

**Case Study Title:** The War in Iraq and Its Implications for the Future

**Article Information:** Please provide the information requested below for the four to five USA TODAY articles (from the printed newspaper) you've selected which were published between July 1, 2006 and March 1, 2007, focusing on a news topics relating to the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Study Topic, *Gold, Gods, and Glory: The Global Dynamics of Power*.

Article headline: "Iran ships weapons to Shiite extremists"

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): Jim Michaels

USA TODAY publication date: February 12, 2007

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): World

USA TODAY page number: 6A

Article headline: "Car bomb attack kills 78, flattens oldest marketplace in Baghdad"

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): The Associated Press

USA TODAY publication date: February 12, 2007

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): World

USA TODAY page number: 8A

Article headline: "Al-Sadr won't back security operation, statement says"

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): "from wire reports"

USA TODAY publication date: February 26, 2007

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): Washington/World

USA TODAY page number: 8A

Article headline: "Bush extends stay of troops in Afghanistan"

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): David Jackson

USA TODAY publication date: Friday / Saturday / Sunday, February 16-18, 2007

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): World

USA TODAY page number: 10A

Article headline: "Military says attacks in Baghdad have dropped"

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): Oren Dorell and Rick Jervis

USA TODAY publication date: Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): World

USA TODAY page number: 11A

**Summary Statement:** Your one-page case study summary statement should outline your topic, any issue or controversy about this topic and how the case study examines these issues.

The Iraq War has become a flashpoint for debate and argument worldwide. The conflict is extremely complex, with political, military, security, economic, and geopolitical implications. Many observers label it a civil war. Others maintain a hopeful perspective, believing that new U.S.

policies and Iraqi government and military practices will bring meaningful change. Meanwhile, key politicians and prominent individuals advocate either the immediate withdrawal of American troops or a “phased pull-out.” Conservatives oppose withdrawal, saying the situation in Iraq will deteriorate further, encouraging a terrorist breeding ground. While the rhetoric and deliberations continue in the United States Congress, the Defense Department, the White House, and the fledgling Iraqi government, the stark street-level realities for both Iraqis and American soldiers every day remain extremely dire.

Today, the American military death toll stands at 3,741. Iraqi civilian casualty counts range from President Bush’s December 2005 estimate of 30,000 to 100,000 in an October 2004 *Lancet* article based on public health organizations and NGO data. In October 2006, the *Lancet* estimated 655,000 civilian deaths have now occurred. This number entails 500 Iraqi deaths per day due to violence or disease. With daily suicide car bombings, kidnapping-murders, and targeted executions, this estimate could indeed be true. Iraqi insurgents continue attacks with growing sophistication and skill. On February 19, 2007, insurgents attacked a U.S. military facility. Having blown through the gates with suicide bombs, they then engaged U.S. soldiers in a firefight that killed three soldiers and injured an additional seventeen (Dorrell & Jarvis). Shiite extremists have withdrawn support for the US-led Baghdad security plan, complaining through radical cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, “There is no benefit in this security plan because it is controlled by the occupiers” (wire reports). Three days later, insurgents blew up chlorine-carrying trucks. “Most of the chlorine burned off in the blasts, but the mere use of the gas — used as a weapon in World War I — had a psychological impact ... It's more of a terror weapon, ... used to get the attention of the people. And it gets our attention, too.”\*

In less blatant, but equally-devastating maneuvers, insurgents have continued to target electricity infrastructure. One such attack resulted in blackouts in Baghdad shortly before Iraqi

elections in 2005: "Insurgents sabotaged power lines to the capital Friday evening, knocking out electricity across the greater Baghdad area and plunging it into darkness on the eve of the country's key vote on a new constitution." (*USAToday*, Ibid.). This destruction has devastating consequences for security, health care, economic infrastructure, and sanitation and contributes to even greater frustration, fear, and anger on the part of Iraqis.

Numerous books from various perspectives have been written in the past four years on U.S. war politics, the nascent Iraqi government, the motivations of the U.S. invasion, the difficulties of creating a democracy for those inhospitable to its development, and the post-Iraqi war world. While evidence quality varies, all arguments ultimately speculate about the increasingly complex and dangerous struggle for power.

\*("Insurgents Aim for Wider-Scale Attacks", *USAToday* online 2/26/2007)

**Discussion Questions:** Develop three to five thought-provoking discussion questions that use critical thinking skills to examine this topic from different perspectives.

- 1) How will the War in Iraq affect other regional conflicts? Will the war lead to other US conflicts nearby or open the door to warfare among other countries while the world focuses resources on Iraq, Afghanistan, and perhaps Iran?
- 2) Does the United States or any other country have the right to force democracy on another nation? Is it truly democracy if it needs to be enforced?
- 3) How will the war in Iraq affect the future US and world economies in which today's college students will participate tomorrow? Can college students bear the war's long term debt and today's tuition costs?
- 4) Can a war for democracy be a war against terrorism? Can the US change reasons for fighting in Iraq and expect to maintain high credibility for years to come?
- 5) How do we reconcile limiting American personal freedom under Homeland Security rules while we fighting to expand personal freedom in the Middle East?

**Future Implications:** Write an essay (up to 200 words) on how you predict this topic will influence society in the future and/or what result or outcome you anticipate.

The resolution of the war in Iraq has implications for not only the country itself, but the Middle East power dynamic and for how and why countries engage each other in war in future years. With Iran and Syria possibly becoming involved in the Iraq conflict, the United States faces major and complex choices about actions it will take against these two countries, if any. With an already-overextended military, the U.S. cannot afford to take on another conflict, especially if it intends to maintain its ability to fight two major wars simultaneously. There is thus the possibility that it may enlist the help of Israel to subdue any aggressive actions by Arab states. This would, without question, lead to a major conflagration that would likely prove absolutely uncontrollable and long-standing. So far, this has not happened, and the Bush Administration's concern is reflected in its appointment of new military officers and advisors. The installation of Gen. Peter Pace as head of all American forces in Iraq represents a major change in America's Iraq war policy and possibly foreshadows other measures, including genuine diplomacy intended to avert further conflict in Iraq and the Middle East at large.

**Additional Resources:** Suggest up to six additional resources related to this topic. Resources can include books, videos, Web sites (please include URL), and/or articles.

- 1) Jarecki, Eugene. "Why We Fight" (film), SONY films, released 2006.
- 2) The Iraq Study Group, Baker III, James A. & Hamilton, Lee H. The Iraq Study Group Report: The Way Forward - A New Approach. New York: Knopf Publishing Group, 2006.
- 3) Galbraith, Peter W. The End of Iraq: How American Incompetence Created a War Without End. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2006.
- 4) Fawn, Rick & Hinnebusch, Raymond A. The Iraq War: Causes And Consequences (Middle East in the International System). Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner Press, 2006.
- 5) Cerf, Christopher & Sifry, Micah L. (editors). The Iraq War Reader: History, Documents, Opinions. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

- 6) Ricks, Thomas E. Fiasco: The American Military Adventure in Iraq. London: Penguin Books, 2006.