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The Proposed War against Iraq

President Bush and his administration are pushing for military action against Iraq. His administration insists that Iraq is producing weapons of mass destruction, and he is calling for their disarmament. Furthermore, his administration implies, with its actions, that the United Nations is incapable of providing such assurance.

In light of the recent shuttle disaster, such a stance by the United States seems a bit bold. One would think that a catastrophe to a long time American symbol would make our leaders realize our nation's vulnerability. One would think that they be more conservative with their actions and try to keep a low profile. The recent push by President Bush, however, indicates the opposite. Bush and his administration are determined to push forward with their objectives, and they refuse to let tragedy get in the way of their political goals.

As an American I am a bit weary about taking another risk. I am not convinced that going to war is the right approach. Instead of smothering a possible threat, the war against Iraq may fuel more hatred against the United States. It will be very easy for Saddam Hussein to turn the war into an attack on Islam. War will inevitably kill civilians and the Iraqis can use that as propaganda against the United States. When we weigh the costs of such a war with the benefits, our preventative measures may be setting us up for future tragedy.

The other important issue is the ease with which we could defeat the Iraqi's, assuming we go to war with them. Although the last Gulf war was very one-sided, this war would be completely different, in both purpose and strategy. The first war thwarted

an invasion. This war would have the United States invading Iraq. There is no way in which we can predict how different the reaction will be among Iraqi citizens.

President Bush can claim that he is helping the Iraqi people by removing a dictator, but President Bush has a very different world perspective from most Iraqis. Besides fueling more hate in the Arab world, an actual war against Iraq may pose a more direct threat to Americans. It may be true that most Iraqis may not like Saddam Hussein, but it may also be true that most Iraqis don't like the United States. They may very well view us as the enemy because of the sanctions we help impose on their country. With this animosity comes a very real problem. What if this proposed war turns into the Vietnam of my generation? The U.S. army was undoubtedly stronger than the Vietnamese, but they lost a huge number of soldiers in the conflict that never panned out. Who knows how Iraqis desperate and determined to defeat the United States might react. It is very possible that they have unconventional means of thwarting the United States' effort, possibly creating another crisis and even more problems for our country.