

# Global Journalist: Reconstruction after the Iraq War

**Abstract:** This is a conversation from April 17, 2003 between Stuart Loory and journalists on what to expect for the reconstruction process following the end of the war in Iraq. They examine past reconstruction in Afghanistan and Bosnia and determine what should and should not be repeated in Iraq.

**Host:** [Stuart Loory](#)

**Guests:**

- [John Lichfield](#), Paris
- [Senad Slatina](#), Bosnia
- Razia Sultana, Pakistan

**Producers:** [Sara Andrea Fajardo](#), [Augustine Pang](#)

**Directors:** [Mary Furness](#)

**Tags:** Stuart Loory, John Lichfield, Paris, France, The Independent, Senad Slatina, Bosnia, International Crisis Group, Razia Sultana, Pakistan, the Dawn, The Frontier Post, Iraq war, reconstruction, post-Saddam Iraq, Afghanistan, Saddam Hussein, Muslim

**Runtime:** 28:16

**Stuart Loory** 00:09

Welcome to Global Journalist on KBIA. This is the program that says mid Missourians, indeed many Americans, are interested in international news. I'm Stuart Loory of the Missouri School of Journalism coming to you again from London. The war in Iraq is over. And if you needed evidence for that, it was General Tommy Franks and his commanders holding a strategy session yesterday, in the principal palace of the many that Saddam Hussein used. The generals apparently discussed the question of what do you do now to restore order in Iraq, to begin building democracy there, and to return Iraq to the family of nations? If the war was about destroying weapons of mass destruction, none have yet been found. If the war was about destroying the Saddam Hussein regime, well the government is gone, but where is Saddam? Is he dead or alive? Is he in Iraq or did he flee? Do Bush administration officials really care about these issues? Or do they have other things on their minds? What are the possibilities for reconstruction that will begin quickly and bring fruitful results? To discuss these matters today we have John Lichfield, Paris Correspondent for The Independent, the British newspaper; Senad Slatina, an analyst for the International Crisis Group in Sarajevo, Bosnia; and Dr. Razia Sultana, a freelance columnist for The Pakistani newspapers, the Dawn and The Frontier Post and a visiting Fulbright Scholar at New York University in New York. Let's talk about the reconstruction first and let's start with the meeting that was held yesterday in a press conference today, in Athens of the European Union. The European Union wants to have a role in the reconstruction and it wants the United Nations to have a role. And there is some concern that

the United States is going to freeze both of those organizations out. John Lichfield, what can you tell us about how Europe feels about reconstruction and its role?

**John Lichfield** 02:23

Well, I think there's, there's no recognition across the board, even by those countries like France and Germany, which thought the war was wrong and still think the war was wrong, that the US and Britain are the forces on the ground and that under international law, they have a duty not simply a role, in the reconstruction of the beginning of the reconstruction of Iraq. And I think there's an acceptance by all EU countries that the first role in restoring order, which is the first condition for the reconstruction of the country, has to be taken by the US principally and also by Britain. Beyond that, I think there is a feeling that the only legitimate reconstruction or guidance of Iraq towards democracy should be somewhat controlled by the United Nations and that the reconstruction economically of Iraq should not be something that's kept to the United States or a few cronies of the present administration but spread more widely, something which didn't happen, as I understand it, after the first Gulf War, even for those countries who participated in the coalition at that time.

**Stuart Loory** 03:27

Yeah. Senad Slatina, you live in Bosnia, Bosnia is a country that was devastated by a severe civil war several years ago. What did it take to get reconstruction started and what should be learned from the Bosnian experience?

**Senad Slatina** 03:49

Well, all such situations are unique and it's, of course difficult to have lessons from one applied exactly on the other case, but I think that there might be some lessons from Bosnia to be taken into consideration. Certainly, first, when we are talking and reading about the issue these days, there are a lot of proposals like, let's get out fast from Baghdad, let's leave things to the locals, and so on and so on. I think that's something that should be forgetting, forgot. This is going to be a long haul. Let me remind you that Bosnia as a whole country has a population less than Baghdad city. And we have international forces present here for the eight years now since the war. But then, if there are lessons to be learned from Bosnia, I would, I would identify five of them. First of all, and probably those five could have been applied in post-Iraq, post-war situation in Iraq. First of all of them is of course, that as quickly as possible, rule of law should be established. The one single biggest lesson from Bosnia is that rule of law is more important than democracy. Rule of law first, democracy can come later. Then there should be a resolute action on the, de-Saddamization, de-Baathification of Iraq. The third lesson that I would pull is that these post-war reconstruction should certainly have UN endorsement, but it shouldn't necessarily be UN ruled, and rather, they should be ruled by U.S. and coalition forces because that way, they would be far more efficient than if UN ruled. As a fourth lesson is the local people, the local political forces should be included. There should be some interim Iraqi government, but internationals, those people who have the experience of democracy should hold a firm control of the reconstruction process. And as a fifth lesson, I would I would call on all people involved in reconstruction, not forget that economy should go together as political development, we should bring entrepreneurship and prosperity into Iraq. And that would probably be the single most important goal for this for this process. Because if we, if we

