

OPINION

Blue Banner Editorials

BY KRISTEN RUGGERI
Editor-in-Chief

Iraq: Not just about Oil

In one of my classes last week, we got into a discussion about the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. Many seem to feel that oil is the only reason Bush sent our army over there. I disagree. Let's start at the beginning. After 9-11 we invaded Afghanistan because of substantial evidence that their government supported and harbored terrorists linked to the attacks. Some of the terrorists lived in Afghanistan prior to their short stay in the United States. But ousting the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was just the first step toward warding off another attack on American soil.

In response to 9-11 and to ensure the security of all nations, the Bush administration proposed a plan to rid the world of terrorism. But the administration faced some tough decisions and it needed to act quickly. It took a close look at other nations, especially the ones capable of carrying out another fatal attack on our county. In his state of the union speech in January, 2002, Bush outlined what he calls the "axis of evil," consisting of Iran, North Korea and Iraq. Iran's planned nuclear facility posed a threat to the United States. At the time, however, Iran cooperated with the UN international atomic energy agency and it appeared that the sole purpose of its developing nuclear facilities was the generation of electricity. North Korea also posed a problem because of its threat to go "nuclear." But the Bush administration viewed North Korea's nuclear facilities as more of a bargaining chip than a reality. After all, in 1994, North Korea agreed to stifle its nuclear program in return for energy and aid supplied by the United States.

In 2003, John Bolton, deputy under secretary of state for arms control, said the purpose of military action in Iraq was to eliminate Saddam Hussein's regime. Bolton implied that the real threat Iraq posed was not its weapons, but into whose hands they were in. Saddam has a notorious history for aggression and violence. Under his leadership, the Iraqi military had used chemical agents, not only in its war with Iran, but to kill thousands of Kurds and its own citizens. Then, in 1990, Saddam ordered the invasion of Kuwait, and, by 1998, had denied UN weapons inspectors entry to Iraq, leaving the rest of the world unclear about its weapon production. However, during this time, international intelligence confirmed the existence of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and production facilities in Iraq. In response, the Clinton administration implemented the Desert Fox air campaign, a four-day bombing in Iraq to hinder the development of such weapons. But, Clinton took no follow-up military procedures to prevent the restoration of these facilities. In the post 9-11 world, a new, greater threat existed: the threat of Saddam providing WMD to terrorists.

Many argue that today WMD do not exist in Iraq. But, if the country was not producing WMD, then why didn't Saddam open the doors to U.N. inspectors rather than subject his country to an invasion? Why would such a maniac risk losing all his power if he had nothing to hide? It doesn't make any sense.

What also doesn't make any sense is invading Iraq for its oil. Besides Michael Moore's 9-11 fantasy film, where is the evidence to support this theory? Do you think the rest of the world would stand idly by if this were indeed the case? One thing is clear to me: the invasion of Iraq and disposal of Saddam was the right thing to do at the time. And even John Kerry and the majority of democratic leaders agree with this. It freed a country from the hands of an evil dictator and potentially made the U.S. a safer nation today. Perhaps most importantly however, it sent a strong message to the rest of the world—particularly to Iran and North Korea—that the U.S. will aggressively combat perceived threats of terrorism no matter where they lie.

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Life at UNCA continues despite many recent changes

Editor's Note

Kristen Ruggeri
Editor in Chief



Back at it again for another school year. But, somehow it doesn't seem quite the same. So much changed since last fall that it's almost hard to recognize our small college community in the mountains.

Alright, well maybe we shouldn't go that far, but no returning student can deny the abundance of differences on campus.

The largest ever freshman class produces more than 700 new faces and called for last minute housing decisions, some of which were pretty creative (such as turning study lounges into dorm rooms and shipping the upperclassmen to live in a gated apartment complex). Class scheduling was more difficult than ever while trying to accommodate hundreds of new students and keep classes small at the same time. The new Highsmith Center provides, among other things, a new bookstore, restaurant, convenience store, a game room and new offices for many organizations, including the *Blue Banner*. Speaking of which, we have an almost entirely new editorial staff

this year since all by two of last year's editors graduated.

While we know these changes can be good and the changes made at UNCA all seem to better campus life, I know I wasn't the only one who felt confused and stressed these first few weeks of school. For a fourth-year student like me to feel overwhelmed, it's hard to fathom how a new student can feel. I predict things will settle down though. These changes will probably soon become aspects of everyday life at UNCA.

