**Editorial:**

The war at home

Everything that people have been speculating about and discussing with extreme fervor for about six months has happened. The United States is at war with Iraq, again. At this point, victory is almost assured if you watch CNN, MSNBC, or Fox News (yes, some people actually do watch Fox News). It is merely a matter of how long it will take before we overcome Baghdad.

It is dangerous to think this way. This is a war, and no one wins a war. We have, for the most part, breezed through Iraq’s outer defenses, but those posts are comprised of their most poorly trained soldiers. The military has no illusions; they know that this war will not be what some would call easy.

The only place more conflicted than Iraq right now may be the home front. Right here at home, people regularly take to the streets screaming that this war is for oil and demanding the impeachment of Bush. Many people are unsure of their feelings.

Many want to be patriotic, but they feel that America entered this war, perhaps, with less than the best intentions. Others are outright opposed to the war and all of America’s military actions. Still others are all for it and want to blast Iraq off the map.

Are any of these points of view right? Can any point of view be right? We are dealing with a matter that has the highest stakes imaginable—human lives. Thoughts of the innocent casualties of this war creep into everyone’s mind. The children and innocents of Iraq cannot possibly escape this war unscarred and that cost is too much for some people to bear, despite what the intentions of the war may be.

Some see echoes of the turmoil that boiled in America during the Vietnam War. But the speed with which the current peace movement surfaced is staggering. It took years, and thousands of U.S. soldiers in body-bags, before people in America began to avidly oppose the war in Vietnam. Now, there were large protests the day after the war began.

What does this say about the climate in America today? Are people less patriotic? It did not seem so after Sept. 11, but that may have simply faded. Or, perhaps, people are not as willing to swallow whatever the government gives them as they were in the 60s. It is no secret that the government has made it a habit of lying to the American people. Some could argue that no one could trust the U.S. government after Nixon’s administration.

Then, there’s the disturbing aspect of the current leader of Iraq. He’s a blood-thirsty madman that has, more than once, been compared to Adolph Hitler. Many feel that no matter what the reasons for this war, if the end result is removing Saddam Hussein from power, then it might all be worth it. This is a valid point, but it’s very one-dimensional, it is a justification or even a rationalization for entering Iraq. People don’t want to oppose their country after Sept. 11. They will latch on to any reason that seems noble enough to support. Initially, some tried to convince us that this war had something to do with abolishing terrorism, but not to many people bought that.

Then, the idea that this war is actually a campaign to liberate the oppressed people of Iraq, a very American goal. Who can argue against a reason like that?

Most people can’t, because it is true that Hussein is a dictator who places little to no value on human life and ruthlessly oppresses his own people as he lives in monstrous palaces while many Iraqis exist in poverty. It doesn’t really matter now why the U.S. entered Iraq. The fact that we began this war cannot be changed, it is part of history now, never to be erased. Arguing about it is pointless.

What we must be concerned about is how Hussein is removed from power and what the U.S. does after the war is won. That is where the difference will be made. That is what will label this war as a success or as the largest blunder in American history since Vietnam.

This weekly editorial expresses the majority opinion of The Rider News editorial board and is written by the Opinion editor.

Letters to the Editor: Please send letters to ridernews@rider.edu. We reserve the right to edit all letters for clarity and/or space.

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**Quote of the Week:**

“War is a series of catastrophes that results in a victory.”

—George Clamenceau

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