

OPINION

THE BATTALION

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DEPLORABLE ACTS

Iraqi forces in violation of Geneva Convention must be held accountable

U.S. forces in Iraq have been destroying organized resistance rapidly, leading Saddam Hussein and his followers to a horrible conclusion: to survive, they must violate the rules of war against Allied forces and even their own people. Forcing their own soldiers to fight at gunpoint, parading prisoners of war on television and using terrorist tactics to ambush U.S. troops all are deplorable and avoidable acts that Iraq is committing, and all are being covered by the media. The United States and its allies must act now to prevent events such as these from happening and to let those responsible know they will not escape punishment.



DAVID SHOEMAKER

vised interrogations previously, according to The Chronicle.

This is simply appalling, showing that Saddam and his forces, despite all their crowing about the United States' "illegal war," have even less respect for international law than they claim the United States has. And as if this were not enough, Saddam is now sending his troops on suicide attacks against U.S. troops. The Chronicle reports that Iraq's Foreign Minister, Naji Sabri, claims these soldiers volunteer for the duty. This may not be entirely true because, in an even worse incident reported by The New York Times, Iraqi officers are shooting their own soldiers in the back for refusing to fight. U.S. troops found an Iraqi private who had sustained a small caliber gunshot to the back of the head at close range, indicating that he had been shot by one of his superior officers. Other soldiers reported similar behavior in other areas, where troops who did not want to fight were forced to do so at gunpoint. All of these incidents seem to fit a pattern of Saddam's total disregard for the conventions of war, and even for the troops who are fighting for his survival. Allied forces can no longer simply sit by; something must be done to improve the situation.

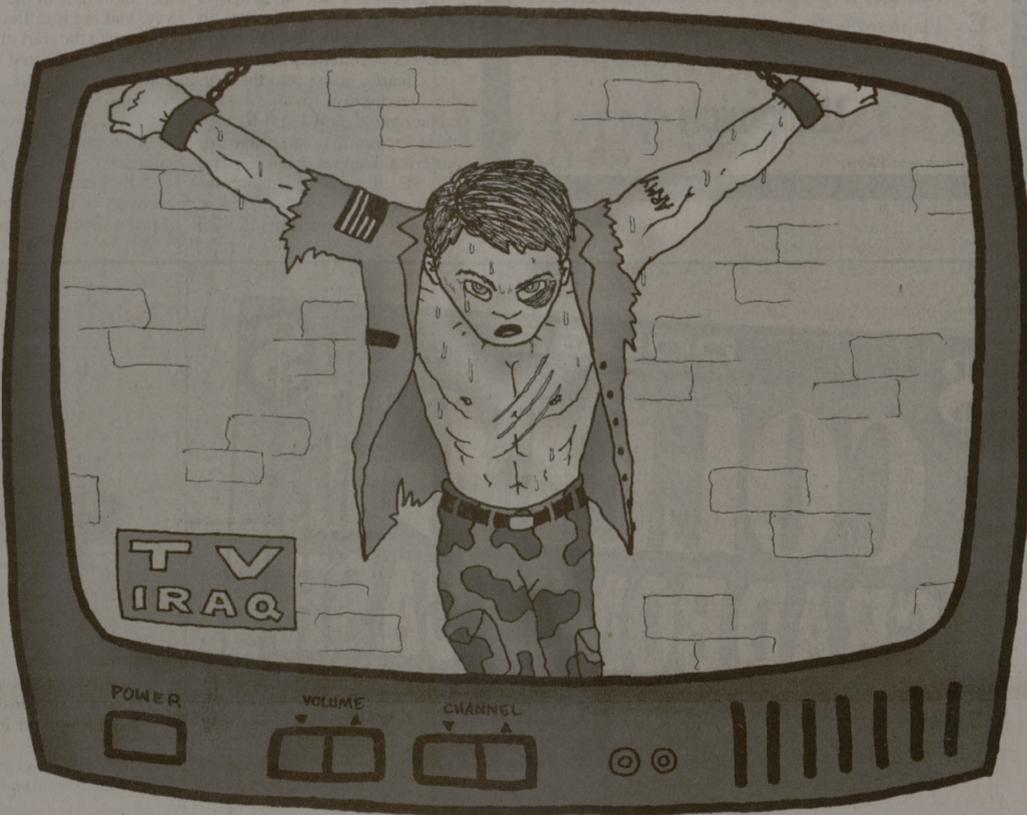
The Allies should use the media, diplomatic channels and the troops on the ground to put an end to Saddam's deadly games. First, the Allies need to make it clear to those in Saddam's regime that any further mistreatment of Allied prisoners is intolerable. Any treatment of POWs in violation of the Geneva Convention should result in those

responsible being tried for war crimes. Although this threat may not dissuade Saddam's lackeys, at least after the war's end there will be justice for the POWs' families and a way to keep war criminals out of post-war Iraq. Regardless of how these threats are delivered to the Iraqi armed forces, the U.S. stance must be made clear.

However, Allied forces need to reach out to average Iraqi citizens and soldiers. They must be encouraged to revolt against officers forcing them to fight and to turn over Saddam loyalists in hiding. But these requests must be backed up with pledges of protection and of monetary rewards. These kinds of offers are communicated well by leaflets dropped from air-

planes and by interaction with troops on the ground. Allied forces must act now to prevent the spread of illegal and inhumane tactics by Saddam's forces across the rest of Iraq before more people die needlessly.

David Shoemaker is a junior management major. Graphic by Josh Darwin.



Media must remain impartial during war

Anti-war protests seemingly given more attention than those supporting war

The media have always been criticized for having some sort of bias, which has become more apparent since the war with Iraq has been in the spotlight. Some journalists have seemingly forgotten one of the basic rules of journalism: objectivity.

