

Global Journalist: Expectations for 2003: war on terrorism, nuclear weapons, trade

Abstract: In this conversation from January 2, 2003, Stuart Loory asks several journalists what they expect to be the big stories in 2003. Among their predictions: the war on terrorism, the North Korean nuclear weapons program, politics in Latin America, famine in Africa, and free trade for Latin America and the U.S.

Host: [Stuart Loory](#)

Guests:

- [Raymond Louw](#), South Africa
- [Chon Shi-yong](#), South Korea
- [Dan Kirshock](#), Argentina

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Tags: Stuart Loory, Raymond Louw, Southern African Report, Johannesburg, South Africa, Chon Shi-yong, Korea Herald, Seoul, South Korea, Dan Kirshock, Buenos Aires Herald, Buenos Aires, Argentina, war on terrorism, Iraq War, North Korea nuclear weapons, AIDS, famine, trade

Runtime: 28:30

Stuart Loory 00:08

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. On this first program of the year 2003, I thought it would be interesting to listen to what a panel of journalists from throughout the world think are the most important stories of last year, and what they think will be the most important in the year to come. If we were to make judgments from here, I think that most of us, journalists and listeners, would agree that last year, the war on terrorism and the despotism of Saddam Hussein topped the list, and I think most of us would agree that in the year to come, the top international stories will be the same. Let's see if our panel agrees. They are in Johannesburg, South Africa, Raymond Louw, editor and publisher of Southern African Report; in Seoul, Korea, Chon Shi-yong, national editor of the Korea Herald; and in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Dan Kirshock, managing editor of the Buenos Aires Herald. Let's start by asking each of our guests for his views on last year. And let's begin with South Africa. Ray Louw, will you go first?

Raymond Louw 01:28

Well, yes, I'd be delighted to. To agree with you and say that I think the War on Terrorism was in fact, the major, the major story last year with all its ramifications, that is the the attacks on the nightclub in Bali, for instance, and the other attacks that have occurred from time to time. And, and I think, coupled with that the hunt early in the for Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and the war in Afghanistan. And I think of course, what hits all of that out to some extent towards the end of the is the growing preparations for a war against Iraq. I think that that, in fact is occupied and still occupies people's minds.

Stuart Loory 02:09

And Ray, that is so in South Africa, as well as in the United States and Western Europe?

Raymond Louw 02:18

I think there is growing concern in South Africa evinced by a deputy foreign minister, as these are hard making statements, warning America of the fallout and the consequences of a likely of a war against Iraq. And particularly, because of the complexity of societies in Africa, the closeness to offset Africa to of course, the Middle East. And the the the the, the relation the the fact that Africa most most of Africa is a developing country area, and that the economic side effects, apart from the humanitarian effects, are likely to be very disruptive of our societies.

Stuart Loory 03:02

Dan Kirshock, in Latin America, what was the major story of the past year? And what you see is the important stories in the year to come?

Dan Kirshock 03:14

Well, clearly on an international level, as Ray says, the war on terrorism and, and the possibility of a war or with Iraq have been the major stories. Around Latin America, there's also been the

story of Latin America itself and, and what's going to happen with the continent. After a decade in 1990, when many countries in the region experienced very strong growth and seemed to be on the right path to development, what we saw over the last year or so, is that many of those countries including Argentina have gone into a meltdown. And so the big question in Latin America now is whether the the continent is headed for another lost decade like it experienced in the 1980s, I think looking ahead for the region, there are three major stories. One is whether the newly elected president of Brazil, Lula, will be able to prove that the left can govern responsibly in Latin America. I think the other big story will be Venezuela, and see what happens with Mr. Chavez there and whether he'll be able to stay in power, whether he'll be forced to either resign or call early elections. And I think the third one will be Argentina, and whether it will be able to pick itself up after disasters 2001 and 2002.

Stuart Loory 04:40

Well, those are certainly three important stories and I'd like to come back to those in a moment but let's ask Chon Shi-yong about Korea and Asia.

Chon Shi-yong 04:50

And in Korea and Asia too, the war on terrorism was the biggest international news in in the region, and but I think the in from the regional perspective view, the North Korea's the the new nuclear threat, you know, which all began developing in late December. I think that, you know, the, in the final month over the last year, we had all the big news. And then in 2003, I think DC is going to be a big, major news for the time being.

