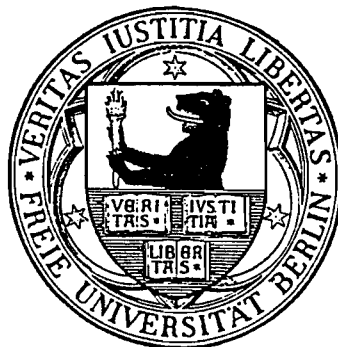# FREIE UNIVERSITÄT
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AmerikanistInnen zum Golfkrieg

AmerikanistInnen zum Golfkrieg

Vorwort

Wissenschaft zeichnet sich nicht durch die kühl-objektivierende
Distanz des Beobachters vom Untersuchungsgegenstand aus, sondern
durch die Ernsthaftigkeit und Systematik ihres Vorgehens, wozu
auch gehört, an einer Sache zu bleiben, selbst wenn ein aktuelles
Interesse, das ihr diesen Gegenstand zunächst vorgegeben hatte,
nicht mehr zu bestehen scheint, weil der Weltgeist der Mode an-
dere Themen auf die Tagesordnung setzen möchte. Wissenschaft ist
in dem, was sie als Produkte hervorbringt, auch ein Gefäß des
Erinnerns an das, was Menschen in einer bestimmten, im Rückblick
historisch gewordenen Situation aufgeregt und ihr Erkenntnisinter-
esse herausgefordert hat.

Im Februar 1992, dem Zeitpunkt, da die hier publizierten beschei-
denen Papiere der kleinen Öffentlichkeit eines Universitätsinsti-
tuts vorgelegt werden, liegen die dramatischen Tage und Wochen
des sog. "Zweiten Golfkriegs", mit dem das Jahr 1991 weltpolitisch
eingeleitet worden war, erst ein Jahr zurück - und scheinen schon
wieder in Vergangenheit zu geraten oder zu geraten wollen: aus
vielerlei Gründen besteht ein aktuelles Interesse daran, an die-
sen Krieg nicht allzusehr zu erinnern. Ein Grund, und vermutlich
der wichtigste ist der, daß (für wissenschaftlich, d.h. historisch
und systematisch Beobachtende von politischen Prozessen im allge-
meinen und von Kriegen und Gewaltanwendung als Mittel der Politik
keine Überraschung) auch dieser Krieg keines der ihn tiefer ver-
ursachten Probleme gelöst oder einer Lösung nähergebracht hat.
Aber Zehn- vielleicht sogar Hunderttausende von Menschen sind ihm
zum Opfer gefallen, wurden von der Politik kalkuliert geopfert
oder werden ihr Leben noch verlieren: die materialen und ökolo-
gischen Kriegsfolgen werden erst jetzt in Umrissen deutlich und
eben darum mit dem Mantel des Verschweigens bedeckt, dem auch
eine an anderen, neu-aktuelleren Themen interessierte, also

am Zweiten Golfkrieg inzwischen wieder desinteressierte Öffent-
lichkeit gerne entgegenkommt. Denn "wir sind noch einmal davon-
gekommen." Zwar gibt es um diesen Jahrestag herum eine Reihe von
Publikationen, die sowohl die innenpolitischen Debatten und Posi-
tionen "von damals" reflektieren, als auch Analysen zum historisch-
politökonomischen Hintergrund des Krieges bieten, in denen wir -
endlich, verspätet - etwas mehr erfahren über Politik und Kultur
des arabischen Raumes z.B., aber überwiegend handelt es sich da-
bei um kleine, kaum über einen engen Kreis von Fachleuten hinaus
bekannte Verlage, die das Risiko der Publikation von solchen Golf-
Titeln eingegangen sind.

Unsere Papiere erscheinen in noch bescheidenerer Form - aber zu-
gleich dort, wo sie entstanden sind und zunächst auch hingehören:
in der Diskussionsreihe eines FU-Instituts, das sich auftragsge-
mäß den Nordamerika-Studien widmet. Sie alle sind entstanden in
den Tagen und Wochen um und nach dem 15. Januar 1991 und waren
präsentiert worden auf Diskussionsveranstaltungen, zu denen einzu-
laden sich insbesondere die Abteilung Politik des Kennedy-Insti-
tuts verpflichtet fühlte. Sie orientieren sich dabei alle an der
Rolle der USA in diesem Kriegskonflikt, die ja zweifellos zentral
war aber eben doch nur eine Dimension des komplexen Themas dar-
stellt. Auch dort, wo es - wie im Beitrag von Bohman - um deutsche
Positionen und Kontroversen geht, ist es die US-amerikanische
Sicht, aus der sie dargestellt werden, d.h. wie sie von dort wahr-
genommen wurden. Die allgemeinste - und pointiert kritische -
Einschätzung der Politik der US-amerikanischen Regierung stammt
von zwei Studentinnen der Politikwissenschaft bzw. Amerikanistik,
Dobner/Krause. Sie war zum Zeitpunkt ihres Vortrages und ist auch
heute noch kontrovers und wurde darum besonders heftig diskutiert -
wie es sich gehört. Dabei sollte jedoch der oder dem genau Lesen-
den nicht der Bezugsrahmen entgehen, von dem aus hier gewertet,
be- und auch verurteilt wird: es ist wiederum ein amerikanischer,
nämlich der des anderen, des idealistisch-demokratischen Amerika,
der der USA von 1776 ff. und nicht der der Großmacht und selbst-
erklärten Siegerin im Kalten Krieg. B. Young von der Wesleyan
University war - ein glückliches Zusammentreffen für unsere Dis-

kussionen zum Thema - im Wintersemester 1990/91 Gastprofessorin
am Kennedy-Institut und hat nicht nur das Versagen der Politik-
wissenschaftler (oder doch vieler der Disziplin) herausgearbeitet,
sondern auch die macht-arroganten patriarchalischen Dimensionen,
die für dieses Versagen - der Wissenschaftler so gut wie der so
selbstsicher handelnden Männer der Politik - mitverantwortlich
sind, angesprochen. Ebenso Instituts-Gastdozent war in jenem Win-
tersemester B. Spear, dem es zu verdanken ist, die differenzierte
Vielfalt der Golfkriegs-Diskussion in den USA, insbesondere im
"konservativen" Lager aufzuzeigen - ein Thema, was vor dem über-
wältigenden Interesse von uns Deutschen an uns selbst eher ver-
drängt und ignoriert worden ist. Ch. Scherrer, einer der drei
festen Mitarbeiter der Abteilung Politik, hat - wenn ein bißchen
kollegiales Lob hier gestattet sei - seiner fachlichen Qualifika-
tion als Experte für die Politische Ökonomie der Weltwirtschaft
alle Ehre gemacht dadurch, daß er komplexe Zusammenhänge lesbar
und einleuchtend aufgehellt und verständlich gemacht hat - näm-
lich die der Konsequenzen für eine westliche Welt, der ihr Osten
abhanden gekommen ist.

Auf den verschiedenen Podien und "Teach-ins" des JFKI im Januar/
Februar 1991 hatten noch zahlreiche andere Experten und Engagier-
te, Institutsangehörige und eingeladene Gäste, gesprochen. Wir
konnten nicht alle Beiträge schriftlich dokumentieren - aber auch
diese wenigen haben doch, so scheint es, genügend Substanz, um
als wissenschaftliche Zeugnisse erinnert und ernstgenommen zu
werden. Zumindest dieses erste Jahr - alle entsprechen im wesent-
lichen den Texten, die damals vorgetragen worden sind - haben sie
unbeschadet-aktuell überstanden, etwas, das sich von wenig poli-
tisch motivierten Analysen des letzten Jahres sagen läßt.

Ekkehart Krippendorff

Berlin, 5. Februar 1992

Pazifismus um jeden Preis?

Zum Antiamerikanismusvorwurf an die deutsche Friedensbewegung

von:

Petra Dobner
Felicitas Kraus

Februar 1991

Einleitung

Seit dem Beginn der alliierten Offensive gegen den Irak dominiert die Logik des Krieges das politische Tagesgeschehen und die öffentliche Auseinandersetzung. Alle Vermittlungsversuche scheiterten bisher an der Unnachgiebigkeit beider Konfliktparteien - sowohl der Irak, als auch die USA haben einen Waffenstillstand, der zu einer Verhandlungslösung genutzt werden könnte, abgelehnt.

Auch die innenpolitische Auseinandersetzung in der Bundesrepublik polarisiert sich zunehmend. Spätestens seit den Raketenangriffen des Irak auf israelische Städte und der amerikanischen[1] und westeuropäischen Kritik an der allzu zögerlichen Haltung der Bundesregierung formieren sich innenpolitische Fronten: auf der einen Seite die, die im Namen des Völkerrechts für die gewaltsame Entwaffnung Saddam Husseins plädieren, und sich vorhalten lassen müssen, für diese hehren Ziele einige zehn- oder hunderttausend Ziviltote in Kauf zu nehmen; auf der anderen Seite die KriegsgegnerInnen, denen vorgehalten wird, ihr Eintreten für eine friedliche Konfliktlösung laufe letztlich darauf hinaus, Frieden mit dem Diktator Hussein und seinen Waffenarsenalen zu schließen. "Tertium non datur", so Klaus Hartung[2]. Für oder gegen den Krieg zu sein - das wird zu einer Frage des Glaubens und der besseren Moral. In dieser Situation halten wir es für notwendig, die wissenschaftliche und die politische Diskussion jenseits der scheinbar zwingenden Alternativen zu intensivieren.

Die Unverhältnismäßigkeit der Mittel

Der irakische Überfall auf Kuwait am 2. August 1990 stellte eine klare Verletzung des Völkerrechts dar. Noch am selben Tag verurteilte der Sicherheitsrat der Vereinten Nationen die Annexion und erklärte sie für "null und nichtig" (Resolution 660/662).

Wenig später beschloß er ein umfassendes Embargo gegen den Irak nach Artikel 41 der UN-Charta (Resolutionen 661/665/670). Die von der UNO verhängten Sanktionen wurden von einer breiten Mehrheit der vertretenen Staaten mitgetragen, das Embargo wurde praktisch vollständig eingehalten.

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1) Soweit im folgenden - der Einfachheit halber - von »Amerika«, »amerikanisch« usw. die Rede ist, sind durchgängig ausschließlich die Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika gemeint.

2) in: »die tageszeitung« vom 27.01.1991

Die UNO hat so die Verantwortung der Völkergemeinschaft, Verletzungen des Völkerrechts nicht unwidersprochen hinzunehmen, wahrgenommen; die Wirkung der Sanktionen - die allgemein als aussichtsreich eingeschätzt wurden - hätte abgewartet werden können.

Mit dem Aufmarsch der alliierten Truppen in Saudiarabien, und insbesondere durch das von den USA geforderte Ultimatum für den Rückzug des Irak aus Kuwait bis zum 15. Januar 1991, bekamen jedoch die Ereignisse eine grundlegend neue Qualität.

Die USA erklärten den Rückzug der irakischen Truppen aus Kuwait zur Bedingung für Verhandlungen. Hierauf einzugehen wäre für Saddam Hussein einem Gesichtsverlust gleichgekommen. Der Spielraum für Verhandlungen wurde so praktisch auf Null reduziert. Letztlich setzte das Ultimatum des Sicherheitsrats vom 26.11.1991 eine unwiderrufliche Kausalmechanik zum Krieg in Gang - gegen die Intention der meisten Staaten, die die von der UNO verhängten Zwangsmaßnahmen mitgetragen hatten. Eine ultimative Politik dynamisiert Konflikte dramatisch - bleibt das Ultimatum wirkungslos, muß eine Sanktion der Herausforderer folgen. Die politischen Ziele - nun Kriegsziele geworden - verschieben sich unter der Hand. Ging es zunächst um die Vertreibung des Irak aus Kuwait, geht es heute auch darum, dem Irak eine grundsätzliche und exemplarische Lektion zu erteilen. "Wir werden im Golf Erfolg haben. Und wenn wir das tun, wird dies ein für allemal eine Warnung der internationalen Staatengemeinschaft für jeden Diktator oder Despoten - der Gegenwart oder Zukunft - sein, der gesetzlose Aggression in Betracht zieht"[3], erklärt George Bush in seinem »Bericht zur Lage der Nation« am 29.01.1991.

Das Abrücken von einer politischen Lösung des Konflikts und der Beginn der alliierten Offensive am 17.Januar 1991 scheinen inzwischen mehr Konflikte zu schaffen als zu lösen. Zahllose Opfer unter der Zivilbevölkerung durch die flächendeckende Bombardierung des Irak und Kuwaits und die durch den Irak herbeigeführte Umweltkatastrophe mit mindestens langwährenden, möglicherweise unumkehrbaren Folgen, sind bereits jetzt der Preis des kriegerischen Lösungsversuchs.

Ein anderer Effekt der »ultimativen Politik« besteht darin, daß die Bestätigung der Notwendigkeit, den Irak aus Kuwait zurückzudrängen gleichzeitig die Akzeptanz dieses Krieges bedeutet. Andere politische und wirtschaftliche Sanktionsmaßnahmen geraten aus dem Blickfeld.

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3)   George Bush, Bericht zur Lage der Nation, zitiert nach: »Frankfurter Rundschau«, Dokumentation vom 05.02.1991

Ebenfalls wird mit der Anwendung dieser vermeintlichen "ultima ratio" die Frage nach der Verhältnismäßigkeit von Zweck und Mittel nicht länger gestellt. Ob diese Verhältnismäßigkeit gegenwärtig gewahrt bleibt, ist in verschiedener Hinsicht fraglich. Trotz der zensurbedingt geringen Kenntnis über die Zahl der bisherigen Kriegsopfer, besteht offensichtlich die Gefahr, daß der Irak »in die Steinzeit zurückgebombt« wird. Man beginnt sich zu fragen, wie die Menschen, die den Krieg überleben, die Nachkriegszeit überstehen. Auch Kuwait wird nach dem Krieg nicht mehr das Land sein, das man zu befreien suchte. Ob durch brennende Ölraffinerien, Raketen, Bodentruppen, Atomverseuchung - die Zerstörungsmöglichkeiten sind groß. Unverhältnismäßig stehen sich die wiederherzustellende Souveränität und die zu erwartende Zerstörung gegenüber.

Die Verteidigung des Prinzips

Man könnte einwenden, daß »Prinzip« sei zu verteidigen, das der Gerechtigkeit und des Völkerrechts und das Prinzip des Friedens. George Bush legitimiert den Einsatz am Golf, indem er feststellt, für Amerika stehe im Golfkrieg "mehr auf dem Spiel als nur ein kleines Land - eine große Idee: eine neue Weltordnung, in der unterschiedliche Nationen in einer gemeinsamen Sache zusammenstehen, um die universellen Hoffnungen der Menschheit zu verwirklichen: Frieden und Sicherheit, Freiheit und Rechtsstaatlichkeit"[4].