For something to be considered biased, it does not have to come from a newscaster preaching that war with Iraq is wrong. Bias is sometimes more apparent in an editor's decision about what news story to run or in a reporter's decision about who to interview. Bias tends to happen, whether intended or not.

Bias can come from both directions — liberal versus conservative or pro-war versus anti-war, depending on the news agency. Flip back and forth between CNN, Fox News and other stations and notice the difference.

The success of the war in Iraq could partially rely on public opinion, especially among American citizens. This is why it is important for the media to remain impartial and to present both sides of the issue. It is possible that if more Americans who support President George W. Bush were represented, public opinion might change.

The fact that the news media have covered so many anti-war protests around the globe creates the feeling among their audiences that practically everyone is against the war in Iraq. This might mean that some Bush supporters, thinking themselves a minority, are afraid to voice their opinions.

Maybe members of the media are not necessarily to blame



KATHARINE MCHENRY

for creating a kind of bias in this particular coverage. News editors likely consider the protests newsworthy, but it is necessary to remind the public that what it is seeing is only half of the story. Chances are, most people who are content with America's foreign policy are not going to go out and march with signs that say "We're happy with the status quo."

Yes, there have been a few pro-war protests covered in the media, but anti-war protests have seemingly been given more publicity. This may have to do with the fact that there are, on the whole, fewer pro-war protests than anti-war ones, but is it really necessary to keep showing the peace demonstrators?

Almost all of the anti-war protests look the same. People wave signs saying things such as "Bomb Texas too" or "Bush is Hitler" while they chant in unison. "No to war." Why is it necessary to keep bombarding Americans with the same story day after day? Peace demonstrations have been given more coverage than they deserve, at least as far as newsworthiness is concerned.

It has also been difficult to go more than a day or two without seeing a well-known — but not necessarily well-informed — celebrity criticize the Bush administration and the war in Iraq.

Unfortunately, it is the stars, not average American citizens, who have automatic publicity to express their views. Award shows, specifically the Grammys and Oscars, provide a perfect

opportunity for entertainers to rant about the injustices of the world, the favorite of which is that the candidate whom they backed was not elected president of the United States.

Because celebrities receive so much media attention from their statements, some people may be led to believe that these entertainers' overwhelming views represent a majority of Americans, which certainly is not the case.

On the opposite end of the spectrum from the so-called liberal media, there are such organizations as the ultra-conservative Media Research Center, which has the goal of bringing "balance and responsibility to the news media."

According to the Media Research Center, there are at least a few stars who support the American policy toward Iraq. Among this elite few are Kelsey Grammer, Dennis Miller, Kid Rock and Vince Vaughn.

However, most people probably have not heard about these entertainers' views because celebrities who back Bush do not receive the coverage that other celebrities get when they shamelessly say, "I'm embarrassed to be an American." By now, everyone has probably lost count of the number of stars who have made that statement.

Maybe the media think anti-war celebrities make for more interesting stories, but surely the idea of a celebrity actually supporting the United States should make the front page.

Katharine McHenry is a senior journalism major.

MAIL CALL

Conoley's words hypocritical

I find it incongruous that Dean Conoley can claim to have "immense trust and respect" for the eight professors who sent a letter protesting the college policy requiring that "we all celebrate and promote every kind of human diversity including homosexuality and domestic partners," after having publicly called the letter "rather pompous and arrogant." Dean Conoley's comment that "I generally consider distinctions that call us to love the sinner while hating the sin to be empty rhetorical gestures at best and covers for persecution at worst" is tantamount to saying that all Christians who seek to practice this principle are in fact hypocrites.

Dr. Conoley missed a wonderful opportunity to model tolerance in her response to the professors who disagreed with her, but chose instead to assume a self-righteous

higher ground with her comment, "I try my best not to judge others," judging all who, unlike her, do make moral judgments. Maybe she might at least acknowledge that some people believe that "sacred texts" are divinely inspired, and therefore, give us objective truth about reality. It is ironic that in the name of tolerance, Dean Conoley has chosen to be so intolerant of the faculty who don't share her radical relativism.

*Walter L. Bradley
Emeritus Professor of
Mechanical Engineering*

Homosexuality not promoted

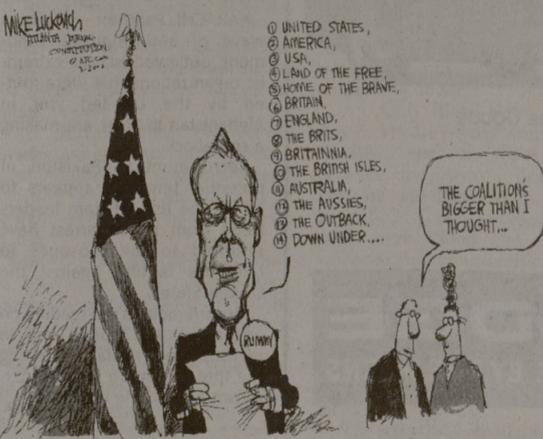
In response to Matthew Maddox's March 31 column:

It's that time again: Gay Awareness Week (or as we seasoned Battalion readers refer

to it, Matthew Maddox's Flaming Conservative Extravaganza!) I'm not sure how Mr. Maddox continually arrives at the conclusion that homosexuals are all part of a massive conspiracy to rob him and the Christian majority of their privileged status. Nor can I comprehend how Mr. Maddox understands gay awareness and tolerance initiatives to be "promoting homosexual behavior." I certainly don't see any correlation.

Finally, in response to Mr. Maddox's claim that "University officials should ... keep individuals who would belittle the religious beliefs of a majority of students and instructors out of critical University positions," I certainly disagree, but I'm sure the American Nazi Party would be more sympathetic.

*Daniel Lewis
Class of 2005*



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