

**MEDIA EDUCATION
FOUNDATION
STUDY GUIDE**

**HIJACKING CATASTROPHE:
9/11, FEAR & THE SELLING OF
AMERICAN EMPIRE**

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9/11, FEAR & THE SELLING OF AMERICAN EMPIRE

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NOTE TO TEACHERS

Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear & the Selling of American Empire, written and directed by Jeremy Earp and Sut Jhally, is sixty-four minutes long. This study guide is designed to help you work with high school, undergraduate, and graduate students from a wide range of fields of study (e.g., American studies, sociology, cultural studies, critical pedagogy, communications, media literacy, journalism, history, etc.), as well as adult education students, community groups, and activists. It is structured to engage and manage the information presented in this video. Given that it can be difficult to teach visual content – and difficult for students/participants to recall detailed information from videos after viewing them – the intention here is to give you a tool to help your students/participants slow down and deepen their thinking about the specific issues the video addresses.

We've structured the guide so that you have the option of focusing in depth on one section of the video at a time. The structure of the guide mirrors the structure of the video, moving through each of the video's sections with a series of key summary points, questions, and assignments specific to that section. We encourage you to select, modify, and build on these activities, adapting them to meet class/workshop's objectives and time constraints. It is important to note that while this guide offers direction, it should not discourage students/participants from asking and pursuing their own questions and interests.

Previewing Questions & Exercises: inspires preliminary discussion about the video's issues prior to viewing.

Key Points: provides a concise and comprehensive summary of each section of the video making it easier for you and your students/workshop participants to recall the details of the video during class/group discussions, and providing a reference point for students/participants as they work on assignments.

Questions for Discussion & Writing: provides a series of questions designed to help review and clarify material for students/participants; to encourage them to reflect critically on this material during class/workshop discussions; and to prompt and guide their written reactions to the video before and after these discussions. These questions can therefore be used in different ways: as guideposts for class/workshop discussion, as a framework for smaller group discussions and presentations, or as self-standing, in-class writing assignments (*i.e. as prompts for "free-writing" or in-class reaction papers in which students are asked to write spontaneously and informally while the video is fresh in their minds*).

Assignments: this section encourages students/participants to engage the video in more depth – by conducting research, working on individual and group projects, putting together presentations, and composing formal essays. These assignments are designed to challenge students/participants to show command of the material presented in the video, to think critically and independently about this material from a number of different perspectives, and to develop and defend their own point of view on the issues at hand.

USING THIS VIDEO IN THE CLASSROOM / WORKSHOP

- View the video prior to showing it to your students or workshop participants.
- Review the study guide and choose which exercises you will use.
- Use the previewing activities to help your students/participants prepare for the ideas presented in the video.
- Encourage *active listening*. Because the content of this documentary is likely to elicit emotional responses from the students/participants, it is important that those involved in the screening engage with each other in ways that ensure that everybody has the opportunity to speak and to be listened to. It is advised that you negotiate guidelines with participants in how to *actively listen* in advance of classroom/workshop discussions. Check out MEF's handout *Techniques for Active Listening* at www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdf/ActiveListening.pdf.
- Have the students/participants keep a notebook/journal. It will be an effective place for them to record their observations about the media and everyday events and explore and analyze their own attitudes and opinions.
- Review and discuss the handout *How to Be a Critical Media Viewer*, available at www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdfs/CriticalViewing.pdf.
- Incorporate activism and advocacy into your media literacy classroom/workshop. They are an important part of introducing students/participants to the powers of personal and social agency.

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THE MEDIA LITERACY CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT¹

AWARENESS

of media

ACCESS

to media

ANALYSIS

of content

ADVOCACY

tell your story

ACTIVISM

protest/praise

THE MEDIA LITERACY CIRCLE OF EMPOWERMENT EXPLAINED

AWARENESS

Students/participants learn about the pervasiveness of the media in their lives.

ANALYSIS

Students/participants discuss the forms and contents of the media's various messages as well as the intent of most media to persuade an audience.

ACTIVISM

Students/participants develop their own opinions about the negative and positive effects of the media and decide to do something about it – this can be in the form of praise for healthy media, protest for unhealthy media, or development of campaigns to educate others with regard to the media, to change media messages, etc.

ADVOCACY

Students/participants learn how to work with media and use their own media to develop and publicize messages that are healthy, constructive, and all too often ignored by our society.

ACCESS

Students/participants gain access to the media – radio, newspaper, internet, television, etc. – to spread their own message. This in turn leads to further awareness of the media and how it works, which leads to a deeper analysis and so forth.

OVERVIEW

Hijacking Catastrophe: 9/11, Fear & the Selling of American Empire examines how a radical fringe of the Republican Party has used the traumatic events of the September 11, 2001 terror attacks to advance a pre-existing agenda to radically transform United States foreign policy while rolling back civil liberties and social programs at home.

The documentary places the Bush Administration's controversial justifications for the war in Iraq within the larger context of a two-decade struggle by neoconservatives to dramatically increase military spending in the wake of the Cold War, and to expand U.S. power globally by means of military force.

At the same time, the documentary argues that the Bush Administration has sold this radical and controversial plan for aggressive American military intervention by deliberately manipulating intelligence, political imagery, and the fears of the American people after 9/11.

Narrated by Julian Bond, *Hijacking Catastrophe* features interviews with more than twenty prominent political observers (*see biographies in the back of this guide*). At its core, the film places the deceptions of the Bush Administration within the larger frame of questions seldom posed in the mainstream media: What is the agenda that drove the administration's pre-war deceptions? How is 9/11 being used to sell this agenda? And what is at stake for America, Americans, and the world if this agenda succeeds in being fully implemented during a second Bush term?

PRE-VIEWING QUESTIONS & EXERCISES

The following pre-viewing questions and exercises are designed to get students to think about their existing thoughts and feelings about the politics of 9/11 and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

1. Where do you get your news? Do you feel well informed about current events, in particular about U.S. foreign policy? Do you believe that mainstream media in the U.S. are serving the interests of democracy?
2. How do you explain the events of 9/11 in terms of why the United States came under attack and who was involved in these atrocities?

3. What is your present political position on U.S. military intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq? Was the war in Iraq necessary?
4. What are weapons of mass destruction? Will the U.S. military ever find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq?
5. In your estimation, is there a clear link between the Saddam Hussein regime and Al Qaeda?
6. How much confidence do you have in public statements made by government officials such as Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice?
7. Has your level of fear of terrorist attacks in the post-9/11 world increased, stayed the same, or decreased? Explain.
8. Do you feel that the government could be doing a better job of informing the public about its efforts in Afghanistan, Iraq, and other parts of the world?
9. Do you feel that the government could be doing a better job in the “war on terrorism”? How?
10. What was/is your position on the 1991, U.S. Persian Gulf invasion? How did you feel about the media coverage of that war? In your estimation, why didn’t the U.S. remove Saddam Hussein and his regime during that military campaign?
11. On a piece of paper, briefly define propaganda? Have you heard this term used? How was it used?

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INTRODUCTION

KEY POINTS

- The failure to find Saddam Hussein’s alleged weapons of mass destruction has raised serious questions about the legitimacy and legality of the ongoing war in Iraq.
- As the conflict in Iraq escalates and the number of casualties continues to grow, mainstream national debates emphasize whether or not U.S. intelligence agencies provided accurate information to justify going to war. As such, the important question remains: Why did the U.S. go to war if it was not about WMD? What is

this war really about? Addressing these questions is the central goal of this documentary.

- The analysis focuses on a group of self-identified, radical conservative intellectuals and policy makers at the right-wing extreme of the Republican Party. The argument put forth is that this group saw the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War as an opportunity to build up the U.S. military's size and to use this force more aggressively and unilaterally – to construct a new American Empire.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Discuss the veracity and implications of the film's opening statement:

The people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked and denounce the peacemakers for lack of patriotism and exposing the country to danger. It works the same in any country.

*-- Nazi Reich Marshall Hermann Goering
at the Nuremberg War Trials*

2. Chalmers Johnson compares the neoconservative agenda to that of ancient Rome in its directives towards empire. He states that the ideology of this neoconservative group emphasizes a disdain for allies and international law and engenders the logic embedded in the Roman expression: "It doesn't matter whether they love us or not so long as they fear us." In your estimation, is Johnson accurate in his comparison and depiction?

3. What are ways in which the events of 9/11 have granted the current administration carte blanche to pursue any agenda of its choosing in the name of "fighting terrorism" and "protecting the homeland"?

4. Has the mainstream media provided balanced reporting on the issue of weapons of mass destruction? Has it provided information critical of the government's claims and position? Have you found alternative news sources that provide better information?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Go to the website Right Web: The Architecture of Power that's Changing Our World at <http://rightweb.irc-online.org/ind/index.php>, which profiles the people who have played a significant role in shaping, promoting, and/or implementing the Bush Administration's weapons programs, foreign policies, and political and military strategies. Conduct any other searches or background checks on the following people: Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Deputy Secretary

of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Secretary of State Colin Powell, and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. How do these individuals contribute to a synergy among particular government, corporate, and media interests?

2. Go online (or to your public library's archives) and with a major newspaper of your choice compare the Bush Administration's position on weapons of mass destruction before the invasion of Iraq on March 19, 2003 to its position just after the release of *The 9/11 Commission Report*. Present your finding to the class/group. As part of this exercise, you may want to review *The 9/11 Commission Report* which is available in full text at www.gpoaccess.gov/911/.

3. Research the history of the word *propaganda*. Write a paper that expands your earlier comments in the previewing exercise and examines the role that propaganda has played in society and the crucial decisions of governments.

4. The concept of "homeland" has roots in the rise of the Third Reich in Germany. After 9/11, this concept has been used to the degree that the U.S. now has an Office of Homeland Security and a Homeland Security Council. Investigate the history of the use of "homeland" and elaborate on any connections there may be to current ideas of nationalism, patriotism, and citizenship in the United States. If there is time, make a chart that compares and contrasts the use of "homeland" in Nazi Germany and the current usage in the United States. Write an essay on the possible strengths and dangers of this term?

5. Research the basic tenets that informed the Roman Empire's ideology of domination and compare and contrast this social, political, economic, cultural, and institutional agenda with current practices in the U.S. Present your finding to the larger group.

