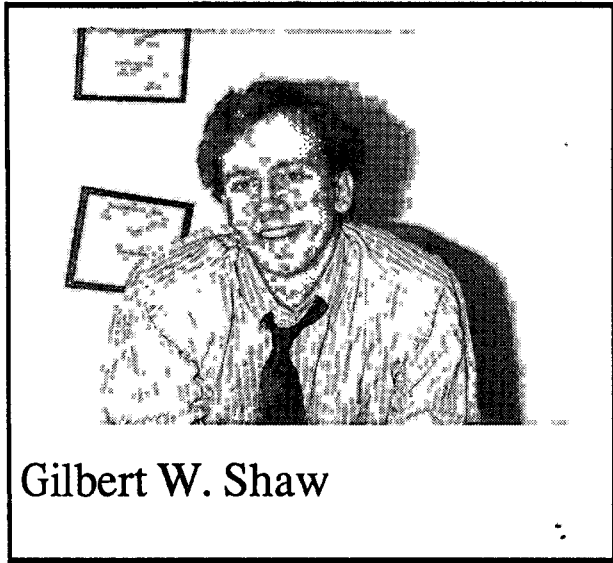


## Let's Get Our Symbols Straight

Symbols surround us. They testify to our beliefs, they signify our commitment to those beliefs, and they inform others of our positions and preferences. However, as Derrick Willard thoughtfully

It is a tribute to this nation's commitment to the principle of freedom that we may choose. Like Mr. Willard, I do not wish to infringe upon that right, nor will I "deny anyone's right to do as he

[or she] pleases." But given that both our American flag and the Confederate flag can symbolize different things to different people, we should always, as Mr. Willard says, "consider



Gilbert W. Shaw

elucidated in last week's issue of *The Davidsonian*, symbols can mean different things to different people. Precisely for this reason we should take care in how we display our symbols or undertake symbolic acts, but we should not, as Derrick suggests, shelve the symbol. Rather we should strive to clarify what meaning we wish to convey in the symbols we employ.

In his article Derrick refers to

the statement [we] make" when displaying symbols.

The answer then lies not in "shelving" the symbol, but rather in clarifying its meaning. Obviously, a Confederate flag, when flown alongside an American one, cannot truly stand for a Confederate nation. Rather, the more likely meaning is that it symbolizes a region, the South, which has shared a unique history, and considers

***I for one intend to always fly my American flag along with my U.N. flag. The American flag flies most honestly and purposefully then.***

the Confederate flag in particular. "What is seen as a proud relic to many Southerners, the Confederate flag, is a symbol of oppression and hatred to many others," he reminds us. Yet, we must acknowledge that such conflicting perceptions occur with the American flag as well. As all of us are but too aware, our American flag evokes both pride and scorn here at home. While some salute it, others burn it, and still others may do neither.

itself in some ways distinct from the rest of the country to which it holds ultimate loyalty. Some individuals feel this distinctiveness of greater personal pertinence than do others. I would encourage those who do feel this need to display the Confederate flag to do so properly: *beneath* the American flag, which symbolizes the values of justice and freedom to which there should

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## Why I Do Not Support The War

By Doug Gibson '91

The most common topic of debate in the *Davidsonian* over the past few weeks has been the issue of protest. Those who support this war insist that its opponents silence their protests in order not to hurt the war effort. We must stand behind the world's forces, they say, or else we risk their lives and the stability of the region by lengthening this conflict; we must resolve to punish Saddam Hussein, or else we may have to face his threat again.

Perhaps. But when I hear these arguments, I think about Henry David Thoreau's essay, "Civil Disobedience," in which Thoreau asks, "How can a man be satisfied to maintain an opinion merely, and enjoy it? Action from principle -- the perception and performance of right -- changes things and relations; it is essentially revolutionary."

Those who criticize peace advocates want them to divorce their ideals from their lives now that the war has started, but how can anyone ask this? The idea is absurd. Those who opposed this war before it began can do nothing but oppose it more stridently now that it has commenced the very evils they feared all along. If they did anything else, they would give up their rights as citizens and -- worse -- their responsibilities as human beings.

That said, why do I oppose this war? I have several objections both to George Bush's methods and reasoning as he led our nation and our world into this conflict. First, I feel we cannot afford it. Ten years of irresponsibility have made a shambles of efforts to help our nation's poor: now, despite concerns over how our economy will compete in the world for the next decades, George Bush has shouldered the responsibility to forge a "new world order." How will an nation which has spent so much on defense and has then expended its force in the desert provide the economic clout necessary to maintain this order? I do not know. For a decade now the United States has ignored the widening cracks in its economy and yet after

this year the money to patch them will be scarce indeed.

