

Opinions about war and protesters conflict

'Silent majority' circulates petition to back soldiers

"I may not agree with what you say, but shall defend to the death your right to say it." The great French philosopher Voltaire wrote this hundreds of years ago, yet this statement still holds true in today's world.

In the past five months, anti-war protesters have exercised their right to freedom of speech. They have voiced their feelings and concerns regarding the hostile invasion of Kuwait as well as their anti-Bush/anti-war sentiments. We defend their right to speak out and we acknowledge their freedom to do so. Now, however, we, (and you could call us the silent majority) have chosen to speak out as well.

In recent polls from all across the United States, more than 86 percent of the people in this country have cast their votes in favor of supporting our troops. We here at the university are among those 86 percent, and we now want to let our troops and our government know that we support our fellow Americans who are currently engaged in Operation Desert Storm.

In the next few days, there will be a petition going around the UNL campuses and the petition reads as follows:

"Saddam Hussein must be ejected from Kuwait. Period. We the people of the United States agree with this statement, and we support our fellow Americans who are currently engaged in Operation Desert Storm. We back our troops 110 percent. Go get 'em!"

This petition is going to be sent to the troops in Saudi Arabia to let them know that the vast majority of citizens in the United States is backing them and is thinking of them. We need to let our troops know that only a small minority of U.S. citizens is against Operation Desert Storm. The troops need to know that we believe in them, and Saddam Hussein needs to know that we believe in them as well.

Many of you who are in the minority may be thinking: "What a bunch of Rambos!" Let me assure you of one major fact: we do not love war — no one does, but we do love our families and friends who are doing their jobs in the Middle East. For this reason, we (the silent majority) have chosen to no longer remain silent. May every American defend to the death our right to do so.

Mitzy Myers-Nannen
junior
business

Jean Meister
sophomore
education

Protesters, go tell it to Saddam

I find it very disturbing to see the very vocal minority of anti-war protesters across our nation and on our own campus. These people seem to be very ignorant and misguided. They seem to feel that this nation is following a tyrannical leadership, in the course of global domination, under the guise of some sort of blind patriotism. In that, they are mistaken. The well-informed American majority have placed their trust in our leaders who are freely elected officials whose actions are under daily scrutiny. If these protesters want to complain about a militaristic society in which the people are blindly following their leader in the hopes of global domination, then they can go tell it to Saddam.

These protesters believe that the United States spends so much money on its military because we are a militaristic nation. Again, they are wrong. The hard-working American people have afforded this great nation a military second to none so that we can be ready to stand up for the strong beliefs that this nation holds no matter where they might be threatened.

As for the argument, "No Blood for Oil," I agree, that would be nice. However, again they're complaining

to the wrong people. Go tell it to Saddam. After all, he's the one who threatened to take over the entire Middle East, thus controlling OPEC and with it a large proportion of the world's oil that could further his military regime.

When this war is over and the world community, again under the leadership of the United States, has defeated Saddam and his military regime, this country still will be the greatest on Earth. The hard-working American people will help the Iraqis and Kuwaitis and the rest of the Middle East rebuild. We will go to work on paying off our own war debts. We will congratulate and welcome back our victorious troops. We will honor the brave men and women who sacrificed their lives for the safety of the world.

The anti-war protesters, on the other hand, will have to find something else to complain and gripe about in our great nation because, once again, they will have missed the boat, and it will be too late to "tell it to Saddam."

Robert L. Bryant III
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business

Student responds to protest slogans painted on campus

I thought I might tell everyone that there is a new voice against the gulf war. I first walked up to Oldfather Hall and my opponent said "Think Solar." I told my opponent that solar would be a great energy alternative to coal and oil, but solar is not always immediately available so we cannot do away with existing fuels. My opponent had nothing else to say at that time, so I went to class.

Later, I met up with him in front of the Nebraska Union. Now, he had more to say. First he said that "Bush Kills." To that I said no one who is in the gulf was forced to go. They all signed up with the military knowing that they may have to be used in possible deadly situations. To this my opponent again said "Bush Kills." Since I stated my opinion once, I moved on. But now he said "War is Stupid." In one way, it is. Killing someone is dumb, especially when you don't know the person, but preventing one person from taking over and controlling other countries is not. Hitler (oops!, I mean Saddam) must be kept in check and force is required.

I met my opponent at other places on campus, but his words were not always understood. I saw him making the peace sign all over campus. I then guessed my opponent's words were set in stone. I did not try to change them. I figured that my opponent was told what to say. I was right.