Stuart Loory 05:32

I think here in the United States, the the situation for the year 2003 is the buildup the continuing build up toward the war with Iraq. Most of my colleagues living in Washington tell me that they are certain there is going to be a military intervention of some kind by the United States and whatever allies it can put together against Saddam Hussein. But one of the things that interests me is that a year ago, President Bush proclaimed the axis of evil, including Iraq, Iran and North Korea. Now, I think despite the fact that Korea is continuing to develop nuclear weapons, apparently, the President and the Bush administration has backed down on its characterization of North Korea as a member of the axis that requires military action in the same way. We heard Colin Powell say just the other day, that things he thought could be worked out with North Korea in a different way. Although what that way is is puzzling because he says there will be no negotiations. Chon Shi-yong, what do you think, what's going to happen?

Chon Shi-yong 07:05

Well, like on every other international issues, I think there could be two different views on the North Korean nuclear is optimistic and pessimistic. And, of course, the pessimistic view is that North Korea demands defines defiant and keep developing nuclear bombs. Often they'll fail over the majors, including economic sanctions, the United States might consider conducting a pre-season military strike on the nuclear facilities, which could roll South Korea and 37,000 American soldiers stationed in the south into an all out war. Japan also may suffer at the hands

of North Korean missiles. A military conflict in Korea we also have a huge impact on the world security, and, of course, the global economy. This is must be, this must be the worst case scenario. And I would say we should and can avert this situation. Now, the optimistic view is that the United States, South Korea and other members of the international community docked to the north and reached an agreement to end the standoff. For this, I think we might need some incentives to the north node in return for his decision to reverse his moves to the activating nuclear programs. The incentives could include provision of energy and other economic aids. Many experts in South Korea and the United States say North Korea has claimed a nuclear game because it desperately needs outside power to keep its economy going and feed these starving people.

Stuart Loory 08:54

Well, other experts say that what North Korea is trying to do really is to drive a wedge between South Korea, and its 50 year ally, the United States. And there are some reports that that appears to be working. Is it?

Chon Shi-yong 09:16

There have been some reports in South Korea and the States that are there are some kinds of different views and conflicts between the how between the approaches of South Korea and the United States in dealing with the nuclear issue. But I'll just say, that is always a bit exaggeration. I think it is a good sign that President said President Bush said in Texas Tuesday that it thinks the, you know, he could resolve the issue diplomatically. Right. This is the position of South Korea. And I think the now the President Bush his aides are not taking hardline position on the North Korea. I think this reflects the position of South Korea and the South Korea, Japan and the United States, they are all working together to defuse the crisis. And I think the, the how they are doing to incorporate the issue is you know, taking a design over direction.

Stuart Loory 10:28

Okay, let's bring Ray Louw and Dan Kirshock into this. Both of you, I was interested in hearing you say that the war on terrorism was and will continue to be the big story. Dan, you mentioned of course the the other problems in Latin America. And Ray, I thought you went a little bit lately on the problems in Africa as something that would be in the news in the coming year, I'm thinking of the health problems, the famine problems, the political problems.

Raymond Louw 11:09

So I didn't mention that I mentioned the world, the world story. But on the African front, of course, the famine is going to be the big story in the coming year as it is, has been encroaching in the last year, famine. 14-15 million people in Sub Saharan Africa face famine. Half of those in Zimbabwe, as you know, virtually the whole of the productive farming element has been destroyed or wild of the white farming element, should I say, has been destroyed. And then of course, there's the enormous problem of AIDS, which continues to be a major story in Africa. We're not given incidentally as much of the attention as to as it deserves by the South African government, but which is now coming around to the view that it's in fact got to be more active on

that issue. But those are those are the two really very big big problems that Southern Africa is facing. And of course, they are the ongoing wars and the fragile fragile pieces, pieces, mechanisms that have been set in place in places like the Congo, only to have it a day after the signing of the peace treaty to erupt again in battles which have caused 60,000 people to have to flee their homes. And of course, there's Burundi where they're South Africans on a peacekeeping mission, there is Angola, which seems to be hitting on a reasonable footing. But of course, that is being attacked by the other other big enemy in Africa, and that is corruption in government and, and then of course, the Zimbabwe itself. We, apart from the famine, there's the political problems in Zimbabwe, how they're going to work themselves out. So Africa certainly is a is a hotbed of problems. If I can, if I can word it that way. And and it's going to be And it's gonna be worse in the coming year. From South Africa's point of view, we, of course, played host to the World Summit on sustainable development, that is the earth conference, which was regarded as a reasonable success. About that, I think was one of the bigger events that were staged in South Africa, but for the rest of our economy, which has been in a rather sad plight for since 1994, he's showing signs of, of improving and, in fact, I saw a headline in one of the newspapers, saying that we can look forward to a prosperous 2003, well, I hope so.

