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"avoided the quagmire and preserved his two triumphs: the extraordinary cooperation among coalition members and the revived self-confidence of Americans," who "greeted the Feb. 28 cease-fire with relief and pride — relief at miraculously few U.S. casualties and pride in the brilliant performance of the allied forces" (NYT, Aug. 2, 1991). Surely these triumphs far outweigh the "awesome tragedies" in the region.

These are chilling words. One can readily understand the reaction of the non-people of the world.

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tlement. If that comes about, it will be hailed as another triumph for our great Leader, a renewed demonstration of our high-minded benevolence and virtue. The other possibility is that the "peace process" will fail, in which case we will read of "a classic cultural clash between American and Middle Eastern instincts," a conflict between Middle Eastern fanaticism and Baker's "quintessentially American view of the world: that with just a little bit of reasonableness these people should be able to see that they have a shared interest in peace that overrides their historical antipathies" (Thomas Friedman).[31] It's a win-win situation for U.S. power.

The "Two Triumphs"

The "peace process" aside, there is not a great deal that can be brought forth to illustrate U.S. achievements in the Gulf. This too is not much of a problem; as state priorities shift, respectable folk follow suit, turning to approved concerns. But it would have been too much to allow the August 2 anniversary to pass without notice. A last-ditch effort was therefore necessary to portray the outcome as a Grand Victory. Even with the journalistic achievements of the past year, such as the suppression of the possibilities for a peaceful negotiated settlement and the rigorous exclusion of Iraqi democrats and world opinion generally, it was no simple matter to chant the praises of our leader as we survey the scene of two countries devastated, hundreds of thousands of corpses with the toll still mounting, an ecological catastrophe, and the Beast of Baghdad firmly in power thanks to the tacit support of the Bush-Baker-Schwartzkopf team.

It is a relief to discover that even this onerous task was not beyond the capacity of the cultural commissars. In its anniversary editorial, the New York Times editors dismissed the qualms of "the doubters," concluding that Mr. Bush had acted wisely: he

[31] NYT, May 19, 17, 1991.

on the high seas or the tens of thousands who have been jailed without charges in the occupied territories. In the same journal, a lead op-ed derides the "frenzy" of Arab politics which "expresses the resentments of a civilization which has at once been left behind and overwhelmed by modernity" and which must be helped to "accommodate to reality" (Martin Peretz, who reveals his own grasp of reality by accusing Baker of "a fixed animus to the Jewish state").[30] One can imagine the reaction to a call for "extermination" of Jews or similar derisive commentary about Jewish culture.

The approved current practice is sanctimonious and patronizing condemnation of the Palestinians for having applauded Saddam Hussein, and for PLO support for Iraq against the U.S. attack (while calling for Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait). Therefore, American and Israeli hypocrites argue, the Palestinians have abdicated their right to participate in determining their own fate. Let us put aside the fact that that right had been forcefully rejected by the United States and both Israeli political groupings long before the invasion of Kuwait; one will search far for a U.S. or Israeli commentator in the mainstream who was willing to grant Palestinians even the right to select their own representatives, a right explicitly denied in the Baker-Shamir-Peres plan. Let us consider, however, what the same logic implies about Israel, which not only applauds but directly participates in horrifying atrocities in Latin America, Africa and Asia, not to speak of its loyal support for U.S. aggression in Indochina and elsewhere, and its own shameful crimes. The conclusions are obvious enough, but, again, fail the test of political correctness, and will therefore not be drawn in a well-disciplined and deeply conformist culture.

For Washington's purposes, it is not of great importance that the "peace conference" succeed. If it does, the U.S. will have rammed through its traditional rejectionism, having sucessfully rebuffed the near-unanimous world support for an authentic political set-

[30] Editorial, BG, Aug. 15; Peretz, Aug. 9, 1991.

Voices from Below

In concluding its report The Challenge to the South, the South Commission, chaired by Julius Nyerere and consisting of leading Third World economists, government planners, and others, called for a "new world order" that will respond to "the South's plea for justice, equity, and democracy in the global society" — with a touch of pathos, perhaps, since its analysis offered little basis for such hopes.[1] Some months later, George Bush appropriated the phrase "new world order" as part of the rhetorical background for his war in the Gulf. The powerful determine the rules of the game and the meaning of the rhetoric adopted to disguise them. It is George Bush's New World Order, not that of the South Commission, that will prevail. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the Third World did not join in the enthusiastic U.S. welcome for the uplifting vision proclaimed by the President and his Secretary of State.

In earlier articles as Bush's war plans unfolded, I have quoted Third World reactions, including the Iraqi democrats who were rebuffed throughout by Washington and scrupulously excluded from the propaganda system because of their opposition to every phase of U.S. policy: the enthusiastic Reagan-Bush support for their gangster friend as long as he followed orders; the rush to war and barring of the danger of a peaceful negotiated settlement; the slaughter itself; and the support for Saddam Hussein as he crushed the popular uprisings that Bush had called for when it suited his purposes, then abandoned as priorities changed. To survey Third World opinion is no simple matter; the traditional colonial areas are of little interest to Western privilege unless they fall "out of control," at which point there is a quick transition from silence to frenzied abuse. But from what information I can gather, there was broad agreement with the interpretation of the editor of Germany's leading daily,

[1] The Challenge to the South, Report of the South Commission (Oxford, 1990), 287.

Theo Sommer of Die Zeit, who saw in the U.S.-U.K. reaction to the Gulf crisis "an unabashed exercise in national self-interest, only thinly veiled by invocations of principle"[2] — invocations that were proclaimed with due pomposity and self-righteousness as long as the interests of power were served thereby.

