

Simple historical analysis reveals fallacy of Iraqi war

The lesson of history is clear, but U.S. is determined to ignore it.

History repeats itself. I woke up Wednesday morning, just like every morning. I turned on my computer as usual. Strangely, I got an instant message from my ex-roommate immediately, though she hadn't IMed

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me in over a month. She told me to turn on the news (either CNN or Fox News). She told me that the United States had taken over Baghdad and liberated the Iraqi people and she just wanted to include me in this moment in history. This time my ordinarily sweet ex-roommate did not have such sweet innocent intentions as "including me" in this moment in history. She informed me of this event because I am a protestor AGAINST the war. She was essentially saying, "Look, you were wrong and we won. Look how the U.S. army has liberated the Iraqis.

Look how much time and effort you have wasted, all in vain!" All I could think of when I turned on the news was the three slogans of George Orwell's 1984 totalitarian party:

WAR IS PEACE
FREEDOM IS SLAVERY
IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH

It seems the Ministry of Truth has a new location - Washington, D.C. Liberation? LIBERATION??? I remember those words used in the not so distant past. Does anyone remember Afghanistan? Do you even see it on the news anymore? What ever happened to those "liberated" women of Afghanistan? As far as CNN and Fox News are concerned, they have fallen off the face of the earth.

They haven't - but maybe their lives would be better if they had a little more coverage. According to White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, "If you take a look at Afghanistan ... under the Loya Jirga and the helping hand the United States and others are providing in the rebuilding of Afghanistan they certainly are more free and democratic than before."

Women of the world, get ready for U.S. "liberation" and prepare to cheer, because burka sales have gone UP since the United States placed

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the Northern Alliance into "power" in Afghanistan. Women are still little better than chattel there and the systematic rape of women continues relentlessly as if "liberation" had never taken place.

According to a study done by University of New Hampshire Professor Marc Herold, U.S. bombs killed 3,666 Afghani civilians. Due to the use of cluster bombs that leave more than 12,400 explosive duds, 127 Afghani civilians, over 69 percent of them children, have died since Nov. 2002, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

As many as 88 percent of people living in urban areas lack access to safe drinking water according to the U.N. environmental program.

What has the U.S. government had to say about this? According to the most recent U.S. budget, \$300 million is being sent to rebuild the area (compared to the \$1.1 billion a day spent on a war in Iraq), but experts

say this is nothing compared to what is needed to make any real impact on the country. The Bush Administration's proposed budget did not allocate a single dime to be sent.

Little of the money that has come actually goes into improving the Afghanis' lives. According to one reporter in the country, "Much of the money seems to have gone toward gleaming new offices and air-conditioned jeeps for the 1,025 U.N. agencies and international aid groups have taken over many of the villas in the Wazir Akbar Khan suburb where Osama Bin Laden's Arab acolytes used to dwell ... for most people the 'U.N. Effect' has been an overload of an at best sporadic electricity supply and a rise in living costs."

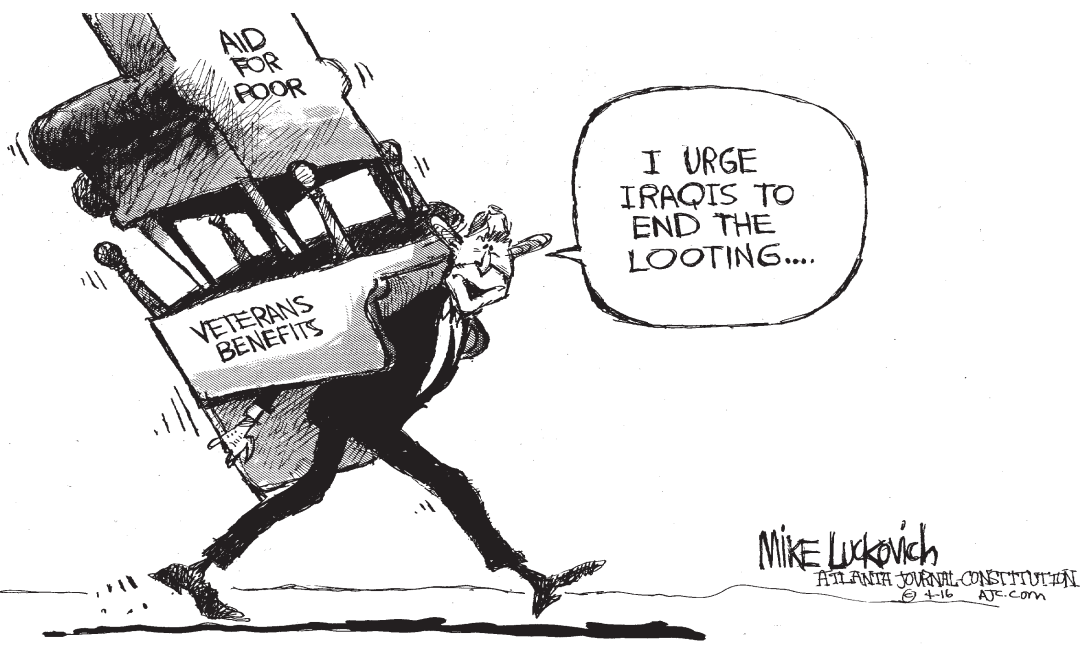
So, why mention Afghanistan? It's the past - and trust me, the U.S. government knows that. The question is, did U.S. bombs liberate Afghanistan? I would say the only notable differences in present-day Afghanistan from pre-Afghani "liberation" are new names, a U.S.-controlled oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea to the Indian Ocean, and 20,000 Afghani people killed due to bombs and the humanitarian crisis they caused. Or, as The Who would put it, "Meet the new boss, the same as the old boss," plus death and destruction. So in response to watching Saddam

