

World opinion outraged by Bush's Persian Gulf war atrocity

The following statements and commentaries are a sampling of the revulsion from around the globe to Bush's Gulf war.

Australia

Senator Janet Powell, leader of the Australian Democrats, speaking at a special parliamentary debate on the war on Jan. 21:

It defies belief that we are as a nation again at war. As we debate this motion, bombs with a total explosive power exceeding the Hiroshima nuclear weapon are being dropped daily on Iraq and Kuwait. . . . There is a whole range of weapons with obscene potential for destruction being unleashed on vast numbers in the name of peace and the construction of a new world order. This is a war which need not be happening; this is a war which should not be happening, and this is a war in which Australia should not be involved. . . .

Not only has truth yet again been the first casualty of war, but also we are now becoming aware that this war will cause tens of thousands—perhaps hundreds of thousands—of deaths. There will be massive damage incurred by the civilian infrastructure of Iraq, Kuwait, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and possibly a number of other nations in the region. There will be enormous damage, and Senator Evans [the foreign minister] himself has noted the likelihood that Kuwait City will be destroyed once the ground war moves there. . . .

The resentment arising from this resource war—and, make no mistake about it, that is what this war is—has enormous and ominous implications for the so-called new world order which President Bush and Prime Minister [Bob] Hawke appear so enamoured of. . . . The conflagration throughout the Middle East has only just begun.

Asia

Asad Zaidi, in Business and Political Observer, Delhi, India, Jan. 28:

Iraq is merely the first casualty of a process, which, if not halted, is going to put an end to the gains of decolonization and the independent, self-reliant strategies of development in the formerly colonized world, including countries like China and India. The Iraq issue did not develop with the Iraqi

annexation of Kuwait. It happened long before that. The West wanted to destroy Iraq because of its military might and to get on the way with forming a greater Israel. This is not to say that the present war is an attempt to redive the world or that the situation today is an exact replica of the situations that prevailed between the two world wars, but there is a definite crisis in the international economic order today with the United States facing severe recession, Japan making rapid economic gains, reunification of Germany causing the portending of a greater Germany resurgence, the U.S.S.R. in desperate economic crisis, and Great Britain trying hard to get a better deal for itself in Europe after the long night of Thatcherite exclusionism. . . .

The West Asian crisis is regarded by the parties concerned as a means for redefining the terms, nature, and reach of the economic rights and the license that they will enjoy in the new era. The European countries cannot afford to let the United States gather all advantages. The U.S. cannot afford to let Europe and Japan forge ahead. The minor imperialist countries are also very much part of the conflict. . . . In the larger sense, the current war is, therefore, an expression of the necessity felt by the major participants in the Western alliance to determine their status vis-à-vis each other—an exercise difficult to carry out through a roundtable conference or through a direct conflict among themselves. In keeping with the tradition of the post-World War II period, the cost of this realignment of status must be paid by the Third World.

Jordan Times editorial, Jordan, Jan. 25:

Much hope was pinned during the run-up of the Gulf crisis to the explosion of the war on Jan. 16 that the European countries, particularly France and Italy, would somehow break free from the American-inspired move toward the war option and would have the guts to stand up and tell Washington that the use of force was not the answer to the problem. As it turned out, the hopes were ill-founded. . . . These two countries . . . are now equal partners in the massive assault against Iraq.

While one can understand the European approach, which rules out the acquisition of territory by force . . . it is indeed very difficult to comprehend the apparent vengeance with which the European allies in the anti-Iraq coalition are bat-

tering an Arab country. If that is not enough, then one only has to look at some of the gleeful war communiqués issued from Paris, Rome, and London. War is war indeed, but is it war that is being orchestrated against Iraq today? Isn't it aimed at the annihilation of a nation?

It may be naive at this point to issue a fresh reminder to the Europeans that they would indeed be the net loser in the bargain if the U.S. were to achieve its strategic, military, and economic objectives in the Middle East: that of acquiring total domination of Arab oil resources, output, and international prices as well as doing away with Arab military power. . . .