Stuart Loory 13:35

Let's hope so. We have to take a break now, but I'd like to come back to this and also to move on to Latin America. This is Global Journalist on KBIA. I'm Stuart Loory. 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.dot.globaljournalist.org) or here in mid Missouri by calling us at 573-882-9641. Let's pick up the discussion with some more about Latin America. Dan Kirshock, talk a little bit about what might or should happen in Latin America in the coming year.

Raymond Louw 14:26

I believe the big, big story, as I said earlier in Latin America will be Brazil. Yesterday, Brazil got a new president, Lula Inacio da Silva, his official name, better known as Lula, we know. He's a former labor leader who has tried several times to reach the presidency and he was finally successful. And he comes into a country which, after a decade of economic reforms, is hungry for change and he needs to be able to balance the demand of a society where millions live in poverty, with the need to implement responsible policies that won't drag the country back into the past of high inflation and economic mismanagement. So he's got a very difficult balancing act to, to perform and thus far, in the months leading up to his taking office, he has shown himself to be an extremely astute politician capable of balancing those different demands.

Stuart Loory 15:37

He has also, Dan, shown himself to be astute enough to abandon some of the the left wing policies that I think helped bring him to power.

Raymond Louw 15:49

Yes, he has and he walked a very fine line here, he brought in some very orthodox type economist to head to the central bank, the heavy economy ministry, he has managed to

reassure reassure investors. And yet in his inaugural speech yesterday, he also made very clear that that solving Brazil's massive social problems would be a priority for him. And so if he can, if he can pull this off, I think it will be a very good thing for all of Latin America.

Stuart Loory 16:25

I'd like to ask all of you a question and that relates to American policies toward the rest of the world. I think there is a growing feeling that United States is getting far too involved in in various big problem areas around the world. Certainly, the Middle East feels that way, the Arab countries. What about Africa and Latin America, Ray?

Raymond Louw 16:55

Well, I think that South Africa, politicians in South Africa are very wary indeed of what is going on in the Middle East, and America support for Sharon and the and the escalating war situation that has been developing there over the last two years with no indication that that a peace initiative is likely to succeed. And that's partly because America seems to be giving, it's perceived to be giving greater support to the Israelis than to the Palestinians and not really listening to the Palestinian side of the story. There's that aspect of it. There's there's a general feeling, one senses this in letters to the newspapers, that America seems to be wielding the big stick. It's not so much its interference in affairs, it's how it's interfering in the affairs that it is trying to, to throw its weight about in in demanding this and demanding that of people and there's there seems to be as a reaction to that, of course tempered by the fact that in most countries depend to some extent on America for economic aid and and for trade trade factors. For instance, this nobody's objecting to America's intervention in Africa with the what's the the act which provides for trade between African states and and and America without having duties imposed on them, on their products. Nobody objects to that and that's that's a very fine positive mood move. But there isn't, there's great fear here about a war involving America and Iraq and and the side effects and the spin offs that are likely to develop from from that. There's also a feeling that although the war is supposed to finish off Iraq's ability to use weapons of mass destruction, well, some of those weapons of mass destructions were originally supplied by America. And secondly, will the effects of such a war not in fact have the same effect as the possibly or similar effects to the weapons of mass destruction. I'm talking now about the number of innocent people who will be killed. And and and the side effects and the economic side effects as well.

Stuart Loory 19:18

Dan Kirshock, do you have some ideas about Latin America and American policies toward it?

Dan Kirshock 19:25

Well, certainly, the relationship between Latin America and United States has always been a difficult one. There's always been, mixed with admiration or respect to the United States has always been a lot of resentment toward what are perceived as high handed or imperialistic policies on behalf of the United States. And so right now, the war on terror, terrorism, potential war in Iraq, are certainly being perceived by many sectors in this in this region as once again,

another example of the United States' tendency to act unilaterally. And those feelings have been aggravated by the fact that that economic situation here throughout the region has been very bad in the last couple of years. And not only is there just a philosophical difference with what the United States is doing, but there's also a practical one. And, and and the attitude is, look, if the US is so concentrated on the Middle East, what about us? Why aren't they spending some of their time and effort to try and help and solve our problems down here? One thing I've noticed, though, is that even though the attitude about there's a lot of skepticism if not resentment towards U.S. policy in the Middle East, on the issue of Korea, you don't see that same reaction and I think that there is a certain acceptance that there is a legitimate concern about Korea, and that you don't see the same criticism toward the US on that issue.

Stuart Loory 21:03

Well, not only a legitimate concern, but the the United States does appear to be handling that problem differently. It appears to be leaning more toward negotiation than confrontation.