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BLUEPRINT FOR EMPIRE

KEY POINTS

- When George W. Bush became president he brought with him a group of conservatives that had served in the administrations of Ronald Reagan and that of his father, George H.W. Bush. Of particular importance are: Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, and Paul Wolfowitz. Their post-Cold War vision for American power and their blueprint for U.S. foreign policy have been in the making for years.
- Paul Wolfowitz, a key member of the conservative fringe of the Republican Party, has argued for decades that the United States should reconsider its commitments

to international treaties, international law, and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations.

- A radical plan for U.S. global military domination first surfaced during the presidency of George H.W. Bush. In 1992, Paul Wolfowitz working in the Department of Defense was asked to write the first draft of a new national security strategy entitled *The Defense Planning Guidance*. This document would later be known as *The Wolfowitz Doctrine*. It's most controversial points included the following: the U.S. should dramatically increase defense spending, it should be willing to take preemptive military action, and it should be prepared to take military action with or without allies. The report states, "The U.S. must show the leadership necessary to establish and protect a new order." According to Wolfowitz, the idea was to "prevent the emergence of a new rival" and to secure "access to vital raw materials, primarily Persian Gulf Oil."
- Politically displaced during the Clinton presidency, Paul Wolfowitz and his closest colleagues worked with an influential, right-wing think tank -- The Project for the New American Century (PNAC). In 2000 they released another national security report called *Rebuilding America's Defenses*. The document revived *The Wolfowitz Doctrine* by calling on increasing the military budget by one hundred billion dollars, denying other nations the use of outer space, promoting "boldly and purposely...American principles abroad", and adopting a more aggressive and unilateral foreign policy that would allow the U.S. to act offensively and preemptively in the world. The elimination of States like Iraq figured prominently in this grand vision. The report acknowledged that "the process...of revolutionary change is likely to be a long one...absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event...like a new Pearl Harbor." One year later that event would arrive in the form of 9/11.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. In your estimation, what does *The Wolfowitz Doctrine* mean? Do you think that *The Wolfowitz Doctrine* is representative of what most Americans believe and desire?
2. In *The Defense Planning Guidance* report, Paul Wolfowitz argues, "The U.S. must show the leadership necessary to establish and protect a new order." According to Wolfowitz, the idea is to "prevent the emergence of a new rival" and to secure "access to vital raw materials, primarily Persian Gulf Oil." While the goals are clear in these statements, in the call to invade Iraq, what issues were most reported as being the reasons to invade Iraq? Were the issues of oil and imperialism overshadowed in national debates and in the media, initially by preoccupations with WMD, and subsequently by concerns for human rights and democracy in the region? What were some human rights violations that received a good deal of media attention?

3. Noam Chomsky makes the argument that this fringe group of intellectuals and policy makers is not representative of conservatives in general. What are traditional conservative values? How does *The Wolfowitz Doctrine* contradict traditional conservative ideology? How would you define a “neocon” or “neoconservative”?

4. Should the U.S. participate with the help of its allies or go it alone? What is the purpose of the United Nations? What has happened to the reputation of the United Nations in the U.S.? Did President Bush support the idea of assistance from the United Nations? Has his position changed? Why? In your estimation, what logic seems to guide his position towards the UN?

5. How were France, Germany, and Russia generally viewed by the U.S. press, government officials, and the public after these countries criticized the U.S. for invading Iraq? On March 11, 2003 a sign was put next to cash registers in the Longworth Cafeteria in Washington, D.C. letting patrons know that French fries had been renamed “freedom fries”. U.S. Representative Bob Ney endorsed this act as “a small but symbolic effort to show the strong displeasure of many on Capitol Hill with the actions of our so-called ally, France”. This linguistic shift was not without historical precedent. During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson’s Committee of Public Information renamed sauerkraut “liberty cabbage”. Are such political statements necessary and politically effective? Have businesses in your community pulled French products from the shelves or, for example, have restaurants stopped selling French wines and vodkas? What is your position on this practice? How did/do you feel about other nations boycotting American products because of the war in Iraq?

6. The Wolfowitz report acknowledged that “the process...of revolutionary change is likely to be a long one...absent some catastrophic and catalyzing event...like a new Pearl Harbor.” One year later that event would arrive in the form of 9/11. Why have the events of September 11th often been compared to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941? What strategic or political role does such an event or comparison play?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Go online and get copies of *The Defense Planning Guidance* (1992) and the *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* (2000) reports. Read these documents (or excerpts from them) and write a report on the conclusions that you draw about their content and intent. Excerpts from *The Defense Planning Guidance* (1992) can be found at the PBS Frontline website:

www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/iraq/etc/wolf.html.

The entire *Rebuilding America’s Defenses* (2000) report can be found at PNAC’s website: www.newamericancentury.org/publicationsreports.htm

(scroll down and click on *Rebuilding America’s Defenses: Strategy, Forces, and Resources for a New Century*).

2. Research the history and agenda of The Project for the New American Century (PNAC). As part of this investigation, go to Right Web's Org Web at <http://rightweb.irc-online.org/org/index.php>, which profiles conservative organization and think tanks. Also go to the Center for Media and Democracy's Disinfopeia link which provides a working definition of "think tank" along with an extensive list of organizations with detailed background information on each one. Disinfopeia can be accessed at www.disinfopeia.org/wiki.phtml?title=think_tanks.

In addition, review the history, connections, funding, and influence of The American Enterprise Institute, The Committee for the Liberation of Iraq, The Heritage Foundation, The CATO Institute, and The Foreign Policy Research Institute. Analyze the political and ideological leanings of these organizations.

3. Break the students/participants up into five groups. Each group is in charge of tracking stories about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan on a major network's evening news: ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, and FOX. When "experts" are used, write down what organization they represent. As a small group, discuss and display in graph format what organizations get the most airplay. After you complete this exercise, go to the FAIR: Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting website and review the organization's findings on bias in the media -- see for example, "Examining the 'Liberal Media' Claim: Journalists View on Politics, Economic Policy and Media Coverage" (June 1998) at www.fair.org/reports/journalist-survey.html.

Read also "The Conservative Bias" available at the Online Journal (March 2004) at www.onlinejournal.com/Media/031004Arvey/031004arvey.html.

Present your overall findings to the larger group. (This exercise could also be done with major newspapers.)

4. Form research groups of two or three people and interview/poll people in the streets. Ask them if they think that the United States should reconsider its commitments to international treaties, international law, and multilateral organizations such as the United Nations. Record your findings and present them to the larger group. Ask if the people think the mainstream media is *conservative* or *liberal* in its leanings. Ask what the terms liberal and conservative mean. Then look up definitions for these terms in history books and compare them to what people think. Can you draw any conclusions based upon this survey?

5. Benjamin Barber asks: "The question for all of us is what we remember...and what we do with the memories. What is the lesson? What does it tell...what does it teach?" Write an essay on what you feel this nation should have learned from 9/11. Have each student/participant read her/his essay to the larger group and list on the board important ideas and suggestions made. Have the group discuss the list and link together some of the common themes. Have the group work together to assemble and draft these thoughts into an essay that will be read at the next State of the Union Address.

6. There are a number of lawsuits against the U.S. government brought by families of victims of September 11th. For example, Ellen Mariani is suing the government for the death of her husband, rather than accept the money offered by the September 11th Victim

Compensation Fund. (It is important to note that in order to receive a payout, families must agree not to sue airlines, security companies, and government agencies.) Accused in Mariani's suit are President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Attorney General John Ashcroft, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, The Department of Defense, The Central Intelligence Agency, The National Security Agency, The Defense Intelligence Agency, and The Council on Foreign Relations. Mariani's open letter to the President of the United States can be found at www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/EllenMariani.html. After you have read it, answer all or some of the following questions:

- What do you think are her four most important points or claims?
- If this were a "normal" airline disaster would the government be giving greater cooperation? If yes, why do you think they are not cooperating to a greater extent?

7. There is a controversial suggestion that the links between Pearl Harbor and 9/11 are similar, and that there was ample intelligence available about both of these events that could have been used to prevent them. Research this theoretical stance (you can start by putting the key words *conspiracy*, *Pearl Harbor*, *9/11* in a Goggle search). Do you find this theory compelling or not? Write a response to these accusations.

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HIJACKING FEAR

KEY POINTS

- Franklin Delano Roosevelt stated as President of the United States during WWII that "The only thing you have to fear is fear itself." The Bush Administration has been using a very different approach in its war on terror. Norman Solomon describes the neoconservative position as, "The only thing you have to fear is not enough fear."
- Scott Ritter argues that the government can program the level of fear without any justification. He states: "We have an intelligence report that says that the terrorists are about to attack... 'Who?', 'We don't know.' 'Where?' 'We don't know.' 'What?' 'We don't know.' "But you tell us and now we're afraid."
- The public's fear of terrorism and terrorist attacks was expanded beyond the nineteen men involved in the atrocities of 9/11. Government officials turned the event into a global conspiracy against the U.S. that must be confronted militarily. As Paul Wolfowitz states: "One has to say it's not just simply a matter of

- capturing people and holding them accountable, but removing the sanctuaries, removing the support systems, ending States who sponsor terrorism...”
- The Bush Administration then took the events of 9/11 and the struggle against Al Qaeda and turned it into full fledged battle between ‘good and evil’. The President put it in the following terms: “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.”
 - The media has helped feed public fear of terrorism; e.g., Time Magazine’s cover stories “Can We Stop the Next 9/11?” and “The Fear Factor”, Newsweek’s cover story “How Scared Should You Be?”, and U.S. News and World Report’s cover story “Altered States of America: Coping with Life After 9/11”.
 - Feeling confident that he had enough public support, the President went to West Point to announce his new national security strategy. Invoking the memory of the 9/11 terror attacks, he set the stage for a U.S. invasion of Iraq, making *The Wolfowitz Doctrine* official U.S. policy. The United States rejected Article 51 of the United Nation’s Charter – a cornerstone of international law enacted after WWII, designed explicitly to prevent nations from using military force to advance their own sense of national and moral superiority, and to prevent the kind of unprovoked so-called “preemptive” wars of aggression that have ravaged the world for millennia.
 - The U.S. was henceforth moved outside of the compass of international law by the Bush Administration. Benjamin Barber sums up the government’s position as, “The United States will make war at a time and place of its choosing against enemies that it declares its enemies based on its own perception of what the threats are.”
 - The Bush strategy was hailed as innovative, but in fact it was based on old ideas. *The Bush Doctrine* marked the culmination of a relentless campaign by radical neoconservatives to change the very nature of U.S. foreign policy, to use unrivaled American military power to shape the globe in the image of the United States, and to create in their own words “a new American century”.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Is the fear engendered by 9/11 legitimate? Robert Jensen argues that “The fear [post 9/11] is legitimate but it is manipulated and that’s the core of the Bush policy to manipulate that fear.” Benjamin Barber contends, “This administration has been responsible for inciting the very terror that it was the terrorists’ purpose to incite in America.”? Discuss the politics of fear and its implications. What other governments have used fear to support their objectives?