In a typical Third World reaction, the Jesuit journal Proceso (El Salvador) warned of the "ominous halo of hypocrisy, the seed of new crises and resentments." The hypocrisy "is extreme in the case of the United States, the leader of the allied forces and the most warmongering of them all." Writing in the Chilean journal La Epoca under a caricature of Bush in a bathtub filled with war toys, Uruguayan writer Mario Benedetti agreed that Bush has "succeeded in outdoing Saddam in hypocrisy." "When liberation fever hits the United States," he continued, "the alarms sound everywhere, particularly in the Third World," which lacks the Western talent to turn quickly away from "the liberated wreckage" and where it is no secret that "the abyss between the First World and the Third World is wider with each passing day." There is nothing accidental, he writes, about the resemblance of Bush's phrase "New World Order" to Hitler's "Neue Ordnung" and Mussolini's "Ordine Nuovo." The "express intent" of Bush's Gulf war was nothing other than "to show both the Third World and its old and new European allies that from now on it is the United States that orders, invades, and dictates the law, period." For the Third World, "the combination of the weakening of the USSR and the [U.S.] victory in the Gulf could turn out to be frightening…because of the breakdown of international military equilibrium which somehow served to contain U.S. yearnings for domination"; "the contempt that this triumph has brought about (thirty countries against one) could stimulate even wilder imperialist adventures." For the South,

[2] Guardian (London), April 13, 1991.

enter Germany," the Hebrew press reported. Israel is also reported to have persuaded the Soviet Union to deprive departing Jews of Soviet citizenship, to bar return there, a growing problem as many Russian Jews seek to leave Israel despite the serious impediments imposed by its government, including severe financial liabilities.[29]

Israel will never agree to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state unless the U.S. withdraws the huge subsidy that maintains it as a wealthy Western society. And that is unlikely. Israel's services as a "strategic asset" have been highly valued for thirty years, with roots extending beyond. The Israeli lobby (not all Jewish, by any means), with its political clout and its finely-honed techniques of defamation, slander, and intimidation is highly effective in containing discussion within the narrow framework of U.S.-Israeli rejectionism and support for Israeli power and repression.

In contrast, the Palestinians, as noted, offer the U.S. nothing, and there is no domestic lobby pressuring for their rights. What is more, anti-Arab racism is endemic, so rampant as to be unnoticed. The concept of "rejectionism," mentioned above, is demonstration enough, with its unquestioned assumption that Jews have rights denied in principle to Palestinians. The same is true of the standard assumption, also taken as uncontroversial, that Palestinians should not even have the minimal right to select their own representatives to negotiate their capitulation. An editorial in the liberal Boston Globe calmly observes that the "ultimate control" of terrorists who take hostages is "extermination," referring, of course, to Arab hostage-takers, not to Israel with its hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian hostages held under grotesque conditions to ensure compliance with Israel's terrorist army in South Lebanon or to induce Lebanese terrorists to release Israeli soldiers captured in the course of Israeli aggression, not to speak of Palestinians kidnapped

[29] Ha'aretz, Feb. 18, May 19; Yediot Ahronot, March 15; Christian Science Monitor, July 29, 1991.

To force Soviet Jews to Israel, it is necessary to gain U.S. cooperation in barring their entry. That is readily obtained, with the support of those who had been vociferously calling on the Soviets to "let my people go" — as long as they go where we tell them to. The Jerusalem Post quotes Democrat Charles Schumer of New York, a ranking member of the House immigration, refugee and international law committee, who said on August 15 that there would be no increase in the ceiling on Soviet immigration (50,000, with "some 40,000 slots reserved for Jews"). "This comes as a relief to absorption officials [in Israel], who worry that Soviet aliya ["ascent" to Israel] would drop-off dramatically if the U.S. allows more Soviet Jews in," the Post news report continues. "American Jews and Israel," Schumer explained, "both seem happy with the current equilibrium," effectively barring non-Jews from the U.S. altogether and restricting Jewish immigration sufficiently to ensure that many will be compelled to go to Israel against their will.[28]

Nevertheless, there are some clouds on the horizon. Ha'aretz reports that a Jewish organization was formed in the United States to campaign for admission of Russian Jews. This dangerous development led to a closed debate of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem, where participants "expressed sharp opposition" to any such plan and agreed that "the other Jewish bodies in the United States should unite to sabotage this attempt, which might harm the immigration of Jews to Israel." These moves extend pressures of many years on American Jewish communities not to provide assistance to refugees from the Soviet Union. Prime Minister Devid Levy was sent to Germany to induce its Government to stop providing refugee status to Soviet Jews. "Our policy…is that Jews should go to Israel," not here, the spokesman for the Israeli Embassy said in Bonn. Michael Kleiner, head of the Immigration and Absorption Department of the Knesset, "sharply attacked the decision of the German government to permit Russian Jews to

[28] JP, Aug. 16, 1991.

he concludes, the only hope is to pray to every imaginable deity to "try to convince Bush and Powell not to come liberate us."[3]

Few in the former colonial domains would take issue with the judgment of the Times of India that the traditional warrior states sought a "regional Yalta where the powerful nations agree among themselves to a share of Arab spoils… [The West's] conduct throughout this one month has revealed the seamiest sides of Western civilisation: its unrestricted appetite for dominance, its morbid fascination for hi-tech military might, its alien' cultures, its appalling jingoism…." The general mood was captured by Cardinal Paulo Evaristo Arns of Sao Paolo, Brazil, who wrote that in the Arab countries "the rich sided with the U.S. government while the *millions* of poor condemned this military aggression." Throughout the Third World, he continued, "there is hatred and fear: When will they decide to invade us," and on what pretext?[4]

Prior to the Gulf crisis, the South Commission had given a grim though accurate assessment of the latest phase of the 500-year European assault against the world — whether called "the Vasco da Gama era," "the Columbian era," "imperialism," "neo-colonialism," or the era of "North-South conflict," the current euphemism. There were some gestures to Third World concerns in the 1970s, the Commission observed, "undoubtedly spurred" by concern over "the newly found assertiveness of the South after the rise in oil prices in 1973" — which were, incidentally, not entirely unwelcome to the U.S. and U.K., which are producers of high-cost oil, the home of the energy corporations that benefited mightily from the price rise, and the recipients of much of the flow of petrodollars (primarily the U.S.).[5] As the threat of Southern assertiveness abated, the Commission report continues, the industrial societies lost interest and turned to "a new form of neo-colonialism,"

[3] Editorial, Proceso, Jan. 23, 1991. Benedetti, La Epoca, May 4, 1991.
[4] Z, May 1991. Foreword, Thomas Fox, Iraq (Sheed & Ward, 1991), ix.
[5] On these matters, see my Towards a New Cold War (Pantheon, 1982).

monopolizing control over the world economy, undermining the more democratic elements of the United Nations, and in general proceeding to institutionalize "the South's second class status."

