

HANDOUT



A SHORT HISTORY OF THE GULF WAR: 1991

The **Gulf War** of 1991 was the largest military engagement for the United States since the Vietnam War. After Vietnam, U.S. presidents were reluctant to commit large numbers of troops to a foreign conflict out of fear of repeating the mistakes of Vietnam. The Gulf War of 1991 changed that.

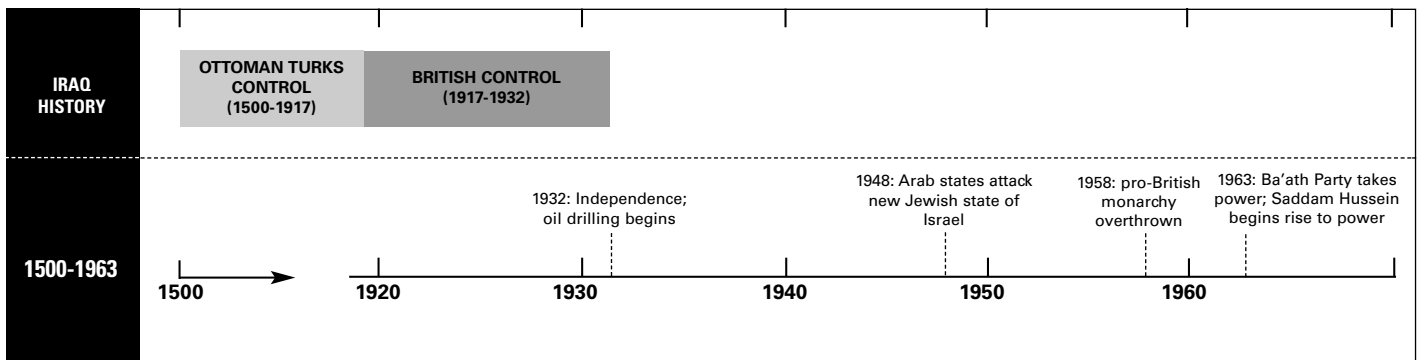
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area of the **Middle East** surrounding the Gulf is home to ancient civilizations. Agriculture, the wheel, and writing are all thought to have originated in ancient **Iraq** thousands of years ago. From about 1500 to 1900 the **Ottoman Empire** controlled the Gulf area. After World War I the **British Empire** took control of Iraq until its **independence** in 1932. The discovery of huge reserves of Middle East **oil** spurred interest in the region by the major world powers, including the United States. A 1958 revolution in Iraq overthrew the pro-British **monarchy** and in 1963 the **Arab** socialist **Ba'ath Party** took power. In the 1970s a young Ba'ath Party member gained control of the country through intimidation and

assassination of his political opponents. His name was **Saddam Hussein**.

THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR

Saddam Hussein ruled Iraq as a **dictator**, executing political opponents and persecuting ethnic and religious groups who did not give him their absolute loyalty. In 1980 he began a war against neighboring **Iran**. Iran had just ousted a pro-American dictator, the Shah of Iran, and had created a **theocracy** under the **Ayatollah Khomeini**. Khomeini hoped to spread his **Islamic revolution** to Iraq and throughout the Muslim world. Saddam Hussein perceived Iran as weak and vulnerable but Iran's Islamic revolutionaries fought back and nearly won the war in the early 1980s. The United States and other Arab nations, including Kuwait, supported Iraq in the war, fearing that an Iranian victory would spread Islamic revolution throughout the Middle East. In 1988, after millions of casualties, Iraq and Iran signed a cease-fire with neither side gaining any territory.



The Middle East



THE INVASION OF KUWAIT

After his self-proclaimed victory over Iran and backed by the world’s fourth largest army, Saddam Hussein turned his attention towards his small Arab neighbor to the south. He demanded that **Kuwait**, which had cut off financial support for Iraq after the war with Iran, turn over a disputed oil field. In August of 1990 the Iraqi army stormed over the border, taking control of Kuwait and its vast oil reserves. The international community demanded that Saddam Hussein withdraw all Iraqi forces and recognize the **sovereignty** of Kuwait. Saddam Hussein refused and declared Kuwait the 19th province of Iraq. U.S. President **George H.W. Bush** built an international coalition to force Iraq from Kuwait. In November the **United Nations Security Council** approved the use of force. Although American public opinion was

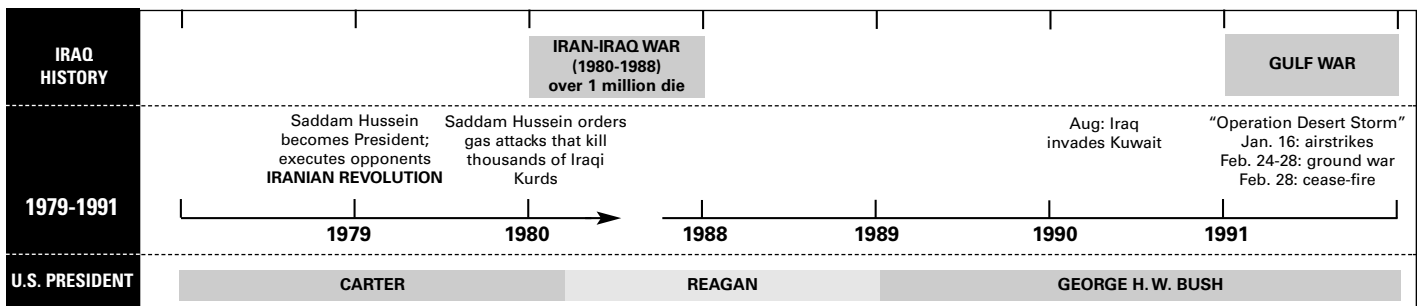
evenly split on the issue, the U.S. Congress narrowly voted to authorize the Gulf War on January 12, 1991.

