

EDITORIAL

By Christmas, there will be over one million troops in the Persian Gulf ready to go to war over control of the oil fields.

George Bush will have sent more American soldiers to the Gulf than the U.S. had previously sent to Vietnam at the height of its involvement in southeast Asia.

But this time, there is no evil spectre of communism, no "red horde" that must be vanquished: the Soviets in fact have indicated they will back a U.N. sponsored request for a military offensive.

Technically, the West is already on the offensive. The U.S.-led naval blockade that has been imposed on Iraq is an act of war.

Make no mistake, there will be war. The time for negotiations is rapidly waning. Besides, the Bush administration has repeatedly rejected any compromises offered by Saddam Hussein.

The U.S. has never really wanted to allow Hussein and Baghdad to maintain any kind of dominance in the region. Even if the war was concluded quickly, U.S. troops would remain in the Gulf to protect what they had gained and to ensure no country becomes too powerful.

And where does Canada stand on this whole crisis? Firmly in the American battle camp, of course, waiting for instructions from Washington.

This is a war effort being led by corporations and their apologists, the politicians. Mulroney and his right-hand man, Joe Clark, are rattling sabres about "our boys in the Gulf" and the defence of freedom. But the real defence being conducted is that of corporate profits: the oil money of Esso, Petro Canada et al.

But who exactly will follow Mulroney and Clark in their headlong rush to war? Very few people right now, but if the official propaganda continues throughout the mainstream media, it could turn to thousands of people — most of them young people our own age.

Mulroney and friends will continue to dress in their finest while "our boys in the Gulf" will be donning fatigues and strapping on rifles. It's about time this was changed back to the ancient model.

Politicians would be far more cautious about rallying around war if they were on the front line leading an assault. Mind you, it would be nice to see our glorious leader in his tilly hat leading Tory troops into a hail of enemy gunfire. Perhaps, that would do what macaroni and paper cannot do: remove them from office.

Canada's army currently numbers 85,000. We only have a standing reserve of 35,000 and after that it's time for mandatory conscription.

After speaking to an officer at the Department of National Defense, we were assured there was no plan for mandatory conscription because there was no conflict yet.

However, the insinuation is that when the conflict becomes official, conscription will soon follow suit.

The officer also mentioned that the draft can be instated by Parliament at any time during a war to sustain Canadian forces depending on the depth of the military's involvement.

In other words, in a protracted conflict, we would be drafted to provide more "depth" to the army and to relieve the first wave of soldiers.

Currently, Canada does not have any legislation for conscientious objection.

If Mulroney's Tory cabinet calls for compulsory military service, it will be challenged immediately under the Charter of Rights, which has yet to be tested in a war scenario.



LETTERS

Excalibur welcomes letters to the editor on all topics. We will publish, space permitting, letters up to 500 words in length. They must be typed, double spaced, and accompanied by the writer's name, signature and telephone number. The opinions expressed belong to the writers and do not necessarily reflect those of Excalibur staff or directors. However, we will refuse letters that are racist, sexist, libellous or those which attempt to incite hatred toward an individual or an identifiable group. All material is subject to editing. All submissions must be addressed to the Editor-in-chief, Room 111, Central Square.

Director of Comm. says keep in touch

To the editor,

Re: Your editorial of November 5 regarding the visit to York University of the Prime Minister.

In the case of this particular visit, the responsibility of media liaison rested with external consultants working directly with the Faculty of Administrative Studies. For ease of communications, our department agreed to forward all enquiries about the visit to Dean Horvath's office. To suggest the university "had no comment on the affairs" is simply not true.

As you know, Excalibur, as a matter of course, receives all news releases from the Department of Communications. (I was pleased to note that two of the three stories in your news section of November 5 corresponded to two of our recent releases.)

I would also note that I have in the past suggested a weekly meeting (if only by telephone) with you or members of your staff to help keep you current on events and issues we were aware of. To date, you have not taken us up on this. I urge you again to do so.

You have had for some time both my office and home telephone numbers, if at any time you or your staff needed to reach me on an urgent matter.

I look forward to hearing from

you soon (and often). If not, rest assured we'll be in touch.

Sincerely,
Jessie-May Rowntree
Director
Department of Communications

Mulroney protesters disgusting

To the editor,

This letter is not meant to defend or support Brian Mulroney. However, the behaviour of many York protesters last Monday was simply embarrassing and disgusting.

Need I remind the students who protested that Brian Mulroney is a grown man. Throwing macaroni and paper at him (and his wife no less!) is a thoroughly degrading experience, not for him, but for the people doing it. You looked like large children throwing a tantrum. The fact that he is the prime minister makes it even worse.

Do you think that Brian Mulroney went home that night and said to his wife, "Gosh, those university kids really straightened me out. I'm going to go back to York and tell them all that I'm going to kick in mega-millions for higher education."?

Get real. If you want to prove your point, then write letters to him, call your MP or hold up signs of protest as he passes by (the PM can read).

Show the prime minister and all the other politicians who insult their constituents with their sometimes juvenile behaviour (ie. the Senate) that you can ask for some honest changes in a

manner becoming of the elite of the population (the University student).

How can you shout at him "Resign, Resign" two years into his term, because he's down in the polls when just a few months ago, David Peterson was turfed for holding an election a couple years early?

How can you chastise him for the way the Oka incident was handled when you throw paper at him, just as Canadian citizens threw rocks at native women and children passing by in cars?

There was a moral outcry then, but these were the same instincts displayed by those protesters who saw fit to pelt the prime minister with garbage.

There is nothing wrong with protest signs or shouts about the GST. Living in a democracy affords us the opportunity to do just that and I am sure that even the prime minister will agree that protests and demonstrations are sometimes the only way to grab the attention of a politician.

But shouts of "swine," "piss on you" and throwing objects at a grown man? Grow up.

Alan Grad

Proud to be at York?

To the editor,

Two weeks ago, a great many students showed up for the prime ministerial visit to the Administrative Studies building. Although Mulroney came to address only select Administrative Studies students, many others showed up to voice their concerns.

It was nice to see the enthusiasm

con't on pg 5

EXCALIBUR

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Excalibur is an autonomous corporation with a mandate to inform, educate and provoke thought among York University's diverse population.

The distinct opinions and articles appearing in Excalibur constitute our collective voice. However, they belong first and foremost to the individual writers and are not necessarily shared by any other Excalibur staff or board member.

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