

A PARADOX OF POWER

As we move sluggishly towards midterm elections, a pall of problems faces this President: Economy and War top the list though there are others that dance before his eyes like the immigration dilemma, the oil leak and whether to drill or not drill, an inability to obtain a census of understanding within the government—all bespeak of leadership dilemmas facing him.

The economy is fraught with low-growth ratios, unemployment hovering at 10%, government intrusions into the private sector where jobs and credit cry out for reconciliation, a never-ending rise of the national debt, the threat to the dollar, and potential high inflation on the horizon, and predicable double-dip recession fears. An inherent philosophical move towards European-like socialism of a nanny-state control by government in all aspects of life looms, perhaps? One does not have to be an economist to ask, ‘who will pay for it all?’ It seems that the only answer will be an onslaught of taxes on all of us, income, value-added, an upgrade of estate taxes at death, etc. A paradox of power describing a government in conflict, a dilemma of trust settling over us.

To me the war is even a bigger dilemma. In the MacArthur phrase, “there is no substitute for victory.” As I addressed in a recent article: Victory in Iraq/Afghanistan and environs is impossible without an Islamic response that a real ‘war of civilizations’ could endure if they realized all options are on the table, total war essentially: no Saudi money, moderates to encourage the fanatics to stop their attacks, and the realization we will accept and respect Islam—we have tried—and join in mutual accommodations of peace and relationships. This will not happen with the present administration and so we must be ready for the withdrawals and the post-war scenario.

The economy will sink or swim perhaps burdened by the paradox between the Keynes deficit spending approach where government injects money into the system to obtain an economic spark to revive industries, businesses, et al and the Friedman menu of capitalism and free market trial and error. Roosevelt and Obama lean towards the former and others like the latter free from the power of government.

The war in kaleidoscope: Soviet Union orchestrates a coup d’etat in Afghanistan in 1979, placing Afghan communist Najibullah in place of his assassinated predecessor, then invaded perhaps with the warm-water port idée fixe of past rulers. From 1979-1989 war became a series of contacts between Afghan tribes

and warlords and the Soviet Union of conventional arms. Stirrings in the theaters were the appetites over oil and land between Iraq and Iran leading to war and the earlier takeover of Iran by Shiah exile, Khomeini. From the Islamic world came recruits in Jihad against the Soviet oppressor, money from Saudi Arabia and aid from the US CIA where support grew; introduction of the hand-held Stinger anti-aircraft missile thwarted the advantage of the Soviet Hind helicopter.

Ultimately the Soviets left and Islam world saluted the victory, none moreso than Osama bin-Laden, a rich Saudi whose money and influence led to the creation of the Taliban- whose origin came from Pakistan and the madrassas.

The nineties found the rise of Al-Qaeda (the base) for militant Islam, and Osama's appetite for taking on another infidel (the United States) in Africa and the attack of the naval ship at Aden, declaring war on the US much for their presence in Saudi Arabia during the first Gulf War initiated by Saddam Hussein. The seeds of 9/11 grew into reality during the late part of the century.

Our paradox remains: the dilemma between a government seemingly intent on controlling the economy for good or bad with little redeeming virtue and promise currently or for the long haul....and a war where Islam (is it religion, ideology and nation) remains uncompromising and not defined as enemy by this administration.