

Global Journalist: America and Iraq and the 1 Year Anniversary of September 11

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SPEAKERS

[Stuart Loory](#), [Faris Sanabani](#), Raymond Lowe, [Boris Kagarlitsky](#), [Grahame Lucas](#)

ABSTRACT: On September 5, 2002, Stuart Loory talked with experts and journalists about the Bush administration's appeal to the United Nations to help the U.S. invade and take out Saddam Hussein in Iraq to eliminate 'weapons of mass destruction'. Loory and guests discuss how other countries with ties to Iraq feel about this. Also, with the first anniversary of September 11 this year, Loory asks guests how other countries plan to commemorate the day.

Stuart Loory 00:07

Welcome to 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. From all indications the Bush administration is determined to go to war to oust Saddam Hussein, from his office in Iraq. Despite criticism from political leaders at home from former national security experts who worked for his father during the first Gulf War, and from leaders of many countries around the world, including friends of the United States, the administration makes the case for armed conflict with Saddam. Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa says don't do it. So does UN Secretary Kofi Annan or Secretary General I should say Kofi Annan. Russia negotiates a trade agreement with Iraq, that could mean \$40 billion in revenues. Saudi Arabia says the United States cannot use air bases in its country. Germany and France oppose the war and so do many American military leaders who lead the battle against Iraq in the first Gulf War. We're going to talk about that today, but we will also talk about how the world is going to commemorate the first anniversary of September 11 next Wednesday. Will the outpouring of remembrance for the tragedy be as great around the world as it will be here in this country? How much has been accomplished in a year to prevent new acts of terrorism? Our guests are in Johannesburg, South Africa, Raymond Lowe, editor and publisher of the Southern Africa report. In Moscow, Boris Kagarlitsky, Director of the Institute for Globalization Studies. In Aden, Yemen, Faris Sanabani and publisher of the Yemen observer. And in Cologne, Germany, Grahame Lucas, head of news and current affairs of the English Service of Deutsche Welle Radio. Ray Lowe, let's start with you. As I just pointed out, Nelson Mandela had some pretty tough things to say to President Bush. What is the feeling in South Africa about the Bush administration's policy toward Iraq?

Raymond Lowe 02:30

Well, I think everybody is siding with Mandela on the issue. They feel that America is putting yourself into a position of a rogue state by taking all and attempting to take the law into its own hands. And there's a strong feeling here, but in government, particularly and when you've quoted Mandela, saying that the Americans should not go do this on their own, that they should only do this if they get the United Nations approval. And Mandela has gone as far as to say that if America does get United Nations approval that he would support Americans actions. There is a very strong feeling here, though, and this may have had some resonance with you, with the reception that your Secretary of State Colin Powell received at the Johannesburg World Summit on sustainable development, he when he made his speech yesterday, and when he was shouted down when he made a reference to his views on Zimbabwe. I don't think it was entirely in favor of Zimbabwe, I think it was more a kind of an anti-American feeling that was being given voice to. So I think I think there is a quite strong feeling in this country, against America going it alone.

Stuart Loory 03:46

When you say that the feeling is that the United States is a rogue state. What you're doing, in essence, is putting the United States in the same category that the Bush administration reserves for Iran, Iraq and North Korea.

Raymond Lowe 04:01

Well, I think that there's a perception that people will have. That kind of action where you take the law into your own hands.

Stuart Loory 04:10

Grahame Lucas, as chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder also opposes any unilateral reaction by the United States. As a matter of fact, I think he opposes any kind of reaction. Is it the feeling also in Germany that the United States is becoming a rogue state?

