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OPINION

THE BATTALION

Page 11 • Tuesday, January 28, 2003

Cost of war high for Iraq

How the son of poor Iraqi farmers could develop into a man capable of ordering the murder of everyone between the ages of 15 and 70 in a group of Kurdish villages, says President George W. Bush, is not something typically going through one's mind while pumping gas. However, it should be. Whether it's the increasing price of the 87 unleaded being pumped into your Chevy or the deployment of your uncle to the Middle East, another war with Iraq will affect you. By blatantly violating every United Nations resolution passed against him, Saddam Hussein has made himself the target of world scorn. His time is up, but ousting him will come at a price.

Disclosing or destroying all weapons of mass destruction, ending all support of terrorism, and ending the persecution of the Iraqi people are all conditions the terms outlined by the president before the United Nations for Saddam Hussein to avoid war. There is no compromise.

This madman of the Middle East has ballistic missiles with range enough to hit countries such as Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Turkey, a region where more than 135,000 American civilians and service members live and work. Bush says these missiles are capable of carrying any of the chemical or biological weapon agents Hussein has possessed. Your friend in the recently called-up reserves could be his next target. There is no question of Saddam's willingness to use these weapons; just ask his own people, the Kurds.

Dispersing these types of weapons does not require a great deal of technical skill. Only one Iraqi intelligence agent or terror-

ist is needed to murder innocent U.S. civilians with Serin or VX nerve gas. These are weapons Saddam has possessed in the past and has yet to prove he does not still possess. According to The Associated Press, a Kuwaiti sergeant recently arrested was working with Iraqi intelligence on a plan to poison large numbers of U.S. personnel.

It does not take a stretch of the imagination to see Saddam giving these invisible killers to a terrorist group such as al-Qaida, allowing him to attack the United States without implicating himself. The thought of inhaling nerve gas while waiting in line at George Bush Intercontinental Airport is not a pleasant one, but it is a possible reality if Saddam remains in power. As our parents dreamed of a world without Soviet aggression, I sometimes wonder if my children will have to live in a world with a monster like Saddam. With the Soviet Union, at least we knew what to expect.

Saddam's calculated manipulation of the current U.N. inspections is merely a stalling tactic to keep U.S. forces from moving in until the weather becomes too hot. The pattern of deception continued this past week with the discovery of 12 rockets designed to carry chemical weapons not listed in Iraq's report to the United Nations. Iraqi officials labeled this material breach as merely an "accounting error." If you and I are accountable for being academically honest, surely a dictator is responsible for keeping track of

something as mundane as his chemical weapons.

Fears of a U.S.-led invasion of Iraq have already caused an increase in world oil prices, and consumer confidence will react negatively to a U.S. invasion according to economy.com. Uncertainty is the U.S. economy's worst enemy.

With the Bush administration openly discussing an invasion of Iraq, world markets are already taking into account temporary disruption of the global oil supply. Saudi Arabia and Russia have excess production capacity able to fill any void left from Iraqi non-production. With a relatively short conflict, the world economy will not greatly feel an oil crunch. A victory in Iraq will add a dependable supply of oil to the world market, thus ensuring

lower oil prices. The \$30 to \$50 billion price tag, a mere 2-3 percent of the \$2 trillion Federal Budget projected using Congressional Budget Office estimates, is a small price to pay for our economic well-being and national security.

Saddam has had his chance to be reasonable; either he meets the criteria of the U.N. resolutions, or the United States will act. Some may say the potential cost of losing brave American men and women while expanding our presence in the Middle East and the war on terror is too high for us to bear. I say the cost of inaction is even greater. As Gen. Omar Bradley once said, "In war, there is no prize for runner-up."

Matt Cheshier is a senior economics major.



Redefining what constitutes rape

Due to efforts of women's rights activists in the past, rape has transitioned from a shameful and silent secret to a commonly accepted courtroom case, and a crime that more women are taking a stand against. While rape is a crime that women certainly have a right to press charges for, the definition has been contorted to fit the whims of women who regret what they did.

