

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## SEVERING INTERNATIONAL TIES

### Actions of U.N. and NATO call into question need for global alliances

With war imminent, many Americans are wondering if the United States should remain party to indecisive international organizations such as the United Nations and North Atlantic Treaty Organization given their inept handling of the current Iraqi crisis.



JERAD NAJVAR

United Nations and NATO. One is reminded of the Gulf War of the early 1990s, or the NATO actions in Bosnia under the Clinton Administration. In short, the United States expends a great deal of resources supporting these organizations.

Despite the apparent successes of these organizations, reluctance on the part of the United Nations and NATO to deal with Iraq has proven just how shaky international alliances can be, and calls into question America's support of them.

Take the United Nations, for example. As stated on its Web site, the "primary responsibility" of the U.N. Security Council is the "maintenance of international peace and security." With this in mind, the Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441 in November of 2002.

Far from being a new mandate, Resolution 1441 represents a culmination of more than a decade of resolutions and threats made by the Security Council regarding Iraqi disarmament in the wake of the Gulf War. Resolution 687, passed in 1991, required Iraq to provide the United Nations with an "accurate, full, final, and complete disclosure" of "all aspects of its programs to develop weapons of mass destruction," as well as any ballistic missiles with a range greater than 150 kilometers, and to provide "immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access" to weapons inspectors.

Declaring that Iraq "has been and remains in material breach" of this previous Resolution 1441 was supposed to give Saddam Hussein one last chance to comply with U.N. demands, and threatens "serious consequences" for non-compliance. However, when Iraq was recently found to have undeclared and illegal chemical warheads and ballistic missiles, and has continued to impede inspections in various ways, the Security Council has balked. At the urging of several nations, the council has simply refused to enforce its own resolutions, instead choosing to drag the process out.

Displaying a similar reluctance to

fulfill its self-proclaimed obligations, it took weeks for NATO members to even agree to begin planning for the defense of Turkey in the event of an Iraqi war, reported CNN.com.

Although the alliance has proven durable after past strains, some see this situation as a bigger test. According to Robin Oakley of CNN, Henry Kissinger calls the rift the "gravest in the Atlantic alliance since it was formed," and the American ambassador to NATO says it faces a "crisis of credibility."

Despite the trend toward international cooperation seen in the modern world, current divisions in the United Nations and NATO reaffirm the simple reality that nations will pursue a foreign policy that advances their national interests.

Acceptance of this fact means that the United Nations and NATO may not be as important as many perceive.

In addition to being prone to indecision, international organizations, by their very nature, represent a threat to national sovereignty.

Although membership in a voluntary military alliance such as NATO certainly has the potential to present such a threat by dragging the United States into somebody else's war, a few of the United Nations' recent proposed policies are especially instructive in this regard.

To begin with, one must acknowledge that the United States is alone in the world regarding its respect for and protection of personal liberty. The fact that the United States supports an organization that currently seats Libya and Syria on its Commission on Human Rights, two countries whose records on human rights are less than credible according to Human Rights Watch, should cause great discomfort.

