

November 1, 1990

Saddam Hussein  
President, Iraq  
C/O The Tribune, Oakland, CA

Dear Mr. President:

We the people do not get to negotiate for this country, just as your people do not get to negotiate for Iraq. If we could, however, here's an offer.

1. We will immediately reduce our nuclear arsenal by 50%.
2. We will immediately begin the elimination of our chemical weapons.
3. We will immediately cease our troop and armament buildup in the Middle East.
4. We will immediately allow passage into Iraq of food and medical supplies.
5. We hereby apologize for the silly things our leaders have said about you. That is the nature of all leaders with armies.
6. You must withdraw your army from Kuwait.
7. Upon your withdrawal from Kuwait we will support U.N. supervised free elections in that country. No people should be oppressed by either dictators or playboys.
8. Upon your withdrawal from Kuwait we will support a U.N. supervised program of reparations.
9. We will immediately initiate a program to send engineers, technicians, teachers and philosophers to Iraq, Iran, Jordan and Kuwait to assist in the peaceful and ecologically wise development of those countries. We will not send money because it has no value, and because we don't have any. We have lots of engineers, technicians, teachers and so forth. We have expertise and we have time.
10. We will immediately make a similar offer to Israel regarding the territories its army now occupies.

In our school of thought we call a holy war oxymoronic. You should not, as we also say, take that personally. We know our own leader, who claims to be losing it when patience is infinite and unloseable, to be an occidental moron, and that doesn't bother him.

It is true that God is on your side. It is also true that He is on ours. He does not, however, engage in war. His answer to war is peace. War is the stupidest of human activities, since stupidity can be quantified. Peace is wise beyond words.

The wise know that anger, aggression, hatred and war are merely cries for peace and help. You did what you did to get our attention, and you succeeded admirably. For the first time in

modern history, since we have only just entered the Age of Wisdom and can understand what it is, you have provided us with a global opportunity to respond to anger, aggression and hatred with the help they call out for.

You have not threatened peace because it cannot be threatened. Peace will be around long after the wars of man have ended forever.

Anyone who made a penny of profit off this crisis is no better than you. Of course anyone who lost money in the matter is no worse. And that is simply another way of saying that the only possible difference between you and me is that I know we're both the same.

Asking your people to die for a cause, or a country or for anything is silly. It is silly because it is impossible. It is impossible because no one can die. That is why the wise have rarely been heard from and thus far do not govern the world's nations. The silly, who do the governing, insist that their people die. But that is just a matter of time.

Bodies can be hacked or shot, burned or buried. What the silly call killing is really just a matter of littering. That which people are, which any philosopher or prophet or real scientist knows, does not die and goes nowhere. Mohammed, you can bet, is still with us all. Nevertheless, because of the anguish the silliness of killing engenders, and because of all the effort wasted in doing essentially nothing, it makes good sense to stop trying.

The motive behind killing is an attempt to prove ourselves unworthy of God's love. We have come up with ever more heinous crimes and instruments of destruction, individually, racially and globally, to prove we are unloved and unlovable. And we have done nothing. God remains unchanged and infinitely loving, and peace is unshaken. Therefore be of good cheer and do something which is not nothing--be an instrument of peace.

There is still the matter of hostages. Actually we should be very heartened by the many planeloads of foreign nationals you have allowed to leave Iraq. Unfortunately we in this country have been taught to see only the emptiness in our glasses. So we propose the following.

The writer of this letter hereby volunteers to replace all your hostages. I made a similar offer to the captors in Lebanon a couple of years back, although I'm uncertain if they even received my communication. I suppose I would be a more desirable hostage if I was more celebrated, but celebrity is something over which we have almost no control. In fact my only claim to fame may be that I am the least known philosopher in America. I would go wherever you want and suffer in whatever conditions you deem appropriate. If our side failed to perform any part of the agreement reached with you I would be executed. I would be available for torture if you desired.

I could perhaps serve as a hostage for both sides, sequestered somewhere on neutral ground, in Geneva or Beirut for example. If either side failed to perform any part of the agreement the other side could execute me. Such an execution might provide sufficient satisfaction to make war unnecessary. I have plenty of lawyers to work out the details.

Please give our offer some thought and let us know. This is

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a matter of some urgency for all of us.