2. What role has the media played in circulating and legitimating this fear?

3. How do you feel about the government's new terror alert system – the Homeland Security Advisory System -- with its color codes? How do you differentiate between the various levels: *low, guarded, elevated, high, and severe*? When the Office of Homeland Security raises the alert level above *elevated* does this affect your behavior and daily activities? Do you and your friends even know when this happens?

4. The Fox network's basic news slogan is "We report you decide: our news is fair and balanced". CNN's slogan is "More Americans trust CNN than any other news channel" (this quote is taken from a carefully done survey by PEW). What do you make of these slogans? Is there a difference between them?

5. How do you feel about the military's recent practice of "embedded journalists"?

6. Mark Crispin Miller says: "They [the neocons] want the USA to outdo all previous empires, not in its longevity but in its permanence." He asks: "What does it have to do with the Constitution? What does it have to do with democracy? What does it have to do with the pursuit of happiness?" He responds, "Nothing....It's about power, it's about domination. It's about control of dwindling resources." Miller makes several huge generalizations about the U.S. government's motives. Rank order them from what you think is the most serious to the least, and, if you have time, say or discuss why you think that way.

7. In the process of preparing the general population for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the government and media repeated the idea that "They hate who we are, they hate what we stand for, and they hate democracy and freedom..." Has the face of Islam been demonized in the post-9/11 political climate in the United States? Are mainstream media depictions of Islam connected in some way to the over one thousand cases of abuse and violence against Muslims that have been reported in the U.S. since September 11th, 2001 -- crimes including harassment, assault, arson, and murder? Have you witnessed any discrimination against Muslims in your community? If over one thousand such crimes had been committed against another ethnic group, would the mainstream news have covered those stories with more or less intensity? What are ways in which communities can struggle together to eradicate racism and violence of this sort?

8. Article 51 of the United Nation's Charter was designed to prevent nations from using military force to advance their own sense of national and moral superiority. This provision was established in response to Adolph Hitler's preemptive strikes which led to WW II, during which millions of people died. WW II was merely one in a long and bloody history of wars of aggression. Outlawing "aggressive" wars has been one of the few strategies that seems to have met with some success in humankind's attempt to prevent war. Should the U.S. engage in such military tactics?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Bush argued, “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.” Mark Danner counters that “The important thing to remember here is that one didn’t have to put it in these terms. One didn’t have to say if you are not on our side you are on the side of the terrorists. That’s not a necessary response, that’s a chosen response.” Write a paper describing your position on this issue and include a discussion of alternatives to this ultimatum.
2. In groups of two, for an entire week, record, compare, and deconstruct evening news stories on Fox News and CNN. Report to the larger group your findings in terms of what kinds of stories are covered, how they are covered, the similarities and differences between the two network’s approaches to news, significant omissions of stories or in stories, what kinds of advertising are aired, what types of images are used and how are they used, etc.? If possible, tape some of this news footage of the war in Iraq and show it to the larger group for analysis.
3. Do a religion background check on the key players in the Bush Administration. Does the President’s cabinet match the religious diversity of the nation? Share your findings.
4. The bumper stickers “God Bless America” and “God Is on Our Side” can be seen on cars in the United States. Sometimes these stickers are placed beside another sticker of an American flag. There are also a great many references to religion in the media and in political speeches. For example, Bush stated, “We’re too great a nation to allow the evil doers to affect our soul.” What role do you think religion plays in this conflict? Start an online chat room with your colleagues and debate this issue.
5. It has been reported that George W. Bush sees himself as appointed by god to take up the mission to fight terrorism (see the Buzzflash article (March 2003) "Bombing His Way into the Jaws of Armageddon: The Divine Right of Kings and The Madness of King George" at www.buzzflash.com/editorial/03/03/12.html). What is the position of the religious right in the U.S.? Research the definition of *fundamentalism*. Is the conflict in Iraq in part a “clash of fundamentalisms”?
6. Explore the ways that interfaith coalitions and organizations such as the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (www.adc.org/) and CAIR: Council on American-Islamic Relations (www.cair-net.org/) have organized to combat what they see as the racism and abuse that Muslims have experienced in the U.S. What lessons can be learned from these movements? (For information on the mistreatment of Muslims in the United States, see the article in the Village Voice (August 3, 2004) “The Spread of Racial Profiling Since 9/11: Civil Rights Rollback” at www.villagevoice.com/issues/0431/lee.php.)

7. For additional comments made by the Bush Administration in support of the war in Iraq, see “Bush Administration Officials’ Lies about Iraq’s Supposed Weapons of Mass Destruction in Their Own Words” at

www.kucinichwatch.com/support/weapons_of_mass_destruction_liesbush.htm.

Write a formal letter to the President of the United States responding to these statements, giving your opinion.

8. Why does it seem that the U.S. wanted to shut down Al-Jazeera’s operations during the invasion of Iraq? Why has the interim government in Iraq shut down certain media operations, including Al-Jazeera? Read “A Fear of Free Speech” in The Guardian Unlimited (August 11, 2004) by Maher Abdallah at

www.guardian.co.uk/comment/story/0,3604,1280442,00.html.

What does the author argue is the reason for shutting down the certain media in Iraq?

9. Pick a mainstream news magazine (e.g., Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report) and compare and contrast the ways in which it presents stories on Iraq to the ways that an alternative news magazines/journal (e.g., Z Magazine, Against the Current, The Progressive) does (see the list of alternative magazines and journals at the back of the study guide).

10. Compare and contrast the current treatment of Muslims in the United States to what happened to Japanese Americans during WW II.

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“THINGS RELATED AND NOT”: FROM 9/11 TO BAGHDAD

KEY POINTS

- For years, long before the “war on terror”, *The Wolfowitz Doctrine* had identified regime change in Iraq as a crucial first step toward global domination by force. In 1998, PNAC sent a widely circulated letter to President Clinton challenging him to act militarily to remove Saddam Hussein’s regime from power.
- Two years later, upon ascendancy to power, President George W. Bush picked many of the same radical neoconservative supporters of *The Wolfowitz Doctrine* for key foreign policy posts in the Pentagon and State Department: Elliot Abrams as National Security Council, Richard Armitage as Deputy Secretary of State, John Bolton as Under Secretary of Arms Control & International Security, Richard Perle as Pentagon Policy Advisor, and Zalmay Khalilzad as Special Presidential Envoy to Afghanistan (and as previously mentioned, Donald Rumsfeld as Secretary of Defense and Paul Wolfowitz as Deputy Secretary of Defense). The group continued to be preoccupied with Iraq.

- After the attacks of 9/11, the focus on Iraq within this administration intensified even though there was no credible much less conclusive evidence that Saddam Hussein's regime had been involved in the attacks.
- According to Richard Clark, the Head of Counterterrorism from 1998-2003 and a major counter-terrorism advisor for preceding administrations going back as far as Ronald Reagan, "The President dragged me into a room with a couple of other people, shut the door and said, 'I want you to find whether Iraq did this'." Clark concluded that "George Bush wanted me to come back with a report that said Iraq did this."
- Five hours after American Airlines flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, and without any evidence linking Saddam Hussein to the attacks of 9/11, Donald Rumsfeld was already ordering his aides to draw up more specific plans for striking Iraq.
- The Bush Administration had to justify such an invasion to the public and the rest of the government. They needed public support and the strategy to gain such consent was to initiate an intelligence and media campaign that would link Saddam Hussein to the events of 9/11 and terrorism and terrorist networks such as Al Qaeda.
- Soon after September 11th, Donald Rumsfeld set up a small intelligence office in the Pentagon -- The Office of Special Plans. The purpose of this office was to create an acceptable rationale for the already planned attack on Iraq, and to convince people that Hussein possessed WMD and that he was linked to Al Qaeda and 9/11.
- Lieutenant Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski who worked in the Pentagon witnessed how the Office of Special Plans issued talking points about Iraq for senior government officials, allegedly based on intelligence. Kwiatkowski argues that "...you could find bits and pieces of fact throughout, but framed, articulated, crafted to convince someone of what, well of things that weren't true, things that weren't true...Al Qaeda related to Saddam Hussein..."
- The Bush Administration began a major public relations campaign with ubiquitous speeches and reports that were designed to sell their war plans. Donald Rumsfeld revealed to reporters: "The United States knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. Any country on the face of the earth with an active intelligence program knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction." Dick Cheney reinforced this with: "There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies and against us."
- These claims were not based on intelligence but rather a very selective reading of intelligence to push the neoconservative agenda forward with public consent.

Despite having no credible evidence, the Bush Administration continued to use the claim that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction as a vehicle to achieve the ultimate goal of regime change.

