

THERE'S TIME FOR DISSENT WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS OUT

April 29, 2003

In my February 18, 2003 column I made some observations on our country's war with Iraq. I did not endorse or condemn the action. I wrote: "Most legislators have a definite opinion on what our policy should be regarding our actions. They must surely be privy to a lot more facts than I have been able to learn in order to come up with a definite answer. I followed with some conclusions that might possibly legitimize the actions our government took. My final analysis was that we had no choice other than trusting our government. In a letter published in the April 1, 2003 issue of the *Express*, Denis Clifford took issue with my assertion.

He stated that my argument was wrong and we should not trust our government because we were wrong to have done so in the Vietnam War. He would rather give others the benefit of the doubt than our own government.

I bet to differ for the simple reason that if I err it's going to be on the side of our country, not any other. I believe from the facts that have come to light because of our action our government has been vindicated.

Further, Mr. Clifford opines that I misrepresented the facts in making my case. I believe that the facts that have come to light subsequent to our actions prove I did not. He obviously misrepresented the facts when he alleged "U.S. public opinion, world opinion, and most foreign governments strongly oppose a unilateral U.S. attack" Every public opinion poll I have seen disputes his assertion. Liberal media outlets did not form my opinion in this matter.

Perhaps no other more significant fact was confirmed by the war than the duplicity of left-leaning media outlets in their reporting of same. After watching events as they unfolded on Fox News live television and honest reporting on their news network it was hard to comprehend how major newspapers could come up with the headlines they displayed. Baghdad Bob in his daily assessment of the conflict only outdid them.

The war also furnished undeniable proof of the blatant partisanship of many leading Democrat leaders. Their actions and statements placed party politics above national security. There is no question in my mind but what they have caused many moderates in the party to rethink their allegiance.

The news briefings at the Pentagon and Cen Com headquarters were most enlightening and at times tedious with the banality of the questions tendered by the reporters. Speculation and hypothetical scenarios provided most of the gist of the questioning. It was obvious that they were intended to embarrass the government and bolster left wing contentions that we were all wrong in our actions.

I did find one humorous moment in the whole somber procedure of the war. It came at the expense of Democratic hopeful, Senator Kerry. Like many of the opposition he tried his best to do a balancing act between being a patriotic government official and playing to the sympathies of the extreme left of the party. I saw a cartoon in which he is asked if he still listened to the Dixie Chicks after their anti-Bush remarks abroad. His answer was that he still listened but did not tap his toe.

I find now that the major part of the conflict has been resolved I am in accord with our actions. I realize there were many facts about Saddam and his regime that I was not aware of before. However, I have serious reservations about the success of ever in the

near future establishing a democratic style government in Iraq. No one party or nation is going to overcome thousands of years of imbedded culture overnight. I do not believe, as many on the left do, that France, Russia, China, and Germany should form our foreign policy. It is not wrong to try to help oppressed people enjoy the same freedoms we do

I firmly believe in the right of dissent, but not when it impinges on the safety and welfare of members of our military guarding those freedoms. There will be ample time to express dissenting opinions after the smoke of battle has cleared and our young people are no longer in danger. It was clear the actions of many on the left were tantamount to treason in their opposition to the war.

"Me thinks they doth protest too much," and their actions are meant to obscure blind ideology that will never be confused by facts.