

# WESTWORLD



## New foreign policy step in right direction

W. **Suhail Ansari**  
World Editor

The historic election of the nation's first African-American president has its intrinsic value, such as a clear movement forward in race relations and minorities' struggle for civil rights. However, this great achievement has overshadowed a much more important hurdle, the shift from former President George W. Bush's eight-year foreign policy of ignorance and hate to President Barack Obama's more enlightened view.

During the Bush administration, this country made one of the biggest mistakes in federal budget history: the waging of the Iraq war. Not only did the start of this war begin with baseless claims, it set up the U.S. to foot a bill to the economy of \$3 trillion, according to Nobel-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz, which adds to the federal deficit of already \$11 trillion, according to the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

## Instead of just trying to quell the consequences of global problems, the Obama administration seems to try to stop the problems from occurring

The subsequent war has precipitated the detainment of thousands of innocent civilians along with seemingly guilty militants. Even if such action was required, the brutality that the U.S. government authorized has painted the U.S. as the enemy in many powerful nations. With the immoral use of Guantanamo Bay and the use of water-boarding torture techniques, the U.S. shifted from keeping peace to causing chaos.

Further demonizing the U.S. under Bush's administration was its role on putting pressure on the Iranian government to stop its enrichment of uranium and pursuit of nuclear power plants and weapons while refusing diplomatic relations. Although it might have been necessary to pressure Iran, the refusal of diplomatic relations throughout the ordeal was counterintuitive.

The former administration took a more aggressive approach to international relations that worsened the view of America. Its poor decisions in the Iraq war and its seeming refusal to negotiate any solution with Iran put the U.S. in a bad light.

Instead of promoting the well being of the entire international community by promoting economic and educational growth and therefore ensuring lasting peace, the former president dealt with the consequences of all the problems in the world without addressing the root causes.

## This profound shift will definitely be more successful in establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility and promoting the general welfare

Although the previous administration might have seen fit to wage unjust war, the new administration of Obama seeks to help unify the international community under the shared hope of lasting peace. Although the new plan has some flaws, such as the continued economic backing of Israel (see *West Word* issue 6, page 4), it still displays a profound shift in dealing with problems. Instead of just trying to quell the consequences of global problems, the Obama administration seems to try to stop the problems from occurring.

With the economic sanctions in place on Iran, the new policy is for tough and direct diplomacy with Iran without preconditions, and the goal of the new policy with Iraq is to end the war within the next two years, according to [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov).

The problems of terrorism, nuclear weapons, climate change and poverty are just some of the global problems that face the global community. Therefore, it is common sense that the Obama administration wishes to usher in "a new era of international cooperation that strengthens old partnerships and builds new ones to confront the common challenges of the 21st century," according to [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). This profound shift will definitely be more successful in establishing justice, ensuring domestic tranquility and promoting the general welfare.

## School community applauds U.S. Iraq policy

W. **Suhail Ansari**  
World Editor

"In my class, we discuss the Iraq war in context with other wars in the past. When you compare an aspect such as public approval in the Vietnam War to public approval in the Iraq War, there is much more of a response from students," global studies and honors U.S. history teacher Janet Kelsey said.

Other teachers feel that the Iraq War's large impact on American society is the reason why it has become so important to discuss this current issue. "The Iraq War has become a very important issue in modern America, and the amount of resources, both money wise and human wise, is just staggering. The war has had a large impact on the American political landscape, both widening [the inequality in America and] abroad," global problems teacher Matt Weatherington said.

President Barack Obama visited Iraq on April 7 to announce his plans for the future of the Iraq War, according to the New York Times.

Under this new initiative, Obama hopes to withdraw all combat forces by Aug. 2010 and shift the focus on Afghanistan. Obama said, "I have a responsibility to make sure that as we bring troops out, that we do so in a careful enough way that we don't see a complete collapse into violence."

Kelsey sees it appropriate to discuss the recent changes in American policy with her class. "I feel that sometimes teachers



President Barack Obama visited with the President of Iraq on Apr. 7 and announced his new plan for the withdrawal of all combat troops from Iraq by Aug. 2010. Photo courtesy MCT

are nervous about discussing current political topics in class because they feel it is too controversial, but I feel that students need to be informed about what is going on in the world and how to go about fixing the problems we face," she said.

Some students feel that the information received in class is beneficial.

"In my U.S. history class, we talked about how the Iraq War costs the American economy. The new change in pulling out of Iraq will help save many American lives," junior Christina Colletta said.

Other students feel as if the Iraq War is not discussed in class enough.

Senior Manju George said, "We never really talk about how the wars we are in started. All the teachers just mention small pieces of information here or there and do not really talk about how America got involved in Iraq and Afghanistan."

Although students might feel current events are not fully discussed in class,

Weatherington said that it is vital for students to have the right information.

"Our students need to have all the information to make an informed decision when voting, and it is the school's responsibility to prepare them for that. The Iraq War is a problem in America's policy, [and that is why I teach it in my classroom]," Weatherington said.