Very truly yours,

Gerald Armstrong  
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November 7, 1990

Thomas R. Pickering  
US Representative to the UN  
US Mission to the UN  
799 United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I have today sent this letter and the accompanying copy of my letter of November 1 to the President of Iraq to each of the addressees on the also accompanying addressees list. The first six addressees are in a position to do something serious, and if not serious at least funny, with our offer. Richard Behar at Time gets a pack because he's the only contact I have in the media who owes me a meal. In his copy of this letter I have changed the pronouns where applicable. On November 2 I delivered a copy of our offer to The Tribune in Oakland and I have given copies to a dozen or so friends. The offer, I, and I know others, believe to be worthy and worth communicating. The outcome is inevitable; the form is in God's hands. I ask that you consider our offer, and if you find in your heart any reason to pass it on to Saddam Hussein, or to anyone anywhere, you do so, and if you find any desire to communicate with me, you feel free.

Peace to you.

Gerald Armstrong  
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## THE GULF

If ever there was a time for humans to come together it is now. Of course we have never been apart so the task is not that difficult. What appears to be a gulf may not be. If it isn't funny it isn't true, and that, if one truly looks at it, is excruciatingly funny.

Accompanying this note is my proposal of November 1, 1990 which I believe was serious enough to make even Saddam Hussein smile. The media said he blinked when he freed the foreign nationals. I bet he laughed. I sent my proposal to the Oakland Tribune, the Los Angeles Times, and the individuals on the accompanying addressees list, all of whom received my letter of November 7, a copy of which also accompanies this note. My contact at Time magazine laughed. I have no idea if any of the others did. And I still don't know if President Hussein received my proposal. I did see him on TV smiling, and as we know he did free the hostages.

Some people believe the proposal has merit. If a whole bunch of people in this country believed, the few non-believers who believe they run it wouldn't. Believe it or not there is wisdom. I am handing out 20 copies of this note and the accompanying materials at the meeting of the Fairfax Town Council to consider a resolution opposing US military offensive action in the Persian Gulf. If you believe the proposal has merit, and if you can't do

Gulf. If you believe the proposal has merit, or if you crack the tiniest smile, don't be dismayed by the copyright, copy it and pass it on.

And peace to you too.

G. Armstrong

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December 10, 1990

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January 10, 1991

To the American People

Please find herewith:

1. 11-1-90 letter to Saddam Hussein
2. 11-7-90 letter to the Secretary-General of the UN
3. Addressees list for the 11-7 letter
4. 12-10-90 cover letter to 1-3 above entitled "Gulf."

I believe that if they thought about it for very few seconds a majority of Americans anywhere in America would say "Let's give the Armstrong Proposal a chance." And I believe that a majority of Americans have a few seconds to spare for such a thought. And for the life of me I can't see why the proposal shouldn't be offered.

It would have to be admitted that the proposal is a lot more fun than war. It should be given a chance, even if only to see if Saddam laughs. We still have time to get it to him before January 15 and he still would have time to laugh or not laugh before that date. I mean, what if he said, "I accept the Armstrong Proposal!?"

In the instant crisis war means unprecedented violence, murder, terror and disaster. Same thing once it's done. The guilt the US will build out of its imagined terrible national stupidity will threaten the nation. Peace, on the other hand, means that that unprecedented violence, murder, terror and disaster and that massive stupid guilt don't happen.

Peacemakers save war makers from their worst nightmares.

Only wimps send men to war. Others fight for peace. That Saddam thought Iraqis were not the same as Iranians, and then Kuwaitis, does not mean we need make the same mistake. Now that we really do understand that the Iraqis are not only our brothers, they are us, war is not only ridiculous it is murder. The good thing is that murder is merely silly.

I didn't hear back from any of the addressees on the list.

The Oakland Tribune sent back the letter and some other writings without comment. I sent the package to a friendly journalist at the LA Times and it got buried under his stack. I gave the proposal, some of my significant press, one of my recent books and some other writings to a San Francisco Examiner writer in a box and she returned it all, also without comment a month later.

So somebody please pass the proposal on to Saddam Hussein.

Somebody else tell President Bush to hold off until the people have considered the proposal and Saddam has had that chance to

have considered the proposal and Saddam has had that chance to laugh. Some other comedian organize something. For the love of God!

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[End Quote]