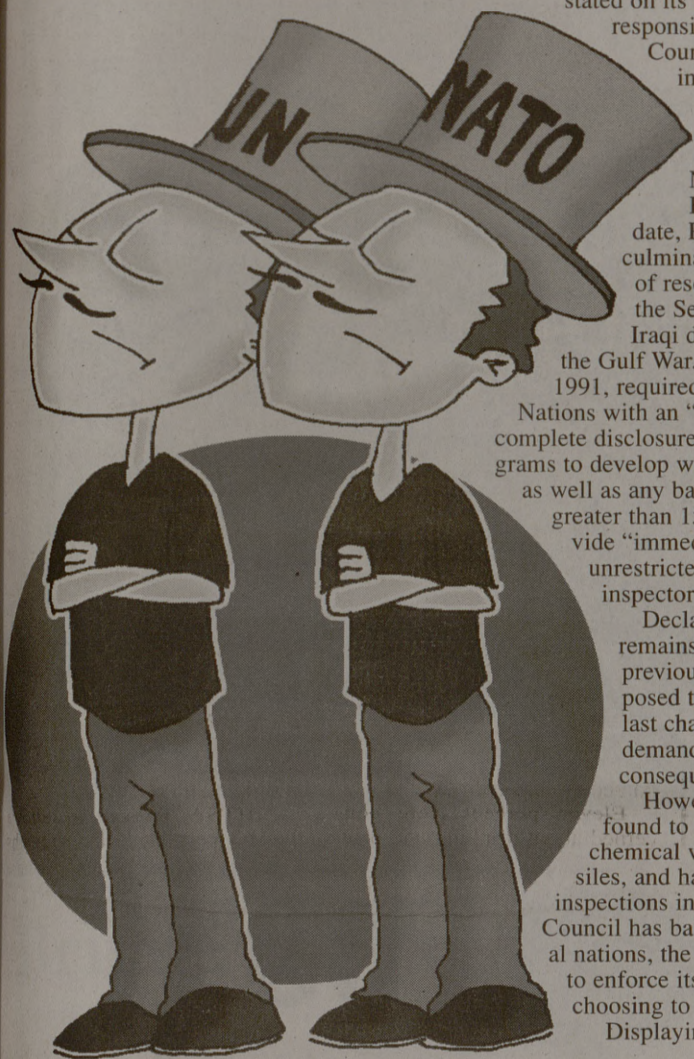
With a membership such as this, Americans should not expect the United Nations to respect their ideals. Some agreements sought by the United Nations, such as international provisions aimed at curbing the illicit trade of firearms, or the institution of an International Criminal Court, would even undermine the Constitution itself.

In his Farewell Address of 1796, former President Washington explicitly warned future generations of Americans against engaging in

"permanent alliances."

Given the fact that such alliances present an inherent threat to national sovereignty, and after witnessing the United Nations' impotence and NATO's reluctance regarding the present crisis with Iraq, perhaps American policy makers should finally heed that advice.

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## Saving summer school

### Classes must not be affected by cuts

When Texas A&M President Robert M. Gates reported last month on the state-mandated budget cuts, he promised in his Feb. 10 press release that the "process of dealing with the cuts will be open and your questions will be answered as best we can." However, each college has yet to explain to the students how they will be affected, and direct answers are far from accessible when one does attempt to find them.

A clear possibility is that the \$23 million that A&M will no longer have threatens to affect students negatively. One thing students would hope for is that the budget cuts would follow practicality and eliminate unnecessary or marginal spending instead of eliminating anything that would contradict the central purpose of A&M: educating students. Gates maintained that "the fundamental missions are teaching and research," in his press release.

However, the shaving of the budget will be left to the deans of each college within the University, and cutting costs will be left up to them. A looming possibility could be the reduc-

tion in the number of summer school classes offered to compensate for the high spending from the fall and spring semesters.

Although numerically, the educational sector has more money to spare, the overall result of the decrease in summer school classes would have an adverse domino effect.

**"Summer school classes are not only part of the central mission of education at A&M, but hold many components and implications that could create problems if diminished."**

Summer school classes are not only part of the central mission of education at A&M, but hold many components and implications that could create problems if diminished. Many students depend upon classes offered in the summer to graduate on time, and make living arrangements based on their summer schedules. Furthermore, should any

drastic measures be taken that would cause numerous students to abandon the prospect of summer school and return to their own hometowns, the economy of College Station during the summer might worsen.

The deans of each college must find ways to cut funds that deal with other areas, such as unnecessary programs or additional research. A&M's purpose is to educate its students, and although other components hold their own importance, the central mission should be to provide courses for students.

Dealing with the change in the budget is a balancing act, and determining which areas deserve money is a difficult one. However, the importance of education should not be overlooked by the various deans at the university.