- The media participated in redirecting public 9/11-based fear of terrorism and terrorist networks toward Iraq and the Hussein regime. For example, just as the Bush Administration was working to convince the public, Time Magazine ran a cover story special report entitled “The Sinister World of Saddam”.
- So successful was the propaganda campaign that by 2003, polls were showing that the vast majority of Americans believed the unfounded claims that Saddam Hussein was linked to 9/11, that he possessed stockpiles of WMD, and that he was a danger to the U.S.
- The government thus went forward with its plans of attack as a ‘non-aggressive, justified act of self-defense under international law’ rather than an offensive action designed to extend American empire.
- President Bush continued to link the Hussein regime to terrorism in his public addresses. For example, he stated in a speech: “The liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror. We’ve removed an ally of Al Qaeda.”
- A year later in a famous statement, President Bush was forced to deny any knowledge of a connection between the Hussein regime and Al Qaeda: “We’ve had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with September 11th”.
- In the meantime, Iraq has been found to have negligible connections to Al Qaeda (see for example *The 9/11 Commission Report*). As Tariq Ali points out, their relationship had actually been antagonistic as Al Qaeda was despised by the secular regime in Iraq and vice versa.
- When it was discovered that the White House’s story of WMD was false, the Bush Administration continued to make claims about the connection between Hussein and terrorism, but it washed its hands of the WMD debacle by repeatedly placing the blame on bad intelligence. Robert Jensen rebuts: “It wasn’t a failure of intelligence; it was the manipulation of intelligence to achieve a political goal. They were disciplined, they stayed on message, they marshaled all of their forces in this relentless public relations campaign to convince the American people that there was a threat from Iraq.”
- Karen Kwiatkowski corroborates this claim, “Well, I worked in a place where they concentrated on preparing this storyline and selling it to everyone that they could possibly sell it to.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jodi Williams states: “I understand that they want the American public to believe that the invasion of Iraq was the response to September 11th. I think it is a lie. I believe that is it part of a neoconservative agenda to assert that American hegemony is untouchable and September 11th gave them the opportunity to put in play plans that they had been considering since the first Bush Administration.” What does “hegemony” mean both in general and in this context? Discuss and debate the William’s statement.

2. Karen Kwiatkowski argues that “...you could find bits and pieces of fact throughout but framed, articulated, crafted to convince someone of what, well of things that weren’t true, things that weren’t true...Al Qaeda related to Saddam Hussein...” What do you make of these comments? Given her background (read her bio in the back of this study guide to the class), is Kwiatkowski a credible source?

3. In your estimation and experience with this war, did the media aid in creating the idea that Saddam Hussein, 9/11, and Al Qaeda were connected? How?

4. President Bush stated in a speech: “The liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror. We’ve removed an ally of Al Qaeda.” A year later the President denies the connection between Hussein and Al Qaeda -- “We’ve had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved with September 11th”. What are the possible reasons for such contradicting statements? What reason do you think is the most plausible?

5. Robert Jensen argues: “It wasn’t a failure of intelligence; it was the manipulation of intelligence to achieve a political goal...” Do you feel that a manipulation of intelligence occurred? In your opinion, was the U.S. invasion a ‘non-aggressive, justified act of self-defense under international law’ or an offensive action designed to extend American empire?

6. William Hartung contends: “These guys should be brought up on charges, there should be an investigation about whether these guys should be allowed to serve our country anymore, because to me it’s criminal to say we’re going to send our troops to war based on falsified intelligence, based on puffed up exaggerated details.” Do you agree or disagree with this position?

7. Daniel Ellsberg holds: “Their policy depends on deception and secrecy, like every imperial policy in history. Even dictatorships have taken great efforts always to disguise what they are doing and why they are doing it to their own people.” Do you think that the government has been open with the American people, or secretive? Has the Bush Administration embraced or resisted formal inquiries into its operations? For example, did it embrace or resist the creation of the 9/11 Commission? How did you feel about the White House’s initial decision to resist having National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice testify in front of the 9/11 Commission? Why do you think that the President would not agree to appear in front of the commission alone – only with Vice President Cheney

at his side? Why do you think that neither the Vice President nor the President would testify under oath?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Go to the following web address to read the letter, postmarked January 26th 1998, that PNAC sent to President Clinton:

www.channel4.com/news/2003/special_reports/pnacletter.html.

What do you make of this letter? Does it support the film's thesis? Document your analysis.

2. Go back to Right Web at <http://rightweb.irc-online.org/ind/index.php>, and any other sources, and research the backgrounds of the following people: Elliot Abrams, Richard Armitage, John Bolton, Richard Perle, and Zalmay Khalilzad. Describe to the larger group the political leanings and influence of these individuals. Does the film's portrayal seem accurate? You can also go to Disinfopedia and research the background of these individuals; e.g., Richard Perle:

http://www.disinfopedia.org/wiki.phtml?title=Richard_N._Perle.

3. Research the Office of Special Plans that was set up by Donald Rumsfeld and write a report on what you see as the functions and purpose of this office. For help with this, see Disinfopedia's "Office of Special Plans" at

www.disinfopedia.org/wiki.phtml?title=Office_of_Special_Plans,

review the *Karen Kwiatkowski: Archives* available at

www.lewrockwell.com/kwiatkowski/kwiatkowski-arch.html,

and/or read "The Spies Who Pushed for War" in *The Guardian Unlimited* (July 2003) at

www.guardian.co.uk/Iraq/Story/0,2763,999737,00.html

and "The Lie Factory" published in *Mother Jones* (August 2004)

at www.motherjones.com/ (scroll down to the archive section).

4. In "The Lie Factory" (referenced above in question three of this section) the authors write:

That the White House and the Pentagon put enormous pressure on the CIA to go along with its version of events has been widely reported, highlighted by visits to CIA headquarters by Vice President Cheney and Lewis Libby, his chief of staff. Led by Perle [Pentagon policy advisor], the neocons seethed with contempt for the CIA. The CIA's analysis, said Perle, "isn't worth the paper it's printed on." Standing in a crowded hallway during an AEI [American Enterprise Institute – a conservative think tank] event, Perle added, "The CIA is status quo oriented. They don't want to take risks."

What do you make of these statements? If the CIA were as Richard Perle describes, why would it have taken the blame for the failure of intelligence on the dangers of Iraq – reflected in the resignation of CIA Director George Tenet? Write your response as an op-

ed newspaper article (see the style generally used in major papers). Strategize with your colleagues how to get this published in a local paper.

5. William Hartung argued: “These guys should be brought up on charges, there should be an investigation about whether these guys should be allowed to serve our country anymore, because to me it’s criminal to say we’re going to send our troops to war based on falsified intelligence, based on puffed up exaggerated details.” Set up the classroom/workshop space into a mock courtroom. Split the group in two. Establish one group as the prosecution and the other as the legal defense representing the White House. Have each group spend time putting together its arguments and then have them both present their case to the court. The instructor will play the role of judge and will keep track of the important points that are made. (Note: The goal of this exercise is to debate the facts. As such, it is not important that the members of either group actually believe the appointed position – the idea is to argue the points through as best one can.) Be sure to debrief after the exercise and let participants air their conclusions and concerns. Have students/participants vote as a jury, then write about what they learned from this experience, especially in terms of the craft of making an argument work from the facts that one is given.

6. By rejecting Article 51 of the United Nation’s Charter and going into Iraq on false intelligence, is the war in Iraq legal according to international law? Go to Global Policy Forum’s “International Law Aspects of the Iraq War and Occupation” at www.globalpolicy.org/security/issues/iraq/attack/lawindex.htm. Use the very same setup as described in the previous exercise and have students/participants argue in court, after exploring as a group the information provided at the above website and elsewhere, the legality of U.S. actions. One might invite a historian to come and give information to the group about the importance of international law -- successes and failures.

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EMPIRE

KEY POINTS

- To improve ties with Iraq, as an emissary to the Reagan Administration, Donald Rumsfeld met with Saddam Hussein in 1983 (as seen in the photo of the two shaking hands). At this point in his political career, Hussein was known for his brutality, but the U.S. government for the most part turned a blind eye to his atrocities. In 1988, Hussein gassed the Kurdish people in Halabja with little criticism of the United States. In 1991, when the first Gulf War had ended, the U.S. allowed Hussein to brutalize the Shia people after they staged an uprising that the U.S. had encouraged. As Robert Jensen argues: “The United States has consistently supported Saddam Hussein throughout the worst of his crimes when

his policy was consistent with U.S. interests in the area. The minute that those interests changed then Saddam Hussein became the center of evil in the world.”

- Karen Kwiatkowski explains: “What they’re trying to do is have an Iraq that is a friend to us. Not an Iraq that is liberated, this is totally bogus, we never intended to liberate the Iraqi people. We intended to liberate Iraq from Saddam and have a footprint, a military footprint there. They’ve done that now. We have Kuwait, we have Fifth Fleet in Bahrain, we have a nice base in Qatar but it’s a little too far south. And, what do we have, we have four bases in Iraq. Beautiful bases. We can hit Syria. We can hit Iran. We can keep tabs on Afghanistan. There are all kinds of things we can do from those bases.”
- With its abundance of natural resources, the Gulf region, within the logic of global competition, is of great geopolitical importance. As Max Wolff emphasized, it is crucial to control the oil and gas if you want to have significant control over the global economy – such control gives the U.S. enormous strategic power in the world.
- The war in Afghanistan is also linked to the war over natural resources. As Vandana Shiva points out: “The oil pipeline [the Trans-Afghan Pipeline proposed in 1997] that was planned...the best security for that was an occupation of Afghanistan.” Karen Kwiatkowski adds: “If you map the pipeline, proposed pipeline route across Afghanistan, and you look at our bases, [it] matches perfectly. Our bases are there to solve a problem that the Taliban could not solve. The Taliban couldn’t provide security in that part of Afghanistan, well now that’s where our bases are. So what does that have to do with Osama Bin Laden? It has nothing to do with Osama Bin Laden.”
- U.S. military action and aggression fits neatly within the logic of the neoconservative agenda in which military force is used to push other countries around in order to gain access to their raw materials.
- The excuse for going into Afghanistan and Iraq has been the threat that they pose to the security of the United States. Robert Jensen concludes: “But in the end, neither one of those wars was really about those people or those regimes. It was about securing and solidifying American control over these incredibly important regions of the world.”
- While control of the region’s oil and natural gas is important, Immanuel Wallerstein contends: “Their [the U.S.] immediate goal is intimidation....Of course oil is important and of course we want control of oil, but oil isn’t enough to explain a war on Iraq.” Tariq Ali adds: “The major reason to take Iraq was a display of imperial power; was to show both the Arab world...to show Europe and the Far Eastern block, China and the Koreans, who is master.” Colonel Gerry Crowder, of the Air Combat Command, reinforces this idea in stating: “...to make it [an attack] so apparent and so overwhelming at the very outset of potential

military operations that the adversary quickly realizes that there is no alternative here other than to fight and die or to give up.” Donald Rumsfeld echoes this sentiment: “What will follow will not be a repeat of any other conflict. It will be of a force and scope and scale beyond what has been seen before.”

