

Canada and Gulf

by Jane Hamilton

About sixty people attended a discussion on the current situation in the Persian Gulf and its effects on Canada, last Wednesday. A question and answer period followed the discussion. The meeting was put on by the Centre for Continuing Studies, Henson College Dalhousie University and the Dalhousie Alumni.

A panel of Dalhousie professors and specialists moderated by Dr. Graham Taylor spoke at the discussion.

Dr. John Flint, from the Dalhousie History department, gave a brief history of Kuwait and Iraq and events leading up to the current situation in the Middle East. He gave a synopsis of the relationship between the two countries and why Saddam Hussein believes Iraq has rights to Kuwait.

Flint believed there was no alternative to sending forces as there was "too much power [that] needs to be stopped." He said, "This area has to be de-militarized ... entirely of all military weapons." He said that if nothing had been done to stop Hussein, "then others [in the Persian Gulf] would be in danger."

Cox felt that Canada should intervene because of the mass of nuclear, bacterial, and chemical weapons in Iraq. He said "We should be concerned, [as] we are guilty [of being] involved in the weapons trade to third world countries."

Hayden, who used to be in the Canadian Navy and was involved in NATO, was able to give an idea of how Canada was involved. He said that the Canadian military was right in sending forces immediately. He said Canada "should be there if necessary, even if it was just [on] standby."

Hayden said that although politicians "do not plan [for the] future ... the navy [is] responding as well as it can." He said that Canada did send ships that were equipped for war.

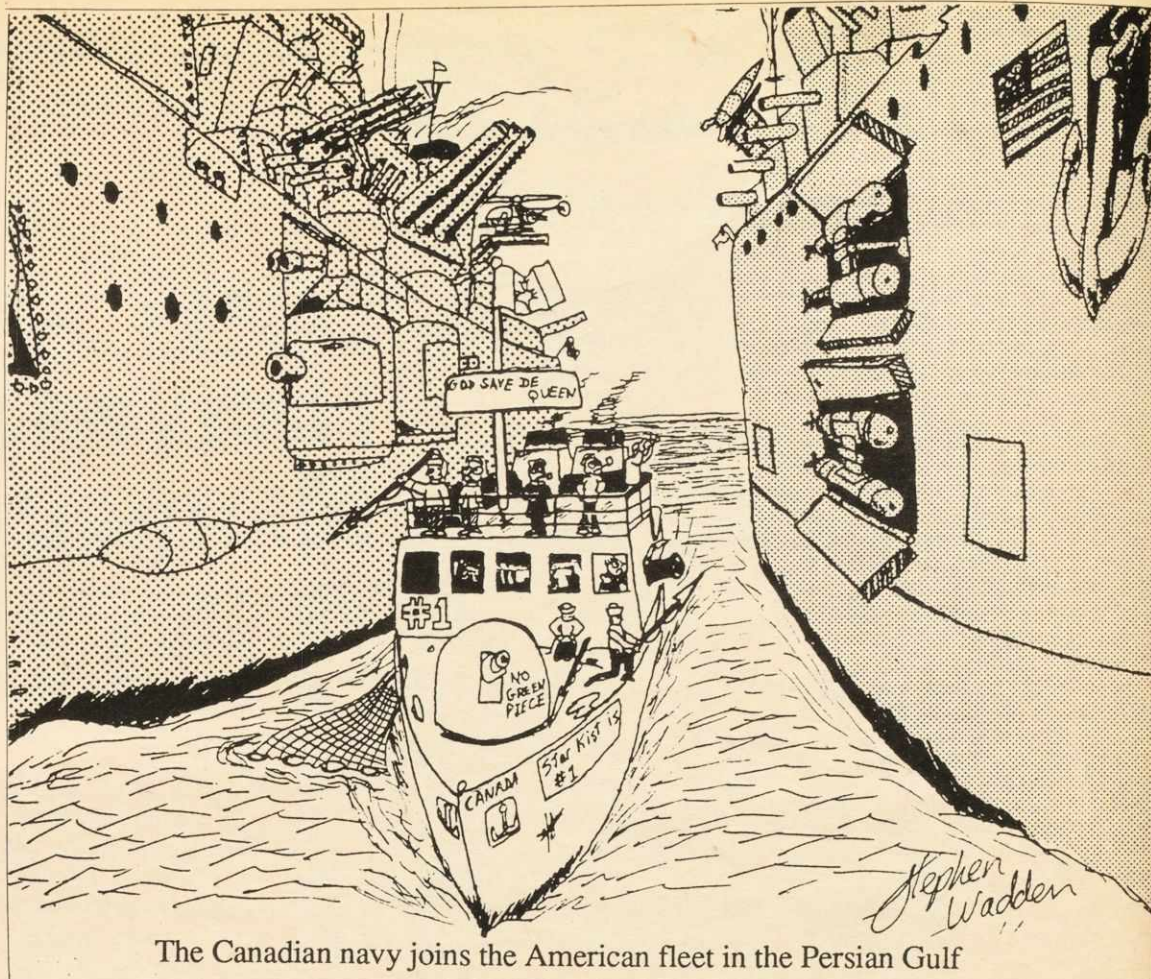
Dr. Fazley Siddiq, professor at the School of Public Administration, said "the embargo in the Gulf and the possibility of war does affect Canada." The embargo will force the price of oil up which will increase the price of most commodities, cause fuel inflation, increase the interest rate, lower the national output, and cause more unemployment.

