CAPABILITY TO THE OTHER THREE IN RETURN FOR THEIR PROTECTION.

THEIR BETRAYAL OF UKRAINE IS NOT PRETTY AND CASTS DOUBT ON THE VALUE OF AGREEMENTS AND DIPLOMACY AROUND THE WORLD. ADDITIONALLY, THERE IS A MORAL ELEMENT TO THE PROTECTION WE AND THE UK PROMISED THAT IS SO FAR UNFULFILLED. HOW WILL WE BE ABLE TO HONOR IT IN ACCORD WITH OUR ASSURANCES? UNDER TODAY'S CIRCUMSTANCES? AFTER BITE THREE?

IRAN

IRAN, LIKE RUSSIA, IS RULED BY A LEADER DRIVEN BY MEMORIES OF HIS STATE'S FORMER GLORY AND DETERMINED TO REGAIN IT. THERE IS, OF COURSE, ONE DEFINING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SECULAR RUSSIA'S PUTIN AND MUSLIM IRAN'S AYATOLLAH KHAMEINI. PUTIN'S BASE AND COURSE TO POWER HAVE BEEN POLITICAL; KHAMEINI'S ARE RELIGIOUS. BUT IN BOTH CASES, IN SPITE OF CONTRARY PRETENSES WHEN THEY CAN BE USEFUL, THEIR POWER IS ABSOLUTE, OR AS NEAR TO ABSOLUTE AS IS NECESSARY TO ACCOMPLISH THEIR PURPOSES.

RUSSIA IS AN EARLY MEMBER OF THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS CLUB WHICH IRAN HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING TO JOIN SINCE THE PAHLEVI SHAH WAS DEPOSED IN 1979 AND THE PRESENT AYATOLLAH'S PREDECESSOR WAS RECALLED FROM EXILE IN FRANCE.

THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS CLUB DOES NOT SEEK NEW MEMBERS, BUT, RATHER, THROUGH NON-PROLIFERATION AGREEMENTS HAS SOUGHT TO DISCOURAGE THEM. TODAY IT CONSISTS OF THE FIVE PERMANENT MEMBERS OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL (US, UK, FRANCE, RUSSIA, CHINA), INDIA

AND PAKISTAN. IN ADDITION, IT IS GENERALLY ACKNOWLEDGED WITHOUT CONFIRMATION THAT ISRAEL AND SOUTH AFRICA ARE MEMBERS AND THAT NORTH KOREA AND IRAN ARE ATTEMPTING TO MEET THE QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED OF HAVING FUNCTIONAL WEAPONS WITH A DELIVERY CAPABILITY.

IRAN HAS BEEN UNDER REVIEW BY THE IAEA (INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY) AND IN DISCUSSION WITH THE US AND OTHER WESTERN POWERS REGARDING ITS NUCLEAR PROGRESS AND INTENTIONS FOR CLOSE TO A QUARTER OF A CENTURY. THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLY LESS THAN PRODUCTIVE, OFTEN ONE STEP FORWARD AND TWO STEPS BACK, IN WHICH IRAN HAS MADE EXTENSIVE USE IN ITS NEGOTIATIONS OF A PRACTICE CALLED “TEKIYAH”⁹ WHICH INCLUDES STALLING, MISLEADING CONVERSATIONS AND OTHER TECHNIQUES DESIGNED TO DISGUISE ITS TRUE INTENTIONS.

LAST NOVEMBER A “FINAL” DEADLINE FOR AN AGREEMENT TO LIMIT IRAN’S NUCLEAR WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT WAS AGAIN EXTENDED FOR ANOTHER SEVEN MONTHS, AS HAVE MANY PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS. COMMERCIAL/FINANCIAL SANCTIONS ARE IN PLACE AND ARE HAVING A NOTABLE EFFECT ON THE IRANIAN ECONOMY, BUT THEY ARE MOST LIKELY TO SLOW RATHER THAN END IRAN’S WEAPONS PROGRAM.

THE PROBLEM FOR THE US, ISRAEL, THE NE AND THE WEST IS THAT THE PASSAGE OF TIME FAVORS IRAN’S POSITION, AS IT DRAWS CLOSER TO HAVING A WORKABLE NUCLEAR WEAPON. ONCE THIS OCCURS, IT CAN BE USED DIRECTLY AGAINST ISRAEL, AS IRAN HAS THREATENED TO DO, OR AS EITHER A BARGAINING CHIP OR FORM OF BLACKMAIL AGAINST NEIGHBORS OR THE WIDER INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. POSSESSION WILL PROVIDE NUMEROUS OPTIONS.

IRAN’S SHIITE GOVERNMENT’S ENMITY FOR ISRAEL KNOWS NO BOUNDS AND IT HAS VOWED TO ELIMINATE ITS JEWISH NEIGHBOR. IT HAS NO BETTER OPINION OF THE US, BUT AS YET HAS NOT PROMISED OUR DESTRUCTION.

LOOKING TO A FUTURE IN WHICH IRAN WILL POSSESS NUCLEAR WEAPONS THERE ARE THREE HIGHLY PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES:

- 1) IT WOULD ATTACK ISRAEL AND ACTIVATE NUCLEAR WARFARE WHICH HAS BEEN HELD IN CHECK FOR TWO GENERATIONS.
- 2) IT WOULD ESTABLISH USE OF THE NUCLEAR THREAT IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.
- 3) IT WOULD POSE THE STRONG RISK OF ITS NUCLEAR ARMS BECOMING AVAILABLE BY SALE OR THEFT TO OTHER VIOLENT GROUPS OR STATES.

