

Letter to the Editor: Raping With Weapons

I'm replying to a letter to the editor written by Andrew MacPhee in regards to the war on Iraq. MacPhee's pro-war letter was featured in The Cadre last week, Feb. 26.

MacPhee states that an "easing of the sanctions on Iraq" is advised in the Baker Institutes report, "in order to alleviate Anti-Americanism in that region." That really is a nice way to put it; instead of easing the sanctions in order to help the people of Iraq, America wants to do it so that they look better in the eyes of the Mid-Eastern countries in order to create "stronger ties." Stronger ties? What exactly, is the goal of these "stronger ties" and what do they mean for both Iraq and the US?

These very economic sanctions placed on Iraq are the equivalent to weapons of mass destruction, which is supported by "the leading international journal of business (The Economist)." They write, "Slowly, inexorably, a generation is being crushed in Iraq. Thousands are dying, thousands are leading stunted lives, and storing up bitter hatred for the future. If, year in, year out, the UN were systematically killing Iraqi children by air strikes, western governments would declare it intolerable, no matter how noble the intention. They should find their existing policy just as unacceptable."

70% of the children dying in Iraq are dying from diarrhoea, dehydration, and respiratory infections. This is due to the deliberate bombing and destruction of public health systems - mainly that of the electricity system - by the US in the 1991 war on Iraq. After the war, sanctions preventing the reconstruction of these public health systems were imposed, and these brutal sanctions still exist today. These children are dying as you sleep. Other deliberate health care systems destroyed in 1991 include irrigation, and water and sewer systems. Hence clean drinking water is one key factor in the amount of death in Iraq, however, *only* one key factor in the amount of death to be found everyday in Iraq. The US has been "rendering useless" what is essential for the survival of the Iraqi people, which constitutes a "breach of humanitarian law," according to the Geneva Convention. What is the difference between the deaths Saddam imposes upon the Iraqi people and the deaths imposed upon them by the unfair sanctions placed upon Iraq by the west? To think that this is a war meant to alleviate the pain and suffering of the Iraqi people is simply ridiculous; if that was the ultimate goal of the

United States, would it not then make sense to lift sanctions and attempt to rebuild rather than create further destruction?

To quote from Milan Rae in her book entitled *War Plan Iraq*, "Iraq is agreed to be experiencing a humanitarian emergency or crisis. The shock of war on the fragile support systems that exist in Iraq would turn a humanitarian crisis into a humanitarian disaster for 23 million people."

MacPhee states that "conceivably more will die if the Hussein Administration is left ruling the country." The Hussein *administration* is, again, a very good way to put it. Richard Haas, director of Middle East Affairs on the US National Security Council explains that "you don't understand. Our policy is to get rid of Saddam, not his regime." The US is not looking to turn Iraq into a democratic state, but simply to replace Saddam "with another Saddam - another iron-fisted military ruler." If the US is to attempt to create a successful reconstruction of Iraq after such a merciless war, it is suggested that Iraq would need the military presence of approximately 75,000 troops for one year, and then approximately more than 5,000 troops for the ten years to come. This would cost a monstrous amount of money and time, one of which, Iraq does not have. Does the US intend to go through with such a plan and set up a democracy within Iraq?

I would first like to ask what the intent may have been in Afghanistan? Canada is currently demanding that it is essential to send more peace-keeping troops to Afghanistan in the face of political and humanitarian instability and the possibility of crisis? What has happened to the US now that the war is over and what does this mean for Iraq after a potential war? "All of the evidence suggests that Washington is intent on an authoritarian solution, preferably stabilising and maintaining the current regime," explains Rae. This seems to fit, how can one take advantage of a viable democracy and get away with it without an outcry and without repercussions? If the regime is bad, if the regime's ruler is bad, can all the problems not simply be blamed on that rather than on those who continue to take advantage of the unfortunate situation.

