

Ron Franks
Reader's Opinion

Blame Hussein Bush should continue to act in Persian Gulf

The United States of America is justified in its role in the gulf crisis. I am an advocate of peace, but I realize peace is a precious gift that must be bought at a very high price.

I, too, am from a Christian-Judeo background, and I hate to see death; but I'm realistic enough to realize death for many might be the price paid to keep this world peaceful. I am haunted by the very real possibility that I might lose my father in the inevitable war on the horizon, but I am comforted by the fact that he is helping to bring about peace. If you are truly in the "peace-at-any-price" mentality, you also should know that the aggressive behavior on the part of Iraq must be stopped forever. Saddam Hussein has stated repeatedly that he will not withdraw from Kuwait; he wishes to continue an occupation of this country against its will.

Knowing this, how can you pin the blame of the crisis on our country? Is Bush truly a "fanatic" for not allowing this absurd notion to be an option? Maybe you'd like to explain to the Kuwaiti citizens exactly why the world has allowed their country to be swallowed by this ruthless dictator. Get a grip, pal.

"The majority of Americans is behind the President in this time of crisis, and that is as it should be. I am apt to disbelieve you when you say the United States is salivating over the prospect of committing atrocities in the pursuit of U.N. objectives."

The notion that the United States is "willing to kill and maim for market priced oil" is moronic. If this was the case, the United States could have continued to buy oil from conquered Kuwait and Iraq. The entire world enforcing the embargo against these two countries indicates the crisis is not about the extra money you have to pay at the pump. If you are looking for reasons for the gulf crisis, ask Hussein — stop pointing fingers at your own country. The United Nations will not always coincide with the will of the United States or any nation, for that matter. I sincerely hope Bush wouldn't back down and let Iraq have its way in the gulf, even if it would have meant going against a U.N. resolution. The United States must be concerned with its own interests.

Before you start spouting off about selfishness, U.S. interests include world peace; this includes stopping aggression by the likes of Hussein. Fighting for the freedom of another country never has seemed selfish to me, and I hope we always are in a position to offer help to those in need.

I also believe you are wrong in thinking the government is "turning a deaf ear ... to its citizens unrest." The majority of Americans is behind the President in this time of crisis, and that is as it should be. I am apt to disbelieve you when you say the United States is salivating over the prospect of committing atrocities in the pursuit of U.N. objectives. I know my father pretty well, and I'm certain he's not on fire at the prospect of killing other human beings. How did you come to the conclusion that everyone else is?

The actions being taken by our government are necessary, and I'm certain most of our citizens are supporting what has to be done. Your demonstrations are useless to those who want peace. Why don't you pack your picket signs and go protest in Iraq?

I am one of the majority members who is praying for peace. I hope Iraq will choose to leave Kuwait, but it doesn't look like that is going to happen. War will be catastrophic, but letting Saddam Hussein wipe Kuwait off the face of the map would be the greatest catastrophe of all.

Ron Franks is a freshman business major.



Crisis remains questionable

The Bush Administration appears to be in a tremendous hurry to use force to ensure an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

However, as the administration rushes into what promises to be a bloody and bitter conflict, too many questions still remain unanswered.

What were the official reasons for initiating the troop buildup? In President Bush's words: "The acquisition of territory by force is unacceptable." Stirring words Mr. President, but words which nonetheless fail to conceal the true motives behind your actions. In recent history, nations have adopted the same methods used by Saddam Hussein.

Has the President forgotten the Israeli invasion of Lebanon? The Chinese invasion of Tibet? The Indonesian invasion of East Timor? How did the United States respond then?

The most clear-cut evidence of double standards employed by the Bush Administration lies in the calm American acceptance of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon.

Elias Hrawi's puppet regime could overcome General Aoun's forces only with the sustained use of Syrian air power. In the past, the United States — acting through Israel — never has allowed such a massive use of the Syrian air force in Lebanon, a country Hafiz Assad has coveted for years.

Instead of condemning the invasion, President Bush practically endorsed the Syrian action by remaining silent.

By trading Lebanon for Kuwait, President Bush has committed a giant blunder. Assad's human-rights record is appalling — in 1982, for instance, Syrian forces murdered thousands of civilians by crushing a fundamentalist challenge to the Assad government, which almost completely destroyed Syria's second largest city in the process.

