9/11 â€“ Ten Years Later â€“ My Reflections

Description

That day I was retired from the Navy, way in the rear, without any gear of helpfulness to those on the front lines. So, where I was, suffice it to say, I remember, but it wasnâ€™t off significance to the big picture.

That day/event shattered a major belief structure I had held since the summer of 1988: Major, large scale wars have no place in the post Cold War Worldâ€¦think about it: The issues are no longer taking over crop land, but the economic might of the â€œcompetingâ€• nations. To go for the scortced earth, have an artillery division take 3 feet of dirt off a sqaure mile does nothing to preserve the economic resources youâ€™re coveting.

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After 9 months at War College, reading much more history, to add to the many tomes already ingested, I was thinking weâ€™d be more in the â€œstaring each other downâ€• mode in the future. Prepared to fight, but not doing it in a big way. Bad outcomes on both sides, but then, I didnâ€™t give guerilla forces much of a place in my thinking.

Then came September 11th, and the face of war in the modern era (meaning when Iâ€™m living), took a radical turn: A religiously based, ideologially driven, small group of people, not aligned with any one nation, and certainly not organized to meet the definition of the armed force of a soverign nation, without the direct or monetary support from and established nation-state, arrived on the scene, outdoing even the Japanese Naval Forces of 12/7/41, and then stood up to take a bow. Thus Al-Queda became part of the lexicon.

The â€œLaws of Warâ€• were not written to primarly handle this type of conflict. They were designed to â€œmanageâ€• the conflict between nation states, with easily identified military forces, loyal to one flag or another. Guerillas were but a side show. Certainly not without impact, but still a side show, until 9/11/01 arrived.

There went my construct on how conflict would happen in the now definitely post-BiPolar Supwer Power era.

Other things changed. How those combatants, illegal as they were, were to be handled. We got Guantanamo Bay, a place I had frequented as a training base during my time in uniform, converted into a holding facility for those we captured on the battle field. Why? By all I can rekon is we didnâ€™t want to â€œgo thereâ€• and handle the illegal combatants (those who were armed and attacking US troops, yet without an identified national uniform or affiliation), and summarily execute them where they were captured. Itâ€™s allowed, but, by being compassionate (Iâ€™m all in on this one), we then ended up with a situation on our hands as how to ensure justice was done. You know the history of that discussion, which still isnâ€™t completed (despite a pledge to handle this from the current Commander-in-Chief).

We now, as an entire society, began looking over our shoulders, and eyeing suspicious acts of any one around us. Top it off with pre-suspecting every single air passenger as a real possibility of being a hijacker not wanting cash, like D.B. Cooper. On top of the untold billions invested in equipment to clearly show we trusted no one citizen of our nation, the tremendous loss of productivity we have suffered, which I suspect will never be calculated, but it is clearly a cost we have incurred by having to arrive earlier, sit longer, just to make sure it doesnâ€™t happen again.

Along the way, we developed an extreme phobia of telling someone else something that might hurt their feelings, such as â€œIf youâ€™re willing to consider killing us for your ideology, weâ€™re willing to try to kill you first to prevent it.â€•

The phobia then extended to ensure we didnâ€™t inflame those who, by their deeds, had already shown they were upset by us.

And, along the way, it has become acceptable to determine something that happened in the name of Christianity in the 2nd millenia AD, was a workable rationale to give a pass to those who began mass killings in the name of Allah, like the modern world, was still in the Middle East doing something other than run of the mill economic trade and business.

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On top of that, while trying to shut out Chritianity as the root cause of the attackerâ€™s anger, therefore justified (in some circles), we have been told to even think someone who subscribes to a faith that clearly has scriptures detailing the destruction of the â€œinfidels,â€• is Islamophobic and is a crime of hate.

Excuse me, but slaughtering just anyone in their way, Christians, Hindus, Buddists, atheists and Muslims alike is a hate crime to me, but Iâ€™m being â€œintolerantâ€• of saying killing for killings sake is a hateful thing.