I also oppose Bush's current diplomatic policy in the Middle East because it is sowing the seeds for future problems. Already we are destroying a military we built up in order to provide the region with stability. For as Iraq weakens we assist other countries indirectly: Iran, with its claims on Islamic

thinks this conflict will, like World War II, require an allied military presence twenty years after its conclusion? If so, then who will pay for such a presence, and who will supply the troops for it? If not, then does that mean Bush will tolerate Hussein's survival or the survival of the Baathists who support him? Also, does the fact that he opposed Iraq's attempt to link

***The main thing we should learn from the origins of World War II is this: that no peace without the consent of the governed will last.***

fundamentalists, will now become a stronger power. We have also begun to support another dictator and sponsor of terrorism: Hafez-Assad of Syria has opposed us in Lebanon for many years now, and he will undoubtedly seize Hussein's defeat as an opportunity to take the lead among militant Arab nationalists. We have had to confront both nations in the past, and if we eliminate Iraq as a contender for the leadership of the Arab world, we will only find them stronger opponents in the future.

In addition to fostering stronger opponents in Syria and Iran, the destruction of Hussein for which Bush hopes can only create another martyr for the Arab world. Right now, his defiance has given him many supporters, and his death at the hands of the United Nations forces will increase those supporters and perhaps destabilize Northern Africa, Jordan, and other countries in the region. His martyrdom might, in the long run, even destabilize a "liberated" Kuwait, once the West restores the monarchy there.

Nevertheless, Bush has insisted so strongly upon Hussein's destruction that one wonders if he now fears his loss of face should the war have any other conclusion.

This brings me to the third reason I oppose the war: the administration's short-sightedness as it plans for what will happen afterward. Bush has compared Hussein with Hitler, but does that mean he

withdrawal from Kuwait with a conference on the Palestinian question mean that he opposes such a conference? If not, then why didn't he say he supported the idea? If he would have supported such a conference, will he still support one now that we owe Israel so much for its restraint? We must wonder what will happen after this conflict ends, and yet Bush has supplied only vague answers. In planning for battle, Bush has so far failed to produce a vision of the peace which will follow.

This failure to plan for peace leads me to my fourth and main reason for opposing our involvement in the conflict. The most common reason Bush cites for confronting Saddam Hussein has been containment, and he uses the example of World War II to prove that we are currently fighting a war for peace, so to speak. Democrats and Republicans, Liberals and Conservatives, diplomats and warriors all agree that just as we should have contained Hitler before he attempted to subjugate Europe, we should now contain and even destroy Hussein before he attempts to subjugate the Middle East. Not only do I disagree with this comparison, I feel it is dangerously misguided, as it ignores other lessons we should learn from the events of 1939.

The main thing we should learn from the origins of World War II is

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## Foundation For The New World Order Is Rotten

By Chris Einolf '91

As a war begins in the Middle East our country faces the certainty of casualties numbering in the thousands, and of expenses in the billions. While Saddam Hussein's actions should definitely be opposed, it is unclear whether our interest in the region merits such a strong response. President Bush contends that these sacrifices are justified because they will bring results both in the Middle East and throughout the world; the war will usher in a New World Order, in which peace and justice will reign worldwide.

This argument rests on some dubious assumptions. Bush feels that with the end of the cold war, the major cause of world conflict has disappeared. The world community agrees on what constitutes

a just conflict, and the United States will lead the world in judging and prosecuting aggression. The example of Iraq will convince other nations to solve their problems peacefully, and avoid war.

Any person who is well-informed about the international politics of this century can see that the New World Order will never come about. The roots of world conflicts go much deeper than the struggle of the superpowers, and will continue even now that the cold war has ended. The world community often disagrees on which conflicts are just, and the United States often finds itself opposed to the decisions of the United Nations. Making an example of Iraq will do nothing to solve the fundamental causes of conflict in the Middle East, and will not solve

the fundamental causes of conflict elsewhere in the world.

The conflict in the Middle East has been going on for centuries; the end of the cold war will do little to resolve it. Defeating Iraq will do nothing to address the region's fundamental problems; in fact, past experience has shown that conflict only exacerbates tensions. Israel has fought four wars since its formation as a state forty years ago, yet the issues that caused these wars remain completely unsolved.

Likewise, making an example of Hussein will do nothing to settle conflicts elsewhere in the world. The headlines may be about the Middle East, but violence and oppression continue elsewhere. A civil war in Liberia leaves thousands dead, yet the United States, despite its long history of interven-

tion in Liberian politics, has not lifted a finger to help. Soviet forces, with Gorbachev's approval, violently suppress the Baltic republics, yet we refuse to even recognize the Baltic states' right to self-determination. In China, four leaders of the Tiananmen square demonstrations go on trial; observers consider the trials to be test cases to measure Western response.

That we are so willing to go to war where oil is concerned, yet so reluctant to act where we have nothing to gain, points out the hypocrisy of Bush's claim that moral considerations motivated this war with Iraq. Furthermore, the war limits our ability to influence other countries through economic and diplomatic pressure. How can President Bush condemn China and the Soviet Union for

their actions, when he needs their support for his policies in the Middle East?

Thus we can see that winning a war against Iraq will do little to establish a New World Order, and may actually set back our efforts to do so. Yet even if this New World Order were possible, what would qualify the United States to enforce it?

Bush portrays the United States as the strong arm of the U.N., as the leader in enforcing what the international community agrees is right. In this particular case, Bush's portrayal is accurate. In the past, however, the United States has often found itself opposed to a unanimous world opinion.

In the years 1981-1986, the

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