The removal of Saddam Hussein from the scene would leave Hafiz Assad virtually unchallenged in the entire Middle East — a prospect which has frightening implications for the security of that region.

President Bush did not explain to the American people the true reasons for his actions. The President said Americans troops will take up defensive positions in Saudi Arabia, adding that they were sent "... to assist

Sarang Shidore
Columnist

the Saudi government in the defense of his homeland."

The unstated objective — but implicitly hinted at numerous times by James Baker — was to protect the American economy from an energy crisis.

The first objective already has been realized. Hundreds of thousands of troops from 28 nations stand eyeball to eyeball with the Iraqi war machine. An Iraqi offensive against the Saudis can safely be ruled out.

The second objective also has been more or less uncovered. True, Iraq now controls 20 percent of the world's oil reserves, but the shortfall in supply already has been compensated by excess production from other OPEC countries — chiefly Saudi Arabia. There is no reason to expect the situation to change for the worse in the immediate future.

Ironically, war itself probably would drive up oil prices to more than \$80 a barrel. It is estimated that war with Iraq probably will cost at least \$50 billion in addition to thousands of American lives.

Make no mistake, there is a case for using the military option in the gulf. Saddam Hussein stands unanimously condemned by the entire international community for his invasion and occupation of peaceful Kuwait.

The point is that neither moral considerations nor oil are the reasons behind the administration's haste to go to war.

It can be speculated that the real American motives are far more subtle. As the Cold War ends, the United States finds itself more a spectator than a player in the game of international politics. American influence on world events is waning, and this galls the administration.

Instead of regaining this influence by other means, America is attempting to use what it has always used with the greatest costs and the least returns — its military.

President Bush hopes a quick surgical gulf operation would restore America's stature in the international

community as a power to be reckoned with.

The administration also considers the crisis as a matter of prestige for the United States. Having once deployed troops, it fears America will lose face, and the anti-Iraq coalition would crumble unless action is taken soon.

President Bush won wide admiration for putting together a coalition which includes virtually all U.N. members. Now that Saddam Hussein is under siege, the administration must be patient.

Before invading Kuwait, the President must clearly prove that sanctions totally have failed to paralyze Iraq's economy. This will take time but is the only sensible option.

The administration so far has provided no hard evidence to prove the sanctions are not working. No one expects Iraqis to starve — the best we can hope for is a near-total paralysis of its industrial and military capabilities.

At the same time, the administration must accept that in the past it consistently has chosen to ignore the U.N. resolutions on Palestine and has pursued a flawed policy in the Middle East.

A formal apology is insufficient; Israel must be pressured immediately to begin talks on the creation of a Palestinian state in the occupied territories. This will take unusual courage.

The United States, with a massive aid program to Israel, is in the best position to use influence beneficially. If the Soviets could apologize for their past actions in Afghanistan, so can we.

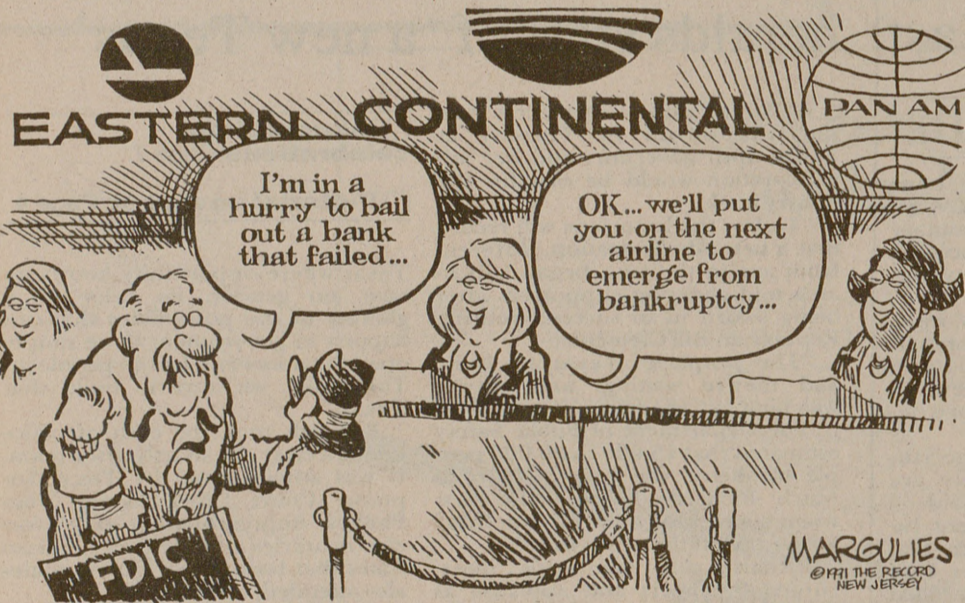
Besides, a resolution of the Palestinian issue will tremendously weaken Saddam's position among the Arab masses and will deny him the fig leaf of Palestine, which he has so successfully used to turn the world's attention away from his aggression.

