

THE WHITE HOUSE  
CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

INCOMING

DATE RECEIVED: AUGUST 29, 1990

NAME OF CORRESPONDENT: TEKA CHILDRESS

SUBJECT: FORWARDS STATEMENTS FROM 11 ST. LOUIS  
ORGANIZATIONS OPPOSING THE MILITARY BUILD-UP  
IN THE MIDDLE EAST BELIEVES ECONOMIC BOYCOTT  
SHOULD BE GIVEN TIME TO WORK

*SLR - to modify*  
*smg 163*  
*C0001-078*

*AUG 29 1990*

|                |              | ACTION |          | DISPOSITION |             |
|----------------|--------------|--------|----------|-------------|-------------|
| ROUTE TO:      |              | ACT    | DATE     | TYPE        | C COMPLETED |
| OFFICE/AGENCY  | (STAFF NAME) | CODE   | YY/MM/DD | RESP        | D YY/MM/DD  |
| SHIRLEY GREEN  |              | ORG    | 90/08/29 | SG          | A90109/24   |
| REFERRAL NOTE: |              |        | / /      |             | / /         |
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COMMENTS:

ADDITIONAL CORRESPONDENTS: MEDIA:L INDIVIDUAL CODES: \_\_\_\_\_

MI MAIL USER CODES: (A) \_\_\_\_\_ (B) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

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| *                        | *                    | *CORRESPONDENCE:     | * |
| *A-APPROPRIATE ACTION    | *A-ANSWERED          | *TYPE RESP=INITIALS  | * |
| *C-COMMENT/RECOM         | *B-NON-SPEC-REFERRAL | *OF SIGNER           | * |
| *D-DRAFT RESPONSE        | *C-COMPLETED         | *CODE = A            | * |
| *F-FURNISH FACT SHEET    | *S-SUSPENDED         | *COMPLETED = DATE OF | * |
| *I-INFO COPY/NO ACT NEC* |                      | *OUTGOING            | * |
| *R-DIRECT REPLY W/COPY * |                      |                      | * |
| *S-FOR-SIGNATURE *       |                      |                      | * |
| *X-INTERIM REPLY *       |                      |                      | * |

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REFER QUESTIONS AND ROUTING UPDATES TO CENTRAL REFERENCE  
(ROOM 75,OEOb) EXT-2590  
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LETTER AT ALL TIMES AND SEND COMPLETED RECORD TO RECORDS  
MANAGEMENT.

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JG

Addressed to: Ms. Teka Childress

Letterid: JG\_90083013.DAT

FORM LETTERS USED: smg-163

GB's remarks to joint session of Congress.

900924

LABEL

\$DATE\$

Dear Ms. Childress:

On behalf of President Bush, thank you for ~~the collection of~~ *your letter ~~on~~ representing the*  
~~Ad-Hoc Coalition of citizens concerned with the crisis in the Middle East.~~  
~~statements from citizens in St. Louis.~~

The United States does not seek conflict, nor does it seek to chart the destiny of other nations. However, the President has pledged America's intention to stand by its friends, saying, "No one, friend or foe, should doubt our desire for peace, and no one should underestimate our determination to confront aggression."

The sovereign independence of Saudi Arabia and our other friends in the Middle East is of vital interest to the United States. Not just our country but most of the nations of the world depend on imported oil, a large share of which comes from this region. Iraq's history of aggression poses a threat not only to the freedom of Saudi Arabia and other nations in the Persian Gulf but also to the stability of the world's economy. As the President pointed out, "Our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom and the freedom of friendly countries around the world would all suffer if control of the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of one man, Saddam Hussein. So, we've made our stand -- not

simply to protect resources or real estate, but to protect the freedom of nations. We are striking a blow for the principle that might does not make right. Kuwait is small. But one conquered nation is one too many."

The President appreciates having these organizations' comments, and sends his best wishes.

Sincerely,

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Shirley M. Green

Special Assistant to the President  
for Presidential Messages  
and Correspondence

Ms. Teka Childress

438 North Skinker Boulevard

St. Louis, MO 63106

*Handwritten signature*

# DRAFT OF SMG LETTER

|                                   |                                           |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| DRAFT DATE:<br>SEP 6 1990         | COMPUTER DRAFT DOCUMENT TITLE:<br>SMG-163 |
| INITIALS:<br>SMG JG 6/21 9/9/     | CC:                                       |
| CLEAR WITH:                       | WHCC:                                     |
| ENCLOSURES, SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: |                                           |

TL-

Ben thought  
this should  
be a draft  
stating GB's  
position to  
these organiza-  
tions.

