

Editorials

If Bush is stupid... so indirectly are we?

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Every now and then, I'll fall into an argument with one of my fellow PSU-Delco friends about politics. Most of them would argue that the President is the dumbest and the stupidest nut-head in America, with no proper substantive reason. I get confused a lot by these harsh words and other negative statements they utter.

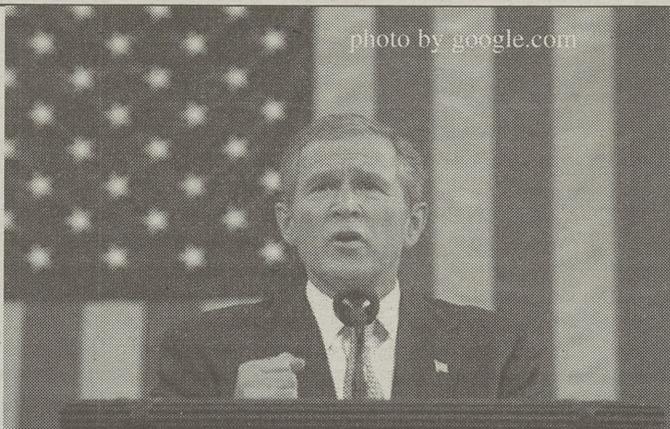
The negative image President Bush is receiving nowadays can be attributed partly to the liberal media. Honest people can disagree on an issue, but that does not make them stupid. To agree or disagree with somebody on certain things is part of life. So the fact that one disagrees or misunderstands President Bush's policies does not make him a stupid person.

As the head of the executive branch of the U.S. government, it is the president's job to execute the duties of the legislative (Senate and Congress) branch of government. Thus, the policies the President implements aren't based solely on his ego, but also partly based on both the legislature and the judiciary branch.

So if Mr. Bush does something unconstitutional, the legislative branch has the right to impeach him. So far, the legislative branch that provides executive oversight has not attempted to impeach him yet on anything because he is acting within the confines of the constitution.

The decision that has made Mr. Bush very unpopular was to go to war in Iraq. But before I began talking about Mr. Bush and his war on terrorism in Iraq, let me back down a little bit into how all these wars were triggered.

We all know that the decision to go to war started back at 9/11, when it was confirmed that the Taliban sector of the Al-Qaeda network was responsible for the attacks. The Bush Administration with authoritative



National Intelligence Estimate and the intelligence from all the intelligent agencies across the U.S. they concluded Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction. Thus Congress voted to authorize Mr. Bush, once again, to wage war against Iraq. Now, we know that Saddam didn't have weapons of mass destruction. But this assessment was the popular opinion among the Israeli Intelligence, the British Intelligence, the French Intelligence, and most of the leading intelligence agencies around the world. It was this popular opinion that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction that caused even the U.N. Security Council to lay out seventeen resolutions on Iraq. The last of the U.N. resolutions asked Saddam to disarm all his weapons or face consequences. And that consequence meant W-A-R. That was why Mr. Bush went to the Congress for permission to use force to enforce the last U.N. resolution, and the Congress agreed.

Now, nobody questions the legitimacy of the war. The question now is how the war was executed? The war on Iraq is not popular because of the mounting death toll of U.S. soldiers and the car bombings shown daily on T.V. This in effect had made the president very unpopular because he led the war to Iraq and he is now in a tight spot making the big decisions. But we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that it was the Congress who authorized the President to go to war in

votes by the Congress, allowed him to use force against the Taliban in Afghanistan, and he reacted immediately. Mr. Bush's argument was that the U.S. could no longer sit down for enemies to come attack us.

After the President and the Congress reviewed the

the first place. And these same Congressmen were elected by the American people, and that their votes are the voices of the American people.

So regardless of the war on Iraq being a good or bad decision, one can apparently infer that the majority of the American people initially supported the war, hoping for a swift victory over Iraq and a democratic system of government for most countries in the Middle East.

So if one said that Mr. Bush is the dumbest and stupidest President America has ever get, one might better watch his back first before the assault backstabber gets to him. Because one is the most foolish and the most incompetent moron to have ever entrusted his or her vote of decision-making to a president, whom one considers stupider than he or she is in the first place. And by this case, who is more stupid? So next time, one should mind his language when talking trash about the President because it isn't worth it, and that that person is indirectly insulting him or herself or maybe one of his lovely family members or neighbors.

Also, we should remember that war is not like a fast-food hamburger where you can stick your mouth into and out at random. It has consequences.

Now what the president is doing is relying on his top generals and commanders on the ground in Iraq to make the best wartime decisions and that's the best thing a President can do. Mr. Bush now some of the best of minds any President could ever have around him, helping him make proper decisions for the nation as a whole and Americans should be grateful for that.

Instead of many American nagging back and forth, and calling the President hostile names (which won't solve the problem!), they should rather rally behind him and offer constructive criticisms and meaningful suggestions.

Because, regardless of whether we like the war or not, it has already taken place and we must find a way out. So this is not the right time to pull each other down, but to support each other.

After all, President Bush had been elected twice by the American people, and is now the face of the American people to the outside world.

In the Footsteps of the Inca

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Imagine telling friends and family that you spent 15 days in Latin America rediscovering the ruins of an ancient civilization. Furthermore, imagine telling the tale of how you hiked through the Andes for hours on end, encountering Millipedes, Tarantulas, and the occasional Llama, to arrive at one of the great lost cities of the world. These are just some of the stories a group of 23 Penn State students, professors, and friends came home with just a few weeks ago after a two week stay in Peru.

All of the students attending received credit for taking one or two courses relating in some way to Peru or Latin America, ranging from Art History with Dr. Kirker, Iberian Studies with Dr. Kelley, and Community Service with Norma Notzold. The result was a once in a lifetime experience with college credits thrown in for good measure; a formula few could resist.

The group spent time in Lima, Cusco, Puno, and Arequipa, completing trip assignments and visiting

countless sites along the way. Beyond this, a small group of students including Elizabeth Larkin, Megan Garrity, and Tom Fiore, participated in community serv-

photo by Connie Kirker



ice programs under the direction of Norma Notzold.

This included visiting a homeless shelter for elderly people and working at a local hospital in Lima, and helping out at an orphanage in Cusco, an event in which almost all students participated.

All travelers had a chance to experience Peru in its glorious splendor. From its customs and foods, including Cuy (Guinea Pig) and Alpaca steaks, to Lima and Cusco's electric nightlife, something especially enjoyed by students.

But the highlight of the trip was without a doubt visiting the lost city of Machu Picchu. Participants had two options; take the train directly to the new city of Machu Picchu and arriving at the ruins by bus, or hike for 6 hours across the Andes on the old Inca Road and arrive at Machu Picchu the way the Inca did. Those who braved the trail did not regret it, although a trip to the local hot springs was a must after the grueling hike.

The trip was originally going to last 9 days, but due to some complications with the airline, was extended to 15. This led to a few more locations being added to the itinerary. This best of these cities was Puno, on the coast of lake Titicaca. From the city, students visited the famous Floating Islands of the Uros, scenic Taquille Island, and even spent a day in Bolivia visiting Copacabana and Isla del Sol.

The final destination was Arequipa, where students had the opportunity to horseback ride across the countryside. Although not all students were proficient with horses, others such as Ms. Elizabeth Larkin were equestrian pros leaving the rest of the group in the dust.

After two weeks of summer weather, it was time to come home and return to classes. Parting was bittersweet since not all students attended the same campus, but the memories and friendships would last a lifetime. Ask anyone one on the trip and they'll tell you; this was a once in a lifetime trip worth every penny.