

THE WAR IN IRAQ

Introduction

Focus

This *News in Review* story focuses on the war in Iraq, which began on March 20, 2003, when the first U.S. missile strikes against Baghdad were launched. Soon a massive bombing campaign and a full-scale invasion by American and British troops took place. Their goal was the disarming and toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime. This story provides some background to the conflict, how the fighting is being reported in the mass media, the Canadian government's policy on the war, and domestic and foreign reaction to it.

On March 20, 2003, the long-awaited war in Iraq finally began. For weeks, the world had watched in anxious anticipation a huge American and British military build-up on Iraq's southern border with Kuwait. At the United Nations, a round of diplomatic wrangling continued as members of the Security Council debated the issue of whether or not a second resolution authorizing a U.S. invasion should be passed. UN arms inspectors delivered reports on the degree of Iraqi compliance with an existing resolution calling on it to prove that it was no longer in possession of "weapons of mass destruction," including chemical, biological, and nuclear arms. Some countries on the Security Council, especially France, called for greater patience and more time to let the arms inspectors complete their work in order that Iraq disarm peacefully. But the United States and Britain disagreed. They felt that Saddam Hussein had no intention of co-operating. Only military force would compel him to comply with UN resolution 1441. U.S. President George W. Bush firmly believed that nothing but the final removal of Saddam from power, or "regime change" in Iraq, would guarantee freedom for the Iraqi people and peace and stability for the Middle East and the world.

When the war finally began, few doubted its eventual outcome. Possessing the world's most powerful military machine, the United States was expected to easily crush Iraqi opposition. Bush and other coalition political and military leaders strongly believed that the Iraqis would welcome advancing U.S. and British troops as their liberators, and that few Iraqi soldiers would

risk death defending Saddam's doomed regime. But during the first week of the fighting, coalition forces seemed surprised at the extent and determination of Iraqi resistance. Few cities were easily captured; Iraqi units fought stubbornly. Some American soldiers were taken prisoner, and Iraq's people did not immediately demonstrate their joy to advancing coalition troops at being liberated. Meanwhile, some of the cruise missiles launched against Baghdad and other targets inside Iraq went astray, causing civilian casualties. Arab television networks like Al-Jazeera devoted considerable coverage to what they viewed as American atrocities committed against innocent Iraqis. This served to inflame public opinion against the U.S. invasion of Iraq in the Arab world and elsewhere.

Meanwhile, in Canada, Prime Minister Chrétien finally stated this country's position on the war when it began. In the weeks prior to the conflict, Canada's UN representative had sought without success to gain approval for a compromise resolution that would require Iraq to disarm by a fixed deadline. When the Security Council did not even vote on the proposed new resolution authorizing military intervention, Canada made it clear that it could not support unilateral action by Britain and the United States. While this position appeared to enjoy widespread public support in opinion polls, the reaction of the United States was extremely negative. The U.S. ambassador to Canada delivered a blunt speech expressing "disappointment" with this country's policy and its failure to support its ally

"It could last six days, six weeks. I doubt six months."
— U.S. Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld (February 8, 2003, *The Globe and Mail*)

in a time of need. The opposition Canadian Alliance also attacked Chrétien for what they viewed as Canada's betrayal of a close friend.

By the end of the first week of the war, as coalition forces appeared bogged down and unable to advance as rapidly as expected, some observers criticized the overall war plan. They suggested it had been based on a set of faulty and overly optimistic expectations. In many parts of the world, including Canada, anti-war demonstrators took to the streets in protest against the invasion. But U.S. and British military and political leaders remained firmly convinced that the fall of Saddam's regime was inevitable. They pointed to the progress their forces had made so far. Spearhead columns of U.S. troops had already moved to within 100 km of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, and had secured an important port city and strategic oil fields in southern Iraq. Many important targets in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities had been destroyed by aerial bombardment. The pro-American Kurdish irregular forces in northern Iraq fighting alongside the coalition were moving on important positions in that part of the country.

While Iraq's leadership continued to claim that its forces would eventually prevail, it was becoming increasingly clear as the war entered its second week that a coalition victory was only a matter of time. The only significant military question remaining was how the battle for Baghdad would unfold. Would U.S. troops launch a full-scale onslaught against the city, fighting Iraqi troops in a bitter street-by-street fight that would result in large numbers of military and civilian deaths? Or would the coalition forces wait outside Baghdad, hoping that Saddam's regime would collapse, possibly as the result of a mass uprising against it?