OPERATION DESERT STORM

On January 16, 1991 the **Gulf War** began with air strikes against Iraqi military targets in Kuwait and Iraq. Roughly 500,000 Iraqi soldiers faced about the same number of Coalition forces—mostly from the United States, but also from Britain, France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Kuwait, and other nations. Over the next five weeks, continuous **air strikes** hit Iraqi military and civilian targets as Coalition forces prepared to invade Kuwait. Saddam Hussein fired missiles on Israel in an attempt to force Arab states out of the Coalition, but the alliance held. On February 24th, Coalition ground troops confronted a weakened Iraqi army and quickly pushed them from Kuwait. After 100 hours of fighting, Iraqi forces were pushed from Kuwait and were retreating towards Baghdad when President Bush called a halt to the fighting, leaving Saddam Hussein in power. The death toll for the Gulf War includes 239 Coalition soldiers (147 of which were Americans) and approximately 5,000 Kuwaitis. Figures for Iraqi war dead range widely but the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency estimated 100,000 Iraqi deaths.

SADDAM HUSSEIN MAINTAINS POWER

The United Nations mandate that authorized the war did not sanction the overthrow of the Iraqi regime. Bush was also concerned that removing Saddam Hussein could lead to civil war in Iraq. Arab **Sunni Muslims**, who had dominated



Iraqi politics since independence, made up a minority of the population. Sixty percent of Iraqis were **Shiite Muslims**, mostly living in southern Iraq. Ethnic **Kurds** populated the north of Iraq. Many in the Bush administration feared that the disintegration of Iraq would give the Iranians dominance in the oil-rich Gulf region. Saddam Hussein quickly moved to reestablish control over the country, and the U.S. did not intervene when his forces put down a Shiite rebellion in the south. A refugee crisis in the Kurdish areas prompted the U.S. to establish a **no-fly zone** in the north. For the next twelve years the Kurds of northern Iraq ruled themselves while U.S. and British forces kept Saddam Hussein's military out of their **autonomous areas**.

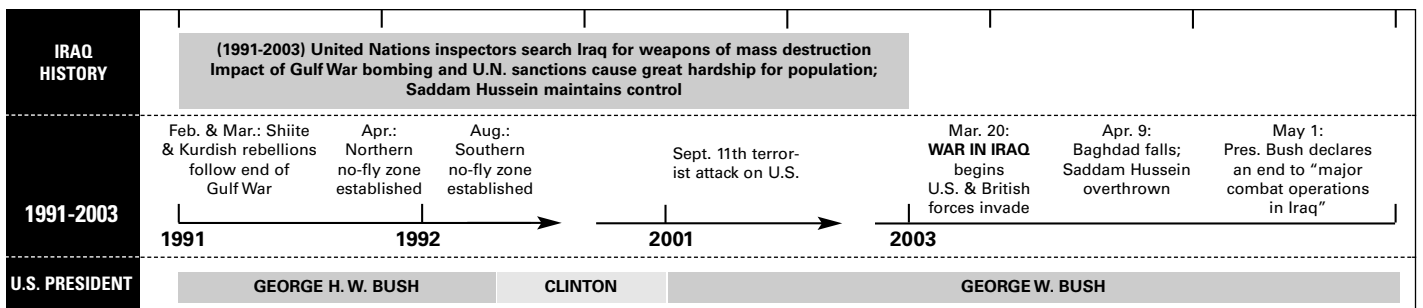
SANCTIONS, WEAPONS, AND MORE WAR

The United Nations placed **economic sanctions** (punishments) on the government of Iraq after the war. By the U.N.'s own estimates these sanctions led to the death of more than 500,000 Iraqi children. By the end of the 1990s international pressure was mounting to remove the sanctions but Saddam Hussein was still in power. The U.N. had also demanded that Iraq relinquish all **weapons of mass destruction**, including nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons. To ensure Iraqi cooperation, United Nations weapons inspectors searched Iraq for banned weapons. Throughout the 1990s Saddam Hussein had continuous conflict with the U.N. inspectors, the U.N. Security Council, and U.S. Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush (son of George H.W. Bush). After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the administration of George

W. Bush began planning military action to remove Saddam Hussein. Although Saddam Hussein had no connection to the **September 11th** attacks, government statements and media imagery left most Americans under the impression that he was somehow involved. Despite international and domestic opposition, U.S. and British forces launched an invasion of Iraq in March of 2003. In less than three weeks Saddam Hussein was overthrown and the U.S. began a military occupation of Iraq.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE GULF WAR

Throughout the Gulf War the legacy of Vietnam loomed large. The government and military did not want a repeat of the media images that had helped to turn the American people against that war. As a result, the military developed a number of strategies for controlling and influencing the media. **Public relations (PR)** experts hired by the U.S. and Kuwaiti governments crafted campaigns to manage media coverage. During the war, reporters were given limited access to the troops and kept away from battle zones. The Pentagon provided their own images and **press briefings** to highlight their view of the war. Reporters who were critical of the war were left out of **press pools** and the government **censored** some reports and images. Some media experts considered the Gulf War a brilliant public relations success on the part of the government while others felt that the American public did not get a complete and honest view of the war. As you analyze *Newsweek* coverage of the Gulf War, compare it to *Newsweek* coverage of the Vietnam War.



SLIDE SCRIPT



THE GULF WAR: 1991

Slides 18-30

This slide script provides teachers with historical information and probe questions linked to each of the *Newsweek* images. Teachers may move quickly through the images delivering key information, but we suggest a slower “collective reading” of the images. This will allow teachers to involve typically quiet students, teach visual literacy skills, cover more content, and engage the class in an interactive analysis and discussion of the issues raised by these historic documents.