Die Logik des Prinzips erfordert aber, daß es immer gilt. Wenn - den Verhältnissen entsprechend - die prinzipiell gleiche Verletzung unterschiedlich geahndet oder geächtet wird, liegt der Verdacht nahe, es gehe um Interessen, nicht um Prinzipien.

Der Berliner Philosoph Ernst Tugendthat stellt in diesem Zusammenhang die Frage, warum das »gute Prinzip«, den Überfall eines großen Landes auf ein kleines Land nicht zuzulassen, "nur in diesem Fall praktiziert wird und nicht dann, wenn die USA ein kleines Land überfallen, wie Panama oder Grenada usw.?"[5]

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4)   ebd.

5)   in: »die tageszeitung« vom 29.1.1991

Letztlich diskreditiert diese selektive Prinzipientreue das Prinzip selbst. "Was, jenseits der Hysterie auf den Straßen, auch kritische Araber gegen die alliierte Koalition aufgebracht hat, ist die in ihren Augen geringe Glaubwürdigkeit des Westens und insbesondere der USA. (...) Sie verweisen darauf, daß die USA im Alleingang die »geeigneten Maßnahmen« die der Sicherheitsrat zur Durchsetzung seiner Beschlüsse ergreifen kann, als »Auftrag« interpretierten, im Namen der Vereinten Nationen Irak zu bombardieren, während sie im Falle Palästinas nie Vergleichbares versucht haben. Im Gegenteil, mit ihrem Veto haben die USA im Sicherheitsrat seit über zwanzig Jahren jeden Versuch blockiert, der Rückzugsforderung der Resolution 242 von 1967 mit geeigneten Maßnahmen Nachdruck zu verschaffen."[6] Indem die UNO und die USA so in den Verdacht geraten, mit zweierlei Maß zu messen, werden ihre Aussichten, eine produktive Rolle bei der langfristigen Friedenssicherung im Nahen Osten zu spielen, dauerhaft untergraben.

Auch auf rechtlicher Ebene erheben sich Bedenken: der Völkerrechtsdozent Dr. Hermann Weber legt dar, daß der Grundsatz der Verhältnismäßigkeit zwischen Zweck und Mittel Bestandteil des Völkerrechts sei, und dazu gehöre, "daß nicht mit militärischen Mitteln reagiert werden darf, solange nichtmilitärische Mittel möglicherweise Erfolg versprechen"[7] (wie das laufende Embargo). Das in der UN-Charta festgelegte Recht auf Selbstverteidigung sei nur im Falle noch andauernder Kampfhandlungen anwendbar. Letzteres war zum Zeitpunkt des Angriffs auf den Irak nicht der Fall.

Hermann Weber folgert aus diesen Umständen, "selbst wenn der Angriff auf den Irak auf konventionelle Kriegsführung auf rein militärische Ziele beschränkt werden kann, ist er doch zum gegenwärtigen Zeitpunkt ohne völkerrechtliche Grundlage..." [8]

Vom Hochsitz der Moral

Die - im Vergleich zu anderen europäischen Ländern und den USA - große Bewegung gegen den Krieg brachte die Regierung der Bundesrepublik, der es qua Grundgesetz untersagt ist, Truppen in militärische Konflikte außerhalb des Nato-Territoriums zu entsenden, in außenpolitische Bedrängnis.

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6)   Friedemann Büttner, in: »Der Tagesspiegel« vom 3.2.1991

7)   in: »die tageszeitung« vom 5.2.1991

8)   ebd.

Der militärische Absentismus und die »Scheckbuchdiplomatie« erweckten den Verdacht mangelnder Bündnistreue, allzu großer Indifferenz bei der »Verteidigung der Freiheit« und mangelnder Solidarität gegenüber Israel.

Die Friedensbewegung, deren Parolen und Aktionen als antiamerikanisch verstanden wurden, galt vielen im In- und Ausland als moralisierende Vorhut gesinnungsethisch verbrämten »Drückebergertums« der Deutschen. Dies verschärfte die innenpolitische Auseinandersetzung zwischen KriegsgegnerInnen und KriegsbefürworterInnen.

Denen, die gegen eine Weiterführung des Krieges und für eine Verhandlungslösung eintreten, wird entgegengehalten, in der Konsequenz laufe dies auf eine implizite Duldung der Annexion Kuwaits und der auf Israel gerichteten Massenvernichtungs- waffen hinaus.

In der öffentlichen Diskussion wird häufig der Vergleich mit der »Appeasementpolitik« Frankreichs und Englands gegenüber Hitler gezogen, die im Münchner Abkommen die Annexion des Sudetenlandes durch Deutschland billigten. Die historische Parallele soll die Notwendigkeit illustrieren, durch frühzeitiges militärisches Eingreifen Schlimmeres zu verhindern.

Stellvertretend für diese Position erklärt z.B. Joachim Fest: "Zu den elementaren Lehren der Hitlerjahre gehört, daß jede Nachgiebigkeit gegenüber dem Erpresser einen weit höheren Preis an Opfern und Zerstörung verlangt als die Unbeugsamkeit; und daß gegen den zum Krieg Entschlossenen der Friede schwerlich behauptet werden kann. Es gibt einen Test für alle Antikriegsparolen, die in diesen Tagen herumgetragen werden: ob sie auch gegen Hitler, im Europa der Jahre 1938/39 standgehalten hätten."[9]

Noch weiter als Joachim Fest geht der scharfe Vorwurf von Jochen Thies: "Again we see that Germany has not yet overcome the Third Reich. In a surprising parallel with their fathers who voted for reasons of fear for Adolf Hitler, the sons and the 1968-era students and their children seem to make the same mistake in the opposite direction - pacifism at any price."[10]

Soll der Frieden um jeden Preis, auch um den der fortdauernden Vernichtungsdrohung gegen den Staat Israel erhalten werden, lautet die polemische Frage. Die Antwort kann nur Nein lauten.

Doch - abgesehen von der Frage, wie haltbar oder denunziatorisch es ist, die Forderung nach Beendigung des Krieges als »Umkehrung« der Duldung und Anhängerschaft des Hitlerfaschismus zu begreifen - es geht nicht um "Pazifismus um jeden Preis". Es geht um die Frage nach den adäquaten Mitteln zur Lösung dieses spezifischen Konflikts.

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9)   in: »Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung« vom 23.1.1991

10)   in: »International Herald Tribune« vom 31.1.1991

Appeasement?

Der Vorwurf der Appeasementpolitik gegenüber Hussein bedarf allerdings einer genaueren Betrachtung. Die Analogie zwischen dem Irak 1991 und Deutschland vor dem Ausbruch des zweiten Weltkriegs, greift zu kurz.
"Die Appeasementpolitik mit Hitler war offenkundig verhängnisvoll. Aber Chamberlain und Daladier waren weder Pazifisten, noch gehörten sie zu einer spontanen Friedensbewegung, sondern sie versuchten viel zu lange, Hitler in ihr außenpolitisches Interessenspiel zu integrieren."[11]

Der Vergleich von Hussein und Hitler

Ein zentrales Element des »Appeasement«-Vorwurfs ist die oft unhinterfragte Gleichsetzung Hitlers mit Hussein. In der Schreckensrhetorik über den »Irren aus Bagdad« funktioniert dieser Vergleich als Begründung für den moralisch zu rechtfertigenden Einsatz aller - gerade auch gewaltsamer Mittel - gegen Hussein und damit auch gegen das irakische Volk.
Doch wieweit trägt dieser Vergleich wirklich? "Nun verkörpert Saddam Hussein ... vieles, was ihn tatsächlich in die Nähe Hitlers rücken läßt: Seine Entschlossenheit, gegen innere und äußere Feinde alle Gewaltmittel einschließlich chemischer Waffen einzusetzen, (...) seine Skrupellosigkeit, internationale Verträge zu brechen (...) Saddam Hussein verkörpert auch ein von ihm selbst geprägtes Regime, das durch das Führerprinzip, den absoluten Machtanspruch einer Staatspartei, die Unterord-nung der Armee unter die Partei-Kader, die konkurrierenden Spitzel- und Sicherheitsapparate (...), die Verfolgung und Massakrierung der kurdischen Minderheit, durch Expansionismus und Kriegstreiberei stark faschistische Züge aufweist."[12]
Mohssen Massarrat warnt aber gleichzeitig vor einem undifferenzierten Vergleich der beiden Diktatoren: dies sei »pure Demagogie« und »Manipulation der Geschichte«. Hussein sei weder der charismatische Führer wie Hitler, noch bestimme Führerbegeisterung und -identität, sondern Respekt und Angst das Verhältnis des irakischen Volkes gegenüber Hussein. Darüber hinaus stelle der "Vergleich Husseins mit Hitler die Vorgänge in der Golfregion auf den Kopf. Hitler war u.a. auch ein Produkt des Versailler Vertrags. Die erlittene Demütigung der Deutschen war der seelische Nährboden für das Gedeihen eines Seelenheil und nationale Größe versprechenden Führers.

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11)   Dr. Herrmann Scheer, in: »die tageszeitung« vom 06.02.1991

12)   Mohssen Massarrat, Diskussionspapier veröffentlicht an der Universität Osnabrück im September 1990

Die um die Jahrhundertwende um die Pfründe der Welt mit den etablierten Kolonialmächten England und Frankreich wetteifernden Deutschen haben Versailles und ihre eigene Demütigung selbst verschuldet. Die nun erwachten islamisch-arabischen Völker sind dagegen Opfer einer neokolonialistischen Politik und sehen in Saddam Hussein weniger aus Überzeugung denn aus Not ihren Hoffnungsträger."[13]

Saddam Hussein mag das Palästinenserproblem, den Heiligen Krieg des Islam und die Frage, wem die Petrodollars zugute kommen zu rein propagandistischen Zwecken aufgegriffen haben. Die Zustimmung zu seiner Politik in der arabischen Welt verweist auf strukturelle Probleme, die nicht mit seiner gewaltsamen Entmachtung und der Zerstörung des Irak gelöst werden: die nichtvergessene Demütigung der arabischen Staaten durch die imperialistischen Mächte Großbritannien, USA und Frankreich, auf die Kluft zwischen extrem (Öl-)reichen und (Öl-)armen Staaten in der Region und das ungelöste Palästinenserproblem.

Der Vergleich Husseins mit Hitler mag zwar an vielen Stellen oberflächlich stimmig sein; in seiner Funktion aber verdeckt er die strukturellen Unterschiede zwischen beiden Ländern und Epochen, steht einer Untersuchung der konkreten Bedingtheiten des Golfkonflikts entgegen und dient letztlich einer Rechtfertigung der massiven Bombardierung und Zerstörung.

Die strukturellen Ursachen der Krise

Den kriegerischen Auseinandersetzungen in der Golfregion, ausschließlich propagiert als Kampf um Freiheit und Rechtsstaatlichkeit und gegen Aggression und Unrecht, liegen auch Hegemonialinteressen zugrunde. In den Kämpfen versucht der Irak, seine Vormachtstellung innerhalb der Region zu behaupten und auszubauen. Für die USA geht es im Golfkrieg darum, nach dem Ende des Ost-West-Konflikts, die alte Weltmachtrolle zu erhalten und neu zu definieren. In der »Neuen Weltordnung«, die Präsident Bush proklamiert, beansprucht die USA zweifellos »leadership«. Tatkräftig unterstützt von den westlichen Alliierten geht es nicht zuletzt darum, die Verfügungsgewalt über Ressourcen und das Strukturgefälle des Nord-Süd-Konflikts aufrechtzuerhalten.

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13)   ebd.

Der Friede in der Region wird durch den alliierten Sieg über den Irak langfristig nicht gesichert werden können. Unterstützten die USA und die westeuropäischen Staaten den Irak im Krieg gegen den Iran als das geringere Übel, - ein Umstand, dem bekanntermaßen der Irak sein heutiges Waffenpotential zu verdanken hat - werden heute Syrien und Israel, Saudiarabien und die Türkei mit Waffensystemen beliefert. Länder, die in Kürze - neben dem Iran - ein Interesse daran bekunden könnten, das mit der Vernichtung des Irak entstehende Machtvakuum zu füllen.

Ohne Zweifel stellt das gewaltige Militärpotential des Irak eine nicht zu unterschätzende Bedrohung für die Sicherheit der Region und die Israels dar. Und niemand, der heute für einen Waffenstillstand und eine Beilegung des Konflikts auf dem Verhandlungsweg eintritt, kann glaubhaft versichern, dies ermögliche eine radikale Abrüstung des Irak in kurzer Zeit. Aber kann der Krieg mit dem Argument legitimiert werden, er diene als friedenssicherndes »Abrüstungsmittel« in der Region? Selbst wenn es gelingen sollte, das Waffenpotential und die militärische Infrastruktur des Irak zu zerstören, führt der Krieg am Golf zu einer gigantischen Aufrüstung der ganzen Region, die der Westen und die USA dulden, um die fragile Koalition zwischen der Allianz und den arabischen Staaten nicht zu gefährden und um deren Parteinahme für den Irak zu verhindern. Am Ende des Krieges wird die Region ökonomisch geschwächt, politisch destabilisiert und mit modernster Waffen-technologie vollgestopft sein. Die Sicherheit Israels und der arabischen Staaten wird dadurch weiter gefährdet.