- Planned for months, the resulting Pentagon “Shock & Awe” bombing campaign was finally underway. The idea was to blitz the capital with bombs to stun the Iraqis into a quick surrender.
- The origins of “Shock & Awe” can be found in a 1996 advisory report published by The National Defense University entitled “Shock & Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance”. Authored by Harlan Ullman of the National War College, the report puts forth the argument that the aim of modern warfare is not merely to achieve military victory, but also, by means of sheer intimidation, to inflict a deep psychological injury, to scare and terrify potential rivals into submission. It is in effect the practical application of *The Wolfowitz Doctrine* of global domination through force.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. The attack on Iraq in 2003 is called *Operation Iraqi Freedom* (and the attack on Afghanistan in 2001 is called *Operation Infinite Justice*). Robert Jensen contends: “This is the way propaganda is used. To motivate a public to support a war that is not really about liberating anyone, but about extending and deepening American control.” Is the U.S. in the process of liberating Iraq or is it an occupying force? What behavior, attitudes, and actions render problematic the idea of liberation?

2. Jody Williams states: “We support democracy when it’s convenient to the interests of the United States of America....We are seen in the world as hypocrites. We’re seen as liars. We’re seen as an imperialist power.” How do you think other countries around the world view the U.S. after the invasion of Iraq? Are such views important from a moral standpoint? Do they affect practical things like U.S. exports, jobs, prices of raw materials, etc.?

3. It is now common knowledge that the United States supported the Hussein regime during the war between Iraq and Iran (1980-1988) and that the Reagan Administration armed Saddam Hussein during that war. Congress tried to have sanctions placed on the Hussein regime after the gassing of the Kurds in 1988; however the first Bush Administration, which came into office in 1989, continued providing the dictator with economic and technical support. How could you explain this? List the possible reasons and write on the ones you think are most likely.

4. The United States currently represents only 5% of the world’s population, but it consumes 28% of the world’s resources and 25% of the world’s oil. In 2001, Vice President Dick Cheney’s energy taskforce, the NEPD, recommended “that the President

make energy security a priority of our trade and foreign policy”. In addition the group recommended that “the President support initiatives by Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Algeria, Qatar, the UAE, and other suppliers to open up areas of their energy sectors to foreign investment.” Are resource wars in part driving U.S. foreign policy? Has the conflict in the Middle East changed your consumption patterns (beyond simply the high costs of fuel)? Why does the SUV remain the best selling automobile in the U.S.? Why is George W. Bush promoting the largest of these vehicles by providing a tax break for small businesses that purchase one? The Bush Administration cut funding for development of alternative sources of energy. Do you think these are wise policies?

5. Is there a difference between “the national security of the United States” and “the national interests of the United States”? Explain. How are these two ideas often intertwined in political discourse?

6. The Halliburton Corporation has been given multibillion dollar contracts in Iraq by the Bush Administration. Do U.S. government dealings with Halliburton represent a conflict of interest -- given that Vice President Dick Cheney, the former CEO of the company, has made many millions of dollars from Halliburton? Some say it is corruption, the equivalent of a bribe. Is this language fair or unfair?

7. At the 2004 annual dinner with television and radio journalists, President Bush showed the audience a photo of himself searching under the furniture in the Oval Office. He joked to the audience, “Those weapons of mass destruction have got to be somewhere.” How did/do you feel about this ‘joke’ given that thousands of people have died in a war that was instigated by the supposed threat of WMD? How did most of the people around you respond? How did the media cover this event? (Note: Many of the conversations and debates about this incident can be reviewed online.)

8. When weapons of mass destruction were not found in Iraq, the Bush Administration began to publicize human rights abuses under Saddam (rape rooms, mass graves, etc.) and the need for a democratic government to replace the dictatorship. What would explain this shift in focus? Considering the fact that no WMD have been located, does the removal of the tyrant Saddam Hussein nonetheless justify the U.S. invasion of Iraq? Should the U.S. remove all authoritarian and abusive leaders from power?

9. With a new focus on human rights, the U.S. government suddenly appeared to be concerned with the plight of women in the Middle East. Do you think that this was a sincere concern? Are neoconservatives feminists? Do you think that the women of Afghanistan and Iraq are better off now than they were under the Taliban and the Hussein regime?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. See <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Definition%20of%20terrorism> for a general definition of *terrorism*, and also for the U.S. Military and State Department's definition. Read "Who Are the Global Terrorists?" by Noam Chomsky on ZNET at www.zmag.org/content/ForeignPolicy/chomskyglobeterr.cfm, and the Chomsky article "Terror and Just Response" at The Institute for Policy Research and Development's website: http://globalresearch.org/view_article.php?aid=440918059). Then read the "Shock & Awe: Achieving Rapid Dominance" pamphlet (for access to the entire document, see The Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs webpage at www.jinsa.org/articles/articles.html/function/view/categoryid/140/documentid/1945/history/3,2359,2167,645,140,1945). Describing "Shock & Awe" as quote "Massively destructive strikes directly at the public will", author Harlan Ullman writes:

Intimidation and compliance are the outputs we seek to obtain. The intent here is to impose a regime of shock & awe through delivery of instant nearly incomprehensible levels of massive destruction directed at influencing society writ large. Through very selective, utterly brutal and ruthless and rapid application of force to intimidate, the aim is to affect the will, perception, and understanding of the adversary. Without senses, the adversary becomes impotent and entirely vulnerable.

Part of the definition of *terrorism* provided by the U.S. Army manual is "the calculated use of violence or threat of violence to attain goals that are political, religious, or ideological in nature...through intimidation, coercion, or instilling fear" (U.S. Army Operational Concept for Terrorism Counteraction -- TRADOC Pamphlet No. pp. 525-37). Compare the U.S. Military and State Department's definitions of *terrorism* to the idea of "Shock & Awe". In your estimation, is there a significant difference between "Shock & Awe" and terrorism?

2. Are most of the Middle Eastern nations that are allies of the United States democracies: Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait? Split the class/group up into small groups. Each subgroup can investigate an individual country on this list. (Note: You may want to also include Pakistan and Uzbekistan in this analysis). Research the type of government that your assigned country has and review its human rights record (for assistance with this research, see Human Rights Watch at www.hrw.org/ and Amnesty International at www.amnesty.org/). Draft a report clarifying why the United States would collaborate with nation that you are investigating. Or, write a letter to your Senator or Congressperson that states your points, expresses your concerns, and sets forth your demands.

3. Conduct research to find out what dictatorships the United States has historically supported -- for example, in countries such as Chile, Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Indonesia, etc. Do a Google search for tyrants, corrupt and abusive dictators, and similar themes. How many countries would the U.S. have to attack to remove all such leaders?

4. Research the social, economic, and political conditions of the Afghan people subsequent to the U.S. invasion. Have human rights violations decreased? How is it possible that Afghanistan has resumed its former position as the heroine capital of the world?

5. Research the current conditions of women in Afghanistan and Iraq. Write a report on your findings. Mold your report into a newspaper article and submit it to your local paper.

6. In small groups, conduct a poll in your local community asking people if they care how other countries feel about the United States. Report your findings to the larger group and discuss the implications.

7. Do you think that records of the Cheney energy taskforce's recent interactions should be released to the public? Investigate this case and lawsuit. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of not releasing the Task Force on Energy Policy's files. List the majority court's reasons and the reasons listed in the dissent. Which do you think were right? Be sure to include whether or not you think that there was a conflict of interest when Chief Justice Scalia and the Vice President went duck hunting together just before the high court's ruling.

8. Research the backgrounds of corporations that are profiting from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Begin with Halliburton, The Carlyle Group, Boeing, Lockheed Martin, McDonnell Douglas, Raytheon, United Technologies, and Bechtel. Write a report on one of these organizations and its connection to the Middle East and the current conflicts. Be sure to check the company's stock prices before and after the invasions.

9. Investigate the controversies over Halliburton's business practices in the Middle East and in the United States. Compare and contrast the criticisms and claims against Halliburton and the corporation's response (see for example:

www.independent-media.tv/itemprint.cfm?fmedia_id=5651&fcategory_desc=Under%20Reported,

<http://houston.indymedia.org/news/2004/06/30589.php>, and

<http://www.disinfo.com/archive/pages/news/id2546/pg1/>).

Examine Halliburton's website, especially its "Community" page at

www.halliburton.com/about/community.jsp. What kind of image does the company hope to portray? What do you think of Halliburton?

10. Investigate who funds who in politics in the United States (for assistance, see Opensecrets.org: Your Guide to the Money in U.S. Elections at www.opensecrets.org; see also the Federal Election Commission's webpage at www.fec.gov/, as well as the website Billionaires for Bush at <http://billionairesforbush.com/index.php>).

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SORROWS OF EMPIRE

KEY POINTS

- In the aftermath of September 11th, civil liberties came under assault through the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act -- better known as the USA PATRIOT Act. As Scott Ritter points out, “The PATRIOT Act was passed here in the United States without public debate, without any debate by Congress...just passed. It’s a frontal assault on the Constitution.”
- Attorney General John Ashcroft expanded the Executive Branch’s legal authority. As Kevin Danaher notes, “They can come in to your home or my home, plant listening devices, take documents, photograph documents, tap the phone and not tell you about it and get away with it.”
- The Fourth and Sixth Amendments to the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are essentially eliminated as a result of the PATRIOT Act. Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen declared an “Enemy Combatant” by the government is being held indefinitely in a Naval Brig in South Carolina. He has not been charged and he has been denied the right to see a lawyer. The U.S. government has thus suspended Habeas Corpus by making indefinite detention possible without formal charges and without allowing the detained legal representation.
- The government has been considering a USA PATRIOT Act II – the Domestic Securities Enhancement Act.
- The U.S. is plunging into deeper debt as billions of dollars are flowing out of the country to fund the “war on terror”. Bush asked Congress for a one year increase for forty-eight billion dollars for national defense, what he calls “The largest increase in a generation.”
- Chalmers Johnson argues: “Perpetual war, the loss of civil liberties, the lack of trust in government because they don’t tell the truth...these are outrageous and unpleasant political developments but they don’t necessarily spell the end of the United States. Financial bankruptcy does.”
- To maintain the Bush doctrine in foreign policy the United States spends more than \$400 billion annually on the military, seven times more than the next biggest spender – Russia spends about \$60 billion, China about \$50 billion, the ‘Axis of Evil’ less than \$1 billion. The U.S. spends nearly as much on its military as the rest of the world combined.
- The Bush Administration’s extensive military spending and its largest tax cuts in history drove record budget deficits to over \$400 billion by 2003.

