

# Journalist talks about 'war nobody wanted'

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war everybody was bound to lose. From the very beginning, President (George) Bush was primed to go to war."

The renowned international journalist offered his views on Saddam Hussein and the situation in the Persian Gulf to about 250 area residents at the Birmingham Temple in Farmington Hills Monday. His visit was the only Michigan appearance in a national tour sponsored by the New Jewish Agenda.

"One thing Milton Viorst does, is he makes us think — and he made us do it tonight," said Eli Master, first vice president of the Birmingham Temple.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS voiced their support of Bush and his action against Iraq, and commented on anti-war rallies, but most came simply to ask questions and become informed.

Viorst's visit comes on the heels of fighting in Iraq and Saudi Arabia — where U.S. and Allied troops are stationed — and just days after air missile attacks on Israel by Iraq. War broke out after Iraq invaded neighboring Kuwait last August, and Bush gave Hussein an ultimatum to leave Kuwait by Jan. 15.

Viorst was one of the first Americans to tour Kuwait and Baghdad after the August invasion.

Viorst paints Hussein as a proud man who grew up in rural Iraq, and who is "shrewd, calculating, a strong nationalist and patriot." He said the world should understand the fierce independence the Iraqi people feel, after years of domination by the Turks and Christians.

HIE SAID THE world needs to view the Middle Eastern situation



Milton Viorst: "It doesn't serve our purpose to call him (Saddam Hussein) 'the Butcher of Baghdad.'"

with understanding of its history, and proceed to broader issues including relationships between the Israelis and Arabs in the region and differences between the Arab countries as well.

"How do we put the Humpty Dumpty of the Middle East back together again?" he said. "I don't think anybody knows. The more deeply we (the U.S.) gets imbedded in this, the more deeply our feet get stuck."

Viorst said he is impressed with the restraint shown so far by the Israeli government, in not retaliating against Hussein's Scud missiles. "Israel has shown bravery in this war," he added. "Everyone knows Israel is a country of fighters. It's been shown Israel can show some restraint. Israel has taken the moral high ground in this issue, and I hope it stays on the high ground until this war is over."



photos by DAN LIPPIT/taft photographer

After speaking on Saddam Hussein, journalist Milton Viorst (right) is confronted by a man who wouldn't identify himself at the Birmingham Temple.

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Larry Hochman, who identified himself as an attorney from Redford Township, speaks during Milton Viorst's talk on Saddam Hussein.

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