ALL THE WORLD’S NATIONS HAVE A VITAL INTEREST IN PREVENTING THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS, BUT IT ONLY TAKES ONE, OFTEN WITH DREAMS OF ANCIENT GLORY REGAINED, TO DENY THE COMMON INTEREST.

ISRAEL HAS INDICATED IT WILL TAKE INDEPENDENT ACTION AGAINST IRAN IF THE PACT IN PROGRESS DRAGS OUT TO THE POINT WHERE NUCLEAR CAPABILITY IS IMMINENT AND IMPERILS ISRAEL’S EXISTENCE. SUCH AN ACT WOULD ALSO PUT NUCLEAR WAR BACK “IN PLAY” AND COULD BRING ABOUT REGIONAL HOSTILITIES BASED ON SECTARIAN, TRIBAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES AND FROM WHICH NO NATION COULD BE SPARED. THE POTENTIAL FOR CHAOS IN THE UN, IN POLITICAL STRUCTURES AROUND THE WORLD AND IN THE GLOBAL FINANCIAL AND OIL MARKETS IS HIGH.

IRAN IS A SITUATION SO EXPLOSIVE THAT IT CAN PROBABLY ONLY BE DEALT WITH BY A COALITION OF EXTERNAL INTERESTS OR A FAILURE OF ITS INTERNAL SYSTEM AND STRUCTURE. NEITHER ONE NOW OFFERS ENCOURAGEMENT TO THE OBSERVER.

WHAT’S TO COME?

THIS PAST DECEMBER, DEFENSE SECRETARY CHUCK HAGEL ANNOUNCED HIS RESIGNATION AFTER LESS THAN TWO YEARS IN THE JOB. AFTER THE CUSTOMARY, COMPLIMENT-FILLED WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCEMENT, SPECULATION SURFACED THAT HAGEL’S EXIT WAS THE RESULT OF DIFFERING OPINIONS OVER THE CONDUCT/STRATEGY OF THE WAR AGAINST IS.

THIS IS NOT SURPRISING CONSIDERING WHAT WE FACE, AS IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE HAGEL ANNOUNCEMENT THE NEW IRAQI GOVERNMENT REVEALED THAT 50,000 NAMES ON ITS ARMY PAYROLL WERE FALSE AND THAT PAYMENTS TO THEM HAD BEEN APPROPRIATED AND SHARED BY OFFICERS. OF COURSE, THE PAYMENTS MADE BY THE US FOR ARMS, CLOTHING, TRAINING AND EQUIPMENT WERE ALSO BASED ON NUMBERS THAT INCLUDED THESE PHANTOM FORCES.

THIS IS A DEGREE AND KIND OF CORRUPTION THAT WE CANNOT IMAGINE IN OUR WESTERN MILITARY SERVICES, BUT IT WAS KNOWN AND PROTECTED IN IRAQ’S NE POLITICAL CULTURE.

PRES. OBAMA APPEARS TO BE CAUGHT IN A TUG-OF-WAR BETWEEN WANTING TO BE SEEN AS THE PEACEMAKER HE PROMISED TO BE AND HAVING TO DEAL WITH THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES OF IS’S SUDDEN APPEARANCE AND SUCCESS. COMMITTING OUR AIR POWER HAS BEEN A NECESSARY FIRST STEP, BUT IT IS GENERALLY CONCEDED BY EVEN OUR MILITARY LEADERS THAT AIR POWER BY ITSELF CANNOT DO THE “DOWN AND DIRTY” WORK ON THE GROUND THAT WILL BE REQUIRED TO ERADICATE IS.

AND LOOKING BACK AT THE LAST FEW MONTHS WE CANNOT AVOID ACKNOWLEDGING THE MOST SERIOUS AND CHALLENGING MISJUDGMENTS OF THE IC’S ENGAGEMENT IN THE NE. WE, AND OUR ALLIES, TREATED THE SYRIAN WAR, EVEN AS IT GREW IN ITS REACH AND INTENSITY, AS A MOSTLY STATIC “RED VS. BLUE FORCES” EXERCISE.

OUR SECOND COROLLARY ERROR WAS TO BELIEVE THAT AT SOME TIME AND IN SOME WAY THE “MODERATE” ISLAMIC NATIONS WOULD BE SO OFFENDED AND ENDANGERED BY IS THAT THEY WOULD SEE IT IN THEIR OWN INTEREST TO UNITE AND DO AWAY WITH IT.

BY YEAR’S END IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THE NUMBERS OF CONVERTS TO IS AND ITS SPECIFIC FORM OF JIHAD WERE GROWING RAPIDLY AND COMING FROM MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD, INCLUDING THE US AND EUROPE. THE MESSAGE DELIVERED BY THESE NOW THOUSANDS OF IS RECRUITS TO INTERVIEWING JOURNALISTS TRASHES ALL OUR WESTERN HUMANITARIAN VALUES, AS YOUNG MEN DEFEND THEIR EXECUTIONS, RAPES AND TORTURE AS JUSTIFIABLE WAYS FOR THEM TO DEAL WITH “SINNERS”. MURDER AND TORTURE BY DIVINE ORDER — IT HAS A LONG AND FAMILIAR SOUND TO IT.

