

The end of nation-building

Fulfilling Trump's promise means halting the endless overseas cash flow.

by Kenneth R. Timmerman

Secretary of State George Shultz famously asked future ambassadors a question before sending them out into the world. He would spin a globe, then ask them to point to their country.

Many of them, thinking Mr. Shultz and his “cowboy” boss Ronald Reagan to be an unwashed heathen, pointed to Germany, Britain, Japan, Lesotho – wherever they were headed. Mr. Shultz cut them off and pointed to the United States. “This is your country,” he would say. “Don’t ever forget it.”

Today’s State Department, after eight years of globalist policies, has forgotten the people it represents.

Of the \$54.7 billion Secretary of State Kerry requested Congress to fund, less than half goes to the core functions of American diplomacy. Just over 11 percent goes to fund overseas embassies and security, including new embassy construction.

Where does the rest of the money go? The largest chunk – nearly 38 percent – goes for what gets euphemistically called “Overseas Contingency Operations.” In layman’s terms, this means: cleaning up the mess our failed policies have helped to produce.

Earlier this year, Mr. Kerry sought an increase of \$5.8 billion to these funds, which he called his “Counter Daesh” strategy, using the Arabic term for ISIS, the Islamic State. Roughly half of this money will go to nation-building in oil-rich countries such as Iraq and Nigeria. The rest will go for refugee support and resettlement.

American taxpayers are being asked to pay for rebuilding Ramadi, Mosul and other areas liberated from ISIS, while the Iraqi government – dominated by the Islamic state of Iran – gets a free pass. Meanwhile, the cash-strapped Kurdish Regional Government, cheated out of oil revenues by Baghdad, gets just \$5 million, even though it has born the brunt of the refugee crisis and the recent fighting.

President-elect Donald Trump made clear throughout the campaign that the days of nation-building were over. “We are getting out of the nation-building business, and instead focusing on creating stability in the world,” he said in a foreign policy address on April 27.

There is much more that is wrong with current foreign policy priorities than just nation-building.

Under Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and Mr. Kerry, the State Department has gone into the “green energy” business, and today spends close to \$1 billion a year to “combat climate change.” That money includes big handouts to left-wing consultants and crony capitalist corporations, who peddle their services and dump their products overseas at taxpayer expense.

The budget includes another \$1 billion per year for the Millennium Challenge Corp. to “expand its poverty-reduction partnerships.” Mr. Trump indicated clearly during the campaign that his priority was to rebuild our crumbling inner cities, not the shantytowns of South Africa, Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast.

The State Department boasts of running “the world’s largest [refugee] resettlement program,” at a cost of nearly \$3 billion per year.

Refugee resettlement has become a big business in America, with so-called humanitarian organizations getting large cash awards per refugee they resettle in this country at taxpayer

expense, as citizen-analyst Ann Corcoran has documented over the years in her must-read Refugee Resettlement blog.

Christian refugees from Syria get systematically persecuted – not just in their home countries, but also once they arrive in European refugee camps, according to the Christian aid organization, Open Doors. Who is doing the persecuting? Fellow refugees, who just happen to be Muslims.

Of the nearly 11,000 Syrian refugees admitted to the United States this past year, just 56 were Christians – less than one-half of 1 percent.

To be fair, the anti-Christian discrimination of the State Department in awarding immigration visas predates the Obama administration. As I personally witnessed at our embassy in Amman, Jordan, Bush-era diplomats favored Muslims and discriminated against persecuted Christians seeking entry to the United States, including Christians who had put their lives on the line working as interpreters for U.S. forces in Iraq.

Taxpayers also are asked to spend \$778 million per year for international broadcasting, including Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL). This is part of a larger, \$1.2 billion appropriation aimed at “countering misinformation about American society and policies,” according to Mr. Kerry’s request.

The Persian-language services of both VOA and RFE/RL have long been a disaster, mocked in Iran because they broadcast pro-Iranian regime propaganda and not the pro-freedom message they were intended to convey.

During our election campaign, for example, VOA’s Persian News Network became an outlet for hard-left-wing voices such as Noam Chomsky, who called the Republican Party “the most dangerous organization in world history.” They also translated partisan screeds alleging that the Trump campaign was run by

white supremacists and neo-Nazis, as if this were an established fact not wild fantasy-land libel.

Out of this \$54.7 billion budget, how much do you suppose was earmarked to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, as mandated by U.S. law? Zero dollars and zero cents.

The next secretary of State will have his work cut out for him. He must fearlessly gore the liberal oxen and clear the stables of their keepers, many of them now burrowed deep into the bureaucracy.

Or then again, he could simply ignore the pledge of the president-elect and conduct business with the elites as usual. Anyone taking bets?

- *Kenneth R. Timmerman is the author of "Deception: The Making of the YouTube Video Hillary and Obama Blamed for Benghazi" (Post Hill Press, 2016).*

First published in the