Japan and continental Europe recovered from the recession of the early 1980s, though without resuming earlier growth rates. U.S. recovery involved massive borrowing and state stimulation of the economy, mainly through the Pentagon-based public subsidy to high technology industry, along with a sharp increase in protectionist measures and a rise in interest rates. This contributed to the crisis of the South, as interest payments on the debt rose while investment and aid declined, and the wealthy classes invested their riches in the West. There was a huge capital flow from South to North, with effects that were generally catastrophic, apart from the NICs of East Asia, where the state is powerful enough to control capital flight and direct the economy efficiently. The catastrophe of capitalism in the 1980s was mirrored, though to a lesser extent, in Eastern Europe, contributing to the disintegration of the Soviet tyranny and its virtual disappearance from the world scene.

The "New World Order" is perceived in the South, not unrealistically, as a bitter one-sided international class war, with the advanced state capitalist economies and their transnational corporations monopolizing the means of violence and controlling investment, capital, technology, and planning and management decisions at the expense of the huge mass of the population. Local elites in the Southern dependencies can share in the spoils, including, probably, much of the ex-Nomenklatura in the parts of the Soviet system that will revert to their traditional status. The U.S. and U.K., which wield the whip, may well continue their decline toward societies with notable Third World characteristics, dramatically obvious in the inner cities and rural areas.

that the U.S. and Israel will not permit. For many years, it has been well-known that Israel relies heavily on West Bank water; control over water has also always been a major reason for Israel's concern over the Golan Heights and southern Lebanon, and any Syrian or Jordanian development projects in the region. Furthermore, some of the most popular suburbs are in the West Bank (including the vastly expanded area called "Jerusalem"). Israel has also benefited from the supercheap Palestinian labor force and a controlled market (meanwhile preventing any independent development), though these needs will reduce if the Arab boycott officially ends, and if enough Soviet Jews can be forced to Israel to do the dirty work that has been assigned to Palestinians.

The issue is not Israel's survival or even its security, which would not be threatened by a Palestinian state. As David Ben-Gurion observed in December 1948, "an Arab state in Western Palestine [that is, West of the Jordan] would be less dangerous than a state linked to Transjordan [now Jordan], and maybe tomorrow to Iraq." Nothing that has happened since has changed that assessment, and an Israel within the internationally-recognized borders could well be integrated into the region as its most technologically advanced and military powerful element. The problem lies elsewhere. It is that under such arrangements, Israel could not "exist according to the scale, spirit, and quality she now embodies," as General Ezer Weizmann explained in justification of Israel's decision to launch the 1967 war by attacking Egypt, at a time when he was air force commander and one of the top military planners.[27]

[27] Ben-Gurion's diaries, quoted by Avi Shlaim, Collusion across the Jordan (Columbia, 1988), 364. Weizmann, Ha'aretz, March 20, 1972. On Israel's decision for war, see now Andrew and Leslie Cockburn, Dangerous Liaison (Harper Collins, 1991), an important and informative study, as indicated by the hysterical and infantile reviews in the New York Times and other major journals (for some amusing examples, see David Schoenbaum, NYT Book Review, Aug. 18, 1991; John Yemma, Boston Globe, Aug. 15, 1991).

among the top party ranks. Much the same is true today. In the Hebrew press, Knesset Member Yossi Sarid, regarded as a leading dove, writes that in a meeting of the Labor Party Committee on Foreign and Security Affairs, Peres sought to undermine any positive response to the conciliatory stance of Syria that had been welcomed by Prime Minister Shamir. "He, Peres, is attacking Shamir from the right," Uzi Baram of the Labor Party reported. On most matters, Sarid continues, the Labor Party is following the Likud lead, but on the matter of the Golan Heights, Peres is mimicking the fringe rightwing Ha-Tehiya party, denouncing any negotiations with Syria as a trap that must be avoided. Peres's Labor Party rival Yitzhak Rabin took the same position at the meeting. "The stand of the two with regard to the Golan Heights is rejectionist to the point of despair," Sarid writes. Earlier, Rabin had denounced the Baker conference plan as "a deadly trap [for Israel], while Peres demanded that Israel not relinquish the Golan Heights under any circumstances," the press reported. These are matters of no small moment, since, as the military command and military correspondents have been emphasizing, failure to reach an agreement with Syria on the Golan Heights is likely to lead to war in the not-too-distant future.[25]

Peres's stand was in accord with the largest sector of the Kibbutz Movement (Ha-TAKAM), which called for "permanent rule over the Golan Heights" by Israel, and steps for further development of the Heights.[26]

In fact, there has never been any serious difference between the two major political groupings on the matter of Palestinian rights, which both reject. The U.S. has always backed them in this rejectionist stance. The official reasons are hardly worth even refuting. The real reasons are that a Palestinian state, even if it lacked a pistol or an ally anywhere, would control its own land and resources, and

[25] Sarid, Ha'aretz, Aug. 1; Hana Kim, Hadashot, July 23, 1991.
[26] Nahman Gilboa, Al-Hamishmar, July 7, 1991.

Controlling the Plunderers

In looking ahead to the New World Order, it is useful to recall some well-established truths, rarely voiced because they lack the redeeming value of supporting privilege and power. They are, therefore, deemed unacceptable by the vigilant guardians of political correctness, along with such matters as the U.S. role in international terrorism and human rights abuses, the actual functioning of the doctrinal system in consciousness-lowering, and so on. But they merit consideration on the part of those who hope to understand the world.

North-South relations are based on the principle that the South has a service role. Independent nationalism, interfering with the prerogatives of the rulers, is unacceptable, whatever its political cast. Murderous tyrants are fine as long as they are properly obedient; Saddam Hussein is only the most recent example. But meaningful democracy, which might allow popular pressures on state policy, is a danger unless the institutional foundations of business rule are so firm that basic decision-making is safely protected from challenge. In occupied Europe and Japan after World War II, until this result was achieved the U.S. worked effectively to undermine labor, democratic forces, and the anti-fascist resistance while reinstating the traditional elites, including Nazi and fascist collaborators (simultaneously, domestic U.S. power launched a massive and effective campaign against labor and independent thought and politics). In the less stable societies of the South, the conditions of business rule are often not yet securely established. Therefore any hint of popular organization and meaningful democracy sets off the alarm bells, often a savage reaction as well.