Der Versuch, die Konflikte in der Region nicht auf dem Verhandlungsweg, sondern mit kriegerischen Mitteln zu lösen, muß angesichts der anhaltenden Spannungen zwischen Israel und den arabischen Staaten, den (Öl) - reichen und (Öl) - armen Ländern, den Völkern mit und ohne Staat und den anhaltenden Nord-Süd-Verteilungskämpfen scheitern.
Schlimmer noch, es schwinden die Aussichten auf eine politische Lösung nach dem Krieg. Der Sicherheitsberater des ehemaligen US-Präsidenten Carter, Brezinski beschreibt das politische Dilemma der USA folgendermaßen: "Wie sollen wir denn nach diesem Krieg die Araber davon überzeugen, daß es uns nicht allein um rein anti-arabische Feindseligkeiten geht? Da wird es großen internationalen Druck auf uns von seiten der Europäer geben, sehr bald eine internationale Friedenskonferenz auszurichten. Sind wir bereit, das zu akzeptieren? Und wenn wir nicht bereit sind, gefährden wir damit nicht unsere Beziehungen zu den arabischen Staaten? Gehen wir andererseits auf die Forderung nach einer Friedenskonferenz ein, werden wir dann nicht im nachhinein angeklagt, genau das »linkage« zwischen der Golfkrise und dem Palästinenserproblem zu akzeptieren, was wir vor dem Krieg abgelehnt haben?"[14]

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14)   in: die tageszeitung, vom 21.1.1991

Eine langfristige militärische Präsenz der USA in der Region zeichnet sich schon heute ab. Läßt sich so auch Präsident Bush Andeutung verstehen, daß "wir alle erkennen, daß unsere Verantwortung als Katalysator für Frieden in der Region nicht mit der erfolgreichen Beendigung dieses Krieges endet."?[15]

Israel

Viele, die noch Mitte Januar gegen den Krieg protestierten, verstummten oder profilierten sich als Befürworter, als der Irak israelische Städte mit Scud-Raketen beschoß. Hieß jetzt noch zu protestieren nicht, Israels Existenzrecht leichtfertig aufs Spiel zu setzen? Erforderte nicht die Solidarität mit dem durch deutschen Giftgas bedrohten Israel - gerade von deutscher Seite - ein vorbehaltloses Ja zum Krieg (an der Seite) der Alliierten? Wäre das nicht sowohl moralische Verpflichtung wie Chance, den deutschen Verbrechen der Nazizeit mit einem eindeutigen »Nie wieder« zu entgegnen? Wie sollte die Bundesregierung agieren, wenn "für viele Juden der Krieg gegen den Irak kein Krieg ums Öl, sondern für das Existenzrecht Israels" ist?[16]
Daß bundesrepublikanische Firmen maßgeblich dazu beigetragen haben, die Reichweite der sowjetischen Scud-Raketen so zu erhöhen, daß sie Israel bedrohen und schlimmer noch, die irakische Giftgasproduktion ermöglicht und unterstützt haben, verweist einmal mehr schmerzhaft auf die unzureichende Verarbeitung der Naziverbrechen und nährt den Verdacht einer unzureichenden moralischen Erneuerung der Deutschen nach dem zweiten Weltkrieg.
Auch die Beteuerungen, die Bundesrepublik habe eines der schärfsten Außenwirtschaftskontrollgesetze, ändern nichts an der offensichtlich völlig laxen Handhabung dieser Bestimmungen. Und selbst der Verweis, es seien nur ein paar schwarze Schafe an den Giftgasexporten beteiligt gewesen, läßt sich nicht halten, angesichts der Tatsache, daß auch große, namhafte Firmen - wenn nicht die Giftgasproduktion - den Aufbau der militärischen Infrastruktur des Irak bewerkstelligt haben und seit Jahren in großem Umfang Rüstungsgüter in sämtliche Krisen- und Kriegsgebiete exportieren.

Auch wenn die Friedensbewegung zu Recht reklamiert, schon seit Jahren gegen "die Exporteure des Todes" auf die Straße gegangen zu sein, läßt sich kritisieren, daß sie zuwenig unternommen hat, die irakischen Angriffe auf Israel klar zu verurteilen.

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15)   Bush, Bericht ... a.a.O.

16)   Bernd Ladwig, in: »Antimilitarismus Information« (AMI), 21. Jg. H. 2, S. 33.

Fatal wirkt sich hier die Verknüpfung der Kritik an der Palästinenser-Politik Israels mit dem mangelnden Engagement für das Existenzrecht Israels aus. Schließlich müßten "die Forderung »Hände weg von Israel« auch diejenigen vertreten können, die nicht die israelische Palästinapolitik glorifizieren wollen." [17]

Den entstandenen Schaden im deutsch-israelischen Verhältnis können auch die Israel-Besuche deutscher Politiker und die Zusage finanzieller und militärischer Unterstützung nicht wettmachen. Sie wurden allenfalls als spätes Schuldeingeständnis verstanden. Das Zusammenspiel zwischen einer deutschen Wirtschaft, die ungeniert Extraprofite aus dem Export von Waffen zieht und einer deutschen Politik, die sich auf eine historisch begründete Zurückhaltung in kriegerischen Auseinandersetzungen beruft, muß als Doppelmoral gelten.

Aber ist die Antwort auf diese Probleme in einer stärkeren Beteiligung der Deutschen am Krieg und seiner finanziellen und militär-technologischen Unterstützung zu suchen, wie es die Bundesregierung suggeriert?
Oskar Lafontaine hält dem entgegen, daß die Nachkriegsinteressen der Alliierten und auch Israels klar gegen eine neuerliche Beteiligung Deutschlands an Kriegen gerichtet waren. "Wenn aber die Umerziehung der Deutschen das Ziel aller war, warum heute klagen, daß sie so gut gelungen ist? Tod und Leben, das ist nach wie vor die Kernfrage von Krieg und Frieden. (...) Wer die Deutschen mahnt, sich dieser moralischen Hypothek stets bewußt zu bleiben, muß ihnen wohl zugestehen, aus einer spezifischen Erinnerung auch eine spezifische Einstellung zu gewinnen. Dies hat weniger mit einem neuen deutschen Sonderweg zu tun als vielmehr mit der historischen Singularität der Verbrechen, die von den Nazis im Namen der Deutschen begangen wurden. (...) Deutschland muß sich zurückhalten, was die militärische Unterstützung für die Alliierten betrifft. Wer allerdings für die eigenen Soldaten beansprucht, daß sie nicht in den Krieg zu ziehen brauchen, muß dies für alle Soldaten beanspruchen. Jede Moral, des »Ihr kämpft, wir zahlen« bleibt fragwürdig."[18]

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17)   ebd.

18)   Oskar Lafontaine in: »Die Weltwoche«, Nachdruck in: »die tageszeitung« vom 9.2.1991

Zum Antiamerikanismusvorwurf

Tragender Bestandteil der Debatte um den Krieg am Golf ist der gegen die KritikerInnen amerikanischer Nahost-Politik gerichtete Vorwurf des »Anti-Amerikanismus«. Partiell wird diese Sichtweise dadurch gefördert, daß die Begründung des Krieges auf der Verteidigung amerikanischer Werte beruht, so etwa in dem mit Spannung erwarteten Bericht zur Lage der Nation. Verblüffend für all diejenigen, die sich eine aktuelle Begründung des Golfkrieges erhofft hatten, erklärte George Bush: "Seit zweihundert Jahren haben wir für die Freiheit hart gearbeitet. Und heute führen wir die Welt in der Machtprobe einer Bedrohung gegen Anstand und Menschlichkeit."[19] Der erfolgreiche Sieg am Golf soll Beginn einer neuen Zukunft sein. Bush macht sich auf, Amerika und die Welt in "das nächste amerikanische Jahrhundert" zu führen. Als Vermittlung von Geschichte und Zukunft, gerechtfertigt durch unantastbare Ideale, knüpft Bush an den Erfolg des Krieges die Gewähr für bessere Tage Amerikas, die kommen werden. Warum die Zukunft Amerikas am Golf entschieden wird, mögen mit uns manche sich fragen: die Amerikaner, so Bush "wissen das instinktiv". Denen mit weniger Instinkt versichert er: "Seit zweihundert Jahren dient Amerika für die Welt als leuchtendes Beispiel für Freiheit und Demokratie."[20] Wenn der Krieg »amerikanisch« ist, liegt der Schluß nahe, seine Ablehnung sei »antiamerikanisch«. Doch zweifelhaft ist diese Verknüpfung, angesichts der Tatsache, daß Kritik nicht nur außerhalb der USA erhoben wird.

Gerade unter Berufung auf die amerikanischen Werte kritisiert unter der Überschrift "Hard word of freedom is left undone at home" ein Autor der »International Herald Tribune«, George F. Will, den amerikanischen Präsidenten, der mit seinem eisernen Besen durch die Welt fegt, nicht genug vor der eigenen Türe zu kehren, und die »Freiheitsarbeit« statt zuhause im Nahen Osten verrichten zu wollen. "The energies of a nation such as ours, which has borne the military burdens of the Cold War, are finite. Such a nation has urgent priorities, and important competing interests get neglected."[21]
Er schlägt eine andere Definition der Aufgaben vor: "It must have successful schools to which children come - children from functional families, walking to school down streets free from gunfire. Providing such schools, sustaining such families and policing those streets - call that the hard work of freedom."[22]

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19)   Bush, Bericht ... a.a.O.

20)   ebd.

21)   George F. Will, in: »International Herald Tribune« vom 31.01.1991

22)   ebd.

Doch wenn auch den amerikanischen KritikerInnen kaum der Vorwurf des Anti-Amerikanismus zu machen ist, wenn sie die innenpolitischen Kosten der amerikanischen Großmachtpolitik aufzeigen, ist die Rehabilitation deutscher KritikerInnen von diesem Vorwurf so umstandslos nicht zu leisten.

Auf der Suche nach dem Anti-Amerikanismus der Deutschen stellt Kurt Sontheimer 1986 fest, daß es gewiß keine Ablehnung »der Amerikaner« gebe, daß die Kritik an Amerika, sich heute nur sekundär auf die amerikanische Kultur beziehe, primär jedoch gerichtet sei gegen "bestimmte politische Entscheidungen und Orientierungen der amerikanischen Politik, weil sie den eigenen Interessen eher schädlich zu sein scheinen".[23]

Dies ist heute nicht anders. Doch verschiedene Ansichten über die Angemessenheit einer Politik als "Manifestation von Antiamerikanismus" anzusehen, sei falsch, denn "derartige kritische Auffassungen finden sich ja vielfach in den Vereinigten Staaten selber und gehören insofern zur politischen Auseinandersetzung in einer freien Gesellschaft."[24]

Aber wenn es so ist, daß »Antiamerikanismus« sich heute hauptsächlich in Kritik an politischen Entscheidungen des US-Regierungssystems manifestiert, und wenn die Kritiker, die Sontheimer erwähnt, insbesondere jene "jungen Menschen" sind, die "auch ihre Schwierigkeiten mit der Demokratie im eigenen Lande"[25] haben, braucht es noch eine Erklärung, warum diese begründbar skeptische Haltung nicht als mögliche konstruktive Kritik, sondern als »Antiamerikanismus« bezeichnet und damit jeder weiteren Erörterung entzogen wird.

Die Frage ist, wieso deutsche KritikerInnen amerikanischer Politik »antiamerikanisch«, amerikanische KritikerInnen derselben Politik dennoch »Amerikaner« sind? Denn daß sie es sind, zieht auch Bush nicht in Zweifel, wenn er die freie Meinungsäußerung als unverzichtbares Element der Demokratie festschreibt. "Demokratie birgt das unveräußerliche Recht des konstruktiven Widerspruchs - und wir haben hier in unserem Land anderslautende Meinungen vernommen - einige unbesonnen, andere verantwortungsbewußt. Aber die Tatsache, daß alle das Recht haben, ihre Meinung auszusprechen, ist ein Grund, warum wir seit 200 Jahren in Ziel und Grundsätzen übereinstimmen."[26]

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23)   Kurt Sontheimer in: Trommler (1986) (Hg.), Amerika und die Deutschen S. 464
24)   ebd.
25)   ebd., S. 466
26)   Bush, Bericht... a.a.O

Die Gemeinsamkeit in "Zielen und Grundsätzen" bezeichnet wohl, was Unger als »Amerikanisches Credo« erklärt, das "Freiheit, Gleichheit, Individualismus, Demokratie und das Prinzip verfassungsmäßig garantierter Gesetzlichkeit"[27] bedeute. Unger geht von der "objektiven Existenz einer kollektiven »Idee Amerika«"[28] aus. Um »Amerikaner« zu sein, ist mehr vonnöten als eine Nationalität. "Es verlangt nicht mehr und nicht weniger als das Bekenntnis zu einem System von als »amerikanisch« geltenden Werten und Wahrheiten."[29] Dieses Credo in Frage zu stellen, so Unger, sei »unamerikanisch«, "die einzig legitime und damit auch praktizierbare Form des politischen Dissenses besteht darin, an ihm die empirische Realität zu messen und für zu kurz zu befinden."[30]
Letztlich tun dies auch die heutigen KritikerInnen des Golfkrieges, indem sie die amerikanische Realpolitik anhand der "amerikanischen" Ideale der Freiheit, Gleichheit und Gerechtigkeit kritisieren.

Unger verweist darauf, daß der Amerikanismus zur »Doktrin« werde. "Die säkulare Seite des amerikanischen Credo umfaßt nicht nur die Interpretation und politische Legitimation der amerikanischen bürgerlichen Gesellschaft als liberale Republik individueller Staatsbürger, sondern auch die Apotheose ihrer kapitalistischen Produktionsweise als gemeinwohlförderndes Betätigungsfeld individueller Besitzbürger-Produzenten."[31]

Es scheint, als fielen der Verbindung von »Amerikanischem Credo« und seiner »säkularen Seite«, die analytische Trennung von Ideal und Wirklichkeit zum Opfer. Doch: "There has never been a society that does not fall short of its values. There is a universal, unbridgeable gap between societal ideals and the societal reality of vested interests, status constellation, and power politics."[32]
Diese »unbridgeable gap« verschwindet völlig, wenn Bush über Ideale spricht und Realpolitik meint, wenn er die Mittel nicht hinterfragt und den Zweck heiligt und beides als »amerikanisch« identifiziert. Indem sie die Ideale unmittelbar mit der Realpolitik koppelt, immunisiert sich diese Begründungsfigur gegen jegliche Kritik. Die Kritik des Krieges ist eine Stellungnahme gegen die Freiheit und somit eine gegen Amerika.
Insofern die deutsche Friedensbewegung sich gegen »die USA« wendet, fällt sie auf diese Gleichsetzung herein und begeht einen ähnlichen Fehler. Denn wenn sie umgekehrt Realpolitik meint, aber »Amerika« sagt, wird sie zum Opfer und Mittäter einer unzulässigen und fatalen Identifikation von Wunsch und Wirklichkeit. Gerade in der Artikulation der Kritik als »Antiamerikanismus« geht aber noch mehr zu Bruch: der mögliche Schulterschluß mit dem »besseren Amerika« (Walter Jens).

