

# Protesters miss point with 'loaded rhetoric'

A lot of Americans suddenly have found themselves citizens of a country that is fighting a war they don't believe in. We see them protesting on T.V., we read their letters in The Batt, we see their T-shirts on campus.

It's a wonderful thing in the United States; we have the right to protest the actions of our government and try to convince our fellow citizens and representatives to change the system. It's great to see that so many people care enough about this war of dubious origins to speak out against it. But while these people are protesting a war that certainly deserves to be protested, too many protesters are shooting themselves in the feet with loaded rhetoric.

"No blood for oil" is a catchy enough phrase, and, while simplistic, expresses the belief of protesters that the United States has gone to war and is ending the lives of its young people merely to protect its foreign oil supply and



**Ellen Hobbs**  
Columnist

economy. But "peace at any price?" Oh, come on.

The idea that nothing is important enough to fight for is ludicrous. We're part of a nation of freedom, not complete freedom, but we have a lot more than some people. We may tend to forget that there are much harsher governments out there, and there are a lot of places where the people have very little power.

I like the United States, and the freedoms I am afforded by being a citizen here. I'm not saying it couldn't use some improvement, but what couldn't? The absolute last thing I

would want is for the United States to totally disband its defenses.

If the United States put down all its guns tomorrow and announced it was becoming a pacifist nation, it wouldn't be a week before every country that owned a weapon had descended on us and parted us out like an old Chevy.

There just aren't pacifist nations. Not even the Swiss are pacifists — they're just neutral. Every country has taken precautions to protect its citizens with a military.

And the idea that we should just leave everyone alone and defend only ourselves seems a bit ridiculous.

There's the recently over-used example of Hitler's extermination of the Jews — we couldn't just sit back and let that happen, and there was no way to stop it except by force. It's true economic sanctions can be very effective; and in fact, they might have been effective averting our current war. But they just won't always work, and as human beings we have a hard time

letting a powerful government perpetrate crimes upon its citizens.

Force is sometimes the only answer. But perhaps not this time. The war protesters have good ideas, and they need to be heard. The protesters remind us that we're sending soldiers to die to protect our economy, an economy not so much threatened by the invasion of Kuwait but by the attack on Saudi Arabia — an attack that did not happen until after Iraq already had been attacked by the United States. They remind us that economic sanctions or a stronger showing of willingness to use force from combined allies might have caused Saddam Hussein to back down, but the United States wouldn't wait and rushed into battle.

They remind us that the same president who so wants to punish Iraq for breaking international law was the same president who sent troops into Panama last year and knowingly broke international law. They remind us that if we feel we don't want this the war, we must speak out and try to end it. But protesters who taint their arguments with the ludicrous "peace-at-any-price" argument lose the respect of other citizens who might be convinced to speak out against the war, and they dilute arguments of more realistic, less-idealistic protesters who argue real war issues — the issues that might bring an end to a war that shouldn't have started.

Hobbs is a senior journalism major.



## U.S. joins war to stop violence, not to get oil

The Marine recruiter looked at me steadily over our third or fourth Crown and Coke and said in a voice that told of the anguish he felt for what he had to say: "What you people fail to realize is what 'oil' really is."

Oil, he went on to tell me, is not simply the cheap, inefficient fuel source destroying our environment. Rather, it is something much more important than most Americans care to admit.

It takes us to and from our jobs, lights our homes and offices — it is the very center of our mobility, comfort and entertainment. Oil creates and reinforces more jobs than any other single commodity in America.

Imagine a modern America without cars, electricity or tractors to plow our fields and factories to employ our middle class. Oil means jobs. Oil is our living room on a Friday night doing whatever the hell we want to do.

I said that's all well and good, but what about alternative fuel sources? As an avid environmentalist, I knew the burning of fossil fuels coupled with deforestation had all but caused the Greenhouse effect, not to mention the carbon monoxide pollution which poisoned the very air we breathe.

Then I realized what a massive and long undertaking it would be to convert our needs to alternative fuels. Not only that, but the conversion would require oil.

In addition, the oil industry has had power for so long that ousting it in favor of more logical resources promises to be a long, drawn out and highly political process.

No, this was no alternative. I began to get depressed as other realizations began falling into place. But my arguments were not yet spent. I am a pacifist, I said. There must be a peaceful solution!

What if Saddam Hussein would agree to a conditional release of Kuwait? Had our inflexible non-sense approach to diplomacy closed doors on compromises which would have provided alternatives to bloodshed? Any person with an ounce of sanity surely realized the implications of a war with a nuclear and chemical potential and with a person like Saddam Hussein. Surely any solution besides the loss of innocent lives was a good solution.

I noticed the old Marine's sad silence

**Bruce Enloe**  
Reader's Opinion

and I continued. "There's no such thing as winning a war," I said. "Don't you see?"

I paused as if daring him to rebut my emotional display, then continued: "They could drag me to the front line, but they could never make me pull the trigger!"

At this I stopped noting the growing consternation in his eyes. "Are you through?" he asked. I nodded curiously. "Do you even know what a pacifist is? A true pacifist would never lift a hand of aggression, even in his own defense, or the defense of his loved ones," he said.

I started to object, but he silenced me. He said the point is if a man with a gun came into your house and pointed a gun at your family, if it was in your power to stop him, and stop him forcefully — you could and would.

