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Reporting II

4th Self-Gen Story

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Winona Minn- Three Saint Mary’s University professors shared their knowledge on ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria) and answered questions from students and faculty during a panel-style discussion Monday, Nov. 17, 2014, in the toner lounge at Saint Mary’s University.

The panel included Dr. David Lynch, political science professor, Dr. Erik Lippman, history professor, and Michael Ratajczyk, business professor. Lippman spoke first on the historical aspect of ISIS. “They’re essentially trying to create a reality that never existed by turning back the clock to the seventh century,” said Lippman.

According to Lippman, the state of Islam was once the most powerful empire in the world but completely fell apart over the last 200 years due to bad foreign policy, no leadership, and constant civil war in the Iraq and Iran. “ISIS is an attempt to reclaim what used to theirs by standing up to the west,” Lippman said.

“The timing of all of this has to do with state failure in Iraq, Somalia, and Yemen,” said Lynch. According to Lynch, these countries have gone centuries with no real structure in place, causing living conditions to become unlivable. According to professor Ratajczyk, who spoke mainly from a business standpoint, the U.S has very comfortable living conditions because of our market place freedom and Iraq, Somalia, and other third world counties do not have these luxuries.

“ISIS is robbing local governments of oil and selling it back for much higher prices, resulting in lower gas prices in the U.S, which is one benefit from this,” Ratajczyk said. According to Lynch, fear is the main impact on the U.S from what ISIS has become. “Were sending troops back,” said Lynch. Lippman spoke about how the people who live under this rule face extremely harsh living conditions and they only have three realties to choose from: convert, die, or pay a tax.

Lynch does not believe ISIS poses a threat to the U.S however ISIS is very attractive to younger people because of its radicalism effect. According to Lynch, ISIS uses social media platforms to recruit young people to join their group by promising things such as power, identity, and women. “ISIS does not have a direct threat to individuals but more of a worry that Iraq will fall apart,” said Lynch.

According to Lynch, religion is the backbone and land is the goal of ISIS. “The land of Islam that was once under the land of God so they believe God is on their side for all of this,” said Lynch.

Elizabeth Wall, a member of Catholic Student Relief Survivors, spoke on behalf of the entire organization to thank each professor for taking time to speak about the issue. The event drew a large crowd consisting of professors, students, and community members. The Catholic Student Relief Survivor club, an organization run by SMU students, put the event together.