In these respects, nothing has changed. Thus a Latin America Strategy Development Workshop at the Pentagon in September 1990 concludes that current relations with the Mexican dictatorship are "extraordinarily positive," untroubled by stolen elections, death squads, endemic torture, scandalous treatment of workers

democracy opening' in Mexico could test the special relationship by bringing into office a government more interested in challenging the U.S. on economic and nationalist grounds," the fundamental concern over many years. The hostility to democracy is taken as uncontroversial — probably even unnoticed — by the academic and other participants.[6]

Signs of successful development simply magnify the dangers of independence and, even worse, popular organization: the "virus" might spread and the "rotten apple" might "infect" the barrel as others are tempted to pursue the same path — the "domino theory" of public rhetoric. As Washington moved to overthrow the first (and last) democratic government in Guatemala in 1953, State Department officials warned that Guatemala "has become an increasing threat to the stability of Honduras and El Salvador. Its agrarian reform is a powerful propaganda weapon; its broad social program of aiding the workers and peasants in a victorious struggle against the upper classes and large foreign enterprises has a strong appeal to the populations of Central American neighbors where similar conditions prevail."[7]

Such thinking is pervasive, and understandable. It will persist, as long as the threat of "broad social programs" of the Guatemalan variety, or other forms of independence, has not been extinguished. From 1917 into the 1980s, it was possible to portray the rotten apples as agents of the Evil Empire, poised to conquer us and "take what we have," in the words of one of Lyndon Johnson's laments. The paranoid fantasies were not entirely lacking in substance. Targets of U.S. subversion and economic warfare did, naturally, turn to the Soviet Union for support, and U.S. intervention was constrained by the deterrent effect of Soviet power — the "international military equilibrium which somehow served to contain

[6] Latin America Strategy Development Workshop, Sept. 26 & 27, 1990, minutes, 3. Andrew Reding, "Mexico's Democratic Challenge," World Policy Journal (Spring 1991).

[7] Quoted by Piero Gleijeses, Shattered Hope (Princeton, 1991), 365.

lines of the [Israeli] Government," which exclude any Palestinian rights. Palestinians must, furthermore, be denied even the right to select their own representatives to discuss their capitulation to U.S.-Israeli terms (no PLO); and there will be "free elections" under Israeli military rule with much of the Palestinian leadership in prison camps without charges. These terms would be regarded as a sick joke if they were not advocated by the U.S. and its client.

There remain, however, some problems in implementing this project, notably the recalcitrance of both Shamir and Peres, who lead the two major parties (though Labor is in serious decline). Shamir has repeatedly dragged his feet, and Peres is trying to outflank Shamir from the jingoist extreme (what is called "the right"). The difficulties with Shamir are familiar: he is the preferred scapegoat for the media, and his recalcitrance offers the opportunity to present Washington's extreme rejectionist position as a "middle ground," suitably "moderate" and "pragmatic." But it is harder to deal with the stand of the Labor party, traditionally presented as "the good guys" who line up with U.S. positions. Shimon Peres, in particular, has been designated by the media as a man of "healthy pragratism" and a leading dove, deeply troubled by the lack of a "peace movement among the Arab people" such as "we have among the Jewish people," to sample a few of the fairy tales relayed by the New York Times and its Pulitzer Prize-winning correspondent Thomas Friedman.[24]

Peres's current stand is familiar in Labor Party annals. Leading figures in the Labor Party had opposed Menahem Begin's acceptance of the Camp David agreement, a great boon to Israeli power because it removed the sole Arab deterrent (Egypt) from the conflict, thus enabling Israel to accelerate its integration of the occupied territories and attack Lebanon, with massive U.S. assistance. But the agreement compelled Israel to yield settlements that Labor had established in Egyptian territory, eliciting opposition

[24] For details, see Necessary Illusions.

and Israel have always blocked an international conference and demanded that the PLO must be excluded. Virtually any participant in an international conference would express at least token support for Palestinian rights, a sour note that must be silenced. And since the PLO will, naturally, advocate such rights, it has never been accepted as an interlocutor by either Israel or the U.S. — including the period of the "negotiations" between the U.S. and the P.L.O., an utter fraud, as was well-understood by the Israeli leadership. The facts have been efficiently suppressed here, but are known at least to readers of this journal, so I will not repeat them.[23]

There has long been a tacit alliance between the "Arab Facade" that manages the energy system and the regional gendarmes that provide protection from nationalist currents — Israel among them, alongside of Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan — with U.S.-British power on call if needed, and various modifications as conditions change (e.g., the fall of the Shah). The tacit alliance is coming quite close to the surface now that Arab nationalism has been dealt yet another crushing blow, thanks to the murderous gangster who disobeyed orders, and PLO tactics of more than the usual foolishness. The Arab rulers therefore have less need than before to respond to popular pressures and make pro-Palestinian gestures; accordingly, the prospects for U.S. rejectionism have advanced several notches.

The U.S.-run "peace conference" will be permitted to discuss only one topic, as James Baker made clear and explicit in 1989: the Shamir Plan, actually the Shamir-Peres Plan of the Likud-Labor coalition, then governing. The basic terms of this Plan, it will be recalled, are that there can be no "additional Palestinian state" (Jordan already being one) and no "change in the status of Judea, Samaria and Gaza other than in accordance with the basic guide-

[23] See my articles "The Trollope Ploy and Middle East Diplomacy," "The Art of Evasion: Diplomacy in the Middle East," Z, March 1989, Jan. 1990, and my Necessary Illusions (South End, 1989).

U.S. yearnings for domination" (Benedetti). The Cold War itself had North-South dimensions that should not be ignored. Soviet domains had in part been quasi-colonial dependencies of the West, which were removed from the Third World and pursued an independent path, no longer available "to complement the industrial economies of the West," as a prestigious study group defined the threat of Communism in 1955. Furthermore, the Soviet Union offered a model of development that was not without appeal in the Third World, particularly in earlier years.

