The Stanley Foundation brings fresh voices and original ideas to debates on global and regional problems. It is a nonpartisan, private operating foundation that focuses primarily on peace and security issues and advocates principled multilateralism. The foundation’s concept of principled multilateralism means working respectfully across differences to create fair, just, and lasting solutions.

The Stanley Foundation’s work recognizes the essential roles of the policy community, media professionals, and the involved public in building sustainable peace. Its work aims to connect people from different backgrounds, often producing clarifying insights and innovative solutions.

The foundation frequently works collaboratively with other organizations. It does not make grants.

Stanley Foundation reports, publications, programs, and a wealth of other information are available on the Web at www.stanleyfoundation.org.

The Stanley Foundation
209 Iowa Avenue
Muscatine, IA 52761 USA
563-264-1500
563-264-0864 fax
info@stanleyfoundation.org
Update

Much has happened since the filming of the documentary you have just seen. In June 2005 Al Jazeera moved to a new, much larger, state-of-the-art newsroom and control room. The network has developed a code of ethics that guides editorial decisions. Al Jazeera is also planning to penetrate global markets, including the United States, by launching a new 24-hour English service, Al Jazeera International.

Since Control Room was filmed the media scene has become much more competitive in the Arab world. Local channels have introduced more hard-hitting news and discussion programs in response to Al Jazeera's success. For example Al Masreya, the Egyptian state-run channel, now has a program called “Halet Hewar” (In a State of Dialogue) that stretches the boundaries in terms of topics and guests allowed on screen. Great Britain and Russia are now planning Arabic broadcast services to the Middle East.

For more information, please refer to the Stanley Foundation resources in the kit. These include our nationally aired radio documentary “24/7: The Rise and Influence of Arab Media,” a recent issue of our quarterly magazine Courier focusing on Arab media, as well as the report Open Media and Transitioning Societies in the Arab Middle East: Implications for US Security Policy. These resources and more information are also available on our Web site at www.stanleyfoundation.org.

Books to Consider

New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere, by Dale F. Eickelman

Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today, by Marc Lynch

Al-Jazeera: The Inside Story of the Arab News Channel That is Challenging the West, by Hugh Miles

These sources are provided only as a resource. The Stanley Foundation does not necessarily endorse the institutions, organizations, or publications listed here.

Control Room Questions:

1. What were your impressions of Al Jazeera and other Arab media outlets before watching the movie? Have your impressions changed since watching Control Room? If so, how?

2. What kind of impact do you think Al Jazeera and similar satellite television channels have on public expression and open dialogue in Middle Eastern countries such as Syria and Saudi Arabia that were once only exposed to government-controlled television media?

3. Now that you have seen Control Room, do you believe there are differences in the way the American media has covered the current Iraq conflict and the way Al Jazeera covered the conflict? If so, what differences can you identify?

4. Did Control Room change your perception of the Arab world? If yes, how?

Additional Resources

Security in an Era of Open Arab Media is a special Web feature from the Stanley Foundation. Resources include original articles, expert interviews, in-depth policy analysis, photojournalism, and material from the public radio documentary “24/7: The Rise and Influence of Arab Media.” (http://www.stanleyfoundation.org/initiatives/oam/)

Transitional Broadcasting Studies covers satellite television in the Arab and Islamic worlds. (http://www.tbsjournal.com/)

The United States Institute for Peace published a brief entitled Arab Media: Tools of the Governments; Tools for the People? in which experts aim to understand what effect the media has on the Arab political environment. It is available in both English and Arabic. (http://www.usip.org/virtualdiplomacy/publications/reports/18.html)