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27)   Frank Unger (Hg.) (1988), Amerikanische Mythen, S. 48

28)   ebd. S. 45

29)   ebd., S. 46

30)   ebd., S. 49

31)   ebd., S. 49

32)   Amitai Etzioni, The active Soiety, S. 6

The Decision to Launch Desert Storm and
the "Male-irrationality" Syndrome

by

Brigitte Young

The Gulf War brought forth a cornucopia of books and
articles covering this event. The existing literature focuses
on two particular aspects of the war. First, it emphasizes the
many, and often, contradictory justifications given by President
Bush for waging war. Second, this literature stresses the war
itself and its role in defining a new era in international
relations dominated by American military might. There is much
less information on how the decision was made to use military
force in order to force Saddam Hussein from withdrawing his
troops from Kuwait. A new book, The Commanders, written by the
noted Washington journalist Bob Woodward, is about the decision-
makers involved in this cataclysmic event.[1] Woodward superbly
portraits the behind-the-scene story of President Bush and his
closest advisers to use military force in Panama and again in
the Persian Gulf as the instrument of a new foreign policy.

Woodward reveals some alarming insights into how President
Bush and his top advisers arrived at the fateful decision to
rely on the military options instead of continuing with economic
sanctions. The question is whether conventional political
science has the intellectual sophistication to analyze a
decision-making process that shows an impulsive and disorganized
President, who is known for his "vindictiveness;" a policy
making process that is chaotic; a President which shuns the
military advice from the Pentagon; the elevation of a private
Cable Television Station (CNN) as the main communicator between
the United States and Iraq; and the symbolic importance of the
"tough-guy, cowboy-boot" image of the administration.

I. HOW THE DECISION WAS MADE TO LAUNCH DESERT STORM

Bob Woodward focuses on the five key actors involved in
making the decision to launch Desert Storm: President Bush;
National Security Adviser retired Air Force Lt. Gen. Brent
Scowcroft; Defense Secretary Dick Cheney; Foreign Secretary
James Baker III; and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin
Powell. Woodward tells the reader that his information is based
on more than 400 interviews with people directly involved in the

decisions. The accounts of these conversations, together with Woodward's portrayal of meetings, attitudes and emotions of the players, tells a story that is apt to raise questions among the most faithful believers in the American system of checks and balances.

What are some of the major revelations of the book? First, neither the Central Intelligence Agency nor the Pentagon believed that Saddam Hussein was going to invade, despite the large concentration of troops at the borders of Kuwait. While the increasing troop strength was noted by the CIA and discussed at the highest levels of the Pentagon and the Bush administration, the intelligence community did not believe that Hussein "would do something so anachronistic as an old-fashioned land grab" (p. 217). Even more astounding is the fact, that despite the U.S.american interests in the region and Hussein's past aggression, the military did not have an adequate and updated contingency plan for such an event.

The most surprising aspect of the book is President Bush's handling of the crisis. Rather than presenting a chief executive who is firmly in command, rationally and objectively weighing the options present, Woodward portrays Bush as an highly emotional, impulsive, and "vindictive" chief executive. Colin Powell compares Bush to a cowboy with "six shooters in both hands," who ushers in the New World Order by the barrel of a gun. The invasion of Kuwait became Bush's personal mission. By invading Kuwait, it was as if Saddam Hussein had violated Bush's moral code. Refusing to call Hussein by anything but his first name, Bush personalized the crisis to an extent that went beyond a rational response to this grave international incident. A gesticulating President told reporters "How dare could he have done this?," "I won't stand for this," and "I kick his ass." This feeling of personal injury accounts for the immediate attention the invasion received from the inner circle of the Bush administration.

From the beginning, Bush and Scowcroft were against economic sanctions and were set on a military solution. While the rest of the world still believed in alternative options being weighted and considered for their merits at the White House, the position to go to war crystallized within days after the attack on Kuwait. To any policy analyst, Woodward's account of the decision making process in the White House and the National Security Council leading to the military operation, must be highly disturbing. Instead of rational calculations and

well-planned actions, the process described was mired in chaos. Scowcroft, as National Security Advisor, was, according to Colin Powell, either unable, or unwilling to make sense of all the components of the Gulf policy - military, diplomatic, public affairs, economic, the United Nations. At the meetings at the White House and the National Security Council, few experts were invited, it remained a small circle of Bush, Baker, Scowcroft, Sununu, Cheney, and often but not always Powell. Vice President Quayle was sometimes present, but was never quoted as saying anything important. There was little information on the motives of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait; general ignorance about the Middle East and the Arab culture; experts on the Middle East had studied Iraq for no longer than five years; there was a great distrust and uncertainty toward Saudi Arabia and the other Arab nations; little information about the military capabilities of Iraq; whether the sand could hold a tank battle, and the possible death toll on either side if war were to break out.

The crisis meetings were extraordinary informal, with lots of jokes, virtually no alternatives were ever discussed, no clear goals set in terms of the political objectives once the war was over, and as Woodward points out, clear decisions rarely ever emerged. President Bush and his advisors revelled in the "tough-guy-image," where non-military options quickly became identified with "Wimp Command" or as cowardism as Army General Frederick F. Woerner, Jr, of the Southern Command learned when he cautioned against using military force against Panama. Saudi Ambassador Prince Bandar referred to the five key people as "a very lethal inner circle, capable of playing at the highest level of political gamesmanship, each being half statesman, half warrior, half politician, half of everything" (p. 213). The "tough-guy-image" these men presented to the world and them- selves foreclosed any serious discussion that would resolve the crisis non-militarily. At the same time, the top officials never discussed going to war either. In fact, when the executive order was signed on December 29 to initiate Desert Storm, Cheney reflected, that he could not remember that at any one meeting it was ever clearly spelled out that the Bush administration was going to war. Nor was there any discussion about the American goals once the war was over. The motto was to win against Hussein.

If it were not for the gravity of the situation, the inner workings of these top men had certain amusing aspects. Powell and Cheney quickly learned that Bush's public comments differed

within a span of several hours and they were often at a loss to explain his comments. They soon realized that Bush's statements to the media depended on whether he had just read the Amnesty International Report on the atrocities committed by the Iraqis' in Kuwait, whether he had talked to President Mubarek of Egypt, or was influenced by some other event. In fact, television informed them of what President Bush was thinking in the evening, which invariably was contrary to what they had decided hours earlier. Bush became the "loose canon" in this deadly game.

Another surprise was the lingering effect of Vietnam on the military. Powell and Schwarzkopf were not against war in the Middle East. But these men feared a repeat of Vietnam. Cheney told Prince Bandar, "The military is finished in this society, if we screw this up" (p. 324). At stake was not only the nation's foreign policy, but also the reputation and morale of the military for years, even decades, to come. The difficulty for the military was Bush's disregard for military advice. Woodward points out, "Baker, like Powell, realized that there had been no debate on whether to make the deployment. Likewise, there had been no discussion about the level of force. The deployment had been decided by George Bush" (p. 262). Powell and Cheney had to be tuned to CNN to keep abreast of White House actions. Being excluded from the planning of a carefully drafted military response, Powell set out an overall plan "to use the maximum military force available and necessary to do the job" (p. 347). Moreover, the military commanders refused to have their hands tied as in Vietnam. Once President Bush gave the final approval to launch military operations, it was up to the military commanders to execute the job. Due to the chaotic policy making process and the fear of another Vietnam, the military devised an all out kill strategy that included civilian targets.

The final surprise in the book is the extent to which the top leaders relied on CNN for their information. The intelligence community played a minor role in providing the necessary information. Instead, CNN was the medium through which information was gathered and communicated between the top leaders, and between Iraq and the United States. When the war did break out, the leaders gathered in the White House and watched television. While they watched the pictures, they also knew that the public saw an incredible limited and antiseptic version of the war, and even the videos from the gun cameras in the

bombers showing the attacks were distortions, and the audio was edited so the nervous yells or hyperventilation of the pilots could not be heard.

II. THE "MALE-IRRATIONALITY" SYNDROME

What conclusions can we draw from these revelations about Bush's decision to go to war and international politics. First, no theoretical model exists to account for the combination of irrationality, emotionalism, cynicism, and the importance of "masculine" symbolism that accompanied the policy making process leading to Desert Storm. Neither the "Rational Actor Model" with its emphasis on rational people stating their objectives, and decision makers weighing the likely consequences of each alternative choice before making their decisions,[2] nor the many models built on "bounded" rationality[3] can explain the process that led to the military intervention in the Gulf. There is no evidence in Woodward's account that policy makers looked for alternatives that met their minimum standards of acceptability and agreed upon "satisficing" behavior, which is an essential element of "bounded" rationality. Similarly, models that stress the cognitive processes of the policy makers are no more helpful. While some scholars have stressed the "minds of the policy makers" as more important than the objective environment, and have emphasized perception, learning, memory, inference, belief, and motives to analyze the capacity of the human mind to cope with uncertainty,[4] the problem remains despite the inclusion of psychological variables in decision making analysis. By focusing on factors such as propensity to assume high risks, tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, intelligence, creativity, self-esteem, dominance, submissiveness, need for power, need for achievement and need for affiliation,[5] scholars continue to assume purposeful behavior of explicit motivation. If we believe Woodward and his portrait of President Bush driven forward without a clear conception of where he was going aside from heroically squaring off against Hussein, then we are left in the dark of how such an aspect of "masculine" imagery can be incorporated within the traditional models of decision making. Neither optimal nor minimal criteria of rationality played a decisive role in the decision to launch the military intervention. In a way, Desert Storm has the theatrical quality of a protagonist searching for his antagonist.

Nor are we able to resolve the paradox by invoking the concept of irrationality. Snyder and Diesing suggest that the irrationality of a decision maker is driven by a rigid belief system.[6] Yet such an understanding of irrationality is rather limited. Even Woodward's description of the policy making process remains at the level of a traditional understanding of irrationality. He points to the ongoing discrepancy between the technical rationality of the military apparatus and the political irrationality of its leaders. Yet he never questions the basis for this apparent irrationality of the decision makers. This is all the more interesting, since Woodward draws attention to the importance of the "tough cowboy image" of the members of the inner circle. While not clearly spelled out, the imagery of male status symbols such as heroism, personal honor, tough-guy image, winning, annihilation, decisiveness, invulnerability, and fear of appearing wimpish are found scattered throughout the book. These images and evaluations signal the importance of the "masculine" traits in the Gulf decision making process. "Masculinity" means here, borrowing from Susan Jeffords, "the set of images, values, interests, and activities held important to a successful achievement of male adulthood in American cultures."[7] Inherent in this definition of "masculinity" is its opposition to the "feminine," a process that is necessary in order to actualize masculinity. "Feminine" means compromise, leaving things open, vulnerability, endorsing neither the visions of a "global order" nor of an "arabic world," since both terms signal structures of domination and hierarchy. Emphasizing "masculinity" and "femininity" does not mean that individual men or women embody all the traits of such characterization. Rather, these terms, as Jeffords suggests, "represent the disembodied voice of masculinity, that which no individual man or woman can realize yet which influences each individually."[8] By shifting the focus to "masculine" symbols and their importance in defining the "battle fields," it becomes clear that the decision to launch Desert Storm was defined in gendered terms. Both Bush and Hussein appealed publicly to their "heroic hour" of commanders in chief having to make the fateful decision to wage war. Even their body language hardened as they tried to convince the other of their impending determination not to compromise. As the conflict heightened so did the "masculine" imagery. Identification with the "masculine" signalled that Bush and Hussein viewed the other via defined categories of difference. The "other" becomes in these gendered relations the women - "feminized" - as

Jeffords points out. In this game of positions, neither wishes to appear as the "weak," the compromising, the conciliatory. To appear weak in the eye of the opponent, is as nancy hartsock points out, the most devastating affront to the notion of masculinity.[9]

Particularly President Bush, whose public image was plagued by reference to his "wimpishness," could hardly afford to look weak and cowardly. In a way, Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuweit presented President Bush with the "golden" opportunity to prove to the nation "that he was made of the stuff" heroes are made of. Times of war, as Judy Stiehm suggests, are times men can prove their masculinity.[10] Times of war also mark the separation between men and women most clearly. Me fight and history raises those who win to immortality. Thus it is not surprising that in this sexual division of labor and its emphasis on heroism gained on the battlefield that women have not written "her-story."

I do not wish to suggest that the decision to launch Desert Storm can be reduced to the fear of men apearing "feminized" in the eyes of the world. Nevertheless, I do maintain that masculine symbolism did play a role in the decision making process of Desert Storm, and that traditional models neglect "male-irrationality" factors all too easily al irrelevant. Needless to say, the glorification and exhilaration of war certainly does not come from the "pen" of women.

Endnotes

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2. Graham T. Allison, 1971, <u>Essence of Decisions: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis</u>, Boston: Little, Brown.

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4. John D. Steinbruner, 1974, <u>The Cybernetic Theory of Decisions: New Dimensions of Political Analysis</u>, Princeton: Princeton University Press; also, Robert Jervis, 1976, <u>Perceptions and Misperceptions and International Politics</u>, Princeton: Princeton University Press

5. James A. Robinson and Richard C. Snyder, 1965, "Decision-Making in International Politics," in Herbert C. Kelman, ed., <u>International Behavior: A Social-Psychological Analysis</u>, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston

6. Glenn H. Snyder and Paul Diesing, 1977, <u>Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision-Making and System Structure in International Crises</u>, Princeton: Princeton University Press. See also, Sidney Verba, 1969, "Assumptions of Rationality and Nonrationality in Models of the International System," in James N. Rosenau, ed., <u>International Politics and Foreign Policy</u>, New York: The Free Press

7. Susan Jeffords, 1989, <u>The Remasculinization of America</u>, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. xii.

8. ibid., p. xiii.

9. Nancy C.M. Hartsock, 1989: "The Zero-Sum Game of Honor," in A. Harris and Y. King (eds.), <u>Rocking the Ship of State</u>, Boulder: Westview Press

10. Judith Stiehm, 1981, <u>Bring Me Man and Women</u>, Berkeley: University of California Press

The Gulf War's Crisis of the Kurds
and the Crisis of Political Realism.
by
Bruce Spear

The drama of reading the American press during the month following the official American end of the Gulf War, when the Shiites and Kurds rose up and were slaughtered as American troops stood by, and the world saw it all on television and was horrified, was not only in watching a democracy rise up, challenge its supposedly invincible President, force him to reverse his policy and belatedly come to the aid of the refugees, but also, in watching the arguments the President and his defenders used, pointedly those of political realism which have been hegemonic for the better part of the last forty years, back up before the press of events, an enraged public, and the ultimate threat that the world that brought them into being had up and died. In part, this defensiveness was based in the fact that its foundation in a system of international relations featuring the routine subordination of nation states to the superpowers and their antagonism had simply lost its basis in reality: the Cold War was over. In part, the older paradigm failed because it had little experience with, and lacked a subtle and sophisticated language to interpret, such new phenomena as the "devolution" of the Eastern European states, the new movements of ethnic and regional autonomy, and the truly novel and paradoxical situation whereby the United States is the supreme superpower, able to field a force of a half million sophisticated troops on short notice, yet to feed them must shake a tin can full of nickels at its allies and work hard at it, too.