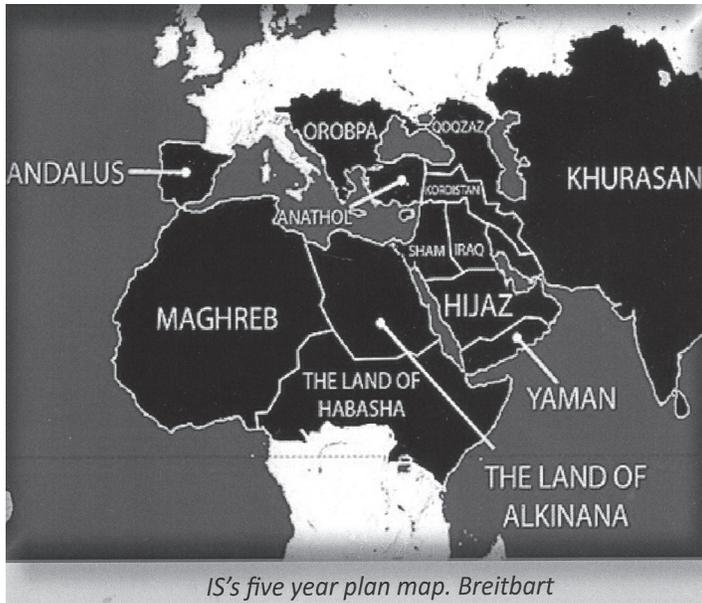
BUT IT IS NOT JUST RECENT NUMBERS OF THESE CONVERTS, NOR THEIR FEROCITY, THAT SHOULD ALARM US; RATHER IT IS HOW WIDELY AND QUICKLY THE JIHADIST BELIEFS HAVE SPREAD AND HOW DEEPLY THEY HAVE BECOME IMBEDDED IN YOUNG MINDS AND HEARTS FAR BEYOND THE SYRIAN/IRAQI BATTLEGROUND. ENABLED BY THE SUCCESS OF ONLINE RECRUITING TECHNIQUES, IS IS RENDERING USELESS MANY HISTORICAL PROTECTIONS OFFERED BY TIME, DISTANCE, GEOGRAPHY, BORDERS, ETC.

WHEREAS, PRES. OBAMA INITIALLY DESCRIBED AMERICA’S ROLE IN THE NE AS “TO DEGRADE AND DESTROY” THE IS MILITARY CAPABILITY, IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE IS INTERPRETATION OF ISLAM AND ITS PLACE IN THE NE AND THE

WIDER WORLD MUST ALSO BE ELIMINATED.

THIS IS NO EASY TASK AND IT CANNOT BE ACCOMPLISHED BY ANY ONE COUNTRY. IN A PAUL REVERE-LIKE ROLE WE SHOULD BE PREPARING THE OBSERVERS IN EUROPE AND THE SIDELINE SITTERS AROUND SYRIA THAT THE TIME IS COMING WHEN A CONCERTED RESPONSE WILL BE THEIR ONLY EFFECTIVE DEFENSE.

INFORMATION IN OUR CYBER AGE ASSAULTS US IN A NEVER ENDING STREAM. SOME IS CLEARLY FALSE AND SOME WELL DOCUMENTED. IN BETWEEN THERE IS A CATEGORY FOR WHICH ORIGINAL SOURCES ARE NOT AVAILABLE BUT SUBJECT MATTER IS SUFFICIENTLY IMPORTANT TO COMMAND OUR ATTENTION. THE MAP BELOW IS ONE OF THESE:



IT IS IDENTIFIED AS SHOWING IS'S FIVE YEAR PROJECTED TERRITORIAL EXPANSION AND AS HAVING COME FROM THE BREITBART NEWS BLOG. THERE IS NO INDICATION OF WHERE OR HOW IT WAS OBTAINED BY BREITBART, AND IT CAME TO OUR NOTICE IN THE SUMMER 2014 MEMBERS NEWSLETTER OF SECURING AMERICAN IDENTITIES.

THE INCREASE IN IS TERRITORIAL CONTROL SHOWN HERE IS AMBITIOUS, BUT NOT EXAGGERATED BEYOND ALL POSSIBILITY. AND YET, CLOSE INSPECTION REVEALS THE MASSIVE AND POLITICAL CHANGES THAT IT WOULD BRING ABOUT.

IF ACHIEVED, THIS IS PLAN WOULD EXTEND ISLAM TO ITS FURTHEST, FORMER NORTHERN EUROPEAN PRESENCE IN SPAIN AND THE BALKANS; TO ALL OF NORTHERN AFRICA FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN COAST SOUTH ALMOST TO THE EQUATOR; TO APPROXIMATELY 80% OF THE INDIAN SUB-CONTINENT; AND TO SIGNIFICANT PARTS OF SOUTHERN RUSSIA AND WESTERN CHINA.

IT WOULD ALSO PUT UNDER IS CONTROL MOST OF THE WORLD'S OIL PRODUCTION AND THE MARINE ROUTES NECESSARY TO TRANSPORT IT. AND WITH THE CLOSING OF GIBRALTAR, THE BOSPORUS AND THE SUEZ CANAL ACCESS TO THE MEDITERRANEAN WORLD COULD ONLY BE GAINED BY IS PERMISSION. THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES WOULD BE SEVERE AND GLOBAL.

CHANGES SUCH AS THESE WOULD REARRANGE DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL INITIATIVES AND REDEFINE ALLIANCES AND FEUDS OF LONG STANDING. AS IS'S METHODS ARE NOT PEACEFUL ONES, THE WHOLE AREA WOULD BE SUBJECT TO A ROLLING PROGRAM

OF WAR AND CONQUEST. GIVEN ITS SIZE AND STRATEGIC VALUE, NOTHING SHORT OF A DETERMINED COALITION WOULD PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE RESPONSE.