- The current administration is also responsible for deepening the national debt which by the end of 2004, figures to stand at over \$7 trillion. This is more than five times the size of the debt of the entire “third world”. Foreign countries hold the notes on about one third of this unprecedented U.S. debt. As Max Wolff argues: “That money must be paid back. And that means, somewhere down the road Americans will pay taxes and get nothing....The image and the rhetoric is tough America going it alone. The reality is, in hoc, in debt America begging others for money.”
- Immanuel Wallerstein argues that: “The basis of U.S. economic strength today is the fact that the dollar is the reserve currency all over the world. That’s a political phenomenon. Now if tomorrow and I think it will occur tomorrow or the next day, these countries decide that it makes no economic sense for them – it never made political sense – but it makes no economic sense for them [to continue using our currency as the basis for their transactions and debts], then the U.S. goes down the drain. I mean it really goes down the drain in terms of our real reduction in standard of living and so forth.”
- As money continues to flow through the Pentagon and tax cuts are increased in favor of the rich, cuts in social spending (e.g., public education, healthcare, housing, and other basic needs) have become commonplace.
- Chalmers Johnson argues that the U.S. economy can’t go on like this forever. Kevin Danaher supports this idea in saying, “In a lot of ways U.S. power in the world is collapsing. What these neoconservatives are trying to do is to compensate with military might and muscle and force what they’re losing in terms of economic control.” Mark Crispin Miller adds: “They are people who want war forever and this makes them much more like fascist movements than it does like conservative movements.” Chalmers Johnson refers to this as “a warfare state” – “The system is set up to go to war...”
- Robert Jensen contends, “One of the major characteristics of the process of militarizing an entire society is going to be the glorification of war and weapons.” Elaborate coverage in the media of weapons systems begins to emerge.
- “Shock & Awe” becomes part of popular culture and people want to use this phrase to name everything from golf clubs to condoms.
- The media also romanticizes war as it seldom depicts the horrors of combat and bombing.
- Describing the horrors of war, Stan Goff states: “I have additional fears. I have the fear that he [his son who is serving in the Gulf] is going to come back as crazy as I was when I came back from Vietnam. You know a lot of us went crazy in different ways. I don’t know how many helicopter pilots I talked to who came

back from Vietnam and said ‘I just love greasing [killing] them.’ It was the biggest thrill of their life. Just to find somebody where there were no witnesses and hose them down [machinegun them]. Way more common than most people realize. People at My Lai [a major massacre of innocent civilians in 1968 in Vietnam] just got caught. That stuff was going on every single day somewhere.” Daniel Ellsberg refers to this as “An atrocity generating situation, that’s what we have in Iraq right now.” Goff continues: “I wrote the piece [an open letter to the soldiers in Iraq] and said hold on to your humanity, specifically to describe how that process happens to some people. Why it happens. How at the very bottom of it is the ability to redefine people whose nation you occupy as less than human.”

- In November of 2003, a U.S. delegation of military families and veterans visited Iraq. The son of one of the father’s of the delegation reported: “Dad, they hate us here. They saw us first as liberators and now they see us as occupiers and they hate us. They want us to go home and we want to go home.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Republicans in the United States usually maintain that the government is too large and should be downsized. Why then are they creating an even bigger government in the post-9/11 world? It could be argued that Republicans want the people to trust them when it comes to big deficit spending on military operations and national security, but not when it comes to protecting the health and well being of the people by ensuring the building and maintenance of sound public schools, universal health care, adequate child care, and labor standards that provide a living wage and a good job. Is this a fair argument? Why or why not?
2. What do you know about the USA PATRIOT Act? Do you find the basic tenets of this Act problematic or helpful in the pursuit of terrorists?
3. Where do you think your taxes go? Break these expenses down into the top five recipients.
4. President Dwight Eisenhower warned the people about the military industrial complex and its need to sustain continuing wars in order to maintain its economic and ideological position in the economy and the culture. Do you think that his warning applies to the present situation? Do you think that corporations which make most of their money from warfare should be allowed to run television advertisements that support their products?
5. Why would a Hollywood set designer be needed to create a \$200,000 backdrop for official war briefings?
6. What do you make of the man in the video who confesses, “It’s quite amazing, I’ve fallen almost in love with the F-18 Super hornet because it’s quite a versatile plane.”? Is

this indicative of the idolatry that Norman Solomon spoke of? Do you think that video games and war movies work to develop this kind of attitude?

7. “Shock & Awe” has become part of popular culture and people want to use this phrase to name everything from golf clubs to condoms. What do you make of this?

8. Do you think that most people are aware that Americans pay twice for weapons systems -- we pay for the research in institutions like MIT, then we buy the weapon system back from the producer? In this sense, the government socializes the risk, insures the investment, but privatizes the profits. Comment on this. By extension, the same thing happens in pharmaceuticals. Is it fair?

9. The U.S. government has not allowed Americans to see U.S. soldiers killed in combat being shipped back to the United States? Why? Why do you think that Americans are not shown many pictures of death and carnage in the war in Iraq? Stan Goff argues: “I, for one, don’t think that we should censor photographs of people who are wounded or dead. I think we should see them in living color every single night.” What do you think? Is this insensitive or do people need to be sensitized to what’s going on? Do you find it considerate or patronizing that the government and the media make these decisions for you? Some politicians did not want the Abu Ghraib prison abuse photos to be released. Should they have been released for public viewing? What was your reaction to these photos? According to the department of defense, there are apparently thousands more of these pictures. Should they be released?

10. Daniel Ellsberg speaks of an “atrocious generating situation” in Iraq. Stan Gross stated: “I have additional fears. I have the fear that he [his son who is serving in the Gulf] is going to come back as crazy as I was when I came back from Vietnam. You know a lot of us went crazy in different ways. I don’t know how many helicopter pilots I talked to who came back from Vietnam and said ‘I just love greasing [killing] them.’ It was the biggest thrill of their life. Just to find somebody where there were no witnesses and hose them down [machinegun them]. Way more common than most people realize. People at My Lai [the massacre in 1968 in Vietnam] just got caught. That stuff was going on every single day somewhere.” Does this provide insight into the Abu Ghraib prison abuse scandal? Were soldiers simply following orders? What is your position on abuse and torture? What is the government’s position? Which do you think is fair? Right?

11. In your estimation, how effective is the activism of Fernando Saurrez Del Solar, who is speaking out against the war and the death of his son in Iraq?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. In small groups, research some of the differences between the USA PATRIOT Act I and USA PATRIOT Act II. Discuss with the class your finding and discuss the implications for civil liberties in the country.

2. Go to BORDC: Bill of Rights Defense Committee's website at <http://www.bordc.org/>. Explore how this organization has mobilized against the PATRIOT Act. What strategies has BORDC employed and what progress has the organization made in the struggle for civil liberties in the United States? Is this organization reasonable? Would you consider supporting it?
3. Research the background of John Ashcroft. In seventy five words or less, describe him. Compare your descriptions with the larger group.
4. Read and review David Cole's new book *Enemy Aliens* (New Press, 2003). Present your review to the class.
5. Census data show that the gap between the rich and the poor in this country to be the widest since the government started collecting information in 1947. Go to United for a Fair Economy's website at <http://www.faireconomy.org/> and see where people are economically in the U.S. Research what your taxes are actually spent on. Write a report on how you think that federal taxes should be allocated.
6. Research the race, gender, social class make-up of the U.S. military. Why do you think that most kids join the military? List the reasons. Which are most probable? Write an essay about how you interpret the mother's comment when seeing her daughter with a gun: "If I had the money to put my daughter in college she would be holding a book instead of a gun, she shouldn't be holding a gun. None of these kids should be holding guns."
7. Michael Franti argues that poor people around this country, the people that are most affected by war, are not happy with the current situation. If you agree, strategize about how you could develop an action coalition that could work with these people to mobilize and effect change? Present your group's action strategy to the class.
8. While the current Bush Administration has increased military spending, it has cut funds for veteran's health care, closed seven veteran hospitals, tried to cut Federal Impact Aid offered since 1950 to school districts that provide educational services to military children that live off base, proposed doubling costs for prescription drugs for veterans, and, for a time, the Pentagon had even planned to cut pay for troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Conduct research to find out how disabled veterans from the war in Iraq, beyond the homecoming parades and glory stories in the media, are/will probably be treated. What kind of health care are they receiving? What other kinds of benefits and support services, beyond those provided by family and friends, are they receiving? Are they employed? For assistance with this research, go to *Institute of Medicine: Health of Veterans & Deployed Forces* at <http://veterans.iom.edu>, and to *Radiation Survivors* at www.radiationsurvivors.org. Is this picture different from the advertisements one sees for the military on television? How? Which do you think is more correct?
9. For alternative pictures of Iraq see the Website *Through Iraqi Eyes: The Gulf War Photographs* at www.activistreader.com, and check for the exhibit *Beyond Fear* –

Towards Hope: An Exhibition of the Iraq War that is touring the country. You can find the schedule of the tour and see if it's coming to a location near you at the *Eyes Wide Open* website at www.eyes.peacechicago.org/index2.html.