Offering the standard amount of classes in the summer session equivalent to years past is the only action that is true to A&M's mission. During the upcoming weeks, as the deans begin to cut programs or spending, they must remember this mission and keep funding for summer courses the same.

Sara Foley is a sophomore journalism major.



SARA FOLEY

## MAIL CALL

### Anti war protestors uninformed, peace no longer an option

I am willing to stand up for the red white and blue. Those who are opposed to going to war with Iraq do not understand the nature of humanity. Despite the fact that most of us love peace, harmony and tranquility, not everyone does.

There are many in the world who would kill others for their own sadistic pleasure. They would use biological weapons to make themselves powerful. They would destroy the lives of those under them in the interest of furthering their own goals.

As I was walking through the Academic Building Plaza this morning, I saw a large group gathered to protest the war.

It sickens me that citizens of this nation would think that being peaceful would set an example for foreign nations of this sort.

The signs read, "Teach peace." Do you really think that Saddam Hussein says, "Wow, look at those peaceful Americans. I wish our country could be like that?"

These people don't care about peace. They want domination. If we wait any longer, domination is what they shall receive.

We, as a nation, are trying to stop the massive genocide that occurred during the Second World War. This time, however, it's not the Jews that are in trouble: it's the Americans. If you think that lighting a joint and singing "kum-ba-ya" at international meetings will stop the slaughter of millions of Americans, you are sadly mistaken.

Virginia Traweck Class of 2005

### Conflict with Iraq may signal beginning of World War III

Go to Iraq. Starve the poor, obliterate the sick, and attack the impoverished. Instate new and possibly more dangerous dictators as we have done so many times before. Dismantle the United Nations and any other governing body that stands in your way.

And years from now when you are dying, fighting for the world's last puddle of oil, waving your "big stick" instead of striving for a diplomatic solution, you will reach out for a limb but find that there are no trees, no fertile ground on which to lay, only scorched earth — only a barren, war-torn wasteland and the big, iron stick of a tank's gun on which to feebly lean as you watch nuclear war and unimaginable pestilence come screaming over the desolate horizon.

When the nation and world we all love are nothing more than a series of "mudholes," each bigger than the

last; when the prosperity we cherish has been reduced to some inconceivable, mythological fable; and, eventually, when the struggle is not for oil or democracy even freedom but for existence itself; then maybe, possibly you will comprehend the actions of the "bed-weaving, tree-hugging peace activists" whom you despise. Remember World War III? Let's hope we never have to.

Cory Olivet Class of 2005

### Discomfort about war does not mean we should protest it

In response to a March 4 Mail Call:

I agree with Mr. Taqvi that the scene of trainloads of tanks passing through College Station is surreal. However, to draw the conclusion that we must protest war from this one instance does not logically follow. Uneasiness about the reality of war does not mean we should unconditionally condemn it.

War is scary, as Mr. Taqvi mentioned. War must not be our first answer to conflict, but at times it is necessary to prevent worse horrors. Though gruesome, bloody and horrifying, war is sometimes justified.

Currently our focus is on a possible war with Iraq. That nation's leader, Saddam Hussein, is a dictator who has already killed thousands of his own people; he hates the United States, and possesses unmanned drones capable of executing chemical and biological attacks on the United States; he is also in violation of a treaty he is obligated to respect and actively circumvents diplomatic efforts to bring him into compliance.

Not only are these facts unsettling by themselves, they invoke shades of Hitler: dodging treaties, toying with diplomats, killing his own people.

We must learn from history, both from Vietnam (as Mr. Taqvi noted) and from World War II. If Hitler had been stopped early on, the lives of more than 11 million innocent civilians would have been spared from the Holocaust and other Nazi oppression.

Let us not be moved only by our discomfort with war, but let us also learn from history as we carefully analyze the appropriateness of war with Saddam Hussein.

David Dunton Class of 2005