

## **FRONTLINE TEACHER'S GUIDE: *THE INSURGENCY***

### **ABOUT THE FILM:**

With access to insurgent leaders, this FRONTLINE investigation tells the story of the diverse groups that make up the resistance movement in Iraq, exploring their roots and their incubation in the days after the coalition invasion of 2003. The program goes on to examine the complex and sometimes seemingly counterproductive positions taken by the various factions, including Baath Party members, Saddam loyalists, Sunni, Shi'a, Al Qaeda, and nationalists. Throughout, "The Insurgency" asks: Can these forces hold out longer than the U.S. resolve? Will the divergent groups merge to form a united front against the occupation? What effect will the recent Iraqi elections have on the insurgents' efforts? What effect will their actions have on the future of democracy in Iraq?

### **USING THE FILM AND TEACHER'S GUIDE IN THE CLASSROOM**

Teachers can either assign the film for viewing as homework or show the film in class. Suggested **discussion questions** [LINK] are provided. The lessons and activities in this guide can be used in the classroom without having viewed the film.

### **NOTE TO TEACHERS:**

For classes in social studies, language arts, current events, and history; Grade level 9th - 12th. The lesson plan examines the insurgency in Iraq and, through a debate format, invites students to consider the next course of action for U.S. policy. The lesson can be used in its entirety or teachers can select individual activities to accommodate instructional time and student abilities.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

This guide includes a list of questions for students to discuss after viewing *The Insurgency*.

### **FEATURED LESSON PLAN:**

"The Insurgency in Iraq: A Quandary for the United States"

### **Lesson Objectives:**

Students will become familiar with:

- The reasoning behind the proposals for either a clear and defined exit strategy or the "stay the course" policy promoted by the Bush administration
- The policy debate on whether to withdraw U.S. troops quickly from Iraq or keep troops there until the Iraqis are able to govern themselves

### **ADDITIONAL LESSON IDEAS:**

#### **A Comprehensive View of The Insurgent Groups**

Students examine the different insurgent groups and hypothesize about how these groups may or may not assimilate into a democratic Iraq.

#### **Different Perspectives**

Students compare how Western and Islamic news sources report on the insurgency and the development of democracy in Iraq.

**Public Forum**

Students organize a public forum that focuses on withdrawing troops from Iraq.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

An annotated list of relevant Web sites and articles

**PURCHASING THE FILM:**

"The Insurgency" can be purchased from **Shop PBS for Teachers:**

<http://teacher.shop.pbs.org/home/index.jsp>

Also, teachers and students can watch the film streamed in its entirety on **FRONTLINE's Web site:** <http://www.pbs.org/frontline/insurgency>

**CREDITS:**

This teacher's guide was developed by Simone Bloom Nathan of Media Education Consultants. It was written by Greg Timmons, curriculum writer and educational consultant. Advisers were Ellen Greenblatt, University High School, San Francisco, and Patricia Grimmer, educational consultant.

## **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How has the U.S. military's role changed since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime?
2. Who were the first groups to begin the insurgency and what were their reasons?
3. Why were U.S. civilian and military personnel the initial target of the insurgents?
4. In addition to U.S. personnel, who else have become targets of Al Qaeda's Abu Musab al Zarqawi? What is his strategy behind the attacks against these people?
5. Describe the effect of the battle of Fallujah on the insurgent movement, both in terms of morale and their continued survival.
6. Describe the different strategies U.S. and Iraqi forces took in attacking Tal Afar and Fallujah. What effect did these have on the civilian population?
7. What steps toward democracy has Iraq taken since the invasion of 2003?
8. How have these steps affected the insurgency's actions and goals?
9. What might the future of the insurgency be like if Iraq becomes more democratic?
10. What might the future of Iraq be like if the democratic process falters and the insurgency gains strength?