\$DATE\$

Dear Ms. Childress:

On behalf of President Bush, thank you for your letter.

*the collection of statements  
from citizens in St. Louis.*

The President appreciates your sending him the statements of the various St. Louis organizations whose members are concerned about the situation in the Middle East. He agrees with the views expressed that diplomatic and economic efforts are essential to our course of action against Iraqi invasion.

~~Regarding the concern voiced about the United States military buildup in the Middle East, America~~ does not seek conflict, nor does it seek to chart the destiny of other nations. However, the President has pledged America's intention to stand by its friends, saying, "No one, friend or foe, should doubt our desire for peace, and no one should underestimate our determination to confront aggression."

The sovereign independence of Saudi Arabia and our other friends in the Middle East is of vital interest to the United States. Not just our country but most of the nations of the world depend

on imported oil, a large share of which comes from this region. Iraq's history of aggression poses a threat not only to the freedom of Saudi Arabia and other nations in the Persian Gulf but also to the stability of the world's economy. As the President pointed out, "Our jobs, our way of life, our own freedom and the freedom of friendly countries around the world would all suffer if control of the world's great oil reserves fell into the hands of one man, Saddam Hussein. So, we've made our stand -- not simply to protect resources or real estate, but to protect the freedom of nations. We are striking a blow for the principle that might does not make right. Kuwait is small. But one conquered nation is one too many."

Therefore, President Bush responded to the Saudi request for U.S. assistance in defense of their homeland by ordering American armed forces deployed to Saudi Arabia. He has also responded to a request from the Emir of Kuwait to coordinate multinational efforts to enforce sanctions aimed at convincing Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait and restore Kuwait's independence. He is heartened by the number of other countries -- including Arab nations -- that have joined this international defense effort.

The President appreciates your comments and suggestions concerning this matter of grave importance to our national security.

Sincerely,

## DRAFT OF SMG LETTER

|                                   |                                           |
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| DRAFT DATE:<br>AUG 31 1990        | COMPUTER DRAFT DOCUMENT TITLE:<br>Sm6-163 |
| INITIALS:<br>SMG JB / / / /       | CC:                                       |
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170284

11  
S Green

August 20, 1990

President George Bush  
White House  
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Bush:

end  
Enclosed are the statements of eleven St. Louis organizations, who under the umbrella of The Ad-Hoc Coalition of Citizens Concerned with the Crisis in the Middle East, held a Press Conference to register their opposition to the Military Build-up in the Middle East, as the way to respond to the confrontation there. The group regrets that you so quickly sent in troops without allowing for more time for the efforts of the U.N. and the Middle Eastern countries. Further the group believes that an economic boycott as well as other diplomatic efforts should be given time to work. We greatly fear the danger of escalating the conflict to a level that would be horrible for us all and would leave no one in the conflict a winner. We call on you to work with all the other nations involved in seeking a peaceful and diplomatic solution.

The organizations whose statements are enclosed include:

The United Nations Association of St. Louis  
The Islamic Center of Greater St. Louis  
The American Friends Service Committee  
Inter-religious Committee for Peace in the Middle East  
Episcopal Peace Fellowship, Diocese of Missouri Chapter  
The St. Louis Pledge of Resistance  
The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, St.  
Louis branch  
The Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office, Washington, D.C..  
St. Louis Committee for a Nuclear Weapons Freeze

The St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America  
The St. Louis Catholic Worker

We hope that you will take the time to read these releases so that you can  
know the sentiments of some of the people in this country. Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Teka Childress*

Teka Childress  
Ad-Hoc Coalition of Citi-  
zens Concerned with the  
Crisis in the Middle East

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON  
*ORM OPTICAL DISK NETWORK*

ID# 170284

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Comments:

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## UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION OF ST. LOUIS

7359 Forsyth Blvd.  
St. Louis, MO 63105  
(314) 721-1961

Mary Hamm, *Executive Director*  
~~Carol Lieber, Board Member~~

The United Nations Association of St. Louis applauds President Bush's diplomatic efforts to personally communicate with so many world leaders during this crisis as the U.S. garners support for international economic sanctions.

