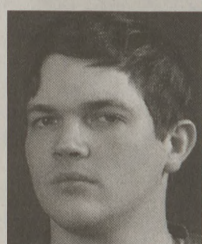


Bitten by the past

Poor foreign policy decisions of past presidents resulted in current Iraq debacle



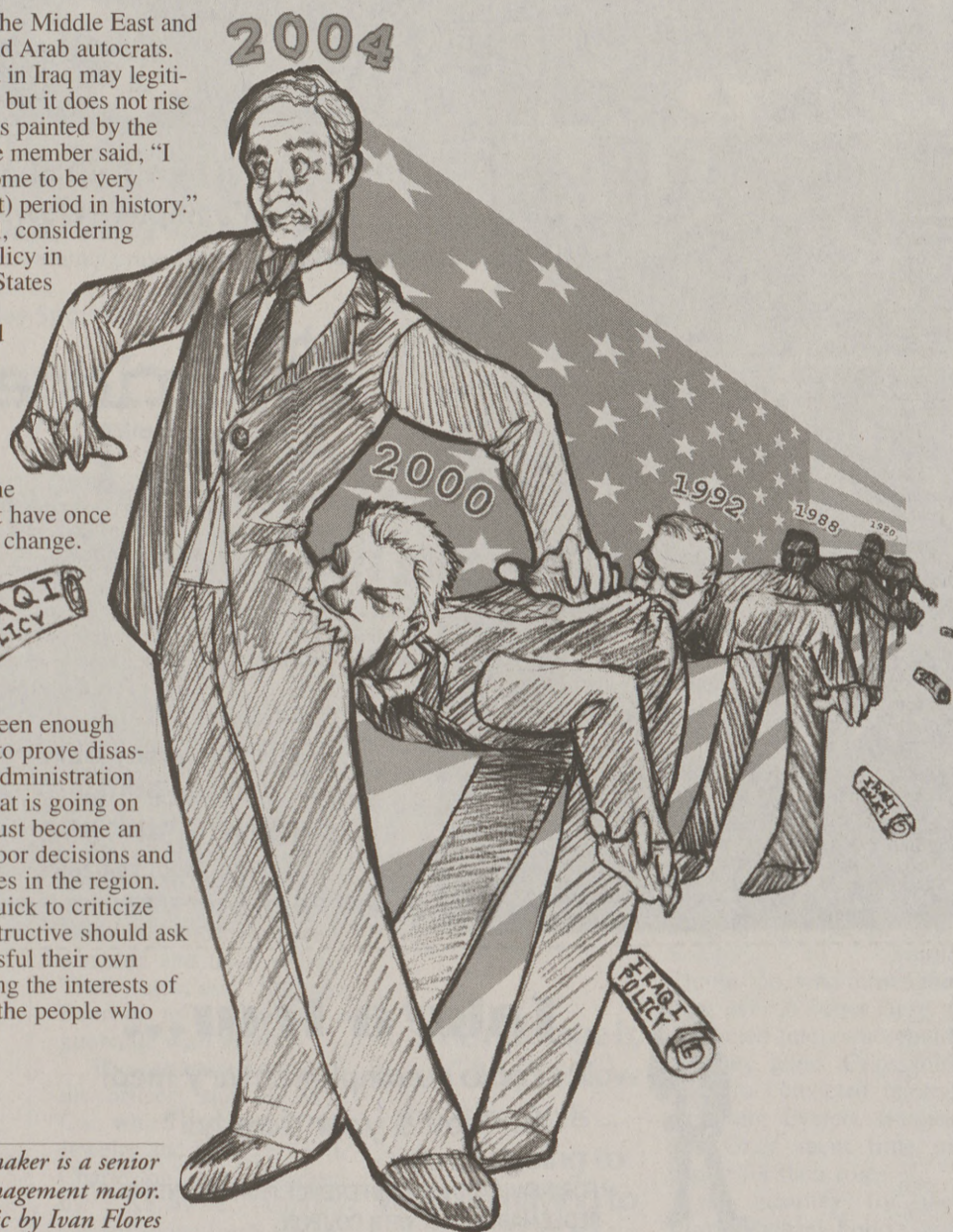
DAVID SHOEMAKER

The political maneuvering of nation-states can vary greatly from one country to another. Some make erratic decisions, others seem to be stuck in a policy rut. The United States is in a bizarre, dependent rut of its own in the Middle East right now. Because of past American and Middle Eastern foreign policy decisions, the United States now finds itself in a poor position. America currently stands for the growth of democracy and economic freedom in the region, but past U.S. policies are wedded to a collection of authoritarian monarchs and dictators. The responsibility for this dates back to the late 1970s and the presidency of Jimmy Carter. That makes it all the more ironic that recently, a group of officials from former administrations issued a report condemning the policies of the current Bush administration in Iraq, according to the BBC. Included were some officials who served under former President Bush. But, the report does not seem to address any policy failures by the United States or its allies in the past 20 years that left America with a foreign policy equivalent to an open, painful wound in the Middle East. The blame for the current climate in the Middle East is not entirely the work of the Bush administration. The fall of the Shah in Iran in 1979 was the first area where U.S. policy and that of its allies faced a major choice. Although the hostage crisis was an immediate problem, the deeper issue was what approach should be taken to the new, aggressive theocracy. The United States at that time decided

