

Viewpoint

Focus: War in the gulf

Like it or not, the war has become the focus of thought, discussion and protest. The war has also brought sympathy, support and concern. Whatever the position, along with it, comes a lot of emotions.

This week *The Pendulum* is running a pro-con debate on the validity of the war in the gulf. It is located on this page. *The Pendulum* welcomes any comments, opinions or letters about the war. Deadlines for copy are Mondays at 5 p.m.

Elon has three students and two alumni in Saudi Arabia. *The Pendulum* has included their names and addresses on page 4. Also included are the addresses for any soldier in the gulf. Please write and send support to our troops.

Where were you when war broke out? Find out where some of Elon's students were at the time on page 4.

Frankly Speaking

by Phil Frank



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The Pendulum, founded in 1974, is published by Elon College students each Thursday during regular school terms. *The Pendulum* welcomes your opinions, with letters limited to about 250 words, if possible. Letters must be signed and a phone number given for verification. Deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. Monday.

The views of war

Bush: 'We cannot hesitate'

Presidential letter to College students:

If armed men invaded a home in this country, killed those in their way, stole what they wanted and then announced the house was now theirs - - no-one would hesitate about what must be done.

And that is why we cannot hesitate about what must be done halfway around the world: in Kuwait.

There is much in the modern world that is subject to doubts or questions - - washed in shades of gray. But not the brutal aggression of Saddam Hussein against a peaceful, sovereign nation and its people. It's black and white. The facts are clear. The choice unambiguous.

Right vs. wrong.

The terror Saddam Hussein has imposed upon Kuwait violates every principle of human decency. Listen to what Amnesty International has documented.

Pro

This article by Pres. George Bush was sent to 450 college newspapers in the country in January, shortly before the war began.

"Widespread abuses of human rights have been perpetrated by Iraqi forces...arbitrary arrest and detention without trial of thousands...widespread torture...imposition of the death penalty and the extrajudicial execution of hundreds of unarmed civilians, including children."

Including children. There's no horror that could make this a more obvious conflict of good vs. evil. The man who used chemical warfare on his own people - - once again including children - - now oversees public hangings of dissenters. And daily his troops commit atrocities against Kuwaiti

citizens.

This brutality has reverberated throughout the entire world. If we do not follow the dictates of our inner moral compass and stand up for human life, then his lawlessness will threaten the peace and democracy of the emerging New World Order we now see: this long dreamed-of vision we've all worked toward for so long.

A year after the joyous dawn of freedom's light in Eastern Europe, a dark evil has descended in another part of the world. But we have the chance - - and we have the obligation - - to stop ruthless aggression.

I have been in war. I have known the terror of combat. And I tell you this with all my heart: I don't want there to be war ever again. I am determined to do absolutely everything possible in the search for a peaceful resolution to this crisis - - but only if the peace is genuine, if it rests on

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'War is a crime against humanity'

So there can be no mistake, let me begin with a statement of my biases. I believe that war is a crime against humanity and a violation of my Christian-based moral principles. I further believe that conflict should be dealt with as actively as possible in a non-violent manner. I believe that violence does not resolve a conflict, it only delays the resolution. This last statement is a key one, so let me illustrate it with a "mental experiment".

Imagine that you are in a conversation over which pizza shop has the most authentic "New York style" pie. Your opponent becomes more and more insistent that you don't know crust from shoe leather. You become more and more certain that your opponent doesn't know oregano from parsley.

Your conversation has become a loud, heated argument (conflict). One of you waves your hand and the other interprets it as an insult on his/her family tree.

Con

Jim Pickens is a professor in the Department of Psychology and is faculty advisor to Elon Students for Peace and Justice.

Blows are exchanged, lips are bloodied, eyes are blackened, hair is pulled, and knuckles are bruised. One is the victor, the other the conquered.

Do you now agree on the original issue, or has your pizza preference been forgotten and someone's "ego" been damaged? Hasn't the violence *itself* increased the level and nature of the conflict?

This is an invented scenario, but it is based on studies of the effects of violence on conflict resolution from the interpersonal level to the international. Studies also point out that similar situations in which participants

avoid violence and use other strategies are more successful in resolving the conflict at hand.

How could the pizza fight have been resolved? You could have suggested that you pick some neutral people, with experience in eating New York style pizza, and ask them their opinions. The shop with the strongest support is declared the winner and you and your friend can discuss professional water polo with confidence in each other's conflict resolving skills.

What does this have to do with the Persian Gulf War? Well, now that Saddam Hussein's violence toward Kuwait has been answered with George Bush's violence toward Iraq we seem to forget that non-violent solutions were possible and still exist, but we have not tried them. Hussein has been cast in the mold of "enemy" - he is the personification of evil and insanity. We are the embodiment of all that is good.

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