By April, U.S. and British troops were seizing cities and supply routes and annihilating Iraqi forces on the battlefield. Having total control of Iraqi air space allowed coalition planes to bomb relentlessly and continuously. U.S. forces seized Saddam International Airport and renamed it Baghdad International Airport. The battle for Baghdad began with long columns of American armoured vehicles moving deep into the ancient city, wiping out Iraqis who dared to resist. Several of Saddam's palaces were captured. In the south, British forces pushed deep into Basra, Iraq's second largest city. In the north, coalition and Kurdish forces pushed Iraqi armies back. The end of Saddam Hussein's regime seemed near.

As the world awaited the outcome of the war, many other important questions loomed about what the future held in store for Iraq in the post-Saddam era. Would the United States keep its word to the Iraqi people and ensure their liberation and right to choose their own rulers? Would the United Nations be permitted to play a major role in the post-war reconstruction of the country, ravaged by war and years of harsh economic sanctions? Would Kurds in the north and Shi'ite Muslims in the south seize the opportunity offered by the collapse of Saddam's regime in order to secede and cause the breakup of Iraq? How would public opinion in other Arab countries respond to the war and a U.S. occupation of Iraq? What role, if any, might Canada play in a post-war Iraq? These and other major questions were being increasingly raised as the forces of the Anglo-American coalition tightened their noose around Baghdad, and the long-suffering people of Iraq anxiously awaited their fate.

To Consider

1. What was the position of the United Nations Security Council on the Anglo-American military action against Iraq?

2. What position did Canada take on the war once it began? What were some of the different reactions to this position?

3. Why did the progress of the war not proceed as most American and British military planners had expected during the first week of the fighting?

4. Why did the final victory of the Anglo-American coalition forces appear to be inevitable?

5. What problems will the post-war situation in Iraq pose to the people of that country and the forces that have driven Saddam Hussein's regime from power?

6. In your opinion, what role should Canada play in Iraq once the fighting is over? Explain carefully.

7. How has the war in Iraq influenced your view of the world?

THE WAR IN IRAQ

Video Review

This *News in Review* video contains important information and graphic images of the opening week of the war in Iraq. Watch the video and use the activities to enhance your understanding of this event and develop your own responses to it.

A) Gathering Information

After watching the video, record the following information:

1. Who is the leader of Iraq?

2. What ultimatum did U.S. President George W. Bush deliver to Iraq's leader shortly before the war began?

3. What country sent troops to Iraq to support the United States in its military action?

4. What was Canada's position on the war in Iraq?

5. a) What was the "target of opportunity" U.S. missiles tried to hit on the first night of the war?

b) What was the "shock and awe" campaign?

6. What two important objectives had U.S. and British forces achieved in the first days of the fighting?

7. What was the biggest surprise U.S. and British political and military leaders confronted during the first week of the war?

8. In what parts of the world did protests against the attack on Iraq occur?

9. a) What is meant by "embedded" reporting of the war in Iraq?

b) What advantages and disadvantages did some media commentators note about this practice?

10. At the end of the first week of the war, why did it appear that the coalition strategy had not worked as well as some had expected it to prior to the fighting?

B) Discussing the Issues

After watching the video, discuss the following questions with your classmates:

1. Why did Canada take the position it did on the war in Iraq? Do you agree with it? Why or why not?
2. Why did the United States and Britain begin military action against Iraq without the approval of the UN Security Council? Do you think this makes the war a violation of international law? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think there has been so much Iraqi military resistance to the troops of the Anglo-American coalition? How long do you think this resistance can continue, and what effect might it have on the final result of the war?
4. Why has there been so much opposition to the war in many parts of the world? Do you share the views of the anti-war protestors quoted in the video? Why or why not?
5. What impressions of the war do you think that the media practice of "embedding" reporters with coalition forces gives television viewers?
6. What have been some of the major difficulties the coalition forces and their military and political leaders have had to face during the first week of the war? Do you think these could pose any long-term problems for their objectives in post-war Iraq?

C) Reacting to Images

After watching the video, record your reactions to the images of war portrayed in it. Share your responses with your classmates. Use this organizer to focus your impressions.