The USSR was, in short, an enormous "rotten apple," and in this case, a menacing one as well. It is understandable, then, that leading scholars should justify the Western invasion of the Soviet Union after the revolution as a defensive action "in response to a profound and potentially far-reaching intervention by the new Soviet government in the internal affairs, not just of the West, but of virtually every country in the world," namely, "the Revolution's challenge…to the very survival of the capitalist order" (John Lewis Gaddis).[8] The same reasoning applies to a huge country or a speck in the Caribbean: intervention is entirely warranted in defense against a change in the social order, interfering with the service function, and a declaration of revolutionary intentions, particularly when there is a fear that "the rot may spread." Although the Sandinista "Revolution without Borders" was a government-media fabrication, the propaganda images reflected an authentic concern: from the perspective of a hegemonic power, declaration of an intent to provide a model that will inspire others amounts to aggression.

The "Communist" danger was further enhanced by their unfair advantages. The Communists are able to "appeal directly to the masses," President Eisenhower complained. Our plans for "the masses" preclude any such appeal. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, in private conversation with his brother Alan, who headed

[8] John Lewis Gaddis, The Long Peace (Oxford, 1987), 10.

the CIA, deplored the Communist "ability to get control of mass movements," "something we have no capacity to duplicate." "The poor people are the ones they appeal to and they have always wanted to plunder the rich."[9] The same concerns extended to "the preferential option for the poor" of the Latin American bishops and other commitments to independent development or democracy — and also to such friends as Mussolini, Trujillo, Noriega, and Saddam Hussein when they forget their assigned role.

While the end of the Cold War frees the U.S. to exercise violence more readily than before, there are several factors that are likely to inhibit the resort to force. Among them are the successes of the past years in crushing popular nationalist and reform tendencies and the resulting demoralization of "the masses" who seek to "plunder the rich." In the light of these achievements, and the economic catastrophes of the past decade, the "threat of a good example" has been notably reduced. Limited forms of diversity and independence can be tolerated with less concern that they will lead to meaningful change. Control can be exercised by economic measures: structural adjustment, the IMF regimen, selective resort to free trade measures, and so forth. And although the narrow ideological constraints of elite Western culture protect us from these visions, Third World observers are quite capable of perceiving the savage retribution visited upon those who step on the toes of the master: Vietnam, Nicaragua, Iraq, indeed anyone who does not understand that "What We Say Goes," in the President's fine words.

Another inhibiting factor is that German-led Europe and Japan have their own priorities, which may not conform to those of the United States, though there is a shared interest in subduing Third World independence, and the internationalization of capital gives competition among national states a different cast than

[9] Eisenhower to Harriman, quoted in Richard H. Immerman, Diplomatic History (Summer 1990). John Foster Dulles, Telephone Call to Allen Dulles, June 19, 1958, "Minutes of telephone conversations of John Foster Dulles and Christian Herter," Eisenhower Library, Abilene KA.

short of abject capitulation to the masters, and national suicide with a friendly smile, counts as "rejectionism."

Decoding the rhetoric of political discourse, we see a picture that looks like this. The U.S. triumph in the Gulf has enabled it to establish the rejectionist position it has maintained in international isolation (apart from Israel). The peace process that the world has sought for many years, with surprising unanimity, can now be consigned to the ash heap of history. The U.S. can at last run its own conference, completely excluding its rivals Europe and Japan, always a major goal of U.S. diplomacy in the Middle East, as Kissinger observed. With the Soviet Union gone from the scene, Syria has accepted the fact that the U.S. rules the region alone and has abandoned what is called its "rejectionist stance" in U.S. rhetoric. In this case, the term refers to Syria's support for the international consensus calling for settlement on the internationally recognized (pre-June 1967) borders and full guarantees for all states in the region, including Israel and a new Palestinian state. Those bemused by mere history will recall that these were the terms of the 1976 Security Council resolution proposed by Syria, Jordan and Egypt, with PLO backing, but vetoed by the U.S. and therefore out of official history along with subsequent efforts in the same vein, such annoyances as Egyptian President Sadat's 1971 offer of a full peace treaty offering nothing to the Palestinians (rejected by Israel with U.S. backing), and much else that lacks ideological serviceability.

Another terminological device is the insistence that state-to-state negotiations are the acid test of sincere dedication to a just peace. Israel has always advocated exactly this, thus passing the test with flying colors, as we expect from the state that the New York Times describes as "the symbol of human decency." The reasoning behind this condition is transparent: it excludes the Palestinians from the start, and thus incorporates the strict rejectionism of the U.S. and Israel within the very framework of negotiations. Enlightened opinion in the U.S. therefore agrees that it is right and just. For essentially the same reason, the U.S.

ing to U.S. power, neither military force, nor wealth, nor anything else that serves to raise the creatures that crawl the earth to the rank of "people." In fact, they are a damned nuisance, stirring up "radical nationalist" (meaning, disobedient) tendencies in the Arab world.

Turning to "land for peace" and "territorial compromise," these terms refer to the traditional position of the Israeli Labor Party (known in the U.S. as "the doves"), which grants Israel control over the usable land and resources of the occupied territories but leaves the population stateless or under Jordanian administration, so that Israel does not have to confront "the demographic problem." The latter is another term of art, referring to the problem of too many Arabs in "the sovereign State of the Jewish people" in Israel or the diaspora, not the state of its citizens. Moderate Palestinian leaders regard these Labor Party proposals as "much worse than the Likud's autonomy plan" under Israeli sovereignty, Israeli dove Shmuel Toledano observes, agreeing that this judgment is "accurate."[21]

The U.S. has always preferred Labor Party rejectionism. It is more rational than the variety espoused by the governing Likud party, which has no real provision for the population of the occupied territories, except eventual "transfer" (meaning expulsion) in some manner. In the past, Palestinian refusal to agree to this U.S.-Israeli plan was condemned as "rejectionism," but the term has recently taken on an even more extreme twist to meet current contingencies. By now, the New York Times editors condemn Arafat's "rejectionism" in demanding that the U.S. allow the PLO to select a Palestinian delegation and guarantee that Israel will give up some occupied land — "the old rejectionist tunes of Middle Eastern politics," correspondent Judith Miller adds.[22] Anything

[21] Ha'aretz, March 8, 1991.