My answer was obvious: Saddam was not in my living room.

Ammesty International has published an interesting report described on CNN. From descriptions I have heard, the report tells of the slaughter of Kuwaitis that refuse to display a portrait of Saddam in their homes.

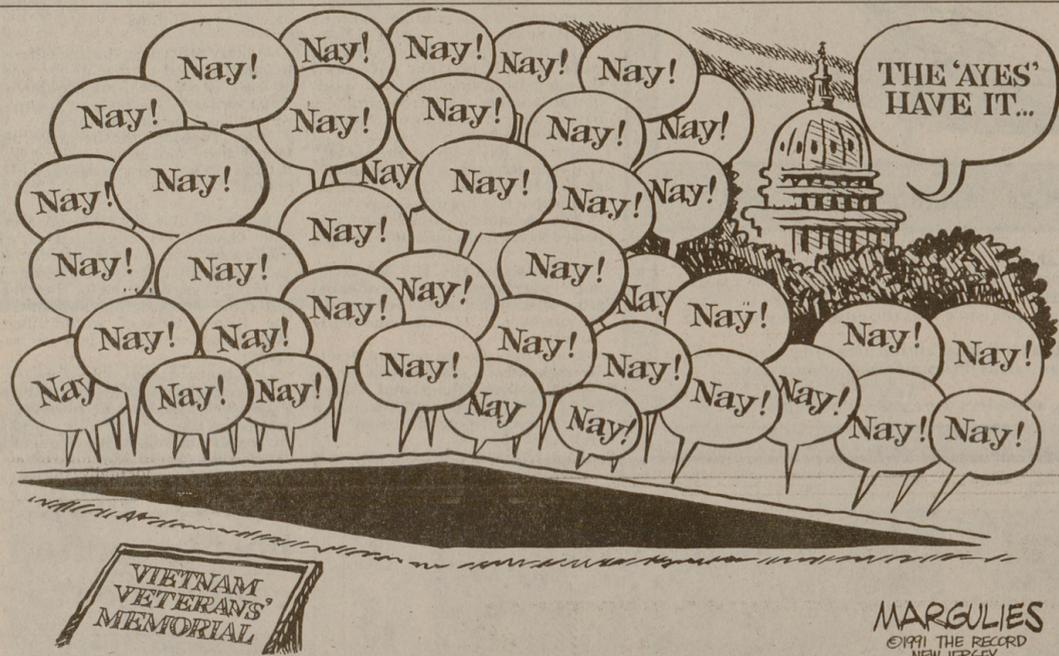
It tells of the widespread plunder and destruction of what were once homes.

Saddam Hussein has promised time and time again to destroy the evil empire. The United States is the evil empire to which he is referring. By seizing our oil, the proven present cornerstone of our not-so-perfect economy; he has come into our home. He has drawn his gun and aimed it. We have the power to stop him.

This is not the time to complain about those things which cannot be changed. Oil is not the issue, it is merely a cloud which conveniently shrouds a much larger picture. This war is not an unnecessary act of American aggression — it is a human response to a violent confrontation.

I know that I cannot change people, were I to try I would fail. I ask only that you listen, think and consider every implication of what you are asking for when you blindly ask for peace.

Enloe is a freshman psychology major.



## Mail Call

### Remember lessons of history

EDITOR:

The Battalion Editorial Board asked for one reason why we should wage war on Iraq. May I give 14 million reasons? I believe the reason we are required to take history courses is to learn the tragic mistakes of history and not repeat them.

The recurrent parallelism between post-war Germany and Iraq ring an eerie bell of present pasts. Both countries were led by ruthless dictators with visions of uniting their respective motherlands. Both were composed of a fanatically nationalistic populace with a deep hatred for the Jews. Both had regional military superiority, and were recovering from economic failure.

When Hitler invaded the Rhine, he gained two major victories: he restored the pride of a beaten Germany, and he won appeasement from Europe and America. The Europeans responded with dialogue for peace and America with isolationism from a situation so far away.

As we look with hindsight at Hitler's march into the Rhine, we realize World War II would have been averted by a devastating attack by Britain and France on Hitler's army. Because such a strike would have cost thousands of lives, the peace marchers clamored to give peace a chance — "No

war for wine." The pacifists won, and there was no military strike, as a result, Japan and Italy learned the lesson of giving peace a chance and more than 14 million died during World War II.

If Saddam had invaded Kuwait with no allied response, he would have gained three important victories: The restoration of pride to a beaten Iraq, the appeasement of the world and the oil of Kuwait. Yes, this war is about oil. Not necessarily our economic dependence on oil, but rather Saddam's use of the conquered Kuwaiti oil.

With the oil of Kuwait he could continue to increase his intimidation if OPEC got higher prices. With these monies Saddam would have built an arsenal and army more deadly than Hitler's army. And most important he would have been able to buy the nuclear-weapons technology and destructive power he wants.

Here we are again. A madman annexing a country to the "motherland" with his sights on a kingdom. The pacifists cry "no war for oil" and "Kuwait is so far away" as they clamor for peace. Will we learn from history? Is Dec. 7, 1941, a day that lived in infamy? Or will 14 million more people die because we are not willing to give war a chance?

Kevin Davis '93

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