Then by Spring 1992, if Saddam shows no sign of withdrawing his forces, a military option is the only alternative.

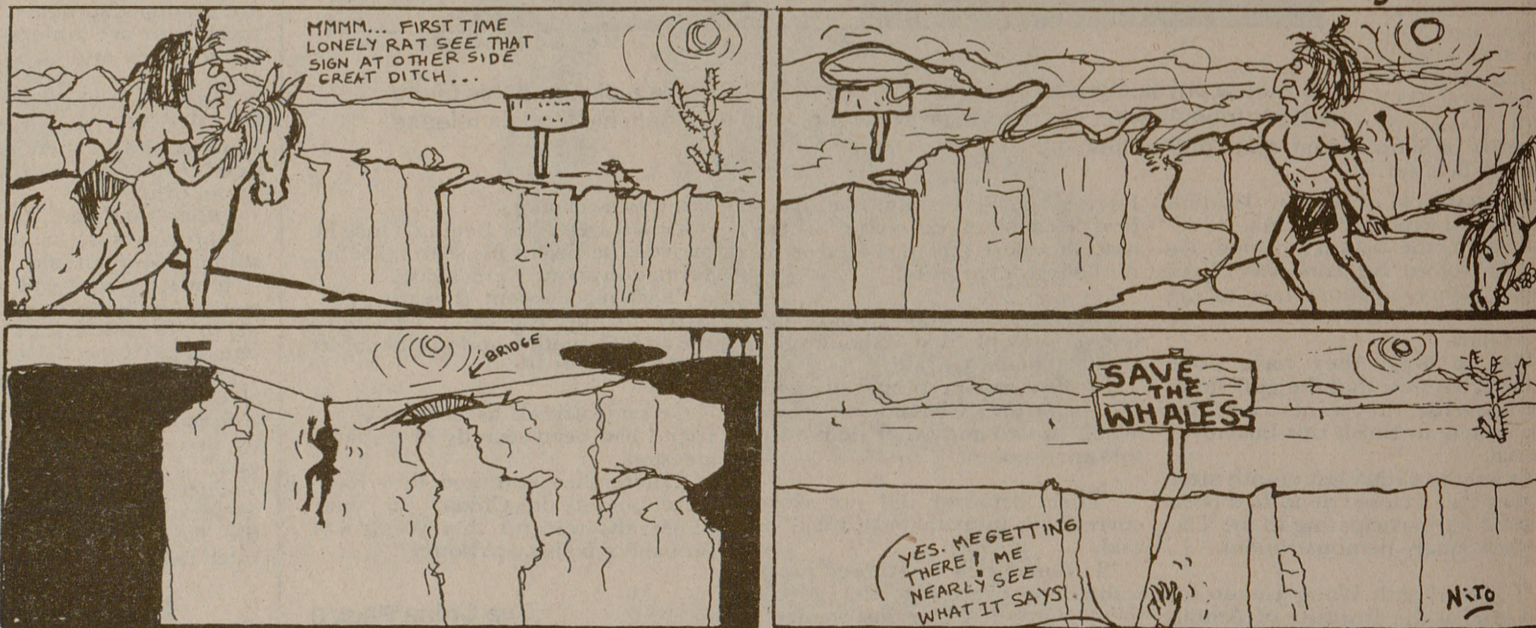
For the time being, however, Operation Desert Shield must remain just that — a shield.

Any attempts to turn it into a sword can only backfire.

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The Battalion

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