

COMMENTARY

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Friday, February 21, 2003

Share your view on the war resolution

Next Friday, the University Assembly will meet to hear and possibly vote on a resolution opposing war with Iraq. The meeting, from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Student Recreation Center, is something of a historic occasion. Rarely before has the assembly called itself together with legislative authority to take up an issue of critical importance to the world, the nation and each of us individually.

In recognition of the importance of this event and the need for critical discourse between those in favor of such a resolution and those opposed, all next week the Emerald will open the Commentary page to opinions about the resolution and the meeting.

Whether the assembly should take a stance on the issue and whether opposition to war is the correct stance to take are important questions in which every member of the campus community has a stake. Let the community know what you think — this decision needs dialogue. Guest commentaries can be short or long. Please just keep in mind the Emerald's limitations.

Submissions can be no longer than 550 words, and opinions of 250 words or less will be run as letters to the editor. Writers must include name, address and phone number for verification purposes. Submissions dropped off in person will need a legal form of identification for verification purposes. If you submit something and we call you to verify it, please return the call quickly so that we have a better chance of getting it in the paper by next Friday.

To get you started, a guest commentary and a letter to the editor on the topic are printed in today's paper. Additionally, here's my opening salvo.

The assembly absolutely should pass the proposed resolution. I'm opposed to this war because it won't achieve disarmament, and instead it will lessen our national and personal security by encouraging those who see America as a violent bully.

It's because of this contradiction and threat to our safety that the University must stand against this war. And I don't think such a resolution will change the tenor of discourse in the classroom any more than any other stance taken by the University has.

The state of Oregon's position that universities can consider nothing other than cost when choosing outside contractors is overtly political, and it could create a "hostile environment" for those opposed to sweatshop labor. But it doesn't and it hasn't, because our professors, by and large, value discourse and a diversity of thought.

That's my opinion; please tell us what you think.

Contact the editor in chief at editor@dailymerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.



Michael J. Kleckner
The editor's office



Peter Utsey Emerald

Keep absolute statements to yourself

Guest commentary

I read with a combination of bemusement and disdain "University's neutrality shows support of Iraq war," (ODE, Feb. 12), and felt compelled to respond as a member of this campus and the surrounding community.

What seems ironic to me is the willingness Todd Pittman has to assert an opinion not held by everyone on this campus as though it were embraced and accepted as the norm, and yet the rapidity with which he would deny this University the right to take the opposing position. It leads me to a conclusion that I have personally held for quite some time: That democracy, in its purest form, is both inherently evil and untrustworthy.

Let me ask you, Mr. Pittman, had Oregon, via the voters, approved Measure 13 — in case your pre-candescence memory has failed you, this is the measure spon-

sored by the OCA that would have made it illegal to discuss homosexuality in the classroom — would you have nodded your head and acknowledged the majority's right to determine such a position?

I think not. You would have complained, bellyached and screamed that it was not the state's place to make such a statement, and you would have been right. We live in a constitutional republic, whose rule of law is set up in such a way that the minority is protected from the savagery and passion that often times accompanies the majority. You very rightly pointed out that as far as the Iraqi war issue is concerned, it is one "that the University community is not in agreement." If this is the case, how dare you assert the right to speak on everyone's behalf when you have openly acknowledged that yours is not a view shared by everyone?

Are you now claiming that there are, in fact, absolute rights and wrongs? Be-

ware the dangers of such a stance, sir, for it would readily place you in the same court and arena as the Christian right, a place I am confident you would not like to find yourself.

In concluding, let me ask you a very simple question. Pretend for a moment that you were born and raised in a conservative state somewhere in the Midwest, and because of economic reasons were forced to attend a conservative state university in that area. Let us assume you were passionately against the war with Iraq, but then the campus voted, your view was soundly defeated and the University took an official pro-war position. Would you be at all comfortable with this, as a taxpayer and student? I think not. Given that, then, how can you presume to make such a moral statement on behalf of the entire University campus?

Scott Austin lives in Eugene.