[22] Editorial, NYT, Aug. 8; Miller, NYT, Aug. 11, 1991.

in earlier periods. Furthermore, the domestic base for foreign adventures has eroded, both in public attitudes and economic base. Even with privileged access to the profits of Gulf oil production, the long-term prospects for a mercenary state running a global "protection racket," as advocated in sectors of the business press, are not too auspicious. It is, furthermore, not at all clear that a U.S.-dominated Western hemisphere trade bloc can effectively compete with the Japan's Asian "Co-prosperity sphere" and the German-dominated "New Order" in Central and Eastern Europe — the realization of many of the dreams of Japanese and German fascism, though in a far less virulent form, and much modified because of changes in the international economy.

The "Gulf War" in Retrospect

Two crucial events of the recent past are the accelerating breakup of the Soviet system and the Gulf conflict. With regard to the former, the U.S. is largely an observer. As a matter of course, the media must laud George Bush's consummate skill as a statesman and crisis manager, but the ritual exercise lacks spirit. It is plain enough that Washington has little impact on developments and no idea what to do as the Soviet system lurches from one crisis to another. The response to Saddam Hussein's aggression, in contrast, was a Washington operation throughout, with Britain loyally in tow, reflecting the U.S. insistence upon sole authority in the crucial energy-producing regions of the Middle East.

Now that the U.S. has achieved its major aims and there is no longer any need to terrify the domestic public and whip up jingoist hysteria, government-media rhetoric has subsided and it is easier to survey just what happened in the misnamed "Gulf War" — misnamed, because there never was a war at all, at least, if the

concept "war" involves two sides in combat, say, shooting at each other. That didn't happen in the Gulf.

The crisis began with the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait a year ago. There was some fighting, leaving hundreds killed according to Human Rights groups. That hardly qualifies as war. Rather, in terms of crimes against peace and against humanity, it falls roughly into the category of the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus, Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1978, and the U.S. invasion of Panama. In these terms it falls well short of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon, and cannot remotely be compared with the near-genocidal Indonesian invasion and annexation of East Timor, to mention only two cases of aggression that are still in progress, with continuing atrocities and with the crucial support of those who most passionately professed their outrage over Iraq's aggression.

During the subsequent months, Iraq was responsible for terrible crimes in Kuwait, with several thousand killed and many tortured. But that is not war; rather, state terrorism, of the kind familiar among U.S. clients.

The second phase of the conflict began with the U.S.-U.K. attack of January 15 (with marginal participation of others). This was slaughter, not war. Tactics were carefully designed to ensure that there would be virtually no combat.

The first component was an aerial attack on the civilian infrastructure, targeting power, sewage and water systems; that is, a form of biological warfare, designed to ensure long-term suffering and death among civilians so that the U.S would be in a good position to attain its political goals for the region. Since the casualties are victims of the United States, we will never have any real idea of the scale of these atrocities, any more than we have any serious idea of the civilian toll in the U.S. wars in Indochina. These are not proper topics for inquiry.

This component of the attack does not qualify as war: rather it is state terrorism on a colossal scale.

(Moshe Zak, senior editor of the mass-circulation daily Ma'ariv).[20] None of this makes particularly good copy. Best to leave it in oblivion.

The "strikingly unanimous view" supporting U.S. "pragmatism," then, includes offices in Washington and New York and London, and U.S. clients in the region, but leaves out a few others — including, notably, Iraqi democrats in exile and the Arab population of the region, insofar as they have any voice in the U.S. client states. Respectable opinion in the United States could not care less, in keeping with the traditional disparagement of the culturally deprived lower orders.

Marching Forward

The Gulf "war" having receded into history, we turn to new triumphs, the primary one in the region being James Baker's skillful exploitation of the "window of opportunity" afforded by the U.S. victory to advance the "peace process." His achievements, so the story goes, offer the first real opportunity to advance the long-sought U.S. goals of "territorial compromise" and "land for peace," now that the "rejectionists" are in disarray.

To understand what is happening, we have to begin by translating the rhetoric of political discourse into English. As is familiar, the term "peace process" refers to the process of achieving U.S. goals; it has nothing particularly to do with efforts to reach peace. The "rejectionists" are not those who reject the right to national self-determination of one or the other of the contending parties in the Israel-Palestine conflict; rather, only those who reject Israeli claims qualify as rejectionists; the indigenous population of the former Palestine lack any comparable rights because they offer noth-

[20] Ron Ben-Yishai, interview with Shomron, Ha'aretz, March 29; Shalom Yerushalmi, "We are all with Saddam," Kol Ha'ir, April 4; Jerusalem Post. April 4, 1991.

rael demonstrate the inveterate anti-Semitism of the world, and are therefore to be disregarded, just as World Court condemnations of the U.S. merely discredit this "hostile forum," as the New York Times and others explain.

It is true that there was some regional support for the U.S. stance apart from the friendly club of Arab tyrants. Turkish President Turgut Ozal doubtless nodded his head in agreement. He had made use of the opportunity offered by the Gulf crisis to step up attacks on his own Kurdish population, confident that the U.S. media would judiciously refrain from reporting the bombings of Kurdish villages and the hundreds of thousands of refugees in flight, trying to survive the cold winter in the mountains without aid or provisions. The reader of the European press, human rights reports, or this journal and a few other exotic sources, could learn something of the Winter 1990–91 exploits of the man who George Bush hailed as "a protector of peace" who has joined all of us who "stand up for civilized values around the world." But those who depend on the mass or prestige media were shielded from such improper thoughts.

