

Resident experts analyze war repercussions

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Just as Iraqi Scud missiles were landing in Israel Thursday evening, five international relations experts gathered in SC 100 at the North Miami campus to discuss the Middle East crisis.

The panel consisted of Dr. Charles MacDonald, professor of international relations; Dr. Hisham Ahmed, visiting professor of political science; Dr. Mohiaddin Messbahi, assistant professor of political science; Alexander Simon, Jr., assistant professor of political science and Dr. Brad McGuinn, professor of Middle Eastern politics.

"Before seven yesterday evening there was a crisis in the Gulf. Now there's a crisis in the world," said Ahmed.

"The scenery was set in a manner where Iraq was not a desirable actor in the international community. From the Iraqi point of view, there are economic, political and historical reasons for the crisis. Israeli and American administrations expressed interest in diminishing his power. That disturbed Saddam. I would've been surprised if it [war] did not occur."

Simon found it difficult to understand the U.S. government's short-sightedness in the Middle East. "The U.S. Ambassador said 'Your border disputes are not our concern.' If the U.S. didn't do anything about Israel [its U.N. violations], why should it do anything about Kuwait [and Iraq]?"

The Iraqis were used by the West to con-



tain the Iranian Revolution; the Americans feared the Iranians more than they feared the Iraqis, Messbahi explained. Messbahi, a Soviet Union expert, said that "Saddam is a product to a certain extent of American and Soviet policy. The Soviets provided the Iraqis with \$8 billion from 1986-1988. Gorbachev is responsible for the missiles landing in Israel," he said. "The Soviets are frustrated that the U.S. is using the U.N."

"The conviction in Baghdad is that with or without Kuwait, Saddam is finished. Now the Iraqis regret not invading Saudi Arabia."

Messbahi fears that Iran will join the war to support Iraq, but is more concerned with the hostility of millions of Muslims against Americans. War must be quick. If not, it's likely the war will go beyond Iraqi borders."

With Israel being attacked, it's not known what effect that will have on the coalition, of which Israel's arch-enemy, Syria, is a part.

Simon said "It depends on Israel's response. If they cross the line, other countries may then side with Iraq." The Arab people may perceive that it's the U.S., Israel and the Saudi royal family against them. "If that perception occurs, a total flip-flop, a reversal of

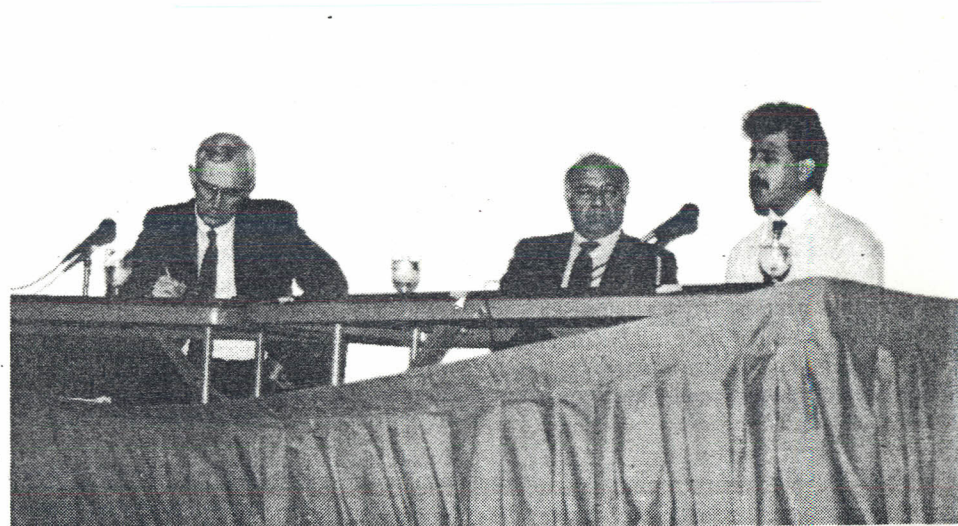


Photo by Andreas Fuhrmann

(Left to right): Dr. Charles Mac Donald, Alexander Simon, Jr. and Dr. Hisham Ahmed.

the situation [may occur]. The U.S. has exhausted its reserves of good will among the Arabs."

MacDonald, the panel's moderator, didn't know if Israel would engage Jordan en route to Iraq.

Messbahi answered: "If Iraq, Iran and Syria join, it will be a total reshaping of the Middle East."

Simon supports an Arab-Israeli conference, but admitted that "Mr. Shamir and company are not interested in a conference that would give up a square inch of Israel." Middle Eastern problems must be addressed,

he said. "You become a terrorist because you don't own an F-15. The difference between a terrorist and a fighter pilot is the size of his weapon."

Simon said that "No one is trying for peace. We keep forgetting the humanity of the issue. It doesn't make sense that these countries aren't working together."

The program was sponsored by student activities, united campus ministry and the social and cultural programming committee of student government.

A candlelight service for peace followed the discussion.