

U.S. must not use armed force in Gulf

The United States should think twice (and perhaps a few more times) before using military force to deal with Iraq.

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was despicable. Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein had promised he would not invade Kuwait over their oil price dispute. Then, claiming he was intervening in a dubious "popular revolution" in Kuwait, he attacked and installed a government of Iraqi officials. After promising to withdraw his troops, Hussein announced that a largely Iraqi "Kuwait volunteer army" of 80,000 would remain. Now Hussein is reportedly amassing troops on the border of Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. government insists he will invade there, also.

The real issue so far for the the American government has been largely economic: higher prices at domestic and international gas pumps and falling stock prices, the result of the tension in the Persian Gulf. President George Bush is talking tough with the Iraqis, promising military intervention if Hussein doesn't back off. He has sent U.S. officials to meet with the Saudi Arabian government to discuss ways of defending that country. This could include the presence of U.S. troops.

This would be a grave mistake. Any kind of U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia will give the Iraqis an excuse to invade on the grounds that they must strike first "in self-defense." Bush should pay attention to his own economic and diplomatic efforts that have been under way since the invasion began.

The international boycott of Iraq has been the most united and effective in recent memory. The United Nations Security Council has voted 13-0 to condemn the invasion and adopt economic sanctions against Iraq. Other major industrial powers, such as Japan and the European Community, have stopped purchasing Iraqi oil. The Soviet Union and China, Iraq's biggest arms suppliers, have cut off their shipments and expressed regret that their weapons were used in the invasion.

If these measures are enforced, Iraq's petroleum-dependent economy and its war machine will be in jeopardy. Iraq has sharply reduced the amount of oil flowing through its outbound pipelines because few countries want to buy it, and the country will not be able to finance or operate any kind of warfare — against Saudi Arabia or another Arab country — without money from its oil-based economy or weapons to fight. The U.S. should give the non-military measures time.



Smith latest focus of ethics violation

Oregon legislators and ethics aren't mixing well these days. The latest focus is on Rep. Denny Smith (R-5th Cong. District).

Smith was a director of American Federal Savings and Loans from 1977 to 1987. He was forced off the board after American Federal merged with State Federal Savings and Loan in an attempt to save financially-strapped American Federal.

However, in 1986, Smith told regulators that he would not agree to a merger unless they guaranteed him and other directors protection from federal lawsuits in case the merger failed.

First of all, directors of any business or organization are inherently responsible for decisions they render. If Smith was worried about lawsuits, he obviously should not have been making decisions for the company.

Secondly, as a director of federally-insured American Federal, Smith had a personal stake in the outcome of the merger, and contacting regulators asking for immunity for the institution, while a member of Congress, is a conflict of interest.

The House ethics manual states that it is

an "unwarranted abuse of the representative role" to directly ask or imply a request for favoritism.

The post-merger American Home Savings and Loans Bank of Salem eventually collapsed at a cost to the taxpayers of \$113 million. State Federal folded, costing taxpayers \$150 million. Seven men connected to State Federal were convicted of fraud and embezzlement.

House Democrats have debated since January whether to file an ethics complaint against Smith, but they are afraid of complaints against members of their own party who attempted to help floundering savings and loans.

It is a sad state of affairs when discussions and investigations of questionable ethics behavior is stifled because of partisan politics. It is also appalling that 98 percent of House incumbents are assured of re-election simply through name familiarity, even when so many congressmen are under scrutiny of ethics violations.

But worst of all, we the people elect them. It is time that representatives are more closely scrutinized by voters.

Forum

Bill restricting log exports will benefit everyone

By Peter DeFazio

Imagine two ships passing in the night — one carrying Oregon logs to a Japanese lumber mill, the other one carrying Russian logs to an American mill. It doesn't make much sense, does it?

Commentary

Yet that's exactly the prospect we're facing as one major American wood products manufacturer prepares to buy logs from the Soviet Union for its U.S. mills.

What is going on here? Oregon mills are closing; thousands of workers are facing layoffs. Owners cite a lack of timber and incredibly high stumpage prices.

At the same time, huge vol-

umes of unprocessed logs are trucked to the Ports of Coos Bay, Newport and Astoria, loaded onto foreign-flagged ships, and transported to mills in nations in the Far East that raise trade barriers against our finished wood products.

Most Oregonians agree that stopping log exports is an essential element of any plan to ensure a long-term supply of timber for Oregon's wood products industry. For most of us, the picture of Weyerhaeuser shipping its logs to China and Japan, while Louisiana-Pacific buys logs from the Soviet Union is a symptom of a national disorder. Add domestic mill closures, unemployment and timber shortages to the mix, and you have to wonder what our policy-makers are using for brains.

My legislation to stop state

log exports, permanently enact the ban on federal log exports and close the loopholes in the federal ban was just passed by Congress and sent to the President for his signature. I've created quite a stir by calling for restrictions on log exports from private lands as well.

And why not? The United States is the only nation on earth with a modern wood processing industry that still allows the export of raw logs. No other nation exports valuable raw materials during a time of domestic shortages.

Many small woodlot owners are concerned about the effects private log export restrictions might have on their profits. Their worries are almost certainly needless.

First, if federal timber supplies are reduced by even a fraction of what some experts

predict, domestic stumpage prices for private timber will remain at historically high levels — with or without further log export restrictions.

And second, private log export restrictions could be tied to reductions in federal timber supplies. That would mean that some exports would continue, probably under federal license. I would strongly support preferential treatment for small woodlot owners if and when the federal government begins

to restrict private log exports.

I believe in America. I believe that we can remain the world's leading industrial power, providing our citizens with one of the world's best standards of living, if we begin to promote policies that favor industrial development over raw material exports and fair trade over "free" trade.

Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) is the representative of Oregon's 4th Congressional District.

Commentary Policy

The Oregon Daily Emerald welcomes commentaries from the public concerning topics of interest to the University community.

Commentaries should be between 750 and 1,000 words, legible and signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified upon submission.