

No need to be ugly

Things are getting needlessly ugly on the Seventh Congressional District race.

This week, Republican candidate George Allen released an ad criticizing his Democratic opponent Kay Slaughter over her stand on the Persian Gulf War.

While a general discussion of Slaughter's stand on foreign affairs may be appropriate, Allen's ads cross the line of good taste and decorum by showing a photo of Slaughter superimposed next to a pro-Iraqi banner. A companion written statement quotes Saddam Hussein as thanking American antiwar protestors.

Our Opinion

Despite Allen's statements to the contrary, this is clearly an attack on the patriotism and character of Kay Slaughter. This is not a political attack, it is a personal attack.

George Allen is a fine and honorable man. He is running as a Republican in a very Republican and conservative district. Most experts predicted that he would win this district without undue difficulty.

The fact is, George Allen does not need to resort to the sort of demagogic attack that these ads represent.

Of course, before these ads appeared, both Allen and Slaughter had engaged in negative advertising in this campaign, so Slaughter can not claim to be entirely an innocent victim. Those previous negative ads, however, at least focused in some respect on legitimate political issues.

This state and this nation have enough serious problems to discuss. The candidates should be able to engage in legitimate political debate, rather than childish mud-slinging.

The economy of the United States is stagnant. States, counties and cities are struggling to provide services while dealing with reduced tax revenue. Times are hard at all levels. These are the issues that must be discussed.

It seems likely that Allen will have his seat in Congress. It is likely that he will serve with honor and distinction. Hopefully, he will realize that he doesn't need to resort to such low tactics in the future.