

Editorials

In Defense Of War Protestors

Photos by B.Beebe (Cont'd on page four)



Student coalition against the war

by Barbara Beebe

On Jan. 26, 1991, a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, multi-political crowd of 250,000+ people gathered in Washington, D.C. to protest America's involvement and inducement of war in the Persian Gulf. It took over 3 hours for the 5+ miles of people to march from the Capitol, past the White House, to the Ellipse. The Campaign for Peace in the Middle East in conjunction with the Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East - fronted by Ramsey Clark, the Attorney General under Lyndon Johnson - were able to organize numerous organizations from across the country to protest U.S. involvement in the war. The protest was only one of thousands to occur around the globe since the Aug. 5 deployment of U.S. troops in the region.

Signs, chants, buttons, and t-shirts all revealed urgent and demanding slogans and quotes against the war. However, involvement in the anti-war movement has revealed many incisive lessons on the hypocrisy, patriotism, and ignorance that are pervasive in this country.

The position of all war protesters in America has become a perilous one. Overwhelming media bias and subjectivity; taunts of 'communist', 'traitor', and 'America, love it or leave it' remind one that a majority of Americans are capable and willing to fall prey to '50's style hysteria and blind, lemming-like patriotism.

The American government's aggressive involvement and soldier compliance in war against the citizens of Kuwait and Iraq should prompt a truly civilized public to ask questions and demand answers and reasonable justifications for U.S. involvement in the region. Unfortunately, justifications for American involvement have been exceedingly imperialist and indicative of a hypocrisy that many have unquestioningly accepted as natural and just.

War protestors question this



Washington police guard the White House

so-called 'authority'. Yet, many find it almost impossible to have their opinions or numbers revealed. Rarely do articles, interviews, or television programs focus on the positions of the protestors. The media is saturated with stories concerning the tactical maneuvers of the Allied Forces, the 'sins' of Saddam Hussein, and war supporters. A sea of American flags and patriotic slogans, with the help of an inept media, have been effective in smothering the voices of dissent.

It is pertinent that these positions are revealed in conjunction with the accusations and slogans that are hurled at them from the National Party Line.

The Defense

1. "Now that the war has started, we must support the troops."

This slogan, 'support the troops', used extensively by the Nixon Administration during the '60's, is a slogan that should be

turned into a question - 'support the troops to do what?' Protesters care for the lives of the American soldiers like their pro-war counterparts, such as the Family Support Network, a group of military families adamantly opposed to the use of U.S. troops in the region.

However, supporting the troops to drop bombs on ancient, densely populated cities like Baghdad is indicative of an ethnocentric, violent culture. Baghdad was a city of 4.5 million people. Regardless of the video game-like footage of explosions seen on television, many innocent civilians have been killed. The lives of the American troops, regardless of any familial ties one may have with them, are not more important than the lives of anyone else. The value of life must never be subject to an exchange rate.

2. "The war is being fought to 'liberate' Kuwait and is not being fought for oil."

This 'liberation' of Kuwait is a phrase that was not used until the night U.S. troops



Afro-American protester questions the role of Blacks in the Gulf.

began dropping bombs on Baghdad. President Bush was obviously searching for the best euphemism to describe destruction and pillage. War protesters have clearly refused to swallow this government-inspired propaganda.

The liberation of the Kuwaiti people has never been a priority in this country. Did anyone know who they were before August 2, 1990? Does anyone realize the horrors and poverty former ruling emir al-

Sabah had inflicted on the Kuwaiti people? The U.S. does not have a history of preserving the sovereignty or supporting the freedom fighters of small countries. Remember the invasion of Grenada? Of Panama? Are we willing to apply new rules to the same old game simply because they conflict with our economic or control interests? Do we have a right to attempt to police the world? In the end, only the Kuwaitis will be able to liberate themselves.

As for the oil issue, one sign spotted at the Jan. 26 protest says it all: "Would Bush be in the Gulf if Kuwait's main export were broccoli?"

3. "Saddam Hussein is a madman, a Hitler, who must be stopped."

Anti-war protesters have been quick to condemn Hussein's invasion of Kuwait. So have all the countries represented in the United Nations. However, consensus stops there. Countries like Cuba, Yemen, and India have been vocal in opposition to U.S. presence in the region. If Hussein is truly a madman, what gives the U.S. the right to play psychiatrist? The league of Arab Emirates was never permitted to settle the dispute themselves. America's ethnocentric view of the world permits it to have the gall to treat Arab nations as a group of children. Many war protesters refuse to believe that U.S. military technology is the answer to the problems in the Middle East.

Many protesters have also refused to fall prey to the

Voice staffer & friend protest the war.

