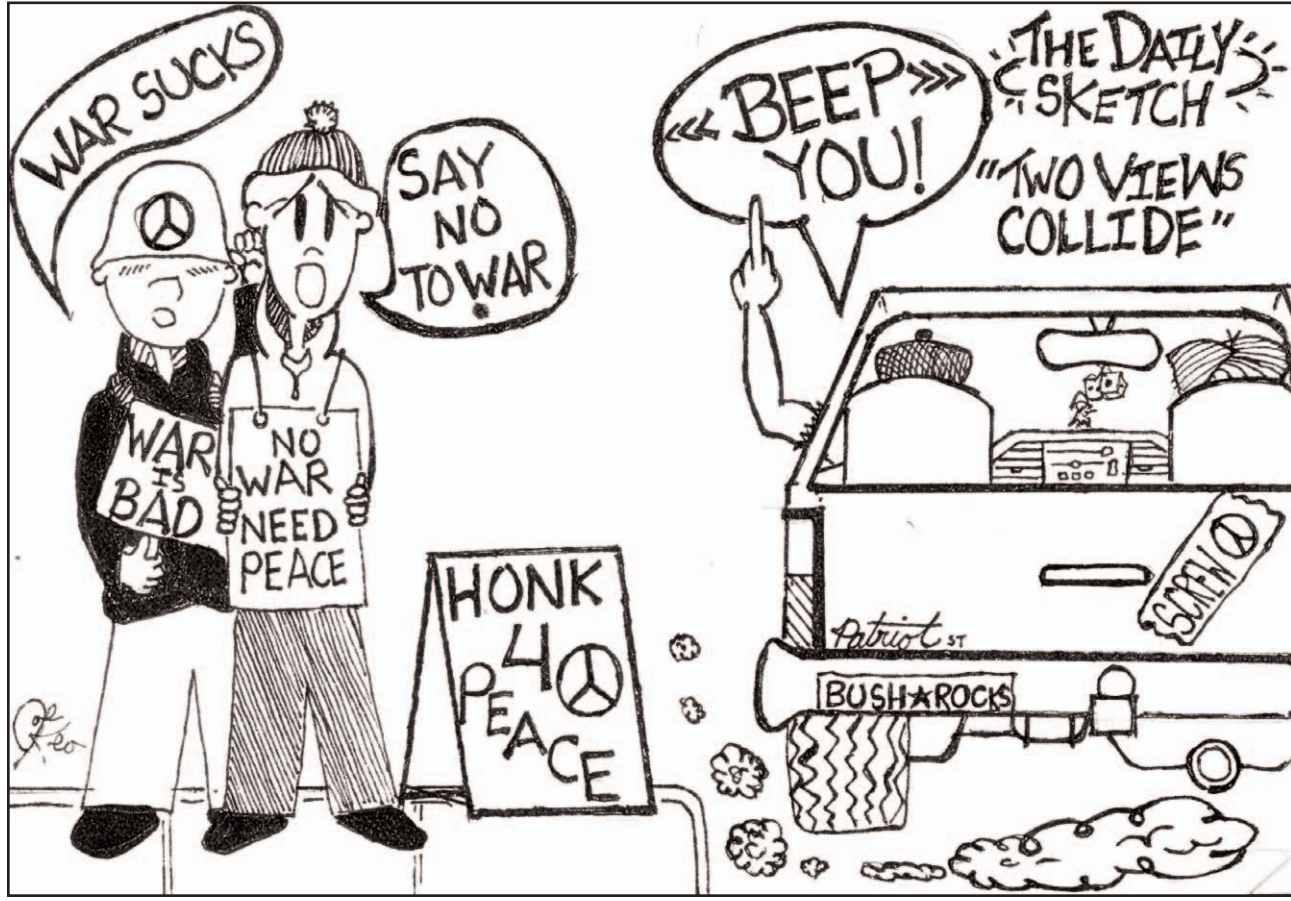


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Joe Keo / The Tattoo

Teens torn on war

By Tattoo Staff

As the United States prepared to invade Iraq, some teenagers around the country and in Canada expressed skepticism about the war while others said they weren't sure or thought the nation had no choice.

"War is necessary to ensure democracy and to ensure American's goal against terrorism," said Justin Garren, a junior at Bristol Eastern High School. He said a successful war would reduce the threat to Americans and the rest of the world.

But Waleska Cabrera, a 17-year-old junior at Bulkeley High School in Hartford, said she thinks that President Bush "is incompetent and Iraq is only a figurehead for war. Terrorism will always exist and preventing it" is going to be an everyday job for the country.