However, we would urge the president to exercise patience as the Arab League seeks solutions that might prevent either a bloody war or the need for an American standing army within Saudi Arabia.

Most importantly, we would urge the president to vigorously take steps to involve other nations in preserving global security employing Articles 41 & 42 of the United Nations Charter. This is an unprecedented moment when world leaders can cooperate together to use the Security Council and all of its resources including peace-keeping forces to bring temporary stability to a region that requires more time to develop a fair and just solution for all parties concerned.

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

*In the Name of Allah. The most gracious and the merciful.*

## **The Islamic Center of Greater St. Louis**

3843 West Pine  
St. Louis, Mo. 63108  
(314) 534-9672

THE INVASION AND ANNEXATION OF KUWAIT IS A RATHER UNFORTUNATE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IT IS UNFORTUNATE NOT ONLY FOR ITS NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE PRICE OF OIL WHICH IS OF GREATEST CONCERN TO THE INDUSTRIALISED WORLD BUT MORE IMPORTANTLY OF ITS DISTURBING CONSEQUENCES IN THE UNITY OF THE ARAB WORLD. THE SITUATION IS HIGHLY FRAGILE AND THE TENSION IN THE GULF AREA IS AS HIGH AS IT HAS EVER BEEN. IT IS THE MOST CRUCIAL TIME FOR TRUE DIPLOMACY, NOT GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY.

WHILE THE U.S HAS SENT HER FULL MIGHT TO PROTECT ONE OF ITS CLOSEST ALLIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SAUDI ARABIA, WE BELIEVE THIS IS NOT A TIME FOR MILITARY ACTION.

WHILE A SHOW OF STRENGTH MAY BE SEEN AS THE MOST APPROPRIATE AMERICAN RESPONSE BY MANY, WE BELIEVE USE OF FORCE IS UNCALLED FOR AT THIS TIME FOR MORE THAN ONE REASON.

WE PRAY TO ALLAH, THE MOST GRACIOUS AND MERCIFUL TO BRING SANITY TO ALL CONCERNED SO THAT PEACE SHALL PREVAIL AND HIS CREATIONS ARE SAVED FROM EXTINCTION.

August 10, 1990.

Mrs. Shah Ahmed.  
Vice-President.

# AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE



**Bill Ramsey**  
Program Facilitator

**Ida Bailey**  
Administrative Assistant

SAINT LOUIS OFFICE  
438 N. Skinker  
St. Louis, MO 63130  
(314) 862-5773

August 9, 1990

Contact Person:  
Eldora Spiegelberg  
(314) 721-4918

Contact Person:  
Charlie Silver,  
North Central Region  
International Affairs Project Director  
(303) 322-6353

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The American Friends Service Committee strongly condemns the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. We support the United States call for immediate withdrawal of all Iraqi forces from Kuwait. We believe that the Iraq and Arab League should recommit themselves to negotiations to resolve the economic and geographical disputes between them.

We urge the United States to halt immediately the deployment of American military forces into the Persian Gulf and Saudi Arabia. While it would not guarantee that Iraq would not attack Saudi Arabia eventually, withdrawal would reduce international tension and allow time for the non-military options to take affect: the global economic boycott could gradually reduce Iraq's economic and military power, while diplomatic efforts to resolve the conflict would be given time to gather support. A non-military response could still achieve the main goal of the world community -- the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait. Further, the deployment of US combat forces has angered public opinion in the Arab world, even those who denounced the Iraqi invasion; their withdrawal would remove Saddam Hussein's best lever for attracting Arab support.

The American Friends Service Committee supports a responsible US policy toward the Gulf crisis. We believe the United States should:

- Condemn the Iraqi invasion.
- Urge the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops.
- Immediately withdraw all US combat forces from the Gulf region.
- Adhere to the UN boycott on economic relations with Iraq and occupied Kuwait. We believe an exemption in the boycott for "humanitarian purpose" should apply to food imports to Iraq and Kuwait.
- Use the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve to cushion the price rises caused by the boycott, and help third world countries meet increased oil costs.
- Continued cooperation by the US with the efforts of the United Nations and the Arab League to find a diplomatic solution.

