

FORUM

A lesson in right vs. wrong

By George Bush

If armed men invaded a home in this country, killed those in their way, stole what they wanted and then announced that the home was now theirs — no one would hesitate about what must be done.

Commentary

And that is why we must not hesitate about what must be done halfway around the world in Kuwait.

There is much in the modern world that is subject to doubts or questions — washed in shadows of gray. But not the brutal aggression of Saddam Hussein against a peaceful, sovereign nation and its people. It's black and white. The facts are clear. The choice is unambiguous.

Right vs. wrong

The terror Saddam Hussein has imposed upon Kuwait violates every principle of human decency. Listen to what Amnesty International has documented. "Widespread abuses of human rights have been perpetrated by Iraqi forces ... arbitrary arrests and detention without trial of thousands ... widespread torture ... imposition of the death penalty and the extrajudicial execution of hundreds of unarmed civilians, including children."

Including children. There is no horror that could make this a more obvious conflict of good vs. evil. The man who used chemical warfare against his own people — once again including children — now oversees public hangings of dissenters. And daily his troops commit atrocities against Kuwaiti citizens.

This brutality has reverberated throughout the entire world. If we do not follow the dictates of our inner moral compass and stand up for human life, then this lawlessness will threaten the peace and democracy of the emerging new world order we now see: this long-dreamed-of vision we've all worked toward for so long.

A year after the joyous dawn of freedom's light in Eastern Europe, a dark evil has descended in another part of the world. But we have the chance — and we have the obligation — to stop ruthless aggression.

I have been in war. I have known the terror of combat. And I tell you this with all my heart: I don't want there to be a war ever again. I am determined to do absolutely everything possible to search for a peaceful resolution to this crisis — but only if the peace is genuine, if it rests on principle, not appeasement.

But while we search for that

answer, in the gulf young men and women are putting their own lives on hold in order to stand for peace in our world and for the essential value of human life itself. Many are younger than my own children. Your age, most of them. Doing tough duty for something they believe in.

Let me tell you about one of the soldiers over there, Sgt. 1st Class Terry Hatfield, a young man from Georgia. He sent me a Christmas card and this is



what he said.

"Mr. President, I just wanted you to know my soldiers and I are ready to do whatever mission you decide. Freedom as we know and enjoy has been taken away from another country and must be restored. Although we are separate from family, friends, loved ones, we will do what must be done ... We stand ready and waiting. God bless you and the U.S.A."

Terry understands the moral obligation that has compelled our extraordinary multi-national coalition to make this stand in the gulf. To look this international terrorist straight in the eye and say: No concessions.

To proclaim now and for the future: No compromises. To bear witness by our presence to the fact that aggression will not be rewarded.

Terry waits thousands of miles from the White House, yet we share the same thoughts. We desperately want peace. But we know that to reward aggression would be to end the promise of our new world order. To reward aggression would be to destroy the United Nation's promise as international peacekeeper. To reward aggression would be to condone the acts of those who desecrate the promise of human life itself.

And we will do none of this. There are times in life when we confront values worth fighting for. This is one such time.

Each day that passes means another day for Iraq's forces to dig deeper into their stolen land. Another day Saddam Hussein can work toward building his nuclear arsenal and perfecting his chemical and biological weapons capability. Another day of atrocities for Amnesty International to document. Another day of international outlaws, instead of international law.

I ask you to think about the economic devastation that Saddam Hussein would continue to wreak on the world's democracies if he were able to control one-fifth of the world's oil reserves.

Together, as an America united against these horrors, we can, with our coalition partners, assure that this aggression is stopped and the principles on which this nation and the rest of the civilized world are founded are preserved.

Editor's note: This letter from the White House was sent to 460 selected college publications, which have forwarded it on to others.

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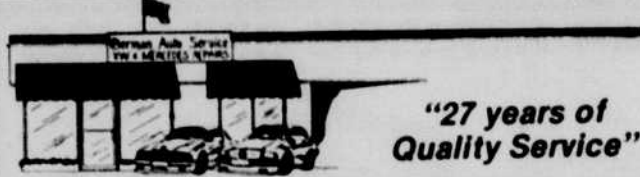
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THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"The carnage out here is terrible. Sandy ... feathers everywhere you — Oh, here we go! The Animal Control Officer is leading the so-called Chicken Coop Three away at this very moment."