During this period, the debates that filled the editorial and opinion pages of The Washington Post (WP), The New York Times (NYT), The Wall Street Journal (WSJ), and the Los Angeles Times (LAT), and through syndication were well-represented in the rest of the nation's newspapers, were not between the left and right, but within the right and offering the curious spectacle of formerly interventionist "hawks" calling for isolation-ism, accusing their adversaries, including such seasoned Cold Warriors as Flora Lewis, William Safire, and Jean Kirkpatrick, "imperial conservatives," and in the words of George Will, worse: "They want America to do for the world what Lyndon Johnson's Great Society was supposed to do for America: fix it ... [they are] speaking the language of a liberal overreacher, Woodrow Wilson."[1] The argument turned not only on when and where America ought to use its military and political power and what America's

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[1] George F. Will, "Who Wants Imperial Mire in Iraq?" International Herald Tribune (IHT) (18 April 1991).

role in the post-Cold War era ought to be, but over the very language of
political debate, including the terms for describing the international
situation, the moral and political values that may or may not be involved,
and at bottom, how and under what conditions moral considerations may
have a place in the conduct of foreign affairs. I will first outline their
positions, survey some of the most conspicuous of writers on both sides,
and conclude surveying the "imperial conservatives" and others as they
would try to apprehend a new historical moment and what it seems to
require of its lone, at times quixotic superpower. I will treat the Gulf
War's crisis of the Kurd's, then, as a crisis of the Cold War's discourse of
political realism, and particularly, as a moment when questions of value and
political morality were revived in anticipation of a new world order.

The news story of the Kurdish refugees broke in late March and
early April with articles by WP correspondent Jonathan Randal and WSJ's
Geraldine Brooks. For our purposes, the debate actually begins earlier
with William Safire's 28 January 1991 NYT column which noted the Turkish
President Turgot Ozal's recognition of the rights of the Kurds to speak
their language and developed the scenario of Ozal's accommodation of their
political consolidation and calls for regional autonomy, i.e., Ozal's recogni-
tion of their power, his attempt to control them, but also, his willingness to
imagine a new political arrangement in light of their long-term political
aspirations on the occasion of the Gulf War's shuffling of the status quo.[2]
Throughout these writings Safire will be sensitive to the Kurds attempting
to carve a degree of political safety for themselves and the difference
between political accommodation in the manner he sees here of Ozal's and
the suppression of autonomy that has been their modern history. At the
end of March he explains the American support for Saddam's suppression of
the Kurds as a fear of "instability" though this hypocritically leads, as
presently formulated, to a re-integrated Iraq under a Sunni regime.[3] He
recalls the US "betrayal" of the Kurds in 1975, amplifies the alternative in
Ozal's support for autonomy within a pluralist, tolerant Iraq, but notes how
the other nations in the area oppose them for their own regions. The
Syrians want Iraq dismembered, the Iranians want a Shiite state, and the
Saudi's want a Sunni military dictatorship without Saddam. He argues that
America should support Kurdish autonomy and the goal of a federated Iraq,
for both political and human rights reasons, and this goal is supportable
with the grounding of Iraq's helicopters. By the 4th of April American

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[2] William Safire, "Remember the Kurds," NYT (28 January 1991).

[3] William Safire, "Follow the Kurds to Save Iraq," NYT (28 March 1991).

public opinion has risen considerably and in an article entitled "Bush's Bay of Pigs," Safire records the general shape of the political scandal as we have come to know it having unfolded.[4] He places full responsibility for the slaughter and exodus on President Bush: he "repeatedly urged the Kurds to rise up," promising to ground the gunships, but then "broke his word" and allowed the Iraqi Republican Guard the decisive advantage of airpower. He associates the American policy of restoring a Sunni regime with Bush's retreat to celebratory fanfare and his avoidance of responsibility. He notes that with the exception of Senator Al Gore the Democrats have not spoken up. He lists this policy's consequences as follows; the loss of American political credibility, the loss of American pride in the war's conduct and the principles of freedom it was supposed to have defended, and he "stopped the momentum toward democracy and peace in the Middle East. If a whole people can be decimated while the President of the U.S. goes fishing, no nation will put faith in American security guarantees." Two weeks later, after the Administration has intervened to aid the refugees, Safire quickly turns from finding fault to finding affirmed the British and French principles of the "duty to intervene" and the conditions ripe for imagining new categories of political identity:

> Where political realities are fluid, diplomacy should be able to find a flexible arrangement that reflects the situation on the ground -- that encourages peaceful devolution rather than bloody revolution. The word bandied about is "suzerainty," which allows the encompassing state a sovereignty limited to defense and central banking, while providing the inhabitants of a region with real autonomy and ethnic identity short of independence.[5]

Safire's articles outline both the course of events and the particular spin on them I see as the unique feature of the moment. His prior understanding of the region's geo-politics and the Kurds place in it undoubtedly helped him to see the forces arrayed against them, and his sympathies for their cause certainly informed his readiness to speak out on their behalf. The significant feature of Safire's position include his elevating the situation into a problem of political theory and political morality. He finds in the Bush Administration not simply a failure of insight, empathy, or political will, but also, a failure of conception, as he would put it, of emerging

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[4] William Safire, "Bush's Bay of Pigs," NYT (4 April 1991).

[5] William Safire, "Straw Men Don't Help the Kurds," NYT (16 April 1991).

political forms and of a post-Cold War American role.[6] Additionally, in the Administration's claims to political realism he finds the pursuit of national interest failing to square with the political and humanitarian ideals of political freedom, compassion, and the rest.

A number of commentators dwell in a point midway between the writers that directly concern me here. I will mention but one of them briefly so we might see how a weak attempt to reconcile problems of politics and morality, and particularly, how an ironic interpretation of the problem, leads but to a muddle. At the conclusion of his "Tough Principle is Not Bush's Thing, WP columnist David S. Broder writes;

> With both the Chinese and the Soviets, Mr. Bush said it could not be "business as usual," then he went back to business as usual. The American public seems to accept these compromises as necessary. Principle separated from a clear sense of national interest led to such foreign policy fiascos as Versailles and Vietnam. So voters welcome a president who tempers principle with prudence. But others pay a high price for the selectivity of American moral outrage.[7]

Foreign policy debate is difficult with such writings because of their high level of abstraction and the apparent smugness of their outcome. Our discussion is better advanced with the clarity afforded by the more extreme positions, particularly those defending the Administration's position.

Among these I'll start with Irving Kristol's 15 April WSJ article, "Tongue Tied in Washington." [8] Speaking as a political realist Kristol argues that the American national interest in the Middle East does not involve "a general resistance to 'aggression,'" nor "a commitment to bring the blessings of democracy to the Arab world," but only the limited goal of preventing "a belligerent, powerful, anti-Western tyrant from dominating that oil-rich area." What we have seen Safire describe as a fundamentally moral problem, though it ought to lead to an innovative political solution, Kristol considers a communications problem: he argues that while it was "disingenuous" for Bush to have argued for Saddam's overthrow all along and now say, in the name of not meddling in Iraq's internal affairs, that we owe nothing to the Kurds who answered this call, the real problem of the

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[6] I am leaving out of my account the articles which attack the President personally and do not significantly add to the conceptual problem developed here. Cf. Leslie H. Gelb, "Where's Mr. Bush? Superman as Gulliver in the Mideast," NYT (7 April 1991); Anthony Lewis, "No Overriding Concern for Decency," IHT (17 April 1991).

[7] David S. Broder, "Tough Principle is Not Bush's Thing," IHT (10 April 1991).

[8] Irving Kristol, "Tongue Tied in Washington," WSJ (15 April 1991).

day is American political discourse: the fuzzy thinking infecting American
political debate that, he argues, preventing the Bush Administration from
both presenting the realist position it is in fact following and from demon-
strating this position's superiority to the public's satisfaction. He asserts
that it is "the debased dialogue" and the "inflated idealism that insulates ...
policy from realistic scrutiny" that keeps America from an accurate assess-
ment of its destiny as the "sole imperial power in the world" with "respon-
sibilities that history has thrust upon us."

> We apparently can justify our behavior in world affairs only by
> reference to "resisting aggression" or "fighting oppression" or
> "protecting human rights" or vindicating the "right of self-
> determination" –– in short, by reverting to the rhetorical mode
> and conceptual categories that Woodrow Wilson didn't invent
> but helped establish as an orthodoxy, and which are now part
> of the very way we think and feel."

The alternative, he offers, is foreign policy conduct in pragmatic, crafts-
man-like terms;

> American foreign policy is usually more subtle and realistic
> than our political leaders would have us believe. They don't
> actually believe that it is immoral to accept the (often cruel)
> choices imposed by reality. We don't always resist aggression
> ... Everything depends on circumstances. Sometimes we do and
> sometimes we don't ... The world being the messy place that it
> is, this is as inevitable as it is sensible. The sharp dichotomy
> between the moral and realistic is, in practice, a false one.
> Prudence always has been, and always be, the mark of authen-
> tic statesmanship in foreign policy.

Creating the straw man of dichotomous thinking, as we saw in Broder's
article, Kristol would have us place our faith in a privileged inner sanctum
manned by smooth professionals making tough choices. But complemented
by his view of a degraded space of public debate we can see how easily he
would discount the popular revulsion to the Kurd's predicament and remove
foreign policy decision-making from democratic accountability altogether.[9]
As for the Kurds, Kristol argues they are less important than maintaining a
consensus among our allies, and worse: support for the Kurds will lead to

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[9] To be sure, others will say far worse things about the opposition.
Robert Novak, in a notorious article in the WP from 8 April, attributes the
"crusade to save the Kurds" to a Zionist conspiracy, finding in the opposi-
tion's arguments Israel's strategy of "widening Arab religious and cultural
schisms, exploiting inter-Arab feuds and stimulating Arab wars," and sug-
gesting that the opposition's moves are dictated by the American-Israel
Public Affairs Committee. Novak's position fully discounts the opposition's
arguments by treating them in conspiratorial terms, and from the stand-
point of challenging the "national interest," that their use of moral argu-
ments to involve us in Israel's defense is treasonous.

support for the Iraqi Shiites and this would lead to "a series of explosions into fratricidal warfare."

Political realists typically begin and end by plotting the national interest onto regional political geographies, and Kristol's assessment of the region's balance-of-power rests on the figure of a strong, stable Iraq maintaining a vital perimeter in the area's containment of Iran. But when he says,

> As for the unfortunate Kurds, it is their bad luck that their 20 million are divided among Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Iran and the Soviet Union, none of which wishes to encourage the idea that a united "Kurdistan" could ever come into existence ... they have enough troubles without fueling another ethnic rebellion in their lands,

he would diminish the force of Kurdish history and cultural and political identity in favor of boundaries arbitrarily drawn and hotly contested to this day. He identifies with the presently-constituted nations as they strive to translate modern political boundaries into effective cultural barriers and consolidate their rule over and against ethnic groups whose group identities were strong but not strong enough to force the British to proceed other than they did. Kristol sees "another ethnic rebellion" and the Kurds "bad luck" when the more relevant fact is how cannily the parents of those 20 million were "divided among" four nations by the stroke of a British pen. Finally, he treats as one and the same a Turkey governed by a parliamentary democracy, the repressive Kuwaiti and Saudi autocracies, and Syrian and Iraqi nations led by Sunni minorities governing with iron fists as if all that mattered was their willingness to side on our side of the Iron Curtain.

Political realism's respect for the boundaries of nation states matured during the Cold War when what mattered was the litmus test of communism and a country's relationship to the much thicker line established by the theory of "containment." But with the Cold War's end this boundary had not only disappeared, but as we have seen in the Baltics and the Balkans, long-suppressed ethnic and nationalist forces are claiming their day and threatening to redraw dozens of national boundaries. Where before American foreign policy could follow the Iron Curtain as its sure guide, and be assured that the weight of the Cold War could be used to solve many international political problems, the path to stability can no longer be so readily discerned. Jeanne Kirkpatrick's LAT article of 15 April, "Human Rights, 'Territorial Integrity,'" discussing United Nations Resolution 688, passed on 5 April 1991, applauds the resolution's affirmation of the principle that "at least in some circumstances there is a relationship between

internal repression and international peace." She sees that body now facing "the conflict between basic principles: the protection of human rights and human life versus respect for "territorial integrity." While she cannot foresee the United Nations at present serving as the standard-bearer for human rights and universal arbiter of conflict, that "it is probably not yet safe for democracies to vest the definition of the most fundamental rights of citizens in the votes of an international body, most of whose members still do not enjoy such rights," she finds the collapse of bloc politics and the discussion of the proper role of the United Nations to be the herald of a new era.

In their editorial of 22 April 1991, "The Realpolitik of Morality," presumably addressing Irving Kristol's article of the week before, the WSJ editors argue that the Bush Administration's actions show how narrowly, undemocratically, and amorally political realism defines this interest. First, they write that even on its own terms the realist argument fails because Iraq's "internal" troubles with the Kurds now spill over their borders and spell trouble for the Turks. Their main argument, like Kristol's, turns on the fact of the American people's overwhelming horror at the Kurd's plight, but where Kristol would discredit the people in favor of the professionals the WSJ advises the professionals to take respectful heed. Where Kristol saw popular debate somehow tying the Administration's hands, relieving the Administration of responsibility for its actions, one may record the editors growing impatience with the Bush regime in their saying, "if a compelling rationale exists for subordinating the shared moral instincts of the American people to some larger national interest, then national leaders bear some obligation to explain it." Where Kristol saw the American people swayed by the phantasms of universalist ideology, the editors argue something of a natural rights philosophy in finding that the American people "have an idea of themselves and their country that sits as a constant counterweight to the policies their leaders choose to pursue." Where Kristol defined the American interest in terms of a steady supply of oil, regional stability, consensus among allies, and avoiding foreign entanglements, the editors argue that American foreign policy is also about "America's bench-mark values" here "thrown into disequilibrium" by the administration's policies. To be sure, they do not appear to be investing in the people exemplary wisdom and encouraging a populist turn. They speak instead of a larger structural change in the conditions of modern political life, a kind of technology-driven democraticization, in the fact that television is bringing the Kurds and the protesting Chinese and Lithuanians into the proverbial American living room.

