

EDITORIAL

Operative word for protests is peace

Speaking your mind when you think something is wrong is a very valuable trait. And in the face of a war that does not seem justified, voicing your opposition is not only valuable, it is necessary.

As you read this, men and women are dying in the Persian Gulf. As the war goes on, and people realize that soldiers in the gulf are dying despite their protests, actions taken by some people in the anti-war movement are becoming violent.

The hypocrisy of this is obvious. The anti-war movement is also called the peace movement because it is advocating **PEACE**. Trying to attain peace through violence drops the peace effort to the same level as the two nations that are fighting.

People are justifiably opposed to President Bush's attempts to gain peace through violence. So some are attempting to do the same thing here at home.

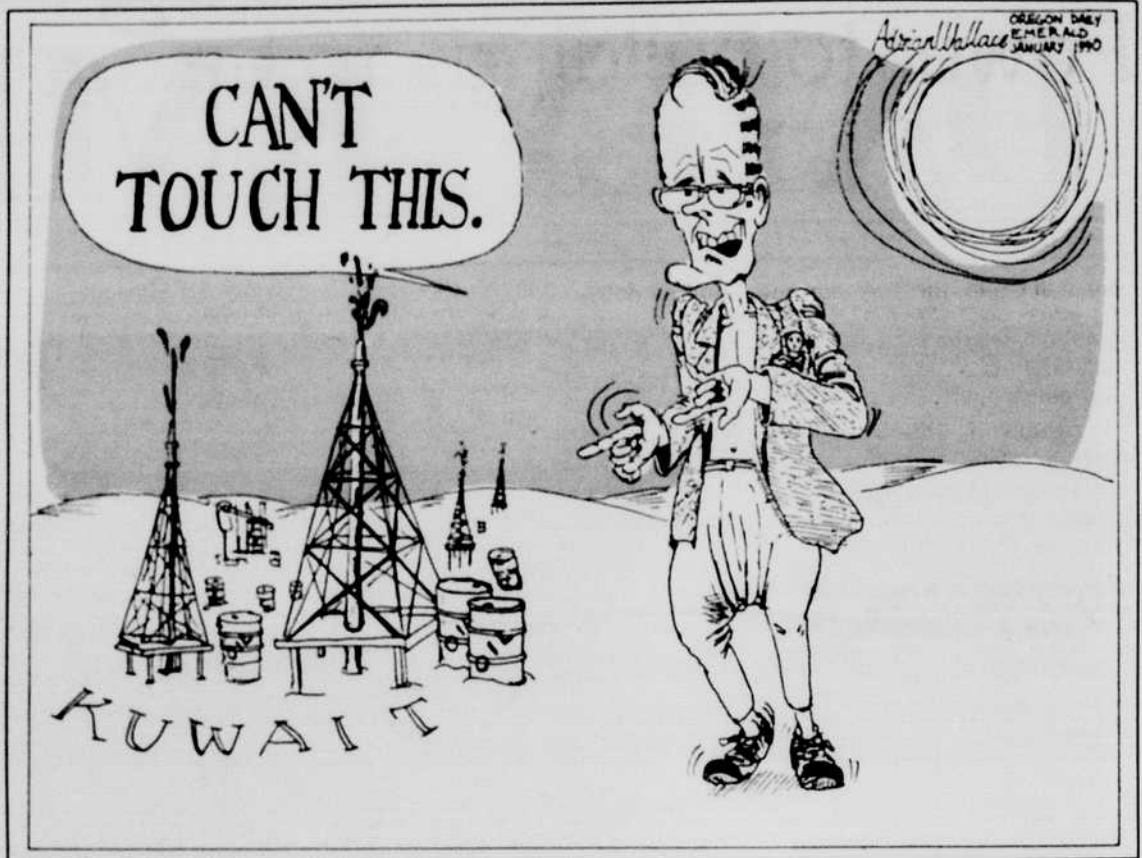
To anyone who thinks the peace movement should resort to violence: wake up and look in the mirror. You have become what you are protesting against.

Employees in the Eugene Federal Building did not order troops into Iraq. And although the Federal Building is a fine symbolic place for protests to take place, threatening the workers inside is absolutely wrong, as are bomb threats, arson, vandalism and all other violent means of protest.

Don't become a hypocrite. Prove to George Bush that people can accomplish their objectives without resorting to violence. If you need proof of this, you need only look as far as the man whose birthday we have been celebrating for the past week. Martin Luther King Jr. made huge accomplishments by advocating non-violent civil disobedience.

If the movement devoted to peace cannot even achieve its goals peacefully, why should we expect the country to do so? Show policymakers the proper way to reach peace. Get arrested at sit-ins, scream as loud as you can at protest marches, but do not destroy, vandalize or intimidate. Those responses are what started this mess in the first place.