LOOKING AT THIS MAP IS A POWERFUL EXPERIENCE AND IT TAKES SOME TIME TO FULLY COMPREHEND WHAT IT SUGGESTS FOR THE FUTURE — WHAT LIFE IN THE AREAS SHOWN AND BEYOND THEM WILL BE LIKE IF THE IS FIVE YEAR PLAN SUCCEEDS. BUT ONCE WE HAVE ENGAGED THAT POSSIBILITY, OTHERS, EVEN MORE DISTURBING, TAKE SHAPE. WHAT WILL IS'S SHARE OF THE WORLD'S TERRITORY, RESOURCES AND POPULATION BE IN TEN YEARS ? OR TWENTY ?

THERE ARE TWO OTHER KEY AREAS THAT FOR VARIOUS REASONS WILL REQUIRE OUR ATTENTION IN THE 21ST CENTURY. EACH IS PASSING THROUGH A DIFFERENT ASPECT OF THE ECONOMIC CYCLE AND BOTH WILL CHALLENGE THE WORLD'S ABILITY TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF THEIR POPULATIONS AND POLITICS. THEIR HISTORIES ARE LONG AND COMPLEX AND WELL BEYOND OUR ABILITY TO DEAL WITH IN OUR LIMITED SPACE, BUT WE HAVE CHOSEN A COUPLE OF ELEMENTS FROM THEIR PASTS THAT MAY BE HELPFUL IN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF THEM IN THE FUTURE. THESE ENTITIES ARE AFRICA AND CHINA.

AFRICA

AFRICA IS COMPOSED OF ABOUT 40 COUNTRIES AND IS OUR WORLD'S LARGEST CONTINENT WITH 11.5 MILLION SQUARE MILES AND 20% OF THE EARTH'S SURFACE. IT IS, AND HAS BEEN OVER ITS HISTORY, HOME TO MULTIPLE TRIBES, CULTURES, RELIGIONS, LANGUAGES, FOREIGN TRADERS AND COLONIAL OCCUPIERS ALL OF WHICH HAVE HAD TO SURVIVE THE RIGORS OF AFRICA'S MOSTLY EQUATORIAL CLIMATE FROM BIZERTE (TUNISIA) TO CAPE TOWN.

TO PROVIDE A SENSE OF SCALE OF AFRICA'S SIZE, THE COMBINED PHYSICAL AREAS OF MAINLAND CHINA (PRC), EUROPE, THE USA, INDIA, TURKEY AND JAPAN CAN FIT WITHIN ITS BORDERS.¹⁰

THERE IS ANOTHER KIND OF DIVERSITY IN AFRICA THAT EXTENDS BACK BEYOND THE EARLIEST RECORDS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE. IT IS GEOGRAPHIC DIVERSITY DETERMINED BY NATURAL FORCES OVER MANY MILLIONS OF YEARS WHICH HAVE RESULTED IN RADIATING ZONES OF LAND MARKED BY SIX BASIC TYPES OF COVER — DENSE FOREST, SAVANNA, BUSH, DESERT, MEDITERRANEAN VEGETATION AND IRRIGATED CROPS. THEIR CENTER FROM WHICH THEY RADIATE LIES ON THE EQUATOR WHERE THE WEST AFRICAN COAST MAKES A 90° TURN EAST AND THEN AGAIN SOUTH AND AWAY FROM THE CONTINENT'S NORTHERN MASS.¹¹

THE DENSE FOREST IS CAUSED BY THE RELEASE OF MOISTURE AS CLOUDS MOVE IN FROM THE ATLANTIC AND EACH SUCCEEDING ZONE OF GROUND COVER IS MARKED BY LESS MOISTURE UNTIL IT IS EXHAUSTED AND DESERT RESULTS.

AS LIFE EVOLVED AND FORMED ITS EARLIEST COMMUNITIES IN AFRICA, IT IS INEVITABLE THAT THE DISTINCTIVE ECOLOGIES ABOVE GAVE RISE TO AND WERE REFLECTED IN THE POPULATIONS THEY SUPPORTED. MOREOVER, AS DISTANCES WERE GREAT AND TRANSPORTATION WAS LIMITED TO FOOT TRAVEL BY LAND OR CANOES BY RIVER, PRIMITIVE PEOPLE STAYED IN AREAS IN WHICH THEY WERE COMFORTABLE. THIS BOND BETWEEN

THE LAND'S VEGETATION AND ITS OCCUPANTS OVER THE LATTER'S EVOLUTION SUGGESTS THAT IT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN THE ORIGIN OF AFRICA'S EXTRAORDINARILY STRONG AND LONG STANDING TRIBAL STATUS AND CUSTOMS.

TRIBAL LIFE AND WAYS WERE TRANSMITTED FROM ONE GENERATION TO THE NEXT WITH ALMOST DNA-LIKE PRECISION, PROVIDING IDENTITY, JUSTICE, AUTHORITY, PROTECTION AND A WORKABLE SOCIAL FRAMEWORK. IT IS NO WONDER THAT THEY ARE NOT EASILY RELINQUISHED AS AFRICA IS PUSHED, SOMETIMES AT GUN POINT, INTO OUR MODERN WORLD THAT DATES FROM THE WEST'S GREAT AGE OF EXPLORATION.

THE TENACITY WITH WHICH THE MANY AFRICAN TRIBES CLUNG TO THEIR CULTURES AND LAWS DURING THEIR EVOLUTIONARY PROGRESS HAD AN ISOLATING EFFECT WHICH WAS MOSTLY TEMPERED BY WARS OVER FOOD, WATER, LAND OR ANCIENT GRIEVANCES THAT HAD BECOME "HARD-WIRED" INTO TRIBAL CODES OF BEHAVIOR OR ATTITUDE.