to try to pursue a policy of containment, which was not a failure in and of itself. But the decision to support Iraq as a part of it was. According to a brief history of the Iran-Iraq War courtesy of us-israel.org, the United States and allies such as the Saudis and other Gulf states thought that supporting Iraq was a good way to keep Iran in check. Then the United States changed its policy and tried to help the Iranians through the half-baked Iran-Contra "arms for hostages" deal. Although this fell through, it made it clear that both countries were problems for the United States. By the end of the war in 1988, Iraq had a large military and still sought to dominate the Persian Gulf. Iran was still trying to export its Shiite Muslim theocracy, much to the dismay of the Persian Gulf states. This is where the decision to support Iraq came back to bite those who had made it. Iraq turned on Kuwait, an act made possible in part by previous U.S. support. The failure of the coalition to remove Saddam in the following war was another squandered opportunity. The first Bush administration should have gone back to the United Nations and other coalition members to ask for permission to finish the job it started in Iraq. By leaving Saddam in place, the stage was set for 10 years of stalemate that sapped the good will derived from the war. Those 10 years included the rise of al-Qaida, which used the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia to contain Saddam as a rallying call for its supporters. The United States also squandered support among Shiites and Kurds in Iraq by refusing to aid them against Saddam's regime. By the end of the Sept. 11 attacks, the series of bad decisions had caught up with the United States and its allies. The United States is the target of a worldwide terrorist insurgency, based upon the heavy

American presence in the Middle East and its support for Israel and Arab autocrats. The decision to fight in Iraq may legitimately be questionable, but it does not rise to the level of disaster as painted by the recent panel report. One member said, "I think we will in time come to be very ashamed of this (current) period in history." That seems doubtful, considering that in the course of policy in the region, the United States tried to trade arms for hostages, has supported an array of repressive autocratic leaders who have left permanent scars on the history of their countries and has abandoned those like the Iraqi Shiites who might have once been willing agents for change. The key thing that the war in Iraq has done has been to scatter the pieces on the chess board of the region. There has not been enough time for events in Iraq to prove disastrous. But if the Bush administration doesn't take care of what is going on in Iraq, the war could just become an addition to the list of poor decisions and squandered opportunities in the region. Those who would be quick to criticize the efforts as being destructive should ask themselves how successful their own efforts were in protecting the interests of America, its allies and the people who live in the Middle East.

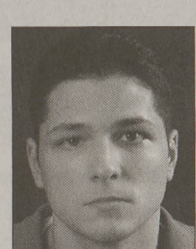
David Shoemaker is a senior management major. Graphic by Ivan Flores



Commission findings don't contradict Bush

Bush administration never asserted an Iraq-al-Qaida link to Sept. 11 attacks

Many of those following the 9-11 Commission hearings in the media have come away woefully misinformed. Newspaper headlines and published reports have misled some into thinking that the commission has found no link between Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime and al-Qaida. Last week's New York Times and Washington Post headlines, just to name a few, said exactly that, and the unfortunate result is that the layperson casually following the headlines may think that President George Bush deceived America in his justification for the Iraq War. As columnist Joel Mowbray said in his latest townhall.com editorial, "The Times' Page One story reads like a John Kerry press release." But, in reality, Saddam and al-Qaida were linked, and have been since the early 1990s. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and the members of the 9-11 Commission all agree on this point. So, what gives? Why has the liberal media — which Cheney has repeatedly labeled "irresponsible" in its reporting on commission findings — denied Iraq-al-Qaida ties? The unfortunate but not-at-all-surprising answer is partisan politics. Many of the left-leaning pillars of the media, such as the Post and the Times, would sooner paint Bush as a liar and the



GEORGE DEUTSCH

commission's findings as contradicting the Bush administration than concede any justification for war. Admittedly, the commission has found no indisputable evidence — yet — of a direct tie between Saddam and al-Qaida in carrying out the Sept. 11 attacks. But this fact has somehow been reinterpreted by some of the media as meaning there were no ties between Iraq and al-Qaida at all. That assertion is patently false. The Bush administration has deceived no one. It never claimed a link between Iraq and al-Qaida in the Sept. 11 attacks. It only said that there was a link between the two prior to Sept. 11. Chairman of the 9-11 Commission Thomas Kean said last week that "We don't see any serious conflict" with what the Bush administration is saying. Fellow 9-11 Commission member John Lehman agrees. The ties between al-Qaida and Iraq are clear. So clear, in fact, that there is so much circumstantial evidence linking Iraq and al-Qaida that it would be hard for an informed person not to at

