

# Former U.N. weapons inspector decries potential war with Iraq

BY JAY M. GROSSMAN  
STAFF WRITER

Scott Ritter, a former United Nations weapons inspector, spoke out against a war with Iraq before a group of Oakland University students on Monday.

Ritter warned students that a war between the

opt for war instead.

Several factors will go into this decision, Ritter said.

One is the weather:

The best window of opportunity to attack Iraq is between December and March.

The other factor is whether President Bush believes a war will reap political benefits at the polls in 2004.

"Are Americans going to die to preserve the political future of George Bush? These are the key questions," he said. "Right now, as far as I'm concerned, we might as well stop calling him the President and start calling him King George, because that's what he is."

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Former U.N. arms inspector Scott Ritter told an Oakland University audience that war with Iraq appears imminent.

United States and Iraq appears imminent.

"Is Iraq a threat today? I don't know," said Ritter, an ex-marine who fought against Iraq in the 1991 Desert Storm conflict.

"But I don't think Iraq is a threat to America that's worthy of war."

Following Desert Storm, Ritter joined the U.N. weapons inspection team, taking part in more than 30 inspection missions. During those inspections, Ritter said he confirmed U.S. suspicions that Iraq was preparing to engage in biological and chemical warfare.

In several instances, he said, his team was forced to conduct inspections with Iraqi soldiers pointing guns to their heads.

He resigned from his post in 1998 and wrote a book about his experience, *Endgame*, that details American foreign policy in the Persian Gulf.

Now on the lecture circuit, Ritter told the students that war is hell and a tool the country should only employ as a last resort.

"War's about death and destruction. It's all about killing — plain and simple," he said. "It's not about hugies blaring or banners flying. It's about being scared. War's about death."

Looking around, he pointed out the average age in the military is 20 — the same age as most of the students inside the packed auditorium at the Meadow Brook Theatre.

Lindsay Stover, 21, a political science student from Brighton, opposes a military invasion into Iraq.

"I just don't know why in this age we've totally ignored diplomacy," she said. "I don't think reciprocating violence with violence is the right thing to do. I just don't see how that would be a solution."

Ritter predicted a war could start by this weekend, when Iraq is supposed to meet a Dec. 8 deadline and provide a complete declaration relating to its weapons of mass destruction.

Iraqi officials have said they would meet the deadline by Dec. 7 — one day early.

He believes the U.S. will reject the declaration and

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