Grahame Lucas 04:27

No, I didn't think one would go so far as to use the word, rogue state. I think one thing that one shouldn't forget is that Germany is in right in the middle of the election campaign. Schroeder is looking for re-election on the 22nd of September. And he's facing a situation in public opinion, which has, if you like, swallowed the intervention in Kosovo in 1999 and the attack on Afghanistan with a great deal of, let's say stomach aches, and whatever simply Because of Germany's history, and Schroeder is, of course, trying to ride out that public opinion. If you've got 75% in the polls saying they're against intervention against Iraq as things stand, then it's almost political suicide for any candidate to come out and strongly support the United States on this. Schroeder has essentially justified his rejection of military action against Iraq by saying that he fears that this would weaken the international anti terror coalition, which came into being after the Americans took the lead to move against the Taliban in Afghanistan, and showed us theories if the war against al Qaeda is not yet over and it appears not to be yet over the coalition against terror would then fall to pieces before the job is done. And the second major argument that he's been putting out tirelessly here, is that if there is an intervention in Iraq, what is going to be the post war order in Iraq and in the Middle East? And he's saying that the Americans

have to come up with some kind of idea on that and discuss it with their allies before he will even entertain any discussion about an intervention.

Stuart Loory 06:15

Faris Sanabani, what about in the Arab world? How is the Bush administration's anti-Iraq policy seen there?

Faris Sanabani 06:31

It is definitely seen as double standard. There is a mixed feeling in the Arab world regarding the Iraq regime. Are we talking about changing the regime? Or are we talking about taking military action? You're gonna say, right, we're talking about taking military actions are going to surround them, not just me, but also the Gulf Cooperation console, the Arab League, the Arab and Islamic parliament, all of the Arab head of state, the Muslim people, and every peace loving person, whether it's Christian, Jewish, or against that on Earth. Now, so talking about changing the regime, and there is 1,001 ways to do so.

Stuart Loory 07:08

1,001 ways the United States has tried a lot of ways and hasn't been able to do it. In what are we talking about 10 years now? Can you can you give us just two or three of the 1001 ways?

Faris Sanabani 07:25

Okay, for sure. In under pressure, people tend to unite. So for example, if they left embargo, if they let the people eat in Iraq, if they let them watch satellite, they let them travel, that will open ideas that will bring things into the country that will bring the democracy slowly. Democracies emerging in Yemen, the emerging in Bahrain, in Oman, and Qatar throughout the region and Iraq will be no exception that cannot be isolated. That is one way. Another way is also by the people themselves that people have to take action, but people have to decide whether they want to change the leaders, not an outside force, changing every law that exists and to change what what the people will.

Stuart Loory 08:11

So in other words, when you say change the regime, you are not necessarily talking about changing the regime. You're just talking about changing the attitudes of the Western world to the regime, is that correct?

Faris Sanabani 08:27

No, if they let the people of Iraq take action. Give them the give them the don't put them under siege, lift the embargo right away. Satellites will come in money will come into the people right now that people are in tough situation. And in tough situation they unite and they will stand behind Saddam or behind their leader.

Stuart Loory 08:46

Boris Kagarlitsky. Russia says it will adhere to the embargo, but it's still negotiating a huge trade agreement with Iraq. Is that what it? What impact is that going to have? And will that agreement go through if Saddam Hussein false?

Boris Kagarlitsky 09:06

Well, basically the agreement Russia is negotiating with Iraq is based on the west Thompson's as the sanctions would be lifted sooner or later. And in that sense, it's pretty logical because no sanctions can continue forever. And of course, the initial assumption was that Saddam's regime was going to be readmitted, and to the global community in one way or another. Or at least there'll be some gradual process of realignment with Iraq so that they will be allowed to re-enter the global economy and their global community step by step possibly. But then the situation started moving in an opposite direction; though in fact, when we discuss the real content of Russian commercial interests in Iraq, in many ways, it is exactly this contraband smuggling Iraqi oil to the global markets, which really becomes a big business for some Russian companies. In that sense, it's kind of funny. Sometimes Western observers of the oil market say that, look, Russian oil is so cheap, sometimes in terms of production. And that's contrary to the logic because the Russian oil is producing the far north and it cannot be technically cheap. Some of that oil is simply Iraqi oil, which is provided to the global market, semi-legally, so to speak, more illegally by Russian companies presented as Russian oil.

