

OVERVIEW OF THE KIT

USING THE VIDEO *LINES IN THE SAND*

Lines in the Sand was produced by Ed Griffin-Nolan, Laura Marini, and Peter Wirth.

Before using the Gulf War slides, show at least the first seven minutes of the 12-minute video, *Lines in the Sand*. Lead a discussion using these questions:

What was the main point of this video?

- After the Vietnam War, the U.S. government developed ways of influencing media coverage to avoid “another Vietnam.”

What facts or statements did the filmmakers use to convince you of their point?

- Vietnam taught Americans to question war while the Gulf War was a “national therapy session” to reshape American opinion.
- “TV images were controlled to manipulate public opinion and rally support for the war.”
- During the Gulf War, PR experts drilled and rehearsed military briefers.
- Press officers only allowed interviews with selected troops.
- Reports were censored.
- Journalists critical of the war were left out of press pools.
- Networks gave lots of time to Pentagon briefings and former government officials.
- Victims of war and images of U.S. or Iraqi casualties were rarely seen.
- Although “smart bombs” got media attention, 93% of the bombs dropped by the U.S. during the war were conventional.
- “What we saw on television was...a danger-

ously sanitized, bloodless version of warfare, brought to you by Pentagon sources, defense contractors, and quarantined reporters.”

Besides these facts and statements, how else did the filmmakers attempt to influence or bias viewers?

- They used images, music, and questions. Have students identify specific examples of bias in the video (e.g. showing Iraqi women and children killed by U.S. forces with sympathetic music, juxtaposing images of Pentagon press briefings with critical narration).

What important information was left out of the video?

- the reasons behind the war
- Saddam Hussein’s cruelty
- U.S. attempts to limit civilian casualties
- CNN’s press coverage from Baghdad despite U.S. government opposition

Who made this video and for what purpose?

- The video was written and produced by Syracuse peace activist Ed Griffin-Nolan to educate and influence public opinion.

Is this video propaganda?

This is an open-ended discussion question.

Propaganda: *biased or one-sided communication intended to manipulate public opinion towards a certain point of view*