

## **Why?**

Jina Kim, 3/18/2003

President George W. Bush addressed the nation on Monday evening. If Saddam Hussein did not leave Iraq within 48 hours, the United States would attack. Although the nation would clearly go to war, I was confused because I could not find a clear motive. There are several possibilities, but none fully justify this war against Iraq.

Is this Bush's war against terrorism? In his speech, Bush tried to justify his position to go to war by explaining that the Iraqi regime "has already used weapons of mass destruction against Iraq's neighbors and against Iraq's people...it has aided, trained and harbored terrorists, including operatives of Al Qaeda"(2/18/2003, A14, "Bush's Speech on Iraq: 'Saddam Hussein and His Sons Must Leave'") The pending war carries a bitter aftertaste of September 11<sup>th</sup>. Are we seeking revenge? In her article, "Realizing Dreams of Flight, Inspired by Historic Crew" on March 17<sup>th</sup>, Lynette Clemetson describes how a squadron of F-18 Super Hornets, the Navy's newest fighter jet, has dedicated its deployment to a firehouse in Midtown Manhattan (3/17/2003, A1). Each of the twelve jets has the name of a victim from Ladder Company 4 and the firehouse slogan "Pride of Midtown. Never missed a Performance" painted on its side. In the preparations for this war, we are continually reminded of the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks, the injustice, and the pain. In my opinion, the World Trade Center bombings is too emotional a reason for the U.S. to wage war on a country that is associated with terrorists.

Is it for oil? Initially, I thought that this reason was not as significant. Yet, it was mentioned in Bush's speech. Bush warned Iraqi military and intelligence services not to destroy oil wells because they are "a source of wealth that belongs to the Iraqi people." However, oil wells can also serve the United States, and no one forgets it.

Are we fighting for disarmament? Bush devoted a significant portion of his 15-minute speech explaining to the American people that the Iraqi regime has repeatedly abused diplomacy. Iraq did not fulfill the promise to destroy all its weapons of mass destruction, which was a condition for ending the Persian Gulf war. Iraq defied U.N. Security Council resolutions that demanded full disarmament, and its officials deceived weapons inspectors. Yet, if disarmament is the concern, why not pursue North Korea, which has claimed to possess weapons of mass destruction?

North Korea may be the next logical step. In his March 18<sup>th</sup> “Bush's Doctrine for War”, Sanger labels Bush's strategy as “the doctrine of pre-emptive military action against foes” (A1). Although Iraq has not directly attacked the United States, we are taking preventive measures to alleviate the terrorist threat. Bush stated that “responding to such enemies only after they have struck first is not self-defense, it is suicide.” This new concept of taking preventive measures makes the concrete reasons for war even more ambiguous.

Is Bush choosing war for altruistic reasons, the sake of the Iraqi people and the global security? In his speech, he spoke more of the Iraqi people than he did of the American people. He promised them a free Iraq, with “no more poison factories, no more executions of dissidents, no more torture chambers and rape rooms.” President Bush also mentioned that the security of the world rests upon disarming Saddam Hussein. These claims lead to another question: why is the United States playing God? Does superpower status give us authority to interfere in other countries' affairs or fight on behalf of the rest of the world? I say no. I ask President Bush to look to our domestic affairs. We lack of funding in state programs, and the economy is falling. We should fix

ourselves before attempting to correct the world's mistakes.

This paper does not aim to answer the major question of why, but merely explore the different motives floating around Bush's decision to attack Iraq. Whether any or all of these reasons justify the war on Iraq, we will enter it very soon. But without a set purpose, how will we know to end it?