MacPhee states two accounts of American intervention that created democratic states, this may be true, but perhaps we should look at how "democratic" is defined within these contexts. And does

anyone remember Pinochet, brutal dictator of Argentina installed by the US? Does anyone remember that it was the US themselves who had installed Saddam? Did you know that the US backed Saddam, and sold him weapons in his war on Iran when it suited US interest? That must have been back when Saddam was a *nice* dictator/bloody murderer. "Nice," is the word; "nice," for the US.

MacPhee also suggests that a "US occupation can only be a step in the right direction," but who, exactly, would this be a good step for? The US could certainly then, having control, take advantage of such a situation. Also, it seems funny to suggest such a thing with all of the Anti-Americanism to be found in the region. Certainly the people of Iraq and the countries surrounding Iraq do not want this, just as they do not want this war.

Tell me, what is democracy all about? Should we be beginning a war, or setting up a government in which the people in the region specifically do not want?

Another thing MacPhee suggests is that "the economy of the 'States was strengthened as a result of military spending during WWII, the Korean War, and the Vietnam war." Perhaps this is true, but does this mean that we should be constantly at war to further our own economy at the expense of others? And does this necessarily mean that *this* possible war would also be good for US economy and the world, as "the economy of the world is intricately tied to the economy of the US[?]" The economy of Iraq, and other countries in need, are certainly not going to benefit from this strengthening of US economy; it would be interesting to see how "world" is defined in this context. Also, simply because one war has in the past furthered economy does not necessarily mean that every war will do the same.

Furthermore, as Randolph Bourne argued, "this war may lead to a sickness of world economy, and poverty and disease for millions." Larry Eliot suggests that "periods of high oil prices mean an initial surge of inflation followed by recession." This happened in 1990 when the first war on Iraq was beginning. That however, is beside the important point to be made; there are better ways to further produce economy, and most importantly, economy for all. Certainly in war all economies are not being benefited.

Speaking of economy, MacPhee suggests that Canada should back the US-led possible war in order to preserve their own. He points out that the US slapped almost 30% duty on our softwood lumber exports to the US in 2001/2002, costing Canadian companies almost three billion dollars. Funny, our participation in the war

on Afghanistan did nothing to alleviate this lumber dispute.

Furthermore, MacPhee suggests that "Canada becoming a poorer nation will undermine our security and independence far more than any war." I fail to see how this is the case; Scott Ritter, a former US marine and weapons inspector, asks "What are you Brits going to do, roll over like nice little doggies just because America says so?" Perhaps, as Andrew suggests, Canada should do the same and become more secure and *independent*. Canada is obviously not keen on this war, and neither are the majority of people in Canada, or for that matter, the world. If the US claims to be trying to set up democracies, perhaps it would make sense to uphold the concept themselves, for the large majority of this world actually *does* oppose the possible war, which the US is blatantly ignoring. That - I am sorry - has not even a shred of democracy to it; "You are either with us or against us?"

MacPhee explains that the anti-war supporters "seem unable to convincingly make that case to other people in an intelligent and persuasive manner," a statement that I hope is now being corrected. Also, the concept of "innocent until proven guilty," has very quickly gone out the window; the Bush administration itself has been unable to do this very same thing. I want to ask you and anyone else who supports this war; "why?" Give me some "intelligent" and "persuasive" reasons - you have so far done nothing of the sort. If the Bush administration is willing to begin such a war, without intelligent and persuasive reasons, and without democratic support, I would suggest that it is not Saddam or his country that are the threat to this world, but the United States itself, who is being supported by Britain, and which none of this is being opposed by Canada.

As Germany knows well the evils of war, they speak out loud and clear against this brutal act of terrorism by the western world upon Iraq. And Canada, in not joining with Germany, is no better than the aggressors in the White House. Iraq is being raped to a bloody pulp, and Canada is standing on the sidelines watching, too afraid to simply even speak out for fear of an unhappy trading partner. This is nothing new, the sanctions imposed on Iraq have been around since the Gulf War, and these sanctions are nothing more than a condom, protecting the west from the public and political repercussions of a continuing rape scene with a diseased country. If you have an opinion, perhaps you would like to send it in? This issue, perhaps, courts debate.

By Brad Dieghan