Stuart Loory 10:54

It comes to Russia from Iraq through pipelines or...?

Boris Kagarlitsky 10:59

No, no, no it comes to Russia at all. It goes directly into Russian tankers in Iraq, so I don't know the technicalities of that. I just know that they present the oil, which was drilled in Iraq as if it was drilled and pumped somewhere in northern Siberia or shipped from Kaliningrad or whatever. In fact, it's not shipped from Kaliningrad it's shipped from elsewhere.

Stuart Loory 11:33

So in other words, there's a good chance that we in the Midwestern United States are driving around burning gasoline that came from Iraqi and Russian tankers.

Boris Kagarlitsky 11:44

Exactly. So when they said that they were going to buy Russian oil in order to support Russian oil industry and to sort of put more pressure on Iraq and other Arab countries. A lot of people in Russia simply laughed.

Stuart Loory 12:04

Graham Lucas, is that the the situation in Western Europe also that what we think is Russian energy going to Western Europe is really energy coming from Iraq?

Boris Kagarlitsky 12:19

Wait a minute, I just wanted to say not that we shouldn't say that most of Russian oil coming to the west is Iraqi oil. In fact, crude oil is Russian oil. I understand that when it comes to Iraq, there was a lot of Iraqi oil, it was called Russian oil.

Stuart Loory 12:37

That's, that's perfectly clear to me, Boris. But I was just wondering if it is perceived in Western Europe or in Europe, that what is coming into Europe might be actually Iraqi oil?

Grahame Lucas 12:53

I'm not aware of exactly how much Iraqi oil is coming into Europe, but of course, we do drive around burning gasoline in our cars. And that gasoline essentially comes from the Middle East, primarily from Saudi Arabia. So it's all from Kuwait. So it's all the same region. And when we had the the Gulf War 12 years ago, of course, we in Europe, were acutely aware that our energy supplies come from this region, and this is part of the problem.

Stuart Loory 13:24

Okay, we have to take a break now. 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.globaljournalist.org. Or you're in mid Missouri by calling us at 573-882-9641. Before the break, we were talking about the possibility that the embargo against Iraq is not really being adhered to. But I'd like to change the subject just a little bit now and ask the question of what would happen if the United States did unilaterally go to war against Iraq? Let's start with Faris Sanabani.

Faris Sanabani 14:26

I believe it will destabilize the region. There is a huge fear whether it's through the articles that have been written or through the leaders' statements, and the Middle East and in the Islamic world. That will, they will find it extremely difficult to talk to their people or to maintain close allies with the US even in their war against terrorism. They feel that the people might rage against their own leaders, they might rage against the US allies in the region.

Stuart Loory 14:59

Grahame Lucas, Europe?

Grahame Lucas 15:01

Well, I think we've got to clear up a couple of things first. I think what is emerging in European public opinion, generally, I've mentioned the German position, which is one extreme, if you like. The other extreme is the British position of voiced by Tony Blair, which is very much more pro-American. And somewhere in the middle, I think European foreign ministers when they meet Colin Powell, next week, will be wanting to know if there's going to be a new binding UN resolution, calling for the inspectors to go back into Iraq. If that is the case, and Saddam doesn't let them back in or continues to prevent them from doing their work, then the case for more, let's say, more support for the Bush administration will get much stronger. The second point is also the question of evidence. I think this is the word that's been going around here. We want to know more about the actual threat emanating from Iraq. Now, if those two positions, the two points I've mentioned, fall into place, and let's say Saddam Hussein does not allow inspectors back in. And if we are presented in Europe by convincing evidence by the Bush administration, of a threat of chemical or biological nuclear weaponry, then I think the whole question of support for the Bush administration in Europe will change much towards very strongly towards the American position,

Stuart Loory 16:31

You think that there is still the good possibility that the Bush administration can gain the support of traditional allies?