Enough of that, so onto a set of rhetorical issues befuddle me:

Iâ€™m really missing the point of those who say we â€œover reactedâ€• or, as on man put it a about a month ago, â€œwe went to war for no reason.â€• Getting on board with those, like President Clinton, and the early version of President Obama (and I disagree with this, but it helps address the people who think war was not the answer): Iâ€™d like to ask them how they have reacted when they are told that a serial murderer is on the loose in their area. I know, as we see this all the time, from both sides of the aisle politically, they demand the law enforcement not rest until the person responsible is found and brought to justice. They want dragnets and sweeps and police to protect them from the threat of being next, and have no problem â€œjudgingâ€• the murderer without a trial. So my question would be: What if 2996 people were murdered and that person announced that they had done it and they would do it again, and again, until they had their way with all of you? I think I know the reaction, but the craziness here is they somehow think the 2996 lives lost on 9/11 was no call to action to find those who did it and remove the capability for it to happen anymore, particularly in of the continued statements of future attacks, let alone having seen the actual carnage all over the world, in Europe, India, the Middle East, Malasia, and more places. What kind of a society would we be, saying we are a nation of laws, who turned our backs on that tragedy of 9/11 and said â€œwe canâ€™t respond, we had it coming to us.â€• ?

Anyhow, much has changed. Politicians are fearful of making waves, because we canâ€™t hurt feelings. Small organizations get people to belive they have a big voice, then proceed to peddle disinformation, and we are told they are the experts and do not question tham (side note: We somehow hate corporate lobbyists doing the same thing, but once again, when itâ€™s from an outside force, we must now bow and scape in their general direction, so they donâ€™t do it againâ€¦but wait: They tell us they will and then we still cower).

On top of that, it has become fashionable to ask the person on the street their opinion, on complex matters, and honor their answers. Weâ€™re not getting any smarter, as seen by standardized tesing, and revisionist history, yet somehow we have to hear from those who lack even a modicum of understanding, as if they are all expert scholars on the subject.

And my last item before stopping rambling: I heard it this morning. On the about to be dedicated â€œPeace Pole,â€• the message of â€œpeace on earthâ€• was done in four languages, and particularly in English, as â€œwe need to hera it the most.â€• I may have missed it, but Arabic native speakers attacked us on 9/11, and have done so for many more years, thankfully overseas, and â€œweâ€• need to hear it most inplies very strongly we were the cause. And, by the way, the other three languages didnâ€™t include Arabic. At the services, the same leader read a letter from a very close friend who has very recently served in Afghanistan about his yearâ€™s tour. The Army Captain was obviously in Civial Affairs, as he was in charge of getting wells put in for the people. In his letter he mentioned, how during his tour, he was amazed at the massive out pouring of help from people all over the US, mostly strnagers to him, to all him to deliver school supplies and so much more to the chldren of Afghanistan. The majority of the letter reiterated how he couldnâ€™t fully comprehend this help sent to a far away US population to people they didnâ€™t even know, just because it was a giftâ€¦.and â€œweâ€• who speak English need to hear about â€œpeace on earthâ€• more.

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When was the last time the Taliban send school supplies to the mid-West after the tornados, or the mid-Atlantic and North Eastern States in the awake of the hurricane?

So, yes, things have changed. And some people have still not bothered to fully understand we didnâ€™t attack because we â€œover reacted,â€• we did it beacuse 2996 people are no longer there to continue conducting â€œpeace on Earthâ€• operations, as they were doing that morning, ten years ago.

Category

1. 2996 Tribute
2. Geo-Political
3. History
4. INternational Relations
5. Leadership
6. Military
7. Military History
8. Political
9. Stream of Consciousness

Tags

1. 9/11

2. 9/11 reflections
3. peace on earth
4. terroist attacks
5. terrorism
6. terrorists

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