If war came about, it could be worse. Siddiq said that it would be "harmful if it lasts even a short time." Taxpayers would have to support the military, oil prices would go up, the deficit would be worse, there would be increased inflation, the General Sales Tax

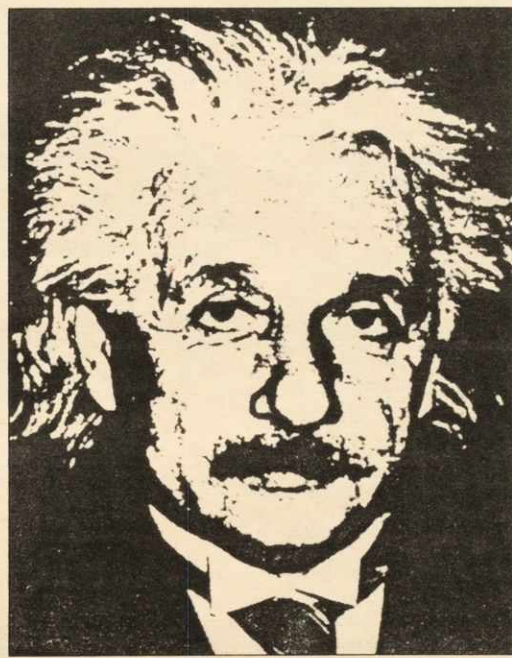
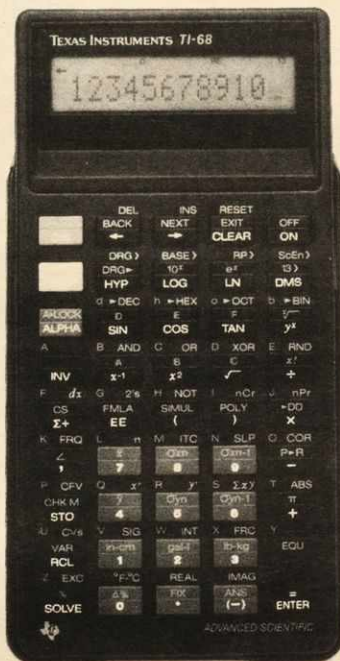
would be higher, there would be higher interest rates and even a recession would occur.

Dr. McIntyre, from Community Health and Epidemiology, said that development aid (money, equipment, food, etc.) should also be sent to Jordan for the refugees. She said that a few hundred thousand refugees had fled mostly to Jordan where water was already a problem. McIntyre said that dehydration, malnutrition and starvation, shelter, and disease were all problems facing the refugees. She said that the refugees had also been stripped of all their wealth.

If you have a good idea for a panel discussion, contact the Centre for Continuing Studies, Henson College, Dalhousie University at 494-2375.



The Canadian navy joins the American fleet in the Persian Gulf



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