

(Free) What We Owe Iraq: War and the Ethics of Nation Building

What We Owe Iraq: War and the Ethics of Nation Building

Noah Feldman

ebooks | Download PDF | *ePub | DOC | audiobook

Noah Feldman

WHAT WE OWE IRAQ

War and the Ethics of Nation Building

With a new afterword by the author

"Insightful, accessible and highly recommended"

—Richard A. Clarke, *Washington Post Book World*

 Download

 Read Online

#1602983 in Books Princeton University Press 2006-04-02 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.50 x .40 x 5.511, .50 #File Name: 0691126127176 pages | File size: 17.Mb

Noah Feldman : What We Owe Iraq: War and the Ethics of Nation Building before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What We Owe Iraq: War and the Ethics of Nation Building:

23 of 25 people found the following review helpful. Arguably the best, most practical book on post-war Iraq By Lee L. I think I'll begin by addressing the two negative reviews posted thus far... At no point in this book does Feldman argue that the U.S. should have replaced Hussein with another dictator. That kind of statement runs completely against everything contained in this book. In my opinion, only someone that had never read the book could make a claim like

that. As for the other review (posted by someone that simply pastes academic reviews onto), the view is presented that the U.S. in fact does not owe Iraq much of anything and claims that Feldman presents no argument to the contrary. This type of statement is also in the wrong. Feldman takes the position in this book that since the U.S. is in Iraq and completely dismantled the government, there is an ethical obligation on the part of the U.S. to see the job finished. A finished job would be a functioning, self-reliant Iraq that can defend itself and promote individual liberties. This book goes about describing the set of ethics the U.S. should abide by. A lot of people argue about Iraq today as if it were only George W. Bush's problem. This approach is terribly flawed. Iraq in 2003 was a product of (1) Saddam Hussein, and (2) EVERY U.S. PRESIDENT SINCE REAGAN. Washington has had a roller coaster of a ride with Iraq ever since the early 80's. Every decision made by the U.S. since then has contributed to how Iraq would eventually end up. Yes...Hussein is also to blame and should not be given a free pass, but neither should the U.S. As far as ethics go, we owe a huge deal to Iraq. Hussein would have most likely been defeated by Iran in the 80's had it not been for U.S. and other Western support. It's time the U.S. owned up to our decisions, regardless of whether or not George W. Bush went about it in a patently dishonest way. In the end, Feldman presents an argument that is both ethical and pragmatic. I think his argument is the one that should ultimately be adopted. If you can get past your own partisan issues and listen to Feldman with an open mind, you'll come away with a much better understanding of Iraq and what to do about it.

3 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Do not compare Germany and Iraq ...By FrizzTextCondoleezza Rice always takes the concept of "Nation Building" with pleasure into her mouth and tries to explain with frown to the audience how important this task is. The author Noah Feldman is an expert for this concept -- and NATION BUILDING also has his development history: On the occasion of the 1st World War the United Nations formulated guidelines which were still whisked a little with the ideology of the colonial time and carried a little of the gesture of a patriarchal guardianship into themselves, though. After the second World War one lost something of this arrogance and put as an aim into the centre only, that a nation, political ethically lagging behind (at that time Germany), should be brought by the introduction of democracy to the global community standard. Cases like Kosovo or East Timor seemed to confirm the correctness of such a target. In the case Iraq an additional thinking effort must be done. While Condoleezza Rice still compares Germany 1945 with present Iraq a little school girlishly and assumes that everything has to be fixed in the time window of four years, the expert Noah Feldman is there already a little more skeptical. Compare the educational level, the religion dependence, the power of the different population groupings and the complete missing of national feelings of guilt: these different factors forbid the comparison Iraq/Germany actually. [Nevertheless the Washington administration-rhetoric continues to do so.] Noah Feldman seems to recognize the clear difference: Because the wave of terror-acts is not tearing off. Has there been this in Germany, that police stations were classified as collaborator collection places and regularly blown up into the air? Has there been this in Germany 1945, that permanently seeped over the national boundaries from the neighboring countries Christian sympathizers to Germany, which wanted to help to cast out the Americans? NO! The USA have completely underestimated the forming strength of Islamic solidarity and the connected high aggression level. Since the debacle was got going worldwide visibly now (perhaps justified a little recklessly and wrongly)?, the USA owes to the Iraqi people, not to leave the country till at least safety is established against assassinations - this is the NEW, what Feldman is saying. Unfortunately, the installation of a constitution suffices not at all (like 1945-1949 in Germany). The production of a civilian safety as an afterwards defined aim will take up substantially more time or is successful never -- and ends with an out throw of American know-all battalions as formerly in Vietnam. Noah Feldman does not mention this point, he likes to see a positive future, not the flashbacks of nightmare-views. Of course we all hope, there soon will shine the sun of peace and freedom in Iraq -- and the US will take a break, being a global ethic police ...2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Good book... title not preciseBy Loves the ViewThis is not a discussion of what we owe Iraq, which Feldman states is a decent functioning government, but an analysis of the the issues involved in getting there. The best parts, for me, were the examples from his experience such as the practical problems facing those who worked in the early occupation, his description of the Republican Palace, the meeting with the Lawyers Association. The heart of the book is an analysis of the issues involved in achieving the goal such as authority, occupation vs. trusteeship, paternalism, elections, legitimacy/perceived legitimacy, etc.