least suspect Saddam's regime of having a hand in the attacks. First, consider the most recent findings that the 9-11 Commission didn't even incorporate into last week's interim report. Lehman told NBC's "Meet the Press" of new intelligence linking a top al-Qaida operative to Saddam. "Some of these documents indicate that (there was) at least one officer of Saddam's Fedayeen, a lieutenant colonel, who was a very prominent member of al-Qaida," Lehman said. "The vice president was right when he said that he may have things that we don't yet." Admittedly, this is no direct link to Sept. 11, but it certainly reshapes the debate. Even the 9-11 Commission's interim report saw evidence of clear Iraq-al-Qaida ties stretching back years. USA Today reported that "the commission said (Osama) bin Laden sought Iraq's help in obtaining weapons and setting up terrorist training camps a decade ago." As the old saying goes, the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Cheney told CNBC that there is evidence that these ties include an Iraqi brigadier general

who joined bin Laden in Sudan — his terrorist base before Afghanistan — to train al-Qaida members in how to manufacture bombs and forge documents. Cheney went on to mention evidence of a Czech intelligence report, which has yet to be confirmed or denied, that asserts that Sept. 11 hijacker Muhammad Atta met with senior Iraqi officials in Prague just weeks before the attacks. So, the ties between al-Qaida and Iraq are there, it's simply a question of whether these ties extend to the attacks on Sept. 11. When asked on "Meet the Press" recently about a direct Iraqi link to Sept. 11, Cheney responded simply, "We don't know." But what this nation does know is that Saddam's Iraqi regime and the al-Qaida terrorist group stood for the same things: murder, destruction and power at all costs. The war in Iraq, just like the toppling of the Taliban and the continued hunt for members of al-Qaida, is wholly justified. No amount of partisan bickering or misleading reporting can change that. Those who died on Sept. 11 did not die in vain.

George Deutsch is a senior journalism major.

"The Bush administration has deceived no one. It never claimed a link between Iraq and al-Qaida in the Sept. 11 attacks."

MAIL CALL

Out-of-wedlock statistics for blacks inaccurate
In response to Nicholas Davis' June 22 column:
Mr. Davis writes that "70 percent of all out-of-wedlock births are to black mothers." That is incorrect. Although almost 70 percent of all black births are out-of-wedlock (OOW), black OOW births are far less than 70 percent of the total number of OOW births. In the year 2000, there were 1,347,043 OOW births in America, and 426,649 of these were black. Thus, blacks account for about 32 percent of all OOW births. (CDC's National Vital Statistics Reports, Vol. 50, No. 5, Table 1, http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr50/nvsr50_05.pdf.)
Students too often have little respect for precise thinking. And why shouldn't they? Logic courses have been stripped from the curriculum, and our universities are staffed by postmodernist professors who espouse a hyper-feminine concept of truth in which emotion trumps data-driven facts, and the scientific concept of

truth is seen as oppressive rather than liberating. Academia's most influential feminist, Professor Catharine MacKinnon, is openly contemptuous of truth: "... we also disavow standard scientific norms as the adequacy criteria for our theory, because the objective standpoint we criticize is the posture of science. In other words, our critique of the objective standpoint as male is a critique of science as a specifically male approach to knowledge. With it we reject male criteria for verification."
Sloppy thinking cannot reduce pollution, make an airplane fly or mitigate the disastrous consequences of out-of-wedlock births.
James G. Boyd IV
Associate Professor
Department of Aerospace Engineering

Minimum wage hike is an unrealistic proposal
The Kerry campaign recently suggested that the minimum wage ought to be increased to seven dollars an hour. If seven dollars is good, why not eight?

Hey, if eight dollars is good, why not 10? If 10 is good, let's just make it \$20 an hour! By now, you've said, 'Whoa, twenty is too much.'
But the same logic made seven dollars sound pretty good, didn't it? Seven dollars an hour is just some arbitrary figure John Kerry pulled out of his hat in the interest of "fairness." Here is a better idea: let's let the market value of labor determine what wages people will be paid. To think you won't get a competitive wage without government "fairness" policies is absurd.
Competition among businesses who are in the labor market is what causes real wages to increase. Doctors don't work for minimum wage because they know they can go elsewhere and receive a much better wage, up to the current market value of labor in their field of work.
Kerry thinks he single-handedly can distribute wealth more effectively than the market can.
I get tired of hearing Kerry throw around the phrase "tax cuts for the rich." The rich are the only ones who pay federal income taxes in the first place! Something along the lines of 96 percent of all taxes are paid by the top 50 percent of wage earners. Bush's tax cut actu-

ally caused the percentage tax burden on the top one percent of wage earners to increase, even though they did get the most actual dollars in tax relief. So the real question is not whether the poor are being fairly treated in terms of the tax burden (since they hardly pay any), but whether the government should be allowed to take what the rich earn. Would you rather have those with good business sense, those who are entrepreneurs and those who spur job growth keep their money? Or would you rather the government, who has no bottom line to worry about and no competition to keep it in check.
Just look at those who Democrats claim to be helping and ask yourself if you want to be one of them. Bush understands jobs are created in the private sector. In times of recession, tax cuts work.

Kevin Sewell
Class of 2007