Letters to the editor

Local papers miss athletic story

"Faculty aims to slow athletics 'arms race'" (ODE, Feb. 17) caught the editors of The Register-Guard and The Oregonian with their pants down. Both commercial newspapers have chosen to protect their interests in the college game by ignoring a story that could develop into the most significant about sports in the past century.

While praise is due the Emerald, they also made a serious mistake — not in a fact, but in burying the big story near the bottom of the article. Not until the 27th paragraph was reference made to the fact that the big boys — university boards of trustees — finally have recognized the problem of excessive athletics spending, and will address it at meetings with faculty senate leaders and the NCAA.

If those who control education purse strings — administration and trustees — don't take serious action soon, college sport is headed over the cliff of financial and moral disaster. The city newspapers ignored the

story, even though it was featured (with deserved recognition to University faculty) in The New York Times exactly a month before the Emerald article. It also appeared in a recent issue of The Chronicle of Higher Education.

We'll need to count on the Emerald staying on top of the story, while self-serving editors of the commercial press persist in ignoring a major story until it explodes in their faces.

George Beres
Eugene

Column sheds light on Iraq threat

I just wanted to say that I really enjoyed "Time for action against Iraq" (ODE, Feb. 17), and while reading it, I was reminded of the eloquent words of Tony Blair in a speech in Glasgow, Scotland, on Saturday. At one point, Blair said, "At every stage, we should seek to avoid war. But if the threat cannot be removed peacefully, please let us not fall for the delusion that it can be safely ignored."

Salena De La Cruz's conclusion was as forceful and well-put as the always straight-talking Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, who said on Jan. 15: "Let me go back to what's

been going on up on the Hill. They have been trying to connect the dots about Sept. 11. What did somebody know? How did it happen? Was there some way to stop it and save the lives of those 3,000 people?"

"In the case of Iraq, the task is to connect the dots before there's a smoking gun. If there's a smoking gun, and it involves weapons of mass destruction, it is a lot of people dead; not 3,000, but multiples of that."

Her column very neatly and concisely summed up why it is so urgent that the threat posed by Saddam Hussein and his addiction to weapons of mass destruction be dealt with once and for all. I think her excellent column today will go some distance in helping the anti-war crowd understand just what is at stake here.

Sean Walston
sixth-year graduate physics

Eugenics proposal should prompt action

In 1729, Jonathan Swift published "A Modest Proposal." The pamphlet concerned a plan to sell poor Irish Catholic babies into a meat market to feed rich land owners. The satirical piece was address-

ing the overwhelming poverty and unemployment of his countrymen. Probably to Swift's disappointment, the article did not cause the shock he intended, and was largely dismissed as a joke.

Peter Sur did not have this problem. While I do not know him and therefore couldn't state for certain whether he believes his stance in "Selective euthanasia can save the world" (ODE, Feb. 7), the tone of his article suggests not. Rather, he seems to be following Swift's model, begging awareness for problems which require more creative answers than those currently offered.

The response to this article has been disappointing. Yes, eugenics plans should be considered evil. But what solutions should be considered in a government that will not provide adequate funding to care for the homeless, sick, prisoners and other "undesirables"? What's more, how better to take care of the dissidents whose freedoms our government seems bent on suppressing?

Our nation is burdened by problems that our leaders would rather ignore than address. However, unless Sur's plan is carried out, we cannot expect society's problems to

simply "go away." This proposal should be seen as a call to action, not to mobilize for selective euthanasia, but to invent creative and constructive solutions to the very real issues we face. Surely we can do better than Sur's.

Katie Drueding
junior history

Put your butt where your mouth is

I read the Oregon Daily Emerald almost every day. And I've been noticing an increase in passionately worded commentaries and letters to the editor praising the merits of a "preemptive" attack on Iraq and deploring all of us willy-nilly (even treasonous) "peaceniks," who aren't convinced that such a war would be either necessary or just.

So, I'm wondering, why aren't all of you pro-war (and oh so knowledgeable) tough-talkers in the military? I mean, shouldn't someone who believes so passionately in a hyper-militaristic foreign policy be willing to put their pro-war butts on the line for their supposed convictions?

Paul Griffes
senior geography