

## EDITORIAL

### Hot air, no substance characterized debate

President Bush has received the OK from Congress. Saturday, after three days of debate, both the House and the Senate approved resolutions giving Bush permission to use force to remove Saddam Hussein's army from Kuwait.

Although the votes were relatively close, reflecting the division and lack of consensus among Americans on the issue, the president has called this a clear and decisive victory.

There are no longer any obstacles in the way of a Persian Gulf war.

A "no force, give sanctions more time" resolution from Congress was the last card most peace supporters held to persuade Bush not to invade Kuwait and Iraq.

However, anyone watching the debates that were broadcast on the public television station had to be disillusioned with the decision-making process used in Washington.

Each senator and representative had an opportunity to address other congressional colleagues. While a scant few people in the debate were moving and enlightening, many of our leaders were long-winded and had nothing substantial to say.

Alaska Rep. Don Young recognized this pattern and asked to have the time limit for speakers reduced to ten minutes. This was a good start, but that time limit probably could have been cut in half.

It seemed that many of the speakers felt obliged to use all of their allotted time when they really had nothing to say.

More than once, viewers were forced to sit through 15- to 20-minute diatribes that went in circles, never making a point. When the orators of many of these fine speeches were finished, it still was not clear which position they favored. It appeared that they didn't want to take sides on national TV. One speaker spent the majority of his time comparing the debate to a decision made in Athens in 421 B.C. What's the point?

There are more than 400,000 American men and women waiting to face death in a desert halfway around the world, and the "best minds in this country" are more worried about using up all of their television time than they are about making a point.

The old saying "If you don't have anything nice to say don't say anything at all," should be changed to "If you don't have anything at all to say, don't waste our time," and painted on the walls of the Capitol.



### Walk out, attend rally, become involved

University budget problems due to the passage of Measure 5 have students, faculty and staff worrying about tuition costs and job security.

An ASUO- and University Democrat-sponsored walkout of classes today at noon to oppose proposed tuition increases should encourage lawmakers to study alternative means for funding higher education.

Students should, if they choose, walk out of class in protest, but not just to take a holiday. Students who walk out should attend the rally in front of Johnson Hall to show the state of Oregon that they truly are concerned about the future costs of attending Oregon universities and colleges. Governor Barbara Roberts' proposed budget package includes higher education cuts of about \$74 million. Besides predictions of higher tuition costs, almost 500 jobs are scheduled to be cut. The University could become the most expensive public university in the 13 Western states.

Oregon must find a source of revenue

that does not come out of student pockets. Students can barely afford college at the current costs. If the University and the state do not keep tuition costs reasonable, an exodus of students from the University is certain.

The Legislature needs to study all possibilities. A sales tax is acceptable if all the revenue is put into education. But we need to see what the Legislature proposes before the University increases tuition.

Once an increase is in place, nothing will reduce it. If tuition is raised and then the Legislature finds alternative funding, tuition will not drop to reflect new revenue.

It is up to students to keep the Legislature and the University honest. Walk out of class and attend the rally today. But don't stop there.

Write letters to legislators and newspapers. Call your legislators and remind them that you vote as well as attend school.

Oregon's educational health is in our hands. Make today a start in the reassurance of Oregon's educational future.

## OPINION

# President Bush's letter entertaining but incomplete

Editor's note: The letter from President George Bush to college students is on Page 3.

On Thursday, I found a letter in my message box from none other than the 41st president of the United States, George Herbert Walker Bush, faxed to me from the student newspaper at the University of Arizona. The letter is interesting, but incomplete. And before I pledge my support to Operation Desert Shield, I'd like President Bush to answer a few of my questions.

Bush begins by setting up the Persian Gulf crisis as a clear-cut battle between the forces of good and evil. He then traipses through other familiar territory. He writes of the brutal Iraqi forces torturing Kuwaiti citizens. He mentions the good-guy role of the United States, and why it's our job "to stop ruthless aggression."

We then get to read a passage from a Christmas card sent to Bush from a soldier somewhere in the Saudi desert. "We will do what must be done," writes Sgt. 1st Class Terry Hatfield. "We stand ready and waiting. God bless you and the U.S.A."

Quick. Somebody get me some Kleenex.

An Associated Press story about the president's letter said it was sent "urging college students to rally behind the effort to force Iraq from Kuwait." An interesting word choice: Rally. It brings to mind cheerleaders and basketball games, flags and confetti. Someone who reads Mr. Bush's letter may sense a certain "rah-



### The Fine Print

by  
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rah" attitude in his writing.

"And so let us remember and support," he writes, "all our fine servicemen and women as they stand ready on the frontier of freedom, willing to do their duty and do it well."

I may be paranoid, but Bush sounds like a coach making a desperate pre-game speech in a lockerroom; "bench players" (college students) are being urged to get ready to "come off the bench" (go to war) if most of the "starters" (soldiers in the desert) happen to "foul out of the game" (get shot or gassed). Why else would he want the support of college students? Why else would he try to set up his little Arabian Nights adventure as the ultimate battle between light and darkness? Is a draft on the horizon? I would like to know, and, of course, Bush doesn't tell me.

There are some questions, however, that Bush seems to answer on his own. If Kuwait is worth thousands of American lives, why isn't Liberia or Somalia?

How stupid of me. They have no oil. Why aren't Amnesty International reports from regimes in Central and South America worth our time? Oh, that's right. Those "aggressors" are our friends, as was Saddam when he "used chemical warfare on his own people — including children."

Of course, all of this comes from a man who has given the U.N. sanctions *five whole months* to work, when less stringent sanctions in South Africa have been in place for years. This is the same man who condemns the invasion of Kuwait a year after he sends paratroopers into Panama. Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised.

A war with Iraq is a matter of absolutes to Bush, and when there are absolute problems, absolute solutions seem to follow. Again, the letter is lacking in concrete, straightforward information. Do these solutions include drafting more soldiers? Bombing civilian targets in Iraq? The use of nuclear weapons? Bush raises more questions than he answers in his letter, and if he wants our support, he should at least make an effort to tell us what's really going on.

There's one last bit of information Mr. Bush left out: the opinions of soldiers who don't want to be in the Middle East. "We're being used," said one reservist I saw interviewed on TV news report. "These people don't want us here." Of course, that serviceman probably didn't send the president a Christmas card.

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