

By REMEDIOS F. MARMOLEÑO

High school and college requirements for units in history during my student days meant I had to study subjects that dealt with the quarrels of the royal houses of Europe. A good number of the wars then were “religious wars” and the present troubles in Iraq made me want to go back to what I can learn from rereading history. An entry in Wikipedia started with these lines: “ During the period of 1525 until 1648, Europe was plagued by wars of religion. It is important to recognize, however, that while religion was given as the reason for war, there were many other reasons as well. These included land, money and economics, political power, natural resources, and more.”

The period referred to in Europe was about 400 years ago but do the reasons still apply to what is happening in the ISIS march across Iraq? An online video supposedly featuring a spokesman for Hamas has this man saying that the end goal of Hamas is not the total destruction of Israel but allied with ISIS it is to establish an Islamic state in the world and destroy other civilizations and this will entail the shedding of much innocent blood.

I do not wish to fall for propaganda no matter who is responsible for it. If the video is taken as its words imply, the present conflict is most certainly a war between religions. But, might this present conflict arising from ISIS really be a conflict for political power? There is after all the 3-year civil war in Syria that seeks to topple Assad from power and not surprisingly he refuses to step down. There is also Al Maliki who refused to step down from the leadership of Iraq in spite of the urgings from those brokering peace in that country. He has since agreed to step down.

Might this present conflict created by ISIS really be a means to control the oil fields of Iraq and thus get into the realm of petro politics? We are familiar with this ploy and this is one of the reasons why there is such a push to get the world into other types of energy sources and thus get out of the clutches of those who control oil in the world.

Is this really a religious war?

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But it can also be a religious war as expressed in the video that I saw, a war fomented by those who believe that their religion is the only religion that should prevail in the world and all those who do not submit themselves to it should be eliminated from the world.

Now this is something I really find scary, that there is a group that will dictate to me what religion I should practice no matter what my own inclination might be. Not only that, but that the whole notion of religion being something that makes us better people is somehow nullified if what we hear of what the ISIS is doing is correct – beheading children, lining up men on a road and shooting them like so many captured rabbits, abducting women and girls.

Is this how it will be in a world where this religion will be the dominant one?