Behind this debate with Kristol on political realism's domestic politics the <u>WSJ</u>'s editorial of 10 April, "A Critical Juncture," criticizes political realism on foreign policy terms, advising: "a reappraisal of sheer <u>Realpolitik:</u> Any post-war order in the Middle East cannot be sustained with a Baathist regime at its center." They argue that "Saddam is indeed 'another Hitler.' And the Baathists are modern Nazi's. They are a force that is both evil and centrifugal." They speak here not of a president responding to the "counterweight" of the American people, but of his recognizing the American interest in Saddam's overthrow and the need to prepare the American people to support him in doing so. From this perspective, the later editorial's attention to domestic American politics at first suggests a retreat from the earlier editorial's interventionism. But we may also see it aggressively asserting the earlier essay's underlying principle: that a polity's political form has everything to do with both its internal stability and its relations to its neighbors. Moreover, when they argue for the restraining effect of the American people's moral revulsion at the Bush administration's policy, pointing to the demonstrable effect of a popular "counterweight" to government, they suggest that the American people are doing to Bush what the people of a democratic Iraq would do to their elected leadership if they had one: restrain the tyrant. To return to Irving Kristol, we may now see how his contempt for American political debate would not lead him to expect much from democratizing forces in the Middle East, and by the same token, how easily his "cabal" view of American government is sympathetic to the autocratic regimes of our Middle East allies.

The most aggressive defense of the inherent virtues of democracies comes from A.M. Rosenthal, who consistently argues that political freedom, democracy, and human rights ought to be central terms in the definition of the American interest. In a <u>NYT</u> article of 20 November 1991, "Five Mission Words," Rosenthal argues that at the very least such principles would lead policy-makers out of the hypocrisies of the realist's pragmatic accommodations.

> If freedom of political choice ever does come to the Middle East, the whole structure of monarchies, despotism and the rule of the mosque will crack open. But so will the cozy arrangements between the local rulers and Western oil companies and the profitable military deals between the West and the kings and sheiks.

Secondly, he asserts that democratic principles and the support of activists are a productive political force towards the good: "the collapse of Commu-

nism was brought decades nearer by democratic activists who risked their lives pushing through the tiny loophole of the Helsinki treaty on human rights." Third, he asserts that governments founded on these principles rarely war against each other and are inherently more stable, saying, "Interesting, how rarely democracies war against each other, and how often they have to face dictatorships in combat." In an article published in International Herald Tribune (IHT) of 17 April 1991 -- midway between the WSJ editorials -- he speaks more emphatically, anticipating the WSJ's position: "It is simply that in a democracy the people must consider and support a war. Generally they do not approve unless they feel threatened. Democracies do not go to war with each other."[10] He argues that the political realist's belief that democracy is impossible in the Middle East is a self-fulfilling prophesy: the perennial quest for balance of power arrangements does not address the deeper, underlying problems of instability.

For George F. Will, building a foreign policy on such ideals is a disaster. Like Kristol, he thinks President Bush "has the traditional conservative's wariness about uncertain undertakings, a prudent skepticism about the promiscuous minting of abstract rights and duties, and an inclination to anchor U.S. policy in the rock of U.S. national interests."[11] In contrast, he thinks people like A.M. Rosenthal and the WSJ are "imperial conservatives" who have taken over the mantle of Wilsonian idealism. For Will, the WSJ's call for a "MacArthurian Regency" to take over and run Iraq is no different in impulse and ambition than Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society:" they would construct a foreign policy on "fixing" the world. Unlike Kristol, Will's argument does not rest on simply asserting the realist position, asserting the integrity of an administrative cabal, and impugning the opposition's motives. Instead, he shatters the interventionist's idealism by hammering away at the practical limits and dangers of trying to manipulate political behavior and change. He says the model of MacArthur in Japan featured a Japanese people surrendering unconditionally, a complete occupation, and constitution-making, and none of this applies to Iraq. He says the hope for supporting democratic impulses among the Kurds is in the absence of any evidence of the "social, institutional and moral preconditions" for "social pluralism under government of limited, delegated and enumerated powers." He evokes a cauldron of difficulties in decentralizing,

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[10] A. M. Rosenthal, "The Mess Made by 'Realists' Argues for a Try at Morality," IHT (17 April 1991).

[11] George F. Will, "Who Wants Imperial Mire in Iraq?" IHT (18 April 1991).

confederalizing, and federalizing states and cites as bloody evidence the American Civil War. In an article published two weeks earlier, he argues in more legalistic terms that "it is a crashing non sequitur to say that if party A urges party B to overthrow a tyrant, then party A is obligated to participate," that the legitimacy of the US intervention was governed by the UN Resolutions and "the job," as the American soldiers put it, is done.[12] Anticipating the argument cited above, he asserts that we have little idea of what to do with "the ripped flesh of Iraqi society" and are ill-advised to risk an alliance with the Kurds who he characterizes as in reality "factions within factions and complexities we cannot comprehend, let alone control" and who he things might very inflict the kinds of terrors they are themselves suffering on minorities among them they might control.

Daniel Pipes, in the WSJ of 11 April, similarly argues that American responsibility to the Kurds is limited and certainly overwhelmed by the dangers of intervening on their behalf.[13] He, too, views the American commitment in legalistic terms and the dangers of commitment to be in both the lack of clarity in a final, achievable goal and the risks of an imperial venture: responsibility with no end in sight; an expensive, long-term commitment with failure and humiliation at the end of it; the fracturing of Iraq leading to regional instability including Islamic fundamentalism in southern Iraq and movements for an independent Kurdistan in the north destabilizing Iran, Turkey, and Syria. Pipes goes one step further when he argues that it is not just Saddam, but the Iraqi's that are our opponents. Citing Daniel Boorstin, he argues that Bush has departed from the American tradition of holding the people responsible for their state, that the Shiites and Kurds have been part of the Iraq government, and that the Iraqi Army, not Saddam, was doing the dirty work in Kuwait. He concludes by boiling them all up together in "a predictable patter of ethnic-based violence" that extends from Iraq to Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and "meanwhile, the killing goes on, year after year, in Chad, the Sudan, Lebanon and Afghanistan;" "the region is politically a sick place; outsiders would do well to keep a prudent moral distance."[14]

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[12] George F. Will, "Why Blunder Back Into Quicksand?" LAT (4 April 1991).

[13] Daniel Pipes, "Why America Can't Save the Kurds," WSJ (11 April 1991).

[14] See also, Christine Helms, "Is Iraq Smashed Beyond Repair?" NYT (30 March 1991); Edwin M. Yoder, Jr., "The United States Is Right Not to Meddle in the Iraqi Civil War," IHT (8 April 1991); Shibleky Telhami, "Stay Out of Iraq's Civil War," NYT (5 April 1991).

Those who would argue against such generalizations, the restoration of the status quo, and American withdrawal they serve, would find in the historian Robert D. Kaplan's WSJ article of 10 April 1991, "Kurdistan -- More of a Nation Than Iraq," a specific, detailed political geography supporting recognition of Kurdish autonomy.[15] Kaplan plots 50 years of Kurdish opposition to Sunni Muslim control; linguistic, ethnic, and cultural differences suggesting a unique people; and argues that the present uprising is better considered "a war of survival between their nation and another" than a civil war. He argues that the image of an Iraqi civil war is possible only by accepting the British and French post-WWI carving up of the area. In Kaplan's story, the British originally planned two states, acknowledging the fact that "Kurdish mountaineers had little meaningful political contact with the inhabitants of Mesopotamia," but placating Turkish leader Mustafa Kemal's fear of an independent Kurdistan they agreed to "stitch together a colonial Frankenstein that proved more artificial, and thus more unstable, than any of the other newly created states in the Middle East." The only thing holding the state together, including the Sunni-Shiite and Arab-Persian splits, has been a series of repressive Sunni Arab regimes. By permitting Saddam Hussein to fulfill the long-standing Sunni political goal of suppressing and depopulating the Kurds, the Americans are "breathing life into a British colonial corpse." This article is accompanied by a small map showing Kurdish settlements as a dark shaded area evenly overlapping four national boundaries. Above this article WSJ published Laurie Mylroie's "We Should Mind Iraq's Business," an account of Saudi Arabian support for a Salah Omar Ali al-Takriti's bid to depose Saddam, the initial allied grounding of Saddam's air force which encouraged the Shiite and Kurdish uprisings, and when al-Takriti's bid failed, the Saudi's fear of the aroused Shiite's, and particularly, what they saw to be the fundamentalist Iranian influences among them.[16] Mylroie shows how the United States was led up a blind alley by Saudi Arabia and she argues we ought to be more circumspect about our relations to our allies. Like Kaplan, she is also highly specific; where the isolationists speak of "factions within factions," these writers speak of opposition leaders seizing historic opportunities, the complex interplay between them, and the need for a sophisticated re-thinking of the American interest in respect to the

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[15] Robert D. Kaplan, "Kurdistan -- More of a Nation Than Iraq," WSJ (10 April 1991).

[16] Laurie Mylroie, "Led Astray by the Saudis in Iraq," WSJ (10 April 1991).

nature of the regimes and regional balances we ought to be supporting. They develop a realist's concern for the weight of history and a clear assessment of political forces, but unlike those drawing the line at existing national boundaries, they examine political groupings in qualitative terms, and particularly, they find in the Kurds struggles for autonomy a legitimacy and force challenging the region's autocracies and thus challenging the terms of our alliances.

At the end of March, Meg Greenfield's "A Messy New World Order" discusses how difficult it is for American political culture to come to terms with such ethnic struggles as the Kurds. She surveys the awkward, undeveloped vocabulary in American politics and cultural debate when it comes to understanding American "ethnics," who she describes as variously black, Eastern European, the celebrated ones in our current multiculturalist "golden age," and those rising up in the lands formerly behind the Iron Curtain.[17] She asserts that while statesmen have long been accustomed to dealing with governments, they don't know what to do with long-suppressed but enduring ethnic and nationalist movements, never mind angry mobs in the streets of Tehran, Manila, Prague, or Tianamann Square. In "World Cops and Ethnic Violence," Stephen S. Rosenfeld similarly argues that Bush and his generation could work with "ostensibly stable, inward-focused tyrannies," that they understood understand clearly aggression when they saw it crossing national borders, but that the situations in Kurdistan, Lithuania, Quebec, Kashmir, Tibet, Croatia, Sri Lanka, Ireland, East Timor, Puerto Rico, Palestine, and Angola -- all situations that need to be understood in terms of ethnic movements within national frontiers -- escape concepts of national boundaries yet appear to be the shape of things to come.[18]

In "When Sovereignty Is a License for Horror," Brian Beedham examines how the concepts of national sovereignty are recent, post-WWII invention associated with the establishment of the United Nations, that they had not been invented with his British great-grandfather sailed to India, nor to the 19th century American's pushing west, and that the agony of the Kurds has "made the world see that the sanctification of sovereignty has two sides. One is bright and good; the other is the color of dried

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[17] Meg Greenfield, "A Messy New World Order," WP (26 March 1991).

[18] Stephen S. Rosenfeld, "World Cops and Ethnic Violence," WP (12 April 1991).

blood."[19]   Brian Urquhart's "Sovereignty vs. Suffering," subtitled "Obso-
lete values victimize the Kurds," offers a more expansive view.[20] He lists
communications technology, pollution, radioactive debris, the flow of money,
the power of religious or secular ideas, AIDS, the traffic in drugs and
terrorism" as among the features of modern international political life
calling for cross-border responses and inevitably leading for a review of
the most basic questions of sovereignty underlying the UN's charter. Mario
Bettati's "The Right to Interfere," reviews the legal and political history of
UN Resolution 688 as well as how he and his colleagues imagine the broad
range of humanitarian issues and actions, particularly disaster aid, inform-
ing it.[21] Together these writers assert the novelty of recent political
movements and the challenge they pose to Cold War conceptions of diploma-
cy, and thus, suggest a sea-change in history the old political realists, as
narrowly-defined as they have argued here, have yet to apprehend seri-
ously.

Flora Lewis, in "When We Have a Duty to 'Interfere,'" places the
problem of the Kurds as but one of many regional disturbances calling for
international intervention. The bulk of her article describes the practical
problems UN peace-keeping forces encounter in the absence of a clearer
definition of the problem. She quotes the Ghanian General Erskine, who
commanded UN forces in Lebanon, asking how the UN can send food and
medical supplies but not attempt to resolve the political situation that is
behind them. Erskine describes how the limitations of UN missions are not
only administrative and logistical, but that they suffer from "a lack of
political will and underlying dogma" as well; he asks how the successes of
the Helsinki Agreements, which depended on the recognition by participat-
ing European nations that human rights are an appropriate international
concern, can be expanded to problems of "internal conflict" in the third
world. This expansive conception of international relations also informs her
holding of the United States to a higher standard of international respon-
sibility. On April 12, she describes how the massacres and refugees are
the direct consequence of American policy, their "basking in plaudits for
the first part of a mission accomplished and shirking the absolute duty to
restore peace after the war," and thus the opening of the door for

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[19] Brian Beedham, "When Sovereignty Is a License for Horror," IHT (9
April 1991).

[20] Brian Urquhart, "Sovereignty vs. Suffering," NYT (17 April 1991)._

[21] Mario Bettati, "The Right to Interfere," WP (14 April 1991).

Saddam's long-term strategy of driving the Kurds off their lands.[22] She
then asserts "that people around the world have understood better than
governments that going to war created a moral obligation that outweighs
involuted power calculations."

Where President Bush and his allies spoke of acting to "punish
aggression," free Kuwait, and getting the job done, we may now see how
Flora Lewis and other columnists find that American's room to maneuver, its
ability to exercise power and authority, involves obligations and responsi-
bilities inherent in America's unique role in the international order and put
to the test by the actions it takes on its own. Those who would retreat
from fear of uncontrollable entanglements are surely right in warning that
each foreign engagement potentially opens up a can of worms. But their
adversaries argue that "there is no going back to the clearer realities of
an earlier age." They argue instead from a complex set of factors, includ-
ing the WSJ's "imperatives of national interest, a common national morality,
and the information stream of global communicators," and as numerous
articles attempt to ascertain, they develop forward-looking assessments of
America's standing in the post-Cold War world. Such writers as Flora
Lewis, with a long history of concern for geo-politics and the NATO alli-
ance, find in the Administration's bumbling over the Kurds "a real reflec-
tion of America's dilemma about the use of its power" that goes beyond this
particular Administration's difficulties.

