

The war bill

Victory shouldn't eclipse domestic needs

In 1975, a 25-year-old National Security Council document called NSC-68 was accidentally released and published. The document described a program developed by Harry Truman in 1950 to expand the U.S. military. At the time, the country was in a post-World War II economic slide.

The idea was to exploit war, or at least the fear of war, to bolster America's export and production of military hardware. Truman wanted the military-based economy of World War II to continue.

The American public initially didn't go for the idea. Then Americans were told by the Truman administration about a place called Korea. They also were told about something called the Domino Theory.

Then they were told about the Cold War, and by 1990, 26 percent of the U.S. budget was still in some way related to national security.

By the late 1980s, the Soviet Union and its international proletarian revolution was pretty much a memory. A cease-fire in The Cold War was declared, and people at home started calling for a "peace dividend" and a reconstruction of America's crumbling infrastructure.

In 1990, the United States fell into recession.

On July 25, 1990, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, told the president of Iraq — who was threatening an invasion of a small neighboring country — that the U.S. had "no opinion" on Iraqi border disputes.

Then Americans were told about a place called Kuwait. They also were told about things called naked aggression and the New World Order.

Now, in 1991, the U.S. military once again is a source of pride. High-tech and the troops won big.

And the American public is going to be a lot more willing to financially support a winner, even during times of economic hardship at home.

Twenty-six percent of the federal budget goes to the military. The people who profit from that 26 percent surely will use the gulf war as justification for that spending. Multibillion-dollar defense contracts, they can say, save American lives and crush ruthless, expansionistic dictators.

Since the designing of NSC-68, this country's military complex has siphoned needed money and manpower from domestic programs and non-military industries. The Persian Gulf war may be another end run from a peacetime economy.

But it's not necessary to believe that the Soviets and Saddam were pawns to divert public attention from domestic problems and to justify our huge military complex. It is only necessary that Americans quickly turn their attention back to problems at home.

Just like before the war, homelessness, drugs and every other domestic issue still exist, as does the inability of U.S. industry to compete on foreign markets. Victory in Kuwait can't change these facts, it can only hide them.

— B.N.

Rodeos, wars not equivalent

Can you mix issues as well as Fran Thompson (DN, Feb. 20)? Comparing Lincoln's rodeo to the war in the Persian Gulf is like comparing Coca-Cola to 10w40. The only thing that the rodeo animals have in common with the humans fighting the war is the fact that they are mammals. The animals think differently, act differently and cannot organize an armed military group. Imagine if they could. Would it be something like Harry Holstein's armed herd against the abominable Horses!! The history of the planet would be tremendously different if animals were equal to humans. The basic fact is they are not, and they must be treated with different rules of conduct and behavior than humans.

Granted, animals are sentient; they can think. However, their level of intelligence is not to the point where they can reason or plan beyond a few minutes in advance. They are unable to launch an organized military action (some dog species approach military action with their pack hunting, but this is mainly for more effective hunting, not the gaining of territory). Most of their time is spent searching for food. Some of their behavior is learned; some behavior is instinctive. This varies from species to species with the greatest intellect being in humans.

You may say that humans with their great intellect should look out for the welfare of the animals of the earth. You are absolutely correct. We should and are, in most cases, responsible for these lesser creatures. But they are still lesser creatures. No ani-

