

WAR QUESTIONS

HON NEWS

WAR ISSUE

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Arnold Toynbee said all wars are fought over land. This is a proposition that doesn't ring strange to Georgist ears. It certainly is amply demonstrated by Desert Storm.

So, now we can rest easy in contemplation of a long peace.

Yet in the Gulf, the Syrians are still armed to the teeth, as is Israel. Iran is busy breeding another generation of martyrs - cannonfodder for the next jihad. Further away is an anything but peaceful Kadafi who, these days, is known principally because everytime we come across it, his name is spelled differently. In these places there is a lot of possible action.

And there is Iraq, which still has 500,000 relatively untouched soldiers in its northern forces. Perhaps Saddam will soon be sitting across the tea table from Kadafi; or rooming in the Casbah; or maybe he will still holding the fort in Bagdad. If he is still there, what will we do with him. Even the most pacific liberal seems to want him assassinated - as the easiest solution.

Question : Is Saddam the problem - or a symptom of a deeper problem, which if allowed to fester, will lead to future trouble.

Across northern Africa are a bunch of problems, in which the supply of food is a political, not an economic issue. Ethiopia, Somalia, the Sudan are a mess of fighting fragments - mostly Marxists beating up Marxists. Not too much of threat to those outside the countries. Another Mahdi might unite them all - but, at the moment, it looks as if they'll simply continue to kill each other.

Question : What do we do do feed and quieten the unfortunate people of the area - or should we do nothing?

Before leaving Africa we should note that of 51 countries, some 47 are under military or single man rule. In South Africa everyone

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has a vote - except the blacks. As a matter of interest, for 75 years before the Boer War black people did have the vote. When the Boers proved too tough, the British agreed as part of the peace agreement that the vote should be taken from the blacks.

Is the franchise important to keeping the peace? Georgists might argue that economic freedom is more important than political freedom; that all you can do with the vote is to limit your existing freedom. But, perhaps the vote has a cosmetic effect on unrest. It hides potential aggression. Quite cynically, it might be argued that people should be given the vote to keep them quiet.

A poll in early January showed Americans vastly approved of the war. Then they were asked 'would you approve of the war if it meant 100 Americans would die', a majority said no. 'If a thousand would die?' enthusiasm died. Yet, practically everyone approved 'a war'.

Question : Can we rely on 'democracies' not to instigate war.

Question : In an Iraqi democracy, would Iraqis have voted against war if they felt they could influence the decision. Or, would they be like us - influenced by politicians and newspapers?

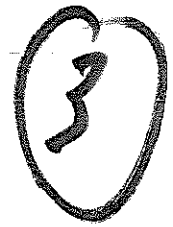
If the population of a warring country does not stop the war, are they responsible for it. If they don't vote against war - are they sanctioning it - or at least sanctioning anything their leaders do? And if they don't have a vote, are they sanctioning by inaction. In other words, is there no such thing as an innocent civilian?

Question : Given the above, does the military have cause to bomb anyone, in cities, in hospitals - even baby food factories - for no-one is innocent?

I began by saying that all wars are really fought over land.

So, what about the West Bank? Dare the Palestinians be given an Israeli vote? Would it keep them quiet? In any event, the West

Bank should obviously be returned to the Palestinians, or back to Jordan which is Palestinian to the core. You'll remember that the Jordanians were cheering the Israeli SCUDS. There is no love to spare across the West Bank. Yet, the problem can be quickly solved by returning the area.



Unless you are an Israeli. Take a look at Israel without the West Bank. It has the wasp waisted look of a twenties' flapper. If I was an Israeli, I'd say to heck with giving it back. We stole it fair and square.

Question : Must the West Bank be given back to the Palestinians?

Iraq is bits and pieces with a minority cadre ruling the majority. yet it is dictatorially stable. But some envious eyes will be searching out territory. The Kurds in the north - a sizable fraction - once were Turkish. They were the people who suffered attack from gas. No love is lost between them and Saddam. Turkey would love that bit of Iraq. Will they take it? What might Iran have eyes on - or Syria?

Question : Should Iraq be allowed to break up - or be viewed as a necessary lynch pin in a stable Mid-East?

Then there is the large oil field that straddles the Iraqi-Kuwait border. Both countries pumped the same field. Perhaps Kuwait should get the whole field as punishment to Iraq and compensation to Kuwait.

Question : Should Kuwait get that oilfield as reparations?

Oil is the lifeblood of the American economy. If the same thing was done with our water supply would that make a difference. Is blood for oil - or water - a valid course to follow?

Question : Do we have the right to step in with force, if a bandit is grabbing for our vital resources?

When the Los Angeles Watts riots began, the politicians waffled and did little. By the time the national guard was called in, it was

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out of control and 38 people died and the place had gone up in smoke. San Francisco had a similar problem about a month later, but they had learned. They jumped on the incipient riot and quelled it for no loss of life.

Major Question : Do we have the moral right to stamp on a prospective problem quickly - rather than allow it to fester and become major? Had Europeans jumped on Hitler when he re-militarized the Rhineland and built the Seigfried Line, might 65 million lives have been saved?

A final thought : We mustn't forget that in Poland are still 50,000 Russian troops. Nor Germany which is playing host to 300,000 members of the Red Army. Now, they aren't going to do anything bad.

Are they?

**Harry Pollard
(Delivered March 1st, 1991 at Final Friday)**