Specific Image	My Reactions/Impressions

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Roots of the Conflict

Any significant event in history occurs as a result of both long- and short-term causes. Historians sometimes refer to these as background or immediate causes. Despite the fact that many people prefer simple explanations for complex chains of historical events, and like to find single, easily understood causes to account for them, history is rarely that straightforward. Future historians seeking to explain why the war in Iraq took place in early 2003 will have to examine both sets of causes. Historians frequently differ over both the causes they select and the relative importance they assign to them. Here are some of the long- and short-term causes of the war in Iraq that may be useful in order to gain a better understanding of what some historians call the “five Ws” in history: Who, Why, What, Where, When?

Long-term Causes

To some, the causes of the war in Iraq may be traced at least as far back as the January 1991 Persian Gulf War, itself triggered by Saddam Hussein’s decision to invade Kuwait in August 1990. This had been provoked by his anger at Kuwait for failing to provide the financial aid it had promised to compensate Iraq for the losses it had suffered during its eight-year-long war with Iran, from 1980 to 1988. During that conflict, both the United States and Kuwait had supported Iraq against the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Iran that they feared might destabilize the entire Middle East. Because of this, and the fact that he had previously been a staunch pro-American ally in the region, Saddam Hussein had some reason

to believe that the United States would not object to his occupation of Kuwait. But shortly after the invasion took place, both U.S. President George Bush Sr. and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher condemned it. They demanded that the United Nations impose harsh economic sanctions against Iraq. A series of UN resolutions set a definite deadline of January 15, 1991, for Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait, or face military action to compel it to do so.

When the deadline ran out a massive military coalition under U.S. military direction began a relentless air and ground assault on the Iraqi occupiers. This was called Operation Desert Storm, and within a month it had successfully ousted Saddam Hussein’s troops from Kuwait. With his army in tatters, the Iraqi leader’s hold on power appeared precarious. Rebellious Shi’ite Muslims in the south and Kurds in the north, who had no love for the regime that had oppressed them for so long, rose up, believing that the advancing coalition forces would come to their aid. However, this did not happen, and Saddam’s elite Republican Guard troops, which he had kept out of the fighting in Kuwait, brutally crushed the uprisings. Desert Storm commander Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf had been ordered to halt the advance of his forces at the Iraqi border. President Bush and other Western political leaders had feared that the nation of Iraq would break into pieces if Saddam’s regime were toppled. This would have plunged the entire Middle East region into chaos.

In the decade following Iraq’s humiliating defeat in Kuwait, Saddam’s

"Bush has sought war with Iraq throughout his presidency. He and a handful of advisers are obsessed with the desire to control Iraq and its resources, and have brought us all to the brink of disaster." — Former U.S. attorney-general, Ramsay Clark (*Toronto Star*, March 8, 2003)

Definition

Cold War is a term used to describe the confrontation between the two superpowers of the U.S. and U.S.S.R. from 1945 to 1990.

regime faced ongoing UN economic sanctions, which resulted in great hardship for his people. They faced severe shortages of food and medicine. American and British aircraft patrolled two UN-imposed "no-fly-zones" over the northern and southern parts of the country, preventing Saddam from using his air force to conduct further attacks on Kurdish and Shi'ite centres. At the same time, UN arms inspectors were authorized to maintain a presence in Iraq, searching for illegal weapons that Saddam's regime was not permitted to possess. All of these negative consequences of his invasion of Kuwait represented a tremendous setback for Saddam's goal of making Iraq a major regional power in the Middle East. But they did nothing to loosen his stranglehold on power within Iraq itself. If anything, his regime was stronger than ever as a result. His propaganda machine was able to deflect public resentment from his own misgoverning of the country to foreign powers, especially the United States and Britain, who in his view were intent on making ordinary Iraqis suffer.

Short-term Causes

In January 2001, George W. Bush was sworn in as the 43rd president of the United States. He had been elected promising to reduce the U.S.'s role in the world and refrain from committing its forces to UN-authorized missions abroad. The willingness of his predecessor, Bill Clinton, to involve the United States in such activities had cost him considerable political support at home, especially after U.S. troops had lost their lives in places like Somalia. But many of the new president's closest political advisors were veterans of his father's administration. They had strongly opposed the decision to refrain

from ousting Saddam Hussein when it had been within the United States' grasp in 1991. Among them were Vice-President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, and Assistant Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz.