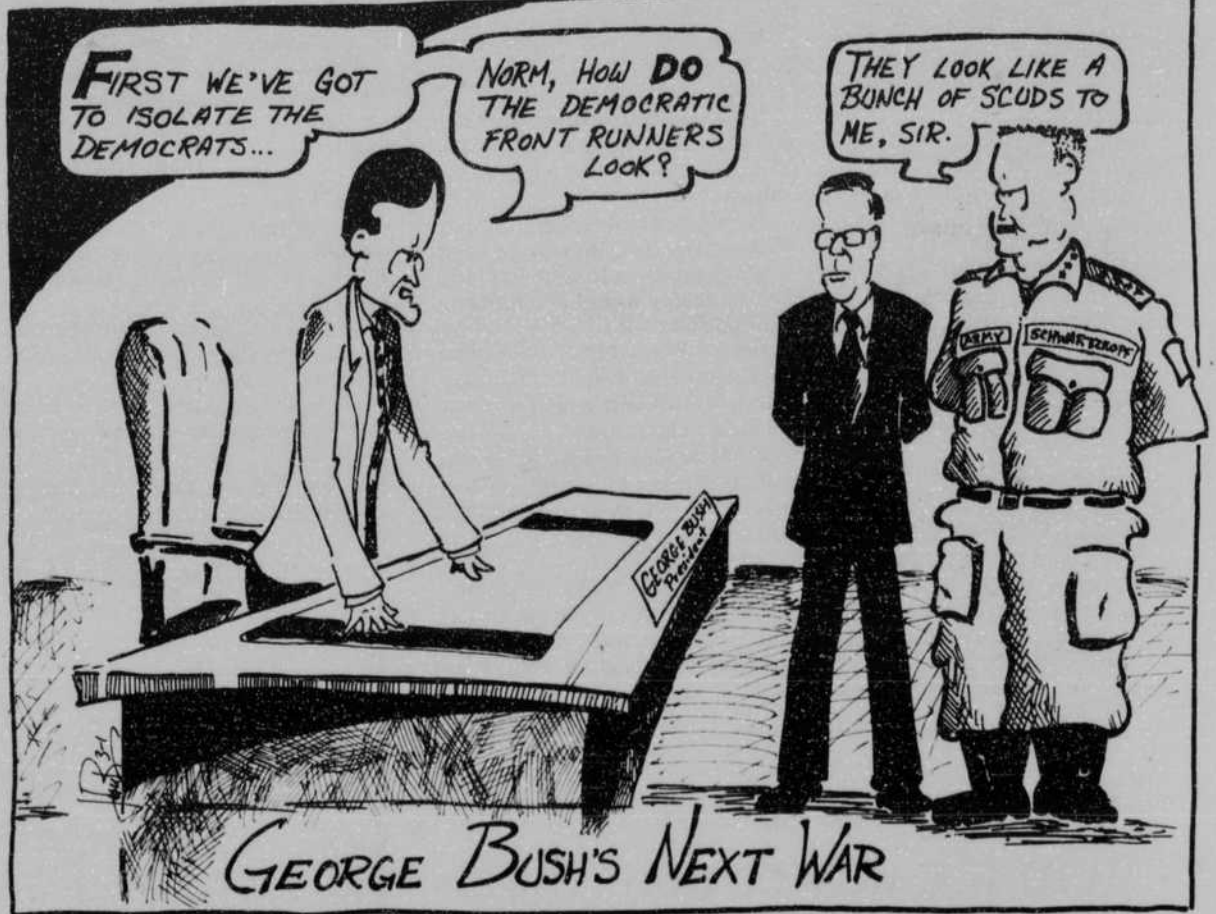
mal approaches humans in the ability to reason and control their environment. To equate any animal with any human is an error of judgment.

Who are the people that support radical acts for the "freedom" of animals? Don't they realize that they are better off under the care of humans than in the wild? Nature is a cold and cruel master. Animal populations are maintained depending upon the amount of food that is available. Too much food one year means that more individuals can be born and may survive. This increased number of individuals is more vulnerable to the ravages of disease because of the increased possibility of less food for the larger number of individuals the next year. What happens to this large herd? They starve to death; disease attacks the individuals weakened by lack of food and they die. Sometimes the disease brought in by this herd of animals infects other species of animals in the immediate area and they die.

Animals controlled by humans are watched regularly, fed regularly and treated when ill, and populations are held at static levels to prevent major number fluctuations and the associated die-offs.