What do we owe Iraq? America is up to its neck in nation building--but the public debate, focused on getting the troops home, devotes little attention to why we are building a new Iraqi nation, what success would look like, or what principles should guide us. What We Owe Iraq sets out to shift the terms of the debate, acknowledging that we are nation building to protect ourselves while demanding that we put the interests of the people being governed--whether in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, or elsewhere--ahead of our own when we exercise power over them. Noah Feldman argues that to prevent nation building from turning into a paternalistic, colonialist charade, we urgently need a new, humbler approach. Nation builders should focus on providing security, without arrogantly claiming any special expertise in how successful nation-states should be made. Drawing on his personal experiences in Iraq as a constitutional adviser, Feldman offers enduring insights into the power dynamics between the American occupiers and the Iraqis, and tackles issues such as Iraqi elections, the prospect of successful democratization, and the way home.

Elections do not end the occupier's responsibility. Unless asked to leave, we must resist the temptation of a military pullout before a legitimately elected government can maintain order and govern effectively. But elections that create a legitimate democracy are also the only way a nation builder can put itself out of business and--eventually--send its troops home. Feldman's new afterword brings the Iraq story up-to-date since the book's original publication in 2004, and asks whether the United States has acted ethically in pushing the political process in Iraq while failing to control the security situation; it also revisits the question of when, and how, to withdraw.

One of Choice's Outstanding Academic Titles for 2005 "Powerful and important. . . . The book, like its author, is an unusual blend: part theoretical treatise, part political analysis, part memoir. Above all, it is a plea to the American conscience to take seriously the responsibility the United States has assumed to help the Iraqi people build the democracy Feldman believes they need and deserve. . . . As American citizens, Feldman insists, we are all responsible for what happens in Iraq."--Robert Kagan, *New York Times Book "In What We Owe Iraq--part theoretical treatise, part political analysis, part memoir--Noah Feldman . . . makes the case that when the United States invaded Iraq, it not only toppled a tyrant but also undertook a 'trusteeship' on behalf of the Iraqi people."*--*New York Times Book "An earnest, thoughtful brief against those who would have the U.S. withdraw before our job there is done, a temptation that will grow harder to resist in the months ahead. Mr. Feldman's emphasis on serving American interests injects a welcome dose of realism into his ethical meditations. America's de facto rule of the conquered country is a trusteeship, he insists, obliging us to think of ourselves as representatives of the Iraqi people, accountable to their views and responsible, ultimately, for restoring their sovereignty."*--*Wall Street Journal* "Written with tempered passion and a grounded sense of the possibilities, Feldman's book nicely bridges theory and practice."--*Publishers Weekly* "Valuable. . . . What We Owe Iraq . . . lays out clearly just how we avoided delivering whatever we owed Iraq in the way of democracy. . . . Feldman thinks it is actually in our own interests to foster a legitimate democratic government in Iraq in order to combat terrorism effectively, as well as being the right thing to do."--*Andrew Cockburn, The Nation* "Insightful, accessible and highly recommended for policymakers and readers interested in understanding the opportunities and hazards that will confront America as the world's foremost nation-builder. Feldman details the behind-the-scenes power politics of the U.S. occupation and delivers a persuasive appeal for a more grassroots approach to nation building--that is, an approach seen by most Iraqis as legitimized by local input. He argues that nation building can be an effective long-term strategy to fight terrorism if its purpose is to create stable democracies. Feldman's approach offers preventive medicine against insurgency and terrorism as well as a practical strategy for a longer-term global war of ideas."--*Richard A. Clarke, Washington Post Book World* "A well-argued call for a long-term U.S. commitment to Iraq. The book is original and refreshingly free of ideology and partisanship."--*Andrew Apostolou, New York Post* "This short penetrating study . . . examines the ethics of nation-building, exploring its challenges from the perspectives of law, democratic theory, and political morality. . . . This timely, carefully reasoned, and elegantly written book is an important contribution to the literature on political development."--*Choice* "An informed, thoughtful examination of why the U.S. is trying to build a new Iraqi nation, what would be considered a success, and what principles should be followed."--*H. J. Kirchoff, Globe and Mail* Noah Feldman is a rapidly rising star in the American intellectual firmament. This elegant set of essays showcases his keen intelligence and sweeping erudition. It illuminates America's mission in Iraq, and much more. (Fareed Zakaria, Editor, "Newsweek International", author of "The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad".) From the Inside Flap "Noah Feldman is a rapidly rising star in the American intellectual firmament. This elegant set of essays showcases his keen intelligence and sweeping erudition. It illuminates America's mission in Iraq, and much more."--*Fareed Zakaria, Editor, Newsweek International, author of The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad.* "If you are wrestling with the question of why the United States is in Iraq, committed to the reconstruction of that troubled nation, there is no better place to start than with Noah Feldman's timely and thought-provoking new book. Deftly weaving his own experiences in the rebuilding of Iraq, political philosophy, constitutional law, and a broad perspective on American interests in the world, Feldman elevates the debate on this issue above the platitudes of the politicians."--*Kenneth M. Pollack, Director of Research, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution* "Intervening in another country and rebuilding its institutions after tyranny amounts to a moral promise. Noah Feldman's fine book is a lucid, passionate, and closely reasoned examination of what it means to try to keep that promise. There are plenty of books around that treat nation building as a technical or military exercise. This is the book that thinks through nation building as a moral challenge and an exercise in promise keeping."--*Michael Ignatieff, Director, Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Harvard University, author of The Lesser Evil* "A coherent, tightly argued, penetrating, timely, and provocative book. Noah Feldman provides both a clear-sighted discussion of constitutional aspects of nation building and a fascinating account of postwar Iraq."--*G. John Ikenberry, Albert G. Milbank Professor of Politics and International Affairs, Princeton University, author of The Nation State in Question*