Grahame Lucas 16:42

Oh here in Europe, most certainly. But I think we are simply waiting for action on those two points. And interestingly enough, Tony Blair, who is facing left wing rebellion in the Labour Party in Britain, has moved forward the date on which he intended to publish information about the threat from Iraq, and this will probably come out in now, I believe, two or three weeks, probably around about the beginning of October. And if that is the case, and if Europeans are convinced by that evidence, then I think we might start seeing opinion shifting more towards the American position. But that evidence, of course, has to be convincing.

Stuart Loory 17:20

Raymond Lowe, do you think the same thing would happen in South Africa?

Raymond Lowe 17:24

I think that would be so too bad today would be another there would be a strong undercurrent here of, of antagonism towards America on a sort of a racial divide. This can be very easily turned in this country into a kind of a black-white question. You know, an Arab versus the whites, Arab versus the European should I put it that way? Question, or the Americans. And and that would, that would be another factor here. Mandela feels that in fact, the United Nations may be maybe seriously harmed if such an attack took place. But that would, of course, be a unilateral attack. That would not happen, of course, if America did get the support of the United Nations. And if as Graham said, things start turning towards America in Europe, or hinges on the question of the of the inspectors being allowed to go back in which of course, Iraq has said that they will, would allow them to do so. But it's, it's it would be a very messy question here. Because of the of the of the racial undertones.

Grahame Lucas 18:35

I could just come back in, Grahame Lucas here in Cologne on that. I think it's not just a question of the inspectors going back in at this point. They've been in there before and they've been prevented from doing their work. I think the key thing now as far as European opinion is concerned is that Saddam lets them in and doesn't prevent them from doing their work. That is now the key.

Raymond Lowe 18:55

Now, yeah, sure. I got on with that, when I meant letting them in, obviously, and letting them and do their work, because otherwise, it becomes a valueless exercise. Yeah, exactly.

Stuart Loory 19:03

Yeah. Boris Kagarlitsky. A President Vladimir Putin puts a great deal of stock on his friendship with George Bush. How would he in the Russian government come down on the question of American military action against Iraq?

Boris Kagarlitsky 19:29

I think Russian leadership will never dare to do anything against the will of Americans. Or maybe to be more precise. The Russian leadership will not dare to go against the Americans unless Germany does so because if Germany goes its own way, and criticizing or even condemning the American adventure in Iraq, and then most probably, Russia will follow because what Russian leadership is trying to do is to sort of choose between two masters. And they look at the Germans as the potential good Master, good slave owner, as compared to Americans as bad slave owners. So we look like very wise slaves who think that they have a freedom to choose the slave owner, or server owner, whatever. thing?

Stuart Loory 20:36

Yeah, what you're suggesting is that the, the enemy and the ally of World War II are now being turned around?

Boris Kagarlitsky 20:45

Well, first of all, historically, Russia was always very close to Germany and contrary to their impression of the 20th century, if you look at Russian history, in more depth, we discover that the relations with Germany were very, very strong throughout history, but it's not a historical thing at all. In reality, it's about the economy, because Germany is one of the major economic forces in Russia. And in fact, if we can see the German investment in the industrial sector, the manufacturing is by far more important than any American presence there. In that sense. Germany is an important player inside Russia. And I think that is an important issue and again, also, yes, I think that Russian leadership now thinks that we are not any major power anymore, but at least we can sort of gamble we can find our ways between the real powers of today, which they see as Germany and America.

Stuart Loory 21:53

You can certainly see the, the German economic power in Russia, just in the streets of Moscow, when you look at all the Mercedes and BMW and Volkswagen.

Boris Kagarlitsky 22:03

Exactly, they are present visibly.

Stuart Loory 22:07

I would like if I may to change the subject now and talk about September 11. In this country, although the, the actual tragedy took place in New York and Washington, and in one small town in Pennsylvania, there will be a great outpouring of remembrance, throughout the country, in every little village and town, here in Columbia, Missouri, a small Midwestern city, there will be day long remembrance ceremonies at the City Hall, at the University, just everywhere. What about around the world? Is it having the same impact? Let's say in Russia, Boris, can you talk a little about that?