A longer range US policy toward the region should include:

- Withdrawal of all US military forces from the Middle East and Persian Gulf, elimination of US military bases and facilities and a pledge of nonintervention.
- Negotiations with the Soviet Union, China, European nations and other supplier nations to permanently halt the transfer of arms to Iraq and all other nations in the Middle East.
- A national energy policy which reduces dependence on imported oil through conservation and the deployment of safe energy resources, and support for an international agreement to equitably share oil resources.
- Opposition to all illegal occupation of territory in the Middle East, including the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Golan Heights and Lebanon.

The American Friends Service has long supported a multilateral moratorium on arms transfer to the Middle East. We see this present conflict as a clear example of why a moratorium is needed.

The US has many ways of approaching solutions to problems but we are becoming increasingly known for relying on military resolutions. It is very difficult for Arab nations to be free to find diplomatic means to resolve the current crisis while they are being pressured by talk of a quarter million American troops to be sent to that area of the globe.

The discussion that we hear taking place about this crisis is almost exclusively in terms of oil and economics. Politicians and commentators are asking what is in the best interests of the US--as if our best interests were somehow different from those of other peoples. Peace is in our best interest. Long-range cooperative planning is in our best interests. The killings of Kuwaitis, Saudis, Iraqis, Turks, Egyptians, Americans, French, British and others are in nobody's best interests.

It is imperative that the lives of human beings be first taken into account in our analysis of current tensions.

Iraq's actions must be condemned and sanctions applied.

Diplomatic efforts must be explored.

We must place human interests before economic interests.

PROF. HARRY JAMES CARGAS  
Webster University  
St. Louis, MO 63119  
(314) 968-7014

with the  
Inter-religious  
Committee  
for Peace in  
the Middle  
East.

EPISCOPAL PEACE FELLOWSHIP, Diocese of Missouri Chapter  
STATEMENT ON MIDDLE EAST CRISIS, August 10, 1990

On behalf of the EPF we applaud the members of the UN for urging economic sanctions against Iraq.

We call on President Bush to halt the U.S. military buildup in the area and to continue to work with other world leaders and the UN to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in the Middle East.

ST. LOUIS

# Pledge of Resistance

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438 N. Skinker • St. Louis, MO 63130 • (314) 727-4466

We of the St. Louis Pledge of Resistance regret and deplore Iraq's use of physical force to bend a smaller, weaker country to its will, however undemocratic Kuwait's government may have been--just as we have regretted and deplored our own government's similar use of force in Nicaragua, Grenada, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, and Panama. We are heartened by the nearly unanimous condemnation of Iraq's actions by the nations of the world, speaking individually and through the United Nations, and by their efforts to use nonviolent means to undo Iraq's violent actions. We are sorry that our own government has so quickly made its own hired killers a part of this dangerous situation. We urge our elected leaders to pause before resorting to violence so that we may, in concert with other nations, give nonviolent diplomatic and economic methods a chance to resolve this crisis with a minimum of human suffering. Human lives are more valuable than oil.

10 August 1990

# The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

St. Louis Branch  
(314) 862-5735



438 N. Skinker Blvd.  
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

August 9, 1990

Dear President Bush:

The Women's International League for Peace and Freedom deplores the recent invasion of Kuwait by Iraq. We are encouraged by the prompt unanimous action of the Security Council to impose economic sanctions on Iraq. However, we in the U.S. Section are gravely concerned by the precipitous U.S. military reaction before sanctions have had time to take effect. The U.S. efforts to further militarize the Gulf risks escalation of an already tense situation to a major confrontation and possibly war that would engage U.S. forces thousands of miles from home and cause great human suffering. History has demonstrated that military action does not resolve disputes, and is more likely to exacerbate them; witness the Iran-Iraq war which was expected to be a "quick fix."

Therefore we call on the U.S. government to:

1. Stop the militarization of the Gulf area. ~~DO~~ NOT continue to act unilaterally nor draw other nations into polarizing military actions;
2. Work within the United Nations to use all the mechanisms available for negotiating a settlement of this dispute. Continue to observe the economic sanctions agreed to by the Security Council.
3. The crisis in the Gulf and other current deployments of U.S. troops around the world should not justify maintaining the excessive burden of military spending on the people of the United States. We urge you to redirect U.S. priorities to correct the deteriorating domestic economy and focus resources on real security -- meeting human needs.

We look forward to your response.

