

# The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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### *Tempering the Victory Celebration*

I agree with Haynes Johnson [March 1] that Americans are joyously shedding the Vietnam syndrome, the psychic oppression of things gone wrong, especially things military.

I disagree with Mr. Johnson on only one point, but an important one if we are to keep our victory celebration from producing a Rambo-esque hangover in which we disdain negotiation whenever force is an option. We did not, as he implies, fight a peer power. Rather, we took on a Third World nation, admittedly heavily armed, but with a population approximately that of New York. The fight was not between a giant and a gnat, à la Grenada, as Mr. Johnson points out, but it was not giant vs. giant either. Therefore, let us think realistically of what we did and did not do, and so guard against recklessness. Let us remember, too, that in addition to our own small casualties we left thousands dead in Iraq. Many of them surely felt about Saddam Hussein much as we do, certainly the estimated 3,000 Kurdish civilians who perished.

Therefore, even Americans who believe, as I do not, that the main issue was Kuwait, not fuel, and that war was an apt solution might temper their rejoicing with thoughts of the innocent dead.

War should not leave anyone too happy, even victors.

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