A California Supreme Court case ruled Jan. 6 that not only do women not have to say the word "no" for the case to be considered a rape, but they can say something as vague as, "I should go home." In addition, the case expands on the idea presented in similar cases in Maryland and North Carolina that once one partner expresses discontent, they must stop immediately, even when using such ambiguous terms.

According to the court report of People v. John Z. Laura T. was the only female at a party in March of 2000, and had gone into a bedroom to talk to the defendant. The two then engaged in various acts of foreplay, acts that she admitted reciprocating and enjoying. However, during intercourse, Laura changed her mind. Unable to express this clearly, she said a few times, "I should go home." Approximately four minutes after she expressed this, her assailant got up and assisted her in finding her clothes

and leaving the party, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Although it is clear that Laura may have regretted some of her actions, she did not make it clear to her partner that she did not want to have sex with him. The combination of her indefinite word choice with the fact that a few moments previously, she had been participating with her partner and enjoying it, it is understandable that it may have taken more than a moment's notice for John to comprehend that this activity was no longer consensual.

Women of all ages should know not to expect a man to be a mind reader, but by bringing the consent for sex to the point of what someone intended to say, instead of what she did say, does just that. The equivocal, "I have to go home," could be broadly interpreted in later cases, to the point where almost any utterance could be translated as a channel to charge someone with rape. While a few cases might be justified, undefined terms such as these could cause a series of unjustly accused rapists around the country. If a woman truly believes she is being raped to the point of pressing charges, she should be able to make that known to her partner, not only by her word choice, but by her actions as well. Unclear phrases, such as Laura's "I should go home," can be misinterpreted as a plea for reassurance or urgency, and was by the defendant in this case, John told Fox news.

Furthermore, it is difficult to pinpoint the moment consensual sex transforms into an attack and a partner turns into a rapist.

Although in many legal cases it has been decided that a woman may retract consent at any moment during intercourse, the amount of time allotted for the partner to grasp this change of circumstances is not factored in. John ceased pursuing intercourse with Laura four minutes after her protests of needing to go home, according to the court report. The court decided that four minutes was more than a reasonable amount of time for him to stop. However, considering the circumstances and Laura's unclear language, the time it may have taken him to comprehend she was no longer enjoying the act and wanted him to stop may have been that amount of time.

The lines are difficult to draw, and little distinction can possibly be made from 30 seconds to one minute to three minutes. "Immediately stop," the term that the court used, is as indefinite as the term the plaintiff used to urge him to do so.

The definition of rape has become hazier, and additional questions have arisen due to this case. For a case to be considered a rape, a certain amount of force should be present. Persistence, not force, was the problem in this case, according to Justice Janice Rogers Brown. At this point, it can be difficult to prevent regret from turning into rape accusations and hard to discern what actual terminology communicates "No." Unfortunately, this case only further complicated the system instead of clarifying it.

Sara Foley is a sophomore journalism major.

MAIL CALL

NAMBLA legally advocates change

In response to Thomas Campbell's Jan. 14 column:

Thomas Campbell's article on NAMBLA was replete with inaccuracies. While I am not in agreement with NAMBLA's view that all age-of-consent laws should be repealed, it costs us nothing to be fair and balanced and to tell the truth.

First of all, Campbell tells us, "NAMBLA is rightly being sued by the parents of a 10-year-old

Massachusetts boy who was murdered by two men, one of whom was allegedly a member..." Campbell doesn't mention that the suit is a wrongful death action and that there is not even a crumb of evidence linking NAMBLA to any advocacy of violence.

This case is so weak that it is only public sympathy for the family that has kept it from being thrown out a long time ago, as, in time, it will be. One can understand why the Curley family would react the way they have, but the ambulance-chasing attorneys who manipulated them into filing this

case ought to be ashamed of themselves.

Second, Campbell informs us that "any sexual contact of a child younger than 14 ... is a form of child molestation for which the perpetrator can receive jail time. Anyone advocating sexual contact with children is advocating lawlessness at the expense of children." True, if that were what NAMBLA did. But there is nothing "lawless" about advocating a change in the laws — or even a repeal of the laws, which is what NAMBLA does. They are exercising their right to free speech, as NORML does when

it calls for repealing marijuana laws, or as the NRA does when it calls for relaxing firearms laws. The evidence that NAMBLA advocates lawless activity is paper-thin; the evidence that they advocate murder is nonexistent.

