

The Outlander and the American political battlefield

I just finished watching a terrific Netflix series entitled, *The Outlander*. For those of you who haven't seen it, I would describe it as a cross between a docudrama and a Harlequin novel. Based on the books of Diana Gabaldon that merge multiple genres with elements of historical fiction, romance, mystery, adventure and science fiction/fantasy, the series is dramatic, but at its core is really about tribalism and the human desire for unity.

Set in the 1740s in Scotland, Gabaldon weaved a magical spell that is like a call from sirens of the day, luring you into another epoch. She presented a dramatic case-history that shows the effects of tribalism and what national pride can do to devotees of 'empire.' Comparing the desire of the Scottish clans to return their *rightful* (Scottish) king to power to our modern-day political tug of war for the American political/ideological throne, it offers a lesson that is hard to miss.

That lesson is simple; power fuels choice, and absolute power that ignores the common man will sooner or later lead to revolution. The warring tribes of Liberals versus Conservatives in the U.S. seem willing to risk everything to retain or gain hegemony over all of us just as the 18th century Brits justified spilling blood by claiming that their position endowed them with the right to wage armed conflict against any who opposed them. We see this play out in the current impeachment fever promulgated by the Left, the Mueller investigation of Russian collusion and the mad rush to take down the President at all costs. The Democrats and the Republicans can be cast as being both the entrenched interests of the English aristocracy/elites and the Scottish rebels in their quest for a 'free Scotland,' depending on your point of view.

While the weapons of our modern war are not spears, swords or muskets, they are every bit as dangerous. Lies, innuendo and accusations perpetrated by Left-wing zealots along with a willing co-conspirator like the media are busy decimating the truth like the cannons that slaughtered the clans on the open moors. The series takes us deep into the parlors and palaces of the time, giving us insight into the real reasons behind the conflict, the principal one being the preservation of the elites' belief that they were destined to govern. It also pulled back the curtain revealing the hierarchy of entitlement and superiority. The French felt superior to the British and the British felt superior to the Scots. The open disdain for any form of self-governance was evident as the rich and landed power brokers lined up behind their sovereigns to protect their fortunes and birthrights. In America, the ideologues of the Left have simply substituted *king* with *big government*. The Right has aligned itself more with the Scots who were fighting for self-determination, even though they did so within the framework of a monarchy.

How were they to know that only thirty years later a revolution would take place in France and the United States? Had they known, they could have perhaps avoided the thousands of deaths that would result from their ambitions and that characterized their struggle by opting, instead, for a democracy or a republic. *The Outlander* showed that any oppressed people's struggle can be justified and romanticized, especially when looking backwards. The challenge for those striving to protect the rights of all men under a Constitution is another matter, entirely. Though we have our American history to look back on to see the sacrifices our ancestors made to insure what Franklin called, "a republic if you can keep it," we often forget to place those sacrifices in a context that would make it easier for us to take a side, today. We who value our liberties and declare our allegiance to protecting them at all costs are frequently seen as 'outlanders' and viewed as ignorant peasants and 'deplorables' by those who believe that 'might makes right.' Those who feel they are entitled to sweep two centuries of freedom under the rug of history and pretend that it never existed would do well not to underestimate the power of an idea whose time has come or one that has stood the test of time.

Stephan Helgesen is a retired career U.S. diplomat who lived and worked in 30 countries for 25 years. He is the author of three books on American politics and has written over 1,000 articles on politics, economics and social trends. He can be reached at: stephan@stephanhelgesen.com