

North Korea: the next Iraq?

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As the presidential election approaches, decisions made in the past four years become more prevalent in the minds of American voters. One such decision is the Iraq War. Iraq is one of the countries in what President Bush dubs "the axis of evil". Other countries included are Iran and North Korea. North Korea is making itself known as a threat. Last Thursday, September, 9, a mushroom shaped cloud was spotted over North Korea. Experts say it was not from a nuclear weapon, and North Korean Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun explained that it was from demolition of a mountain to build a hydroelectric plant. Hydroelectric experts in Seoul, South Korea are skeptical to the validity of North Korea's explanation because they say the Huchang river is too small to

run a large plant. Britain's ambassador to Pyongyang, David Slinn was told on Monday by North Korea's vice foreign minister to Europe that he could visit the site in question as early as Tuesday.

A little about North Korea to consider, North Korea is one of the few countries left over from the Cold War that is state communism. Almost all of their money goes towards their military. The dissolution of the U.S.S.R, their primary source of income, impoverished much of the country. Except for residents of the capital, Pyongyang, the country is rural and poor. A permit is required to live in Pyongyang. Residents often experience power outages and are isolated from the world outside of the city walls.

To aid in power generation are plutonium repacking plants, who until recently did not repackage weapons grade plutonium. Satellite images have

shown several nuclear weapon manufacturing plants. As of right now, North Korea is not known to have the capability to fire one a great distance. The dictator Kim Jong Il or "Dear Leader" as referred to by his countrymen acknowledges that firing one of these weapons at the U.S. would be futile. It is more a concern that they will sell the weapons to people and groups that will not be reluctant to use these weapons for malicious purposes. Considering the economy is poor and North Korea has no natural resources, these weapons are the only things it possessed that there is a market for in the outside world.

North Korea also has these weapons to act as "bargaining chips". Kim Jong Il feels that the U.S. will not invade with the threat of selling nuclear weapons looming. He can shut down his plants in exchange for more foreign aid. It is unclear whether he is serious about

holding on to his "bargaining chips" considering talks since the Carter administration have not been productive. His talk with Jimmy Carter was effective for a short period of time. The plutonium plants were reopened after the Dear Leader felt Carter did not keep his end of the deal. It is unknown whether this is true or not.

It does tell us that Kim Jong Il is not completely unreasonable, at least in regards to the outside world. This also tells us that North Korea may be up to no good. It is imperative that we do not need another Iraq especially when there is substantial evidence that they do have tangible nuclear weapons.

North Korea is currently maintaining that they want to hold six-party talks (two Koreas, U.S., Russia, Japan and China) by the end of September. They have been offered energy aid in exchange for freezing their nuclear program.

Diversity on Campus

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Contributing Writer

Diversity. Yes, I did say the D-word. Many of you have probably cringed, but hear me out. Unfortunately for many students, diversity and its related complexities cause involuntary reactions: heart palpitations, sweating, gagging, and you get my point.

But why does the mere hint of the D-word send people scattering? Why is there such a strong reaction?

Because we have forgotten what diversity really means.

Diversity has become a little lead box in which we shove anything we don't understand. Frantically we push people of different skin colors, different religions, and different sexual orientations in so that we do not begin to question our

beliefs or deal with something different.

Here is the problem: by its very definition we are all diverse. There is no cookie cutter stamping us out. Diversity is more than just race, religion, and sexual orientation. It is where you are from, who makes up your family, even that special talent like shooting milk out of your eye that no one else will admit they can do. Face it: you are all diverse.

Take me for example. Here is my not-so-obvious diverseness. I'm from Shelby. Right now, I know about five people from Shelby on this campus-that makes us a diverse group. My father has early-onset Alzheimer's disease. I may or may not be the only one dealing with that specific issue, but I am not the only one with a parent who is sick. I also have one double

joint in the first finger on my right hand. Guess what? That makes me (say it with me) diverse.

No two people have the exact same life experience, so here is my suggestion.

Talk to each other. Try to understand, or at least listen with an open mind. Ask people questions. Ask them what makes them unique. As long as you are asking with the purpose of educating yourself, they probably will not mind.

So ask someone on the hall where she is from. Ask your neighbors in the cafeteria about their secret talents. If you know someone of another religion, ask him or her about it. Do not expect them to speak for their entire religion, but they can probably tell you about their personal beliefs.

Look something up on the Internet if you are a little

nervous about talking to someone. There are some really good websites out there. Just make sure that it's a website for educational purposes and not motivated by hatred.

Unless you educate yourselves about an aspect of life, you can't make statements about it. Do not knock it if you have not learned about it. So make that one of your goals this month: to educate yourself about something you do not understand or do not know much about.

Not only will you have an informed opinion, you will be expanding your mind, which is what college is really about.

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