

America's Place in the World

A Perspective on Vision for 2005

President George W. Bush spoke of America's place in the World at his second Inauguration and State of the Union speech. The centerpiece "renewed the commitment of our nation to the guiding ideal of liberty for all." The President's words may be circumscribed by the political language of presidential polity. May I offer a perspective on this vision?

Vision for the world focuses first on the nation in the mirror. The Founding Fathers, President Bush and every President in between, especially Woodrow Wilson, saw the exceptionalism of the U.S. as The Great Experiment - Representative Democracy in America. Since 1776, America is a unique place of liberty. The context changes continually. The words, "American Empire", were used from the beginning for our destiny, yet the meaning changed as the actual means to impose imperial power grew.

America, the Empire of Liberty, conquered a continent and then captured colonies until the bitterness of falsely fighting 'the war to end all wars' brought two decades of isolationism (1920-30s).

WW II was fought to defend our freedom against Human Secularist Nazi Totalitarianism and Japanese Imperialism. WW II was a global, strategic offensive demanding the full mobilization of American manpower and will. The Cold War, WW III, followed so closely as a global struggle against Human Secularist Communist Totalitarianism. Containment, a strategic defensive based on alliances, required only a partial mobilization of resources, but constant will.

The defeat of the Soviet Empire (1991) put America in the same strategic picture as the Romans after the defeat of Carthage. However, we won't pull down Moscow and salt the earth. Without a peer competitor for another 30 years or more, the watchwords of America's place in the world are security and stability. 'Security and stability' doesn't grab patriots' guts like 'Defend Freedom'. Conflicts during the decade of strategic pause, the settling of the geo-political tectonic plates, were harbingers of the next defining competition.

The Islamists emerged, attacked and brought 'Defend Freedom' back to our national purpose. 9-11 ushered in a WW IV against Islamist Totalitarianism that is different than the state-sponsored past enemies.

The Islamist enemy is an array of groups who occasionally control a state (Afghanistan, perhaps Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, others some day) or use a state to get WMD, training, or finances (Iraq, Iran, Syria). Islamists are a derivation of Islam. If only 10% of Muslims are Islamists, then the enemy is 150 million fanatics. This enemy looks a lot like the barbarians ringing the Roman Empire. Those barbarians were 600 to 800 years behind the Romans in civilization.

“Our aim is to build and preserve a community of free and independent nations, with governments that answer to their citizens, and reflect their own cultures,” President Bush.

Except, America can NOT build free and independent nations. Islam is stuck in the 13th century at best – it’s mostly tribal cultures lacking a Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment and Awakenings.

“Our generational commitment to the advance of freedom, especially in the Middle East, is now being tested and honored in Iraq,” President Bush.

Our generational commitment is very limited. Like the Romans reached a limit, America doesn’t have the manpower or will to push the borders of American Civilization with conquest. Conquest is the only sure way to advance our unique Empire of Liberty. Every People or Nation must decide for themselves. Iraq is no exception.

Iraq may become as free as the Muslim culture can produce. Or, it may dissolve in tribal civil war. Iraq was an Operational Offensive to destroy an assumed clear and present danger. The best the U.S. can expect is a ‘free enough’ state that contributes to stability and security.

Iraq won’t be free like us. America sits even on a stool with three ideas as its legs: Judeo-Christian culture, capitalism and liberal democracy. The degree to which any nation differs on any of those three ideas, so too, is their ‘liberty’ and ‘democracy’ different.

America’s place in the world is to continue adjusting our Judeo-Christian culture, capitalism, and liberal democracy for the Information Era at home. It’s the same as from frontier to agrarian to industrial eras. Resolve our Culture War. This will take decades until the next big thing, like nano-biology or a great catastrophe, becomes the watershed for a new era.

America should be on the strategic defensive for now. Contain the Islamists in the Muslim world. Control Islamic immigration. At the operational and tactical levels of war, which are merely, but exceptionally, politics by another means, America is on the offense. No haven for Islamists, but conquering only when required.

Europe may become center of gravity for the battle in the next 50 years, just like WW I, II and III. Europe either regains its conscience in a European Christian Great Awakening, and repopulates itself, or converts Muslims to socialist pagans, or succumbs to the Islamic immigrant invasion.

“And because democracies respect their own people and their neighbors, the advance of freedom will lead to peace,” President Bush.

Liberty prospers under stability and security. Liberty doesn’t create stability and security. Remember the French and Russian Revolutions, WW I and, especially,

America's Civil War. Elections everywhere won't bring peace. Ideas will.

Until Islam changes or Muslims convert, a minority of Muslims will threaten stability and security. So, WW IV will last decades. Islamist Totalitarianism will self-destruct, like Communism, eventually.

"Our generation has dreams of its own, and we also go forward with confidence. The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable -- yet we know where it leads: It leads to freedom," President Bush.

Our generation's dreams are debating in a Great Culture War verging on ACW II. The Road of Providence leads only to the End Times of trials and tribulations.

America's place in the world is to win WW IV. Let's roll.

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