

Iraq isn't alone

We can't ignore violations elsewhere

Ironically, President Bush's supposed punishment of Saddam Hussein for atrocities has led to a rash of human rights violations elsewhere in the world.

While the world conscience faced Iraq, Mikhail Gorbachev smashed democratic aspirations in the Baltic republics. The United States, after all, needs Soviet support in the gulf.

And on Saturday, China, the all-important no-vote on the U.N. Security Council, sentenced pro-democracy demonstrators — one demonstrator to four years in prison and the other to seven years.

This comes in addition to numerous other closed-door trials over the past month in China. This rush to close the cases comes 20 months after hundreds of the demonstrators were killed in Tiananmen Square.

There seems to be little question why the U.S. government has avoided confrontation with Beijing, especially within the last six months. It's not easy to make examples of countries with huge armies, especially when their votes are needed to make examples of countries with smaller armies.

And it's even less of a question why Beijing has chosen January to try all the cases. Who would cry about a few lives in China when thousands are on the line in Kuwait.

But if the United States is going to claim moral obligations in the gulf, it must be prepared to fight injustice everywhere.

In the weeks to follow, China will be trying and sentencing what the government considers to be the most serious offenders in the democratic movement — those accused of plotting to overthrow the government.

Without adequate U.S. and U.N. response, they could be executed for supporting ideals the United States supposedly is fighting for in the Persian Gulf.

Such hypocrisy would compromise the legitimacy of U.S. actions in the gulf, or anywhere else it serves as the enforcer of justice. China must be pressured economically to free its political prisoners, simply because hypocrisy and altruism don't mix.

—B.N.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

U.S. making military mistake

Thank God it's not another Vietnam! What a worthless, pitiful reason for Jennifer Eaves' (DN Jan. 21) "relief" of the war in the Persian Gulf. Never mind that thousands (yes, that's THOUSANDS) of American lives will be the payment for our involvement in a country that realistically and economically is not worthy of such a dire price — like Vietnam.

"Will we never learn by our past mistakes?" wails the misguided Eaves — implying that anti-war protesters only hinder our pure and God-given mission of policing the entire globe (that is, only when we want to). She continues, "Don't get me wrong, I myself am a big supporter of peace and feel that war is the easy way out. But I also don't want us to now repeat mistakes made during Vietnam." Sorry to rain on your parade, but aren't we falling into the same kind of trap that happened nearly 25 years ago? Do you actually think that only because we are using the full potential of our conventional forces that this will be easy and relatively bloodless? The American troops are facing the fourth largest ground army in the world, which, I might add, has been battle-hardened for the last eight years of desert fighting with Iran. Most of our troops have never seen conflict, let alone trained in desert tactical warfare.

Finally she bestows us "peace-lovers" with wisdom beyond her years: Rather than voicing our opinions, we should "greet them (the servicemen and women) with victory parades, hugs and cheers of joy. Then after it's all over — whether that be in a couple of weeks or years — let's take diplomatic steps to finally ensure that there will never be another war again." Unfortunately, in a war that lasts either a "couple of weeks or years," many families won't be able to participate in those parades. For many of these families, the reality of war (the death, the maiming, the stupidity)

will forever be with them.

One question that I feel hasn't been adequately answered is: Why in the hell are we there? Certainly we're not fighting for oil — the government has cleared up that asinine assumption (sarcasm for those of you who don't see it). Are we fighting for freedom? Are we falling on the same rhetoric of the Johnson era that the Domino Effect will eventually overtake us and soon we'll all be wearing thick Saddam-like moustaches? If so, why are we defending a feudalistic state — an absolute monarchy? Boy, that sounds like we're in defense of the American way — Mom, Apple Pie, and Totalitarianism.

Unfortunately, many believe that the anti-war protesters are automatically "anti-military," or more specifically, "anti-troops," and thus, un-American. I think this is the furthest from the truth. We are not protesting situations like Vietnam's My Lai, where servicepersons were directly responsible for their own, uncalled-for actions. We are simply protesting the reasons for our involvement in the Persian Gulf. They are flimsy at best and wholly without merit. Although Bush has received the apprehensive nod from Congress to engage the United States in this war, and our military forces are now fully committed to it, doesn't mean that we must humbly accept it. Believe me, it isn't the protesters who will hinder the progress of this military mistake and keep "our boys and girls" over there, it is we who will show that the war isn't held favorably by all Americans, and when the perennial tide turns and the growing body count becomes intolerable, it will be our efforts that bring them home.

In closing, Jennie says it best: "Wake up people and face reality! We are at war!"