While resorting to violence may relieve your own pent up frustrations, it does no good for the movement as a whole. The anti-war movement must be guided by a calm voice of reason. It must be viewed as a movement made up of intelligent, thoughtful people from all segments of society. Once the anti-war movement is viewed as nothing but a bunch of radicals it will be rendered completely ineffective.



MLK day may be missed opportunity

Martin Luther King Jr. week is coming to an end. The only thing left to do is celebrate the actual day the man was born — a week late.

Many students will be taking time Monday to learn more about King and how they can take steps in their own lives to help reach his dream. A conference at the University on Monday will provide students and others the chance to do just that.

Educational workshops are scheduled in conjunction with the conference covering topics from African-American history to hate crime intervention. All students at the University are encouraged to attend these workshops and the conference. Educating ourselves to the history, attitudes and obstacles faced by minorities in the United States is something we should all feel obliged to do.

While the King conference is a large leap from the scarce celebration that occurred on campus last year, it is only a first step. Celebration organizers need to find ways to in-

volve students in a more direct manner. While in theory students should be attending Monday's conference because they have the day off, many will use the free time to simply relax or leave town. The opportunity to educate and discuss minority issues will be wasted.

Conference organizers should work with the University to integrate some of the topics into classroom discussions. Substance and learning should be the goals of the King celebration week.

While eating birthday cakes and stringing yellow ribbon around the campus signify the celebratory mood of the events, they are more fluff than substance. Hate crimes in this country are increasing at an alarming rate. Much of that is due to ignorance from people who do not understand the complexities of living in a multicultural nation.

Workshops can change that; cakes and ribbons will not.

LETTERS

Invest wisely

Jan. 15 has come and gone and it amazes me that people are so passive in the face of war. The president does not accept Hussein's "naked aggression," yet Bush helped the United States violate international law when it invaded Panama and Grenada and armed the Nicaraguan Contras.

The multi-millions per day disappearing in the American military presence in the gulf is desperately needed elsewhere.

Is Saddam Hussein a greater threat than the greenhouse effect, the destruction of the forests, the poisoning of air and water or the population explosion?

Our real security lies in investing in conservation and renewable energy rather than committing billions in what may be a futile attempt to secure monarchical sheikdoms halfway across the globe.

Improving our cars by three MPG would replace U.S. imports of oil from Iraq and Kuwait, which would save us the 18,000 plus American lives that are expected to die in a Middle East war.

Part of being a United States citizen is refusing to be silent as George Bush prepares to fill 100,000 body bags with my generation.

As a citizen of the world I feel a certain obligation to educate myself, to get active and be vocal. As students at the University we each have the ability to make an impact by utilizing one of the many student groups.

Right now is the time to channel our energies so that we can mobilize for global dangers as we do for war.

Caitlin Twain
OSPIRG Chair

Be an activist

It is encouraging to notice a recent upsurge of interest and participation in events which aren't necessarily campus-specific. The concern and discontent about the situation in the Mid-East clearly has been a catalyst for many people, a galvanizer which moved them from mere observation of events and into the realm of activism. War will do that sometimes; it kind of goes with the territory.

But I don't want to write about war, I want to write about activism. Because it is activism, in all its forms and levels, which is so crucial to a political system like our own — a political system in which decisions which affect us at every level, whether as students, citizens, or residents of a polluted environment or consumers of dangerous products, are being made without our input or even our knowledge. Being an activist does not necessarily mean devoting one's life to a cause. It does not necessarily mean advocating from a position so far from the mainstream that no one listens.

Being an activist does mean, however, that you care about something and are willing to go beyond caring and get involved. The level to which you give yourself to that cause or issue is your decision.

Happily, there exists on this campus many groups and organizations which facilitate and encourage activism; OSPIRG is one of them.

If you want more information about the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group, call 346-4377.

Learn how to be an activist.

Peter Drake
OSPIRG

Good dead, bad Dead

If there is anyone out there who can explain to me why war is OK and the Grateful Dead is not, I would really appreciate some insight into your wisdom.

Garret Keeton
Accounting

First step

Given this nation's sudden official interest in chemical warfare in the Persian Gulf, it's ironic that first use of such weapons should be initiated by representatives of our government on civilians resisting an unnecessary (and therefore unjust) war.

Police use of teargas and mace on unarmed civilians constitutes the first violent action of the war.

Martin Brzezinski
Eugene

Sensational

Once again Tim Hughes has proven just how far removed from reality he really is (*ODE*, Jan. 16). To accuse the U.S. Military of the acts of torture he described is unfounded, and insulting to the men and women of the Armed Forces.

Hughes should refrain from such sensationalist and blatantly false drivel. I can understand how you must like seeing your name in print, but in the future try and limit your vivid imagination to the plausible.

Charles Deister
History
Howdy Stout
Journalism

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Comments must be factually accurate and refrain from personal attacks on the character of others.