Hussein's statue fall in Baghdad, I don't hold the same jubilation. Saddam is evil and I assure you that I would be glad to hear that he is dead. The reason why I am not smiling is because I know what U.S.-implemented regime change looks like. It looks like the CIA backing Pinochet in Chile in 1973, the support of the oppressive Saudi government, the CIA coup that brought the Shah of Iran and the dictator Suharto in Indonesia. It looks like Afghanistan.

War is NOT peace. Freedom is NOT slavery. Ignorance is NOT strength. Did the world learn from history? Yes, 90 percent of the world is against this war. Did the U.S. government care? No. It conveniently forgot. I am glad I am not in Iraq, because when the 20 million Iraqis meet the new boss they will be pissed. I don't want U.S. soldiers to be there either as the resistance increases.

I am proud to be OPPOSED to this war and support the lives of our friends and relatives in the military by demanding that they be brought home! It is time for us to stop repeating history. The lyrics of The Who state, "Then I'll get on my knees and pray ... we don't get fooled again!" Amen to that!

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Moore's message not so simple

Documentary filmmaker asks and answers questions.

Michael Moore is not a math professor - he does not attempt to solve questions that have only one definitive answer, and he certainly cannot look up the answers in the back of a textbook. At best, Michael Moore is a sociologist with a

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objectivity. Some try to argue that a documentary film should show "only what is real." This would be very boring indeed - without edits, voice-overs or even reenactments, documentaries would be unwatchable. You need only imagine watching a sporting event from a single camera-angle, without added crowd and game noise and without an announcer to see the point. Thomas Edison and the Lumiere brothers were able to get away without these things at the beginning of the twentieth century, but they wouldn't be able to even get hired today. Moore uses a scripted opening in *Bowling for Columbine* not to break away from the standards of documentary, but rather to reinforce it - like *The Blair Witch Project*, the point isn't that it's real, but rather that you can believe it to be real. The bank where you can get a free gun doesn't have to exist in America; the idea that it could exist is disturbing enough to get Moore's point across.

Similarly, the animated portion of the film is not to be taken seriously, but rather it is there to show how ridiculous the stereotypes of gun ownership are. Not surprisingly, it is the last point in the movie where Moore points his finger at the extremists and begins to take a closer look at casual gun ownership.

Another common misconception of documentary is that its job is to provide a definitive answer to specific questions - this is a misconception that has been

created because the primary documentary exposure in America comes from PBS and the Discovery Channel. Moore is not trying to say that he knows definitively what the answer to gun violence is, but rather to see if there is a definitive answer to be found. Following the same mold as Socrates, Moore asks questions in order to refute them and get closer to the truth (though he ultimately has less success than does Socrates).

Ultimately, Moore is trying to reach a conclusion from a thinking standpoint, but realizes that the human condition requires feeling as well as thinking to get to a utilitarian solution.

At the end of Moore's film we are left with as many questions as we had at the beginning of the picture. We do know three things, however, gun violence is not linked to gun ownership, so we know that we don't have to ban guns to solve the problem. Gun violence is not linked to culture; so we can't say that we're just being brought up to be a violent society. Gun violence is not linked to the entertainment industry, so we don't have to ban violent movies and video games and censor vulgar music and television.

Knowing these things, we know that we are no longer where we started from, but rather we have dispelled three strong myths and their possible solutions. We now rest closer to discovering the real solution to the problem.

