

Editorial Opinion

Returning home

As the Persian Gulf War dwindles, Bush must deal with domestic crisis

For almost seven months, the U.S. government worked with other world leaders to get Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait.

For another month and a half, Americans watched television reports and read newspaper accounts of the Persian Gulf War.

But now, the focus of attention must turn to the domestic front.

The economy is in the worst recession in a decade. Unemployment has been on the rise consistently during the Bush administration. And more than 32 million Americans live in poverty. Thirteen million of them are children.

Last week, Bush urged Congress to "move forward aggressively on the domestic front." Perhaps the people of America should be give the president a similar message.

As long as Bush's military victory glitters in the public eye, some White House officials have said they will be satisfied in doing only enough domestically to appease the Democrats.

Is this the message a country hurting from the casualties of an economic recession needs to hear?

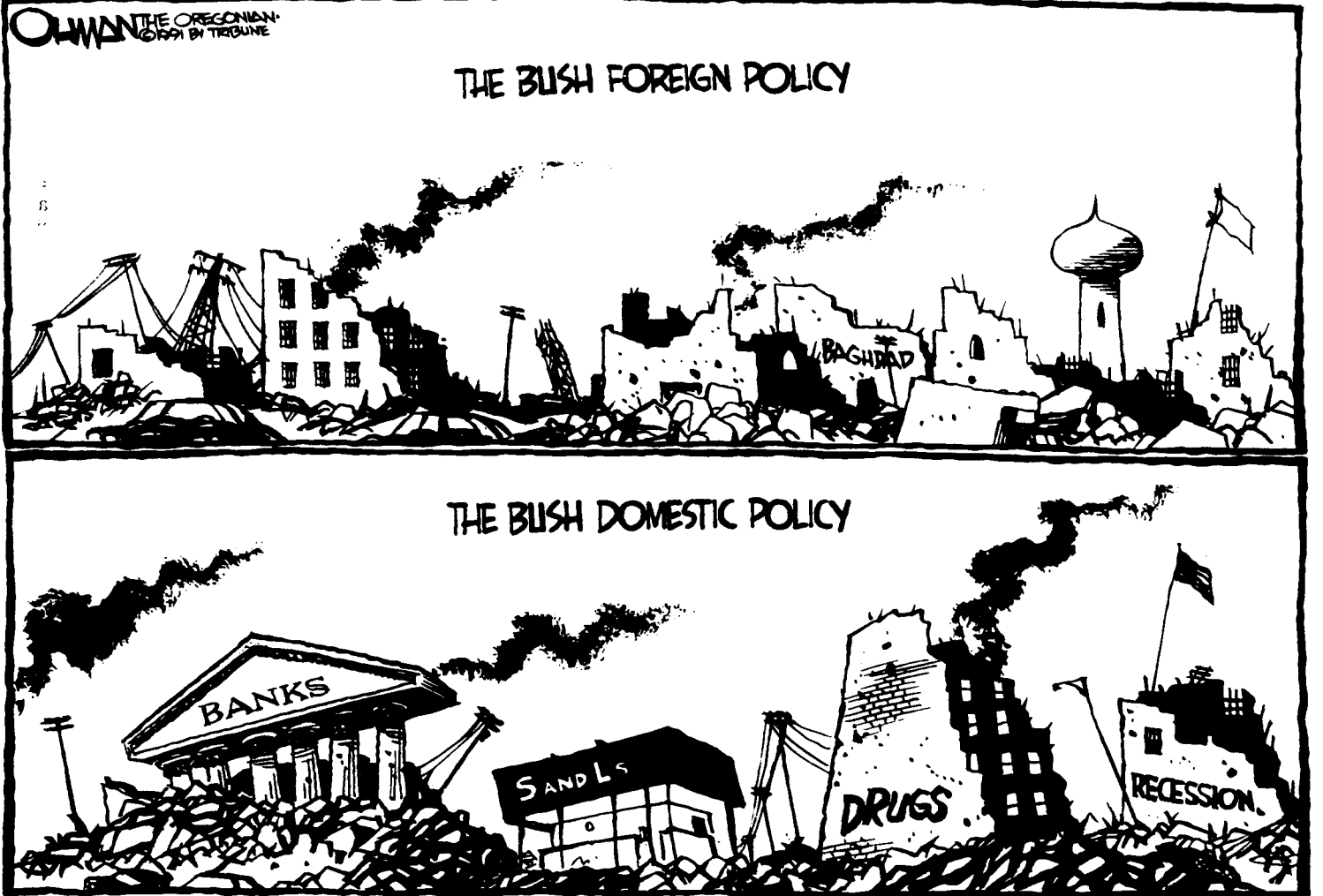
The Democrats have rightly said Bush doesn't have a domestic agenda. Since the Bush administration took over in 1988, little time and energy has been spent on salvaging the ailing democracy. President Bush seems to think that the only way to heal our economy, health and education system is through tax breaks and tougher actions against criminals.

If he really cares about equal opportunity, the plight of the homeless, the unemployed and underemployed, then perhaps he should be working to solve those problems instead of jumping on to another crusade — the drug war.

