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FBI Warning

Often when asked about my position on the War in Iraq, I either explain that it is complicated for me to shortly state my opinion, or I hope the person asking has a few minutes to spare. My position is not necessarily supportive or unsupportive of the War or how it was started. First of all, I believe that it is important for the United States to reach out to other countries in need, but to do this half heartedly is not the way to go about it. I believe that the United States had every right to invade Iraq because of the belief in the presence of weapons of mass destruction. However, after the United States recognized that there were none of these weapons, we chose not to pull out. Instead, we decided to help the people gain freedom from their dictator Saddam Hussein and establish a new government in their best interest. For this reason, I support the War in Iraq. I do not believe that a country founded on revolution by a desire for independence and with unsurpassed resources should put a price on or deny another country its own freedom. In saying that, I also believe that the United States did not put forth enough effort to do so. The government underestimated the difficulty of preparing a new government for Iraq and therefore did not do as well as hoped. Overall, I support the War and want the Iraqis to have their deserved freedom.

I feel the way I do about the War mainly because of **pride**. I am extremely patriotic; maybe even excessively so. I am patriotic because my grandfather was in the

army. He taught me that the flag should never touch the ground and when to raise it, when to lower it, and when to put it at half staff. This instilled in me the feeling that this country is special and that even minute details, such as a flag, are important. Also, I do not want my country, the greatest power in the world, to back down from a fight. I believe that we can do anything, and to give up now would just show weakness in my opinion. The reason I believe that this country can do anything is simple. The United States has rarely been below the bar as compared to other countries. We are at the top in terms of technology, wealth, and freedom. We once defeated what was thought to be the greatest power on earth with a small army to gain our freedom. **Teachers have taught me** that the United States is better than others in those terms so that has certainly shaped my view on the War.

Another aspect of pride I possess is one in which I want the Iraqis to know and feel what we have: freedom. I want them to look up to us as a helper and maybe even a friend. Keep in mind that I do not believe that it was the actual Iraqi citizens who wanted to cause us harm. All they knew was what they were told by Hussein. I simply do not want to fail the Iraqis. This thinking can be contributed to **fear**, one of the FBIs discussed in *Learning to Think Things Through* (Nosich 22). At first, fear may not seem to be the best FBI for this way of thinking because the question is raised of how someone supporting a war can be in **fear**. Some may even say it has more characteristics of egocentrism. However, for me it is **fear**. I fear that other countries will look down on us because we could not finish the job. I **fear** that we will not appear as strong as we did in the past. I fear that we have failed if we abandon Iraq. And most of all, I **fear** that other countries will realize that we were attacked on our own ground on September 11, 2001

and could not retaliate. This may cause other countries to not take us as seriously and form an attack. In this sense, **fear** and pride can go hand in hand (Nosich 22).

Fear, however, is not the only FBI that fuels my pride. **Forming an opinion on the basis of music** is another FBI I possess. While Nosich blames this impediment on movies, television, advertising, and magazines, I believe that music has a greater impact on me (21). The song titled “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue (The Angry American)” by Toby Keith contains American pride in the logic that its citizens will not simply lie down after being attacked. The song contains lyrics like “soon as we could see clearly through our big black eyes man, we lit up your world like the fourth of July” (Keith). This song not only gives me pride but it also shapes my way of thinking. It creates the feeling of us being victims and trying to correct what was done to us on September 11th. However, now that the United States army is no longer retaliating, I still have that notion that we were victims because of this song. Darryl Worley also contributed to my FBIs. His song entitled “Have you Forgotten?” wants us to feel like victims as well by questioning if we remember what happened to make us go to Iraq. He asks “what about our freedom and this piece of ground” and explains “we didn’t get to keep them by backing down” (Worley). Once again, we are through retaliating and no longer have that reason to be over seas, but because of these songs, I still have the feeling that we should be over there fighting back.

For every song that supports the War, there is another that opposes it. I, however, do not give this opposition, or any other opposition for that matter, the time and respect it deserves. For example, the Dixie Chicks are a band that opposes the War, as seen through their song “Not Ready to Make Nice”. I do not listen to them for several reasons. I do not

want them to shape my thinking about the War because I feel comfortable with how I feel now. I also, perhaps, **fear** that I will like the song and maybe even support what it is saying. Basically, I am trying to keep myself at status-quo because it has worked for me thus far. Nosich would describe this as an **all-or-nothing FBI** since I am only allowing one way of thinking and not giving others a fighting chance (22). I sometimes take offense at opposition and feel that it is aggression or hostility towards me instead of a simple opinion about the country's decisions. This is mainly because of the way I think. For example, if someone states an opinion that I disagree with, I try to counter their argument with the motivation to oppose them instead of opposing what they say. So, when I am opposed, I feel that the person opposing me is doing that same as I am when I oppose someone else. I also practice **this all-or-nothing thinking in stereotyping**. I have a mindset that **stereotypes** all those who oppose the War as liberal because of television. While watching the O'Reilly Factor, a guest on the show opposing the War is usually liberal or Democratic. If I were to genuinely and critically think about the issue, I would come to the conclusion that there are some liberalistic thinkers who support the War and some conservatives who oppose it. I tend to not even give others a chance to explain their views and automatically think that they are incorrect in their judgment mainly because I do not want to be transformed by their views. Again, I like status quo because it is easier for me to deal with than changing my life and mindset because of another's view. This is an FBI that can truly hinder gaining freedom from critically thinking with an open mind.