HERE BRAUDEL (SEE NOTE 11) AGAIN PROVIDES A RELEVANT COMMENT. REFERRING TO "BLACK", SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, AS DISTINGUISHED FROM ITS MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL REGION IN THE NORTH, HE STATES: "THIS RELATIVE ISOLATION EXPLAINS THE IMPORTANT GAPS WHICH WERE SCARCELY FILLED, IF AT ALL, BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE EUROPEANS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THEIR COLONIES. THE WHEEL, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS UNKNOWN; SO WERE THE PLOUGH AND THE USE OF PACK-ANIMALS; SO WAS WRITING EXCEPT IN ETHIOPIA ... AND THE COUNTRIES OF THE SUDAN AND THE EAST COAST."¹² HE GOES ON TO NOTE THAT WHERE WRITING DID OCCUR IN THESE AREAS IT HAD BEEN INTRODUCED BY ISLAMIC EXPANSION.

GEOGRAPHY HAS BEEN THE MOST ENDURING DETERMINANT OF HISTORY AND ONE OF ITS MOST ACCURATE PREDICTORS. IT SHOULD BE A COMPULSORY COURSE IN THE COLLEGE CURRICULUM AND AVAILABLE BY CHOICE AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL IN MIXED MAJORS SUCH AS ECONOMICS, HISTORY, SOCIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, AGRICULTURE, GEOLOGY, ETC., BUT IT IS NOT. UNFORTUNATELY, IN OUR MARKET AND MEDIA DRIVEN CULTURE DOMINATED BY SEX AND MONEY, ACADEMIA TENDS TO VIEW IT IN AN ANCIENT, GLAMORLESS, 19TH CENTURY LIGHT. TOO BAD; IT HAS A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE TO REVEAL.

CHINA

THE TOPIC OF CHINA, LIKE THAT OF AFRICA, IS FAR TOO VAST AND COMPLEX FOR US TO COVER, BUT, AGAIN LIKE AFRICA, THERE ARE A FEW BASIC FACTS THAT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED TO UNDERSTAND ITS PLACE IN OUR WORLD TODAY AND ITS ROLE IN OUR FUTURE.

THE FIRST IS ITS SIZE WHETHER MEASURED POLITICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, BY AREA OR BY ITS POPULATION. POLITICALLY, LESS THAN TWO GENERATIONS HAVE PASSED SINCE MAO INFLECTED THE HORRORS OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION UPON THE CHINESE PEOPLE.

CHINA TODAY REMAINS COMMITTED TO ITS RECENTLY EMBRACED COMMUNIST MODEL OF GOVERNMENT. IT HAS SOFTENED A BIT ECONOMICALLY AROUND THE EDGES BY ALLOWING A TIGHTLY CONTROLLED MEASURE OF CAPITALISM, BUT IN THE IMPORTANT INTERNAL AREAS OF HOW POWER IS DEFINED AND EXERCISED THERE IS LITTLE OR NO DEVIATION FROM THE

MARXIST METHODS AND PRINCIPLES THAT HAVE BEEN EMPLOYED BY WORLD COMMUNISM FOR OVER A CENTURY.

ECONOMICALLY, CHINA HAS BECOME A MAJOR FORCE IN THE WORLD AND, IF ITS HOME GROWN PREDICTIONS BEAR OUT, WILL SURPASS THE US AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST ECONOMY. IT HOLDS MORE OF OUR EXTERNAL DEBT THAN ANY OTHER ENTITY AND PROBABLY THE WORLD'S LARGEST GOLD RESERVES, BUT, IN SPITE OF ITS TIGHT CENTRAL CONTROLS, IS NOT IMMUNE TO THE KINDS OF CYCLICAL "BUBBLES" THAT PLAGUE FREER CAPITALIST ECONOMIES OF THE WEST. AND, IF WE PUT OUR EARS TO THE GROUND, AS OUR NATIVE AMERICAN TRIBES DID, RUMBLES OF APPROACHING DANGER CAN BE HEARD.

IN ITS PHYSICAL SIZE, IT CO-OCCUPIES WITH RUSSIA THE VAST ASIAN CONTINENT, ALTHOUGH ITS AREA IS BY FAR THE SMALLER OF THE TWO. BUT IT IS THE SIZE OF ITS POPULATION, AT OVER 2 BILLION, THAT HAS PROVIDED THE DOMINANT FORCE FOR ITS DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY DIRECTIONS IN THE PAST, AND WILL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE.

AS CHINA AND THE WORLD BOTH ENTER A NEW ERA IN WHICH DOMESTIC POLITICS WILL HAVE TO GIVE REAL CONSIDERATION TO "ISSUES WITHOUT BORDERS" SUCH AS AIR/WATER POLLUTION, WATER/FOOD SHORTAGES, CLIMATE CHANGE, RESOURCE DEPLETION AND RISING POPULATIONS THAT EXCEED THE LAND'S "CARRYING CAPACITIES", CHINA WILL BE REQUIRED TO BECOME MORE GLOBALCENTRIC.

THIS WILL MOST LIKELY PROVE TO BE A MORE DIFFICULT PROCESS FOR CHINA THAN FOR OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH BRINGS US TO THE SINGULARLY MOST IMPORTANT FACT ABOUT ITS INTERNAL NATURE AND ITS EXTERNAL OUTLOOK. ITS HISTORY IS UNIQUE AMONG NATIONS AND CAN, AS MUCH AS ANYTHING CAN, REVEAL CHINA'S CHARACTER AND POLICIES TO THE WORLD BEYOND ITS BORDERS.