While the Persian Gulf crisis may have required Bush's undivided attention for those six months, it is now time to return home.

Ignoring problems such as civil rights and the economy, or addressing them only slightly will not make them go away. The issues must be dealt with in depth if any solutions are to be found.

It's up to the citizens of the United States to make sure our leaders do just that.



Reader Opinion

Give HEMP a chance

As a sociology major, I am impressed by the rapid mobilization of the Hemp movement.

Within the last two semesters, there have been several significant events for the movement here at Penn State. First, Jack Herer's HEMP Tour brought the issue here in September. And on the coat tails of the tour, Penn State NORML and Student First Step formed.

Now in a collaborated effort, PSNORML and Student First Step are bringing the Hemp Conference to Penn State and a hemp referendum to the USG elections. Herer's book, "The Emperor Wears No Clothes," is now receiving some serious attention from scholars in the fields of agriculture, economics and environment.

The Hemp Conference, which will be here from March 21 to 22, will bring Herer back, along with others, to discuss the relation of hemp to the oil industry, the agricultural industry and the environment.

The marijuana referendum, which will appear on the USG election ballot March 27, reflects the views of hundreds of students who signed petitions regarding privacy rights. This referendum is also significant because it represents the movement's entry into the political process as an interest group.

The hemp movement has been gaining steam nationwide, with marked success at Penn State, so I feel every student should attend the Hemp Conference, in order to find out what the group is talking about, and vote on the upcoming referendum.

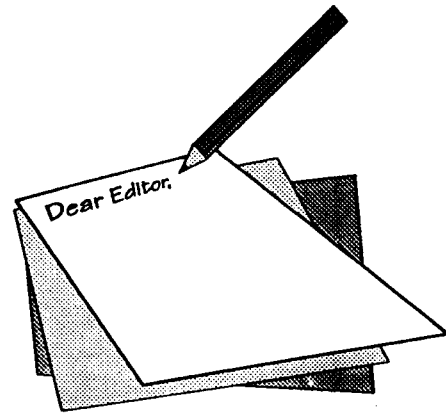
Brian Green
junior-sociology

Where to write

State College and University Park residents may submit letters in person at 123 S. Burrowes St. with photo identification. Others may write to:

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Letters to the Editor
123 S. Burrowes St.
University Park, Pa. 16801-3882

All writers must provide phone number and address for verification. Letters may be no longer than two typewritten, double-spaced pages. Letters of up to three pages may be submitted as forums. The Collegian reserves the right to condense or reject submissions. Submissions become the property of Collegian Inc.



Women Students, the USG Department of Women's Concerns and the USG Supreme Court for the support and guidance they provided during the past several months. It was really encouraging to receive such thoughtful assistance from the University community.

Men Stopping Rape is a group dedicated to educating people about the prevalence of rape, domestic violence and sexual assault in our society. We believe that the widespread problem of violence towards women needs to be addressed by men for the simple reason that it is men who are the perpetrators of the violence.

According to FBI estimates, one out of every three women will be a victim of sexual assault in her lifetime. Until we, as men, are willing to question and change some of our beliefs concerning women, violence and sexuality, this terrible injustice will never end.

As an officially recognized organization, Men Stopping Rape hopes to work in a variety of ways, presenting programs, distributing information and providing advocacy and support for different groups and events focusing on sexual assault. Our meetings are at 8 p.m. Mondays in 304 Willard, and new

members — men and women who share our beliefs and are committed to change — are always welcome.

Next Monday, Feb. 18, we will be viewing the movie "The Accused," and we hope to see many new people. If you are interested in working with the group in achieving our goals, or if you simply want to learn more about these issues and increase your own awareness, please attend. Working together with open minds, men can and must stop rape.

Eric Bokelberg
graduate-mechanical engineering
Michael Davidson
senior-architecture

Living proof

Although abortion is one of the most pressing issues in our society, we find the lack of information at our university distressing.

Human Life Awareness Week, from March 18-22, gives you the perfect opportunity to attend four informative sessions related to life issues. Doug Scott will kick-off the week with an expose on Planned Parenthood. Scott, the author of "Inside Planned Parenthood," leads the national pro-life boycott against corporate supporters of Planned Parenthood.

On Tuesday, discover which of your favorite athletes support life in the film, "Champions For Life." We will also be showing the film "Living Proof" in 73 Willard.

Penn Staters will share their personal stories in a panel discussion on Wednesday. These speakers will include a member who was adopted, a woman who had an abortion, and a woman who, despite adverse circumstances, gave life to her child. This forum will be held in 212 Eisenhower Chapel.

Do you remember Peg Luksik, the "housewife from Johnstown," who took 46 percent of the vote from Barbara Hafer in the 1990 Republican primaries for governor? She will speak on Thursday about her strong stand for life and answer any questions concerning her creation of Mom's House, a home for unwed mothers. This presentation will take place in 112 Chambers. All sessions will begin at 7 p.m. and will have question and answer periods to address your concerns. We only hope that you will try to end the ignorance by coming to Human Life Awareness Week.