**FEATURED LESSON PLAN:**

"The Insurgency in Iraq: A Quandary for the United States"

**Lesson Objectives:**

Students will:

- Understand the reasoning behind the proposals for either a clear and defined exit strategy or the "stay the course" policy promoted by the Bush administration
- Participate in a policy debate on whether to withdraw U.S. troops quickly from Iraq or keep troops there until the Iraqis are able to govern themselves

**Materials Needed:**

- Internet access
- Copy of the FRONTLINE documentary *The Insurgency*
- Student worksheets: [\[link\]](#) **Advocate Planning Guide; Policymaker Planning Guide**

**Time Needed:**

- 60 minutes to view the film (This can be done as homework.)
- 15 minutes to conduct the opening activity
- 45 minutes to review the student worksheets (This can be done as homework.)
- 30 minutes to complete student handouts (This can be done as homework.)
- 45 minutes to conduct policy debate
- 45 – 90 minutes to write letter or editorial (This can be done as homework.)

**Procedure:**

**Opening Activity:**

Write the following statements on the board:

- A) The longer U.S. troops stay in Iraq, the more the insurgent attacks will continue.
- B) The more the insurgent attacks continue, the longer U.S. troops will have to stay in Iraq.

Divide the class into two large groups and assign one half of the class the first sentence and the other half the second sentence. Then divide each large group into discussion groups of three students. Have each group of three do the following:

- Discuss the meaning of your assigned sentence. Do you agree or disagree and why?
- Add the other sentence to yours and discuss the meaning of the combined statement.
- How does the addition of the other sentence change your understanding of your assigned sentence?
- Do you agree or disagree with the combined statement? What do you think is the answer to the dilemma it poses?

**Main Activity: Policy Debate**

1. Tell students they will be having a policy debate on the timing of an exit strategy for U.S. troops in Iraq.
2. Have students choose one of the following statements for debate:
  - The U.S. military should end its occupation of Iraq at the earliest possible moment.

- The U.S. military should stay in Iraq until the insurgency has been defeated and Iraq is able to govern itself.
3. Divide the class into four large groups: advocates for leaving Iraq quickly, advocates against leaving Iraq quickly, and two groups of policymakers. The two advocate groups should be even in size, so if necessary, ask students to be in the policymaker group to balance the advocate groups' numbers.
  4. Distribute the "Advocate Planning Guide" to each advocate and the "Policymaker Planning Guide" to each policymaker.
  5. Distribute to all students the following three articles or assign the reading as homework:
    - "Debating Iraq's War Strategy" from *NewsHour with Jim Lehrer*:  
[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle\\_east/july-dec05/iraq\\_11-21.html#](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/july-dec05/iraq_11-21.html#)
    - "Iraq and U.S. Policy" statement by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice:  
<http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/55303.htm>
    - "Representative John Murtha's stand on War in Iraq":  
[http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/pa12\\_murtha/pr051117iraq.html](http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/pa12_murtha/pr051117iraq.html)
  6. Instruct students to identify the sources of their information as they develop arguments to support their position during the debate. If necessary, students can go to other sources for more information as time allows.
  7. Students in both groups of advocates should complete their planning guides individually or with another student taking the same position. Policymakers should complete only Section 1 of their planning guides. They will complete the remainder after the debate.
  8. Once students have completed their planning guides, have them meet in their large groups to share and discuss the information they have collected. The two advocate groups should meet separately to determine their best arguments and review evidence to support their respective positions.
  9. The two policymaker groups should meet together and determine their best questions for Part 1 of the planning guide.
  10. After students have had a chance to discuss and review their ideas, form small debate groups composed of an advocate for each side of the question and two policymakers. In some groups you might have more than two policymakers. Spread the student groups around the classroom to reduce distractions.
  11. Explain the debate format below to all groups. (This is also found at the end of their planning guides.)

#### Part I

- The *Advocate For* should begin by presenting and defending his or her position on the issue. (10 minutes)
- During this time the *Advocate Against* should listen, but may not speak. He or she can write notes if necessary. The policymaker may ask questions at any time.
- Then the *Advocate Against* explains and defends his or her position on the issue. (10 minutes -- same rules as above)

#### Part II

- In the last 10 minutes, each advocate group may refute the arguments made by the other side, one point at a time. The policymakers should moderate this so that each advocate group takes a turn rebutting the other side's points. The policymaker can also ask questions during this time to either advocate.

- Following the debate, the policymakers should complete their planning guides. (This can be done as a homework assignment.)

