



NEWSHOUR

A NewsHour with Jim Lehrer special for students

EXTRA

## THE ROLE OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN POST-WAR IRAQ

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***The United States asserts that its coalition of allies will play the leading role in post-war Iraq, despite critics who would like a more international approach.***

Despite America's assertion that its coalition of allies in the Iraq war will play the leading role in an immediate post-war Iraq, other nations continue to press for increased international involvement in deciding Iraq's future.

Making the rounds of the **Sunday talk show circuit**, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz was skeptical about the United Nations' ability to run Iraq, citing the U.N.'s role in Kosovo in the late 1990s.

### **Not another Kosovo**

Following U.S.-led NATO bombing in 1999, the United Nations created an **interim civilian administration** in Kosovo, which they named UNMIK. But four years later, instead of setting up a fully independent government, the United Nations is still overseeing Kosovo's administration. The U.N. promises Kosovo will eventually be in full control of the government.

On CBS's "Face the Nation," Wolfowitz said the Kosovo situation is "not a model we want to follow, of a sort of permanent international administration."

Wolfowitz said the U.S.-led coalition will likely run Iraq until a new Iraqi government is in place and ready to take care of its affairs.

"I think the right goal is to move as quickly as we can ... to a government that is – if I could paraphrase Abraham Lincoln – of the Iraqis, by the Iraqis, for the Iraqis," he said. "Not to make them a **colonial** administration or a U.N. administration, or run in any way by foreigners."

### **The role of the United Nations**

Critics of the influential U.S. role would like to see a more international post-war Iraq. Mustapha Karkouti, a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, says that while European countries, including Britain, would not be opposed to the U.S. maintaining an advisory role in Iraq, those countries would "like to see the United Nations playing what they call a vital and important role, not the supporting role the U.S. administration seems willing to give it."

Wolfowitz said the United Nations' main role in a post-war Iraq would be to bring humanitarian relief to the Iraqi people.

"The U.N. can be a mechanism for bringing that assistance to the Iraqi people ... but our goal has to be to transfer authority and operations of a government as quickly as possible, not to some other external authority but to the Iraqi people," he said on Fox News Sunday.

Secretary of State Colin Powell, after meeting with **European Union** and **NATO** foreign ministers in Brussels on Thursday, expressed similar sentiments, saying the coalition "has to play the leading role" in a post-war Iraq.

"Military commanders will be responsible for stabilizing the situation, for securing the country and the people. But that does not mean we have to shut others out. There will definitely be a United Nations role, but what the exact nature of that role will be remains to be seen," Powell said.

### **European critics**

The U.S. stance differs significantly from the views of officials in France, Germany and Russia, who would like to see the United Nations put in charge of a post-war Iraq.

"We believe the United Nations should have a central role, whether political or economic," said French Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, whose country has been one of the most outspoken opponents of the war.

"The U.N. is the only international organization that can give legitimacy" to Iraq's reconstruction, he said.

In an interview with the German newspaper Frankfurter Rundschau Sunday, German Defense Minister Peter Struck warned that Europe could not be expected to contribute troops or money to help Iraq's reconstruction if the United States was running the country.

"If reconstruction is not placed under the U.N., then I don't see any primary responsibility for Germany," he said. "When you consider they are already reportedly looking for companies in the United States for reconstruction, then it seems obvious to me that the process will be secured by the U.S. military."

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## Vocabulary

**Sunday talk show circuit** – political talk shows on American television including, Meet the Press, Face the Nation, Fox News Sunday and This Week.

**interim civilian administration** – a government that is put into place between the old and new governments.

"Working closely with Kosovo's leaders and people, the mission (UNMIK) performs the whole spectrum of essential administrative functions and services covering such areas as health and education, banking and finance, post and telecommunications, and law and order." (<http://www.unmikonline.org>)

**colonial** - of, relating to, or characteristic of a colony (Merriam-Webster)

**colony - a** : a body of people living in a new territory but retaining ties with the parent state **b** : the territory inhabited by such a body (Merriam-Webster)

**European Union** - economic, scientific, and political organization consisting of Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Ireland, United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Austria, Finland, & Sweden (Merriam-Webster)

**NATO** – North Atlantic Treaty Organization