THE SOCIETY DEBATE

Before the first volleys of this contentious debate were fired, Mr. Benjamin Stern '09 prefaced by imploring the assembled members to approach the resolution with maturity, and to transcend petty partisan scuffling to reach the roots of the issues concerning the War in Iraq. With this preface complete, the orators spoke and debate began.

For the majority of the first half of the session, discussion focused primarily on the good and the bad of U.S. strategic decisions in Iraq and other conflict zones. Eventually, President Mr. Ross Jacobs '10 attempted with some success to steer discourse toward the “deep moral question” of whether the War was fundamentally desirable or not. Citing David Brooks's concept of a “Policy of National Greatness,” he asked, “What does America do after liberty?” and “Is the Iraq War a struggle necessary to uplift Americans?”

From here, debate turned toward the concept of “American Exceptionalism” with some extolling America's triumphant ability to spread liberal democracy in undemocratic parts of the world and others questioning whether such a strategy would indeed prove desirable. In the end, discussion expanded to address the broad theoretical topic of the benefits and failures of western “liberalism” before coming to a late close with those opposed to the resolution, “The War in Iraq is a Failure,” defeating it by a slim margin: 8–7. As usual, following formal debate, discourse continued late into the evening.