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I find it rather ironic that we as Americans are so proud of our democracy and government – our freedom of choice, our liberty to opinion, our power to vote and influence – and yet, it doesn't seem to be working right now. We are presently two hundred plus years after the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, and our president and government refuse to listen to the outcry of the public. Not only that, they turn deaf ears to the ever-present international community as well. What kind of example does this present to struggling nations who look up to and admire us? And specifically, our form of government? Are the head honchos of the one of the most influential political systems in the world making America into a hypocrite? In a New York Times article on February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2003, David Stout says that “President Bush said that that he is still determined to use force... to disarm Saddam Hussein, and that a weekend of worldwide protests by millions of people did nothing to change his mind.” Additionally, “Mr. Bush said he would base his decisions not on the protests or opinion polls but on what he thinks is right for history.” Thus far, it seems as Bush hasn't done that bad of a job with the presidency, but when it comes to war, when it comes down to life and death, whether of the innocent or guilty, when it comes down “peace through war,” the top power-holders of the American government seem slightly deluded. Even taking into account that the newspapers probably lean more towards the public, the facts themselves are plain and open. Patrick Tyler writes that the “case for war” has been put into a

difficult position by “four converging negatives.” First off, Bush and Blair versus France, Germany, Russia, and China. Secondly, the worldwide, and specifically European, anti-war sentiment has caused much turmoil, particularly amongst the common people, and the lack of support for the war (look at Turkey’s aversion and unenthusiasm, not to mention greediness) in helping with the “peace” effort. Thirdly, the evidence – even historical and political facts that basic public is willing to read and interpret – points to weapons inspection progress, even if it *is* presently minimal. And lastly, proof has been lacking as to how a war would solve anything.

It’d be nice, even if it is too optimistic, to hope that a person’s opinion matters in what happens. Everyone always says to vote because “one single person’s vote will count.” So in this case, millions of individual people, not to mention a couple of nations, are voting “no.” If we stick to democracy, one of whose definitions is “the common people, considered as the primary source of political power,” those votes should count for something. Patrick Tyler’s first sentence of his New York Times February 16<sup>th</sup> article reads: “The fracturing of the Western alliance over Iraq and the huge antiwar demonstrations around the world this weekend are reminders that there may still be two superpowers on the planet: the United States and world public opinion.”