Towards the end of April, a number of writers discuss the geo-
political implications of the Kurdish predicament, and particularly, in light
of the previous year's identity crisis in the NATO alliance. In an article
from 17 April 1991, "America Could Leave the Pedestal Gracefully," Lewis
discusses how uneasily the U.S. has assumed the burdens of leadership,
alternately cobbling a coalition together at the United Nations, falling
behind the curve over the Kurds, brow-beating their allies the Europeans
and Germans, and then having to follow their lead. Lewis thinks of the
challenges faced by the U.S. in dualistic terms. On the one hand, she
finds the U.S. in the complex position of being the only nation in the
position to intervene efficiently and effectively but being unable to pay for
it, and hence faced with the peculiar challenges of adjusting to a new
international economy. At the same time, she finds the U.S. confronting the
collapse of the old Cold War ideological struggle with uncertainty -- many
of those counseling a retreat from Iraq had no difficulty supporting

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[22] Flora Lewis, "To Stop the Killings, Stop the Killer," IHT (12 April
1991); "America Could Leave the Pedestal Gracefully," IHT (19 April 1991).

Interventions in the fight against communism. Their objections to foreign policies based on ethical ideals include fears of an imperial America meddling in other people's business and the squandering of resources better spent at home. Lewis overcomes this objection by turning America's economic weakness into a virtue in the context of the emerging strength and unity of its European allies:

> The new struggle is to bring states together to uphold freedom and the rule of law. For that, there must be a full sense of partnership and acceptance of its constraints.
> Stepping down gracefully from the lonely pedestal of superpower is not a loss of influence or status for America. It is a triumph for the ideas that its power is meant to serve.

I conclude this survey of opinion with Zbigniew Brzezinski's "The U.S. Victor Has an Obligation to the Middle East."[23] Brzezinski's conclusions do not derive from the immediate problem of the Kurds, but in fact, hew closely to the long-standing Trilateralist goal of stable international free trade, but I grant him the last word because he shows how neatly moral arguments for intervention may serve American commercial interests. He lists the war's benefits as the rebuffing of aggression, the strengthening of American political and military credibility, the strengthening of American influence in the Middle East, and the reduction of the Soviet Union's influence. He lists as the war's liabilities the strengthening of a potentially destabilizing Iran, the intensification of ethnic divisions, and due to the air assault's intensity, the "concern that the conduct of the war may come to be seen as evidence that Americans view Arab lives as worthless." He then reviews in detail and at considerable length recently released bomb damage assessments indicating the extensive damage to the Iraqi infrastructure, including the destruction of work places, seed and medicine stocks, and water and sewage systems. He notes the United States initial use of "just war" arguments to justify their intervention and then holds these arguments against them. He argues that an initial under-reaction to Iraq's threats led to an over-reaction in response, and that at the end of it one had to consider whether the superpower had dealt a third-world country a "disproportionate response." The remarkable quality of this essay is how easily he turns from moral philosophy to the Marshal Plan. He marries the moral responsibility for the Kurds predicament to the United States' "unprecedented influence on the fate of the entire region"

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[23] Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The U.S. Victor Has an Obligation to the Middle East," IHT (22 April 1991).

and calls for a Truman-like commitment "to large-scale relief, reconstruction
and reconciliation."

> Beyond this immediate, partly moral and partly political imper-
> ative, it behooves the United States to pursue actively three
> broad goals: a regional security arrangement; a process for
> redistribution of regional wealth and for enhanced economic
> cooperation among all the region's states (including Israel); and
> a serious movement toward Arab-Israeli peace.

With Brzezinski we return to the argument's central question of the
national interest and whether it is indeed being redefined here or not.
With Brzezinski we find an old free trade agenda happy to take advantage
of the isolationist's embarrassment and the moment's opening to the moral-
ists, but otherwise concerned with "broad goals" which are quite indepen-
dent of the story of the Kurds. I think the question raised by these
debates has been set up, but not fully asked, by the WSJ when it says
there is no going back to a simpler age, and by this I mean either the
simpler age of political realism in the context of anti-communism or what
the political realists see as their moralizing, dualistic adversaries. The WSJ
argues that the lesson of the day is a problem of political structure: a
confluence of communications technologies and popular political morality that
policy-makers must not "factor in." In this pragmatic view, political
morality matters because it moves people and prudent management must
develop an accurate assessment of force. The moralists go one step
further: they argue that modernity's long-term scientific ambitions have
gone bust and that political morality can be factored into calculations of
the national interest. They key, as I understand it, is the turning of
America's economic weakness into a strength: America has both the ideology
and the military force to intervene, but cannot pay for it and so is by
necessity kept on a short leash: this solves the first lesson of Vietnam: the
arrogance of power. The second lesson, of overcoming the "Vietnam Syn-
drome," is solved here, too. As America remains the only superpower, by
marrying its political dominance, ideologies of justice and the rule of law,
and organizational skills, it may serve as a unifying force in a world no
longer unified by the Cold War; but since it is economically weak and
dependent upon coalitions among its allies it can not for long gain go off
on a frolic of its own. Like all new ideologies, this one wins not by
concrete evidence of its fully working out in reality, but by its subtle and
complex relations to the tensions of the moment, and its promise.

The Gulf War and Western Trade Conflicts

by

Christoph Scherrer

Let me explore briefly some of the ramifications of the Gulf War for United States' efforts to maintain a liberal world market order. The decisive defeat of Saddam Hussein's forces send a clear message to all "Third World" countries which reads like this: "Play by the (our) rules and don't mess with Western interests!" This message needs no further elaboration. The "Third World," however, is not the only recipient of Gulf War messages. Also the industrial allies of the United States of America and domestic groups inclined to embrace isolationalism have received clear signals.

The allies are implicitly told: "You are dependent on us for the free and cheap flow of oil, so you better be attentive to our trade concerns!" But why may the control over oil be an important resource in intra-allies trade negotiations? Access to oil had been decisive in World War II. After the war the United States utilized domestic and Middle Eastern oil to speed up European reconstruction. In the Suez-Crisis of 1956 the Eisenhower administration wielded the oil weapon to stop British and French colonial adventurism. By the 1960s, the cheap and steady supply of oil had seduced the West Europeans and the Japanese to become extremely dependent on U.S. American and Anglo oil corporations, giving up control over a crucial input of their economies. The United States' blundering response to the first OPEC challenges and the policy fiasco thereafter (Iran, Lebanon), however, had led Western nations to try securing the flow of under-priced raw materials themselves. U.S. military prowess was no longer recognized as a bargaining asset in North-South raw material relations but as a threat to international stability.[1]

The ability to maintain a stable raw materials regime was, however, not the only means of exercising hegemony the U.S.A. had lost in recent years: they no longer monopolize technological or managerial innovations, as the world's greatest debtor nation their ability to buy influence has been drastically reduced, and the end of the Cold War has reduced the value of the nuclear umbrella the U.S.A. have provided the Western allies.[2] Therefore, the victory over a major "Third World" army has restored one dimension of U.S.

leadership capacity. The ease with which Secretary of State James Baker collected war contributions from Japan and Germany is a telling example.

For what will this new bargaining tool be used? As indicated by U.S. ambassador Michael Armacost in Japan it will be exercised for a tough stance on trade issues.[3] The United States had run up huge trade deficits throughout the 1980s and the successive administrations were under mounting pressure to correct these trade imbalances by imposing protectionists measures. In the immediate postwar era when nearly all U.S. industries displayed a foreign trade surplus most social forces consented to the establishment of a liberal world market order. The support of the trade unions was lost in the late 1960s when foreign producers scored their first great successes. As more industries began losing market shares to imports, the support of free trade dwindled. In 1987, after a massive devaluation of the Dollar had failed to balance the trade flows, the late Reagan administration turned to an aggressive strategy of opening foreign markets to U.S. goods.[4] Most of these efforts were directed against Japanese practices. They culminated in the Structural Impediment Initiative of 1990 which obliged Japan to make sweeping changes in domestic commercial practices.[5]

However, by the summer of 1990 the U.S. foreign policy establishment became afraid that the Structural Impediment Initiative may not be sufficient to suppress the calls for protectionism, since it was unlikely to produce rapid results.[6] In fact, facing a recession and experiencing the end of the Cold War, they were alarmed about reinvigorated isolationist sentiments. To stem the tide they urged domestic reforms, since in the words of the president of the Council on Foreign Relations, Peter Tarnoff: "If (...) the United States is consumed by its failure to resolve internal social problems, American leaders will have little political support for an activist international role."[7] On the foreign front they called for more intensive tripartite consultation and even suggested that "the United States has to make the difficult adjustment from hegemon to partner."[8] And even Jeane Kirkpatrick, who unlike Bergsten does not receive $500.000 annually from the German Marshall Fund, added "Americans will have old

burdens to relinquish. We will need to learn to be a power, not a superpower."[9]

The decisive defeat of Iraq in March of 1991, however, has (at least temporarily) reversed the relationship between domestic and foreign policy. International activism no longer requires domestic prosperity, it compensates for domestic failures. The victory over Saddam Hussein has immaterially rewarded the U.S. population for its support of the foreign activism of its elites. In addition, many U.S. companies can expect lucrative contracts from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.[10] The foreign policy establishment has thus won a new licence for international activism which it already has put to use by pushing for a free trade agreement with Mexico.[11] The Gulf War message to the domestic audience may therefore read like this: "International activism is rewarding!"

To sum it up, the intervention in the Gulf region has renewed domestic support for an activist international role of the United States and has simultaneously increased U.S. bargaining power in international relations. Therefore, the Gulf War probably strengthens U.S. commitment to a liberal world market order. The wider room to maneuver on the international level, however, may seduce the United States to postpone overdue reforms at home.[12] And I doubt whether market liberalism will meet humanity's needs[13] but this is here besides the point.

Endnotes

1. For interesting accounts of United States foreign oil policy and Western co-operation, see <u>Svante Karlsson, 1986: Oil and the World Order. American Foreign Oil Policy, Leamington Spa, Berg</u>, and <u>Robert J. Lieber, 1983: The Oil Decade: Conflict and Cooperation in the West, New York, Praeger</u>. The complete story of oil is brilliantly told by <u>Daniel Yergin, 1991: The Prize. The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power, New York, Simon & Schuster</u>.

2. A precise summary of the debate on U.S. decline is provided by <u>Joseph S. Nye, 1990: Die Debatte über den Niedergang der Vereinig-ten Staaten, in: Europa-Archiv 45(13-14) 421-427</u>.

3. See <u>Georg Blume in Die Tageszeitung March 14, 1991: 3</u>.

4. See <u>Christoph Scherrer, 1990: Handelskrieg oder Kooperation? Perspektiven transatlantischer Wirtschaftsbeziehungen, in: Argument, Heft 182, 575-581.</u>

5. See <u>Theodore H. Moran, 1990: International Economics and National Security, in: Foreign Affairs 69(5) 74-90</u>.

6. See <u>C. Fred Bergsten, 1990: The World Economy after the Cold War, in: Foreign Affairs 69(3) 96-112</u>.

7. <u>Peter Tarnoff, 1990: America's New Special Relationships, in: Foreign Affairs, 69(3) 67-80, p. 79</u>, for similar calls, see <u>Bergsten supra note 6</u>, <u>Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, 1990: Beyond the Cold War, in: Foreign Affairs 69(1) 1-16</u> and <u>Stanley Hoffmann, 1990: A New World and Its Troubles, in: Foreign Affairs 69(4) 115-122</u>.

8. <u>Bergsten supra note 6, p. 105</u>.

9. <u>Kirkpatrick supra note 7, p. 16</u>.

10. <u>Business Week March 11, 1991: 26f</u>.

11. See <u>Rolf Paasch in Die Tageszeitung May 4, 1991: 14.</u>

12. The reform needs are well described by the conservative political analyst <u>Kevin Phillips, 1990: The Politics of Rich and Poor: Wealth and the American Electorate in the Reagan Aftermath, New York, Random</u>.

13. For a recent critique, see <u>Elmar Altvater, 1991: Die Zukunft des Marktes. Ein Essay über die politische Ökonomie der Regulation von Geld und Natur nach dem Scheitern des "real existierenden Sozialismus, Münster, Westfälisches Dampfboot</u>.

The German Left and the Gulf War:
An American Perspective

by

James Bohman

Although there are many different ways to gain perspective
on events, time and distance are perhaps the most important. Even
as the last parades took place in the United States to celebrate
what some called a "victory," the course of events in Iraq out-
stripped Bush's attempts to put the military campaign in the Gulf
to ideological use. Some of its more horrifying consequences already
became clear in the last days of the war with the senseless slaugh-
ter of retreating Iraqi soldiers, the continued targeting of civil-
ians and economic infrastructure, and the near destruction of whole
cities such as Basra. Other consequences seem to be the result of
a conscious, cynical decision by the United States to leave the
current government in power to achieve a "balance of power" in the
region. Another way to gain perspective is through distance, whether
it be geographical or cultural. The distance of an American living
in Germany at the time of the war, as I was, may lend a certain
perspective on the German discussion of the war which happened to
take place simultaneously with unification. It is clear in retro-
spective that unification placed a certain structure on the debate
about the war among the German Left, indeed a distorting lens that
has limited critical political discourse in important ways.

First let me adopt the inner-American perspective. Despite
what you may have read or have been led to believe in retrospect,
it was not at all clear the American would support such a massive
military campaign for what many average Americans saw as dubious
purposes and interests. Battlefield success makes any war popular
for at least a brief period, although it is not at all clear that
the historical experience of Vietnam is not still the framework in

which foreign wars are interpreted by many in the United States. A clear historical framework of post-war experience certainly explains the official German government positions during the war. What is surprising is the support of the war among a substantial minority of German Left intellectuals (although not among the Left generally), a support that seems in my experience to be more widespread than among their American counterparts. Certainly, many American Left intellectuals supported the war for many of the same reasons, as a persual of recent issues of Left-oriented journals like Dissent shows. Given the complexity and ambiguity of the situation, the brutality of the Iraqi regime, and special identification with Israel, such arguments are plausible from a Left perspective, whether German or American. It is clear in retrospect that many intellectuals discussed some possible war against Iraq rather than the real war that was carried out with all its brutality and obviously highly specific strategic goals. This has been particularly true of the German debate, especially among philosophers and intellectuals. What is responsible for this sort of cultural perception of these events? Why did a whole range of political positions and moral reasons seem to become discredited so suddenly? I think the reasons have not only to do with the type of arguments used, but with very recent German history.

