

TIME AND RECOMPENSE

“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom , the man who gains understanding, for he is more profitable than silver and yields better returns than gold”.
(Proverbs 3: 13-14)

Like the story of John Adams and Thomas Jefferson—a time of understanding and appreciation for each other, though once in conflict, adversarial —by the coincidence of their passing on the same day. This brought to mind, perhaps analogous, the recent death of two noteworthy scholars, rarely in tune, often in intellectual discord, Walter Berns and Harry Jaffa who proffered by time and circumstance. Like the former Presidents, they lived into their nineties. God seemed to aid their longevity. Each gave their time, in return adulation.

It is said that Adams and Jefferson reconciled and collectively ‘wished to protect the political project they had both done so much to launch’ and Berns drew from them as well as Lincoln in perspective. Berns enlisted in the Navy before Pearl Harbor and remained to the end of the war. Among his thoughts on the Constitution, he believed before it was fashionable ‘not of keeping the Constitution in tune with the times, but to the extent possible, keeping the times in tune with the Constitution.’ His legacy was as one of ‘giant oaks’ who helped steady the country through the Cold War and domestic upheaval. Both Berns and Jaffa were students of Leo Strauss at Cornell influenced to go beyond classical political philosophy to the essence of the American regime. Jaffa, more conservative, would often raise his voice and swivel his chair to look at a framed photo of Churchill walking alone on the forecastle of HMS Prince of Wales during the Atlantic conference of 1940 and in emotion state, “The fate of the Western world depended on that single man, at that single moment, and we need him again.” It would seem from their writings, and words, to seek that city on the hill, and like Berns, a lover of Lincoln. “It is the eternal struggle between right and wrong, and is so prescient today”.

Age for them seemed a time to reflect and continue to expound by voice, the written word and a teaching rationale for history to learn from. A mind, one would think, can mature. As I near 90 I think it helped me.

For sometime I wrote and sent in articles to the Baldwin Register, then a part of the Press Register located in Mobile, Alabama. Most were printed and inspired my setting up a website –a 3 war soldier recalls. So, with the inspiration aforementioned above, as a time and recompense. I appreciate my family whose forethought and the hard work of Dawn provides a memorable occasion. For those who wish a copy.

Something I wrote earlier, ‘A Lullaby of Concern’-questionable legacy is prescient here. President Obama whose leadership has been consistently questioned in domestic matters, and seen as weak in military matters, and more so now, can be praised for the decision where ‘Obama got Osama’ but this did not happen in a vacuum, as plans for this were ongoing earlier. Transfixed by Obama’s soothing words of ‘hope and change’ like a father singing to his children (young, less fortunate, most media, and the academic world) rolling on with a creeping Socialistic mantra, lulled by words, not actions of economic foibles, and the overwhelming health fiasco, entitlement problems, massive debt, uncontrolled spending and despite the raid, very suspect leadership. His has been like a Kabuki dance of puppets with little or no rationale.

Obama has never defined militant Islam as a threat or that it exists internationally, and an inference of stealth Islam here along with Sharia as a political and cultural relationship. Perhaps most serious threat is Isis that - cries out for a strategy which goes unanswered - echoes of his father in voice and Obama’s writings. A recent argument that the Christian Crusade to retake Jerusalem a thousand years ago killed many in the guise of Jesus Christ so this is some sort of payback by Islam. Franklin Graham argued back that Jesus’ mission was one of love and commitment, that Muhammed was the one who killed as part of Islam’s mission.

And so it goes!