



Meredith, world react to possibility of war with Iraq

Situation in Iraq escalates, leading to heated discussion and anti-war protests in Raleigh and around the world.

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America has not had to worry about war since the Gulf War ended back in 1991. But now, daily reports of more and more soldiers being deployed to the Persian Gulf have been the top story on every news outlet for several weeks in a row.

As a home to several military bases, North Carolina is feeling the full effect of the deployment as military families and friends watch their loved ones pack their bags for the unknown. CNN.com reports that 125,000 U.S. personnel are presently stationed in the Gulf.

President Bush has made it evident to Iraq and the world that the United States will pursue military action

if Iraq does not follow the resolutions that were passed by the United Nations. Bush feels that the danger that Saddam Hussein poses to the world is too extreme to be ignored.

U.N. inspectors are to deliver a report to the Security Council next week regarding the status of the situation in Iraq.

Major international figures, such as Britain's Prime Minister Tony Blair, are standing behind President Bush and his policies towards Iraq, while countries such as France and Russia question the United States' involvement.

While the state of affairs with Iraq was once far from most people's minds, the world is becoming more aware of a potential war as the weeks pass by. Recently, several events have occurred where citizens have made their voices heard as to the situation in Iraq.

Last Saturday, thousands of people demonstrated in Washington, D.C. against a war with Iraq. Speakers included the Reverend

Jesse Jackson (see world news briefs, page 5). Overseas, people gathered in several major international cities, such as London, Moscow, Paris and Hong Kong, to speak out against American military build-up in Iraq.

Closer to home, protests are also building. In downtown Raleigh, protestors stood outside Senator John Edwards' office on Tuesday handing out anti-war leaflets and protesting against his support for U.S. war with Iraq.

The situation with Iraq is now coming to the forefront on Meredith's campus as well. Across campus, stories of family and friends in the military being deployed have put a face to the serious situation at hand. Opinions have varied and sides are being taken as to how the United States and the international community should handle the situation with Iraq.

"I think that something needs to be done - they have violated the anti-chemical weapons treaties that they have signed," said junior Rebecca Lee. "But I

think it's irresponsible that the government is playing off of the 'we were attacked on Sept. 11 so we need to attack Iraq' mentality."

Lee, a politics major, added, "they are two separate events and people need to realize that and treat them as such."

However, some students feel differently. "I believe war with Iraq is a necessary evil," said freshman Lindsey French. "Saddam has spent most of his time in power infringing on Iraqi citizens' natural rights. He has even used chemical weapons.

"Imagine what he would do to the rest of the world with weapons of mass destruction," French added. "There is your reason for war."

"We [the United States] should weigh all of our options before jumping into a war that is unjustified, unfounded, and extremely dangerous to the health of our soldiers and Iraqi citizens," said junior history major Karla Gregory.

Last semester, the Department of History and Politics held several public

forums aimed at helping the Meredith community to gain information regarding the developing situation with Iraq and be able to make their own educated decisions about where they stand. This Monday, another forum, sponsored by the History and Politics Club, will be held, and the club invites all students to attend.

The roundtable discussion will take place on the second floor of the Cate Center from 6-9 p.m.

Several students and professors have been invited to help bring to light what exactly is occurring and what it means, not just for the United States but for the rest of the world. Students that have a question they wish to be addressed at the forum will be able to write it down and place it in the boxes being put up in some academic buildings.

Though the massive troop deployments seem to suggest a war is imminent, it is uncertain exactly what course the United States will take.

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