No matter which way the Gulf war turns out, the wounds inflicted by the Europeans on the Arab mind and heart will not be easily healed. And the Arabs do not have a short memory.

Jomhuri Ye Eslami, Iranian daily, Jan. 30:

Today the liberation of Kuwait has completely lost its priority and has become a side issue. At the top of the agenda now are the extensive killing of civilians and the violent bombardment of residential areas in Iraq, the destruction and annihilation of the Iraqi infrastructure and economic structure, the destruction and complete annihilation of the Iraqi Armed Forces, and finally the ousting of the Baghdad regime and the installation of a puppet regime in its place. . . . The leaders of the United States and the Pentagon military should be tried and condemned for these horrible crimes.

This is not a war against Saddam. Today the violent crimes of the NATO armies against the oppressed people of Iraq are so clearly and painfully felt that it seems the Iraqi leaders obviously intend to take advantage of the situation to justify themselves.

Teheran Times, Iranian government newspaper, editorial, Jan. 20:

Turkey's de facto participation in the war against Iraq indicates a dangerous and uncertain future of the region. . . . During the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war, Ankara exploited the situation in the service of their interests as much as they could and took no measures to end the conflict. . . . If Turkey covets Iraqi territory, it has to know that no change in the geopolitical map of the region will be accepted by Teheran.

Europe

William Pfaff, writing in the Feb. 1 International Herald Tribune, syndicated by the Los Angeles Times:

PARIS—President George Bush was assured by his military advisers that Iraq would collapse within two days of the start of bombing two weeks ago. I have that from a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Bush was told

by President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt that the war would be over in two weeks. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia told him "two hours."

The public would seem to have been wiser. People wanted to believe that the war could be won overnight with laser weapons. But from the start there has been evidence of an inarticulate public dread that the United States faced exactly what the White House now says it does face: ground combat and a long war.

People still do not seem to understand that the long-war scenario is an optimistic scenario, in that it foresees eventual success for the coalition, with the possibility of a constructive political aftermath. . . .

Let me suggest what the seriously pessimistic scenarios could look like:

Stalemate and failure: The U.S.-led ground offensive bogs down. Summer heat makes fighting all but impossible. Support for the war fades. Arab or European mediation gets some response from Saddam. We are forced to settle. Saddam survives.

Defeat: Exocet missiles take out a marine landing ship with all aboard. The coalition's ground invasion force is blunted by Iraqi defenses, with much blood-letting. . . .

General war in the region: Israel attacks on the ground to clear out the Scud missile sites, going through Jordan. Iran comes in the war on Iraq's side. Turkey becomes involved. Turmoil in Egypt, the Maghreb, and elsewhere. This is not in the least unlikely.

Nuclear war: Iraq makes a nuclear, chemical, or biological strike on Israel or the coalition forces. . . . U.S. and/or Israeli public opinion demands and gets a nuclear retaliation. General world uproar.

But I won't go on. I'm sure that readers would rather not read more.

Sunday Express, Great Britain, Feb. 3:

. . . when the history of the Gulf War comes to be written, this battle for a dusty Saudi resort, a ghost town 12 miles south of the Kuwait border that used to house 20,000 people, will merit more than a general's footnote. For all their snorts of derision, and in spite of a successful counterattack, the Allied commanders cannot hide from the fact that Saddam Hussein highlighted their complacency with an embarrassing, if suicidal, thrust south that caused red faces in Riyadh HQ and anger in the Saudi government. . . . The Iraqi leader doesn't follow the West Point or Sandhurst rule book. He is a street fighter.

Edward Heath, former British prime minister, Feb. 1:

. . . we are back in the 14th century with the Crusades . . . we are becoming mercenaries. We are just being paid by other people to go and fight.

Arthur Schlesinger, *former adviser to President Kennedy*, interview in the French weekly *Nouvel Observateur*, Jan. 31-Feb. 6:

. . . I doubt that the United States, which, unlike Britain or France has no common history with this part of the world, has the desire or capacity to replace the defunct Ottoman Empire. . . .

