# FACING THE WAR

## Stereotyping bothers prof

#### Robin Price Capital Times Staff

On Jan. 16, the first night of Professor Adam Knobler's Middle Eastern History class, he planned to teach "The History of the Koran." The break began on schedule at 7 p.m.

But President Bush had other plans for the evening; the bombing of Bhagdad by U.S. and allied forces at approximately 7:01, turning Operation "Desert Shield" into "Desert Storm."

Instead Knobler postponed his lesson and moved the class to the Gallery Lounge where they spent the remainder of the evening like most of us--glued to CNN.

Knobler, a part-time instructor of history, said what surprised him most about that evening was how little time Bush waited after the Jan. 15 deadline to begin bombing.

It came as no surprise though, to Knobler, an expert on the Middle East, that U.S. dealings with Iraq should be filled with intrigue. After all, to many westerners, Arabic culture is shrouded with mystery.

According to Knobler, the majority of the Muslim world sees this war as part of a continuous conflict between Islam and the west dating back to the

Knobler said anti-American demonstrations in Algeria and Jordan often refer to America's presence in Saudi Arabia. Saddam Hussein has long promoted this anti-American sentiment.

Iraq is a western creation, made of remnants of the post-Ottoman Empire, which began in 1288 with the overthrow of Byzantium by the Turks, and fell in 1918 after World War I.

Hussein and the Arabs see U.S. support for Israel as an attack on Islam, Knobler said. They see the U.S. as favoring Israel over Arab States.

A misconception of most Americans is thinking of "The East" as one uniform amorphous distant land where people "don't act like us," Knobler said.

Culturally, Knobler said, Americans should understand there are many different types of Arabs around the world, and that Islam is a religion with many divergent strains.

"There is not a monolithic Arab or Muslim mentatlity," Knobler said. "Middle Eastern people are culturally variegated and diverse."

We need to distinguish between Islamic (a religion) and Arabian (an ethnic group).

"All Muslims are not Arab and all Arabs are not Muslim," he said. "Many Ilsamics live in the U.S. as well as many Arabs, but the majority of Arabs here are Christian."

"Unfortunately," Knobler said, "gross stereotyping, which would be deemed unacceptable toward Jews, blacks and other minorities, is accepted toward Arabic peoples. Knobler said that American ignorance about Arabic culture leads to such incidents as recent attacks on Pakistani women living in the U.S., whom the attackers confuse with Arabs.

And what about Hussein? Is he crazy? Knobler said no. Hussein is power hungy but not crazy.

"Is Saddam Hussein more crazy than any other murderous dictator in the world?" he asked. "We portray him as crazy because we're at war with him. There are a lot of other dictators in the world, but they're not sitting on oil fields," Knobler said. "And were we crazy to send troops to Vietnam to burn women, children and villages? War is not a sane activity," he said.

## Students react to media

#### Karen M. Putt Capital Times Staff

As the Gulf War enters its fourth week many students say they are still taking time from studying to keep up with military actions in the Gulf. Others say they are trying to forget the situation entirely and concentrate on school.

Khalid Battal, a 26-year-old public administration graduate student, said he watches CNN and Nightline every night. The Gulf War holds special interest for him since his family lives in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia.

"TV occupies much of my time," he said. "I watch TV because the situation is changing all the time."

Battal visited his family over Christmas break and left the country 10 days before the fighting started.

"My family is safe," he said. "I spoke to them two weeks ago and I'm sure they're fine."

The weeks since the war began find at least a few students, faculty, and sometimes more watching TV news in the Gallery Lounge.

Knowing people in the Gulf is a frequent reason for either delving into or avoiding wartime coverage.

Wendy Gullish, a 25-year-old american studies graduate student, has a brother stationed in Saudi Arabia.

"Since my brother's over there, it really affected my studies when the war broke out," she said, color rising in her face. "I concentrated too much on the

negative. Now i'm trying to put my energy into more positive things with school and my community."

The war is making some students more aware of the exonomy.

Kim Murray, a 21-year-old accounting major, said "I look at the war coverage in The Wall Street Journal. I watch TV a little and I scan the whole paper to keep up day by day. But I mainly look at the impact on the economy."

Students are debating the rights and wrongs of American involvement in the war.

Ken Towns, a 26-year-old business major, said the American public is blind to media influence.

"I am amazed how easily the American public has gottn seduced into supporting Bush," he said, shaking his head. "I watch CNN and it seems we're only getting one side of the story. I think the war's getting a lot larger than Bush had expected. America's just too overconfident."

Grant Boice, a 28-year-old industrial engineering graduate student, overheard Towns talking and joined the conversation.

"I think we're in the right," Boice said, "we've got the right people in charge and they're doing the right things. I watch TV just to keep up now, but the first 10 days it was getting to the point where I was almost obsessed with it. I believe what I see," Boice said, shrugging his shoulders. "Sure I'm biased, I'm an American."

### War stresses students

#### Elin Moral Capital Times Staff

Penn State Harrisburg students may not complain specifically about emotional problems from the Gulf War, say counselors in the Student Assistance Center, but the more they talk, the clearer it is that the war causes stress.

"Students experiencing war-related stress have the general feeling that the world is not a safe place," said Linda Meashey, a counselor in the Student Assistance Center.

Meashey said this feeling becomes more evident the more closely related to the war the student is.

"Everyone knows someone who knows someone who is involved," said Edward Beck, coordinator of personal counseling in the Student Assistance Center.

"This war affects everyone," Meashey said. "It has the potential to touch everyone's lives."

Marylou Martz, Health Services Coordinator, said there has been no noticeable increase in visits from students with stress-related ailments. But Martz said four faculty members have come to her, worried about their blood pressure and tension connected with the war.

Meashey said the immediacy of media coverage adds to stress.

"We can watch that war as it unfolds," Meashey said. "People who watch CNN (Cable News Network) constantly have a fear to leave the television. They feel that if they don't watch, something bad might happen."

As for reducing the anxiety caused by overexposure to the media, Beck recommended watching Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network (C-SPAN).

"C-SPAN presents just the news; briefings without the commentaries. It is comparable to a military briefing," Beck said. Martz said simply-turn off the television.

# Continuing Ed Expands

Victoria Phillips Capital Times Staff

The two-story Continuing Education building, across First St. from the CUB, is being renovated to include more classroom space.

Formerly an apartment complex, the building is in its second phase of development with the work scheduled to be finished in August 1992.

Ruth Leventhal, provost of Penn State Harrisburg, said the renovation will provide "important space for the campus." Growing enrollments require more classrooms space, Leventhal said.

Increased space for Continuing Education should also increase

community awareness of the college, the provost said.

According to James South, associate provost for administrative operations, the new layout includes three classrooms, two seminar rooms and two workshops on the first floor, said James South, associate provost for administrative operations. A student lounge, additional classrooms and workshops are on the first floor.

Accomodations for overnight guests of the university are also included in the building, South said.

South said 20 apartments were formerly located in the building, but the Meade Heights housing complex could meet current housing needs.

Capital Times Staff Meeting: Please plan to attend the staff meeting on Tuesday Feb. 19 at 12:30 in the office. Attendance would be highly recomended and greatly appreciated. If you cannot attend, please contact Jon, T.J., or Dr. Parisi.

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