

OPINION and REVIEW

Editorial:

The Gulf War: PRO?

by Jennifer Darr

War. I think lately that is a word we all hear at least a dozen times a day. I get uneasy when I hear that word. How about you?

When I hear the word "war" all sorts of things flash through my mind. I picture soldiers running through the streets with guns, and I see tanks cruising around. I can also see towns being bombed and people all around me dying. I can see planes flying over my house dropping bombs all over the place. The neighborhood schools are closed, so are the supermarkets and everything else.

However, this war isn't totally like that. Yes, there are jets bombing cities, but not American cities. This war is totally confined to the Middle East, with the exception of terrorist bomb threats. It doesn't really feel like a war, at least not how I was taught about how war is supposed to feel.

Most of us students were not alive during the Vietnam war. So what we have learned has only been from books or television programs. We don't know how it is supposed to feel.

When this crisis began last year, I really didn't think it would end up like this. I figured it would eventually be solved, like everything else is. When George Bush imposed the deadline of January 15th on Saddam Hussein, it seemed like plenty of time. But as the deadline slowly crept up, I realized that war was definitely a possibility.

The day before the deadline felt like a holiday. Don't read that statement wrong. It wasn't full of joy and love or anything like that. It was kind of quiet, like it is on holidays. I felt a sense of anticipation in the air. I expected midnight to arrive and bombs to drop all over America.

I never really agreed with the President and all of his military spending. I never really liked anything about him. When I heard on the radio that we were at war, it gave me more reasons to dislike him.

However, my opinion has drastically changed since the war has started. George Bush had no other choice but to take some initiative with Saddam Hussein. Hussein is a potential Hitler. If he is allowed to take over Kuwait, what country will be next? It is obvious that the man does not listen to reason; therefore, the only other option is force.

Although I do agree with trying to stop Hussein with force, I don't agree with the death and destruction that goes hand in hand with war. Unfortunately, it seems you can't have one without the other.

Editorial:

The Gulf War: CON!

by Vi Ong

The U.S commitment to the Gulf War has grown more intense each day. Already, there are more than 500,000 U.S. troops occupying Saudi Arabia, not to mention more than half a dozen P.O.W.'s who are still in an internecine struggle for what little of hope and life remain. Most of the U.S soldiers are young teenagers just like you and me-whose duty is to sacrifice their lives for an ambiguous purpose, a purpose which our government has failed to clarify.

All the propaganda and massive military buildup during the past months happened so quickly that it caught all of us by surprise, leaving most of us terrified, shocked, outraged. Of course, we are fully informed by our government and the media about the "insane" Saddam, a dictator and a potential Hitler. The President emphasizes his intolerance of Hussein's action to use his military illegally and without invitation to invade and occupy a sovereign country.

But what is the real motive behind President Bush and his administration for plunging this country into an unnecessary war? Are we truly fighting for democracy and the liberation of Kuwait?

The Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) tried to maintain high prices on oil by limiting their petroleum production. Iran and Iraq are members of this organization. However, when the war broke out between these two countries in early 1980, money was needed to finance the war.

Under such critical circumstances, both of these countries decided to go against OPEC-imposed production limits and produce as much as needed in order to finance their war. To compete against the world's oil market, Iraq sold their oil for far less than its value. At the end of the war, Iraq suddenly found itself in debt, especially to their neighbor Kuwait.

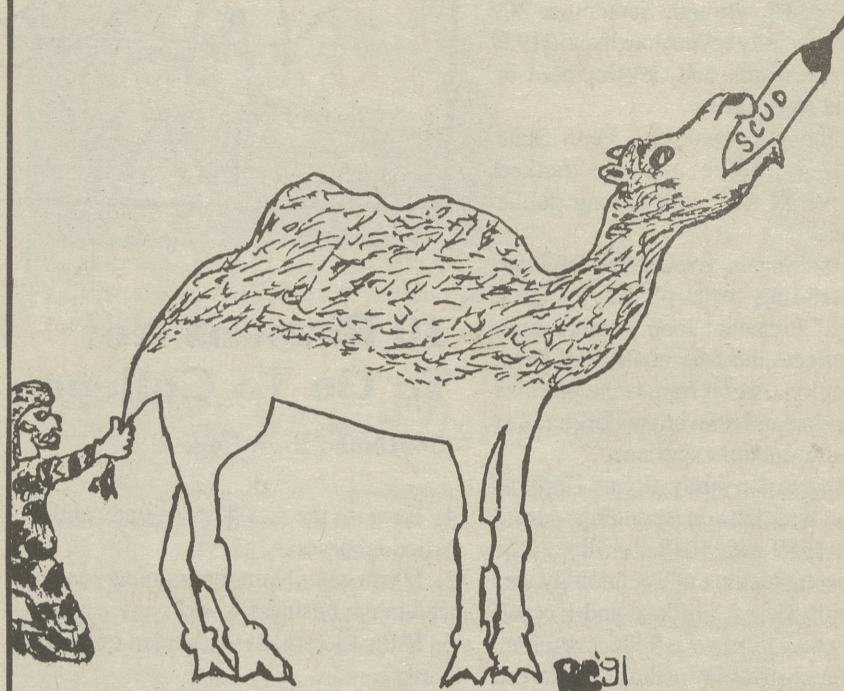
On the other side of the same coin, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia were given a nominal independent status by the U.S. and Britain in exchange for assurances of access to cheap oil. These countries have blocked the effort to raise oil prices, threatening countries like Iraq and Iran into bankruptcy.