SOME HISTORIANS HAVE DIVIDED THE WORLD PRIOR TO 2000 BC INTO THESE POPULATIONS: MEDITERRANEAN, ALPINE, SEMITIC, PROTONORDIC AND MONGOLIAN. BY 2000, CULTURAL, TERRITORIAL AND OTHER RECORDS BROKE THESE DOWN FURTHER INTO EIGHT GROUPS/SOCIETIES¹³: AEGEANS, EGYPTIANS, HITTITES, AMORITES, IRANIANS, INDIANS, HUNS AND CHINESE.

JOHN B. SPARKS' UNIQUE HISTOMAP SHOWS CHINA AT THAT TIME AS "A DISTINCT SMALL EMPIRE DIVIDED INTO NINE PROVINCES UNDER THE AUTOCRATIC RULE OF ONE EMPEROR"¹⁴ IN THE INTERVENING 4000 YEARS NUMEROUS POWERS, GOVERNMENTS, NATIONS, DYNASTIES HAVE BEEN FORMED, EXPANDED, CONQUERED, ABSORBED, ETC. IN THE PROCESS OF THE ACCUMULATING AND ACCELERATING HEREDITY THAT WE CALL HISTORY.

ONLY CHINA HAS SURVIVED THIS PROCESS IN A DISTINCTIVE FORM SIMILAR TO ITS ORIGINAL STATUS. DYNASTIES, INVASIONS, REBELLIONS, REVOLUTIONS AND OTHER TRANSFORMATIVE EVENTS INTERVENED AND COLLIDED FROM TIME TO TIME BUT THE CONCEPT OF CHINA AS A DISTINCT PEOPLE AND PLACE ENDURED, AND GAINED SUBSTANCE IN THE PROCESS.

AND FOR CENTURIES, NOT ONLY WAS CHINA ABLE TO MAINTAIN ITS IDENTITY, BUT IT ALSO EMBRACED WHOLEHEARTEDLY THE BELIEF THAT ITS IDENTITY WAS SUPERIOR TO ALL OTHERS. TO SUPPORT THIS CONCEPT IT DEVELOPED BOTH A FORM OF GOVERNMENT AND AN ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT THAT PROVED TO BE UNUSUALLY STABLE.

DYNASTIES LED BY THE EMPEROR CONDUCTED ROYAL FUNCTIONS AND REMAINED IN PLACE UNTIL SOME CRISIS OR OTHER SERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCE MANDATED REPLACEMENT WHICH

GENERALLY CAME FROM A POOL OF AVAILABLE NOBLEMEN, DESCENDENTS OR OTHER LEADERS. THE BUSINESS OF RUNNING THE GOVERNMENT WAS UNDER THE DIRECTION OF MANDARINS WHO WERE HIGHLY EDUCATED IN MATTERS OF LAW, FINANCE, ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING, ETC. THEY CONSTITUTED A SEPARATE, ELEGANT AND ELEVATED CLASS THAT WAS BOTH POWERFUL AND RESPECTED. WHILE IN THE PURSUIT OF THEIR DUTIES THESE MANDARINS COULD OFTEN ACCUMULATE CONSIDERABLE WEALTH, THEIR STATUS WAS ROOTED IN THEIR INTELLECT, LEARNING, EDUCATION, JUDGMENT AND DEDICATION.

WITH ONE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT ASSIGNED THE FUNCTIONS OF MANAGEMENT AND THE OTHER THOSE OF RULING, A SUCCESSFUL STRUCTURE OF TWO VERY SEPARATE PARTS RESULTED. THIS STRUCTURE REINFORCED THE TENDENCY OF THE CHINESE PEOPLE OVER TIME TO VIEW THEIR PERSONAL AND NATIONAL IDENTITY AS BEING DISTINCT FROM AND ABOVE THE POLITICAL FRAY.

DYNASTIES, REVOLUTION, GRINDING POVERTY, AND EVEN COMMUNISM — COME WHAT MAY — THE REAL CHINA OF HONOR, CULTURE, LAND, LANGUAGE AND MYTH POSSESSED A MAGICAL DNA THAT WOULD ENDURE.

“THE DIFFERENCE IS ONE OF SCALE, AND IN MATTERS OF POPULATION SCALE IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE OR DEATH.”

THE MOST DIFFICULT PROBLEM NOW FACING CHINA IS ITS POPULATION GROWTH. IN 1952 CHINA WAS HOME TO 572 MILLION; BY 1984 IT HAD PASSED A BILLION; AND IT IS NOW OVER 2 BILLION. THE PRESENT COMMUNIST PERIOD WILL PROBABLY TURN OUT TO BE ANOTHER PASSING ONE IN CHINA’S EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY, AND ITS LEADERS MUST DEAL WITH POPULATION NUMBERS NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE BY ANY CIVILIZATION ON OUR PLANET. THEY HAVE AN EDUCATED AND EFFICIENT BUREAUCRACY AT THEIR DISPOSAL, BUT SO DID THE MANDARINS. THE DIFFERENCE IS ONE OF SCALE, AND IN MATTERS OF POPULATION SCALE IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE OR DEATH.

EPILOGUE

POLITICS: IN EARLY DECEMBER THE LAST MID-TERM SENATORIAL ELECTION WAS DECIDED BY A RUN-OFF VOTE IN LOUISIANA IN WHICH REP. BILL CASSIDY HANDILY DEFEATED DEMOCRATIC INCUMBENT MARY LANDRIEU, THE LAST REMAINING DEMOCRATIC SENATOR FROM A SOUTHERN STATE. THE DEMOCRATIC “SOLID SOUTH” BLOC WAS A MAJOR FORCE IN CONGRESS FROM THE POST-CIVIL WAR RECONSTRUCTION PERIOD TO OUR CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF LAST CENTURY’S ‘50S AND ‘60S. TODAY, IT IS A THING OF THE PAST.

