

PROMISE AND PERIL

Winston Churchill once said when frustrated with problems of world consequence, -"a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." He would wonder(as I do)about the strategy and end-game of the US War on Terror, and perhaps(as I do)the connection between what is going on in Iraq and the recent eruption of proxy-war by Hezbollah terrorists condoned and supported by Iran and Syria. Israel's quasi-massive response of air and ground forces was a surprise to the world to both friend and foe. After a month of fighting a UN brokered cease fire is in place with the proviso of a large neutral force to separate the belligerents and, in theory, disarm and contain Hezbollah beyond the Litani River. This is moot!

The great irony of the two conflicts despite dominance in conventional war, the US and Israel seem befuddled with unconventional war of many acts: an embedding with civilians and firing weapons causing counter-fire and collateral damage, suicide bombers, and all kinds of hit and run strategies. Shades of the great guerrilla fighter, Mao Zedong whose 'fish soon return to the sea of civilians'. Victory is relative and in the eyes of the beholder and often the guerrilla earns respect when facing the tactical fighter and the overwhelming artillery of the stronger force. And perhaps most of all the many faces of Islam, fanatic and moderate seem comfortable with a return of the fortunes of the Ottomans and Mohammed Jihads of the past. The peril perhaps is more obvious than the promise of a peaceful, quasi-democratic Mideast.

Like puppets on a string we have no strategy only a reactive one, and we bob and dance and pretend we are on top of things. Churchill and Roosevelt, great wartime leaders had a strategy and it was called "Unconditional Surrender" and applied to both Germany and Japan and concluded the most climatic war of the last century or perhaps of all time by dropping two atom bombs on Japan killing about 100,000 people simultaneously and more later via radiation sickness. Fire bombing in Germany and Japan killed even more. End game: no insurgency.

We cannot afford to be wrong about the Islam menace and what appears-in their view- a 'War of Civilizations'. We almost moved too late against the German and Japanese in WWII, but did in time. The collapse of the Soviet Union was a combination: economic imploding, wars of national liberation(trying to fill void in former colonies)and failure to keep up scientifically with the US(SDI/Star Wars)led by a President who waged ideological combat against the 'Evil Empire'. This forestalled nuclear conflict!

Hence, the Bush Strategy, should be enforced: 'to fight the terrorists and those that harbor them'. At the moment this should include Iran and Syria and others who harbor terrorists and have just inspired a proxy war against Israel. A military option must be on the table and include Israel in the plan. One recalls the Eisenhower threat to use tactical nuclear weapons against an intransigent China in the Korea War aftermath -if they did not come to the peace table. Carter had serious war games which included use of tactical nuclear weapons if the invasion of Afghanistan by Russia spread to include Mideast strategic inferences. Strategy with teeth.

