

# Readers defend war protesters

## Anti-war advocates justified in protests

Well, here we go again. By his letter (DN, Feb. 8), Jim Friend proves he is incapable of seeing the forest for the trees.

Jim, wise up. Gail Steen's reference to you in her letter as a hypocrite was not a personal attack against you, just an observation upon your intolerance and your blatant, misguided jingoism. I notice, however, that your outrage at this perceived injustice did not prevent you from making further 'personal' attacks on war protesters.

You label the protests as unwarranted attacks against our president and our nation's war effort. I don't accept that these are attacks, but whether they are or not, they most assuredly are not unwarranted. The president has, typically, mishandled this situation with predictable Republican party-line hamhandedness, and, Jim, not everyone, myself included, is willing to stand idly by and pretend that this macabre, obscene, opportunistic horror show is anything other than a gross, politically and economically expedient road apple laying in the sun.

Not for nothing, Jim, but you had best sit through another session of your constitutional law classes, the ones that you find it hard to believe that Steen attended; I find it hard to believe that you attended them, otherwise you would never have allowed the question you ask in your letter to see the light of day. You ask, "Am I a hypocrite to believe you should be allowed to speak, even though I think you're wrong to do so?" The answer to this, Jim, is a resounding yes, because this issue is part of a political forum that involves more people than just you or me. But then, Jim, you go on to make the appalling statement that "just because you have a right to do something doesn't mean that you ought to do it." I beg your pardon, Jim. Please tell that to Rosa Parks or Lech Walesa.

One last thing. You seem to be under the impression that the troops in the gulf are susceptible to mood swings in regard to perceived lack of support on the home front, and you bemoan a "weakening of morale" should they get wind of the activities of war protesters. I submit that they have other things more pressing to fret and stew over, to wit: half-a-million land mines buried beneath the sand; facing the fourth-largest army in the world, an army that is seasoned and battle-experienced (as opposed to our forces, made up mostly of

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skittish, college-age sacrificial lambs); and being able to determine in the dark whose tanks are whose, so as to not fry their own comrades. If the troops are indeed spending time pouting about anti-Bush protests, then they have too much unoccupied time on their hands. Therefore, Jim, feeling as you do on the subject, and being so eager to show your support, may I suggest you pack up your megaphone and your propeller beanie and head on over to Saudi Arabia in the capacity of cheerleader. There is nothing like acting on one's principles in order to achieve personal fulfillment, and life is too short to be miserable.

Wes Jackson  
sophomore  
English

## Soldier's morale not affected by protesters

Recently Jim Friend has had two letters published. I would love to criticize the large amount of nationalistic, right-wing B.S. expressed in both letters, but B. Gail Steen already had an excellent response (DN, Feb. 6) to Friend's first letter printed.

It seems that many people feel that anti-war protest in some way hurts the troops. As Mr. Friend put it, protest is "treasonous" and causes the troops to feel "unappreciated." First of all, protest is not treason, it is a right. Secondly, since when did a little criticism hurt anyone? One must have an extremely weak mind to let another's contrary opinion affect them. The military did not lose in Vietnam because of dissent in the United States, it lost because the Vietnamese were too tough. I mean, a fighter's performance does not decrease because there exist people who are pacifists. That man (or woman) still will do all that is within his ability to survive and to be "victorious." So chill out and quit worrying about protesters, Friend.

Finally, I must add a few political opinions. The United States has terribly selective foreign policy. Why is it not invading the West Bank and Gaza Strip to kick Israel out? Why can the United States depose the leader of Panama, and Iraq not have the right to do the same to Kuwait? Also, Kuwait is merely a small tract of sand that was not ruled democratically. The Kuwaiti monarchy is a pack of spoiled oil barons. I could care less if Iraq

owns it. And do not tell me, "Oh, but now Saddam controls all the oil." In the first place, he does not; and in the second, if you are so worried about oil, I suggest you find an alternative.

Jon Dokter  
sophomore  
physics

## Nations should strive for understanding

This letter is written in response to Arshad T. Syed's letter (DN, Feb. 7). He states that David Berges' letter was totally off base and incorrect. I, however, found Mr. Syed proving, to some degree, Mr. Berges' letter correct, possibly unconsciously.

Mr. Syed tells of western women being "forced" to mingle with friends, to wear slinky dresses and to take hours making themselves beautiful for their husbands. Did it ever occur to you, Mr. Syed, that western women did these things for themselves? To express their own sexuality and feelings?

You talk about how Islamic women have the "privilege" of not having to pray and fast when going through their monthly cycles, that they are "allowed" to keep their maiden names and that they are "permitted" to hold on to their wealth. I'm sure that they are forever indebted to the Islamic men for granting them these privileges. However, in the western world, these sorts of "privileges" are a given right for women. They are equal in the choices.

You state that mothers "earn a place in Heaven." Where do the single women go? In the western world, women choose their own religion. Do they in Islam?

When it comes to situations like this — the western culture versus the Islamic culture — debate can continue forever, and for the simple reason that the two cultures are greatly misunderstood on both ends.

Instead of stating all the personal opinions and misconceptions, we should work to understand that the two cultures are fundamentally different and one needs to respect them, both for what they are, even if they are radically against one's own beliefs. One can't give the answer when one does not understand the question.

Chris Halligan  
junior  
arts and sciences

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