IN LA THE DEMOCRATS HAVE ONLY ABOUT 30% OF THE WHITE VOTE — NOT ENOUGH TO DELIVER ELECTORAL VICTORIES. THEY HOPE TO ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS OF LATINOS, CHINESE AND OTHER MINORITIES TO REPLACE BLACK VOTERS THAT HAVE LEFT THE STATE. THIS IS A SLOW PROCESS, LONG ON HOPE AND WITH NO GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS. IN THE PRESENT (GOP) “SOLID SOUTH” THE WORDS ARE THE SAME, BUT THE MESSAGE IS DIFFERENT.

THE OLD DAYS OF POLITICAL SPHERES OF INFLUENCE MOSTLY CARVED OUT BY COMMERCE, COLONIALISM AND CONQUEST WORKED FAIRLY WELL, EACH MAJOR COUNTRY HAVING A SPHERE ROUGHLY COMMENSURATE WITH ITS WEALTH AND POWER AND ITS ENERGY DEDICATED TO MAINTAINING THEM.

TODAY SPHERES OF INFLUENCE HAVE GIVEN WAY TO THREE MAJOR POWERS COMPETING TO BE SOLE SUPERPOWER, A TITLE NOW CLAIMED BY THE US. IN THIS HUMPTY-DUMPTY SCENARIO, RUSSIA AND CHINA PRETTY MUCH ACT AS THEY WISH — UNBURDENED BY UN RESOLUTIONS OR COALITIONS WHICH WE COURT FOR PROPRIETY’S SAKE.

A SUPERPOWER THAT CANNOT TAKE STRONG, PROMPT AND INDEPENDENT ACTION IS NOT A SUPERPOWER. AND COALITIONS OF STATES THAT RESERVE THE RIGHT TO DECLARE UNDER WHAT CIRCUMSTANCES THEY WILL PARTICIPATE AND WHICH WEAPONS OR FORCES THEY WILL PROVIDE DO NOT WORK. PRES. BUSH II AND OBAMA HAVE TRIED TO CONDUCT MILITARY OPERATIONS IN THE NE WITH ONE EYE ON THAT REGION AND THE OTHER ON ELECTIONS AT HOME. THIS WILL NEVER PRODUCE SOUND POLICY.

WE HAVE COMMENTED HERE ON SEVERAL AREAS FROM WHICH WE CAN EXPECT FOREIGN RELATIONS CRISES IN THE YEARS AHEAD. PRESENTLY WE HAVE A RELUCTANT PRESIDENT ATTEMPTING TO LEAD RELUCTANT ALLIES, A COMBINATION WHICH IS UNLIKELY TO PRODUCE A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME. EUROPE IS EAGER TO GIVE US THE SOLE SUPERPOWER’S LEADERSHIP ROLE (WITH THE EMPHASIS ON “SOLE”), BUT NOW, AFTER THIRTY YEARS OF WAR IN THE NE, WE ARE NOT AS EAGER AS WE ONCE WERE TO HAVE IT. THE MAN IN THE WHITE HOUSE MAY REGARD SUPERPOWER USA AND SEE “LEGACY” WRIT LARGE, BUT THE AMERICAN TAX PAYER KNOWS HE/SHE WILL FOOT THE BILL. LEGACY DOES NOT PLAY ON MAIN STREET THE WAY IT DOES IN THE OVAL OFFICE.

SUPERPOWER STATUS AND LEADERSHIP IS AN UNEVEN GAME AND IS BOUND TO PRODUCE DISAGREEMENT, EVEN AMONG OUR ALLIES WHERE BEING A TEAM MEMBER IS OFTEN VALUED MORE THAN BEING SUPERPOWER. FOR INSTANCE, THERE’S NATO TO WHICH WE AND OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES BELONG AND WHICH MAY BE REQUIRED BY RUSSIA’S BEHAVIOR TO COME UP WITH A UNIFIED RESPONSE.

EVEN WITH NATO’S FORMAL TREATY OBLIGATIONS, IT’S POSSIBLE REACTION TO FURTHER RUSSIAN PROVOCATIONS ARE NOT CLEAR. NATO WAS FORMED DURING THE COLD WAR AS A MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY TO DETER RUSSIAN AGGRESSION IN EASTERN EUROPE. NOW, AFTER DECADES OF SPEECHES, PHOTOS, CONFERENCES, MONEY SPENT, MILITARY EXERCISES AND EXPANDED MEMBERSHIP, WHEN RUSSIA HAS MOUNTED TAKE-OVERS IN CRIMEA AND EASTERN UKRAINE, NATO HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL DEVELOP A RAPID RESPONSE FORCE IN THE YEAR AHEAD.

IT WOULD SEEM THAT, FACED WITH A NO-DOUBT BREACH OF INTERNATIONAL LAW AND UKRAINE’S SOVEREIGNTY, A MULTI-MEMBER DEFENSE ORGANIZATION SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO SHOW SOME SIGN OF A MEANINGFUL DETERRENT. IT CAN, AND PROBABLY WILL, BE ARGUED THAT NATO’S MEMBERS WANTED TO GIVE SANCTIONS A CHANCE TO WORK BEFORE TAKING ANY ACTION, BUT SANCTIONS DO NOT PRECLUDE OTHER FORMS OF ACTION. NATO’S FAILURE OR RELUCTANCE OR TARDINESS — HOWEVER IT IS VIEWED — WAS NOT DUE TO ANY LACK OF OPPORTUNITY, RESOURCES OR CAUSE, BUT RATHER TO A LACK OF WILL AND AN

EXTRAORDINARY MISREADING OF PUTIN'S INTENTIONS AND THE EXTENT TO WHICH HE IS WILLING TO GO TO ACHIEVE THEM.