"September 11th should not have been the catalyst because war should not occur to stop violent acts," she said.

Selena Chu, a Virginia 16-year-old, said that Hussein probably has hidden weapons of mass destruction.

"I think that something needs to be done so that Iraq will be rid of these weapons," said Chu, a junior Granby High School in Norfolk, Va. She said if it means war, "then so be it. War is not exactly the best or peaceful answer, but it is efficient. I think that Iraq is most likely capable of pulling something off that is even worse than 9-11. So, in that case, Iraq must be stopped."

The *Tattoo* interviewed scores of teens in North America during the weeks leading up to war and found their thoughts on the prospect of war wide-ranging and occasionally provocative. Some were paying close attention to developments while others confessed that they either didn't care or didn't know what to do about Iraq.

"I don't know what to think," said Ivette Pereira, 16, an Eastern junior.

Krista Duprey, another Eastern junior, said before the bombs started dropping that "I really don't care" about the war. "Maybe I'll care when it starts."

But most teens were ready to take a stand.

"I don't necessarily agree with war, but how else do you negotiate with a dictator like Saddam Hussein?" said Maryanne MacLeod, 18, a senior at St. Thomas Aquinas Secondary School in Oakville, Ontario.

She said wondered how long the world could wait for Iraq to confess to the arms that its leaders have collected. "Hussein is a dictator and tortures his own people, so what other action do you take? What is the option?" MacLeod asked.

"Waiting on them is jeopardizing our country's safety," said Michele Roach, a 16-year-old junior at Bulkeley High. "They can attack us again and we wouldn't see it coming."

Both the United States and Iraq acted childish as war approached, said Junelle Jordan, 17, a junior at Granby High. She said war wasn't needed to solve the problems between the two countries.

"If people would just compromise with one another, everything would go well instead of people wanting everything their way and not caring about others' feelings and issues," said Jordan. "Violence is not needed, in my

opinion." But, she added, "All my prayers [are] with those who get drafted into this horrible thing and all my prayers to the families and everyone who is involved or affected."

Kiera Sullivan, a 17-year-old senior at Eastern, said she's anti-war and can't see why the U.S. needs to be in charge. She said that other nations should handle it.

Bulkeley junior Audrene Dias, 16, said she wasn't sure what America should do. She said she thought inspectors needed more time, but said she worried that Iraq could have used the time to plan its own attack.

Leslie Lambert, a 16-year-old junior at Bulkeley, said she thinks "Saddam is really hiding weapons of mass destruction and he should be a man and show it so people could live in peace knowing that they are not going to die today or tomorrow because of his weapons."

"I feel Bush wants to go after Iraq for the wrong reasons," said 17-year-old Denise Rodriguez, a Bulkeley junior. "He only cares about oil and doesn't think of the innocent lives that will be destroyed."

"Oil is a corrupt reason, but why we are going," said Nick Stoyas, a sophomore at Warren High School in Illinois. He predicted a year-long war "which we will eventually win."

"It's not about oil," said 17-year-old Jessica Stepp, an Eastern senior. She said she doesn't necessarily agree with the war, but Hussein has been "killing his own people" and there's a good argument for stepping in to stop him.

Amanda Clozza, a 17-year-old senior at St. Thomas Aquinas, said the war is wrong.

"Saudi Arabia has weapons that have to be disarmed, but because they are an American ally, Mr. Bush doesn't care," Clozza said. She claimed that Bush just wants to pick a war with someone.

"Bush just wants a war," said Robyn Zerebecki, 17, also a senior at St. Thomas Aquinas.

But Peter Banks-Kenny, an Eastern student, said the war "needs to happen" because Hussein is insane, though he would have tried harder to negotiate before launching the invasion.

Teague Neal, a 14-year-old freshman at White Oaks Secondary School in Oakville, Ontario, said that war "should be carefully thought out with detailed steps of action that move ahead piece by piece, as Saddam Hussein does possess nuclear weapons."

He said that the Iraqi military machine is "beyond anyone in the western world's perceptions."

"I think that we should go for it," Beckie Demers, an Eastern junior. "if we don't then who knows what other country will try to walk all over us. I mean we are the strongest nation and we have to stay that way."

Lily Ocran, 17, a senior at St. Thomas Aquinas, said that America "should go to war because we should stop Iraq somehow."

Ocran said that war would, sadly enough, be the only way to stop Hussein.