Boris Kagarlitsky 22:55

Well, of course, all the television shows on September 11, will be about the tragedy of the World Trade Center, and so on. So in terms of television, in terms of coverage, there'll be a lot of the same stuff. But in fact, I think if you... see the emotional side, in Russia, it's very different. First of all, don't forget America is a country which was never attacked, which never suffered really tremendous casualties compared to what Russia or Germany or Poland suffered throughout the 20th century. So the

impression was completely different. It reminds me of a real story, when a Russian general saw a poster on the Berlin Wall from the western side, saying that 60 deaths was the price of the Berlin wall that was like in the mid 60s or early 70s. And that was how many people were killed there, the Berlin Wall throughout all that period. And he looked at this and said, 'Do you mean daily?' You see, so in that sense, even the quantities of death in the World Trade Center are not astonishing for the Russian psyche. It's not something which goes out of scale, unlike an American impression. And that's one thing. And the second thing is that the official American explanation, and the official American evidence is very often challenged in the Russian press. So in that sense, people say that they do not exactly feel convinced by the official American version of what happened on September 11. They think that the whole story is much more complicated, that we are not told the whole truth and probably that the American administration is not interested in telling us the whole country. My story of September 11 and we still have to wait to the whole truth will come out.

Stuart Loory 25:07

Ray Lowe?

Raymond Lowe 25:09

Well, it's not won't be very much remembrance. Yeah, I should imagine the American Embassy and consulates around the country will, of course, obviously be conducting services. But from a general South African point of view, the well there will be, of course on television and radio recollections of what did take place on September 11. The only really concrete thing that is happening here is a tightening up of our security legislation. We've got a new terrorism bill, which is floating through our parliamentary processes, and which is, which was obviously designed to following September 11, to in fact, tighten up security in the country as a result of this of the bombings, right?

Stuart Loory 25:51

Yeah, I'm sorry, but we are running out of time. And I'd like to give a few seconds to Faris Sanabani and Grahame Lucas.

Faris Sanabani 25:58

I think this as far as from Yemen, I think the government is celebrating it by taking action by cracking down on terrorist elements and by improving security and cleaning up the country. While the people and the media are celebrating will not even shed a light on it, because they're pretty busy and preoccupied with assessing who the next target is. Is it going to be Iran, or Korea or Saudi or Israel or Syria, that now that the weapons of mass destruction is becoming easily available, and will be even easier available in the next coming years.

Stuart Loory 26:29

Okay, Grahame Lucas?

Grahame Lucas 26:31

Yeah, very briefly, I think, a couple of points. So there's obviously a deluge of reporting on the 11th of September on television radio here. We are also now looking at our third piece of anti-terror legislation in Germany since 11th of September last year, which is already quite a lot. And of course, some of the

terrorists involved in the attack, were actually operating in Germany immediately beforehand. And we have, I'm sure the usual run of church services and appeals by political leaders and church leaders and this sort of thing. The interesting thing, I think, is that a an opinion poll published today says that one in three Germans are terrified or extremely worried that there will be attacks on the 11th of September. And I think that's sort of basically the overriding mood here, one of great concern and also a certain amount of fear.

Stuart Loory 27:19

Well, I think there is probably the same fear in the United States and of course, we all hope that there will be nothing like that at all next Wednesday. Sorry, but we are out of time. Our guests today have been Grahame Lucas of Deutsche Welle radio in Cologne, Germany, Faris Sanabani of the Yemen observer in Aden, Yemen. Raymond Lowe of the South Southern Africa report in Johannesburg, South Africa, and Boris Kagarlinsky of the Institute for Globalization Studies in Moscow. Our director is Pat Akers and our producer Sarah Andrea Fajardo. For all. I'm Stuart Loory. Global Journalist will be back next week.