VOCABULARY AND KEY CONCEPTS (listed by slide number)

<p>#18 invasion of Kuwait George H.W. Bush “ghosts of Vietnam” public relations (PR) press pools</p>	<p>#26 censorship</p>
<p>#19 Saddam Hussein Iran-Iraq War United Nations</p>	<p>#27 ground offensive air superiority 100 hours</p>
<p>#20 U.N. Security Council U.S. Constitution Commander in Chief U.S. Congress War Powers Act</p>	<p>#28 Basra Road</p>
<p>#22 Operation Desert Storm Coalition forces sorties dissent patriotism</p>	<p>#29 Kurds Shiite Muslim Sunni Muslim</p>
<p>#23 prisoner of war (POW) torture</p>	<p>#30 no-fly zones</p>
<p>#24 “smart bombs” Pentagon press briefings carpet bombs</p>	<p>POSTSCRIPT cease-fire agreement economic sanctions weapons of mass destruction U.N. weapons inspectors George W. Bush September 11th preemptive military action</p>
<p>#25 civilian casualties air-raid shelter</p>	

NOTE

Key concepts and vocabulary are in **bold** the first time they appear. Most are defined in the glossary.

Students should read the accompanying “Short History of the Gulf War” before beginning the slides. This will provide key background information that will be reinforced during the slide analysis.

SLIDE # 18



DECEMBER 10, 1990
 “This Will Not Be Another Vietnam”

- QUESTION **What messages does this cover from December 1990 give about the upcoming war in the Gulf? What is your evidence?**
- ANSWER The U.S. will not get “bogged down” in the Gulf the way it did in Vietnam.
- EVIDENCE text: “This Will Not Be Another Vietnam”
- ANSWER President George H.W. Bush will not negotiate endlessly with Saddam Hussein.
- EVIDENCE text: “A Deadline for Diplomacy”
- ANSWER Bush will send ample forces to do the job.
- EVIDENCE text: “And a Plan for All-Out War”
- ANSWER The President is determined to win this time.
- EVIDENCE Bush’s fists and determined look, his quote that this will not be like Vietnam
- ANSWER This is serious business.
- EVIDENCE the dramatic black space around the photo and text

SEE INFO BOX →

INFO

In the summer of 1990 Iraqi troops **invaded Kuwait**, a small but oil-rich ally of the United States. President **George H.W. Bush** stated that this violation of international law would not stand. In order to force 500,000 Iraqi soldiers out of Kuwait, Bush needed a commitment of U.S. troops not seen since the Vietnam War. The “**ghosts of Vietnam**” still loomed large in the American psyche and Bush had to convince the public that we would not get “bogged down” in another “quagmire” like Vietnam.

WAR, LIES, AND VIDEOTAPE: A CASE STUDY OF GULF WAR PR

Shortly after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait the Kuwaiti government in exile hired one of the largest public relations firms in the world, Hill & Knowlton, to sway public opinion in support of a war against Iraq. In October of 1990 Hill & Knowlton orchestrated hearings before a "Congressional Human Rights Caucus" about the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. The event featured the tearful testimony of a 15-year-old Kuwaiti girl who was identified only as Nayirah. She described witnessing Iraqi soldiers dumping Kuwaiti babies out of incubators at the hospital in Kuwait City where she worked. Hill & Knowlton sent free video press releases of her testimony to television stations around the world. Her incubator story was widely covered by the media, repeated by congressional leaders and President Bush, and is credited with having helped to convince the American public to support a war in the Gulf. It was later disclosed that the girl who testified was the daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the U.S. In fact, her widely reported incubator story was a lie. By the time this deception was uncovered, we were already at war.¹

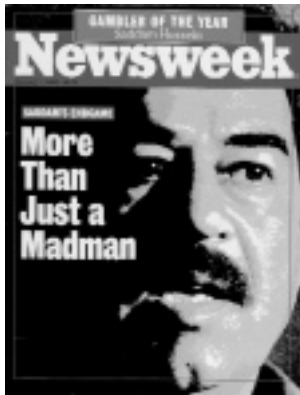
¹John R. MacArthur, *Second Front: Censorship and Propaganda in the Gulf War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992) 58-74.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

The video *Toxic Sludge is Good for You: the Public Relations Industry Unspun* includes an excellent five-minute segment on the Hill & Knowlton campaign. For more information on this video, see [Additional Activities](#).

FOCUS ON THE MEDIA

As President George H.W. Bush made his case for war to the United Nations and the American people, the U.S. military made plans for influencing media coverage of the war. They hired **public relations (PR)** experts to advise them how to construct media campaigns. The military provided video footage and photos for the media and staged highly orchestrated press conferences. They kept reporters away from battle scenes and gave them limited access to the troops. They favored some reporters and left others out of **press pools**. The military also censored some reports and images. As you look through these slides, compare *Newsweek* coverage of the Gulf War with the coverage you looked at from the Vietnam War. How were these wars presented differently to the American people and how did the U.S. government help to construct public impressions and opinions about the Gulf War?

SLIDE #19

JANUARY 7, 1991
 “More Than Just a Madman”

QUESTION What messages about the Iraqi leader are communicated in this 1991 *Newsweek* cover? How are those messages communicated?

ANSWER Saddam Hussein is a dangerous and crazy leader.

EVIDENCE digital manipulation of photo, strange and unappealing colors, harsh lighting and shadows, sweat on face, text: “More Than Just a Madman,” and “Gambler of the Year”

QUESTION Is there a pro-war or anti-war bias to this cover? What is your evidence?

ANSWER This is a pro-war cover.

EVIDENCE shows Saddam Hussein as an evil madman and a gambler, promotes the idea that the U.S. needs to confront him and “call his bluff”

SEE INFO BOX →

QUESTION Why would *Newsweek* manipulate this photo for the cover?

ANSWER By sensationalizing the image of Saddam Hussein, *Newsweek* is trying to attract more people to buy and read the magazine.

ANSWER Like all magazines, *Newsweek* frequently uses visual manipulation of photos on its covers in order to create dramatic and sensational visuals that will sell magazines. However, like other reputable periodicals, it does not alter photographs appearing within the magazine.

