

The Decree

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U.S. war with Iraq is history unfolding

In the past week the United States has entered a war with Iraq. The cost of this war is yet to be determined, both lives and politically. While the death toll begins to mount overseas, the repercussions are hitting home.

For those who have family members in the Gulf area, this time can seem extremely unnerving, and lonely. If you are one of these people, please get together and contact those other individuals who share your burden.

The Office of Student Life is in the process of organizing a support group to help these students through

this crisis. There is also a school-sponsored psychiatrist for those people who do not wish to openly express their feelings. He can be contacted through Student Life.

The school is also sponsoring a number of forums with speakers who have particular knowledge concerning the issues in the Gulf War. One was held last week and another was held Wednesday. All people are encouraged to attend these events.

History is taking place on a grand scale around you. Do not continue to stay glued to your Nintendo games.



Echoes of another war

The wheelchair was empty

By DR. STEVE FEREBEE

During the summer I was 19, one of my best friends was a Vietnamese man called Kim. I spent my weekends out at a rambling, Victorian house surrounded by moss-embraced live oaks and a murky-green lake. About eight friends rented it and in that era's communal spirit we partied and loved and wondered about the universe in a way I'll never forget.

Kim lived close by and was at the Mansion most of his waking hours. He went everywhere with

Dr. Steve Muses

us. When we loaded the van and headed to a rock concert, we put his wheel chair in the back and sang our way to Tallahassee or Miami or wherever the music was. Kim's thin, accented voice grew in confidence as the summer went along.

Until this time, I had never known a physically impaired

person. Kim had been educated in the United States and while working on a graduate degree he decided to return to Vietnam and fight with American soldiers for the liberation of his country. Soon after arriving, he stepped on a mine and lost his legs.

Kim intensely enjoyed his boisterous American friends as we ripped around the lake in a motor boat, moved huge speakers out into the yard so we could dance under the stars, and orchestrated hectic parties with food and drink abundant.

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Morrison column spurs disagreement

Dear Editor:

Part of the thesis of Dr. Morrison's provocative article "Good English is a 'Power Tool'" (Dec. 7) — that those in power determine what constitutes the "standard" language form — is undeniable.

Had the French won the French and Indian War, we'd be speaking a variation of French; had African slaves staged a successful revolution, we'd be speaking Gullah or some variation of Black English. Since ruling classes by definition dominate society, including its schools, their language forms the standard.

But when Morrison speculates about the consequences of this

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situation, she runs into trouble on at least two counts. First, she thinks that making people speak or write "consistently," "clearly," and "coherently" is a capitalist plot to keep "minoritarian" peoples in their place. This is, of course, the goal of rulers everywhere, but one must argue that the use of the clear, coherent language that meets what Morrison calls "bankers' criteria" is certainly not the way they try to do

it.

George Orwell noticed it first. Rulers try to obscure the truth by using obscure language. Assuming that bankers can write clear, coherent English (and the jury is out on this), they rarely do. Their politicians, bureaucrats, and other agents use phrases like "revenue enhancements" for taxes, "arbitrary deprivation of life" for murder, and "upgraded protective reaction" for bombing the hell out

of Vietnamese peasants.

Sometimes they deal in opposites — the equivalent of Big Brother's "War is Peace" method. Thus Mr. Reagan called the MX missile "the Peacekeeper" and the Contras "freedom fighters." The invasion of Panama was "Operation Just Cause."

One of the ways, therefore, to avoid tyranny is for a public to insist that leaders' statements be clear and that words mean what they're supposed to mean. Mr. Bush, whose fractured syntax may reveal either the lack of clear thought about his own policies or a desire to mislead the public or both, would be in big trouble if this were the case. But this is not

possible if the public itself doesn't know clear communication.

Secondly, Dr. Morrison seems to think that nurturing the languages and cultures of "minoritarian" peoples empowers them. It is true that, for aesthetic and perhaps psychological reasons, the languages of subcultures should be preserved. But if such preservation is in their political interest, why, for example, did the South African government forcibly "retribalize" its various black ethnic groups, requiring that they be schools in their traditional language and not English?

Why does virtually every Af-

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