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“BRING IT ON”

KEY POINTS

- Foreign policy was hijacked by what are referred to as “chicken hawks”. Chalmers Johnson defines a chicken hawk as “...war lovers but who have no experience of either barracks life or of war, who are abstract enthusiasts for empire.”
- Many of the neoconservatives in the Bush administration avoided military service: Dick Cheney: conflict avoided in Vietnam, excuse -- “had other priorities”, four school deferments, one paternity deferment; Donald Rumsfeld: conflict avoided in Korea, excuse -- Princeton ROTC; Paul Wolfowitz: conflict avoided in Vietnam, excuse -- school deferment; John Ashcroft: conflict avoided in Vietnam, excuse -- school deferment. Jackson Katz argues: “Of course they are willing to send, you know, blue collar men, white working-class and men of color from the poor and working classes off to kill and die for their imperial ambitions, but they’re sitting in their offices in Washington and New York.” Scott Ritter adds: “I’m an American first and foremost. I love my country more than anything. I’m willing to die for my country, unlike George W. Bush our president, Mr. Chicken Hawk, a guy who couldn’t even have the courage to see through his tour of duty in the National Guard. Maybe flying F-102s over Houston, Texas was too dangerous, so he ran off to Alabama while millions of Americans were going to Vietnam, and he has the administration chock full of these so-called heroes, people who didn’t have the courage to defend their country in a time of unpopular war, and yet, today they’ve got us engaged in another unpopular war and they’re asking people to go out there and do things.”
- None of the Bush Administration’s children have served in the military. Karen Kwiatkowski calls this “a double chicken hawk whammy here because George Bush’s daughters don’t wear a uniform. It’s funny...he says ‘My daughter is the same age as Jessica Lynch...yeah but there’s a big difference. Jessica Lynch wore a uniform and did what you guys told them to do.’”
- Mark Crispin Miller contends: “Bush was a draft dodger. Not only that, he was AWOL. In fact he was a deserter, because [if] this is longer than thirty days, you’re a deserter. The guy was actually a deserter in war time.”

- In response to Iraqi attacks on U.S. soldiers, Bush said, “My reaction is, Bring ‘em on!”. Medea Benjamin notes: “You should have seen the reaction among the troops when they heard that. They started saying, ‘Bring on the attacks? We’re the ones out here on the streets doing patrol that are the targets, how can he be saying that?’.” Benjamin adds, “This can only be coming from people who never fought. He can dress himself up all he wants in this military gear and show up on aircrafts and present himself with a turkey in front of the troops, this guy never fought a war.”
- Norman Mailer observes: “He’s [George W. Bush] not qualified to speak of himself as macho but he’s shrewd enough to know that those working males out there are very angry and that if he presents himself as macho as he did of course with that ridiculous flight in the back seat of that fast plane to land on the carrier in full combat gear, if he presents himself that way they’ll buy it. They’ll buy it because they need it.”
- In a poll, Bush led by almost 20% over John Kerry when it came to white men.
- Mark Crispin Miller comments: “This is a culture of TV where the press really only cares about and only responds to televisual performance. And at a moment when everybody wanted a big daddy, Bush did well enough to allow the press to marvel at his aplomb, at his stature, and it became a kind of self-fulfilling prophesy.”
- Images of the president outdoors with weapons, chainsaws, and pickup trucks have been prevalent. Jackson Katz argues: “Those images are plentiful and that’s not an accident. That’s how they’ve understood Bush’s popularity. He’s is the rugged individualist, he is the cowboy.” Michael Eric Dyson notes: “The Republicans have ingeniously created this sense that this is about real men. It’s time for real men to step to the plate...cause George W represents the reborn American male.”
- Mark Crispin Miller argues: “Bush’s propagandists have been masterful at crafting a certain image for him, actually based to some extent on his weaknesses. He’s not a guy who was born in Connecticut and was a legacy admission to Phillips Andover and Yale. He’s not a guy who has the Queen of England as a cousin. He’s not a guy from a fabulously wealthy family. None of that is the case. He’s just Will Rogers. He’s just a regular guy and when he messes up the language it proves he’s just like you and me....That’s quite brilliant to make Bush out to be a kind of Jacksonian figure, a kind of natural leader from the wilds...”
- William Hartung argues: “...our elections rarely turn anymore on substantive issues, but this is one that really needs to be decided on the substance because our country faces real threats but these guys are not going after the right threats. They are pursuing a pre-existing agenda under the guise of fighting terrorism that is

going to bankrupt our country, that is going to put our troops at risk, that is going to make the terrorist threat to us grow over time instead of diminish.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. While George W. Bush himself admits that he doesn't like riding horses, why do you think he is often shown around Cowboy-like settings and with horses?

2. Did you see the President landing on the aircraft carrier wearing full military flight gear? Did you hear about it? Why do you think the image of Michael Dukakis riding around in the tank backfired in his run for the presidency in 1988, but the images of George W. Bush in military gear have been effective? (A copy of the photo of Dukakis, along with a foolish picture of John Kerry, can be found at <http://politicalhumor.about.com/library/images/blpic-kerrydukakisphotoops.htm>).

3. William Hartung states: “If I had a little window into the average American household, you know like five minutes on their TV screen at night to tell them how to decode the kind of propaganda that they're going to see from President Bush about security, I think I would say first of all don't just look at the images, don't just look at Bush landing on the aircraft carrier, and Bush surrounding himself with our troops. They [his advisors] want him to look tough...they want him to look strong....” Is it important to deconstruct such images which are used by all leaders? How would you educate people about decoding these images?

4. Was the election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as the governor of California a product of this male macho vision?

5. How do you explain the poll that shows extremely high white male support for President Bush?

6. Do you think the President was right to say, “Bring ‘em on.”? Why or why not?

7. What do you think about “chicken hawks”? Should people who have never been to war be able to send people to war? Is the criticism of the President justified? Do a Google search for President Bush's military service. Do you feel that there is a cogent public explanation of the whereabouts of George W. Bush during his service in the National Guard?

8. In your estimation, why do you so few people in the United States vote? Only 38% of young people (18-29) voted in the 2000 presidential election. In a recent election in Albuquerque, New Mexico, less than 5% of those eligible to vote went to the polls and voted. How do you explain this?

9. What do you think people are generally concerned about when they vote in presidential elections? Do you think people understand and/or study the issues? Is our system workable if people do not know the issues?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Tape one of the President's public speeches. Have the class/group deconstruct the signs and images that are used. (All media are constructions. To analyze is to deconstruct.)

2. Go to the resource section of this study guide and make a list of media literacy organizations that would be of interest to your students/participants (for example, visit ACME: Action Coalition for Media Education at www.acmecoalition.org). Share this list with the group and have them explore these organizations. Go to the New Mexico Media Literacy Project and download some of their free resources – <http://www.nmmlp.org/>. What are ways that we as a nation can educate the population, of particular importance, youth? Write up your own working definition of “media literacy” or “media education” and strategize ways that schools and community-based organizations can bring these definitions to fruition.

3. Veterans, families, diplomats, and military commanders have turned against the Bush Administration's approach to foreign policy. Split the class into six groups and have each one of them review and analyze the dissent expressed by the following organizations:

- VAIW: Veterans against the Iraq War, at www.vaiw.org/vet/index.php
- Patriots for Peace, at www.patriotsforpeace.org
- Veterans for Common Sense, at www.veteransforcommonsense.org
- IVAW: Iraq Veterans against the War, at www.ivaw.net
- Military Families Speak Out, at www.mfso.org
- DMCC: Diplomats & Military Commanders for Change, at www.diplomatsforchange.com.

What are their basic arguments against war? Have each group present their findings to the entire class. How do the positions differ from one another, how are they similar? Have one group pretend they are President Bush, refuting the above arguments.

4. It is clear under *The Bush Doctrine*, our military needs more men. We have 398,000 military personnel in over 120 countries. Some say our only choices are different policies or more men. Where are we going to get more men? Some government officials have argued that the U.S. should reinstate the draft because of the Bush Administration's “war on terrorism”. See *COMD: Committee Opposed to Militarism and the Draft* at www.comdsd.org to get the opposing side of this argument. Where do you stand on this issue? What do you think about reinstating the draft?

THE POLITICS OF CITIZENSHIP

KEY POINTS

- In the immediate aftermath of September 11th, the people of the United States came together in an unprecedented display of national unity, and the world rallied to their cause. Across the globe, people came together in a spontaneous and stunning display of unified support for the people of the United States. Yet just two years later, in those same places and on those same streets, tens of millions of people would come together again. This time to march in outrage over the Bush Administration's decision to invade Iraq.
- Zia Mian contends: "One of the things that the exercise of power does is that it cuts both ways. So the U.S. exercises power in the world to create stability, people who are on the receiving end of that power see themselves being oppressed and so they resist and as a consequence this process of trying to pacify the world and get it to go along with what the United States wants actually creates the resistance that the U.S. is trying to quell. This is not the way that will actually get us forward out of the situation that we find ourselves in. It only makes things worse."
- Daniel Ellsberg argues: "...the war against Iraq not only is not part of the war against terror meaning against Al Qaeda or against terrorist networks but it virtually gives up on the war on terror. It substitutes for it and suppresses it in the sense that I think that it's impossible to think of reducing the threat from Osama Bin Laden and from Al Qaeda so long as we are occupying Iraq and killing Muslims in Iraq."
- Medea Benjamin observes: "I look at what this government has done post September 11th and I think, not much more you could have done to make us less safe."
- Greg Speeter states: "I think it's really important that we begin to redefine national security. If people don't have jobs, if people can't provide education for their children, if people are going hungry, if people don't have health insurance they're insecure. We need to be able to address that level of insecurity in this country and the federal government is not addressing those needs because we're pouring all this money into a unilateral war and providing tax breaks for very wealthy people."
- Vandana Shiva holds: "Good societies have cultivated fearlessness and hope among the citizens. Good politics has always been about real courage, real

fearlessness. Take Gandhi whose ultimate weapon was fearlessness against one of the worst empires of our times. The very notion of not cooperating with that empire was fearlessness. When Martin Luther King, Jr. walked in the Gandhian tradition he walked in fearlessness. Every leader worth their names promotes fearlessness.”

