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Pulitzer Prize Winning Historian John Dower to Compare Post-War Iraq with Post-WWII Japan in Talks at UCSB

On his trip to Britain late last year, President Bush said that "substantial progress" is being made to rebuild Iraq, and that much of that progress "has proceeded faster than similar efforts in Germany and Japan after World War II."

Historian John Dower of MIT, a Pulitzer Prize winning author and a specialist in 20th century Japan, strongly disagrees with the president's recollection of post-World War II reconstruction.

Neither is he pleased with Mr. Bush's favorable comparison of it to what currently is happening in Iraq.

"What are we to make of this murky use of history," wrote Dower -- who will speak at the University of California, Santa Barbara Feb. 5 and 6 -- in an essay published in the Los Angeles Times. "The truth is that what is happening in Iraq presents a stunning and fundamental contrast to what took place in occupied Japan and Germany over a half century ago -- and not a positive one."

Dower will make his own comparison of post-war Japan and Germany, and Iraq during his Feb. 5 talk, "Cultures of War: Pearl Harbor, Hiroshima, 9/11," at 4 p.m. in Campbell Hall on the UCSB campus.

On Friday, Feb. 6, he will discuss the encounter of the United States and Japan in 1854, when the U.S. Navy under Commodore Perry entered Tokyo Harbor, in "Visualizing Cultures: East Meets West, West Meets East."

The talk begins at 1 p.m. in the McCune Conference Room (Room 6020) of the Humanities and Social Sciences Building.

Both talks are part of the "America and the Reshaping of the New World Order" series and are free and open to the public.

The series is organized by the Department of English and the Global Studies Program with support from a Critical Issues in America grant.

Dower has written extensively on Japan. His most recent book, "Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II," won the Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction, the National Book Award in nonfiction, the Bancroft Prize in American history, the John K. Fairbank prize in Asian history and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in history.

Further information on the America and the Reshaping of the New World Order series is available on the series Web site, < <http://acc.english.ucsb.edu/NWO>>.

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