THE U.S. IS A **DEMOCRACY**, A **REPUBLIC**, & A **MONARCHY**

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A cowpoke who's roped a dogie has the dogie, which--from the reverse point of view--has the cowpoke. Categorical words are dogies to the literal-minded....**Significs** is the branch of semiotics dealing with the relations of signs & substance, or how words & their denotations are related. As biblical theologian I'm deeply into it, but also as citizen: what I may call "political significs" is the disciplined effort to free public discourse from the muddying literal-mindedness that victimizes reality &, usually unwittingly, both promotes & obscures unfair statements & postures.

1 In CCT today, the letter immediately following mine says "We must not fight dictatorship with dictatorship by letting Mr. Bush singlehandedly declare war....Let the American people decide and Congress vote." Here are the three worlds of polity: (1) When "the...people decide," the U.S. is a democracy; (2) When "Congress vote[s]," we're a republic; & (3) When the President "singlehandedly declare[s] war," we're a monarchy. I'm being **descriptive** about the American political reality. And since I like the situation I'm describing, I can describe it as **normative**. I believe we've hit upon the best mix of the three worlds of civic theory "under God" & short of the Kingdom of God.

2 Geo. Washington wisely refused the title "king," though the title would have been natural enough, he having sprung us free of a king, Geo.III. But the presidential office as then crafted & as later developed had & has, especially in foreign affairs, monarchial aspects. Eg, in military campaigns against the British government, Washington was 1:1, one leader against another--as now, Bush against Saddam.

3 Bush understands the 1:1, Saddam does not. Saddam falsely, & dangerously, thinks it's 1:250,000,000 & that there'll be enough war-resistance among the people & in Congress to prevent Bush-U.N. from attacking Iraq. In the David Frost / Bush interview last evening, the President repeatedly worried as to how to see to it that Saddam "gets the message" of the 1:1 reality. B. was less worried about how to "bring Congress along," & referred again to the fact that in only five of the some 200 military engagements in U.S. history did Congress declare war. We were hearing a king thinking out loud as to how to persuade parliament while sword-rattling against another king. And at the President's breakfast for congressional leaders this morning, the essence of the conversation (according to Sen. Mitchell & Rep. Foley immediately thereafter) was (1) how to enhance, not detract from the President's 1:1 contra Saddam while (2) adjudicating the structurally interactive presidential & congressional war-making powers in the Gulf crisis. Bush escalated the threat (the interview was Dec.16) by telling Saddam that if war comes, Iraq "will not have air cover," as it had in Saddam's attacks on Iran & Kuwait. The President is doing his best to "kick ass" (I disapprove of his wording, but like his sentiment) harder as Jan.15 approaches. A very tough ass: yesterday Saddam's Revolutionary Command Council said Iraq is "determined to destroy the arrogance of the infidels, deviants and hypocrites." Arab rhetoric is the wildest, most out-of-it on earth; but there's more than enough arrogance to go around on both sides.

4 The American President is structurally more powerful than, in Britain, the monarch & prime minister combined. I both do & don't like it.

Like it or not, U.S. is top cop

In 1945 we succeeded in imposing democracy on Japan and West Germany, for their own good and ours. But we failed to keep the U.S.S.R. from developing "the bomb," and so got the Cold War.

If we fail to keep Saddam from developing the bomb, the world will be in Cold War II, or World War III. That is why Israel destroyed Saddam's nuclear center in 1981, and why it must be done again. Washington should be upfront about this.

Two curious letters in your paper Dec. 28 muddy the waters. Both are against war and for peace. But one suggests keeping a Trident submarine within range of Saddam, to dissuade him from using nuclear missiles. But missiles are now smart enough to locate submarines! The other is for "a strong non-proliferation treaty with effective enforcement measures" and "a comprehensive test-ban treaty." But who could believe Saddam would surrender his nuclear program under any treaty?

There's a limit to what we can do as international top cop, or (to use an older phrase) "policeman to the world." The U.S.S.R. seems to be falling into anarchy, and we are unable to force democracy on them for their own good and ours. But as for being top cop again as we were in early 1945, that can't be helped: We are again the only effective nuclear power in the world.

No impure nation should be top cop. All nations are impure. I don't like it that we're top cop. But I'd like it even less if any other nation were, or even the unpredictable U.N.

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