

Global Journalist: Last year's biggest news story and what's to come

Abstract: In this Jan. 2, 2003 episode, Stuart Loory asks his guests about their thoughts on the biggest international and regional stories of 2002, and their prognosis for the new year. The answers contain: Iraq war, North Korea's nuclear plans, African and Latin American political crises and U.S. foreign policies.

Bios

[Stuart Loory](#) was a long-time reporter and editor for the Chicago Sun-Times and CNN. He was the inaugural Lee Hills Chair in Free Press Studies at the Missouri School of Journalism. He [died in 2015](#).

[Raymond Louw](#) was known as "Mr. Press Freedom" after the end of apartheid in South Africa. He revolutionized the paper Rand Daily Mail, focusing its coverage on the Black South Africa and exposing white oligarchs. He was 92 when he [died, in 2019](#), less than 24 hours after the death of his wife.

[Chon Shi-yong](#) made his career at The Korea Herald over the decades, being its national editor as well as its chief editorial writer. In 2018, he was named chairman of the Asia News Network (ANN).

[Dan Kirshock](#) was the managing editor of the Argentinian newspaper Buenos Aires Herald.

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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 were 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 Africa 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 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 year, for Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan and the war in Afghanistan. And I think, of course, what the edges did all of that out to some extent, towards the end of the year, with the growing preparations for a war against Iraq. I think that that, in fact, has 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 Aziz Pahad, 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 to to get to, of course, the Middle East, and the the the the the relation and the the fact that Africa, mostly most of Africa is the developing country area, and that the economic side effects apart from the humanitarian effects are likely to be very disruptive of our society's

Stuart Loory 03:02

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

Dan Kirshock 03:14

Well, clearly on an international level, as Ray said, 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 1990s, 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 or 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 disastrous 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 04:49

And in Korea and Asia too, the war on war on terrorism, was the biggest international news in the region. And but I think the, from the regional perspective of 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 two years, we had all the big news and then the 2003, I think this is going to be a big, major news for the time being.

Stuart Loory 05:31

I think here in the United States, the situation for the year 2003 is the build up, 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 07:03

Well hum, 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 pessimism...

pessimism... pessimistic view is that North Korea remains defiant and keep developing nuclear bombs. Often the failure over the majors, including economic sanctions, the United States might consider conducting a precision military strike on the nuclear facilities. Which could do, quote "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 and 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 scenario. And I would just say we should and can avoid this situation. Now, the optimistic view is that the United States, South Korea and other members of the international community, talk to the north and reach an agreement to end the standoff. For this, I think we might need some new incentives to the north in return for his decision to reverse his moves, to deactivate its 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 help 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 there are some kinds of different views and conflicts to begin with, how between the approaches of South Korea and the United States and you know, in dealing with the nuclear issue. But I'll just say there is a little bit of exaggeration. I think it is a good sign that President Bush said in Texas, Tuesday, that he thinks he could resolve the issue diplomatically. Right? This is the position of South Korea. And I think the, now the President Bush and his aides, no 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, on they are all working together to defuse the crisis. And I think they, the how they are doing to incorporate on the issue is, you know, taking a desirable 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 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 course of the health problems, the famine problems, the political problems.

Raymond Louw 11:08

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 has been encroaching in the last year, famine, 14-15 million people in Sub Saharan Africa, face famine. Seek a half of those in Zimbabwe, where, as you know, virtually the whole of the productive farming element has been destroyed, or the wild, or 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. Not given incidentally, as much of the attention as a two 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 those are the two really very big, big problems that Southern Africa is facing. And of course, there are the ongoing wars, and the fragile, fragile pieces, peace 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 flee their homes. And of course, there's Burundi with a South Africans on a peacekeeping mission, there is Angola, which seems to be hitting on a reasonable footing, but of course, that has been attacked by the other other big enemy in Africa, and that is corruption in government. And, and then of course, there's 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, is a hotbed of problems. If I can do, if I can word it that way. And and it's going to be and it's going to be worse in the coming year. From South Africa's point of view, we of course, played host of 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 our economy, which has been in a rather sad plight for since 1994, is 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.globaljournalist.org or you're in mid-Missouri by calling us at 573-882-9641. Let's pick up the discussion with some more about Latin America. Dan Kirschock, talk a little bit about what might or should happen in Latin America in the coming year.

Dan Kirshock 14:26

Well, I believe the big the big story, as I said earlier, in Latin America will be Brazil. Yesterday, Brazil got a new President, Lula Inácio da Silva, his official name, better known as Lula...

Stuart Loory 14:41

We know Mr. Lula here.

Dan Kirshock 14:43

He's a former Labour 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 a 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.

Dan Kirshock 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 that had the 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 signal 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 the 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? Right?

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's support for Sharon, 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 seems, 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 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 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 a reaction to that, of course, tempered by the fact that in most countries depend to some extent on America, for economic aid and for trade trade factors. For instance, this nobody's objecting to America's intervention in Africa with the oh what's the, the the Act, which provides for trade between African states and, and and and America without having duties imposed on their, on their product, their products. Nobody's nobody objects to that. And that's that's a very fine positive mood, move. But there is, there's great fear here about a war involving America and Iraq, and the and the side effects and the spin offs that are likely to develop 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 but 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, 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 for 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, the country war in Iraq are certainly being perceived by many sectors in this in this region as, once again, another example of the United States has a tendency to act unilaterally. And those feelings have been aggravated by the fact that the that the 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 the

attitude is, "Look, if the U.S. is so concentrated on the Middle East, what about us? Why aren't they spending some of their time and efforts 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 U.S. on that issue.

Stuart Loory 21:03

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

Dan Kirshock 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 taking a confrontational attitude itself, has probably blunted the sort of criticism you would see toward the United States normally and how it responds in other parts of the world.

Stuart Loory 21:43

Chon Shi-yong, there have been 35,000 American troops stationed in your country for the last 50 years.

Chon Shi-yong 21:52

37,000

Stuart Loory 21:54

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, two teenage girls were killed by a U.S. military armed vehicle during trade, training mission. And the two soldiers none of whom manned the vehicle, you know, were were created by the a U.S. court martial. And that angered some South Koreans and the activists and they had some more mournings for the girls and protests. And in this way, you know, there have been some anti-American sentiment growing in recent months. And then the nuclear crisis came. And I think a majority of the South Korean just here want to have U.S. forces in Korea, you know, 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 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 U.S. forces in on the Korean peninsula.

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 AGO act, that is the one that I couldn't, I couldn't remember the time 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 go get into America without having to be to have duty paid on 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 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 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 formation of the African Union, which is the success to the Organization of African Unity in which, as 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 this as it's mean... as a member of the G8, if it could give help on that, in that sphere, particularly financial help, that would be the most the most encouraging.

Stuart Loory 25:29

Ray, thank you. I, 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 talked 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 in. And what those products are principally agricultural products. And thus far, the U.S. and even more so the Europe have shown been highly reluctant to open their market to, 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 is a priority for him, but thus far it is not, in practice, really put a lot of emphasis on that. And if it really wants to earn goodwill here, it should open up its markets for Latin American.

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. Mr. Bush, he should know that the situation in North Korea is different from that in Iraq. Mr. Bush better know that all in every country in the region in Japan, China,

Russia, later on South Korea do not want the U.S. to impose economic sanctions on North Korea, much less a preemptive military strike on the nuclear facility.

Stuart Loory 27:29

Okay.

Chon Shi-yong 27:30

Neighbors 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 U.S. to seek 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 Stachura (ph). For all, I'm Stuart Loory, Global Journalist, we'll be back next week.