

## TechNews

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# Withdrawal of troops reflects political changes

**By Ryan Hynes**  
OPINION EDITOR

This week, President Obama announced a full military withdrawal from Iraq, to be completed by the end of 2011. The news of this has been met with everything from praise to condemnation, and is being labeled by many as a political move.

Indeed, this has the look of a political gambit. It comes at a time when the Republican Party is finally starting to hone in on a few promising candidates, all of whom will prove a substantial challenge to President Obama. In the midst of a strengthening opposition and a

still-sluggish economy, this could very well be intended as a way to boost President Obama's approval rating and rankings in the polls.

Whether you question the President's political aspirations or not, the fact remains that a war that has lasted the better part of nine years is coming to a close. This war holds special significance for each of us, and has touched us all in a different way. Whether it was a personal connection, a friend or relative who served, or the daily updates on the news, this war has been a large part of our lives.

The Iraq war has certainly had its fair share of controversy; It has evolved from a search for weapons of mass destruction, to a

mission to remove a dictator, to a war to liberate a people and install a democratic republic in a place where there is no such concept. We can second guess intentions all we like, but after nearly nine years of fighting, what do we have to show for it?

What does the Iraq war mean to you? How has it influenced you, shaped you, made you question your beliefs? What do you think we should take away from this? Because although the war may be drawing to a close, its impact is something that each of us will carry for a lifetime.

Please send your thoughts and reflections to [opinion@technewsiit.com](mailto:opinion@technewsiit.com)

# Diwali promotes community involvement

**By Utsav Gandhi**  
CAMPUS EDITOR

The children waited for the school bus to depart, holding the colorful diyas they had prepared in art class that day, smiling as joyfully at one another as only eight year olds can.

It was the last day of school before their week-long Diwali holiday, and so nothing stopped them from an exciting time of firecrackers, sweets, new clothes, gifts, rangoli (colorful designs with colored powder) or catching up with cousins at family dinners.

It didn't matter if they were financially well off or not, whether they lived in a high rise or a shanty, whether they roamed about in chauffeur driven cars or public transport, and most importantly, whether they were Hindu,

Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Parsi, Jain – anything.

Diwali is one of those few occasions in the year, apart from India-Pakistan cricket matches or Shah Rukh Khan Bollywood movie releases, when the entire country, the length and breadth from the valleys of Kashmir to the rice fields of Kerala, from the megacities of Kolkata and Chennai to the rural innards of the Great Indian Desert, comes together to celebrate as one, forgetting all the apparent differences we ourselves create.

The festival starts with Dhanteras on which most Indian business communities begin their financial year.

Amavasya, the third day of Deepawali, marks the worship of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth in her most benevolent mood, fulfilling the wishes of her devotees.

The fifth day is referred to as Bhai Dooj, and on this day sisters invite their brothers to their homes.

Diwali may hold special significance for the Hindus and smaller factions such as the Jains, but really the true beauty of the festival lies in the fact that no matter where you go, at every street corner you'll see children playing with the same fireworks, women designing the same door decorations, shops selling the same popular sweets, and the same pleasantries being exchanged for the new year among neighbors, acquaintances and business partners, who are again, of various backgrounds.

It's the most joyous and most auspicious occasion of the year for a seventh of the world's population - and definitely, my favorite "utsav" (Hindi for 'festival') out of all.



Photo courtesy of Karthik Kumar

## TechNews Corrections

In our previous issue, the campus article "Intramural basketball program scores slot on campus" had a title that was both factually incorrect and misleading. The arrival of basketball on campus as a club sport was the point of the article, and not as an intramural. Though TechNews edits headlines submitted by writers to better conform with AP style guidelines, in this case the result was an incorrect assertion. We apologize to the author of the piece and to our readers.