Pax,

Mary Zepernick  
President

Delores Taller, Chair  
Middle East Committee

Joan Drake,  
Program & Action Chair

cc: United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Thomas Pickering, Chairs of the Senate Foreign Relations and Armed Services Committees and Chairs of the House Foreign Affairs and Armed Services Committees.

Press Conference Statement made by Scott Neufeld

Coordinator, St. Louis Mennonite Peace Witness

also representing

The Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office, Washington, D.C.

President Bush has declared that "a line has been drawn in the sand." How fitting that a playground metaphor be used to describe U. S. foreign policy, for it is the rules of the playground that guide U. S. thinking and action. "Might makes right. "If I want it, I can have it." Bush's statement and actions appeal to many who live in this country. What may have less appeal are the reasons that President Bush should not have sent military deployments to intervene in the Gulf crisis.

Firstly, other options were not given sufficient time. With Soviet support secured it seemed likely that the U.N. National Security Council could respond to the crisis by sending a peacekeeping force. Such a plan still could go forth, however, the U. S. military presence is now a complicating factor. In addition, the U.N.-supported sanctions have not been given adequate time to be effective, nor have the Middle Eastern states been allowed self-determination to resolve the conflict themselves. The Arab world is divided on the issue of U.S. intervention.

Humans have a unique ability to communicate complex ideas via language yet we are one of few species which will resort to killing others of our own species in attempting to resolve conflict.

The second reason pertains to our motivation for intervention; greed. As a nation of heavy consumers, we have an appetite for the world's resources disproportionate to our size and actual 'need'. Were we less dependent on foreign petroleum, we would feel much less urge to throw our weight around the Gulf. Rather than escalating the conflict, why have we not focused on ridding ourselves or reducing such dependencies?

Finally and foremostly, violence is wrong. This reason is surely the hardest to hear. Not only is violence a very "base response, not only is violence ineffective at truly solving problems, not only is violence a spiral staircase which, in this case, may lead to the use of chemical and nuclear weapons, but violence is wrong. How dare we engrave "In God We Trust" on our coinage while simultaneously preparing for the destruction of other humans. How dare we try to justify our escalation of violence through military deployments when many of our religious traditions deplore such violence. "Love thy enemies." "Thou shall not kill." Let these rules replace those of the playground.

While I regret the violence the Iraqis used in their invasion of Kuwait and I am thankful that the Bush Administration did not launch a full-scale attack in return, I find the U.S. military deployment to be politically premature and morally offensive.

Statement on Iraq's Invasion of Kuwait  
by Anna Ginsburg, Director  
St. Louis Committee for a Nuclear Weapons FREEZE

Historians looking back on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait will probably call it the first international crisis of the post-cold-war-era. What kind of precedent have we set for international security in this era?

At first, it appeared that this was going to be a different kind of international crisis. Maybe we were entering a new era based on global security.

World opinion was united in condemning Saddam Hussein's actions; the US and the Soviets both spoke out strongly against the invasion and so did the rest of the world; the UN Security Council issued sweeping economic sanctions against Iraq without a single dissenting vote; The countries of the middle east were negotiating among themselves, trying to find a solution.

The issue here is not whether Saddam Hussein should be condemned. His actions are reprehensible. But two days ago he was totally isolated.

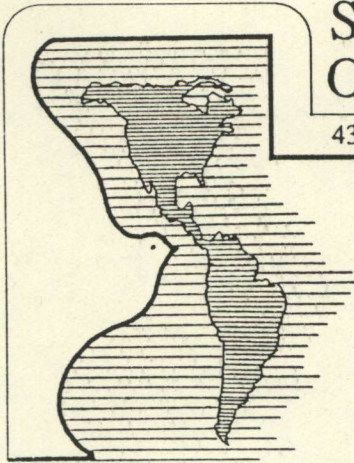
But today Saddam Hussein can use our nearly unilateral decision to send troops into Saudi Arabia in his arsenal. He can confuse the issue and elicit sympathy. Iraq can now play the underdog, standing up to a greedy United States interested first and foremost in protecting our access to oil.

The Pentagon and the State Department would probably say that I don't know what I'm talking about. I don't have access to intelligence reports or secret strategic information and if we hadn't sent in the Marines Hussein would be in control of Saudi Arabia, as well as Kuwait.

