

CONTAINMENT

In a recent analysis (George Kennan: A study of character) John Lukas resurrects the man and ideas - "a cold warrior and his contradictions." Kennan is remembered for his 'Long telegram' published in Foreign Affairs, 1946 citing impressions of Soviet conduct which became the rationale for a new look at the relationship between wartime allies (United States and the USSR): the 'firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansionist tendencies'. Experience as Ambassador in Moscow and Belgrade, State Department Policy Planning chief in those war years surfaced and Kennan became the so-called architect of Containment. Ironically in his probing intellect he later tended to play down this title and often took issue with his own thoughts on 'containment'. His prescience then is food for thought today on Islam.

Islam is an enigma and causes much argument among scholars and military planners. One who accepts Islam becomes apparently submissive and resigned to Allah and its tenets and draws impetus and inspiration from Mohammed and the Moslem religion set forth in the Koran (Qur'an). A true believer seems to visualize this monotheistic religion as an end in itself, without rationalization or acceptance of other religions or clerical views. Often he will accept others only in a subservient role or to ignore them as infidels. Orthodox Christians and Jews may be analogous yet less fervent and fanatic.

One may ask is there any recompense in these views for understanding, acceptance, or something to allow these religious dogmas to live together without armageddon. Like militant Communism, the tentacles of militant Islamism are everywhere seeking and probing. Those willing to accept the former euphemistically would rationalize: 'better Red than Dead' and what of the latter.....? Containment or acquiescence?

.....some thoughts:

Religious absolutism reveals that anyone can find anything he wishes to sanctify his noblest or basest actions. Each religious fanatic knows he is right and others are wrong. Scholars remind that Muhammad raised armies, collected taxes, made war and peace, and his state was sovereign, hence Islam a political entity while Jesus separated what belonged to Caesar and to God: church/state as unique entities... Yet history reveals the rise and fall of Islam was not caused by the Crusades per se, but inherent problems between Caliphs(authority figures)and ideology: wahhabism was both political/religious as conceived by Saudi Arabia and prevails as doctrine: Khomeini burst on the scene in Iran with this quasi-religious rationale as a political weapon.

.....the threat:

Robert Spencer's (Islam Unveiled)speaks to the modest reply by Arabs to 9/11; growing Wahhabism trumps blame of Crusades; asks if Qur'an justifies attack of the US...Dore Gold's(Hatred's Kingdom)aims at Saudi Arabia and terror financing; that militant Islam speaks to elimination of Israel/United States; David Frum/Richard Perle(End of Evil): ignore UN; target Iran; recognize collusion between Saudis and France and establish a firm counter-strategy for Mideast.

Thus to paraphrase Thomas Paine, "this is a time to try men's souls(and hearts)"- this never-ending war caught in a strategic paradox: success in the Petraeus counter-insurgency...an end game or brief respite(troop redeployment) with the proviso ...the troublemakers(Iran/Syria)and the benign moderates of the Mideast be warned- militant Islam will be contained.