SEE FOCUS ON THE MEDIA BOX →**INFO**

Saddam Hussein took complete power in Iraq in 1979 through political intimidation and violence. He invaded Iran in 1980 and began the bloody **Iran-Iraq War**. Throughout this period the U.S. provided Saddam Hussein with weapons and intelligence as he developed a huge and battle-hardened army. But in August of 1990 Saddam Hussein defied U.S. interests and invaded Kuwait, an oil-rich neighbor and U.S. ally. Both the United States and the **United Nations** immediately demanded an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait but Saddam defiantly declared Kuwait to be Iraq's 19th province.

FOCUS ON THE MEDIA

News photos are always manipulated in some ways. For example, the photographer chooses the camera angle, source of lighting, and framing of the subject. Editors and art directors make other decisions such as cropping of the image, size, and placement on the page. These types of visual construction are considered within the accepted bounds of credible news photography. However, magazine covers are essentially considered to be advertisements, and photos shown on them are often altered in more sensational and manipulative ways in order to sell more magazines. Sometimes these kinds of manipulations have caused public criticism – like when *National Geographic* digitally moved two pyramids closer together, or when *Time* darkened O.J. Simpson's skin color after he was found guilty in a civil trial. But mostly the obvious and dramatic manipulation of photographs on magazine covers is considered to be within ethical bounds.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY

Compare this cover of Saddam Hussein with the *Newsweek* cover of North Vietnam's leader Ho Chi Minh (slide #5) from the Vietnam War series.

SLIDE #20



JANUARY 21, 1991
 "The Path to War"

QUESTION What messages about the war are communicated? What is your evidence?

ANSWER The U.S. will win the war with powerful technology.

EVIDENCE text: "We'll Win"; size, power and sophistication of the plane, view from above looking down on Iraq

ANSWER The land of Iraq is desolate and undeveloped.

EVIDENCE the barren landscape, angle of the shot

ANSWER Maybe we should wait to go to war.

EVIDENCE text: "We'll Win, But Why Rush?"

QUESTION Who do you think took this photo, a government photographer or independent journalist?

ANSWER This photo was probably taken from another military aircraft and either provided directly by the military to *Newsweek* or taken by a photojournalist working with the military.

QUESTION Why might the U.S. military provide photos like this to *Newsweek*?

ANSWER Photos like this provide an exciting, high-tech image of the war.

SEE INFO BOX →

INFO

President George H.W. Bush organized a U.S.-led international military coalition to force Iraq out of Kuwait. The **United Nations Security Council** passed a resolution in November calling for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait by January 15th or face war. The five victorious allies from World War II (the United States, Russia, Great Britain, France, and China) control the Security Council, which has the power to authorize the use of U.N. troops. But before President Bush could send U.S. troops he had to consult with Congress. According to the **U.S. Constitution** the president of the United States is **Commander in Chief** of the U.S. Armed Forces; however, **Congress** must declare war. The **War Powers Act**, passed at the end of the Vietnam War, further reinforced the need for presidents to seek congressional approval for war. Although the country was divided on the war, on January 12th Congress narrowly passed a resolution supporting the use of force. This *Newsweek* came out just before the January 15th U.N. resolution deadline (even though the date on the magazine is January 21st).

SLIDE #21

JANUARY 21, 1991
"Mixed Feelings"

QUESTION What messages about the war are communicated? What is your evidence?

ANSWER The U.S. military is prepared for war while some Americans protest.

EVIDENCE photos of military preparation juxtaposed with a lone protester; text: "Mixed Feelings"

QUESTION What do the sizes of the photos communicate about the war?

ANSWER The bottom photo of an anti-war protester is dwarfed by the larger photos of war preparation. Since size is often associated with importance, anti-war sentiments seem less important than war preparation. The smaller photo of a lone, white protester suggests that the anti-war movement is not widespread.

QUESTION What role does the visual element of line play in the upper left-hand photo?

ANSWER The converging lines created by the soldiers' bodies and the gun barrel lead the viewer's eye towards the photo of tanks in the desert. This photo, taken shortly before the beginning of the war, leads the viewer visually into the upcoming war.

SLIDE #22



JANUARY 28, 1991
 "America at War"

QUESTION **Is there a pro-war or anti-war bias to this cover? What is your evidence?**

ANSWER This is a pro-war cover.

EVIDENCE patriotic colors and language, pilot with thumb up = approval and victory, "Special Issue" graphics and color = patriotic high-tech celebration

QUESTION **What role does color play in this cover?**

ANSWER *Newsweek's* decision to surround the pilot with red, white, and blue letters and graphics "frames" the Gulf War as patriotic.

SEE INFO BOX A →

QUESTION **Why do you suppose U.S. public opinion shifted so quickly to support the war once the bombs started dropping?**

ANSWER Once the Gulf War began, American television aired countless images of high-tech American military power devastating the Iraqis. Wartime patriotism, military success, and the government's successful public relations (PR) campaign helped to sway public opinion.

SEE INFO BOX B →

INFO A

At 7a.m. on January 16, 1991 "Operation Desert Storm" (the military name for the war) began. For the next five weeks **Coalition forces** sent thousands of **sorties** (bombing missions), destroying Iraqi military and civilian targets in Iraq and Kuwait. Once the air war began, U.S. public opinion quickly shifted to support the war.

INFO B

It is an historic pattern for political and public opposition to war to diminish once the fighting begins. Politicians have typically spoken about the need for national unity and resolve in the face of a foreign enemy. Some Americans see public opposition to war as unpatriotic or even traitorous once our troops are committed while other Americans feel that **dissent** is a civic and **patriotic** duty.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Do you think that dissent is patriotic or unpatriotic once our country has gone to war?