Saddam Hussein's true motive to invade Kuwait was because of the Kuwait Emir's refusal to abide by OPEC oil quotas. Facing a monumental debt because of the oil prices at the July level, he chose to use military power to enforce the OPEC production limit and protect the Iraqi bourgeoisie's economic interests.

Petroleum is the most important world enterprise, and because the U.S. is no longer the leading industrial country, having control over the majority the world oil market is the only key for the U.S. government and capitalists to maintain the competitive edge in the world economy.

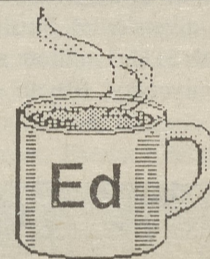
The invasion of Kuwait by Iraq is the perfect opportunity for Bush, the "Godfather," to obtrude into the Middle East like he did during the Grenada and the Panama crises. And in the name of democracy he manipulates in any way he can in order to establish U.S. dominance in the Middle East.

IRAQI MOBIL SCUD LAUNCHER



THE FRONT DESK

by Ed Tomezsko
Campus Executive Officer



My good friend and colleague John Romano and I were sitting on a sofa in the home of Dr. and Mrs. Thomas, Penn State's President and his wife, in State College on Wednesday evening. There was lots of easy, good-humored conversation going on. Friends were together. John, as he usually does, spoke softly and told me he had heard on the radio that coalition planes were leaving Saudi airspace. The Thomas' dinner was very pleasant. Obviously very few of the guests had heard the news; it was still early evening when we arrived. The war started at about quarter 'til seven, Eastern time.

Shortly thereafter, I got into the university van with Dr. and Mrs. Staudenmeier, both friends and colleagues, with a son who is an Army doctor. Over the van radio, Bernard Shaw was describing the airstrike on Baghdad, via CNN. The van ride was quiet. There was some whispered "gallows" humor; once someone asked to have the radio made louder. It was raining softly.

We arrived a few minutes later in the hotel. No one stopped to chat as we usually do. I began a long evening in my room by talking to my family in Media - we wept together - and then by watching the war unfold - I wept alone. Another highly detailed memory etched in my mind forever.

Six months before, peace was breaking out all over the world. We had just returned from visiting Czechoslovakia, finding new relatives there, and still rejoicing in the discovery. Six months later, we could not, or did not want to have guessed that there would be another war.

Anyone of us on campus could have predicted trouble there, because the trouble in the Middle East has been essentially continuous throughout my lifetime, and it was bound to come again sooner or later. Our government either chose to ignore the immediate trouble signals from Iraq, or simply missed them, or saw the signals but had other things on their minds, or etc.

Hindsight is always 20 - 20. Just read the newspapers today - everything is obvious in hindsight. Our own humanity makes foresight really difficult. George Santayana is right - those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Why bother to learn history? Why bother to learn? Why bother? Why?

This war is up close and personal. We all have friends, acquaintances, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, lots of Penn Staters in the desert. CNN gives us "coverage 24 hours a day." It really hurts to know that some have died and more will die - it doesn't matter about which side. It is a real source of pride to see and hear of our military's courage in the desert. It is angering to see terror drop from the sky. It is amusing to hear some learn of the law of gravity. When the SCUD is hit by the Patriot, whatever goes up must come down, even if in pieces.

Here's the point. Lance Corporal Tony, my daughter's Marine pen-pal, gave it to us. He wrote to her "I'm really happy that you are a *good student* because that *will help you*." Tony knows about Santayana. These five words - "good student . . . will help you" - are the essence of the problem. Knowledge is the need. The answers to the four questions above are for you to develop. Knowledge will help you.

I want to remember John Romano for better reasons, but I will take to my grave the recollection of him telling me about Operation Desert Storm.

I have one further suggestion. We have several addresses of our student-soldiers who are in the military and serving in this operation. Perhaps we could even start a campus bulletin board with a list of names and addresses. Whatever your personal convictions about war and peace, please write to these people and to anyone else you know to let them know that you care about them. Connections to home are crucial. I'll even give our Marine's address. If war bothers you, think about them, write them lots of letters, send lots of cards, do something positive for them.