- Patriotism was being defined in very narrow terms. Scott Ritter argues: “I found it odd in the build up to the war that the media would portray your ideal patriot either as the service member away from home or somebody on the street corner waving a flag and shouting ‘We support the troops’. I can train a monkey to wave a flag. That does not make the monkey patriotic. I can’t train a monkey to read the Constitution or live the Constitution. On the opposite end of that street was another group of Americans who also had the American flag who said support the troops but bring them home. Those are patriots too. I think we have to understand that the definition of patriotism can not be hijacked by people with a specific ideological agenda.”
- American citizens were disengaged from the process of helping the nation post 9/11. Benjamin Barber notes: “American citizen’s after 9/11 said to the President ‘What can we do, what can we do to become engaged and take some responsibility?’. President Bush unfortunately said, ‘Go shopping, go back to the mall, go back to your normal lives, we’ll take care of it’. Spectatorship is an invitation to fear. Citizenship is how we fight the politics of fear. The politics of citizenship, the politics of engagement, taking responsibility is a much better way to deal with terrorism than hunkering down, being spectators, and allowing the government to rob us of our liberties, to rob us of our multiculturalism in the name of protecting us.”
- Kevin Danaher concludes: “And that’s their project – to make us scared and stupid. My problem is I’ve been to Washington D.C. and stood in the middle of the night out in the Jefferson Memorial and read the inscriptions of Jefferson’s quotes that are hammered into the marble and you look up inside the rotunda, the favored quote at the highest point of the building, you have to turn around backwards to read it, he says, ‘On the alter of god I pledge undying hostility to any government restriction on the free minds of the people’. We were the first nation state to establish the principle that sovereignty, ultimate political power, resides in the people. That’s a fundamentally radical concept and these guys don’t like the implications of it for their maintenance of minority wealth and power and they’re out to destroy that, but they will fail, I guarantee you they will fail.”

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION & WRITING

1. Do you think the American people are aware of how support for the U.S. (after 9/11) has turned to dislike over the U.S. invasion of Iraq? How do you think that the American people have made sense of this dramatic shift?

2. Has the aggression of the Bush Administration's Iraq war made it easier for terrorists to recruit? Has it increased terrorism in the world? Do you feel more or less safe since the invasion of Iraq?

3. Jody Williams asks: "Why do people in the U.S. think that if we have bigger weapons and more weapons it's going to make us safe from terrorists? We have the most advanced military in the world. We have the most sophisticated weapons in the world. We have more nuclear weapons than anybody in the world. Did that stop September 11th? It didn't stop it." Do you think that bigger weapons make us safer from terrorism? What might different, perhaps more effective, responses include?

4. Benjamin Barber argues: "Spectatorship is an invitation to fear. Citizenship is how we fight the politics of fear. The politics of citizenship, the politics of engagement, taking responsibility is a much better way to deal with terrorism than hunkering down, being spectators, and allowing the government to rob us of our liberties, to rob us of our multiculturalism in the name of protecting us." How can we best walk in fearlessness? How did you feel about the President telling you to be a good citizen by going shopping? What is your definition of good citizenship? What agencies in society could bring to life this definition? What could you do in your community?

5. Michael Franti argues: "Patriotism is when we say we have love for our nation. We have love for our communities and sometimes our nation does things that are positive and sometimes our nation does things that are negative, and it's my responsibility out of my love for this nation to speak out loudly in support of the things it does well and speak out loudly against those things that it's doing that are hurtful." Do you agree? Is dissent patriotic? Is the position that says, "Bring them home now" more or less patriotic than Bush's "Bring 'em on"?

6. Daniel Ellsberg argues: "...the war against Iraq not only is not part of the war against terror meaning against Al Qaeda or against terrorist networks but it virtually gives up on the war on terror. It substitutes for it and suppresses it in the sense that I think that it's impossible to think of reducing the threat from Osama Bin Laden and from Al Qaeda so long as we are occupying Iraq and killing Muslims in Iraq." Do you agree or disagree with this claim?

7. What do you think of Jefferson's famous quotation: "On the alter of God I pledge undying hostility to any government restriction on the free minds of the people."? Do you think the Bush Administration follows its precept?

8. Do you believe the quotation from Robert F. Kennedy, "The future is not a gift: it is an achievement. Every generation helps make its own future. This is the essential challenge of the present."? If so, what can you do to solve the problems amplified by this film?

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Go to www.indymedia.org and find out if there is an independent media center in your area. Examine some of the stories and articles about the issues brought up in this film. What are some ways that people organize to publish their work with an independent news website or with an independent newspaper?

2. In your estimation, how have independent media functioned during this period in our history -- the U.S.-led war on Iraq? If you are not familiar with alternative media, go to the Critical Journals, Web and Activist Resources section at the end of this study guide and choose a few of the organizations from the list and explore how they collect and present the news. For example, see:

- Cursor, at www.cursor.org
- Deep End News.com, at <http://deependnews.com>
- Guardian Unlimited, at www.guardian.co.uk
- Information Clearing House, at www.informationclearinghouse.info.

3. Michael Franti is quoted in a different interview as saying, "I think we're entering a new period of conservatism right now and more artists will be reacting to that." Do you think that cultural movements can make a difference in public consciousness? See the following websites/organizations/activities and comment on their possibilities for social change: *Punk Voter* at www.punkvoter.com/home/home.php, *Axis of Justice* (a non-profit political organization formed by Tom Morello of the band *Audioslave* and Serj Tankian of the band *System of a Down*) at

<http://live.axisofjustice.sparkart.net/>,

Spearhead at

www.acroots.com/spearhead/welcome.htm

(see in particular the lyrics and interview sections), and *MoveOn PAC* and its *Vote for Change Tour* (featuring such artists as the Dave Matthews Band, the Dixie Chicks, Pearl Jam, R.E.M., Bruce Springsteen, John Mellencamp, James Taylor, Babyface, among others) at www.moveonpac.org/vfc/.

4. Conduct research to find out statistically if terrorism has increased or decreased since *The Bush Doctrine* has been put in place. Report your findings to the larger group.

5. Check and see if your town/city is participating in the Cities for Peace initiative. Go to www.ips-dc/citiesforpeace website to research this. If your town/city is participating, what is it doing? If it is not participating, how can you mobilize to get the local government involved?

6. Go to www.mediaed.org and click on the icon marked Beyond the Frame. Go to the section Alternative Perspectives on the War on Terrorism. Explore other voices of dissent to current U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East: Seth Ackerman, Belquis Ahmadi, Joan Blades, Maliha Chishti, Jo Commerford, Cynthia Enloe, Henry Giroux, Janine Jackson,

Darryl Kimball, Michael Kimmel, Mahsa Khanbabai, Naomi Klein, Manning Marable, Bernie Sanders, Ritu Sharmu, and Alisa Solomon.

8. Go to Media Education Foundation’s webpage “Twenty Ways to Be a Media Activist” at www.mediaed.org/handouts/pdfs/20-Ways.pdf.

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POST-VIEWING DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Discuss in small groups what you learned from *Hijacking Catastrophe* and from the class/workshop activities. Open this up to the larger group.
2. After viewing the film and working through these questions and exercises, what is your explanation for the reasons behind the wars in the Middle East? Does your position differ from your responses to the pre-viewing questions and exercises? Explain.
3. The 9/11 Commission found a number of flaws that led up to the tragedy of September 11th, but it pointed no fingers. Rather it suggested changes to security and intelligence structures that could help to avert such an attack in the future. Having seen the film, do you think this was a “political” decision? Should fingers have been pointed and individuals held responsible?

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EXERCISES FOR RESEARCH AND WRITING

1. What are ways that a concerned public can circumvent the mass media and provide access to alternative voices and dissent? How can we confront corporate/government/public relations’ power and their monopoly on media in the U.S.? In small groups, draft a strategy.
2. What impact would the media mergers that the FCC, led by Michael Powell – Colin Powell’s son – have on engaging or disengaging the public on substantive issue and on the dissemination a diversity of voices and perspectives? (For a description of who owns the media, see www.mediareform.net/ownership/, and for an explanation of media ownership rules, see www.mediareform.net/rules/.)
3. Research the international press and note the different ways it represents the crisis in the Middle East. Draft a letter to the FCC and report your findings, concerns, and demands in terms of appropriate use of the public airwaves.

4. Write a letter to your representatives in Congress and the Senate stating your position, concerns, and hopes for U.S. foreign policy internationally.

5. If you have access to a video camera, research a particular event in Iraq or do a ‘person in the street’ story and produce your own video news. Discuss how to get your story out into the public consciousness.

6. Choose one of the books on the suggested reading list at the back of this study guide and do a book review.

7. Do an analysis of talk radio in the United States. How complex is it? Does it include history, philosophy, international points of view, political theories, diverse perspectives, or is it mostly the expression of anger? What function has talk radio played in informing the public about the war? What ideological perspectives do you hear most? Compare it to alternative radio programs such as NPR, CounterSpin, and Democracy Now. See FAIR’s “How Public is Public Radio” in Extra (June 2004) at www.fair.org/extra/0405/npr-study.html.

8. For additional videos that deal with the media and government manipulation of the public that can be also be shown in class to complement *Hijacking Catastrophe*, see: *Uncovered: The Whole Truth about the Iraq War* (presented by MoveOn.org and The Center for American Progress, produced and directed by Robert Greenwald, and available at www.cafeshops.com/disinfo.10306680); Michael Moore’s film *Fahrenheit 9/11*; Frontline’s *The War behind Closed Doors* (available at www.shoppbs.org/home/index.jsp); the PBS series NOW With Bill Moyers – *Worse Than Watergate; Rewriting the Rules of War; Good and Evil in Iraq; God and Politics in the Holyland; Who’s Really in Control?; Iraqi Prison Scandal* (all available at www.shoppbs.org/home/index.jsp); *Peace, Propaganda, and the Promise Land: U.S. Media & the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (available at www.mediaed.org).

For videos that deal with the manipulation of the media: *Orwell Rolls in His Grave* (available at www.orwellrollsinhisgrave.com); *Outfoxed: Rupert Murdoch’s War on Journalism* (available at www.outfoxed.org); *Toxic Sludge is Good for You: The Public Relations Industry Unspun* (available at www.mediaed.org); *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* (available at www.mediaed.org), and *Media Literacy in a Time of War* (available at www.mediaed.org). For CD-ROMs and other curricula that deal with the manipulation of the media: many are available at www.acmecoalition.org and www.nmmlp.org.

9. Go to <http://homepages.nyu.edu/~meo232/sloganator/> and www.jibjab.com/default.asp.

Do you think that these types of creative activism/statements are effective?

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¹ Diagram and explanation adopted from E.D.A.P.'s GO GIRLS! Curriculum, © 1999
(www.edap.org/gogirls.html)