The Battalion has a First Amendment right to disparage the First Amendment if it chooses. But it should at least check facts before going to print. Printing lies about your opponents does nothing to enhance your argument.

Dennis Jacques
Class of 2003

A suffering industry

I recently ordered a CD from amazon.com after hearing a certain song on the radio that I really enjoyed. So, being the good music consumer that I am, I decided to actually buy the album. There was one problem, though: The song that I wanted was only available on a special version of the band's CD. The CD that arrived was not that particular version of the album, and I had already opened the package, now unable to return it. If I wanted the original song I had heard on the radio, I would have needed to buy the CD again.

Even though I enjoyed the other songs on the CD, this incident is just one example of music consumers' frustration in dealing with the avaricious and inflexible collection of record companies and interests groups, such as the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), known as the music industry.

It is an industry that is suffering. In 2001, 763 million CDs were sold. In 2002, the industry only managed to move 681 million units, according to Newsweek. That's a staggering 82 million less CDs sold in the time span of only a year. The decrease in music sales is more evident when one considers that in 2000, the top 10 albums sold 60.5 million copies, according to Rolling Stone. In 2001, the top 10 only managed to move 37 million units, more than a 37 percent decrease.

The RIAA loves to blame decreasing CD sales on music piracy via the Internet, and to a certain extent, it is correct. Many people are using file-sharing programs to illegally download music files and burn them onto blank CDs. Even the most anti-RIAA individual will have to admit that this contributes to fewer CD sales.

But, what the RIAA and major record labels may not know, or what they may not be willing to admit, is many music consumers feel forced to illegally download songs by the industry's own heavy-handedness. For example, when I received the CD from amazon.com with only 10 songs, and not the 11 that were promised, I was almost compelled to find the song on the Internet and download it. I had paid for the CD, I reasoned. But I never download songs from the Internet without the copyright holder's explicit permission because to do so otherwise would be stealing. However, many other individuals, after dealing with an industry that makes even legitimate purchases difficult, become apathetic toward copyright holder's rights and start pirating music from the World Wide Web at will.

Even with the presence of the Internet, album sales would be healthy if CD prices weren't so ridiculously high. In fact, 41 state attorney generals filed a class action lawsuit against the five major record companies and some national retailers, charging them with illegally fixing the price of CDs, according to Newsweek. The lawsuit was recently settled out of court with the defendants paying \$143 million in punitive damages. Anyone who bought a CD between Jan. 1, 1995 and Dec. 22, 2000 should visit musiccdsettlement.com to file a claim and receive a possible \$20 from the settlement.

Aside from disposing of the heinous practice of keeping CD prices arbitrarily high, the music industry could boost its profits by producing more singles. Any song that is heard on the radio should be able to be purchased for a price drastically less than the cost of an entire album. But record labels have severely limited this practice. Just this past year, "The Ketchup Song" proved popular with many Americans. But Sony, one of the five major record companies, was unable to fully bank on the phenomenon because it only sold the song on an album with a list price of \$14. I, like many other music consumers, liked "The Ketchup Song" but was unwilling to pay that much money for one song.

The music industry has spent a large part of the past several years fighting Internet technology instead of embracing it. Many consumers love the convenience of the Web and would gladly pay to obtain music from the Internet legally. But even when it tries to offer users a legitimate alternative to Internet piracy, the music industry finds a way to anger its customers. Take the pay-for-play online music service, EMusic, for example. The EMusic Web site promises "unlimited MP3s" for only "one low monthly price." But dsreports.com, which provides information on high-speed Internet issues, has reported that many EMusic subscribers have had their services canceled for violating the "spirit of the service." In other words, they were downloading too many songs so they had their subscriptions revoked. This does not constitute an "unlimited" service. This type of disrespect by the music industry toward its customers will only make more people yearn for the convenience of music piracy.

The relationship between music lovers and the music industry is extremely inimical. Record companies must lower CD prices, introduce more singles and use the Internet in more constructive ways if they are to earn some much-needed consumer trust.

Collins Ezeanyim is a junior computer engineering major.



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