Everyone should now know who my opponent is, and I would like to thank those people who told my opponent what to say.

David Dye
senior
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Demonstrations against war sadden reader

I value very much the freedoms and rights I have as an American. Freedom of speech, religion and the press are values I cherish and protect. I acknowledge that I have these rights as a result of the battles fought long ago in Lexington and Concord, and debates within the Continental Congress. I recognize that peace and freedom are ideals worth sacrificing life to defend and secure. I believe that these are the issues our courageous young men and women in Saudi Arabia are fighting for today. We are engaged in a war against an unlawful aggressor who took away the fundamental rights of Kuwait.

To see my fellow Americans demonstrate against such action saddens me. I, too, pray for peace, but I know that now we must as a country support our President, our leaders and

our troops with our words, actions and prayers. We must learn from Vietnam and unite as a country, so that this battle for freedom in the Middle East will be the final chapter of the Cold War and the beginning of a new peaceful world order.

Jill Durbin
Lincoln

Support of troops does not preclude opposition to war

I write in response to your editorial column (Eric Pfanner, "Flag Blankets Reasons For War," DN, Jan. 21).

Your main point is correct: In response to this war, we cannot cloak ourselves in a piece of cloth in a blind frenzy of nationalism.

Further, this war is not about our freedom. Our country is not threatened. This war is about oil and hegemony. Moreover, your implicit message, revealed in the stories you cover and the headlines you give them, is also correct: Dissent and protest is an essential part of democracy.

But I take strong exception to a minor point you assert in your editorial: that protester support of the troops, though not necessarily the war, is "a wishy-washy way of saying they support the war," and that "it's impossible to oppose the war and support those who do the killing."

This is patently incorrect. The notion is spawned, I suspect, by a simplistic model of the war in which military personnel are unthinking, unfeeling machines who carry out the directives of the White House and who bear full responsibility for the calamity they find themselves in.

I have friends who were called away from school to the gulf. I suspect you do as well, though possibly not. One friend in particular comes to mind: we have been friends since elementary school; he is introspective and kind. He plays guitar. He is not the one-dimensional automaton you depict simply as one of "those who do the killing."

Paramount right now is to end this war as soon as possible. But withdrawing the emotional and moral support of friends and relatives is, in addition to being wrong, not the way to that end.

The way is to criticize our government and its policy makers.

I do not support the policy that led to this war.

I do support my friends who are obliged to endure its horrors.

Chris Potter
senior
physics, philosophy, math, history
ASUN senator

War supporters must condemn other invasions

I am finally going to be man enough to admit that I was wrong in opposing the war against Iraq. After days of contemplation and seeing that I was in a tiny minority, I've come to realize that what the United Nations is doing is right. No matter that Kuwait had been waging economic warfare against Iraq for years, or that days before Iraq invaded poor little Kuwait, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq assured it that we would remain neutral. The United Nations is right — no country should invade and/or occupy another country. But if the "New World Order" is to be truly legitimate, the rules have to apply to everyone. Not only should Iraq be driven from Kuwait, but Israel should be driven from West Bank in Gaza. Israel also should be punished for its raids on Lebanon.

Naked aggression must be resisted everywhere. The United Nations should immediately condemn the U.S. invasions of Grenada and Panama, the Soviet Union's actions in the Baltic States, the government of El Salvador for its death squads, China's continuing oppression of demonstrating students and South Africa's brutal and barbaric system of apartheid.

If the United Nations and international law is to truly work, it must be swift and consistent. The United States isn't above the law, and neither is Iraq, Israel, the Soviet Union, China, South Africa or El Salvador.

But the next time you see those people marching and protesting the war, remember this isn't China. They should be able to protest without being harassed or having their patriotism questioned. So if you are one of the

many flag-worshippers out there, try to remember what that flag symbolizes — the right to say what you want, how you want, read what you want, look at dirty magazines if you want, listen to dirty music if you want, and yes, even to burn the flag if you want. God bless America — we need it.

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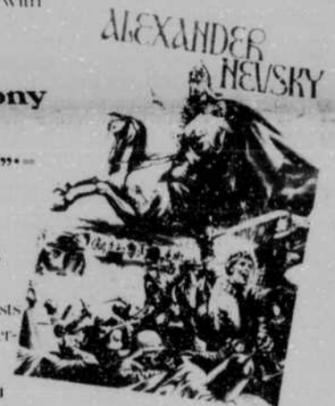
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