

A Call for War Avoidance

Patriotic Americans, and others around the world, would do well to heed the central message of *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary of War*, the just-released book by former Defense Secretary, and longtime public servant, Robert Gates. From Gates' own words, the purpose of this book seems clear: Seeing the world on the verge of total war, Gates is yelling, "Stop!"

Gates' previews of the book make this point unmistakably.

In his Jan. 7 op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal*, he wrote:

"Until becoming secretary of defense, my exposure to war and those who fought it had come from antiseptic offices at the White House and CIA. Serving as secretary of defense made the abstract real, the antiseptic bloody and horrible. I saw up close the cost in lives ruined and lives lost.

"Wars are a lot easier to get into than out of. Those who ask about exit strategies or question what will happen if assumptions prove wrong are rarely welcome at the conference table when the fire-breathers are demanding that we strike as they did when advocating invading Iraq, intervening in Libya and Syria, or bombing Iran's nuclear sites. But in recent decades, presidents confronted with tough problems abroad have too often been too quick to reach for a gun. Our foreign and national security policy has become too militarized, the use of force too easy for presidents.

"Today, too many ideologues call for U.S. force as the first option rather than a last resort. On the left, we hear about the 'responsibility to protect' civilians to justify military intervention in Libya, Syria, Sudan and elsewhere. On the right, the failure to strike Syria or Iran is deemed an abdication of U.S. leadership. And so the rest of the world sees the U.S. as a militaristic country quick to launch

planes, cruise missiles and drones deep into sovereign countries or ungoverned spaces. There are limits to what even the strongest and greatest nation on Earth can do and not every outrage, act of aggression, oppression or crisis should elicit a U.S. military response."

And again, in a Jan. 13 interview with National Public Radio, in response to a question as to why publish the book now:

"The reality is if you look at the book as a total-ity, it's about war, it's about getting into wars, how you get out of wars, about the risks of launching military operations, whether it's in Libya or Syria or Iran. It's about dealing with China. It's about relations between the President and his senior military. It's about defense reform and how we ought to be spending our defense dollars. It's about the role of the Congress in all of this, and the impact of the dysfunction in Congress in all of these areas.

"These are all contemporary issues, and having worked for eight Presidents and being a historian, I felt I had a unique perspective. And these issues are with us today. *These are not issues that can wait to be written about in 2017.* And so that's the reason that I decided to go forward with the book" (emphasis added).

Lyndon LaRouche has put the issue more directly, emphasizing that the world stands at the brink of a war of extinction, if the current imperial system which controls the United States and NATO is not dumped. War must be ruled out, he says, and international agreements for long-term cooperation put into place.

Former Secretary Gates, a leading representative of the patriotic institutions of the U.S., has put the issue of unnecessary war on the table. LaRouche has provided the solution we must take.