### Part III

- Policymakers announce their decisions.
- Debrief the activity by asking the student debate groups the following questions:
  - a. Which arguments by each side were the strongest? Which arguments were the weakest? Why?
  - b. Which ones were best supported with evidence and most convincing?
  - c. Which issues are at the center of the controversy? Which issues are in conflict?
  - d. How can the groups achieve consensus on this issue? What would such a policy look like?

Conclude this activity by asking students to write a newspaper editorial or letter to the editor explaining their views on the best exit strategy for U.S. troops in Iraq. The editorial should take a position on the issue; provide reasons and specific supporting evidence; identify the points of the opposing position and state reasons to reject this position; and include a short closing that restates the initial position and summarizes the reasons for supporting it.

### **Assessment Recommendations**

1. Assess student involvement in the discussion questions and opening activity.
2. Evaluate the debate activity on students' participation in their preparation groups and their conduct during the debate, including the depth/quality of their arguments and evidence, and the organization/persuasiveness of their presentations.
3. Evaluate the editorial on students' accuracy in following the guidelines above, their extent of evidence and quality of arguments, and the organization and persuasiveness in their writing.

**Student Worksheet: Advocate Planning Guide**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:**

1. Work independently or with another student who has the same role as you and review the articles: "Debating Iraq's War Strategy," "Iraq and U.S. Policy," and "Representative John Murtha's Stand on War in Iraq." You may use other sources if necessary as time allows. Then complete this worksheet. Use extra paper if necessary.
2. Meet with the other students who take the same position as you and review your evidence.
3. After reviewing the worksheet, form a debate group with one advocate counterpart and two of the policymakers. Follow the format below to conduct your debate.

**One of the following positions is proposed for debate:** *"The U.S. military should end its occupation of Iraq at the earliest possible moment."* Or *"The U.S. military should stay in Iraq until the insurgency has been defeated and Iraq is able to govern itself."*

My position on the issue is:

One reason to support the position is:

One piece of evidence that supports this position is:

A second reason to support the position is:

One piece of evidence that supports this position is:

A third reason to support the position is:

One piece of evidence that supports this position is:

Opponents of this position might say:

I would reply to their arguments by saying:

### **Debate Format**

#### Part I

- The *Advocate For* should begin by presenting and defending his or her position on the issue. (10 minutes)
- During this time the *Advocate Against* should listen, but may not speak. He or she can write notes if necessary. The policymaker may ask questions at any time.
- Then the *Advocate Against* explains and defends his or her position on the issue. (10 minutes -- same rules as above)

#### Part II

- In the last 10 minutes, each advocate group may refute the arguments made by the other side, one point at a time. The policymakers should moderate this so that each advocate group takes a turn rebutting the other side's points. The policymaker can also ask questions during this time to either advocate.
- Following the debate, the policymakers complete their planning guide. (This can be done as a homework assignment.)

#### Part III

- Policymakers announce their decisions.
- The teacher will debrief the activity by asking the student debate groups the following questions:
  - a. Which arguments by each side were the strongest? Which arguments were the weakest? Why?
  - b. Which ones were the best supported with evidence and most convincing?
  - c. Which issues are at the center of the controversy? Which issues are in conflict?
  - d. How can the groups achieve consensus on this issue? What would such a policy look like?



**Student Worksheet: Policymaker Planning Guide**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:**

1. Work independently or with another student who has the same role as you and review the articles: "Debating Iraq's War Strategy," "Iraq and U.S. Policy," and "Representative John Murtha's Stand on War in Iraq." You may use other sources if necessary as time allows.
2. Complete only Part 1 of this worksheet to prepare for the debate. Create a list of questions you will ask both advocates when they meet with you. Ask challenging questions based on the research you have completed to make sure each advocate is able to support their position. Also make sure your questions are balanced and not biased.
3. After completing the worksheet, form a debate group with the two advocate counterparts and one other policy maker. Follow the debate format below to conduct your debate.

**One of the following positions is proposed for debate:** *"The U.S. military should end its occupation of Iraq at the earliest possible moment."* Or *"The U.S. military should stay in Iraq until the insurgency has been defeated and Iraq is able to govern itself."*

Part 1 – Questions:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Part 2 – Reasons given by each advocate during the debate. Take brief notes while the debate is going on. Use an extra sheet of paper if necessary.

