

RESOURCES

- There is a lot of good information on the media and the current war on the internet at:

<http://globalpolicy.igc.org/security/issues/iraq/medindex.htm>

This website includes many articles recently published about media issues and the war in Iraq, and is updated frequently.

- The study we mention is called "'The Gulf War: A study of the media, public opinion and public knowledge" and is available on the internet. It is by students named Lewis, Jhally and Morgan.

- Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting is always on top of this stuff. Check out www.fair.org, or listen to their weekly program, Counterspin, on WYEP-FM 91.3 Wednesday evenings at 7:30.

- Of course, check out Indymedia! It's a grassroots effort to get everyone involved in the media-- and to get advertising dollars out of it. Go to <http://www.indymedia.org> for the global IMC, and <http://pittsburgh.indymedia.org> for our local chapter. We're getting an office at Project 1877 (4805 Penn Ave. in Garfield) and are reachable by mail too!

Pittsburgh Independent Media Center
PO Box 19038
Pittsburgh PA 15213

- Another suggestion, of course, is TURN OFF YOUR TV! As you've read, television does more harm than good in general. At the very least, don't believe what you see. They may tell the truth, but it's not the whole truth.

WAR AND THE CORPORATE MEDIA



presented by Pittsburgh Indymedia
<http://pittsburgh.indymedia.org>

ONE HAND TIED BEHIND THEIR BACK.

It was often said during the “first” Gulf War in the early ‘90s that Vietnam was fought by the US with “one hand tied behind its back” -- presumably by the US media and its role in humanizing the war and galvanizing the public against it. The US government learned from that experience, and now the press is the one with only one hand.

The Gulf War of the ‘90s was a perfect example of war in the TV age. It has been lamented since as a debacle for the military because of the severe limitations placed on journalists. A pool system selection of 150 U.S. journalists, photographers, and film crews were sent among attacking units in the Persian Gulf. The pool produced no eyewitness accounts, photos, or video of combat involving 400,000 soldiers during the Gulf War. “They wouldn’t let us see anything,” correspondent Leon Daniel said.

Independent journalists who collected any graphic media during the conflict by braving the “Highway of Death” north of Kuwait and working outside of the pool. The highway lacked military handlers who interrupted interviews to persuade soldiers to change their statements as well as forcibly removed film from cameras. More than 70 independent journalists were arrested, detained, threatened at gunpoint, and chased from the front line.

In addition to military coercion, reporters today are up against the most dangerous censors of all-- their own media outlets. In a study of the Gulf War in 1991, three students of communication at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst reached some startling conclusions about the news media as providers of information. The study found that mass media outlets- television networks in particular- “failed, and failed quite dismally,” at the task of presenting “all relevant information.”

The researchers state that “[d]espite the months of television coverage devoted to this story, most people, we found, were alarmingly ill-informed.” They qualify this by saying that the public was “not generally ignorant-- rather, they [were] selectively misinformed.”

Media outlets today are dedicated to the bottom line. War is another sweeps-week device to garner more viewers, and in turn more advertising dollars. Television in particular is an infotainment business; the study states that those who professed to watch more television also tended to have much less knowledge of the political situation surrounding the war. One of the few things the heavy viewers DID know was the name of the Patriot missile, the weapon the US employed to shoot down Iraqi Scud missiles. (They of course didn’t realize that the use of Patriots against Scuds increased the number of ground casualties instead of reducing it.)

TV networks do not want to juxtapose their advertising with images of death and destruction, which is why they have a tendency to downplay the carnage of war and play up the “triumph.” This automatically slants coverage in the favor of the administration that is engaging in the war.

Fairness & Accuracy In Reporting asserts that from January 1 of this year through last week (March 12) not one report on the nightly news on any of the three networks was devoted to the impact the US-led war will have on humanitarian conditions in Iraq.

Now the reporters return to the Middle East, once again “embedded” with the troops and unable to see anything beyond what military officials deem appropriate. The most troubling part about it is that they will call it objective. They report, we decide.