Diana Deckert
member, Penn State Students For Life
Kristen Bernath
president, Penn State Students For Life

the Collegian

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Letters Policy: The Daily Collegian encourages comments on news coverage, editorial policy and University affairs. Letters must be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than one and one-half pages. Forums must also be typewritten, double-spaced and no longer than three pages.

Students' letters should include semester standing, major and campus of the writer. Letters from alumni should include the major and year of graduation of the writer. All writers should provide their address and phone number for verification of the letter. Letters should be signed by no more than two people. Names may be withheld on request.

The Collegian reserves the right to edit letters for length and to reject letters if they are libelous or do not conform to standards of good taste. Because of the number of letters received, the Collegian cannot guarantee publication of all the letters it receives. Letters may also be selected for publication in The Weekly Collegian. All letters received become the property of Collegian Inc.

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Wearing a yellow ribbon should not dictate politics

"Now," he said, "the end ... now nothing but wrath and weeping!"
—Dr. Matthew O'Connor in Djuna Barnes' "Nightwood"

My Opinion

John Antinori



As our troops return from the Persian Gulf, they clearly deserve our thanks and honor. They have done a dirty job for all of us — protecting our (cheap) oil supply. Anyone who, in the last six months, contemplated their own possible participation in combat should respect the courage of our soldiers. They should be welcomed as the heroes they are.

By all means hug a soldier. Let them into ballgames free, loan them money, buy them drinks, fill their cars with gasoline (Yes! especially this). But do not respond to troop homecomings as if our armed forces were returning gold-medal Olympians. We can honor our troops for their courage and sacrifice without resorting to loud, gaudy nationalism, incessant flag-waving and chants of "U.S.A., U.S.A."

And we can honor our troops while at the same time criticizing our government and examining the nation's soul in the wake of six weeks of extreme vio-

lence. (This works both ways. Dissenters can criticize the war and Bush while still displaying flags and yellow ribbons.)

From the beginning of the Persian Gulf War, Americans have perceived the conflict primarily in terms of two previous wars, World War II and Vietnam, especially in supporting American troops in the field.

But the events of 1991 are different from the events of 1945 or 1972, and the public's reaction to victory in the gulf, a victory in which America was awash in wrath but spared much weeping, must be different as well. Americans

must honor the troops and at the same time avoid overweening pride and retain a critical eye when analyzing the events of the last six months.

This balance can be struck only by separating appreciation for our troops from political analysis of the war and events associated with it. When political support for the Vietnam War began to wane, American troops unjustly became targets of some Americans' political frustrations. A generation earlier, the Allied victory in World War II accompanied equally popular politics.

From the start of the Persian Gulf War, Americans have been determined to perceive the conflict through a World War II paradigm. While this has resulted in enthusiastic support for our troops, it has also encouraged the public to accept uncritically the Bush administration's actions. But Americans must refrain from transferring their joy, pride, relief and righteousness from the battlefield to politics.

Here, briefly, are a number of issues that Americans must consider when celebrating victory.

How many Iraqi civilians did our

But Americans must refrain from transferring their joy, pride, relief, and righteousness from the battlefield to politics.

troops kill? Before supporting the war, Americans need to know how many innocent Iraqis died from American air attacks. They also need to see dead bodies on the television so that the human cost of the war is clear, because American news censors have managed to eliminate the human factor from the war coverage. For example, The New York Times and National Public Radio have reported Iraqi atrocities against animals in the Kuwaiti zoo. Meanwhile, Americans remain uninformed about civilian deaths.

One thing is clear. The Iraqi military proved to be a less formidable force than the Pentagon had billed it to be before Jan. 6. Given this, was it necessary to completely destroy Baghdad's infrastructure before engaging the Iraqi army? One reason given for abandoning the blockade of Iraq was that it would harm civilians long before it

would harm Hussein's army. But once the war began, the United States attacked cities before concentrating on the army. This city of four million now has no electricity, running water or sewage. In this week's New Republic, Michael Kinsley recalls the Iraqi troops' dumping Kuwaiti babies from incubators and wonders how many incubators are now functioning in Baghdad.

How chummy do we plan on being with Syria? Really, the only difference between Syrian President Hafez Assad and Saddam Hussein is that Saddam is a marauding, fatigue-clad blunderer, lacking in patience and subtly. Assad is a ruthless and brilliant politician. Whereas Hussein stormed into Kuwait, provoking an American response, Assad used the Gulf War as a cover for his de facto annexation of Lebanon, a project he has patiently pursued for over 15 years.

According to Amnesty International, Assad considers torture a routine political tool. Syria is also a chief exporter of state sponsored terrorism; terrorists under Assad's patronage are, among other things, suspected of having destroyed that Pan American airliner over Scotland in 1989. Bush is extremely cynical when he denounces human rights abuses in Iraq and then exchanges smiles and promises with the butcher of Hama.

What about them oil wells? The earth is on fire. And could keep burning for over two years, perhaps burning as much as 15 percent of Kuwait's oil reserves. What effect will this have on local and global climates? As long as these fires rage, there is little reason to feel good about what has happened in the gulf.

Yes, the nation must welcome its troops home. But it must also remember that there are reasons for weeping and new targets for our wrath.

John Antinori is a graduate student in English and a Friday columnist for The Daily Collegian.