achieved that goal, that if we by some miracle, create a prosperous democracy in Iraq in such a neighborhood, that that could change Middle East far more than any military forces and interventions and --

**Stuart Loory** 06:44

Senad, those are five really good and important lessons and I want to come back to them, but first, I would like to ask Dr. Sultana if she would like to add anything about reconstruction based on her studies of Afghanistan.

**Razia Sultana** 07:02

Well, I have a totally different approach towards the reconstruction of Iraq, having the, you know, having monitoring the reconstruction process in Afghanistan. And you can say in terms of lesson for those who would be reconstructing Iraq, in the post-Saddam situation, like, I would say that the kind of reconstruction that is that was suggested or that was expected by the people and by the scholar at the same time, that has not happened in Afghanistan. And Afghanistan is not a good reconstruction model for the post-Saddam Iraq, because the political setup that was put in place in Afghanistan as a result of the Bonn accord, it is still confined to Kabul, the capital city only. And it has not yet been expanded to the rest of the 32 provinces of Afghanistan. And besides that, the infrastructure, no major infrastructure project has been started yet in Afghanistan, which has created frustration amongst the people. And, you know, the frustration is of such level that it could in the near future threaten the fledgling political setup in Afghanistan. And the major reasons for that are two. One is the security problem, and the second is the lack of funding. The funding pledges which were made by the international community in the Tokyo conference, in which was held in January 2002, that, you know, different international donors, they would, they would provide funding for the rebuilding of the transport system and the banking and the education and you go on. So that has not happened yet. And at the same time, the security issue is very big now in Afghanistan, because Afghanistan does not have security forces of its own. And still at the, even in the capital, the security is provided by international security assistant forces, which are contributed by, I think, more than two dozen countries of the world. So I am kind of not in a way suggesting the Afghanistan model to be taken as an inspiration for the reconstruction of the post-Saddam Iraq. And you can say that it's a kind of a lesson that those things should not be repeated in Iraq.

**Stuart Loory** 10:17

Those are also very interesting points. But I would like to come back to Senad Slatina for a second and talk about his first point, which was the establishment of the rule of law. Senad, I'm not exactly sure what you meant by that. Were you talking about establishment of democratic procedures? Were you talking about restoring law and order in a country that has had a harsh spell of lawlessness over the past several days?

**Senad Slatina** 10:53

Well, I'm talking about both, Stu, of course, the establishment of the of immediate order and in the non tolerance to looting and, and everything that goes along those lines, it comes comes first. But also I'm talking about the establishment of, of democratic procedures, the establishment of the of the legal framework in which all other operations will be later conducted. What I'm trying to point out here is that that, that everybody who who wishes good to Iraqi people and who wants success in Iraq should not be pushing for democratic elections as soon as possible. Before really, it takes time, both in experience says that it takes time that people who have been in in such an oppressive regime for so many years that they learn how to live with freedom, how to express their thinking and their choices freely. What we did in Bosnia, and unfortunately, when we are talking about all these lessons, the problem with lessons is that they are never, never taken seriously that because what will be what will happen will be based on the on domestic political purposes of the United States. But the actual situation in Bosnia because we in Bosnia had still early democratic stockholm democratic elections. But those those elections were conducted by allowing people who were basically fighting the war against each other, those same political forces who had opportunity to indoctrinate people for so many years in such an oppressive regime, and then we had elections and of course, people voted and legitimize those powers, again, and those powers were included in the post war reconstruction of Bosnia and they still impede the real progress in this country. So that should not be repeated.