Luke Schollmeyer
senior
Russian



LISA DONOVAN

Future negates free-ride past

It was at Gay Johnson's Truck Stop in Rawlins, Wyo., that I first saw it: "Gas, Grass or Ass — Nobody Rides for Free."

At the tender age of 12, the bumper sticker meant nothing but a moment of covert perversion on a long haul with the folks to visit my brother in Idaho.

Now that I'm older and a bit wiser, I still chuckle at the notion, but the phrase has taken on a more intense meaning.

That's right. This sleazy saying has come to mean that you always pay in the end. So now, I look at my "free" education. I've been one of the fortunate ones who got a ride from my parents for the last 23 years.

Because I've been readily accepting this ride, I'm going to pay a price for not saving a dime and not having a grasp on how to deal with my finances. Yes, I'll be a sorry soul May 11 when I'm given my piece of paper, a handshake and the real world. This reality will only hit when I decide whether to invest my last \$200 in a Certificate of Deposit or a CD player.

I realized about three months ago that I had less than a school year to learn how to manage money. So I got a second job and told my parents I needed less — all in the name of learning financial responsibility and independence.

I don't think I'm a very good student.

I called the bank on Thursday. I like the newfangled telebanking because when I make an inquiry on my balance, I can use all sorts of expletives without offending anyone.

I listened to the news: "YO-OR BALANCE, SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION IS: THA-REE DOL-LARS AND FIF-TEEN CENTS."

Nice. My immediate reaction would be to dial up Omaha. But I can't. Calling Mommy and Daddy is a habit little Lisa needs to break.

So I guess, three months will come faster than I think and not only will I be paying all of my bills, but in return I will get a sharp kick in the seat of the pants.

That sharp kick will be America's recession, sponsored by this great nation's leaders. Our presidents and economic leaders have been riding on the notion that they would rather be popular than deal harshly with the state of our economy.

All the rich folks voted those politicians back into office during the '80s. They emulated their government and borrowed a bunch of money from their neighbors to buy stocks, to



All of that talk panics me. The animalistic Chuck Darwin in me comes out: survival of the fittest. I don't give a damn if a company that makes crappy beer is going under. What the hell am I supposed to do about people who haven't taken advantage of the American dream. I will survive.

buy junk bonds, to buy furs. The U.S. government and its upper echelon continued to gamble until the '80s ran out. And their luck.

So here we sit, no real control over the situation, just sort of along for the ride. We pick up the papers and read headlines about the growing population and about how New York's homeless have taken to being doormen and women at indoor automatic teller machines to earn a day's pay, and in some cases, sleep.

In Friday's USA Today, there was a notice that G. Heileman Brewing Co., makers of Old Style, Colt 45 and Lone Star beers, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Right next to it was an article about how the auto industry may be in a slump until next autumn, possibly into 1992.

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beer is going under. What the hell am I supposed to do about people who haven't taken advantage of the American dream. I will survive.

But, realistically, I'm not going to do that. There are enough Reaganomics advocates who have taken care of their own dreams. There's no point in letting the less fortunate become more less fortunate.

So to ensure my future, I better be a nice girl now. That evil word, future. People always ask "so what does the future hold for Lisa after graduation? What will you do after graduation? Will you get a job? Do you have a fiancee?"

Whatever happened to the meaningless, "How are you?"

Yes, the future. Everything happens after mid-May.

But from what I can see, I'm merely coasting. It's out of my hands. Many of the newspapers have hiring freezes. Many of my friends who received degrees in December, especially those who want to be reporters, are having a tough time finding work.

But that's no excuse. Dad says with angry emphasis: "You can do anything you want; you'll get a job." Mom gives a reassuring, "do your best," and a look that conveys "I hope you'll stay close to home."

Even if I wanted to, it's not an option. My plans fluctuate with my daily checking account balances.

Last Monday, I wanted to work at a newspaper when I graduate this coming May.

Tuesday, I was going to head anywhere west. Newsweek advised that those looking for work should go where the jobs are — Colorado, Nevada, Utah and California.

Wednesday, I thought I would like to go back to the New Jersey magazine I interned for last summer, but the wavering Northeast economy isn't promising.

By Thursday, my friend Amy and I decided it would be fun to head for New York and wait tables at a trendy restaurant in Greenwich Village or SoHo.

But by Friday, Amy and I thought it would be fun to work at some camp in New York, save some cash and then travel abroad.

I don't know. I can't decide. The real story is that I probably will end up stranded, slinging hash at a truck stop in Wyoming, watching little kids twirl around the rack of bumper stickers, and calling my parents collect.

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