

A chance to demilitarize the US economy

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The Gulf crisis contains the danger of both a destructive war and a derailment of the development of American domestic and foreign policy to take the country beyond the Cold War. The American people have a major stake in supporting a political and not a military resolution of the Gulf crisis. What is at issue is not only the avoidance of war but also the chance to set in motion the demilitarization of the American economy and the use of a growing peace dividend.

America has no post-Cold War program, no international policies apart from wielding armed force, no national economic program apart from presiding over further economic decay at home, and no policy in the Middle East that is not based on direct use of US armed force, military proxies, and massive arms transfers. These only produce more war, more instability and less security for all involved. Every reason for rejecting the Iraqi seizure of Kuwait applies equally to rejecting the Cold War policy system that armed Iraq for this aggression in the first place. Throughout the Cold War, the Soviet Union and the US, with collaboration by France, Brazil, China, West Germany and others, armed Iraq to its present status - each supplier attempting to score a military and political advantage during the Cold War contest. This competition led to toleration of the internal and external excesses of Third World regimes such as Iraq, which took advantage of Cold War rivalries.

That is why other possible after-shocks from the Cold War rivalry must be considered in the response to the Gulf crisis. Political and allied efforts to settle the Gulf crisis should be designed to set a powerful precedent for resolving similar crises. This will require giving major strength to United Nations' dispute-resolving and military peace-keeping institutions. Though well concealed by top government officials, there are means for resolving a set of Middle East crisis points by methods that also would further the task of post-Cold War rebuilding of American society, as well as promoting international demilitarization.

tion and peace-keeping tasks.

The US, as a byproduct of its long Cold War contest, has participated in creating a Frankenstein monster in Iraq. Therefore, a key issue is the nature of the US policy system that equips governments to

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carry out wars of aggression. Going beyond the Cold War requires a systematic approach to internationally agreed disarmament with parallel reduction of military budgets. Within such a framework, it becomes possible to damp down and finally terminate the international traffic in arms.

To prepare for international agreements for demilitarization, the US must have a systematic economic conversion policy. This will make possible a peace dividend for the repair of underdevelopment in the US and for supporting aid to populations too impoverished to help themselves.

Americans need to recognize how the Soviet economy was ruined by using up the civilian industry in the service of its war economy. There is a clear signal for the US. We are on the same track of civilian industrial and infrastructure decay that is propelled by a long-enduring war economy. A peace dividend for economic reconstruction is now an American responsibility that we dare not evade with fear-mongering about the Iraqi war machine.

The US must also develop and implement a domestic energy policy to make this country less of an oil glutton, and thereby less dependent on the importation of petroleum

from the Middle East or any place. The policy would also be the US more energy-efficient methods that include energy conservation and co-generation, energy from renewable fuel (like ethanol from biomass and waste), direct solar-energy applications, electrified public transportation.

Americans must be alerted to hazardous moral, political and economic consequences of maintaining war economy now directed toward armed conflict in Third World. We should also be aware of the possibilities that can be obtained following the Cold War not a new set of military adventures with demilitarization and reconstruction.

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THE BOSTON GLOBE, October 8, 1990

A political assembly designed to address the Iraq-Kuwait issue should agree on a set of principles and procedures that could be applied to other dispute settlements.

These could include territorial demilitarization, compensation for affected people, and the phasing in and out of UN peace-keeping forces. Consensus on such ideas will make it more feasible to negotiate and execute the territorial and other concessions required.

This approach to the Gulf crisis would strengthen the durable dispute-settling and peace-keeping institutions of the UN. The US government has a special responsibility. By being \$500 trillion in arrears in its regular UN payments and by failing to pay its share of UN peace-keeping expenses, the US has played a major part in restricting the capability of the UN for dispute-resolu-