Neither of the principal presidential candidates disavows the Iraq war for what it is:
* a mistake: an unjust, illegal act of aggression against a nation with a third rate military impoverished by a decade of economic, military and political sanctions,
* rationalized a priori on false, misinterpreted or misrepresented data, 'intelligence' being far too sanguine a term to describe the purported basis,
* for projected goals - a docile, subordinate state, compliant with America's wishes and objectives - that now seem clearly unobtainable,
* with a post-hoc rationale, homeland security, now receding ever farther into the distance in consequence of this war's brutal, indiscriminately violent prosecution.

Instead these candidates differ only in detail regarding how we must continue until we 'win'. Win what, for pity's sake? The contempt of the whole world? The enmity of the third world?

The conversion of yet more of the world's oppressed, beleaguered, impoverished peoples to active terrorism against our dominance? What price 'victory'?

Instead our choices are between demonstrated, resolute, inflexible belligerence and vague promises to coalesce a wider consortium of suppression. Nowhere from the current political 'leadership' do we hear expressed the wisdom widely voiced by experienced field observers, from the US to Afghanistan and Iraq:
* The war is essentially lost;
* In one and one-half years, America has successively, conclusively demonstrated its utter inability to inspire or impose peace, stability or national cohesion on either of these two states;
* Our 'war on terrorism' is the ultimate oxymoron, for war, especially as we have pursued it, is the ultimate terrorism: as hate begets hate, so our organized violence against the populations of these two countries has begot only more terrorism;
* America's security is dependent NOT on fear, whether of our psychopathic, irrationally violent outbursts or our support of tyrannical regimes, but rather by the growth of nations reasonably satisfied with their popular governance regardless of its form, governance which we so far have been unable effectively to produce or promote.

Despite the wealth of professional expertise from a diverse range of backgrounds, discrediting the last several decades of American foreign policy fiascos from Vietnam to Granada to Panama, through on-going support of the Israeli national psychopathy, to Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Iraq, our political 'leadership' has been hamstrung by a self-perpetuating, self-destructive, delusional mythology of America's 'right'
to dictate to and manipulate the governance systems of other peoples to suit our liking.

This mythology, fully comparable to the "white man's burden" Britain used to justify its 19th century colonialism, is as utterly fallacious and corruptly self-serving as its predecessor, a mythology that none but the deluded among this country's politicians and electorate seriously accepts. Where does this national delusion, this wish-fulfilling fantasy, come from? What sustains it?

The novelist Len Deighton wrote of IPCRESS, the induction of psychosis by conditioned response to stress stimuli. Our politicians, 'news/entertainment' media and the electorate are engaged in a cyclic frenzy of self-reenforcing hysteria, built on the conclusively demonstrably invalid thesis that our only safety is in dominance. In fact it is our pathological impulse to dominate that inspires the very terrorism we struggle to suppress. Constantly bombarded by generated and imposed psychological stress, Americans accept as reasonable and rational, patterns of thought and behavior that are utterly contrary both to their benefit and to removing or mitigating the stressors. We believe, we say, that we have a moral, ethical, political, economic and military 'responsibility' to impose our wishes on others, especially when and where such imposition advantages our 'interests'.

In a recent, seminal lecture, "Globalisation, Empire and Terror", Prof. Mark Rupert, Syracuse University, argued that nothing short of re-education of the American electorate will suffice to dismantle its allegiance to this dangerously delusional national myth. But the principal architects and exemplars of America's conception of its place in the world community of nations are just those politicians and media that benefit from perpetuating the myth of America's right to, and responsibility to impose, its supremacy. Supreme power corrupts supremely; it is that corruption of the American potential for promoting peace and justice that fosters worldwide animosity and enmity towards us.

Our economic power, our political eminence, could have been used to persuade by example and true leadership for the benefit of all. As our powers have been used in the last fifty years, particularly with the hasty, facile resort to military might to secure, ensure and perpetuate our dominance of all nations, we have succeeded only in alienating the vast majority of our fellow human beings and in provoking ever more violent resistance and opposition to our hegemony.

Where is the leadership bold and courageous enough to educate the American electorate, clearly to voice their misgivings? Where are the voices of those clear-sighted enough to see and tell the truth, to depict ourselves as others see us, to demand that we conduct ourselves not as superior beings but as human beings, fellow to the other inhabitants of this planet? Who recognize, acknowledge and articulate the truth that abuse of our political, economic and military power is but poor substitute for wisdom, compassion and understanding for all, self and others?
The trouble seems to be that the American political process seems to have got caught up in self-replicating fantasies. Like children peeping out from under the covers, frightened of horrors imagined resident under the bed and in the closet, we demand from our politicians fairy-tales of our invincibility and divine righteousness. In order to retain their chances of (res-)election, those opportunistic politicians pander to our national neurotic anxieties, reenforcing the very behaviors that result in yet more anxieties. Rather than the truths about the consequences of our actions we need to hear to make rational decisions, we get flashing lights, smoke and mirrors from our 'leadership' and views of ourselves at utter variance with experience and perception of the rest of the world. Instead of clambering to climb on the merciless bandwagon of destruction and subduction into vassalage of a succession of weak but independent nations, where is the leadership that proclaims as wise men and women already well know, that the key to our 'security', at home or abroad, is living with our fellow man, not subjugating them with fear of our terror?

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