Disastrous undertaking?

Bush administration has proven itself ill-prepared for consequences of Iraq war

There was something different about Memorial Day this year. Memorial Day in the past has always been a day of remembrance and reflection. Yet, the minds of many were undoubtedly peering into the future this year, wondering how many more soldiers fighting in Iraq will be honored next Memorial Day. This thought is anything but comforting, yet it is one Americans must not shy away from. Refusing to consider the consequences of invading Iraq may very well be the reason the Iraq War, at this point, appears to be a disaster.

The public was led to believe that the Iraq war would be speedy and relatively unproblematic. So 825 lost and 4,882 wounded American troops later, it is not surprising that Newsweek is noting similarities to the Vietnam War. However, the administration cannot be blamed for misleading Americans about this aspect of the war. Many within the White House and Pentagon believed U.S. troops would be greeted with open arms as liberators. What the administration must answer to is why alternative solutions to such success, such as widespread resistance within Iraq, anti-American sentiment and rival religious factions, were not considered.

JOHN DAVID BLAKLEY

Or perhaps the reason Iraq appears to be such a mess is that the public never reached a clear consensus on why America invaded Iraq. For a country to send its troops into harm's way, a clear reason must be provided by its leaders. There was no such reason. Fear-mongering, a tactic all too familiar to the right, was used to gather overwhelming support within the United States. Assertions about ties between al-Qaida and Iraq and the threat of Saddam's WMDs were presented to the public as conclusive, without-a-doubt facts. The most tragic event known to our generation, the death of 3,000 American civilians, was used to quell opposition to and even query of the decision to go to war.

As America now knows, there were no Iraqi ties to al-Qaida and it's debatable whether there were WMDs. In fact, the Bush administration's primary concern seems to have been not why to go to war with Iraq, but how to induce the people to go along with the war. In Bob Woodward's book "Plan of Attack," after CIA officials presented their "best evidence" that Saddam Hussein possessed WMDs to the president, Bush responded, "Nice try, but that isn't gonna sell Joe Public. That isn't gonna convince Joe Public." Bush's attention should have been focused on whether Saddam was a real threat to American national security rather than the public's perception of his decision.

So now the reason for the war in Iraq has become humanitarian — to topple a ruthless leader and to plant seeds of democracy in the Middle East. Saddam was a ruthless leader and such a

humanitarian effort is a noble cause. In fact, spreading democracy to other countries is a tenet belonging to liberals and idealists, not neo-conservatives like Bush, Cheney and Rumsfeld. The hope of democratization, empowering women and improving the quality of life for Iraqis is why liberal giants such as Thomas Friedman, Jacob Weisberg and Fareed Zakaria backed the war with Iraq.

Yet, the costs have led many supporters of the war to reconsider, including Weisberg who stated in Slate, "Many of those costs — human, financial and diplomatic — could have been reduced substantially if President Bush hadn't gratuitously alienated so many potential allies and sympathizers, and if arrogance and ideology hadn't prevented his Pentagon team from properly planning for the occupation."

Weisberg brings us full circle. Neither the public nor its leaders were prepared for the consequences of this war. No matter the intentions behind a decision to occupy a country, the question of whether or not occupation can be a success has to be strictly scrutinized. The quest for answers to the problems of the Middle East seems daunting. The clash of two civilizations, Arab and Western, will define this century. With so much at stake, why wasn't the plan for "planting the seeds of democracy" on Arab soil better thought out?

The president has led Americans to a difficult place, one we cannot leave yet. Doing so would create a power vacuum within Iraq, and plant the seeds not for democracy, but for more anti-American sentiment and new terrorism. Yet, no new solutions are coming from the White House to suggest that the war in Iraq could end successfully. Perhaps the solution is new leadership.

John David Blakley is a sophomore political science major.
Graphic by Will Loyd

MAIL CALL

In spite of the Supreme Court decision, no 'right' to abort

The Supreme Court decision, Roe v. Wade v. baby Roe, was fundamentally flawed: Baby Roe could not confront it's accuser and didn't receive proper legal representation, yet was sentenced to death. It was this unjust decision that is now slowly being revisited, despite strong opposition using the so-called "reproductive rights."

We must stop perpetuating the myth of a "right" to abort. Unlike true human rights which protect the individual, abortion by definition destroys the rights of an individual (the baby). The vast majority of abortions are performed to conveniently undo the irresponsible actions of a couple; the price is the loss of an innocent life. Abortion is not a basic human right, it's an expedient political argument for unborn euthanasia.

What about the argument of abortion for cases of rape and incest? As often as this is brought up, don't you ever wonder why we aren't charging thousands of criminals for rapes, statutory rapes and incest? Are abortions being performed to cover up such heinous crimes? Or is the argument just that, an argument for political cover?

What about the argument of protecting the life of the mother? Most mothers (and fathers) would selflessly sacrifice their life to save their child, born or unborn. With current medical science, isn't this an incredible rare occurrence that is just trotted out as another excuse?