**Stuart Loory** 12:55

It looks like to to establish some stability in Iraq right now, the United States is counting on basically a military government. It has given the Pentagon almost complete control over the the early reconstruction of Iraq. Do you think that the United States should try to get beyond that very quickly and bring Iraqis in immediately and bring other international organizations like the UN into that as quickly as they can? Go ahead, Dr. Sultana?

**Razia Sultana** 13:34

Well, this is aboveboard the response that as soon as possible, the, you know, the civil government should be comprised of the Iraqi people and the Iraqi people should have the right to rule themselves, as the basic reason for American attacks that was to do this or not only to disarm Saddam, but to free Iraqi people from the dictatorial rule of Saddam Hussein.

**Stuart Loory** 14:07

We have a we have a big question, in who are the Iraqi people...there are other minority groups.

**Razia Sultana** 14:19

I'm coming to the point. They, my suggestion is that the military has to be in control right now, because there is no alternate setup in Iraq. This is the big the big problem is to reestablish the political political government in Iraq. And if I see back the Afghan situation, I see that in Afghanistan, there was an alternative, you know, political party comprised of different factions that it didn't take much time to replace that the posts are the Taliban after their fall, but that is not the situation in Iraq. So that's why there is, I mean, the, the the army, the American forces having control for for some time, it seems it seems to me very much, you know, in line with the

situation because they don't have any alternate alternate party to take over and, but as soon as possible, this should be transferred to the Iraqi people and I agree with this too, that it will it is not an easy job it will take it will take time as well. But there is another apprehension that when American forces would be in Iraq and having a political control to that they would be resisted as as forces of occupation. So this apprehension is very much there. So keeping in view that I suggest that as much as soon as possible, it will, it will transfer to the Iraqi people.

**Stuart Loory** 16:04

Sorry, but we have to take a break right now. This is Global Journalist on KBIA. I'm Stuart Loory. We'll be right back. Welcome back to Global Journalist. You may listen to this program again, ask questions or make comments by going to [www dot global journalist.org](http://www.globaljournalist.org) or in mid Missouri by calling 573-882-9641. Senad Slatina, one of your other five points was the the de-Saddamization, a good word that of Iraq, or the de-Baathfization of the country referring to the Baath party which Saddam ran. We can't find Saddam Hussein right now, do you think it's necessary to to continue an intense hunt for him?

**Senad Slatina** 17:09

Well, I think that will be that will be up to the military commanders to decide. I think that would certainly be an asset to see to get in more or have him killed in these operations. But I wanted to return to one of the earlier points made by by a colleague who spoke up earlier and about giving returning power to local authorities as as soon as possible. Um, you know, experience from Bosnia really does not support that, that approach. I mean, not certainly as soon as possible, but rather us as soon as local institutions can, can take can take control and really when this country be truly de-Baathfized, I mean, taken out of control of these of these horrible party of Saddam Hussein. Unfortunately, we had made that mistake in Bosnia here and we somehow wanted to, to please, everybody to have everybody being happy. You know, obviously the United States just jumped into Iraq, did something and said, "okay, sorry, guys, you are now free, we are going out." No, that's that these operation was risky from the beginning. But if the United States got involved in it, that had to stay in and see through its end, and that's gonna, that's gonna take a while.

**Stuart Loory** 18:43

So you think that American troops are going to be in Iraq for a long, long time to come?

**Senad Slatina** 18:59

I think that American troops will stay in Iraq, at least five to 10 years from now.

**Stuart Loory** 19:05

Mm hmm. And how about American involvement in in the government there. Is that also going to last that long?

**Senad Slatina** 19:13

That's that's certainly going to last even longer. And those are processes that will hopefully go simultaneously. I think that probably for for at least a year, we won't see the elections over there. We will see a lot of Americans and coalition forces and United Nations agencies supporting the development, helping training military police officer, training, people in business hoping to restore the public administration of Iraq and so on and so on, and then, hopefully a year from now or even longer, have everything set for, for first post war elections to be taken to be held in Iraq.

**Stuart Loory** 19:53

Those are all important political and economic considerations. For what should be done, there are other considerations however. There is the restoration of a lifestyle, there is the restoration of water supplies and electric power supplies and health facilities for for the Iraqi people. And there is also the question and it's a it's a sad question, about the the restoration of Iraq's cultural history. One of the great collections of historical artifacts and literature has disappeared in Iraq. What can be done about that? The sort of the same thing happened in Afghanistan, but not nearly as severely. Dr. Sultana, do you have any ideas?

