

Extension Activity 1

Newly declassified documents have demonstrated that the Nixon/Kissinger White House gave tremendous support to many of the regimes in Latin America in spite of knowing about their human rights abuses.

Have students read the excerpts found at <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB104/> and, either in groups or individually, compile reasons why the United States made the decisions it did. Were the decisions justified? Why or why not?

Have the students imagine that they were in Kissinger's position as Secretary of State during this time. How would they have dealt with the military regimes in Argentina and Chile? Why?

Extension Activity 2

Kanye West, the Grammy-winning hip-hop star, became the center of a censorship controversy last fall when he departed from his scripted comments while introducing a musical act at fundraising concert for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. He spoke alongside comedian Mike Myers, who stuck to his prepared lines. Below is a transcript of their comments.

Myers: The landscape of the city has changed dramatically, tragically and perhaps irreversibly. There is now over 25 feet of water where there was once city streets and thriving neighborhoods.

West: I hate the way they portray us in the media. You see a black family, it says, "They're looting." You see a white family, it says, "They're looking for food." And, you know, it's been five days [waiting for federal help] because most of the people are black. And even for me to complain about it, I would be a hypocrite because I've tried to turn away from the TV because it's too hard to watch. I've even been shopping before even giving a donation, so now I'm calling my business manager right now to see what is the biggest amount I can give, and just to imagine if I was down there, and those are my people down there. So anybody out there that wants to do anything that we can help -- with the way America is set up to help the poor, the black people, the less well-off, as slow as possible. I mean, the Red Cross is doing everything they can. We already realize a lot of people that could help are at war right now, fighting another way -- and they've given them permission to go down and shoot us!

Myers: And subtle, but in many ways even more profoundly devastating, is the lasting damage to the survivors' will to rebuild and remain in the area. The destruction of the spirit of the people of southern Louisiana and Mississippi may end up being the most tragic loss of all.

West: George Bush doesn't care about black people!

At this point in the live broadcast, NBC cut the West's microphone and turned the cameras to comedian Chris Tucker, who was readying himself on another stage. Though West's comments were broadcast live to the East Coast audience, NBC cut his comments from the West Coast broadcast several hours later, censoring West's attack on President Bush.

"Tonight's telecast was a live television event wrought with emotion," parent company NBC Universal said in a statement issued to the Reporters Who Cover Television after the broadcast. "Kanye West departed from the scripted comments that were prepared for him, and his opinions in no way represent the views of the networks. It would be most unfortunate if the efforts of the artists who participated tonight and the generosity of millions of Americans who are helping those in need are overshadowed by one person's opinion."

Discussion Questions

1. Why do **you think** NBC censored Kanye West's comments about President Bush?
2. Do **you think** the decision was justified?
3. Do **you think** West's comments provoked people to think about President Bush differently?
4. How does censorship change the way we discuss issues?