

## NEWS FEATURE

# Modern warfare is immoral

An interesting perspective on the Gulf Crisis.

The following is a commentary by UNB Maths professor Martin Yaqzan. It is a condensation of a letter sent to the President of the United States of America.

**Y**ou [President Bush] have made the following main points:  
1. *Saddam Hussein resembles Hitler and must be stopped before it is too late.*

While analogies need not be perfect, I believe that the Hitler analogy is a serious error. Hitler's dream was the well established pattern of conquerors of the past: Achievement of hegemony over other lands and peoples. Mr. Hussein is an Arab and would like Arabs to unite, but there is no question of his conquering Arab lands, the continent of Europe or any other part of the world. You must know that Kuwait, which is only an area of about 100 x 50 miles, was artificially made into a "Country" by the British colonialism, and that Iraq has consistently claimed sovereignty over it.

2. *Kuwaiti oil resources will empower Saddam Hussein to dictate oil prices and consequently the economies and interests of the industrialized world can be jeopardized. Your Secretary of State, Mr. Baker has gone as far as to say that the American jobs may be at stake.*

It is true that Kuwaiti oil resources will give Iraq more clout, but why should that be considered an evil? Doesn't the United States have much more clout in world affairs because of its resources, agricultural, industrial and otherwise? Why can't the Arabs exercise control over their main resource - non-renewable at that? As someone said, they can't drink their oil, they will have to sell it.

3. *Iraq is on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons, which can upset the balance of power in the Middle East.*

What justifies the acquisition of nuclear weapons by Israel and not by Iraq? For that matter, what justifies any country in the world to have nuclear weapons, be it the United States, France, the Soviet Union or China? Why must the balance of power in the Middle East be in favour of Israel, which is trying to rewrite history at the expense of the vast majority of the population in the area?

4. *Saddam Hussein has committed brutal crimes against Kuwaitis and must be brought to justice.*

Why must the crimes committed, if any, by the Iraqi forces in Kuwait, be considered as acts of cruelty on the part of Saddam Hussein as a person? Should you be held personally responsible for

the death of over 3000 Panamanians killed last year during your invasion of Panama? Should Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon be portrayed as brutal beings for the crimes that were committed during the Vietnam War, because they were the Commanders in Chief of the American forces?

5. *Iraq should not be allowed to benefit from its aggression and the use of force. Since the UN Security Council has asked it to withdraw from Kuwait by January 15, 1991, you will be ready to use force if it does not do so.*

Human history is full of examples of benefits derived from aggression and the use of force. Without the use of force, there would be no United States of America today. So, as an abstract moral edict, it is not very meaningful to say that one should not be allowed to benefit from the use of force. The way UN Security Council is composed at present, is itself a proof that might matters. Otherwise, why are Britain and France permanent members of the Security Council? Is it not because of their importance as colonial powers: a position they achieved through the use of force?

The times have changed, but why are they still permanent members with veto powers? Who do they represent? Why doesn't India with a population of over 700 million people have permanent membership or the veto power? Israel with a population of 3-4 million people exercises veto power through the United States, but who is there to veto for 200 million Arabs?

The use of force as envisaged in the UN Charter, does not justify the kind of attack you are threatening against Iraq. The so called international force is not under the UN command and Iraq has not attacked the United States to justify any defensive action on its part. As for the humanitarian response to the misfortune of some Kuwaitis, a black American student from the Michigan State University hinted at the hypocrisy involved when he asked on the public television MacNeil-Lehrer report recently, whether the US forces

would move on to South Africa after restoring the human rights in Kuwait?

"The Gulf Crisis" is of your own making, you can end it any time by bringing American forces home. The other countries, most of them client states of the United States, will follow suit.

### Lessons from the past

Mr. President, I realize that my comments are like the cold winds from the north, unlike the warm embrace of the Canadian Prime Minister and the Secretary of State, cheering you on and beating the drums of war. But I would like to remind you of Mr. George Ball, under-Secretary of State, during the Johnson administration, who warned of all the dangers that the American involvement in the Vietnam War would entail, but he was ignored. His prophecies came true, and Mr. Johnson's cockiness and supreme confidence in the superiority of the American forces, led to his own downfall and the death of 58,000 Americans as well as the ruin of Vietnam. The United States has yet to pay for the

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pain and misery it caused the people of Vietnam. They are still suffering. The American love for their freedom and democracy has vanished in thin air, and they have been left as paupers.

History will not for-

### give you

I presume that it was Israel's wish that the United States would destroy Iraq's nuclear capability at the cost of American lives. Now that Iraq has threatened Israel as its primary target, the Israeli lobby in the United States is having second thoughts. It should be obvious to anyone that if Iraq is trying to achieve nuclear capability, it is not to attack other Arab countries or the European continent. It is for the sole purpose of facing up to Israel which already has such a capability and uses its implied threat to defy the entire Arab world as well as the United Nations General Assembly. If you were to use the nuclear weapons now deployed in the Persian Gulf and killed hundreds of thousands of Arabs, history will not forgive you, and the long term interests of the United States will not be served.

### Israelis need a Messiah

It is immaterial as to what motivates Mr. Hussein to link the Palestinian problem to his withdrawal from Kuwait. The fact is that Israel has been violating the wishes of the United Nations for the last 23 years and no one has dared to use force to make Israel behave. Can you? Saddam Hussein may prove to be the best friend of Israel, if he were successful in forcing Israel to accept the UN resolutions of 1967, and live in peace with its Arab neighbours. Otherwise, the only choice will be the Biblical Armageddon that some people are waiting for. Israelis do need a Messiah, but none of their

present leaders seems destined to be one. They lack the foresight.

### Civilized course of action

How can you or the world at large ignore the occupation of West Bank, Gaza and Golan Heights by

Israel for more than 23 years, its invasion of Lebanon, when it killed about 20,000 people, its present occupation of southern Lebanon, its killing of about 1000 Palestinian youngsters during the last 3 years, the non-stop daily shootings of unarmed people, and become so enraged about Iraq's annexation of Kuwait, to which it has some justifiable claims, and has cultural, religious and ethnic affinity?

*The plight of the Palestinians is far worse than that of the Kuwaitis and honesty demands that their fate be decided first, not after Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait.* The only civilized and humane course of action is to talk, discuss and explore all possible avenues for the settlement of all the problems in the area, and look beyond the immediate. How long can Israel go on defying the United Nations through the American veto?

### They too want to live and love

Mr. Saddam Hussein is not a particularly religious person, as was obvious from the war he waged against Iran. He has "westernized" Iraq more than any other Arab country. Yet religion still plays an important role in the lives of Iraqis. A million Christians in Iraq probably don't really believe that you as a Christian will bomb them out of existence. As you count the possible American casualties, please think of the Iraqi casualties as well. They too are human beings with feelings and families, and they too want to live and love. Saddam Hussein does not need oil money for his personal pleasure. He probably has enough. He too is trying in his own way to improve the lot of his people.

Modern warfare is cruel and immoral according to any consistent system of morality. The United Nations has no right to sanction it as a means of settling any dispute. Also it has no right to deprive the ordinary citizens of any country of food, shelter and medicine. The present blockade of Iraq should be condemned, not approved by The United Nations.

**Professor Yaqzan is a member of the UNB Mathematics Department**