Tattoo writers Joe Keo, Andrea Easter, Jennifer Ortiz, Eric Simmons, Nicole Bernosky, Danielle Letourneau and Angela Kozak contributed to this story.

Bush's war 'sickening'

By SAM YOSAFI
The Tattoo

One of the things that really irks me about the arguments made by supporters of the war in Iraq is their claim that war is in the best interests of the people who live in Iraq.

While it's true that in the past Saddam Hussein has been a tyrant — brutally killing his own people, among other crimes — our struggle to get him out of power now is not worth all of the carnage that we are so thirsty to inflict.

The fact of the matter is that many more civilians are going to die during this war than Saddam would kill. And how would blowing all these innocent Iraqis to pieces be worth it to those who've already been born into suffering?

While I am an avid believer in protecting America and its values — after all, if it weren't for America, I wouldn't be here right now writing this — waging war against Saddam is not the way that we should go about obtaining our security.

The reason? Iraq poses no threat to us.

Without hard evidence that Iraq even has "mass weapons of

destruction," let alone any proof that it has any intention of using them, we have absolutely no business in Iraq.

That's why I believe that President Bush's motivation lies elsewhere.

We have no legal or moral justification for war, or even a shred of proof that Iraq directly threatens the United States, though it perhaps threatens our empire-building agenda.

Does our government truly believe that this war will bolster our nation's feeling of security? From what I've observed so far, it has only aggravated peoples' fear.

We are living in such a nauseating state of paranoia that it has led to altering our daily lives, stripping us of the liberties that America stands for.

We are absolutely cold-hearted, callous, and downright murderous to believe that wiping out masses of people over mere speculation is justified.

The idea of slaughtering the helpless over mere guesswork is appalling. The fact of the matter is that we don't have real evidence of

Iraq doing anything at all that should worry us. The American government has connived and schemed to bring up so much that proved false that even if something genuine turned up, it'd be hard to believe.

The comic book story that the Bush administration is giving as an outline and justification for this war is sickening.

These are real lives we are playing God with, yet all our government has to do is create propaganda and it gains approval and popularity.

Well I must say, Mr. Bush, if it's popularity you wanted, it's definitely what you've got.

With elections coming up in 2004, there's no doubt in my mind that Bush will be a tough act to follow for anyone who's running against him because of the support he's secured through war.

It's a horrifying reality to accept.

The real threat is the 2.5 million jobs lost since Bush took office, the plummeting stock market, the soaring deficit and our retirement funds in danger.

I cannot accept shipping young, healthy Americans — our nation's future — to shed blood to help a

What I say

More *Tattoo* online

At www.ReadTheTattoo.com, you'll find more views on the war as well as other global and national issues; music, movie and other reviews; high school survival advice; and in-depth projects on teen suicide, teen pregnancy and school violence. There's a large selection of travel pieces and more cartoons. Bookmark it!

Read also about seven talented *Tattoo* writers who recently won awards in a regional high school journalism contest sponsored by the American International College in Springfield, Mass.

Support our troops

By JOE KEO
The Tattoo

I've seen tons of rallies and protests on television recently. During some, people yell anti-war slogans while others have people waving signs that support the war.

But no matter what your perspective on the war in Iraq, anyone who has a heart should have enough compassion to support the men and women who are serving abroad.

Go ahead and say the war is all about oil, continue to bash President Bush and his administration, because you have the right to do so.

Our freedoms of speech, petition, assembly, and press are on your side.

American troops and allies fighting the war in Iraq are there to make sure you are able to maintain those rights.

Their mission isn't to kill innocent people, destroy homes, or conquer a country.

Their main objective is to fight off threats to America and its citizens because if they don't then we might lose our right to express our opinions, and perhaps more.

These are hard times. Our armed forces are all-volunteer. The draft is long gone. Normal men and women have decided that they want put their lives on the line for their country.

Every day of the war these soldiers are out there risking their lives against the enemy.

All American citizens are in debt to our troops.

Personally, I oppose war because I don't like to see people killed in battle. I squirm at the sight of bloodshed and I cry about death.

But my opposition to the war

doesn't interfere with my support for our armed forces.

Though our soldiers hold guns and have weapons capable of taking lives, I know that our enemies — and all who may dislike American ways — also hold weapons and are willing to kill.

I can see that there is rarely any clear-cut good or bad in war. It's all in the eyes of the beholder.

Iraqis may look upon Americans as imperialist bullies, but we see their government as a global threat.

Some Middle Eastern people danced with joy at the fall of the Twin Towers, but in America we cried over all the deaths.