REASONS FOR

REASONS AGAINST

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Part 3 – After the debate, consider these questions in making your decision:

1. Were either advocate's arguments relevant to the issue?
2. Were their arguments supported by evidence?
3. Which arguments presented by one advocate went unchallenged by the other advocate?
4. What contrary evidence was presented by either side that seemed to disprove the other side's position?
5. Did the evidence seem credible and accurate? Why or why not?

After carefully considering the reasons and evidence each side presented I have concluded that:

The reasons that most influenced my decision are:

## **Debate Format**

### Part I

- The *Advocate For* should begin by presenting and defending his or her position on the issue. (10 minutes)
- During this time the *Advocate Against* should listen, but may not speak. He or she can write notes if necessary. The policymaker may ask questions at any time.
- Then the *Advocate Against* explains and defends his or her position on the issue. (10 minutes -- same rules as above)

### Part II

- In the last 10 minutes, each advocate group may refute the arguments made by the other side, one point at a time. The policymakers should moderate this so that each advocate group takes a turn rebutting the other side's points. The policymaker can also ask questions during this time to either advocate.
- Following the debate, the policymakers complete their planning guide. (This can be done as a homework assignment.)

### Part III

- Policymakers announce their decisions.
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### **ADDITIONAL LESSON IDEAS:**

Teaching and talking about any war can be difficult. The resources in this guide are designed to make your job as an educator easier. They will take you to U.S., international, pro- and anti-war sites. All can be used to teach perspective and facilitate deeper understanding.

#### **A Comprehensive View of the Insurgent Groups**

The attention paid to activities of insurgent groups like Abu Musab al Zarqawi's executions on the Internet have given the impression that all groups involved in the insurgency are lusty for blood. Invite students to examine some of the insurgent groups in Iraq. Using resources from this guide and other news media groups, have students document the different backgrounds, causes, and goals of the insurgent groups. Then have students hypothesize how well these groups might assimilate into a democratic Iraq and provide evidence to support their views. The following sites provide background:

- **Who Are the Insurgents in Iraq?** [BBC, Oct. 5, 2005]  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/4268904.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4268904.stm)
- **Iraq: Insurgency Goals** [Council on Foreign Relations, May 20, 2005]  
<http://www.cfr.org/publication/81117/iraq.html%20>

#### **Different Perspectives**

How do U.S. and Islamic news sources report on the insurgency and the development of democracy in Iraq? Introduce students to basic strategies for analyzing media. Some helpful references for such strategies include **11 Strategies that Effectively Use Media Resources** [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/globalconnections/multimedia/strategies.html>]. Another source for media analysis can be found at FRONTLINE's "**In Search of Al Qaeda**" Web site [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/teach/alqaeda/postviewing2.html> ], where students can explore the media's influence on their perceptions and analyze the techniques used by editorial cartoonists to influence public opinion. Students should then apply these strategies to analyzing news coverage of events in Iraq. News samples can be obtained from Middle East news sources like **Aljazeera in English** [<http://english.aljazeera.net/HomePage>] and **Iraq Today** [<http://www.iraq-today.com/about.php>]. Students may use the U.S. news sources of their choice. Students might also want to extend their comparison of differences to European, Asian, and other American news reports. Students can put together a paper or informational poster that compares the news coverage of the insurgency and the development of democracy in Iraq from the different news sources.

#### **Public Forum**

Invite students to organize a public forum at a school- or community-based venue that focuses on withdrawing troops from Iraq. Several different organizations have created materials for conducting informed discussions/debates on the U.S. policy in Iraq and which actions might be taken relating to the conduct of the war. Students might want to invite, through their speakers' bureaus, spokespersons from various local organizations (World Affairs Councils, military recruiting, congressional offices, and Arab-American organizations) to discuss and/or debate whether or not troops should be withdrawn quickly from Iraq. Ideas for debate questions or statements can be found at **The Program on International Policy Attitudes** [<http://www.pipa.org/>] where information on U.S. policy in Iraq is presented.



