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AJES serves to bridge the gaps among academic disciplines and among researchers and practitioners devoted to understanding and promoting the development of sustainable communities, both human and wild.

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Give the Warmongers Their Due

By **GARY CHILSON**
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The war against Iraq might be over by the time this essay is published, if we're very lucky. Like many, though, I can think of little else. While I'm only a rube in the wilderness, mostly concerned with just getting along, I nevertheless know that we can't live in harmony with the Other if we can't get along among ourselves. However flawed, the UN is still the world's best hope for international cooperation. So I really regret we didn't wait for the UN to ask us to be the world's executioner.

I have no doubt we will win the war eventually, if we haven't already, even without international cooperation. We have the most powerful military machine in the world and we will spend whatever it takes in blood and money. And of course I support our troops. They are doing what they've been told even if our purpose is not really the enforcement of United Nations resolutions, the reduction of a terrorist threat, or even bringing liberty to an oppressed people. That's merely the pabulum we've been fed.

The justifications are so contrived and rife with holes I was dismayed by how many Americans ate it up. The Bush Administration could only get away with it because of the visceral fear so many feel about another terrorist attack. That fear can be seen reflected in the eyes of our Homeland Security agents as they patrol our lives with automatic weapons and super surveillance devices. The threat of social chaos from terrorism, banditry or competing warlords leads many to sacrifice liberty for safety. Why else would the Iraqis and so many others around the world suffer dictatorships to exist?

When events pile upon events and too many complex factors are involved for me to understand the truth of a given matter, I fall back on basic American principles to guide my thinking. Two quotes come to mind that should be remembered in this particular crisis at home and abroad. The first states: "Those who would sacrifice their liberty for a little safety deserve neither liberty nor their

safety." The other, that: "America should be the lamp of liberty to all but the defender of none but her own."

So it's all just a ruse. The justifications for our pre-emptive and unilateral war act like blinders to keep us from seeing the larger vision. I think the Bush Administration sees this moment as a monumental turning point in history — one of those special moments when a host of factors serendipitously combines to present an opportunity of unparalleled proportions. The effects of our War on Terrorism, which has already given us the war in Iraq and Afghanistan and Homeland Security, will be far-reaching and long lasting, comparable to or even greater than the reorganization of the world following World War II.

Capitalizing on our fear of terrorism following the tragedy of 9/11 and our eager willingness to abandon our heritage and traditions in its wake, Bush's Perpetual War on Terrorism will establish America as the undisputed Ruler of the World. It will also create a more stable and orderly police state here at home. We will never end terrorism by war of course, but for now, in this one masterful stroke against Iraq, we will split the Muslim world in half, crack the unity of the Arab League, demoralize the foes of Israel, capture the largest remaining reserves of oil, and pinch Iran between our forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. Henceforth, all will fear America's willingness to swiftly, unilaterally, and without direct provocation, strike at any nation, group or individual with Un-American interests.

Perhaps to some, the benefits outweigh the cost in American liberty, honor, lives and dollars — all this from a President we didn't even elect.

Please direct your comments, suggestions or ideas for material for *AJES* to Gary Chilson, Editor, Adirondack Journal of Environmental Studies, Paul Smith's College, Paul Smiths NY 12970, chilsog@paulsmiths.edu.