Raymond Louw 21:20

I would agree with that. And I think also the fact that people see that North Korea has in certain respects, thumbed its nose at the United States and and has taken a confrontational attitude itself has probably blunted the sort of criticism you would see toward the United States normally and and how it responds in other parts of the world.

Stuart Loory 21:43

Yeah. Chon Shi-yong, there have been 35,000 American troops stationed in your country for the last 50 years. Do you think there is a buildup of pressure now to have those troops removed?

Chon Shi-yong 22:03

There has been some anti American demonstrations in South Korea in recent months. Two teenage girls were killed by a US military army vehicle during trade training mission and the two soldiers who manned the vehicle, you know, were created by the US Court Martial and that angle to some South Koreans and the activists and they had some mournings for the girls in the protest and in this way, you know, there have been some anti American sentiment growing in recent months. And then the nuclear crisis came and about I think a majority of the South Koreans are scared, want to have US forces in Korea, you know, or to deter any possible invasion from North Korea and to maintain stability, stability and peace in the region.

Stuart Loory 23:01

So that what we have been reading here about a call for withdrawal of troops, I think is is a little overstated. It's not an important part of the Korean society that is making that demand?

Chon Shi-yong 23:15

I would just say the our elected people, and a majority of South Korean people still want US forces on the Korean peninsula. Mm hmm.

Stuart Loory 23:28

I would like to ask each of you now, to talk a little bit about how the United States should be changing its foreign policies. And I would like Ray, if you would, to concentrate a little bit on what the United States should be doing differently in Africa.

Raymond Louw 23:52

Well, I mentioned the AGOA Act. That is the one that I couldn't remember the name I spoke earlier, the African Growth and Opportunities Act. Well, that's, that's, you know, that's a very positive step forward, as I indicated, because it's enabling South African products and African products from other countries to get to get into America without having to be to have duty paid in them. And therefore, they can, in fact, prosper because the prices are competitive. I'd like to see America exerting some pressure on Europe and internally and its own policies in terms of the subsidy system for farmers, which is preventing products from developing countries like South Africa, but also the other countries in this region, from finding of getting a foothold both in America and in Europe, particularly in Europe, where the subsidy system for farmers has made products from this part of the world virtually, and I think that would apply also to South America, virtually uncompetitive in terms of the the prices that could apply in Europe. I also think it would be very helpful if America could give us more stimulus in terms of the African Union, the formation of the African Union, which is the successor to the Organization of African Unity and which has its main focus is in fact on economic and political development in, in Africa with, of course NEPAD, that is the new partnership for Africa's development, with its peer review system of governments, etc, with that being fostered and America with it as it's meant as a member of the G8. If it could give help on that, in that sphere particularly financial help that would be the most most encouraging.

Stuart Loory 25:29

Ray, thank you. We're beginning to run out of time and I would like to move on to Dan Kirshock in Latin America.

Dan Kirshock 25:36

Well, I'd like to echo something that Ray said, when he would talk about agricultural subsidies. I believe that the best thing the United States and Europe for that matter can do for this region, for Argentina and for other countries in this region, is to get really serious about opening up trade for the products that these countries can be competitive. And, and what those products are principally agricultural products and thus far, U.S. and even more so the Europe have shown been highly reluctant to open their market to products from these from this region. And I think both the United States and and Europe could really earn a lot of goodwill among people here by by by doing that. Now, the Bush administration made clear that opening the free trade of the Americas as a priority for them, but thus far it has not in practice, really put a lot of

emphasis on it and if it really wants to earn goodwill here, it should open up its markets for Latin America.

Stuart Loory 26:53

Okay, Dan, excuse me. We have 30 seconds left for Chon Shi-yong in Korea.

Chon Shi-yong 27:00

About the Bush administration's foreign policy in Asia, I think the the nuclear issue now is coming up. So I think, Mr. Bush should know that the situation in North Korea is different from that in Iraq, with the Bush must know that all in every country in the region, Japan, China, Russia, let alone South Korea, do not want U.S. to impose economic sanctions on North Korea, much less a preemptive military strike on the nuclear facility. What ables in the region do not want to see North Korea go nuclear but they at the same time do not want to see a war in the area and they want the US to take a peaceful solution to the crisis.

Stuart Loory 27:40

Okay. Chon Shi-yong, I'm sorry, we are out of time. Our guests today have been Dan Kirshock in Buenos Aires, Argentina; Raymond Louw in Johannesburg, South Africa; and Chon Shi-yong in Seoul, Korea. Our director is Pat Akers, and our producer Colleen Stretchura (ph?). For all, I'm Stuart Loory, Global Journalist will be back next week.