

An open letter to George Bush.

It is now very fashionable among your media types to comment ruefully that "the first casualty in war is the truth." I think that this rather lame excuse is being put forward as a sorry apology for the obvious and crude way in which what we see and read is being censored by your government. What news we do receive could well fall under the headings "PROPAGANDA" and "NINTENDO UPDATE."

Mr. Bush if you are so confident that you have the lasting support of the American and Canadian people, why don't you cut out this censorship and show the viewers at home the bloody carnage that you have unleashed?

Please Mr. Bush don't tell me that the news is non-existent because Saddam kicked out the journalists. We all know that you've seen the pictures of the dead, Bomb Damage Assessment I believe you call it, after all can't your satellites and spy planes spot a dog pissing on a lamppost from 30,000 feet.

In the first two days of the war, the Pentagon informed us that 24,000 tons of high explosives were dropped on Baghdad and surrounding areas, that is double the force of the atomic bomb dropped by your government on Hiroshima in 1945. And yet still as I write today there are few reports of Iraqi civilian casualties.

Pardon me for doubting the claim that there are few casualties, but I think you may not be telling the truth.

I realize that you are using "smart weapons" this time (although this seems to me a contradiction in terms), but didn't you use these before a few months ago when you were removing another one of your allies who bit the hand that fed. Yes, that's it, you saved Panama from the man you employed there, a certain Mr. Noriega. I seem to remember that 7,000 people were killed in two days with your "smart weapons," or are you still sticking to the claim that 14 died and a marine grazed his elbow?

But, Mr. Bush, truth wasn't a casualty in the war, it died in your hands months ago, that is to say, it is not just what you have told us, it's the truth you have concealed.

You started out by telling us that this war was about defending a democracy. Many of us thought that just and noble, it sounded very nice, but we had trouble finding the democracy you were defending. It certainly wasn't Kuwait where only 60,000 men and not a single woman voted, in a population of two million, where the parliament had been dissolved from 1986, where public meetings of more than 20 were banned.

Perhaps you meant Saudi Arabia, but it's fairly difficult to have a democracy when political parties and trade

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unions are banned and King Fahd is the absolute ruler. It's pretty hard to have a democracy where the voice of one man counts for that of two women in the legal code. So after that argument fell flat, a month or so went by and then you told us that the war was going to be about international law, and that to enforce that law, lots of ships and armies of lots of countries were going to recruit tan and Latvia and they joined you. Britain and France were busy, so you approached the butchers of Afghanistan. To defend international law you then tried to recruit ships and armies of lots of countries were going to recruit tan and Latvia and they joined you.

As time went on, Britain and France should, they colonized all they know the region, they should, our spineless prime minister joined you hoping to raise himself out of the dustbin of history with a good bit of flag-waving. Your claim to be upholding international law with the friends you have amassed is hollow and hypocritical. Do the words "international law" stick in your throat, they should Mr. Bush? If the populations of the world had power to bring men like you to their court, you would be found guilty. Guilty for the horrors of El Salvador, regimes that exist, guilty for the torturers in Chile and guilty of hypocrisy and lies.

Perhaps the sickest charge against you, however, would be sending thousands of young men and women to die in the Saudi desert. They will die at the hands of the Iraqi army, the same army that you helped to arm, the same army you financially and militarily supported in war against Iran.

Perhaps it has slipped your mind but do you remember when in 1980, you were only vice-president then, one of your officials said, "We see no fundamental incompatibility of interests between the United States and Iraq" or perhaps you remember Feb. 1989 when one of your Pentagon hawks made this comment to the New York Times: "Saddam Hussein may be a son of a bitch, but at least he's our son of a bitch." Or maybe you remember the \$1-billion trade credit you granted Iraq in 1988, or the Bell Huey helicopters you sold them in 1987? No, you've probably forgotten, it seems most of your media have too.

This war is not about international law is it Mr. Bush? There are still those in your country though that will speak the truth, unfortunately many of them are the kind of people that put dollars over morals. The Financial Post and Business Week, both very honestly stated, and I quote the November issue of the latter, "Oil is worth going to war for."

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But we don't have to rely on the hearsay of the paperazzi to see what your really up to, why don't you see if you remember what your employee in the State Department, Robert Kimmett has to say. He was quoted in the Washington Post as saying the war was about "the free, uninterrupted flow of oil from the gulf." Perhaps you remember Lawrence Korb (Assistant Secretary of Defence under yourself and Mr. Reagan) who said of the Iraqi invasion: "If Kuwait grew carrots we wouldn't give a damn."

