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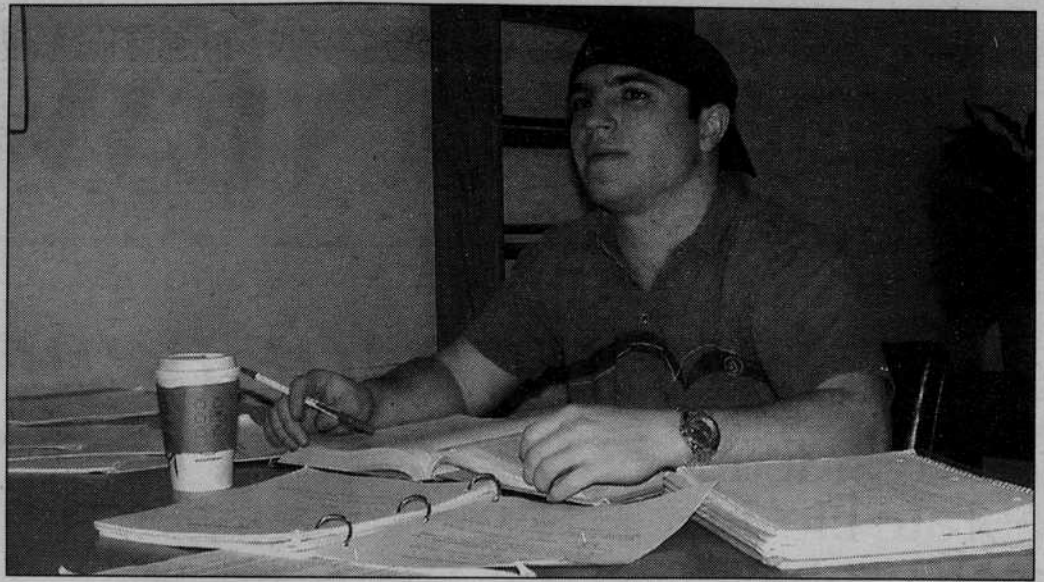


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University student Ryan Long studies for a finance final Friday. He is preparing to be sent overseas as an army national guardsman within the next two months. Roman Gokhman Emerald

Students voice opinions about Iraq war, Hussein

Many students are concerned about the actions of Saddam Hussein and George W. Bush as the threat of war in Iraq lingers

Roman Gokhman
Campus/City Culture Reporter

Most students at the University may agree that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is a threat to the Middle East, but few see eye-to-eye on what to do about him.

University student Mona Zubair, a native of Saudi Arabia who witnessed the effects of the Gulf War in 1991, said that while no one in the Middle East loves Hussein, she hopes the United States stops pursuing war with Iraq.

Army National Guardsman Ryan Long — a University student called to duty last week who will probably be sent overseas in the next two months — didn't share the same opinion. He said Hussein is a madman who must be removed from presidency in Iraq.

Other students said they would not be personally affected by a war, which could begin before classes start for spring term, but most said they think war is not necessary right now.

Zubair, a graduate student majoring in public policy and management and a council member for the Muslim Student Union, said the Gulf War and the current conflict are two different crises.

"Saddam was an aggressor at that time and had to be stopped," she said. "War is not necessary at this moment."

Zubair said because she had lived in both parts of the world, she saw the many views of people from both regions. She said the media was partly responsible for the gap between cultures.

"War is definitely ugliness (and) destruction," she said. "It's going to generate more hate in the region. It is not that simple."

While Zubair said she believes war is imminent, she still hopes it can be averted because weapons inspections are working.

"We can make it very hard for (Hussein) to breathe right now," she said. "I'm really happy to see a lot of people (at the University) not accepting this war."

"It's going to be totally a distressful time — I'm really worried about that part of the world."

Long is worried about "that part of the world" enough that he is ready to take part in an intervention.

The army national guardsman reported to a Salem training facility over the weekend, and will remain there for a week before being sent to Fort Lewis near Tacoma, Wash. He said his battalion will spend 45 days training before being deployed overseas — probably to the Middle East.

"We'd probably get over there by the time ... the conflict was ending," he said, adding that his engineering battalion, which is equipped with trucks and bulldozers and humvees, will probably be responsible for cleaning and rebuilding Iraq.

Long said he is a little nervous about the length of time he might

spend in the Middle East but is mostly excited to fight for his family and friends.

"I'm looking at this as a way to protect the nation's interests," he said. "I agree with the cause — (Hussein has) inflicted a lot of harm on his nation and people, and he's scared the whole world with his biological and chemical weapons."

While some University students are not as optimistic as Long, they don't think the University will be directly affected by a possible war.

"At a time when the economy is faltering and the state is facing massive budget deficits, the president has decided to lower taxes further and push forward with a war, the cost of which is unknown and projected to be \$100 billion — that's just irresponsible," said Peter Sur, Asian and Pacific American Student Union outreach coordinator. "I don't like the manner in which the administration has pushed for war."

ASUO Student Senate Treasurer Mike Linman agreed with Sur, and like Zubair, said weapons inspectors in Iraq should be given more time. Linman said that the war will probably damage the United States' international relations.

"If we go into Iraq without international support, it will be detrimental to foreign relations," he said.

Linman said that if a war began, student protestors would be out in force and in larger numbers.

Contact the reporter at romangokhman@dailyemerald.com.

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Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. Box 3159, Eugene OR 97403

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