During the Clinton presidency, this group had produced a policy paper strongly recommending that in the future the United States should forego the United Nations and use its unsurpassed military force to impose its will on any part of the world where it believed its economic or security interests were threatened. It viewed the post-Cold War world as a place where U.S. hegemony should be unchallenged, and any "rogue states" heedless enough to oppose it should be dealt with severely. On their list of real or potential enemies of the United States, Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq was close to the top. However, the policy document ended with the pessimistic conclusion that this approach was unlikely to find much support within the Clinton administration. Even a future Republican president might find it difficult to adopt it without a significant external crisis, such as the sudden and unprovoked Japanese attack in December 1941 on the American naval base in Hawaii called Pearl Harbor.

On the morning of September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four commercial airliners, crashing two into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and one into the Pentagon in Washington D.C. This stunning attack was to launch Bush's "war on terrorism." It gave his advisors the opportunity they had been looking for to promote their doctrine of pre-emptive (acting in advance of a threat) attacks on hostile foreign states. Even though

the Al Qaeda Islamic fundamentalist group led by Osama bin Laden had absolutely no proven connection with Saddam's regime in Iraq, many of Bush's senior advisors were convinced that military action against him could be easily justified in the wake of September 11, 2001.

In his January 2002 State of the Union address, Bush specifically named three countries that he claimed constituted an "axis of evil" dedicated to harming the United States. They were North Korea, Iran, and Iraq. Although these three states had no concerted foreign policy dedicated to opposing U.S. interests, individually they had at one time or another challenged the U.S. in their respective parts of the world. Bush alleged that these countries, among others, harbored international terrorists and possessed or were developing weapons of mass destruction, such as chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons, which they might one day use, either against friendly countries or the United States itself. He put them all on notice that they might become targets of a pre-emptive American military strike unless they radically changed their policy course.

In November 2002, after considerable U.S. and British pressure had been brought to bear on its member nations, the United Nations Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1441. It required Iraq to readmit the arms inspectors who had been withdrawn from the country in 1998 during a round of U.S. and British air strikes known as Operation Desert Fox. The resolution made a vague reference to "serious consequences" should Saddam block the arms inspectors from doing their work or conceal illegal weapons he was not supposed to possess. Despite the fact that the arms inspection teams had

found no serious evidence of such weapons and appeared to be making progress in their investigations, Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair maintained that Saddam was stalling and had no intention of truly disarming. For his part, Bush went a step further, calling for a "regime change" in Iraq that would remove Saddam from power, and permit the establishment of a democratic, pro-U.S. government there.

Bush's goal of "regime change" in Iraq was viewed with some concern, even by traditional U.S. allies like Canada. They worried that it might provide a precedent for a series of military actions designed to rid the world of any governments to which the United States took exception. But some interpreted Bush's determination to oust Saddam as the result of a serious concern that his regime posed to peace and security in the Middle East. Others believed that U.S. interests in Iraq had more to do with the country's vast oil reserves than with the desire to implant democracy there. Still others concluded that much of Bush Jr.'s zeal to topple the Iraqi dictator was the result of unfinished business that his father had been unable to accomplish in 1991. A few maintained that the U.S. was exercising its legitimate right of self-defence in removing Saddam from power, as it had done with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001. This was because the events of September 11 proved that the U.S. could be vulnerable to devastating terrorist attacks from countries that supported groups determined to conduct them. Despite the fact that there was no credible evidence linking Iraq to these events, many Americans accepted Bush's justification of the war as part of the country's ongoing campaign to crush the security threat international terrorism represented.

Activities

1. Explain the differences between long- and short-term causes of an important historical event.

2. Why do you think both types of causes are essential for a clear understanding of how an important world event like the war in Iraq occurred?

3. In your view, what are the most important long- and short-term causes of the war in Iraq? Explain the reasons for your choices.

4. To what extent do you think that learning about the long- and short-term causes of the war in Iraq can help you to understand the events and possible consequences of this conflict?

5. In your view was the current war in Iraq inevitable or could it have been avoided? Explain carefully.

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Canada's Path: Defenders and Critics

Did you know . . .

Although Canada is opposed to the war in Iraq 31 Canadian soldiers are participating through an exchange program with coalition armies? As well, about a dozen Aboriginal Canadians have joined the U.S. forces.

Further Research

Canada's political parties are divided over Canada's role in the war with Iraq. Visit these official Web sites to learn their most current positions: Bloc Québécois, www.blocquebecois.org; Canadian Alliance, www.canadianalliance.ca; Liberal Party of Canada, www.liberal.ca; New Democratic Party of Canada, www.ndp.ca; Progressive Conservative Party of Canada, www.pcparty.ca.