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **A Note about Internet Resources**

Students need to be aware that Web sites sometimes only present one view of an issue. Encourage them to think about Web sites even as they are reading. Guiding questions as they review Web sites are: What did you learn from this site? What didn't you learn from this site? Who sponsors this site? What bias might the sponsor have? How current is the site?

## **WEB SITES**

### **FRONTLINE: "The Insurgency"**

[www.pbs.org/frontline/insurgency](http://www.pbs.org/frontline/insurgency)

The companion site to the documentary offers extended interviews with U.S. military commanders, insurgent leaders and *Time* Magazine reporter Michael Ware; background on the insurgents, their motivations, and the U.S. counterinsurgency strategy; a web-exclusive interview with a counterinsurgency expert; plus more on the making of this film, links and readings, and the opportunity to watch the film online in streaming video.

### **Online NewsHour's "Iraq in Transition"**

[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle\\_east/iraq/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/middle_east/iraq/index.html)

This site traces the situation in Iraq from the earliest days of the coalition invasion to the present. Updated with news stories as they occur, the site features information on governing Iraq, the insurgency, key players, maps and lesson plans.

### **Educational Services and Staff Development Association "War in Iraq"**

<http://www3.essdack.org/socialstudies/iraq.htm>

This site provides an extensive listing of general resources and lesson plans to assist in teaching about the war in Iraq. The site also provides links to news outlets and government sites.

### **U.S. Department of State Web site on Iraq**

<http://www.state.gov/p/nea/ci/c3212.htm>

This government site tracks recent events in Iraq and provides documents, reports, and updates from the secretary of state's office. The site has information on the status in Iraq from the Bush administration's perspective, including fact sheets, press and video news releases, and a photo gallery.

### **Council on Foreign Relations: Iraq: Insurgency Goals**

<http://www.cfr.org/publication/8117/iraq.html>

The Council on Foreign Relations is an independent, non-partisan research center dedicated to helping people better understand the world and foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments. The site on the insurgency in Iraq provides background and analysis on its actions, motives, and goals.

### **Global Security: Iraqi Insurgency**

[http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq\\_insurgency.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/iraq_insurgency.htm)

This site is focused on innovative approaches to the emerging security challenges of the new millennium. Articles provide an update on the actions in Iraq and describe different insurgent groups and their impact on the Iraq war.

**BBC News – Who are the Insurgents in Iraq?**

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/4268904.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4268904.stm)

This site gives an overview of the insurgency in Iraq with information on each group's origins, actions and goals.

**ARTICLES**

**"What Went Wrong in Iraq?"**

By Larry Diamond

*Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2004

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20040901faessay83505/larry-diamond/what-went-wrong-in-iraq.html>

A comprehensive look at the early stages of the U.S. occupation in Iraq written by a former senior advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) in Baghdad, the essay documents events and actions by the CPA and U.S. military during the time of the escalating insurgency.

**"Crush the Insurgents"**

By Lewis E. Lehrman and William Kristol

*Washington Post*, May 23, 2004

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A46730-2004May21.html>

Lehrman and Kristol present an historical analysis on the crucial importance of winning in Iraq. The writers examine the perceived state of despair over the insurgency in Iraq and recount other periods in history where similar feelings were faced by those who fought in World War II and the Civil War.

**"Unmasking the Insurgents"**

By Rod Nordland, Tom Masland, and Christopher Dickey

*Newsweek Magazine*, Feb. 7, 2005

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/6885867/site/newsweek/>

This article provides a close look at some of the insurgents in Iraq and how the groups formed. The authors examine a series of crucial mistakes by the Bush administration, the Coalition Provisional Authority, and the U.S. military that helped create and intensify the insurgency movement.

***Democracy Now* – "Should U.S. Troops Withdraw from Iraq?"**

<http://www.democracynow.org/article.pl?sid=05/04/20/1427259>

*Democracy Now* is an independent national daily news program providing access to people directly affected by U.S. foreign policy, interviews with independent and international journalists, and a broad range of perspectives. This article is a discussion with *The Nation's* journalist Naomi Klein and Eric Gustafson of The Education for Peace in Iraq Center.