

Editorials

A Few Questions For President Bush

What Happens On V-I Day?

by Kelvin Culbreth

The United States is at war. In the onslaught of media coverage, many questions about the ramifications of this conflict have not only gone unanswered, but many have yet to be asked. And completely lost in the media-blitz have been the domestic problems, the wars that Americans fight everyday.

In his State of the Union address on January 23, President George Bush accurately pointed out many of these domestic and foreign issues. But simply recognizing that a problem exists does nothing to alleviate the problem, no matter how many standing ovations the rhetoric solicits.

President Bush made many references to "a new world order where diverse nations are drawn together in common cause to achieve the universal aspirations of mankind." If we are to believe President Bush, a military victory over Iraq and Saddam Hussein is imminent. The military might of the U.S. is far too superior for Saddam to withstand much longer. And the President is probably correct. But the world problems, including Mid-East instability, are not going to disappear on "Victory-over-Iraq" Day.

President Bush also stressed the need for more involvement from John Q. American to handle the problems at home. Calls for volunteerism, political reform, education reform, and banking reform all drew heavy applause from the politico-packed audience at the Capitol Building Senate Chambers. But lost in the applause, once again, was the meat of the ideas. The ignored but inevitable question: "How?"

What happens on V-I Day, George Bush?

1) What about the reconstruction of Iraq? The U.S. must rebuild what it destroys. This a moral imperative. But

where will the money come from? Which domestic programs will suffer the loss of funds? Education? AIDS research? Social-assistance? Or will taxes be increased to pay for the damage?

2) Who will assume power in Iraq? Is the U.S. going to stand aside and allow the Iraqi people to decide? Or will it be another U.S.-backed, overly ambitious military leader-like Sadaam Hussein?

3) What about Kuwait? Will the U.S. spend more billions in reconstruction for Kuwaiti ruler Sheik Sabah? And will Sheik Sabah be allowed to return to absolute rule after Americans died fighting a war for "freedom and democracy"- for him?

3) What about the Mid-East region and a lasting peace? Will the U.S. pull out and leave the problems between the Israelis and the Palestinians unaddressed? And how about the strained peace agreements between Israel and Egypt and Jordan and Syria?

5) What about the injustices that have been going on in the world since long before Sadaam was a household name? Is it time to forget about gold and diamonds and start taking real economic and diplomatic action against the government of South Africa?

6) What about the unrest in the Baltic States? Is the U.S. ready to start flexing its muscle at the Soviet Union in the name of freedom and democracy?

7) And what of the forgotten freedom fighters in China? Is the U.S. ready to go to bat for them? Are sanctions against China forthcoming in the name of democracy?

Now that the U.S. has taken the position of "world democratizer," freedom fighters around the globe will expect (rightfully so) U.S. assistance.

8) As for the home front, what is going to be done about the sagging economy? The U.S.

can no longer rely on the myth that "a good war is good for the economy." In your address you stated, "We should focus our efforts on economic growth," and that is absolutely true. But you continued, "...I'm submitting a budget that holds the growth in spending to less than the rate of inflation." All that means is the budget deficit will grow slower. It will still grow and the U.S. will still be spending money it does not have. And most economists agree that that is the root of our economic problems now.

9) What about the rapidly disappearing Savings & Loan scandals? We cannot forget that the people who profited from illegally from those shady deals deserve a significant share of the blame for this recession. A free-enterprise system relies on the confidence of the people more than any other factor. Right now, that confidence is all but gone. What are you going to do to make sure this kind of assault on the people of this country does not happen again? You proposed a banking reform plan "so that our banks remain safe and can continue to make job-creating loans for our factories, businesses, and home-buyers. Sound banks should be making more sound loans now, and interest rates should be lower now." Surely your idea for reform consists of more than shouting commands at the banks. Let's hear it.

10) What about AIDS research? More money is spent each day that the U.S. is in Saudi Arabia than is spent on AIDS research in a year. Must this disease devastate the general population the way it has devastated the homosexual population (as it most surely will) before it is given the concern it deserves? If so, that is a disgrace. Too many people have died already.

11) What about the Civil Rights Bill? Are the men and

women of minority ethnic backgrounds expected to return from a war (for freedom and democracy, remember?) to a country and president that refuses to keep civil rights at the top of their own agendas?

12) What about the political reform? You said, "The time has come to put the national interest above the special interest and to totally eliminate political action committees (PACS)." Pretty gutsy call, Mr. President, maybe the most gutsy you ever made. Especially considering how much you owe to the PACS. It is a good idea, don't forget about it. We certainly won't.

13) And last, but definitely not least, what about education? You referred to the Education Summit, attended by the nation's 50 governors, and proposed legislation to achieve excellence in education. But that was all you said. There is no issue more important to the future of this country than the education of our youth. If you have a plan that includes better teachers, better salaries, and better techniques, lets hear it. Maybe it is time we took a lesson from the Japanese. There is nothing wrong with learning from other people. That is what education is all about.

"If we can selflessly confront the evil for the sake of good in a land so far away, then surely we can make this land all that it should be." Those are your words Mr. President, and we, as your employers, expect you to live up to them. If tax increases are needed, most Americans are willing to foot the bill. But real progress must be accomplished. As you said, "We stand at a defining hour." And no one underestimates the challenge that lies before you. You have the opportunity to be the catalyst for a new America, a new world. But you must remember that our government is of the people, by the people, and for the people.