## Reactions mixed to televised military funerals

W. **Sarah Espinosa**  
Staff Writer

"A funeral it supposed to be meant for family and closest friends; if it is military, then the people he served under and with [should attend]," senior Adam Rahman said, "The media [are] going to spin it, it will all be like propaganda. Why should we publicize the death of one or two to attract the death of more?"

Rahman responded to a recent [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com) article regarding the publication of photos of caskets and/or television coverage of funerals for military personnel who have died serving their country.

Other West students and staff expressed mixed reactions to President Barack Obama's lifting the 18-year-old ban on such coverage.

Dean Mark Rigby, who served in the U.S. Army for five and a half years, does not support the idea.

"I do believe that people need to be more educated on our military, [but] I don't think that people, especially around this area, are educated about what is going on. However, I don't believe that airing funerals is the way to do that. I believe that a funeral is and should always be a private, somber ceremony that is not for public consumption. I think that it is intrusive and unnecessary," Rigby said.

Strength and conditioning coach Fernando Perez agrees with Rigby. Perez served in the Marine Corps for six years and served two terms in Afghanistan.

"[The funerals] will be interpreted the way the media [want

them] to be," Perez said. "They will pull things out in the past that don't need to be said."

Senior Elise Lee agrees.

"I don't like it; I understand that they are protecting our country out there and we want to honor and respect them, but I don't think that is how the U.S. should go about it," Lee said. "The media will portray it the way they want people to see it, and I don't like the idea of it at all."

Junior Jessica Strauss expressed ambivalence.

"I think it depends on if the family thinks it is okay, and if they approve what the media will say and show," Strauss said. "Overall, it is a good idea, but a lot of people could see it as rude."

Junior Sidney Bekaon reacted negatively to the issue.

"I think it is stupid. First of all, you need to ask the family whose son or daughter had died if it is okay to televise the funeral. How do you televise a funeral? It is supposed to be a time of respect by not talking. If there is some news anchor there, that defeats the purpose," Bekaon said.

Assistant Principal of Operations Ryan McTague, who served in the Army, offered another perspective. "I understand both sides of the argument, but I think that if the family wants cameras there or allows cameras to be there, then I think that it is okay. I think it shows people that there is a cost to war and it is not only in dollars but in lives too," he said.

Sophomore Seve Loubriel concurs.

"I think it is a good idea. It will open the eyes of many people and they will see how many people actually dying out there," Loubriel said.

## Students plan ways to spoil mom on Mother's Day

W. **Adriana Zalloni**  
Sports Editor

As Mother's Day approaches, students scramble to find the perfect gift to give. They worry whether mom will like the meal they prepare or if the set of towels they buy will match the kitchen tiles. How do students at West show their affection for these women?

It varies from student to student.

Senior Owais Ahmed takes the traditional route to show his mother he cares.

"I usually get my mother flowers and a card," Ahmed said.

On Mother's Day, the roles also tend to be switched.

"I wake up early and bring my mom breakfast in bed for once," junior Alex Bedoya said. "We try to spoil her with her favorite foods. My sister and I also clean the house for her, so when she gets home from work, she sees a clean house. That day is all about my mom."

Other students incorporate culture into their plan.

"For Mother's Day, [my siblings] and I hit up Greek Town," senior Kyriaki Ades said. "We ask the waiters to come out with a Mother's Day cake. She loves it."

To many students, Mother's Day is a day to honor all women in their family. Junior Melanie Demos is one such student. Her

family honors all women, including those who are not even mothers. "In my family, we use this day to celebrate everyone," Demos said. "Even some of my aunts, who do not even have children, receive Mother's Day gifts. To us, this is a day to honor all the special women in our lives who impact us every day."

Why is this day so important to students?

"My mom brought me into the world," Ahmed said. "She is the reason I am who I am today. She taught me morals. She taught me right from wrong."

To Demos, it is a day to show the women in her family how special they are.

"These women are the most important women to me," Demos said. "They are my role models, and it would be unfair for them not to have an entire day dedicated to them. Plus, it is a perfect excuse for the girls to get out and spend a day together."

Senior Becca Marohn shares a special relationship with her mother.

"My mom is my best friend," Marohn said. "She is someone I can talk to about everything and she has always been there for me. She has always supported me, and we have always had a really close relationship. I owe it to her."

This year, Mother's Day will be Sunday, May 10. That leaves nine days to prepare something special for all West moms. Get busy!



# WestWord

2009 Exam Calendar - Week 1 <small>Advanced Placement</small>		
	Morning - 8 a.m.	Afternoon - 12 noon
Monday, May 4	French Language	
Tuesday, May 5*	Computer Science A Computer Science AB Spanish Language	Statistics
Wednesday, May 6	Calculus AB Calculus BC	
Thursday, May 7	English Literature German Language	French Literature
Friday, May 8	United States History	European History Studio Art (portfolios due)

2009 Exam Calendar - Week 2			
	Morning - 8 a.m.	Afternoon - 12 noon	Afternoon - 2 p.m.
Monday, May 11	Biology Music Theory	Physics B Physics C	
Tuesday, May 12	Environmental Science Chemistry	Psychology	
Wednesday, May 13	English Language	Art History	
Thursday, May 14	Macroeconomics	Microeconomics	

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