Any account of the cultural framework within which the Gulf war was interpreted by the German Left must begin by recognizing the unique historical relation between Germany and Israel. Many German intellectuals see a moral responsibility for advocacy for Israel, especially if its survival were ever in doubt. But the survival of Israel was never in doubt in this war, for all of the brutality of the Scud attacks. More importantly, German intellectuals on the Left who defended the war chose to interpret Israel's interests in any way far more consistent with the Likud and the Israeli Right than with the Israeli Left, ignoring a whole range of possible positions that would both protect Israeli interests and integrity and yet oppose the war. Thus, advocacy for Israel did not require supporting the war except on a very narrow interpretation of Israel's interests. What then pushed the German Left

to adopt these limited interpretations of its moral responsibili-
ties? The opening of the Berlin Wall and unification have had a
profound effect on German Left political culture, and the Gulf war
is the first major political event of the post-Cold war and uni-
fication era; it is an era in which the German Left, if such a
thing still exists, has lost a clear sense of itself as an oppo-
sitional political culture. A whole range of arguments and styles
of thought have been rejected and identified with the past, often
without explicit awareness or coherent argument. Without this sense
of oppositional criticism, the German Left has adopted the odd
mixture of realism and moralism which was so present in its Gulf
war discussion. My view is that the German discussion vacillated
between these two politically untenable positions. Most of all,
the German defenders of the war on the Left adopted a position
that is actually more naive politically and certainly less prin-
cipled than the absolute pacificist position that they criticized.

Rather than first discussing the exact nature of particular
arguments that some on the Left used to defend the war, I would
like to examine two general aspects of the debate: first, its
self-critical tone, and, second, its purely moralistic level of
argumentation. I am going to criticize both of these features,
without, of course, rejecting the need for self-criticism and nor-
mative argumentation. Rather, I see both as misplaced by the
distorting and delayed effects of both the events of 1989 and of
unification on oppositional political culture. These effects are
clearly manifest in the limited range of analysis seen as permis-
sible by the pro-war segment of the German Left.

The German debate about the Golf war often involved a heated
rejection of pacifist positions that were so typical of the German
Peace movement of the early 1980s. The defence of the war was
viewed by many German intellectuals as an improvement over their
past oversimplified moral-political positions in favor of ones
that are more "differentiated," that go beyond the abstract in-
nocence of principled pacifism and the relevance of reductionist
theories of imperialism and ideology. The slogan "no blood for oil"
was particularly the object of such criticisms, and many Left

critics objected to the way it was used by both the American and German peace movements. Certainly, ridding the Left of false and reductionist theories is a noble occupation. However, the internal American discussion, particularly before the war and in the Congressional debate, repeatedly emphasized American and Western interests in access to oil and the desire to avoid Iraqi control over this resource. In the United States, it is only after patriotic identification with the troops began to take hold that these appeals to economic interests were dropped from the justifying political discourse around the war. Indeed, it is the opposition to the use of such economic justifications that motivated some of the conservative opposition to the war, a little known aspect of the American war debate in Germany. These conservatives (such as Buchanan) were not talking about Left interpretations of the war, but reacting to other positions on the right-wing spectrum of the conservative and public debate about the war. Even such conservative critics pointed out that violations of human rights and international law cannot be the real cause of our involvement in the war. In retrospect, it is quite clear that without oil the United States would have no more intervened in Kuwait than it has in East Timor, where the real genocide of hundreds of thousands has been occurring for years. For all the desire of the pro-war Left to reject the type of reason the slogan embodies, "no blood for oil" is at least a reasonable analysis of the causes of the war, as well as a plausible ideology critique of current justification.

But the second feature of the debate is more important than this self-criticism by intellectuals, which would be entirely misplaced within the American scene where economic interests did play a justificatory role, particularly early on in the war. Rather what is more striking is the surprisingly normative and moral character of the German debate. In no sense do I want to dispute the fact that political debate should be principled, nor that political culture consists of a community of principle, to use Dworkin's phrase. But what is striking to an American observer is that the German debate was carried out at an almost exclusively

non-political level. There are political norms that must apply
to such decisions that make them legitimate or illegitimate, biased
or impartial, democratic or undemocratic. What is surprising to
me is that those who normatively defend the war in Germany almost
never considered this level of the debate, despite the fact that
the decision to wage war and the subsequent decisions of how to
do so were highly political processes. After 1989, the German Left
refuses to defend publically political claims and analyses that
were once almost its sole currency. As an American, where many of
these political processes occurred, the politics of the war seems
undoubtedly primary. Just as it is impossible to call international
a war primarily fought by the armies of one nation, it is impos-
sible to call democratic the way in which decisions were made
throughout the war by the White House, in light of its narrow
interpretations of international principles in its non-general-
izable geopolitical interests. Even if the outcomes may be justi-
fied by a post-hoc appeal to universal norms, the decision-making
process itself could be nonetheless clearly politically illegiti-
mate. Such is the case with the Gulf war.

The Gulf war is significant for primarily political reasons:
it is the first major political event of the post-Cold War poli-
tical era and thus was given constitutive significance for the
American government; it inaugurates a "new world order," with new
functional requirements. The very "winning" of the Cold War pro-
duced a potentially unstable situation that shifted the axes of
conflict from West and East to North and South. Super-power re-
lations had become a relatively stable system, and the Gulf war
alone has not produced anything equivalently stable, and most
certainly nothing like lasting institutional arrangements to
solve conflicts with any legitimacy. Recent events make it clear
that the United Nations is not really going to be used as a frame-
work for problem solving and conflict resolution, that its use
in the Gulf war was due to an coincidence of interests rather
than a new principled and democratic basis for international legi-
timacy.

As an American, I find it impossible to think of the Gulf war
apart from this conscious effort to create a political system by
force, the stability of which alone would serve its economic func-
tion. It is impossible to ignore the fact that American leaders
described what they are doing openly in these terms: they followed
these goals and used a moral language of law and rights to legi-
timate their policies to their domestic audience. A mixture of
both highly idealized normative discourse about souvereignty and
freedom of others and the direct expressions of our own political
and economic interests characterized the discourse about the war
from the very beginning. Again as an American, I cannot help but
see this duality in normative arguments for the war, especially
after hearing Reagan roll back the New Deal for a decade with the
same populist rhetoric as the New Deal itself. Of course, German
defenders of the war raise their normative arguments in a quite
different context. Their highly normative arguments make sense
only relative to the rejection of such claims in the past by the
German Left; pacificism is now "unrealistic." The duality here is
more abstract, but nonetheless subject to similar criticisms: it
is impossible to evaluate a normative argument for the morality
of the war apart from the political process by which the norms
are applied and the decision executed. Jürgen Habermas talked
about the logic of the war and its escalating cost of innocent
civilian lives in the early weeks of the war (in: DIE ZEIT;
February, 1991). But the logic of the war had more to do with the
undemocratic political processes that gave rise to ever more in-
appropriate and immoral means and normatively illegitimate goals.
It is certainly false to conceive of a war as somehow justified
without considering how and for what purposes the decisions of
war are made, the things that make this war the war that it is.
This is precisely what is lacking with much of the German dis-
cussion that justified the war: in it, Verantwortungsethik became
linked to a style of argumentation typical of Gesinnungspolitik
with fatal political consequences.

As part of a series in the Tageszeitung in March 1991 en-
titled "Philosophers on the Gulf War," both K.O. Apel and Axel

Honneth defended the war on normative, moral and legal grounds;
both explicitly rejected ideology-critical arguments against the
legitimacy of the U.N. resolution. Apel goes so far as to call
all such arguments fallacies (Denkfehler), claiming that the U.N.
resolutions give rise to a genuine hope for the sort of inter-
national order that Kant discusses in Ewiger Frieden. The evalua-
tion of the military action should concern only whether or not
the allies use the "appropriate means" to achieve the goals of
the resolutions, themselves justified by appeal to universal prin-
ciples of human rights and international law. However, the legi-
timate application of such principles requires coherence and con-
sistency; a legitimate order of international law cannot be based
on their selective application, a selectivity that reveals the
normative inadequacies of the political process of the current
framework of international institutions. On the political level,
the inconsistent and selective application and enforcement of
universal principles, and not their entire absence, is one of the
hallmarks of tyranny. One might respond, as Kant did in Ewiger
Frieden, that even the rhetorical use of moral arguments in poli-
tics can have a salutary effect. Again, my experience with Ameri-
can politics belies this optimism. Merely rhetorical uses of moral
vocabularies drain them of political meaning and motivating power.
In this case, those who already have little power will begin to
distrust the U.N., seeing in selective appeals to human rights
the same cynicism as Jeanne Kirkpatrick's distinction between
authoritarian and totalitarian regimes. Honneth is more consis-
tent in seeing in the principles appealed to in the U.N. resolu-
tions a potential for arguing against super-power actions like
the U.S. invasion of Panama or the Soviet invasion of Czecho-
slovakia. However, these principles do not justify even this
particular war, since it was executed with very specific inter-
ests and goals in mind, as recent events make clear: Moreover,
the goals of the U.N. resolution could easily be met with much
less force, with the net result of much less human misery. The
non-generalizable interests that were revealed by the course of
the war were what caused the extremely exaggerated use of force
by the allies: they are not simply Iraq's brutal and senseless

tactics; they are also the exact and cynical calculation of the interests of the United States in keeping Hussein in power, as was openly discussed by government sources to explain the quick end of the war. It would be a "fatal abstraction," to use Honneth's phrase for pacifist arguments, not to judge the war now in light of its horrific ending; it is no accident, but rather a inherent consequence of its political process in applying universal norms. The appeal to such norms without reflecting on the conditions of international political legitimacy is no less abstract and naive than pacificism.

The application of a norm must not only be consistent and impartial, it also involves considerations of its consequences for all those affected. A war is a complex set of actions and strategies whose moral worth must be tested by its entire course. The ending of the war puts it in its proper and current context and now prohibits us from idealizing and misrepresenting the moral significance of the U.N. resolutions. Proper contextualizing of the politics of applying those resolutions show that this war was no more conducted with the purpose of defending international law and human rights than the contra war was a matter of self-defense for the United States. Applying the U.N. resolutions both to weaken Hussein and yet to keep him in power can be given no consistent moral justification.

What does this say about principled arguments in politics? The misuse of universal principles should not make us want to abandon them, but it should make more aware of the political con- ditions of their application. When people reason in light of such principles and must do so to be convincing, ideological misuses of those principles must at least appear to be universalistic. Although the Left had previously developed and used the tools to criticize such arguments, many now seem to want to abandon this form of criticism. If the motivation for abandoning this form of criticism is related to the German experience with the DDR, then the move to a purely normative level in discussing politics only commits the same mistake twice: the DDR regime

also misused universal moral principles, and it is precisely an
oppositional and critical Left that should have been able to see.
Many here defended the DDR without reference to the political con-
text of application: that such principles as equality and justice
were used to support a police state. With regard to the Gulf war,
its defenders on the left simply committed the same mistake as
the old defenders of the DDR. As opposed to the old New Left
models still practiced today, critics should expose the selecti-
vity and inappropriateness of the application and realization of
these principles. This is simply what it means to reflect critic-
ally upon concrete political events and political policies. Other-
wise, it is easy to fall back into the tendency common in German
philosophy to see political events and whole civilizations as
the direct expression of principles and ideas. Just such a philo-
sophical over-interpretation of the Gulf war went on in the German
discussion, just as Enzenberger's demonology of Hussein as Hitler
and the representation of pure human evil is its German literary
equivalent. Both are over-interpretations simply because they do
not recognize the reality of the actual events, their real textures
and problems; they impose a world-historical and Hegelian signi-
ficance upon the events that is not there. The real character of
events soon outstrips this type of interpretation, showing the
huge gap between the abstract justification of principles and their
real application in political processes and decisions.

The deeper problem is not whether or not Left critics ignore
ideology critique or fall back into neo-Hegelian philosophizing
interpretations of the past. As Ulrich Beck pointed out (in:
DIE ZEIT, May, 1991), the net effect of reunification will be the
undermining of oppositional culture in Germany, a tendency that
is also a product of the normalizing power of one-sided moderni-
zation processes. This loss of oppositional political culture be-
gan in the 1980s before unification, and the Gulf war debates are
more directly related to these processes than to unification.
Certainly, war has always been divisive for the Left, but this does
not explain the huge split between many Left intellectuals and the
many citizens who demonstrated on the street against the war. The

problem is how to maintain an oppositional intellectual role with-
out counter-ideals like socialism, which now has lost its capacity
to mobilize any utopian energies at all. But a free and open pub-
lic sphere cannot function without oppositional critics, who test
the limits and distortions of public policies and discussion even
when there seems to be widespread consensus. The loss of utopian
ideals or the belief in expressive politics should not lead to a
loss of democracy. The brutal realities of post-war Iraq show us
not only the selectivity of the application of universal principles
of human rights and international law; they show the costs of a
lack of an articulate political opposition and its vigilance in
public discourse; they should show the pro-war German Left that
it is still making the same mistake of selectively using concepts
such as human rights. The conflicts expressed in Gulf war debates
only crystalize deep problems for the future of the German Left.
It has no clear utopian or moral vocabulary and no clear critical
perspective. But even as it searches for them, it should not give
up its oppositional role or self-understanding. Its new emphasis
on moral justification should not result in a blindness to politics.
From the perspective of an American, whose political culture has
always had a high moral tone, that would be an illusion. Some on
the German Left may have had good reasons to support a war, but
it wasn't the war that was waged in the Persian Gulf, but rather
one that they imposed a false interpretation upon, an interpreta-
tion that was limited by the way the question of its legitimacy
was framed. German defenders of the war could learn a lesson from
Kant, who realized the world peace depended on a political infra-
structure of democratic-republican states and the consistent appli-
cation of universal norms and laws. For these defenders of the war,
the German perspective that something as new as unification was
happening, like Bush's rhetoric of a "new" world order, distorted
the political realities and the abuses of principle that justified
enormous violence. The lack of political orientation in the German
Left is found in its odd owings between optimism and pessimism:
the extreme pessimism of some about unification is as distorted
as the extreme optimism of others about the role of the U.N. in
the Gulf war. Both events show the misuse of a democratic potential
and demonstrate the need for a nontruncated moral and political

criticism of selectively and inconsistently applied principles.
The strange interpretive mixture of the German pro-war Left intel-
lectual - political "realism" and abstract moralism - makes sense
only as a political discourse narrowly restricted by a certain
experience of historical events. The experience of 1989 fixed
the schemata in which many intellectuals interpreted the Gulf war
of 1990. Most importantly, interpretations that many on the Left
took for granted throughout the 1980s are now seen as discredited
after 1989: what this signifies in terms of concrete political
events is manifested in the pro-war faction of the German Left.One
of the clearest consequences of this loss of critical resources
and change in interpretations is a new split between intellectuals
and social movements on the German scene, an increasing divergence
in interpretations of past events and future possibilities. As the
German Left re-evaluates itself, as must the Left everywhere, the
experience of the Gulf war should show that it ought not too quick-
ly give up on its critical stance and its oppositional identity
for a questionable and abstract normative orientation.

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