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Haverford students and faculty question the war in Iraq

A petition with 300 signatures, one student arrested, numerous others protest with U Penn undergrads



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Despite the fact that a plenary resolution criticizing a U.S. invasion of Iraq failed, the campus is hopping with anti-war activity.

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The most visible is the tri-co petition against the war. The petition, organized by students and faculty including Sarah Morris, HC '05, and physics professor Walter Smith, amassed over 300 signatures in just two days, including the signature of Haverford President Tom Tritton. It was faxed to 30 members of Congress (The 23 Pennsylvania Representatives and Senators, the majority and minority leaders of the House and Senate, the Speaker of the House, Ted Kennedy, and Robert Byrd).

The petition gained national recognition when James O'Neill of the Philadelphia Inquirer interviewed Morris and Smith for his article summarizing Philadelphia area student protests, "Campus activists mobilized on Iraq," which was picked up by Knight-Ridder Newspapers and has appeared in newspapers are far away as Minnesota.

The petition has only been the beginning. On Oct. 4, Dana Ford, HC '05, participated in a 16 person sit-in at the office of Senator Santorum (R-PA). When she and the fifteen other protestors refused to leave when the office closed at 5 p.m., they were arrested as a crowd outside chanted in their support. She was charged with defiant trespass, plead guilty, and was sentenced to 24 hours of community service.

On Tuesday, Oct. 22, the internationally renowned peace movement Women in Black held a silent vigil in front of Founders Hall for "No more war and no more victims." According to the Women in Black webpage, the Women in Black "refuse to add to the cacophony of empty statements that are spoken with the best intentions yet may be erased or go unheard under a passing ambulance or the wound of a bomb exploding nearby," and they stand in silent vigil "to protest war, rape as a tool of war, ethnic cleansing, and human rights abuses all over the world."

On Friday, Oct. 25, 10 to 15 bi-co students participated in a protest at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania where Vice-President Dick Cheney was speaking at the dedication of a new building. The Penn students were protesting Dick Cheney's presence at their school, and the bi-college students decided to join them to support their anti-war efforts.

On Saturday, Oct. 26, two vans of Haverford students left for Washington D.C. to participate in a 100,000 person march against war in Iraq, Washington police, and the organizers of the protest suggested that it had been the largest protest in D.C. since the Vietnam War. The D.C. protest was mirrored in San Francisco and in cities around the world.

On Nov. 9 and 10 Haverford will be holding a "teach-in" against the war. Luminaries such as James Paul, the executive director of the Global Policy Forum, and Peter Lems, program associate for Iraq at the American Friends Service Committee will be presenting their views on the potential war. Barbara Lee of California, the congresswomen who proposed the "Lee Alternative to War Amendment," and who firmly opposed US preemptive strikes in Iraq, will be speaking on the tenth.

Most students in the bi-co should be familiar with the arguments against the war; they have been discussed

heavily on both campuses. Morris summed up a few of them saying, "Attacking Iraq preemptively sets a very dangerous precedent internationally – it violates international law; it makes it OK for any country to do the same. The U.S. thinks we can do it because we have some sort of privilege that other countries don't have – that's pretty arrogant." She continued by stating that "[the Bush Administration] has to be more honest about its motives." She concluded by drawing an analogy:

"It seems to me like it's as if you are walking down the street and somebody walks by you, and they look at you suspiciously, so you punch them in the face. That's not OK, that's not how society is supposed to function."

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