Ridding the all-or-nothing FBI will not be as easy as having an open mind. It will require me to watch different types of news media so that I can view different opinions across America. **The news has a major impact on my FBIs**, according to Nosich (19). I

watch Fox News, which is viewed by most as having a conservative standpoint. But, a news station does not just explain what is happening; “it reports on what is out of the ordinary” (Nosich 20). News likes to twist events; so if I only watch one news station, then I am only getting one twist of events and not what other companies and views illustrate. I will somewhat defend myself by explaining that I also watch the “Daily Show” which is seen as more liberalistic as well as “The Colbert Report” which is seen as more conservative to have more of a balance. However, those shows do not contain enough reliability to outweigh the influence of Bill O’Reilly and Fox News.

This FBI also ties into my **developmental pattern of thinking** (Nosich 25). Since I tend to think in a more Republican and Conservative way, I usually trust what other Republicans and Conservatives have to say. I attribute this tendency towards my influences before adolescence. My family is Conservative and Republican, so like most Americans, I think in the way of my parents. I do this because I respect what my parents, mainly my dad, have to say. And from there, I evaluate everything. For example, if there is a Republican and Democratic debate, my developmental pattern of thinking FBI pushes me towards siding with the Republican side instead of listening to what the Democratic side has to say. I have grown to believe that if a Republican says that we should go to war, then I think we should, instead of critically thinking through the process and questioning their motives. All of this comes back to my respect for my dad and his way of thinking. He raised me and taught me what I know as right and wrong, so my thought process is “why should he be wrong with this when he taught me what I know as right?” I, however, need to learn that I can respect what my parents say while not having to agree with it.

I also believe my **education** has played a role in my developmental pattern of thinking. It is described as its own impediment in *Learning to Think Things Through*, but I believe it is part of my **developmental pattern of thinking** since I attended a private Christian school from second grade until I graduated (Nosich 25). Being a private school, it held some conservative views as teachers gave their opinions and what they thought about the War. It was rare that I heard an argument from the other side. Essentially, I have allowed myself to believe that if those with views like I have make a statement, then it is right. This is because I was never told anything opposite. By only hearing one viewpoint, I could not develop opinions about other points of view.

In likeness with my developmental pattern of thinking, I have also been shaped by those with **personal experience** in Iraq. A friend at my church explained the large amount of help the Iraqis need. The condition where a people are scared to leave their homes really motivated my way of thinking. This information from those with personal experience can also have a disadvantage in terms of FBIs (Nosich 27). By not asking others who were there about the condition of Iraq and its people, I am only left with the opinions and views of one soldier. There could be some that would say the condition is improving and we have done our part.

One of the largest obstacles out of all of my FBIs is the one that is the foundation to every filter, barrier, and impediment I have thus far analyzed. It is **egocentrism** (Nosich 24). To put it simply, I do not like to be wrong. This is the case for many people, but it is far worse for me. I attribute this FBI to my childhood. Every parent at one time or another allows their child to win a game or two. My parents did this excessively so. This made me believe that I could always win and I would always be right. Always

winning made me not like the fact that other people who oppose me can be right or even partially right. It has made me even reach the point on some occasions to not care to know or understand the position that people hold about the War or other points of conflict. I do, however, understand the problem with this and realize that it is not the best way to “think things through” (Nosich vii). If I never listen to other people’s opinions, I will not grow as a person or a mind. My egocentrism “interferes with critical thinking on all levels” (Nosich 24). If no one opened up to others’ ideas then this world would stop growing. It is the differing opinions that join together to create brilliant ideas.

Egocentrism is a flaw that can stop “open mindedness” and “fair-mindedness” (Nosich 24). And, without fairness, we really have no freedom, which is what we are and have been fighting for from the beginning. Our efforts need not be in vain. This has made me realize that I need to be more open-minded and fair-minded. It has given me a lens to see through my own FBI’s and thus providing me with the first step on how to fix them. If I can realize what my FBI’s are, then I can proceed to fix them.

I have noticed that several FBI’s such as egocentrism, a developmental pattern of thinking, and fear have dominated my emotions and views. They affect my critical thinking in regarding the War and other issues. But, I think in order to correct them I need to destroy the foundation of their being: pride. Pride drives every FBI I have simply because, in the back of my mind, I am looking for the answer to support me. When listening to other views, I hear them but I do not absorb what they say. It is also imperative that I learn that I can disagree with my parents, who have greatly shaped my way of thinking, and still respect them and what they have to say. I know that if I want to

think critically I need to abandon my pride and allow an open mind and open heart to different or even opposing views.

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