

WAR IN IRAQ VIEWS FROM CAMPUS

On April 15, IUJ faculty with an array of views on the Iraq War and the Bush administration gathered together for a panel discussion. The MLIC 3F Hall filled with faculty, staff and students all with views of their own, to listen to each panelists' 10 minute remarks and engage them in Q&A. Here are comment highlight of each panelist, presented in order of appearance.



DR. L. BUSZYNSKI:

"It all boils down to a few things: You can leave the brutal dictators in the Middle East alone, but introduce Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and the 9.11 WTC attack and the US feels it has to act. So we have witnessed a change of strategy in the Bush Administration that allows preemptive strikes.

The US is excessively confident with its military might, and that is a dangerous thing. The action the US took at the outset of the war and many decisions thereafter, shows it had insider information. Saddam Hussein could not trust his own military, this was one reason why the regime collapsed so quickly. What does the future hold? A sea of instability. A US dominated government will not last in the Middle East so the US should get out quickly. There has to be a UN transitional authority along the lines of the Cambodian operation over 1991-93.

"Oil is not the main issue here despite what some people think. The US does not want to, nor can it occupy the oil fields permanently and it will have to turn them over to an Iraqi government eventually."



DR. P. K. SHEE:

Visiting Faculty Member

"There are two thesis in this war: 1) A scramble for oil, and control of the oil fields and 2) the capturing of a decisively strategic geopolitical base.

"All the reasons given by the Bush Administration for this war do not stand up. There is insufficient evidence about the possession of WMD, as are the links to Al Qaida.

The motivation to turn Iraq into a democracy is probably impossible, and they most likely know that. The reasons given by the Bush administration are artificial. That leads us to know it is about Oil. Bush has less oil reserves than he wants. By controlling Iraq he controls 50% of the world supply. . . . The Iraq war is an extension of the US Global Ambition. . . . The US domestic political and economic links with corporate contracts and oil control are undeniable."



DR. T. SHINODA:

"The US-Japan Alliance is stronger than ever. Prime Minister Koizumi stated his support early and publicly to confirm this. His mistake was not giving the Japanese public enough information about the alliance. This caused confusion in Japan and no public consensus was reached because there was no clear understanding about the alliance. For example, are regional limitations for an alliance acceptable? This would imply that Japan need not support the US away from home. But would the Japanese people consider the US a good ally if they knowingly withheld protection for a Japanese ship they knew would be attacked in the Gulf or failed to inform Tokyo if they uncover plans for an attack on a Japanese embassy abroad? Clearly not.

"The US felt that the war was inevitable. The only remaining question was timing, and for the US, earlier was better. After 11-12 years of UN resolution violations, including resolution 1441, their ongoing human rights violations, etc. It was not possible to maintain the military pressure that allowed inspections without knowing when it would end.

"I am not saying that a pre-emptive strike was the right thing to do. I don't know. But if we say there are other alternatives to preemption, what are they?"

Editors' Note: For a full essay by Dr. Shinoda on this topic, as presented to The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR) please see <http://lists.nbr.org/japanforum/showMessage.asp?ID=8277>



DR. S. WATANABE:

"I would like to share my personal views as an educated average Japanese who watched the play-by-play of this war until I forced myself to unplug my TV so I could get back to my studies and more sensible judgment on the meaning of the war. . . .

The issue was constantly linked to North Korea on the Japanese television coverage. 'Japan must support the US in order to receive help concerning North Korea.' At the same time, the press focused heavily on the injuries and deaths of citizens caused by the US, calling them immoral or irrational. But this is not new to the history of war . . . and how can we call 'rational' the deaths of some 600,000 children under the age of 6 caused by the UN Sanctions on Iraq.

"Thinking about all this, I drew the conclusion that Japan has lost its independence in foreign policy decisions and the right to act independently but must follow the US foreign policy. The only way to get some independence back is to re-establish a solid foundation with our neighbors by resolving all unanswered and unaddressed issues left over from the first half of the 20th Century."

DR. HASAN: VISITING PANELIST

"Afghanistan and the Iraq war were already being planned before 9.11. 9.11 was not the cause of what we are witnessing, but perhaps the catalyst. The expedience of heading into war makes the reasons stated for the war questionable: If we waited 12 years, why not a few more months? . . .

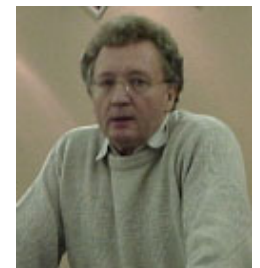
This war is more about Palestine than anything. . . . and it is a clear example of a double standard. Some nations may have WMD, others may not. Some can have human rights violations, others cannot. Double standards will never lead to an end of conflict and a start of a new civilization. How can a city left brutalized and bleeding be the start of a something new and fresh? . . . The doctrine of preemption is a threat to the world and if it applies to the US, it can apply to any strong nation. In this new world order, negotiation and tolerance are now given very little space, but yield to the pressure of force.

Let us remember the quote by the WWII General "We know more about war than we do about peace, more about killing than we do about living." —WWII General Omar Bradley.

