

Essay on Iraq's Future

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Essay Questions: (Please type responses and attach essays to this form)

1. Choose a current issue in international relations. Describe why it is important to you and what can be done to help resolve or improve it (*limit 500 words*).

The Middle East is quite possibly the greatest source of potential conflict for the United States in the post Cold War era. The future and rebuilding of Iraq will be most relevant in shaping our future relations with the Middle East. As an exchange student in Germany I gained a more critical view of United States foreign policy, and as a result I have become sensitive to how the world views us. With this new sense, I have witnessed how American credibility has deteriorated due to the Iraq conflict. American credibility had already begun to spiral downward because of over extension during the Cold War. This caused wide spread anti-American sentiment throughout the world as well as stereotypes of an imperialist United States. This very sentiment, which we inadvertently caused as part of containing communism, now fuels fundamentalist terrorist groups that threaten our national security. The terrorist attacks on September 11th, 2001 made this apparent. Although it is necessary that actions be taken to combat terrorism, I firmly believe the US must carefully consider the implications military engagements in the Middle East carry with them.

America often brushes aside the international community's allegations that US intervention is imperialistic. After all, the United States itself took no part in European imperialist conquest. As a former British colony, America wished to extend its sympathy by rejecting any military commitment which might serve to strengthen British or French mandates (i.e. Egypt and the Suez Canal). But when we look to a few major US engagements, namely Vietnam, Desert Storm, and now the war with Iraq, it is clear we have deviated from our commitment to anti-imperialism and supported borders congruent with the UK and imperial France. Accusations of imperialism no longer seem so far fetched.

US policy in rebuilding Iraq will either confirm or negate suspicions of imperialistic conquest. Iraq's borders were originally drawn by the UK, and it is important to consider that these borders do not reflect a single nationality, but encompass a multitude of ethnic groups. The United Nations ought to conduct a geographic survey of the region to help present viable options other than supporting the boundaries of the former British mandate. In this way, conflict in the future may be reduced if the findings produce evidence that borders need to be redrawn, irredentas reconnected, and new nations be formed (i.e. Kurdistan). However, if the findings show that a vast majority of people in Iraq do consider themselves to be Iraqis before being Kurds, Sunnis, or Shiites, then perhaps a federal state or democracy in support of the current borders is in fact the solution. Ultimately, all peoples of Iraq should have a fair say in their own future, whether that be the devolution of the state or the formation of a democracy. If the US exerts too much influence over the construction of a new state, it would only further enrage fundamentalist terrorist groups in

the region and threaten our national security even more than before.