There are individuals and organizations that continually delude themselves with such thinking. This includes doctors who violate the Hippocratic Oath by tearing apart a child or sucking its brains out. Reconsider what you are supporting: Look at the blood on your hands, and consider how lucky you are that your own mother didn't abort you.

Giving them the benefit of the doubt, the Bryan mayor and City Council were probably blindsided

when the LaSalle people were exposed supporting Planned Parenthood. The city should not be involved, directly or indirectly, in supporting an organization that kills unborn children. The Council should publicly state that renewal of the LaSalle contract is contingent of them backing away with such controversial support; anything less would be seen as a defacto approval of abortion.

Benito Flores-Meath
Class of 1983

Evidence supporting global warming not 'overwhelming'

In response to a June 3 mail call:

Mr. Powell is correct to take Mr. Walters to task about his appeal to authority via a petition, however his assertion that there is "overwhelming scientific evidence" of global warming is preposterous.

The warming trend quoted as being human induced is that of temperature measurements on the surface. These do not match higher atmosphere readings taken by satellites and weather balloons. Global warming estimates are based on computer models of the atmosphere, which require a warming of the upper atmosphere as well as the lower, which isn't borne out by the data available.

The Kyoto Protocol and other such agreements attempt to act based on the advice of what we know are faulty models. Without an accurate model showing a temperature trend produced by human events that matches the temperature records that we have, there is no proof that human emissions effect the overall global temperature.

To legislate based on broken models of future performance is absurd.

Matthew Gross
graduate student

IT'S BUSH. CAN I BE IRAQ'S PRESIDENT?...

Tikrit Tribune
HANDOVER JUNE 30th

MIKE LUCKOVICH

NYC subway photo ban a rights violation

It is summertime, and that means that it is vacation time. Across the country, people will load up to go to those places where they have always wanted to go — places such as Yellowstone, San Francisco and New York.

But those trips to New York may become upsetting in the near future for some tourists; NYC Transit, the arm of New York's Transit Authority that runs the city's buses and subways, has proposed a ban on taking pictures and video on its buses and subways, according to MSNBC.

According to the article, anyone wishing to take pictures would need a press pass or written permission to do so. Violators would be subject to a fine. This policy is a serious problem, as it is a violation of the First Amendment, and it will be hard to enforce.

The idea of photography bans during times of war is not new. During World War II, there were many places where photos were not permitted. But these bans only lasted for the duration of hostilities, until the threat had subsided.

But fighting terrorism is a much more open-ended commitment, something few Americans have seemed to grasp. Even if the West wins the war with Muslim fundamentalists, there will not come a single day when the enemy will surrender, stack its arms and admit its crimes. If the enemies are beaten, they will simply fade away as a coherent force.

But even if terrorism related to the Middle East ends, there are still plenty of people who might perpetrate a terrorist-style attack. There will still be people like Timothy McVeigh or foreign criminals, such as drug cartels, who have just as much of a taste for blood as al-Qaida, but perhaps on a less spectacular scale.

And even if terrorists wanted to attack a subway train, do they really need pictures when they can ride that which they wish to attack? A terrorist could ride the line everyday and commit its every detail to memory, without a camera. He could even try to get a job with the Transit Authority, if he had a clean record, and learn all kinds of information vital to planning an attack.

In the end, a ban on unauthorized photography
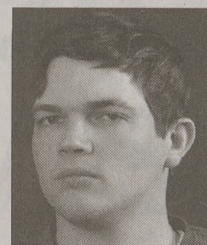
DAVID SHOEMAKER

will not make the subway safer, but it will simply help the terrorists in their goal of trampling the rights enshrined in the Constitution. Even if the ban were constitutional and did not contribute to the erosion of the First Amendment, it would be hard to enforce.

Think of the tourists who ride the subway every day. They all want to take pictures of friends, family and the regular New Yorkers in the station, as souvenirs of their vacation. Will they all be accosted by police to see if they have their papers in order?

The idea of stopping every person with a camera in the subway is just as ludicrous as the idea that every visitor will send off for written permission to take photos. Almost certainly the Transit Authority will have to depend upon the discretion of its police officers to decide which photographers to stop and question.

Even New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg has spoken out on the foolishness of the ban. He was quoted in a radio interview with 1010 AM WINS (a New York station) saying "if there are some tourists and they want to take pictures of each other on the subway train — come on, get real."

Although his remarks are not an official stance, they likely accurately reflect the sentiments of the majority of New Yorkers and Americans who are not petrified at every possible threat. Although it is important to exercise diligence in security matters, it is just as important to keep such security considerations from doing a disservice to those they are meant to protect.

This is why NYC Transit, along with other public agencies, must not get carried away with hysteria over the terrorist threat. They should undertake measures to try to provide safety for their riders, but they cannot stop every threat. It is this inability, along with the Constitution, that should provide a measure of rationality for the extent of security regulations.

> " ... fighting terrorism is a much more open-ended commitment ... there will not come a single day where the enemy will surrender ...

David Shoemaker is a senior management major.