In closing, let me suggest to animal right supporters to clean your own house first. Help the jobless, homeless person that lives in a box in an alley somewhere. Help your species to better itself, then move on to other species.

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DAVID DALTON

Cease-fire prompts new conflicts

Now that the fighting is over, the war in the Persian Gulf should really get interesting.

Retaking Kuwait was just the first act, and it ended with a whopper of a cliffhanger: How will the allies pull out of the region without causing more problems than they came to solve?

It won't be easy, because "pulling out" doesn't mean we tip our hats and bid the Arab world adieu. When we pull out, you can be sure there'll be traces of the New World Order left behind.

This new order thing has been vague from the beginning, as are the president's long-term goals in Iraq. But a few objectives seem likely.

After the mopping up is finished, forces certainly will remain in the area until Iraq complies with Bush's three mandates and whatever else is required to effect an acceptable normality. This probably means deposing Saddam Hussein.

But with Kuwait effectively liberated and Iraq effectively incapacitated, allied troops will be an increasingly uncomfortable presence in the Middle East.

And the level of tension may be worsened by the fact that the problem in need of solution is far more complex than it is commonly given credit for.

It boils down to an effort to repel a power grab by Saddam in which oil and the national sovereignty of Kuwait only play a part.

The reason is President Bush's decision that possession of Kuwait and its oil amounted to too much power for Saddam.

What the United States wants is a balance of power in the Middle East suitable to U.S. interests. If Saddam had been allowed to keep Kuwait, it would have tipped the scale too far in his favor. If Saddam were allowed to expand his sphere of influence both in terms of geography and natural resources, it would have effectively reduced the influence of U.S. allies in the area. Enough so, it seems, to warrant drastic measures in the eyes of our leaders.

Henry Kissinger, for one, made this comment about a month ago: "We need to be able to count on a balance of power, both on a global



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and regional scale . . . This is why in the final analysis all the so-called diplomatic options would have aggravated the issue."

The principle is the same as that of containment, so emphasized in the Cold War years. In various Third World countries the United States proved, by installing dictatorships, that spreading democracy was not as important as stopping the spread of communism. Not a question of morality as much as a question of power.

Actually, morality is often sacrificed when power is at stake. Viable options are rejected in order to maintain alliances.

During the gulf war, linkage of a settlement to the Palestinian issue was taboo in the White House. And why? It would have been like granting concessions to Iraq, or like striking deals with terrorists.

And more importantly, it would

offend Israel. Israel hasn't always been the best friend money can buy, but in the Middle East it is about our only friend. And preserving this bond takes precedence over other matters.

Then there's Kuwait. George Will wrote in a column that when we reestablish the Kuwaiti government, we should give it an upgrade as well — to a democracy.

Bush, on the other hand, seems committed to reinserting the old regime down to the last iota.

Regardless of how well informed you may believe Will's commentary to be, it appears certain that such hopes will not be realized.

In fact, Iraq has a better chance of going democratic than Kuwait does. We already have a foothold in Kuwait without messing with its government.

If Bush insists that every letter of his conditions be met, and especially if he is determined to oust Hussein, the United States may again have to resort to a ground assault to achieve its objectives.

Given the past record of both sides, it doesn't seem unlikely that a U.S. victory can be achieved, though with the troop concentration in Baghdad and the presumed loyalty of those forces, the cost in lives will be significantly higher.

But it is the political consequences that may be the most daunting. Already there is wavering of support for the allied attacks from government officials in France and the Soviet Union. Bush may not be equal to rallying world opinion if the world sees him as a flogger of a dead horse.

The problem is enormous. Bush has stated his goal of achieving a lasting peace in the region. But if his vision of the future is based on maintaining existing spheres of power, the resulting inequities will probably just spell more of the same.

Injustices must be put right, but not only those of our enemies. If we divide the world into nations toward whom we can extend compromise and those we can't, then we have made a world that is assured of conflict.

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