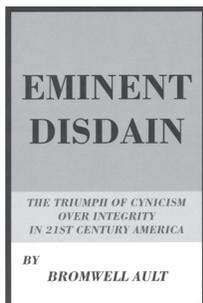
IN THE FUTURE WHAT PLAYS OUT IN UKRAINE MAY FORCE NATO'S MEMBERS AND THE REST OF THE IC TO VIEW IT IN A DIFFERENT LIGHT AND EXPECT MORE FROM IT. HOW WILL AMERICA FIT ITS DUAL ROLE OF SUPERPOWER AND NATO MEMBER TO SUCH A DEVELOPMENT?

THE GREATER PART OF RUSSIA'S LAND MASS IS EAST OF THE URAL MOUNTAINS IN ASIATIC RUSSIA, AND RUSSIA'S RULERS FOR CENTURIES HAVE HAD TO TRY TO BALANCE THE MANY DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IT AND THE MORE EUROPEAN RUSSIA THAT LIES WEST OF THE URALS. PUTIN APPEARS TO BE WRITING ANOTHER CHAPTER IN THIS ANCIENT TUG-OF-WAR AND IS WILLING TO USE HIS VAST RESOURCES AND POWER TO ACT AS ARBITER.

THIS CONFLICT EXTENDS FAR BACK BEYOND BOTH THE PRESENT COMMUNIST REGIME AND THE CENTURIES UNDER CZARIST RULE, AND OUR POLICY SHOULD KEEP THIS IN MIND. FOR NOW, OUR SANCTIONS, COMBINED WITH THE STEEP DROP IN THE WORLD OIL PRICE, IS GIVING PUTIN SECOND THOUGHTS. NATO, HOWEVER, SHOULD NOT HIDE BEHIND THESE ECONOMIC PENALTIES, BUT SHOULD ANNOUNCE AND APPLY MILITARY MEASURES CONSISTENT WITH ITS ROLE AS DEFENDER OF EUROPE WHICH AT THIS TIME DOES NOT REQUIRE USE OF COMBAT FORCES.

OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES HAVE BEEN AS RELUCTANT AS WE HAVE TO MAKE THEIR POLICY CLEAR. THERE WOULD BE MUCH TO BE GAINED BY CRAFTING A JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT, BUT SUCH AN EFFORT WOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURES. SUCH A CONFLICT OF INTERESTS BETWEEN FOREIGN POLICY AND DOMESTIC POLITICS IS A HISTORICAL ONE WITH WHICH WE WILL HAVE TO CONTEND IN OUR VIEW OF THE FUTURE.

ECD 12/29/14



THE AUTHOR'S MOST RECENT BOOK, WHO LOST AMERICA?, DEALS WITH TOPICS COVERED IN MoC ISSUES 19 THROUGH 27. BOTH IT AND HIS FIRST VOLUME, EMINENT DISDAIN, ARE AVAILABLE FROM THE PUBLISHER AUTHORHOUSE, AT 888-280-7715 OR AT AUTHORHOUSE.COM.



END NOTES

- 1 THIS IS NOT A QUICK PROCEDURE. THE EMPLOYER MUST PROVIDE REASONS AND EVIDENCE FOR TERMINATION TO A FEDERAL JUDGE FOR APPROVAL WHICH, IF GRANTED, THE EMPLOYEE HAS THE RIGHT TO APPEAL. IT IS SAFE TO ASSUME THAT, AS JOBS/COMPENSATION ARE INVOLVED, REASONABLE EFFORTS TO EXPEDITE WOULD BE MADE, BUT ATTORNEYS WHO OFTEN WORK WITHIN THEIR OWN TIME FRAME CAN BE EXPECTED TO BE INVOLVED.
- 2 13 HOURS IN BENGHAZI, MITCHELL ZUCKHOFF
- 3 PAY ANY PRICE BY JAMES RISEN, HOUGHTON MIFFLIN HARCOURT, NYC 2014
- 4 GRAFT HOBBLER IRAQ'S MILITARY BY DAVID KIRKPATRICK. NEW YORK TIMES 11/24/14
- 5 BBC - WORLD NEWS RADIO 11/19/14
- 6 FORREST WOOLDRIDGE, LETTER: TO OPINION EDITOR, STATE NEWS (CO) 10/1/14 "THE WORLD (NOW) BURNS 84 MILLION BARRELS DAILY. BY 2030, CHINA EXPECTS TO BURN 98 MILLION BARRELS DAILY."
- 7 BENNETT RAMBERG, UKRAINE GAVE UP NUKES FOR DEFENSE ASSURANCES, THE LOS ANGELES TIMES VIA PALM BEACH POST 11/28/14
- 8 IBID
- 9 ANDREW KAHN, GRAND BARGAIN WITH IRAN . . . VIA PALM BEACH POST 11/28/14
- 10 NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ATLAS OF THE WORLD, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY, WASHINGTON DC 1975. POPULATION IN MILLIONS: EUROPE 3.7; CHINA, 3.7; USA 3.6; TURKEY .3; JAPAN .1.
- 11 FERNAND BRAUDEL. A HISTORY OF CIVILIZATIONS PENGUIN BOOKS 1993
- 12 IBID
- 13 HISTOMAP OF HISTORY: THE RISE AND RALL OF PEOPLES AND NATIONS FOR FOUR THOUSAND YEARS BY JOHN B. SPARKS, RAND McNALLY COMPANY, USA 1931
- 14 IBID

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