

U.S. challenges in Iraq and in the Muslim world*

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Carrollton/Carroll County League of Women Voters
Senior Center (just behind the Carrollton Community Activities Center)
7-9 PM
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<http://adel.cs.westga.edu/leagueofwomenvoters/>

*By “Farhad Kazemi and Augustus R. Norton”

Background

- Pros:
 - Admiration of the US (i.e. pop culture, freedom, human rights, etc.)
 - Success in Iraqi, Palestinian, & Saudi elections
 - Opportunities of Shiite dominated Iraqi government?
 - Lebanon & Syria
- Cons:
 - Resentment of US support for Israel
 - The invasion of Iraq increased hostility toward US in Arab/Muslim world
 - Threats of Shiite dominated Iraqi government?
 - Lebanon & Syria

The Middle East and the West

- Islam fastest growing religion in the world and in the USA
- Diversity of Islamic views (i.e. radical to moderate- Sunni, Shiite, etc.)
- Culture plays a larger part than religion in the Muslim world
- Muslims/Arabs agree on views of Israeli-Palestinian conflict

Iran and the US

- Long history of mistrust
- Islamic revolution in '79 (toppled the Shah-who was put in power by the CIA in '53)
- Hostage crisis and Iran-Contra affair
- Iran was at a turning point (2001)
- Bush administration & the “axis of evil”
- Tension over Iraqi Shiite connection
- Tension over nuclear weapons

Iraq and the war on terror

- Is the war on terror winnable?
- Is there a connection between Iraq and Al-Qaeda?
- Is there one Al-Qaeda or many?
- Has the war in Iraq impacted the US image in the world?
- Has the war in Iraq enforced the idea of US military domination?

Iraq and the war on terror (2)

- Cost of war? (to Americans and Iraqis)
- What is the outcome of the war in Iraq on terror?
- Would a democratic Iraq help transform the entire middle east?

U.S. Policy

- A democratic Iraq would aid the war on terror
- There is a noticeably increase in terror and cost in American & Iraqi lives
- A democratic Iraq would spread democracy in the Middle East
- Powerful images of the war/terror over the airways (& Abu Ghraib)
- Participation in election was mixed- Sunni with smallest numbers
- Elections results favor a Shiite dominated government

Looking Forward

- Iraq may adopt a similar constitution to Iran – Islamic & heavily influenced by Shiite & closer to Iran
- Reactions of US supported governments in the Middle East (i.e. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Pakistan, etc.)
- Violence continues after the Iraqi election
- The change in the Palestinian leadership will challenge the US influence on Israel
- The US must capitalize on opportunities to influence the future direction of the region (i.e. Israeli-Palestinian conflict, reforms of traditional allies, economic development, etc.)

Thank you...

Discussion...