



hour for American democracy. This debate is being used by the right wing of the Republican Party against Democrats. The Democratic Party is fortunate that the American electoral system is tied to the calendar, so that no serious elections are due until November of 1992 and that a strong cadre of Senators are secure for a substantial period beyond that. A snap election this spring, such as would be possible if the United States democracy worked like Britain's, would result in a resounding victory for Republicans.

Time may help the Democrats recover. Even in the first days after the brilliant battlefield victory, it became evident that it may not lead to diplomatic and economic victories. All previous United States military engagements in this century had the promotion of Democracy (which had as a corollary the containment of Communism) as at least the professed objective. It seems quite likely that all the war in the Gulf will achieve is the return of the Emir to Kuwait: OPEC and the PLO seem to be carrying on as before, Saddam or some reasonable facsimile is likely to rule in Iraq, democracy has not been advanced in either Kuwait or Saudi-Arabia and peace between Israel and the Arabs is no closer. If the war does not advance peace, economic justice and social progress a reaction against Bush, which will diminish his popularity, will no doubt set in: Bush has to deliver something beyond the mere fact of Victory.

The Democrats are cowed: they are frightened by the support that Bush has in the polls. To date Governor Cuomo of New York is the only Democratic leader who has spoken out in defense of those who, opposed the unleashing of the ground forces. Cuomo is a consummate politician, he sees that Bush's support is fragile: only a minority approve his domestic policies.

The continuation of the high level of support for Bush is contingent on what happens within the United States. In particular the current recession must be short and mild. The recession is highlighting the anomaly that the 1980's were not good for those who do not go to college and therefor depend upon jobs in factories and in transportation for their livelihood. A sharp deterioration in both the number and the quality of blue collar jobs has taken place: factory employment and union protection of the terms of employment and the dignity of workers deteriorated. For about half of the country the United States has been in a recession the past 12 years.

However the continuation of the recession, or even its escalation into a depression, will not be enough to assure a recovery of the fortunes of the Democratic party by late 1992. There is an American saying to the effect that you cannot beat something with nothing. The Republicans have military successes as their pluses. In order to advance their fortunes the Democrats need to develop a critique of

the economy that explains why it is in recession, why this longer term absolute deterioration for so many occurred and why even worse may occur if policy does not change from the Reagan-Bush line. They need to develop policies by which the economy can once again create sufficient employment opportunities so that a close approximation to full employment and vigorous growth are achieved. The response of the Bush administration to the failure of the Savings banks and the emerging crisis in ordinary banking has been very weak. The Republicans are vulnerable on the mismanagement of the financial system.

But the Democrats are not offering a consistent critique of the Republican policies of the past decade and are not offering any serious broad policy alternative. The likelihood is that the United States will not develop policies in the near future that lead to a full recovery of the economy. The United States cannot be a locomotive for world expansion as it has been for most of the time since World War II. The world needs to face the fact that the overwhelmingly dominant military power is increasingly frustrated by its inability to overcome its weakened economic power and serious social problems. Furthermore this power believes that the War in the Gulf shows that it can use force to serve its ends.