The U.S. stance also received support in Israel, where many commentators agreed with retiring Chief-of-Staff Dan Shomron that it is preferable for Saddam Hussein to remain in power in Iraq. "We are all with Saddam," one headline read, reporting the view of Labor dove Avraham Burg that "in the present circumstances Saddam Hussein is better than any alternative" and that "a Shi'ite empire" from Iran to the territories would be harmful to Israel. Another leading dove, Ran Cohen of Ratz, also "wants Saddam to continue to rule, so that perhaps the hope for any internal order will be buried" and the Americans will stay in the region and impose a "compromise." Suppression of the Kurds is a welcome development, an influential right-wing commentator explained in the Jerusalem Post, because of "the latent ambition of Iran and Syria to exploit the Kurds and create a territorial, military, contiguity between Teheran and Damascus — a contiguity which embodies danger for Israel"

The second component of the U.S.-U.K. attack was the slaughter of Iraqi soldiers in the desert, largely unwilling Shi'ite and Kurdish conscripts it appears, hiding in holes in the sand or fleeing for their lives — a picture quite remote from the Pentagon disinformation relayed by the press about colossal fortifications, artillery powerful beyond our imagining, vast stocks of chemical and biological weapons at the ready, and so on. Pentagon and other sources give estimates in the range of 100,000 defenseless victims killed, about half during the air attack, half during the air-ground attack that followed. Again, this exercise does not qualify as war. In the words of a British observer of the U.S. conquest of the Philippines at the turn of the century, "This is not war; it is simply massacre and murderous butchery." The desert slaughter was a "turkey shoot," as some U.S. forces described it, borrowing the term used by their forebears butchering Filipinos[10] — one of those deeply-rooted themes of the culture that surfaces at appropriate moments, as if by reflex.

The goal of the attack on the civilian society has been made reasonably clear. In plain words, it was to hold the civilian population hostage to achieve a political end: to induce some military officer to overthrow Saddam and wield the "iron fist" as Saddam himself had done with U.S. support before he stepped out of line; any vicious thug will do as long as he shows proper obedience, unlike Saddam, who violated this principle — the only one that counts, as events once again demonstrate — in August 1991. State Department reasoning was outlined with admirable clarity by New York Times chief diplomatic correspondent Thomas Friedman. If the society suffers sufficient pain, Friedman explained, Iraqi generals may topple Mr. Hussein, "and then Washington would have the best of all worlds: an iron-fisted Iraqi junta without Saddam Hussein." The technique of punishing Iraqi civilians may thus succeed in restoring the happy days when Saddam's "iron fist…held Iraq together,

[10] Luzviminda Francisco and Jonathan Fast, Conspiracy for Empire (Quezon City, 1985), 302, 191.

much to the satisfaction of the American allies Turkey and Saudi Arabia," not to speak of the boss in Washington, who had no problem with the means employed.[11]

The operation of holding a civilian population hostage while tens of thousands die from starvation and disease raises only one problem: unreasonable soft-hearted folk may feel some discomfort at having "sat by and watched a country starve for political reasons," just what will happen, UNICEF director of public affairs Richard Reid predicted, unless Iraq is permitted to purchase "massive quantities of food" — though it is already far too late for the children under two, who have stopped growing for six or seven months because of severe malnutrition, we learn from his report in the Canadian press. But Bush's ex-pal may help us out of this dilemma. The Wall Street Journal observes that Iraq's "clumsy attempt to hide nuclear-bomb-making equipment from the U.N. may be a blessing in disguise, U.S. officials say. It assures that the allies [read: U.S. and U.K.] can keep economic sanctions in place to squeeze Saddam Hussein without mounting calls to end the penalties for humanitarian reasons."[12] With luck, then, this huge exercise in state terrorism may proceed unhampered by the bleeding hearts and PC left-fascists.

In keeping with its fabled dedication to international law and morality, the U.S. is naturally demanding that compensation to the victims of Iraq's crimes must have higher priority than any purchase of food that might be allowed — under U.N. (meaning U.S.) control, of course; a country that commits the crime of disobeying Washington has plainly lost any claim to sovereignty. While proclaiming this stern doctrine with suitable majesty, the Bush Administration was keeping the pressure on Nicaragua to force these miscreants, who committed the same unspeakable crime, to abandon their claims to reparations for a decade of U.S. terror and illegal

[11] NYT, July 7, 1991.

[12] Kathy Blair, Toronto Globe and Mail, June 17, 1991; WSJ, July 5, 1991.

attributing it to the traditional U.S. policy of "supporting dictatorships to maintain stability."[17]

The Egyptian reaction hardly comes as a surprise. Though one could learn little about the matter here, the "victory celebration" in Egypt had been "muted and totally official," correspondent Hani Shukrallah of the London Mideast Mirror reported from Cairo. Post-cease fire developments "seem to have intensifed the [popular] feelings of anger against the leading members of the anti-Iraq coalition," inspired as well by the report of the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights that "at least 200 Egyptians have been arrested in Kuwait and that many have been subjected to torture on legally unsubstantiated charges of collaboration." The Egyptian press had also bitterly condemned the U.S. conditions imposed on Iraq, a transparent effort to insure U.S.-Israeli military dominance, al-Ahram charged. enemy' than allies'," Shukrallah reported as the ground attack ended, particularly the poor and students, three of whom were killed by police in an anti-government demonstration. "Not in over a decade have Egyptians felt and expressed so intently their hostility to the U.S., Israel and the West," political scientist Ahmad Abdallah observed.[18]

Many Egyptians also expressed satisfaction when Scud missiles hit Israel.[19] Lacking Western enlightenment, they find it hard to understand why it is highly meritorious to demolish Iraq because of its failure to withdraw from Kuwait under the U.S. terms of unconditional surrender, while it is a reversion to Nazism to administer to Israel what amounts to a slap on the wrist, in comparison, for ignoring the order of the U.N. Security Council to withdraw from Lebanon (March 1978, and subsequently) and other condemnations of its terrorism and repression. Backward cultures fail to see what is so obvious to us: orders to Iraq are to be obeyed; orders to Is-

[17] Al-Ahram, April 9, 1991. Mideast Mirror, 10 April, 15 March, 1991.

[18] Mideast Mirror, 27 March, 26 March, 27 February, 1991.

[19] Personal correspondence, Egypt.

bipeds wanted them to win, but "serious people" did not. The "allied campaign against President Hussein brought the United States and its Arab coalition partners to a strikingly unanimous view," Cowell continues: "whatever the sins of the Iraqi leader, he offered the West and the region a better hope for his country's stability than did those who have suffered his repression."[16]

This version of the facts, the standard one, merits a few questions. To begin with, who are these "Arab coalition partners"? Answer: six are family dictatorships, established by the Anglo-American settlement to manage Gulf oil riches in the interests of the foreign masters, what the British imperial managers called an "Arab Facade" for the real rulers. The seventh is Syria's Hafez el-Assad, a minority-based tyrant and murderer who is indistinguishable from Saddam Hussein. The last of the coalition partners, Egypt, is the only one that could be called "a country." Though a tyranny, it has a degree of internal freedom.