But, Mr. Bush I am being too harsh, when you say that this war isn't about oil you are only half lying. Half lying because it is also about the ability of your country to retain the role of world policeman. Your economy is collapsing and old. Like the boxer that should have retired long ago, you are being whipped by the youngsters, by Germany, by Japan and in the future by a United Europe. When everything points downward for you as a country you decide to have one last big wade through the blood to show the others they need you, to prove to them just how strong you still are.

I am not impressed by your bravado Mr. Bush, nor are the 22,000 American reservists who have refused to go to your war. All the troops that the Pentagon pool hand picked for our viewing pleasure seem very fuelled up and ready to kill Arabs. Why don't you show us the men on the front lines though, the cannon fodder, is it because they are overwhelmingly black? Did you read in USA Today what one of your black infantry sergeants said about you and your precious flag? This is what he wrote: "If I should return as a fatality do not drape the flag around my coffin. I did not die in the defense of my country. I died because my country thought the blood of our young men and women is worth less than oil."

Mr. Bush if you really give a damn about the lives of the men and women in the gulf then bring them back now, bring them back alive. I expect you will accuse me of appeasement, of bowing down before Saddam the "new Hitler" of rewarding aggression.

Don't you realize though that you and your arms dealers helped make Saddam, and if you "win" who will you replace him with? I have no doubt that it will be another military strongman who will be armed by you to contain by force the massive hatred you have unleashed.

And Mr. Bush one last thing, this war has no use for you in the Middle East, you have sown the seeds of hatred of you and your country that will be reaped in country after country for generations to come.

You have poisoned your own wells. This war has no use. Get the Troops Out Now!

Phil Jackson

LETTERS

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intellectual, etc.) have learned to cling to the government like parasites will make the effort to become responsible, productive members of Canadian society. It's about time some people realized that parasites are burdens to society, not assets.

What about people who have valid reason for not contributing to society? It is about time that we recognized that such people are the

responsibility of their "neighbours." We need to be challenged to voluntarily help people in such situations rather than depending on the government to force us to do so through taxation.

Most people note that there are not enough "generous" people in our society to meet such needs. The simple-minded suggest that we enforce such action (through the government an taxation). Those people who are more resourceful seek answers that stress liberty (i.e.

ways to encourage people to be more generous).

I find it very difficult to understand how people can believe that bigger government is synonymous with greater freedom and increased productive activity (and economy). This mentality is in direct opposition to the testimony of history as well as logic and the consistent use of reason.

What disturbs me even more is that such mentality is hardly ever challenged in institutions of inferior

(I mean higher) learning such as York University. But then again Stalin and the Soviet Union are not the only ones who know how to manipulate and control the flow of information.

When the government goes back to doing what it is supposed to be doing rather than acting like Daddy and Mommy, allowing the individuals to expand their creativity, deal with their own problems, respond to challenges and experience freedom, then society will be much closer to

the ideal that so many people are striving for.

Yours for the Tory government,
Tim Bloedow

Bring our troops home

To the editor,

For the past several months, people everywhere have been exposed to what has now become the reality of war. Although the majority of us wish to have our troops withdrawn from the Persian Gulf, and have the entire issue completely resolved, we must still face (though not necessarily accept) the fact that our troops will have to fight if necessary.

Instead of only protesting the war in voice or in mind, why not write to those dedicated women and men in the Gulf and let them know that someone in Canada cares enough to want to bring our troops home?

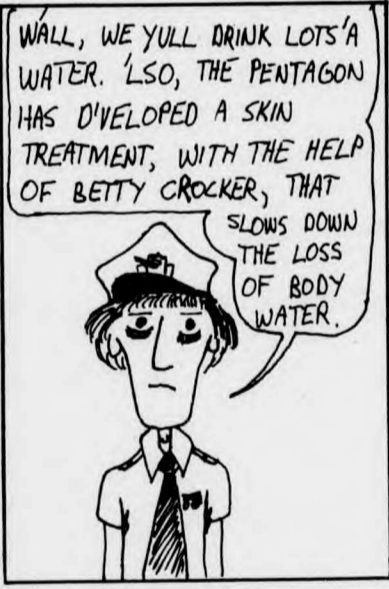
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