SLIDE #23

FEBRUARY 4, 1991
 "Hard Days Ahead"

SEE INFO BOX →

- QUESTION** What messages about the war are communicated by this cover showing an American POW? What is your evidence?
- ANSWER** Iraqis brutally tortured and tormented Americans.
- EVIDENCE** text and shocking image
- ANSWER** The war will be hard for America.
- EVIDENCE** image and text: "Hard Days Ahead," and "A Brutal War"
- ANSWER** Saddam Hussein is an evil enemy.
- EVIDENCE** photo and text about torture and headline, "Saddam's environmental terror"
- QUESTION** Is it likely that *Newsweek* would have run a large cover photo showing the face of an Iraqi soldier or civilian injured by American forces?
- ANSWER** *Newsweek*, a mainstream magazine with a large American audience, would have risked alienating many readers if it highlighted the pain caused by American forces in February of 1991. Although *Newsweek* did run photos of Iraqi casualties, none had the prominence of this cover photo that highlights Americans as victims of Iraqi torture.

INFO

Early in the air war a number of U.S. pilots were shot down and captured by Iraqi forces. This is a photo of one of the U.S. **prisoners of war (POWs)** who was **tortured** by Iraqi forces.

SLIDE #24



FEBRUARY 18, 1991
 "The New Science of War"

QUESTION What messages about the war are communicated? What is your evidence?

ANSWER New American war technology is "cool," even sexy

EVIDENCE space-age image of the Stealth Bomber, "Pullout Poster" of "Weapons of War"

ANSWER New American war technology will "save lives."

EVIDENCE text and absence of destruction in image

ANSWER War is a "science."

EVIDENCE text and clean, high-tech image

QUESTION Is there a pro-war or anti-war bias to this cover? What is your evidence?

ANSWER This cover is pro-war.

EVIDENCE "cool," humane, "scientific," and bloodless view of war and American technological sophistication

QUESTION Who do you think took this photo, a government photographer or independent journalist?

ANSWER This photo was probably taken from another military aircraft and either provided directly by the military to *Newsweek* or taken by a photojournalist working with the military.

QUESTION Why might the U.S. military provide photos like this to *Newsweek*?

ANSWER Photos like this provide a clean, high-tech view of war that is more positive than bloody battle scenes.

SEE INFO BOX →

INFO

The U.S. military successfully promoted its new high-tech weaponry in the media although it did not always represent the true reality of the war. While so-called "smart bombs" received much media attention and provided dramatic images for many **Pentagon press briefings**, only 10% of the munitions dropped in the Gulf War were "smart bombs."

SLIDE #25

FEBRUARY 25, 1991
 "Under the Bombs"

QUESTION What messages about the war are communicated? What is your evidence?

ANSWER There were civilian casualties in the Gulf War.

EVIDENCE photos of dead civilians under makeshift coverings, and text

ANSWER Saddam Hussein is the target of the bombs.

EVIDENCE photo of Saddam Hussein below text: "Under the Bombs"

QUESTION How does the inclusion of *Saddam Hussein's* image on this page help to justify, or at least explain, the killing of innocent civilians?

ANSWER Although we see the covered bodies of Iraqi civilians, Saddam Hussein is the most identifiable person on the page. He is shown under the text "Under the Bombs," implying that he is the target. Throughout the war the U.S. media presented Saddam Hussein as the face of Iraq and rarely showed the faces of innocent Iraqi casualties. By focusing images and information on the dictator Saddam Hussein, U.S. media coverage helped to keep American public opinion focused on the goal of overthrowing the dictator.

SEE INFO BOX →

INFO

It is impossible to know the extent of **civilian casualties** during the Gulf War, in part because both the U.S. and Iraqi governments did not want to publicize this information. The U.S. military understood that coverage of civilian casualties could bolster anti-war sentiments as it did in Vietnam. The Iraqi government, which had total control over the media in Iraq, did not want to publicize the extent of Iraqi losses. One of the few exceptions was the February 13th bombing of a civilian **air-raid shelter** in Baghdad where between 400 and 1,200 Iraqi civilians, mostly women and children, were killed by an American precision-guided "smart bomb." The U.S. military claimed to have intelligence that the shelter was being used as a munitions communications center for the Iraqi military.

SLIDE #26



MARCH 11, 1991
 "Exorcising Demons"

QUESTION What messages about the war are communicated? What is your evidence?

ANSWER Suffering and pain are a part of war.

EVIDENCE injured U.S. soldiers, body bag, crying soldier, text

QUESTION Is there a pro-war or anti-war bias to this two-page spread? What is your evidence?

ANSWER This is an anti-war image.

EVIDENCE shows cruel reality of war including loss, injury, and death to Americans

SEE INFO BOX →

QUESTION What does the writer mean that the Gulf War "exorcised the ghost of Vietnam"?

ANSWER The Vietnam War became very unpopular as Americans watched years of mounting casualties and witnessed the horrible reality of war. The Gulf War images (as you have seen) were very different. They emphasized American military might and success. Vietnam's legacy of guilt and military failure was "exorcised" by the dramatic U.S. victory in the Gulf War.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITY

The PBS video *American Photography: A Century of Images* includes a powerful four-minute clip about media coverage of the Gulf War. In the clip the photographer, David Turnley, describes how he managed to take this photo and get it published. For more information on this video, see [Additional Activities](#).

INFO

This is one of the more famous and unusual photographs from the Gulf War. After the Vietnam War, the U.S. military recognized the powerful impact of photos like this on American public opinion. As a result the military instituted policy changes to both control and influence media coverage of future wars. During the Gulf War, press photographers had limited access to the fighting. They were accompanied by military guides, and their photos were often **censored**. Photographer David Turnley evaded his guide and hooked up with a special operations unit before taking this photo. The man on the left is crying out as he learns that the body bag to the right contains his friend. At first the military censored this photo but then released it after the photographer complained.

SLIDE #27



MARCH 11, 1991

"Victory!"

QUESTION **What messages about the war are communicated? What is your evidence?**

ANSWER America has won and we are happy.

EVIDENCE beaming face of General Schwarzkopf, text: "Victory!" and patriotic red, white, and blue colors

QUESTION **Is there a pro-war or anti-war bias to this cover? What is your evidence?**

ANSWER This is a pro-war cover.