Even if this is the case, we could end up paying a terrible price. Does the US intend to call all of the shots in this era? Have we gone from domination by the superpowers to domination by the undisputed superpower? Will the US be the enforcer of the status quo in the third world? And are we doing it in the name of our right to consume the world's resources as fast as we can?

What about the sanctity of human life, and the new era where dialogue and discussion replace armed destruction? What about global security and international cooperation? What about the opportunity for real disarmament ---both nuclear and conventional. What about the opportunity to direct the world's resources away from military might and towards solving the problems of poverty, hunger and the environment?

This is the vision for the post cold war world that we have been working for. Please, don't let it get lost in the world's oil pipeline.



# ST. LOUIS INTER-FAITH COMMITTEE ON LATIN AMERICA

438 North Skinker

St. Louis, MO 63130

(314) 721-2977

August 9, 1990

The St. Louis Inter-Faith Committee on Latin America has experienced very recently in the Caribbean and in the Andean countries, as well as over the past ten years in Central America, that military intervention can cause grave injustices and suffering. It often serves only to worsen the conflict it purports to solve.

As an organization we strongly advocate negotiation, diplomatic approaches and peaceful solutions rather than the use of military force.

Maggie Fisher  
Program Coordinator

PRESS RELEASE

AUGUST 10, 1990

**ST. LOUIS CATHOLIC WORKER RESPONDS  
TO HEIGHTENED U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Contact: Mark Scheu  
St. Louis Catholic Worker  
1840 Hogan, St. Louis 63106  
621-4052

In the midst of the potential for military conflict in the Middle East involving the United States, the St. Louis Catholic Worker is compelled to remind our brothers and sisters in Christ of the Gospel call to nonviolent peacemaking.

The administration would have us believe that U.S. forces abroad serve as a benevolent policeman, that our military is ready to help liberate Kuwait and defend the freedom of Saudi Arabia. This pose obscures a deeper reality.

Those who share the perspective of the poor, whether abroad such as in the barrios of El Salvador or at home in the urban ghettos, know that the United States government is not experienced as a benevolent force, but an oppressive one. The doublespeak by which the government previously upheld the terrorist forces of the Contras in Nicaragua as "freedom fighters" is now used to lead us to celebrate increased U.S. military intervention in the Middle East.

The primary motive for U.S. sabre-rattling is to defend this government's geopolitical interests, in short, to guarantee access to oil and to forestall military domination in the area by any power besides Israel. These are not benevolent or altruistic motives. The U.S. claims the right to use force to procure oil from a land across the globe in order to preserve "our way of life."

We do not share that aim. We in the Catholic Worker strive to live according to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, although we readily admit we fail daily. When we examine this society, whose way of life our government is prepared to sacrifice many lives in order to preserve, we find it far from God's justice. Private and state capitalism bring about an unjust distribution of the wealth and a polluted environment, for profit motives guide decisions regardless of human consequences. While the world debt crisis increases the deprivation and dependency of the poor abroad, at home the number of hungry and homeless and unemployed rises in the midst of increasing affluence of the few. As this crisis in the Middle East demonstrates, it is a system sustained by violence and injustice -- one in which those called by Christ to the building of a just society cannot wish to participate.

We are called by God to do the works of mercy, not the works of war. Raining down bombs upon the people of Iraq will not bring peace or justice to the Middle East. Recall in the Gospel when James and John wished to call down fire from heaven on their enemies Jesus rebuked them because the Son of Man came not to destroy souls but to save. He also said, "In as much as you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it to me."

The people of Iraq are not the enemies of the people of this country. The U.S. and Iraqi governments are enemies because of their struggle for political power. It is precisely this deadly struggle for power which the follower of Christ is called to renounce and resist. We are called to resist violence with the spiritual weapons of prayer, fasting, and non-cooperation with evil. Refusal to pay federal taxes which fund war, to register for conscription, to comply with unjust laws, as well as withdrawal of support from the dominant systems of injustice are the true means to establish peace. Jesus did so and was executed by the state; but we are called to be faithful, not successful.

Our country has diverged far from the Jeffersonian ideal of self-rule and self-reliance. Violence begets violence. By supporting military adventurism abroad we will not return to our ideals but only strengthen the sources of our oppression. Instead we are called, as Peter Maurin, co-founder of the Catholic Worker movement, said, "to build a new society in the shell of the old," by living in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, by renouncing violence, and by reforming our lives in accordance with Christ's example.