We therefore naturally turn to the semi-official press in Egypt to verify the Times report of the "strikingly unanimous view." The article is datelined Damascus, April 10. The day before, Deputy Editor Salaheddin Hafez of Egypt's leading daily, al-Ahram, commented on Saddam's demolition of the rebels "under the umbrella of the Western alliance's forces." U.S. support for Saddam Hussein proved what Egypt had been saying all along, Hafez wrote. American rhetoric about "the savage beast, Saddam Hussein," was merely a cover for the true goals: to cut Iraq down to size and establish U.S. hegemony in the region. The West turned out to be in total agreement with the beast on the need to "block any progress and abort all hopes, however dim, for freedom or equality and for progress towards democracy," working in "collusion with Saddam himself" if necessary. Speaking abroad at the same time, Ahmad Chalabi bitterly condemned U.S. support for Saddam Hussein's repression,

[16] NYT, April 11, 1991.

economic warfare as mandated by the International Court of Justice. Nicaragua finally succumbed, a capitulation scarcely noticed by the media, mesmerized by Washington's lofty rhetoric about Iraq's responsibilities to compensate its victims.

As Third World observers have no difficulty in perceiving, the "ominous halo of hypocrisy" can rise beyond any imaginable level without posing a serious challenge for the cultural commissars of the West.

The third phase of the conflict began immediately after the ceasefire, as Iraqi elite units, who had been largely spared by the U.S. attack, proceeded to slaughter first the Shi'ites of the South and then the Kurds of the North, with the tacit support of the Commander-in-Chief, who had called upon Iraqis to rebel when that suited U.S. purposes, then went fishing when the "iron fist" struck.

Returning from a March 1991 fact-finding mission, Senate Foreign Relations Committee staff member Peter Galbraith reported that the Administration did not even respond to Saudi proposals to assist both Shi'ite and Kurdish rebels, and that the Iraqi military refrained from attacking the rebels until it had "a clear indication that the United States did not want the popular rebellion to succeed." A BBC investigation found that "several Iraqi generals made contact with the United States to sound out the likely American response if they took the highly dangerous step of planning a coup against Saddam," but received no support, concluding that "Washington had no interest in supporting revolution; that it would prefer Saddam Hussein to continue in office, rather than see groups of unknown insurgents take power." An Iraqi general who escaped to Saudi Arabia told the BBC that "he and his men had repeatedly asked the American forces for weapons, ammunition and food to help them carry on the fight against Saddam's forces." Each request was refused. As his forces fell back towards U.S.-U.K. positions, the Americans blew up an Iraqi arms dump to prevent them from obtaining arms, and then "disarmed the rebels" (John Simpson). Reporting from northern Iraq, ABC correspondent Charles Glass described

how "Republican Guards, supported by regular army brigades, mercilessly shelled Kurdish-held areas with Katyusha multiple rocket launchers, helicopter gunships and heavy artillery," while journalists observing the slaughter listened to Gen. Schwartzkopf boasting to his radio audience that "We had destroyed the Republican Guard as a militarily effective force" and eliminated the military use of helicopters.[13]

This is not quite the stuff of which heroes are fashioned, so the story was finessed at home, though it could not be totally ignored, particularly the attack on the Kurds, with their Aryan features and origins; the Shi'ites, who appear to have suffered even worse atrocities right under the gaze of Stormin' Norman, raised fewer problems, being mere Arabs. Again, this slaughter hardly qualifies as war.

In the most careful analysis currently available, the Greenpeace International Military Research Group estimates total Kuwaiti casualties at 2–5,000; and Iraqi civilian casualties at 5–15,000 during the air attack, unknown during the ground attack, 20–40,000 during the civil conflict, perhaps another 50,000 civilian deaths from April through July along with another 125,000 deaths among Shi'ite and Kurdish refugees.[14]

In brief, from August 1990 through July 1991, there was little that could qualify as "war." Rather, there was a brutal Iraqi takeover of Kuwait followed by various forms of slaughter and state terrorism, the scale corresponding roughly to the means of violence in the hands of the perpetrators, and their impunity. The distinction between war, on the one hand, and slaughter and state terrorism, on the other, is one that should be observed.

[13] Spectator (London), Aug. 10, April 13, 1991.

[14] Greenpeace press release, July 23, 1991; Environet.

"The Best of all Worlds"

Despite its substantial victory, Washington has not yet achieved "the best of all worlds," as Friedman observes, because no suitable clone of the Beast of Baghdad has yet emerged to serve the interests of the U.S. and its regional allies. Needless to say, not everyone shares the Washington-media conception of "the best of all worlds." Well after the hostilities ended, the Wall Street Journal, to its credit, broke ranks and offered space to a spokesman for the Iraqi democratic opposition, London-based banker Ahmad Chalabi. He described the outcome as "the worst of all possible worlds" for the Iraqi people, whose tragedy is "awesome."[15] From the perspective of Iraqi democrats, remote from that of Washington and New York, restoration of the "iron fist" would not be "the best of all worlds."

The U.S. propaganda system did face a certain problem as the Bush administration lent its support to Saddam's crushing of the internal opposition. The task was the usual one: To portray Washington's stance, no matter how atrocious, in a favorable light. That was not easy, particularly after months of ranting about George Bush's magnificent show of principle and supreme courage in facing down the reincarnation of Attila the Hun just as he was about to take over the world. But the transition was quick, smooth, and impressive. True, few can approach our devotion to the most august principles. But our moral purity is tempered with an understanding of the need for "pragmatism" and "stability," useful concepts that translate as "Doing what we choose."

In a typical example of the genre, New York Times Middle East correspondent Alan Cowell attributed the failure of the rebels to the fact that "very few people outside Iraq wanted them to win." Note that the concept "people" is used here in the conventional Orwellian sense, meaning: "people who count"; many featherless

[15] WSJ, April 8, 1991.