Moore has accomplished his goal to look at the problem of gun violence and the possible solutions, and has brought us closer to the real source and its real solution, but that doesn't mean that Moore's work is not without its faults, which I will look at next week.

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camera, and at worst he is a filmmaker with an eye for social problems.

I make no pretensions that I know the inner workings of Michael Moore's mind and can accurately represent him as a person. I am, however, a liberal filmmaker/film student who feels the urge to defend Michael Moore's work for what it does right and criticize his work for what it does wrong.

Bowling for Columbine is firstly a documentary; this is evident but not always apparent. Documentary films are not, as a genre, forced to be objective: no film can be, just as no human can be. Eyes and ears reside in fixed locations on the human head, and while there is more freedom with the placement of a camera and a microphone, they are still limited by where they are placed. The placement of these tools on a set or simply on the shoulder of a cameraman creates instant subjectivity. Documentaries cannot be objective: documentaries are simply what are called "non-fiction film." Truthfully, propaganda films, corporate advertisements and reality television all fall into the realm of documentary, no matter their entertainment value or lack of

Bleary eyes look backward

A retrospective look at 2002 and 2003 from the *Old Gold and Black's* "best loved" writer.

As the sun is setting on my career at Wake Forest and my reign of terror at *Old Gold and Black* is coming to an end. It has been a wonderful year full of paternity tests, penicillin and foggy memories, and I'd like to take a trip down memory lane with you to revisit some of my favorite

They went all out with getting some guy to pretend he was from AA and then crying when I showed up already drunk. From what I remember, it was a sweet party.

a divine portrait of Jesus. The Gospel Choir said it was sacrilegious, but I countered by saying it was "sactacular" - I didn't put enough thought into that comeback. But perhaps my favorite part of the evening was when I went up to Chaplain Christman and he talked to me for 45 minutes about how much I've changed since I was a little boy growing up in Nazareth. Then I told him to stay out of the sacramental wine and get a tan.

November was a month of scandals for me. First, Alpha Sig threatened a libel lawsuit over my column that said they put roofies in their drinks. However, after I told them that a libelous statement would mean it was untrue, they dropped their case. And then there was the whole ordeal with Senior Fifth and me vomiting off the balcony. Apparently that is a sign of "alcohol abuse." I thought the only way one could abuse alcohol was to not drink it. December was a good month. Jesus was born so I got a Playstation 2. I don't remember much of the break because I was pretty hopped up on nutmeg. My parents had me tested for autism. I think I passed.

The second semester started out with a blast ... I think. If anyone saw me on Pledge Night, feel free to fill me in on what happened. My only memories of the night involve a donkey and Uncle Jesse from *Dukes of Hazzard*. At least my column on Pledge Night was accurate.

February and March were pretty crappy. Mother Nature was on the rag, I was on the wagon ... or off the wagon ... whichever one means not drunk, and our basketball team choked worse than Mama Cass. Enough said.

That brings us to April. The weather has gotten warmer, the skirts have gotten shorter and the seniors have gotten lazier. In fact, I've gotten so lazy I can't even finish this column. It's cutting into my drinking time. That's why I didn't have a column last week; I got drunk and tried to write one, but it just ended up being stream of consciousness, kind of like Walt Whitman on Percocet. So I just scrapped it and took a piss in the *OGB's* business office. And there you have it, straight from the Horse's mouth.

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moments and to clear up any pending law suits. August seems like it was ages ago, but it was the month that started it all. It was the month that spawned my first column, my first senior fifth and the first theme party to honor me. My friends decided the theme should be "intervention." They went all out with getting some guy to pretend he was from AA and then crying when I showed up already drunk. From what I remember, it was a sweet party. August was also the first time I received hate mail due to my column. A Chi Omega had sent a scathing letter that said she was "disgusted and appalled at what (she) had read." I was shocked. A Chi O that can read?

Things started to heat up in September when campus sweetheart and general happy person Jenny Billings hit the scene. Although office romances are often frowned upon, can anyone blame me for trying to get with her? Unfortunately, my advances only produced a reason to get a tetanus shot and an exorcism. And as if that wasn't enough drama, a love-hate relationship grew between Kevin Cox and myself after I wrote that he had "an affinity for gerbils."

He actually called me up to complain, but the conversation didn't go too well because I thought it was just another voicemail message from him and I kept hitting buttons to delete it. I could have sworn he was just a robot anyway. The highlight of October was definitely Halloween, where my long hair and beard transformed from a sign of poor hygiene into