**Razia Sultana** 20:54

I think even in Afghanistan, cultural restoration and even societal restorations, these are non-issues. Political and economic and security issues, they are the top priority, right. And if you put in line it, the security is a top priority, because everything starts from security and it ends into security. And what I've been reading and what I've been talking to people from Afghanistan, they were saying that even the donor agencies, they had a great problem that how to go and invest in Afghanistan in the in the reconstruction project, because there is no security around there. But again, security is embedded into the political, you know, political processes, and it is again into the stable government and the stable economy. So all these things are so interlinked, that I think that security is not an independent issue.

**Stuart Loory** 21:50

Yeah, that has also been an early problem in Iraq. In the last couple of days, there have been groups of doctors that have gone in and they have actually been attacked and they have been removed to Kuwait.

**Razia Sultana** 22:07

Well, in a post-conflict situation or in a transitional situation like Afghanistan, and now in Iraq, these risks are would always be there. It's a very it's always a risky situation. And it's all risk. So saying that because of that, the reconstruction would not take pace, I think it's a sorry factor. And I may sound very impersonal saying this that these things should not stop or these things, I mean, these these risks, should not delay or should not slow the process of reconstruction in all these sectors, because this is, yeah.

**Stuart Loory** 22:51

I would like to bring up the question of religion. Both of you, Pakistan is a country with a strong Muslim majority, Bosnia has also a very, very strong Muslim population. To what extent is what the United States and Great Britain did in Iraq, viewed as sort of a modern day crusade, if you will.

**Razia Sultana** 23:27

If you if you could repeat your question, I couldn't get your point.

**Stuart Loory** 23:31

The point is, to what extent is the, are Muslims around the world going to react negatively to what the United States and the United Kingdom did in Iraq?

**Razia Sultana** 23:50

I think the Muslims around the world, they have been feeling miserable about the American foreign policy and they have been having enough reason to say that because all these conflicts in different parts of the world are mostly concentrated in the Muslim lands, and they are related to the Muslim, you know, communities, like the desert in Middle East is a long protected problem of Palestine and Israel. And then we have in South Asia, India, Pakistan, and in case of Kashmir, and then Chechnya. And so Afghanistan is a very latest problem, now Iraq. So, you know, they have quite a number of examples to code. And to that that is frustrating for them.

**Stuart Loory** 24:38

Well, is it is what, what is being done viewed as anti-Muslim and not anti-Iraqi, Senad do you want to step in on that?

**Senad Slatina** 24:49

Well, everything will, will depend on on the outcome of the situation. I mean, that this war will certainly be judged mostly by whether the Iraqi people will live a better life after these intervention, in comparison to the life during the Saddam regime. Unfortunately, it may well happen that I'm just calling again on the example of former Yugoslavia. I mean, we saw the death of Tito, former dictator who was in power for 40 years here, but there are still people here who think that we live a better life during that time than we do now. There are a dozens of small dictators in forms of a nationalist elite that came and and made our lives and former Yugoslavia even more miserable. So I guess the reactions from all objective observers, including including observers from the Muslim world, will be all their assessments of the situation will be based on the fact whether the Iraqi people will live better, will not will be freed to do whatever they whatever they want with their, with their natural wealth. About your your earlier point, I think as a colleague said, there are some really serious doubts about the American foreign policy, because if all this was aimed at, at some some rogue country that has the nuclear nuclear arsenal, so I mean, there are some other countries in the region that have nuclear potential as

that they are using them against the civilians, and that unfortunately doesn't raise much attention in the United States.

**Stuart Loory** 26:42

We have just a few seconds left. And, Senad, I would like you to take them by saying just a few words, about any similarities that there might be between Saddam Hussein and Mr. Milosevic?

**Reinhard Meier** 27:04

Well, they have first of all, they they took care only for the power. They abused everything else just for them being in power. I think that is that is the worst and the most common that they have, that those two individuals have in common.

**Stuart Loory** 27:26

I'm sorry, Senad, but we are out of time. Our guests today have been in Paris, John Lichfield of the British newspaper The Independent; in Sarajevo, Senad Slatina, Senad, incidentally, was the first producer of Global Journalist when he was a journalist in residence in Columbia, Missouri. And in New York, Dr. Razia Sultana, a Fulbright Fellow at New York University. Our director is Mary Furness, and our producers, Sara Andrea Fajardo and Augustine Pang. For all, I'm Stuart Loory, Global Journalist will be back next week.