
emy, he concludes, the concept of the West as a unified entity is likely to disappear, too. But, he adds, it may return, "when things go seriously bad and individual countries or restricted alliances are unable to cope on their own. One must assume—unless one has come to accept the fatuous nonsense that war as an institution is dead—that such circumstances will again return to haunt us one day, perhaps sooner rather than later."

Casualties of War

"The Middle East Scholars and the Gulf War" by Norvell B. DeAtkine, in *Parameters* (Summer 1993), U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, Pa. 17013-5050.

As war in the Persian Gulf neared two years ago, many Middle Eastern specialists warned of disaster for the United States. Rashid Khalidi of the University of Chicago and Charles Doran of the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins, among others, predicted massive upheavals in every Islamic country, Americans slaughtered in Arab cities, airliners blown out of the skies, Arab soldiers turning their weapons on their Western allies, and Saudi Arabs emerging from their villas to toss Molotov cocktails at U.S. tanks.

Have these experts since been reflecting on where they went wrong? Not at all, says DeAtkine, a retired Army colonel who is director of Middle East studies at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center and School at Fort Bragg. In articles and books such as *George Bush's War* (1992) by Jean Edward Smith, they have launched a new revisionist attack. They maintain that the war was unnecessary; or that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was strictly an Arab problem, calling for an exclusively Arab solution; or that the Iraqis had a jus-

tifiable claim on Kuwait; or that Kuwait was insignificant and Saudi Arabia was in no danger of invasion by Iraq.

All of this is absurd, says DeAtkine. There was no political unity among the Arabs, and there would have been no Arab solution. Nor did the historical origins of the boundary between Iraq and Kuwait justify Iraq's action. Until its attempt to take over Kuwait, "the boundaries imposed by colonial powers, while universally proclaimed [to be] an evil legacy of imperialism, were nevertheless generally accepted." Iraq may have had no intention of invading Saudi Arabia, but an intimidated Saudi royal family inevitably would have adopted a policy of appeasement toward the Iraqis. Nor would economic sanctions have been effective enough to dislodge Saddam Hussein, DeAtkine adds.

Why have Middle Eastern scholars and jour-

The Corrupt and the Clean

"The bipolar world dominated by the communist-capitalist dichotomy has been replaced with a politically unitary one, divided between the corrupt and the clean," writes Daniel Bell in the *New Republic* (Aug. 23 & 30, 1993).

It is hard to avoid the larger moral question that is tied up with the fate of democracy and capitalism—of capitalism as a system of economic reward, and democracy as a system of civic loyalty and trust. . . .

In Japan, Tasushi Mieno, the governor of the Bank of Japan, who pricked the bubble of the inflated Japanese boom, has been quoted as saying that the giddy expansion of the late 1980s "undermined the stability and soundness of Japanese society by weakening the ethos of labor, the notion of working by the sweat of your brow." The boom, he said, hastened "a decline in morals," and fostered "inequalities in the distribution of wealth."

If capitalism is still to confront the ethos of "greed," democracy has to confront the problem of trust. In almost every society, the distrust of the political order and of politicians is rising, often feeding reactionary forces that seek to channel the resentments of a population into religious fundamentalism or a rising nationalism. The money corruption becomes the symbol of the breakdown of trust in democracy. The rebuilding of trust can only begin with the rectitude of the politicians and the moral authority of a political class. That is the great task that confronts democratic societies in the years ahead. It is not one of technique, but of virtue.

nalists been so wrong about the Gulf War? DeAtkine offers no definitive answer. But he says that the field is highly politicized. The specialists tend "to justify every inanity, every brutality, every outrage" by invoking cultural rela-

tivism. Many have a "distinctly anti-Western ideological agenda." They are obsessed with the Arab-Israeli dispute. And "area studies" enclaves in universities very often fail to breed detached, critical judgment.

ECONOMICS, LABOR & BUSINESS

A New Business Ethics?

"What's the Matter with Business Ethics?" by Andrew Stark, in *Harvard Business Review* (May-June 1993), Boston, Mass. 02163.

Business ethics is hot in academia: More than 500 courses in the subject are taught at American business schools and there are three scholarly journals and more than 25 textbooks in the field. But this academic boom is largely irrelevant to most business managers, contends Stark, of the University of Toronto's Center for Corporate Social Performance and Ethics. It is not that managers are against business ethics, he says, but rather that too many business ethicists have occupied "a rarefied moral high ground," far removed from most managers' daily concerns.

For decades, enlightened self-interest was the rule recommended by advocates of corporate social responsibility. Ethical behavior might prove costly over the short term, they maintained, but it would pay off in the long run. During the 1970s, however, when business ethics emerged as a full-fledged academic discipline, this perspective came under attack. Ethical behavior, the new ethicists maintained, is not always in a company's best interests, however enlightened. Indeed, they insisted, self-interested acts *cannot* by their very nature be ethical. Mixed motives were given no moral credit. Business ethicists, Stark observes, developed "a kind of moral absolutism." In a recent essay, for example, University of Kansas ethicist Richard T. DeGeorge declared: "If in some instance it turns out that what is ethical leads to a company's demise, so be it." Such glib advice is of little practical help.

"Any business ethics worthy of the name should be an ethics of practice," Stark asserts.

"But this means that business ethicists must get their hands dirty and seriously consider the costs that sometimes attend 'doing the right thing.' They must help managers do the arduous conceptual balancing required in difficult cases where every alternative has both moral and financial costs."

Recently, Stark notes, some business ethicists have begun to do just that. In *Ethics and Excellence* (1992), Robert C. Solomon "goes back to Aristotle's conception of 'virtue' to devise an ethics of practical value to managers. . . . Throughout his book, Solomon discusses toughness (and other morally complex managerial virtues such as courage, fairness, sensitivity, persistence, honesty, and gracefulness) in the context of real-world situations such as plant closings and contract negotiations."

The new thinkers take the fact that ethics and interests can conflict as a beginning, not an end. "The really creative part of business ethics," ethicist Joanne B. Ciulla writes, "is discovering ways to do what is morally right and socially responsible without ruining your career and company."

The Futility Factor

"It's Not the Economy, Stupid!" by Charles R. Morris, in *The Atlantic* (July 1993), 745 Boylston St., Boston, Mass. 02116.

The economy dominated the 1992 presidential contest: George Bush was accused of having mismanaged it, Bill Clinton promised to do better. But there was one big problem with the debate, contends Morris, a principal in a technology consulting firm. Presidents, he asserts, are not really able to "manage" the economy.

The "economy," Morris observes, is not a