

Letter to the editor:

A somewhat belated response to Junior Gallant's letter of January 23rd. In this letter, Mr. Gallant attempts a defense of the United Nations and, specifically, the United States' reaction to Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. This defense portrays George Bush as Kuwait's saviour and Saddam Hussein as the world's next Hitler.

That this idea is often accepted without question is a credit to the U.S. government's increasing ability to manipulate 'mass perception' of events through the media. The fact that previous to the war, Bush had virtually okayed Saddam's plan to push pack the border between the two countries is most often ignored. It is rarely mentioned that U.S. reports of Iraqi atrocities were grossly exaggerated and sometimes fabricated. It was only briefly told that the extent of the gulf oil spills were also exaggerated. The military's absolute control of the media not only went practically unquestioned, but was seen as necessary for reasons of national security. It struck me as ironic that the U.S. media would comment on the fact that Iraq only released images of Saddam in pleasant situations when the U.S. itself managed to reduce the war to fireworks and video games.

In another propaganda coup, the U.S. managed to convince itself, if not the international community, that this war was about human rights. This comes from a country that not only still espouses the virtues of capital punishment, but spends billions of dollars on external military exercises though it cannot find money to solve its increasing problems with drugs, the homeless, education, or providing basic medical needs. This from a country that supplied both Iran and Iraq with military technology needed to build biological weapons and to kill tens of thousands of people.

Given all that, it would still have been possible that "...Iraq was a real threat to world peace." Unfortunately, Mr. Gallant does not explain this threat to us and if we look at the facts, it becomes apparent that from the moment the U.N. forces landed their coalition, there was no threat. Saddam had no intention of moving beyond Kuwait's border. This was shown through his military's primarily defensive posture; the army was spread out along the Saudi Arabia borders as to protect against retaliation, not concentrated for movement; the front lines were found dug into trenches behind minefields or in bunkers, not ready to move out; the Scud missiles, not containing

biological weapons, were a last ditch effort of a government with almost no conventional forces. It is silly to even consider the Iraq forces any kind of match for the U.N. coalition.

The Gulf War was fought because the U.S. has kept itself frighteningly dependent on foreign oil stocks. It was fought because it was politically expedient to defend the rich monarchist governments that supplied most of this oil. It was fought because a no-name president needed a reason to be re-elected. It was fought because a recession was dragging the country's mood down. Pick any or all of these reasons.

The real tragedy is that once the U.N. forces finished 'liberating Kuwait,' having killed over 60,000 people, they weren't around in such strength to help the Kurds or the Kuwaitis, mostly Palestinians, being prosecuted for 'aiding' the Iraqis, even when this aid was given under duress. Having returned the royal family to Kuwait, assuring its supply of oil once again, the U.S. is turning a blind eye to the very violations it supposedly rallied against.

It is impossible to say that "we now know what happened." When those expressing opposing opinions are simple-mindedly denounced and dismissed as "anti-American," it becomes very easy to justify nearly anything. I have no doubt that future senators will have to explain why they were so unpatriotic as to question the U.S. actions.

The somewhat less blindly patriotic but no less sincere,
G. Miniely