EVIDENCE patriotic colors, focus on glory of military victory, celebratory text

SEE INFO BOX →

INFO

After more than one month of intensive bombing, the U.S. launched a long-awaited **ground offensive** on February 24th. Half-a-million troops took part in the war. Although the bulk of the military force came from the United States, 36 nations supported the Coalition with military bases, troops, equipment, and money. Even the Arab nations of Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia joined the U.S.-led Coalition against Iraq. Backed by total **air superiority**, Coalition forces quickly defeated the Iraqi army, which fled back towards Baghdad, the capital of Iraq. As they left Kuwait the Iraqis set fire to over 500 Kuwaiti oil wells in an attempt to cripple Kuwait's post-war economy. In less than **100 hours** of fighting on the ground, the U.S.-led forces had devastated the Iraqi military and forced it from Kuwait. There were 147 U.S. battle deaths. Estimates for Iraqi deaths range from thousands to hundreds of thousands.

SLIDE #28



MARCH 11, 1991
 "Triumph and Devastation"

SEE INFO BOX →

QUESTION What messages about the war are communicated in these very different images?

ANSWER The image on the left illustrates Kuwaiti joy and patriotism in their liberation from Iraq.

EVIDENCE smiling faces and waving flags

ANSWER The image on the right illustrates the chaos and violence of war.

EVIDENCE remains of burned-out trucks and cars scattered in conflicting directions

ANSWER Victory and liberation in this war have a face, while the defeated (and dead) Iraqis are faceless.

SEE FOCUS ON THE MEDIA BOX →

QUESTION What impressions are made by the lines in these images?

ANSWER The many "V" shapes created by the fingers, arms, and flags in the photo on the left symbolize victory, while the jumbled and chaotic lines on the right reinforce a sense of devastation.

INFO

The image on the left shows Kuwaitis celebrating their liberation after the U.S.-led Coalition forced the Iraqi military out of Kuwait. The image on the right shows the remains of Iraqi vehicles that were attacked as they fled from Coalition forces on the **Basra Road**.

FOCUS ON THE MEDIA

Photographs from the Basra Road (also known as the "Highway of Death") show the remains of charred human bodies as hundreds of people fled from advancing Coalition forces. The victims were not given an opportunity to surrender. Photos of the burned bodies were not printed in mainstream media outlets like *Newsweek*.

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Should *Newsweek* have printed the gruesome photos from the Basra Road? Why or why not?

SLIDE #29



MARCH 18, 1991

QUESTION What messages about the war are communicated? What is your evidence?

ANSWER The country celebrates the troops and America's victory.

EVIDENCE lots of American flags, hugs and kisses directed towards returning troops

SEE INFO BOX A →

SLIDE #30



MARCH 25, 1991
"Revolt in Iraq"

QUESTION What does this cover communicate about the situation in Iraq in March of 1991?

ANSWER After Coalition forces drove Iraq out of Kuwait, rebellions in Iraq threatened to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

EVIDENCE photo and text: "Revolt in Iraq"

ANSWER The rebels are armed and have leaders.

EVIDENCE guns in photo, rebel holding picture of a Shiite cleric

ANSWER The U.S. is continuing to threaten Saddam Hussein.

EVIDENCE text: "Bush Keeps the Pressure On"

SEE INFO BOX B →

INFO A

The war ended on February 28, 1991, when President Bush ordered U.S. troops to stop their advance into Iraq. The Iraqi forces were in full retreat and some people called for the U.S. to march into Baghdad to overthrow Saddam Hussein. A United Nations resolution had authorized military action to force Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait, but the United Nations had not called for the overthrow of the Iraqi government. In addition, George H.W. Bush was advised against toppling Saddam Hussein because this might lead to civil war between the **Kurds** of northern Iraq, the **Shiite Muslims** in the south, and the Arab **Sunni Muslims** who had historically ruled Iraq. The U.S. administration was also concerned that a weak and divided Iraq might strengthen the power of neighboring Iran with its staunchly anti-American Islamic revolutionary government. In hindsight the Bush administration may have wished that it toppled Saddam Hussein in 1991 when it would have been relatively easy.

INFO B

Once Coalition forces ceased their advance on Baghdad on February 28th, Saddam Hussein began to re-establish control over the country. Although President Bush encouraged Iraqis to rise up and overthrow Saddam Hussein, the U.S. did not intervene when Iraqi military forces destroyed a Shiite uprising in the south. In the north, British and U.S. forces imposed **no-fly zones** for the Iraqi military and periodically bombed Iraq's air defense capabilities. This gave the Kurds relative autonomy for the next 12 years.

POSTSCRIPT

The **cease-fire agreement** at the end of the Gulf War imposed **economic sanctions** on Iraq and required the Iraqi military to destroy all **weapons of mass destruction**. **United Nations weapons inspectors** entered the country and began destroying biological and chemical weapons. A decade after the end of the Gulf War, Iraq was still suspected of possessing chemical and biological weapons, and economic sanctions were still in effect. By the United Nations own estimates more than 500,000 children died as a result of the economic sanctions. President **George W. Bush** (son of George H.W. Bush) assumed the presidency in January of 2001. Some in his administration had hopes of overthrowing Saddam Hussein and imposing a democratic, pro-U.S. government in Iraq. The events of **September 11th** helped to make those hopes a reality. After the devastating terrorist attacks, the Bush administration's new policy of **preemptive military action** found support in a frightened and angry American public. Government statements and media imagery helped to create the impression of a link between Saddam Hussein and the September 11th attacks, despite the fact that no connection existed. In March 2003, U.S. and British forces invaded Iraq and ousted Saddam Hussein, finishing the war his father had begun more than a decade earlier.

MEDIA COVERAGE OF THE GULF WAR

As we have seen, the U.S. government and military learned important lessons from the Vietnam War, including how to influence media coverage. During the Gulf War mainstream media outlets like *Newsweek* typically ran coverage that supported government war aims. Skillful management of media by the government and military, together with a cooperative mainstream media that catered to patriotic, pro-war public opinion, helped to make the Gulf War a public relations success for the Bush administration. President George H.W. Bush predicted in December of 1990 that the upcoming Gulf War "will not be another Vietnam" and it was not.

