

# COMMENTARY

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## Editorial

### Speak up while you still can, before bombs begin to drop

Scenario No. 1: After 18 months of inspections, all seems to have returned to normal in Iraq, and terrorists, acting under the auspices of Saddam Hussein, unleash biological attacks on cities in America, Britain, Turkey and Australia. People are running in the streets, skin peeling from their dying bodies. Mayhem ensues, as retaliatory attacks ensure a global outbreak of warfare.

Scenario No. 2: America invades Iraq in late March, acting with only a few allies, as the rest of the world has become increasingly hostile to U.S. imperialism. Muslim allies rush to Iraq's aid, and Iraq fires missiles at Israel. As violence spirals into mass warfare, al-Qaida terrorists have easier access into America, and attacks at home and abroad on U.S. targets increase. People are running in the streets, comforting the bloody bodies of their loved ones as U.S. soldiers die in the Middle East.

Scenario No. 3: With all of the hubbub about Iraq, toward the end of the year North Korea gets increasingly desperate and launches a nuclear missile at an undisclosed location on the West Coast. The sudden, jarring violence galvanizes Americans into supporting a full-on war that soon grows to include much of Asia. People are sick in the streets from the fallout and suddenly Iraq isn't so important.

None of these scenarios are that far from possible, and the ideas in them are not mutually exclusive. Our intent isn't to frighten, but people should be afraid — afraid of foreign policy, afraid of an international response to worldwide events that ends up creating more crises.

Weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and tyranny are real threats in today's global picture, and the way America and the international community choose to respond to those threats will determine the way people, countries and religions interact with each other for the rest of the century.

So just sit back in class and turn the page. Read something else, something harmless, something non-threatening. Worry about parties on the weekend and midterms and getting a new car. Worry about the Oscars.

The teachable moment that exists for the world in how humans treat one another, in how humans deal with threats — it's not your business. The leaders will make decisions without you. No one needs you out in the streets, protesting, or counterprotesting, or counter-counterprotesting. Let someone else set the agenda. Our leaders know what they're doing, after all, and they have only our best interests in mind. Leave it to the professionals.

Was that sarcastic enough? We'll try it again, this time without the sarcasm.

No matter how you feel about war, or Iraq, or al-Qaida, or imperialism; no matter how you think the problems the world faces should be handled — the time to join the conversation is now. Stand up and say what's right. Demand that your voice be counted when the decisions are made. Do it now, while you still can.

## Editorial policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters@dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.



Steve Baggs Emerald BAGGS

## Consistency in the Middle East

With too many troops deployed in the Middle East to back out now, the Bush administration has no choice but to attack Iraq in order to save face. However, it is high time we returned to a high-profile international debate that has recently been denied the public limelight it consumed not too long ago.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has largely taken the journalistic backburner, but last week's occurrences should have infuriated those who could tear their eyes away from the mainstream media's continual regurgitation of political allegations, smoke signals and half-truths.

Last week was the four-day holiday celebrated by Muslims called Eid al-Adha, the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. On Feb. 11, President Bush issued this statement: "The Quran teaches that the sacred feast of Eid al-Adha is a time for Muslims to join family and friends in thanking the Almighty for His many blessings and to reflect on the great sacrifice and devotion of Abraham." How sweet.

A day later, The New York Times reported that an eight-year-old Palestinian boy was shot dead on the same day as Bush's statement when "security

forces" opened fire on a group of people throwing stones at them in the West Bank city of Qalqilya. The Israel Committee Against House Demolitions said in June of last year that "if Palestinians are to be held accountable for their terrorist actions, then Israel must be held accountable for the structural violence inherent in its occupation." We cannot condemn one act of terrorism and support another.

I am not anti-Israel — I believe that the Jewish people deserve their own state. It's unfortunate, however, that this state happens to be on land previously occupied by others. Bush gives continual lip service to Muslims around the world and then turns the other cheek when Israel commits atrocities against Muslims and breaks U.N. resolutions — which is a big complaint against Iraq.

Israel has more than 40 U.N. resolutions against it — more than Saddam Hussein — including U.N. resolutions 242 and 338 that call for Israel's withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, lands occupied by Israel since 1967. More recently, the U.N. General Assembly attempted to pass a resolution that called for Israel to "stop encroaching" on Palestinian lands. There were 185 nations to vote in favor of this resolution, with only the United States, Israel and Micronesia voting against it.

In addition to violating numerous U.N. resolutions, Israel is in violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, reg-

ulating occupying powers. Article 49 of the Convention states that "individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the occupying power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive." In addition, Article 49 states that "the occupying power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies." These two resolutions apply to the post-1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Finally, the U.S. government violates its own policy by financing Israel. Article 2 of "The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961" forbids the United States from giving military aid to any government that engages in human rights violations. Israel has been accused of human rights abuses by international human rights organizations including Amnesty International. The Christian Science Monitor in December of 2002 stated that "since 1973, Israel has cost the United States about \$1.6 trillion. If divided by today's population, that is more than \$5,700 per person."

The United States cannot afford to be inconsistent in its foreign policy and should apply pressure in all areas where oppression is taking place.

Contact the columnist at megannfarnsworth@dailyemerald.com. Her views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



Meghann Farnsworth  
 Just think about it

## Letters to the editor

### Iraq resolution would become shallow rhetoric

I respect the faculty for their knowledge and their pursuit for action, truth and peace. But all of these pursuits will be set back if they bring the institution into the Iraq debate. I'm afraid that if the resolution passes, the validity of the University and those who fall under the umbrella of the University will be diminished. Why is this the moment the faculty has chosen to come together to speak as one voice?

Why has there not been a position by the University that more aid should be given to the African people, who are being slowly eradicated by the AIDS epidemic that is ravaging that continent? Was there any unity to scold the United Nations and the United States when they sat complacently, watching 400,000 die in Rwanda? Was there any unity of the faculty against America giv-

ing China Most-Favored-Nation status? Was there any call for the United Nations to save the million Iraqis who died in the past 12 years because a tyrant blamed sanctions for starvation while he built palace after palace?

Let the faculty and the students on campus rise together with millions across the world going to the street saying 'not in our name.' Do not let this just cause of peace erode into political, shallow rhetoric. We need a peaceful resolution as soon as possible. I don't want to see another Frontline special of a woman being decapitated, her head displayed on a storefront showing that Saddam Hussein loves his people.

Jason Payton  
 sophomore  
 economics

### "Short" people need affirmative action

I can certainly agree with Jason Blei's letter "White privilege allows no con-

cern for other races" (ODE, Feb. 12), regarding white privilege. As a person who is below average height — 5-foot-3-inches — who is oppressed by society's ingrained ideas of talloeratic height supremacy, I understand the need for special programs to create equality and help oppressed groups.

Tall people have privilege in this society that "short" people do not: They're more respected, aren't ridiculed on television shows, aren't judged negatively because of their stature, are not as often victims of imperialist ventures by first world nations and can reach the top shelf.

Given these and other manifestations of sizeist oppression, I ask that the system extend the hand of affirmative action to us to make up for the millennia of oppression that they've inflicted on us through their bigotry, dominance and violent ways.

Lucas Szabo  
 sophomore  
 political science