There remains the will to construct a new international order, founded on two pillars (the U.S.S.R. and the United States, the two superpowers) and a reanimated United Nations. To which one can only respond that the U.N. would have emerged stronger, if it had succeeded in resolving the problem of Kuwait only by virtue of an economic embargo against Iraq, instead of serving as a facade and international cover for a conflict that is essentially American. With its array of massive acts of destruction, the war risks . . . discrediting for a long time this mechanism of collective protection. . . .

In 1962, the installing of Soviet missiles in Cuba meant a direct threat for the United States. The Gulf crisis does not represent a direct threat for America. In 1962, negotiations took place at the height of the crisis. Kennedy said that while it was vital that one not negotiate while one is seized by fear, it was necessary just the same not to have fear of negotiating. In Geneva, during the meeting between James Baker and Tariq Aziz, Baker put forward as a precondition, the unconditional surrender of Iraq.

Africa

L'Opinion, *Moroccan daily*, Feb. 2:

In 476, Rome fell to the Germanic tribes. This was the end of the Roman Empire and the beginning of the barbarian era. Since then, the barbarians, strong by their violence, their number, and their will to conquest, ignoring all laws, have not stopped extending their domination by iron and by fire. . . .

[Bush's new international order] was a hoax. The images of premeditated genocide of 18 million people, programmed and executed minutely by the West, will help people remember . . . that the West has remained barbarian.

Tunisian Parliament resolution, passed Jan. 30:

[The parliament expresses] solidarity with the people of Iraq which is maintaining resistance against the forces of destruction. . . . The cruel attacks indicate an extension of the war threater with the aim of destroying the human potential of the Arab nation.

Algerian Support Committee for the Iraqi People, in *El Moujahid*, *Algeria*, Feb. 5:

. . . Beyond Arab and Muslim nations, all people of the Third World will have to react in the face of a slaughter generated by a conflict which doesn't oppose either the occidental "good" to the Arab or Muslim "evil," according to Bush's version, nor the Cross to the Crescent, but on one side, peoples who have decided to build their future in full independence, and on the other side, powers of oppression and domination which still try to share the world between themselves. . . .

Ibero-America

El Espectador, *Colombian daily*, Jan. 27, reprinting *Antonio Caballero from Spanish magazine Cambio* 16:

This war which just broke out, irreparable and terrible . . . was not avoided because it is Bush's war and Bush needs it. Once a year to demonstrate that he is no wimp, George Bush needs to unleash a war. Last year, it was Panama's turn—and democracy, morality, justice, decency, and the universal campaign against drug trafficking were invoked. Three thousand dead, a neighborhood turned to ashes, thousands of refugees in tents, a small country's economy was devastated to its foundations. One prisoner. This time Iraq is the main course. And perhaps there will also be a prisoner: Saddam Hussein. But the deaths will be hundreds of thousands and the whole Middle East will be incinerated and scrambled for many years and all the region's regimes—hard or soft, friends or foes of George Bush—will begin to crumble like houses of cards and the world economy will suffer an unpredictable oil price shock.

Eduardo Galeano, *commentary in La República*, *Lima, Peru*, Feb. 1:

Why war? To prove the right of invasion is a privilege of the great powers and that Hussein could not do to Kuwait what Bush did to Panama? So that the Soviet Army could mow down Lithuanians and Latvians with impunity? So that Israel could seek doing to the Palestinians something too similar to what Hitler did to the Jews? So that it were clear that oil can't be touched? . . . Who has sold mankind's destiny to a fistful of crazy, greedy killers?

La Jornada, *Mexican daily paper*, Jan. 31:

The U.S. government has anointed itself not only as policeman, but also as legislator and as judge of all nations. . . . The most outrageous evidence of this new world order, as Bush likes to call the vast planetary impunity conquered in recent months by the state over which he presides, is the program of destruction of Iraq, in whose planning the European governments—including the Soviet Union—participated with the status of waning subsidiary powers.