GULF WAR GLOSSARY

air-raid shelter: a fortified location where those threatened with an air attack may go for refuge

air strike: a form of military attack that uses air craft as opposed to ground or naval forces

Arab: an ethnic identity typically referring to someone who comes from, or whose ancestors came from, one of 22 Arab nations in the Middle East and North Africa

autonomous areas: politically independent areas; in Iraq, the northern and southern zones established and protected by British and U.S. forces after the Gulf War in 1991

Ba'ath Party: a political party that stresses Arab nationalism and socialism; the party through which Saddam Hussein came to power; also the ruling power in Syria

Basra Road: also known as the "Highway of Death," where thousands of Iraqis were killed by U.S. air forces while withdrawing from Kuwait on Feb. 26 and 27, 1991

British Empire: the former territory controlled by Great Britain that included modern day Arab nations such as Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, and Kuwait as well as many other countries around the world

Bush, George H.W.: 41st President of the United States (1989-1993)

Bush, George W.: 43rd President of the United States (2001-)

Carter, James E. (Jimmy): 39th President of the United States (1977-1981)

casualties: those who disappear or are killed by or during a particular event, like a war or an accident

cease-fire agreement: an agreement made between two or more warring parties to stop fighting

censor: to limit or edit information with the intent of suppressing anything considered objectionable

civilian: a person not on active duty in the military or police force; a non-combatant

Clinton, William J.: 42nd President of the United States (1993-2001)

Coalition forces: the armed forces that fought against Iraq in the Gulf War; led by the United States with additional forces from Great Britain, France, Canada, Australia, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and other nations

Commander in Chief: title used to describe the role of the president of the United States as the head of the armed forces particularly in times of war

dictator: a person who assumes complete rule over a nation, often oppressively

dissent: disagreement or opposition to an authority, often a government

economic sanction: the prevention of the transfer of goods or finances to a particular country or place usually as a form of political or military influence; used as a form of punishment against Iraq after the Gulf War

ground offensive: an attack led principally by ground forces like the army

Gulf War: the 1991 U.N.-authorized U.S.-led war that forced Iraq out of Kuwait

Hussein, Saddam: President of Iraq from 1979 to 2003; known for the brutality and oppressiveness of his government

Iran-Iraq War: decade-long war between Iran and Iraq that began in 1980 when Iraqi forces entered Iran over political and territorial disputes; the war ended in 1990 according to Iranian terms of settlement as the Gulf War was beginning

Islamic revolution: fundamentalist movement that aims to control the political system of a nation; the movement that transformed the government of Iran in 1979 from a monarchy to an Islamic theocracy under the Ayatollah Khomeini

Ayatollah Khomeini: leader of the Shiite Islamic Revolution to overthrow the Shah of Iran in 1979 through which he became primary political and religious leader of Iran until his death in 1989

Kurds: members of an ethnic group that is geographically spread throughout regions of Turkey, Syria, Iraq, and Iran and that has fought for its own nation; most Kurds practice Sunni Islam

Middle East: a geographic and cultural region of South West Asia and North Africa stretching from Iran in the east and Turkey in the north and including most Arab nations

monarchy: rule by one person, usually for the lifetime of the ruler and by hereditary right

no-fly zone: an established area where air craft from a particular country or group are not allowed to fly; in Iraq no-fly zones were created in the north and south, prohibiting Iraqi air craft from flying in those areas

"Operation Desert Storm": the name used by the U.S. government and military for the Gulf War in 1991

Ottoman Empire: a Turkish empire that controlled much of the Middle East from the 15th to the 20th century

patriotism: loyalty, allegiance, love of one's country

Pentagon: the leadership of the U.S. military; U.S. military headquarters that is a five-sided building in Washington D.C.

preemptive military action: military action carried out without direct military provocation in order to seize initiative in a conflict by acting before an opponent

press briefing: a gathering of journalists and officials during which officials release information, respond to issues and concerns, and sometimes conduct a question-and-answer period with journalists

press pool: the media representatives selected or available to cover a particular event; during the Gulf War, a grouping of reporters organized and overseen by the U.S. military

prisoner of war (POW): a person captured in war

public relations (PR): field of communications that deals with the construction of messages sent to the public, typically through mass media, in order to promote a particular product, person, or position

Reagan, Ronald W.: 40th President of the United States (1981-1989)

September 11th: the popular culture reference to the terrorist hijackings and attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001; also referred to as 9/11

Shia Islam: the branch of Islam that recognizes Ali and his descendants as the only legitimate heirs to the prophet Muhammad; the majority sect of Islam in Iran and Iraq but the minority sect in the bulk of the Islamic world

Shiite Muslim: a member of the Shia branch of Islam

“smart bomb”: a bomb with special guidance technology that is meant to lead it to a target

sortie: a mission or attack conducted by one plane

sovereignty: independence from outside control

Sunni Islam: the branch of Islam that recognizes appointed caliphs as the legitimate leaders of the Muslim world; the majority sect of Islam in all but a few Muslim nations

theocracy: political rule by religious leaders as in Iran under the Ayatollah Khomeini

United Nations (U.N.): international political organization formed in 1945 by the victorious allies of World War II, currently with nearly 200 member countries

U.N. Security Council: body of the U.N. responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security; controlled by the five permanent members: the United States, Russia, China, Great Britain, and France

U.N. weapons inspectors: a special team of investigators organized by the U.N. after the Gulf War of 1991 and charged with the task of inspecting weapons and searching for signs of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq

U.S. Congress: the legislative branch of the United States government made up of the Senate and the House of Representatives

War Powers Act: a joint resolution passed by the U.S. Congress in 1973 in response to presidential decision-making during the Vietnam War that limited presidential power to engage U.S. forces in long-term combat without congressional approval

weapons of mass destruction (WMDs): nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons

NAME:**Date:**

Use your knowledge of history and the handout of *Newsweek* images of the Gulf War to answer these questions.