As for the *Blue Banner*, keep an eye out for it, because when changes do occur we are the first to get the scoop and keep you up to date.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

As a Republican, I had few, if any, worries that George Bush would get re-elected once I found out that the great Democratic Party had selected John Forbes Kerry, the most liberal politician in Washington, as his opposition.

In the past few months, John Kerry put the few concerns I had about a possible Democratic victory to rest. When Kerry appointed John Edwards as his running mate, it almost made me think that he was purposely blowing this election.

Any level-headed political observer would think the Purple Heart John would select a candidate with more moderate views and one with the ability to win his home state. But, working once again against conventional wisdom, the Democrats selected John Edwards, a trial lawyer from the great state of North Carolina, who is basically a mirror image of Senator Kerry when it comes to views and votes in the Senate. It's unlikely that people would even vote for Edwards if he ran again for Congress in North Carolina. So, how could Kerry think Edwards would help him in his state, let alone the rest of the South?

Bob Graham, the Senator from Florida, would have not only

have made the Sunshine State blue in 2004, but also would've attracted the in-the-middle voters across America who question John's ability to run this nation's military. But that option must have seemed too logical for Kerry. Instead he decided to not attract any new voters at all and selected Edwards as his running mate.

The Democratic National Convention ended any chance Kerry had at taking over the White House next January. Surely the Democrats knew, heading into the Convention, that Kerry already had a lock

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on the liberal voters, and that it would be a wise investment to try to attract the more neutral Americans. So why did they let Howard Dean, Al Sharpton, Ted Kennedy, Barack Obama and Al Gore anywhere

near the podium? To make matters worse, the Democrats seated Michael Moore right next to ex-president Jimmy Carter in box seats overlooking the mayhem. Do the American people really need an expert's opinion on how to blow the Cold War or how to super size a value meal?

John Kerry and his extreme left supporters tried to present an image of John Kerry as strong on defense and high on nationalism. Yet, for some reason, there wasn't

a single American flag flying at the Convention until the third day.

They also stayed away from talking about Kerry's "illustrious" career in the Senate and shied away from his votes concerning national defense. Kerry started his speech by saying he was "reporting for duty." Why has he not been "reporting for duty" in Congress the last five years?

The bounce in the polls following the Democratic National Convention, or lack thereof, perfectly represents the Democrats' lack of ability to present any type of plan for the future or their bid to win the support of the moderate voters.

Democrats simply have to cringe every time Teresa Heinz Kerry even appears in the national spotlight. It makes me smile when I see John Kerry laughing in the background as his outspoken wife goes on one of her typical angry rants.

Laura Bush has a decisive advantage over Teresa, and hopefully the Republicans will exploit this benefit in the next few months. The lack of class shown by the Senator's wife is just one of the many reasons why he will come up short on November 2nd.

John Kerry's lack of a clear plan for the War on Terror is the main reason why he will not get elected in November. He's for the war last week, against it today, not going to fund it tomorrow. I think the final conclusion was that Senator Kerry would fight a more "sensitive" war than President Bush. I'm sure the Muslim extremists would love for America to get "sensitive"

in this war. John Kerry's attitude towards the war depends on which group of people he's talking to—maybe he bases it on what side of the bed he wakes up on each morning. The bottom line is that with John Kerry we really have no idea what he is for or against. Well, I guess one thing we can be sure of is that he will raise our taxes; there is really no flip-flopping on that issue.

A simple look at history further decreases Senator Kerry's chance in his presidential bid. For some reason, every sixteen years, the Democratic Party decides to nominate a liberal Presidential candidate. George McGovern failed miserably '72, Michael Dukakis was routed in '88, and now the guy who wants to put the government in control of your health care, John Kerry, is making another run for the liberal. The American people didn't want a liberal president in 1972, 1988, and after November 2nd, we know they don't want one in 2004 either.

Another thought: Isn't it ironic that the Students FOR Democracy and Peace are against the war in Iraq?

Are they only FOR democracy in America? Are they AGAINST democracy in Iraq? If they are

According to a Rasmussen Report poll, completed Monday, Bush will likely win the majority of the votes in North Carolina. Out of a sample of 13,000 likely voters, 53% said they would vote to keep Bush in office, while 43 percent said they support Kerry.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



PHOTO EDITOR TYLER BREAUX

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