When the war in Iraq began on March 20, 2003, Canada's Prime Minister Jean Chrétien stated unequivocally that this country would not join the "coalition of the willing" assisting the United States and Great Britain in the military campaign against Saddam Hussein's regime. Chrétien's government had avoided giving a clear indication of what position it would take before the war began, hoping that the conflict could be resolved peacefully through the United Nations. But when the UN Security Council did not vote on a jointly sponsored U.S., British, and Spanish resolution calling for military action against Iraq, it became clear that the United States and its allies intended to proceed without UN authorization. For this reason, Canada was unable to support "Operation Iraqi Freedom," as the military action was called, and expressed regret that the United States had decided to act unilaterally.

Canada had consistently supported the objective of pressuring Saddam's regime to disarm and prove conclusively that it did not possess "weapons of mass destruction." But the other major objective of President George W. Bush's military campaign against Iraq, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime, was a matter of some concern to Canada. Prime Minister Chrétien indicated that he held grave reservations about the notion of "regime change" anywhere in the world brought about by superior American military force. He warned that such a step could set a dangerous precedent, not only for further American military interventions, but for other countries as well. They could cite the U.S. action against Iraq as

a justification for settling scores of their own with other states.

Opinion polls in Canada taken when the war began showed that Chrétien's position had overall majority support. On the whole, most Canadians indicated that they would have supported a military strike against Iraq if it had received UN backing, but did not favour a unilateral American-British attack. The opposition Canadian Alliance criticized Chrétien's Liberal government for failing to support a key ally, friend, and trading partner in time of need, and condemned remarks by some Liberal MPs that they believed were examples of an "anti-American" attitude. But two other opposition parties in the House of Commons, the NDP and the Bloc Québécois, fully endorsed Chrétien's stand. In fact, the newly elected NDP leader, Jack Layton, called on the government to be even more forthright in its condemnation of the war and immediately withdraw any Canadian military forces on patrol near the war zone in the Persian Gulf.

A few days after the war began, Paul Cellucci, the U.S. ambassador to Canada, delivered a speech to a business audience in Toronto, sharply criticizing this country's position on the war. Cellucci stated that the United States was "deeply disappointed" in Canada's failure to support military action against Iraq, alleging that if Canada were facing a hostile threat, the U.S. would be there for it. Cellucci's remarks caused great controversy in this country. Some believed that the U.S. ambassador had no right to criticize the foreign policy of an independent state, and should be reprimanded for seeking

Did you know . . .

Many Canadian aid agencies are actively preparing to send help to Iraq as soon as the fighting ceases? To learn more about their plans, visit the following sites: Oxfam Canada (www.oxfam.ca), Canadian War Child (www.warchild.ca), Canadian Red Cross (www.redcross.ca), Canadian World Vision (www.worldvision.ca) and Care Canada (www.care.ca).

to interfere in this country's decision-making process. But others warned that by angering the United States at a critical time, Canada ran the risk of suffering reprisals, specifically in the area of trade. Prominent political figures at the provincial and municipal levels of government, like Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, Ontario Premier Ernie Eves, former Ontario premier Mike Harris and Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman criticized Chrétien's position, and expressed strong support for the United States in its war effort in Iraq.

During the first two weeks of the war, both pro- and anti-war rallies were held across the country, indicating that Canadian public opinion was deeply divided on both the war itself and the position the federal government had taken on it. It remained to be seen, however, whether or not Canada's decision would result in any long-term negative consequences for the close economic, social, political, and cultural relations between the two neighbouring countries.

Responding

1. Why did the government of Canada take the position it did on the war in Iraq? Do you think this position was justified? Give reasons for your viewpoint.

2. What is your reaction to the U.S. ambassador's remarks about Canada's position on the war in Iraq? How do you think the Canadian government should have responded to them?

3. When the war is finished, is there a role for Canada? Explain.

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Reporting the War

Further Research

For more current information on the war, consider visiting these Canadian news sites: www.cbc.ca, www.ctv.ca, and www.canada.com. You might wish to compare these with U.S. sites such as those of CNN at www.CNN.com or ABC News at www.abcnews.go.com. One popular Arab Web site is www.aljazeera.net.

The war in Iraq is probably the most extensively covered military conflict in history to date. During the first days of the conflict, television viewers in Canada could watch almost non-stop reporting on it, either on CBC Newsworld, other Canadian networks, or CNN, the biggest U.S. television news broadcaster. Many others listened to radio programs on the war or logged on to a wide variety of Web sites that presented news and opinions on the war from a wide variety of sources. But despite the non-stop media attention to the war, some people felt that they were not receiving a full or balanced presentation of this event. They felt the U.S. media in particular was acting more as a cheerleader for the Bush administration than an objective outlet of information.

