Understand Our History

Letter to the Editors:

It seems that in most discussions of the war in Iraq, there is a lack of a good historical understanding of the United States' relationship with that country over the last century.

If you want a good introduction to such a history, read "Iraq and the International Oil System: Why America Went to War in the Gulf" by Stephen Pelletiere. The author was the chief of the Iraq Desk at the Central Intelligence Agency during the 80s, and after that, a professor at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, PA. He points out that America's (and Europe's) interest in the Middle East has one primary motivator — oil.

When the democratically-elected government of Iran decided that Iran's oil wealth should benefit its citizens instead of Anglo-American oil companies in the 50s, the U.S. decided that the Iranian president had to go, therefore a coup was fomented and backed by the CIA with leadership from Kermit Roosevelt, the grandson of Theodore Roosevelt. The Shah was returned to power and needed weapons to crush dissent within Iran's borders. For his weapons shopping, he turned to the U.S. who was willing to sell.

Note here that the U.S. supported a brutal dictator who killed his own people. (Somoza of Nicaragua is another example.)

But other factors are in play also - communism and the Cold War for example. The Ba'athist party was used by the U.S. to provide a hedge against communism in the region. The U.S. was quite happy with Saddam Hussein when he was eliminating communists (Kurdish and otherwise) in the 70s and 80s.

Much more could be said, but readers who care about their understanding of the United States' relationship with that country might want to take it on themselves to get good information about that world.

Fox News Channel, CNN and conservative talk radio might be entertaining, but the viewer or listener will get little real debate from those outlets.

A friend of mine who has a friend in the military stationed in Turkey told my friend that "you shouldn't believe what you read in the news" about Iraq. It's interesting that some of the most ardent critics of the war in Iraq are in the military or were in the military.

Why do we like to believe the lies that are being told (by politicians from both parties)?

Believing lies is just another way to enslave yourself. "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

— LeVon Smoker

The Inside Scoop

Thursday, October 23
• The Church Meets the Muslim Community - opening service, Martin Chapel, 7 p.m.
• Movie: Seabiscuit, SC 106, 9 p.m.

Friday, October 24
• The Church Meets the Muslim Community - all day at the Seminary
• Chapel: Gospel Choir, Lehman, 10 a.m.
• Fall Fest Barn Dance, 8 p.m.

Saturday, October 25
• The Church Meets the Muslim Community - all day at the Seminary
• Chapel: Godspell, Lehman, 7:30 p.m.
• "Valaam" male voice ensemble, Lehman, 7 p.m.
• Movie: Seabiscuit, SC 106, 12 a.m.

Sunday, October 26
• The Church Meets the Muslim Community - ending service, Martin Chapel, 10 a.m.

Monday, October 27
• Chapel: Carolyn Cornelison, Lehman, 10 a.m.
• Coffeehouse conversation, Common Grounds, 10:30 a.m.
• Carolyn Cornelison, Lehman, 8 p.m.

Tuesday, October 28
• Last day to drop fall semester classes.
• Bonhoeffer film and discussion, SC 106, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, October 29
• Chapel: more than just a crummy sermon (communion), Lehman, 10 a.m.
• Movie and discussion: 28 Days, SC 106, 8:30 p.m.