DR. J. WELFIELD:

"The United States is a great imperial power. . . . It invaded Iraq because of the country's geostrategic location and its immense oil reserves, and to demonstrate to its antagonists and to its allies alike that an American centered unipolar world order can be established, is being established, and will be imposed by force if necessary . . .

The history of great empires has been only too frequently the history of unintended consequences. Among the immediate unforeseen consequences of the American assault on Iraq have been a



partial eclipse of the Westphalian system, the collapse of the principles established at the Tokyo and Nuremberg tribunals, the discrediting of the U.N., heightened cooperation among the continental powers: France, Germany, Russia, and China, greater interest in the Bush Doctrine of preemptive strike and a growing conviction on the part of many governments and peoples across large areas of the world that the possession of nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them are the only means of guaranteeing national sovereignty and territorial integrity. . . . Islamic fundamentalist movements, too, are likely to gather strength in the years to come. Secular regimes in the Moslem World will be increasingly threatened. Organizations such as Al Qaeda will proliferate.”

AUDIENCE QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

DR. Y. XING:

Dr. Shinoda asked if the UN Security Council truly represents the world as it is today. I would ask, does the USA and UK represent it better? Who give the US the right at pre-emptive strikes? This is not the only way to handle these issues. This war gave a bad example that if we don't have justice and we don't have truth, we turn to power.

NIKOLAI CHMELEV (IR CLASS OF 2003):

Dr. Buszynski points to the existence of WMD, but none have been found. What can we make of that?

ABDULBAQI IBISHOMI (E-BIZ CLASS OF 2003):

1) Why is it that Dictatorship and WMD are being linked together? It is the natural right of every state to defend itself against an opponent. 2) If I became the president of Nigeria, I would take Nigeria out of the UN, because I believe that the idea of the UN has been compromised. But saying that, does the US truly believe they know best and the UN does not? I don't think 2/3rds of the people who were going along with the UN can be wrong.

ANAND PHANSE (IM CLASS OF 2004):

What are the consequences of this war? Who paid for the last war, and who is paying for this one?

ISMAIL HOSSAIN (IR CLASS OF 2003):

Why did the US choose now? Is it related to the conspiracy theory? Imperialism? An imaginary enemy for the US can lead to the sales of more weapons to bolster the US economy – is this at play?



DR. N. COORAY

(IUJ faculty, alumni and Panel Host): There are other countries with severe human rights violations. Iraq is accused of violating the Geneva Convention for showing the faces of POW in one news clip and blamed. The next story is about US prisoners from Afghanistan being shown on TV as well. The US hit museums and radio/TV stations which is clearly against the Geneva Convention.

**AFTER THE WAR:
WHAT HAPPENED IN IRAQ?**

MOTOHIRO ONO (IR89)

On June 17, Motohiro Ono (IR89) was the guest speaker at the Annual Open Seminar, a forum in Japanese for the Niigata Community organized and presented by Tomohito Shinoda (IR86) for the IUJ Research Institute. Ono-san is a Researcher at the Middle East Institute of Japan. His career has taken him to numerous postings in Middle Eastern countries, including Embassy advisory roles in Iraq, Syria, United Emeritas, etc. Recently, he has appeared on numerous news shows and Iraq war specials as a professional commentator. Below are his comments on the current situation in post-war Iraq.



Saddam's regime is over, and it probably will not be back. To understand what is in Bagdad now, we must remember what was there. Saddam represented a sense of identify for a very diverse, tribal oriented Iraqi nation that, as a country, is an artificial grouping of many religious and ethnicities, formed in 1930.

Under Saddam's 30+ year rule (in a history of 45 years of independence), Iraq has been at war for most of this time. But war brought nationalism and unity. Totalitarian was his regime with himself at the center, surrounded by his family and then loyal military might. Saddam was everywhere. From the way the prison's were set up in the Panopticon style (prisoners in lighted cells 24 hours a day with guards watching from darkned central points - prisoners were forced to assume they were always being watched), to the way social communications and reporting took place (a school child admitting to his school teacher that his father did not watch a Saddam TV speech, found his father gone the next day), Saddam knew everything about every one and "removed" those not loyal.

All this is gone. But nothing is filling the void.

The US removed the structure saying it was "Liberating and Freeing" Iraq. Liberation from a dictator has so far meant chaos, a breakdown of basic services and instability in the cities. In the country, tribal rule began to show its head but the US disallowed that development from providing order. The proposed IIA has been post-poned 3 times with different messages and unclear guidance each time. The Iraqis have no trust or confidence for what will come.

Freedom from a totalitarian regime has occurred, but replaced by a system of no rules. And that is not Freedom. Freedom still must be created. But how remains to be seen.

The US has lost credibility with every move it has made. And now it seems it will be forced to remain an occupying force longer than anyone predicted. Without a clear and consistent steps being taken by the US, and quick development of a Iraqi-led government the situation wont go into chaos, but will become increasingly unstable.

Freedom still must be created.

That said, the expressions "Yankee Go Home . . . and take me with you" still summarizes much of the Iraqi's feeling about the US.

But how remains to be seen.

Was the War about Oil? I don't know, but it cannot be only about oil. The cost of this war to the US is more than the oil is worth.

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