One of the new aspects of this war was the practice some networks adopted of “embedding” news reporters with American or British military units. These people were able to broadcast up-to-the-minute reports on the progress of the military campaign, often accompanied by vivid and dramatic pictures of the fighting. Some viewers welcomed this development, believing it gave them a fuller and more realistic sense of how the campaign was proceeding militarily. But others were critical of the embedding approach, arguing that it presented a very one-sided view of the war, and gave the impression that news reporters were not neutral observers of the fighting, but active participants in it.

While CNN and other major U.S. networks generally adopted the viewpoint that supported the aims and objectives of Operation Iraqi Freedom, news sources from Canada and other

countries remained somewhat more objective. For instance, incidents where Iraqi civilians were killed or injured by American missiles or bombs that went off target received very little attention from U.S. networks, but were given more coverage elsewhere. The influential Arab-language television outlet Al-Jazeera, based in the Persian Gulf state of Qatar, presented a view of the war that stood in sharp contrast to CNN’s portrayal of events. For example, some claims coalition military spokespersons made in the first week of the war, such as the alleged anti-Saddam uprising in the major southern city of Basra and the mass surrender of entire Iraqi divisions, were proved false as a result of Al-Jazeera’s on-the-spot reporting. But Al-Jazeera was also criticized for broadcasting images of captured American prisoners of war and the bloody bodies of U.S. troops killed in the fighting.

It is sometimes said that the first casualty in any war is the truth. When a war is being fought, each side uses as much pressure as possible on the mass media to make sure that its coverage of the fighting casts it in the most favourable light. One of the first media casualties of the war in Iraq was veteran American reporter Peter Arnett, whose coverage of the Vietnam War in the 1960s and the first Persian Gulf War of 1991 had earned him a distinguished reputation. But during an interview by Iraqi state television, he commented that American political and military leaders had been surprised by the extent of Iraq’s resistance to their invasion. He was immediately fired by NBC for making statements that could be construed as giving “aid and comfort” to

Did you know . . .
As of April 8, 2003, 11 journalists had died while covering the war? As well, several journalists had been imprisoned for a time.

the enemy. Although Arnett was quickly re-hired by the London *Daily Mirror*, a strongly anti-war British tabloid, his career as a media journalist in the United States was finished. Some believed that Arnett's fate was a classic example of shooting the messenger, or punishing someone who is not afraid to

reveal harsh truths about a military campaign gone awry. Yet others charged that his remarks represented poor judgment, at best, and that journalists should be careful about what they said and how their views could be exploited for propaganda purposes during wartime.

Discussion

1. With your classmates, discuss your views of how the Canadian, American, and other mass media, particularly television, have reported on the war in Iraq. What positive and negative comments can you make about it?
2. Do you think it is ever possible for the mass media to present an objective, unbiased view of an event such as the war in Iraq? How would you evaluate the degree to which the media accounts of the conflict you have watched have met the standards of being informative, relatively free of bias and manipulation, and helpful?
3. Do you think that NBC was right to fire reporter Peter Arnett after the remarks he made on Iraqi state television? Give reasons for your viewpoint.
4. Would you consider a career in war reporting? Why or why not?

Extension Activities

1. Obtain a copy of your local newspaper and consult the "Letters to the Editor" page. Examine the cross-section of public opinion on the war as the letters on the topic represent it. Analyze the content and argument of the letters, stating how effective you think they are in presenting the point of view of their writers on the war. Then write a letter of your own to your local newspaper, either by post or e-mail, stating whether or not you agree with the war and/or with the position the Canadian government has taken on it.
2. Form groups with your classmates to brainstorm what you think are the most likely scenarios (future possible courses of events) for Iraq, the Middle East, the United States, Canada, and the rest of the world once the current war ends with an expected coalition military victory and the end of Saddam Hussein's regime. Explain whether or not you think this outcome will lead to greater peace and stability in the region and/or the world, and what you believe will be the consequences of the conflict in the months and years to come.
3. Consider visiting www.rockthevote.org to hear "We Want Peace" by Lenny Kravitz, featuring popular Iraqi singer Kazem Al Sahir. Share your reactions with your classmates.