Overall, I see no right or wrong, only people on both sides fighting for what they believe.

War is violent and brings along death and suffering. Everyone knows that.

It's plain and simple: there aren't any sane people who enjoy what war does.

But war is how America became what it is today: an independent and strong nation. It's also how a good number of other nations came to exist.

In any case, whether you hate the war or like it, support those who are fighting it for us.

Our troops need our backing. They are there not for themselves, they are there for you, for me and for us.

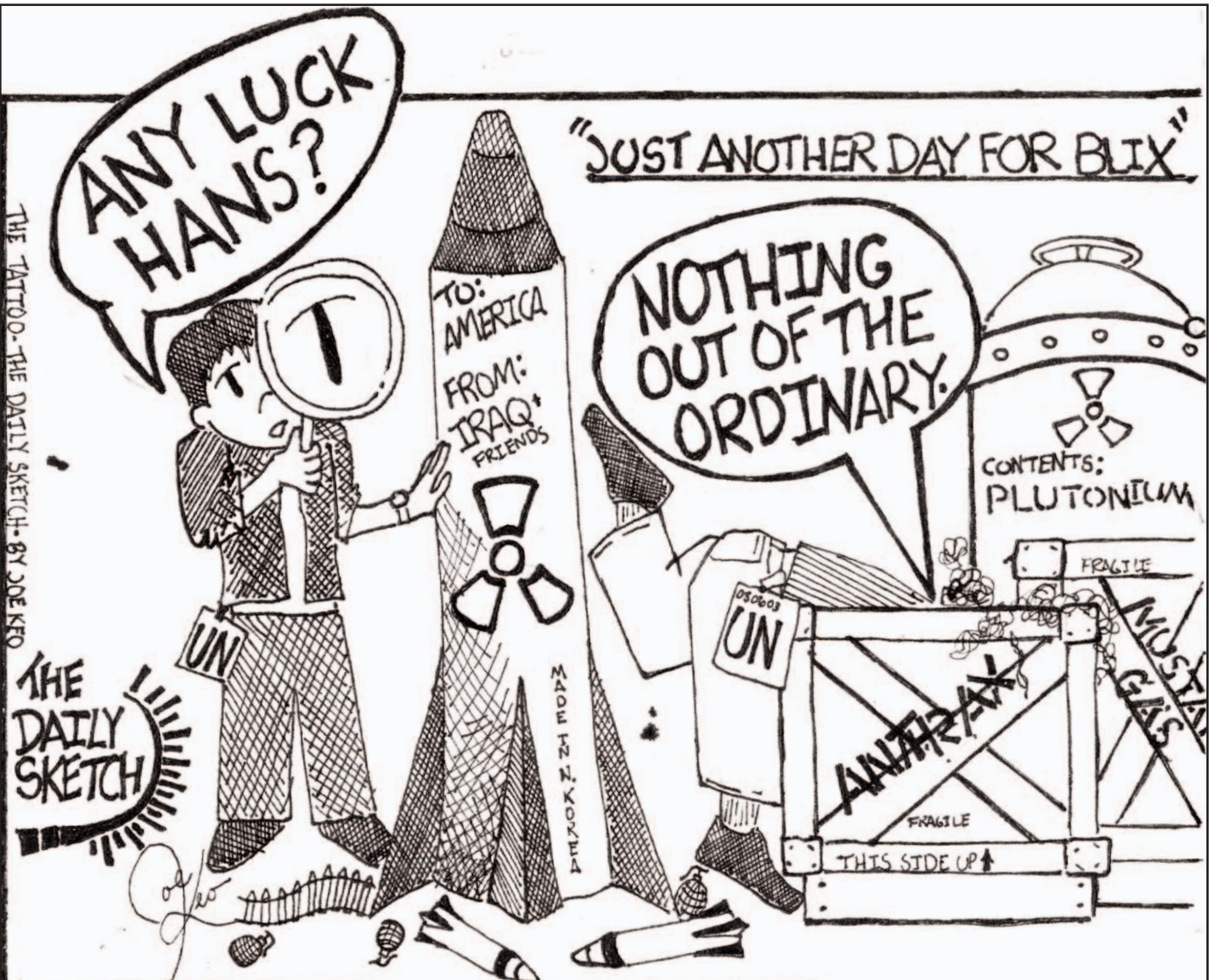
I just hope the war ends as soon as possible.

So many lives have already been taken on both sides that I don't want any more people to suffer or die.

I wish the best for all of our men and women in uniform and for those who have loved ones serving in the current war.

They deserve our respect.

What I say



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