- 1. Which is not thought to have originated in ancient Iraq?**
 - a) agriculture
 - b) the wheel
 - c) writing
 - d) democracy
- 2. Which list of the groups or individuals that have controlled Iraq is in correct chronological order?**
 - a) the Ottomans, the British, the Ba'ath Party, Saddam Hussein
 - b) the British, the Ottomans, the Persians, Saddam Hussein
 - c) the Arabs, the Persians, the Ba'ath Party, the Muslims
 - d) the monarchy, the British, the Israelis, the Ba'ath Party
- 3. Saddam Hussein's government was**
 - a) a theocracy
 - b) a democracy
 - c) a dictatorship
 - d) a monarchy
- 4. In 1979 Iran had a revolution that placed in power**
 - a) a pro-American democracy
 - b) an Islamic fundamentalist government
 - c) an anti-American communist dictatorship
 - d) the Ba'ath Party
- 5. The U.S. and Kuwait supported Iraq in the war against Iran because they**
 - a) approved of Saddam Hussein's administration
 - b) opposed Iran's human rights record
 - c) feared Iran's revolution might spread
 - d) wanted a peaceful Persian Gulf
- 6. Which was a result of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war?**
 - a) over one million dead
 - b) victory by Iraq
 - c) victory by Iran
 - d) stability in the Gulf
- 7. What was the response of the international community to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990?**
 - a) the U.N. demanded an immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops
 - b) the U.S. immediately declared war on Iraq
 - c) Iraq declared Kuwait to be its 19th province
 - d) U.N. weapons inspectors entered Iraq
- 8. On the eve of the war the American public was**
 - a) evenly divided on whether or not to go to war
 - b) 90% in support of the war
 - c) 90% opposed to war
 - d) unaware that a secret war was about to be waged
- 9. President George H.W. Bush put together an international military coalition to drive Iraqi forces from Kuwait that included**
 - a) Palestine, Israel, and Iran
 - b) all countries in the United Nations
 - c) no Arab states
 - d) forces from many nations including Arab states
- 10. On January 16, 1991 the Coalition forces began five weeks of air strikes that**
 - a) overthrew Saddam Hussein
 - b) destroyed the civilian and military infrastructure of Iraq
 - c) were opposed by the United Nations
 - d) killed more people than WWII

11. Iraq launched missiles into Israel during the war in an attempt to

- a) undermine Arab participation in the Coalition
- b) gain Kuwaiti support for the war
- c) force the U.S. out of the war
- d) overthrow the Jewish state

12. On February 24, 1991 the Coalition began a ground war that lasted

- a) 100 minutes
- b) 100 hours
- c) 10 weeks
- d) 10 months

13. Why did President George H.W. Bush decide to leave Saddam Hussein in power rather than overthrow his regime in February of 1991?

- a) ousting Saddam could lead to the disintegration of Iraq
- b) a weak Iraq could strengthen Iran
- c) the U.N. mandate for war did not call for regime change
- d) all of the above

14. What was the U.S. response to the Shiite rebellion in southern Iraq following the end of the Gulf War?

- a) to attack the Iraqi forces which suppressed the rebellion
- b) to attack the Shiites
- c) to remain uninvolved
- d) to send U.S. forces to support the anti-Saddam forces

15. After the Gulf War, United Nations inspectors entered Iraq to look for

- a) weapons of mass destruction
- b) Kuwaiti prisoners of war
- c) illegal drugs
- d) human rights violations

16. U.N. sanctions imposed after the Gulf War

- a) brought down the regime of Saddam Hussein
- b) led to the death of more than half-a-million Iraqi children
- c) protected Iraqi civilians from a brutal dictator
- d) helped to rebuild the war-damaged infrastructure of Iraq

For questions 17 - 20 refer to the handout of *Newsweek* images**17. Which is the least accurate statement about mainstream media coverage of the Gulf War?**

- a) it was critical of government war aims and highlighted the horrors of war
- b) it presented the enemy leader as evil and dangerous
- c) it was influenced by government PR strategies
- d) it highlighted high-tech American military superiority

18. Which was not one of the U.S. government strategies used to influence media coverage during the Gulf War?

- a) censorship
- b) training military spokespeople in PR strategies
- c) limiting reporters' access to the battle front
- d) embedding hundreds of reporters with the troops

19. Which slide presents an anti-war image?

- a) #19
- b) #24
- c) #26
- d) #27

20. Place the number of the corresponding slide after each of the following:

The U.S. Commander in Chief ____
 Commander of Coalition forces
 during Operation Desert Storm ____
 Anti-Saddam Rebels ____
 The Basra Road ____

ANSWER SHEET FOR MULTIPLE CHOICE TEST**THE GULF WAR**

1. d) democracy
2. a) the Ottomans, the British, the Ba'ath Party, Saddam Hussein
3. c) a dictatorship
4. b) an Islamic fundamentalist government
5. c) feared Iran's revolution might spread
6. a) over one million dead
7. a) the U.N. demanded an immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops
8. a) evenly divided on whether or not to go to war
9. d) forces from many nations including Arab states
10. b) destroyed the civilian and military infrastructure of Iraq
11. a) undermine Arab participation in the Coalition
12. b) 100 hours
13. d) all of the above
14. c) to remain uninvolved
15. a) weapons of mass destruction
16. b) led to the death of more than half-a-million Iraqi children
17. a) it was critical of government war aims and highlighted the horrors of war
18. d) embedding hundreds of reporters with the troops
19. c) #26
20. The U.S. Commander in Chief – **slide #18**
Commander of Coalition forces during Operation Desert Storm – **slide #27**
Anti-Saddam Rebels – **slide #30**
The Basra Road – **slide #28**