



Role of Intelligence in Hunting Osama bin Laden

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Grade level: 12

Number of class periods: Semester Project

Objective

Through an analysis of the evidence in primary source documents, students discuss the CIA's activities in pursuing terrorists hiding in Afghanistan prior to 9/11 try to understand how the agency influenced U.S. policy regarding Osama bin Laden.

Common Core Standards

Comprehensive Common Core Alignments at end of lesson plan.

- Reading Standards for Informational Text 1, 2, 3
- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies 3, 5, 9

Resources

- [Terrorism/Usama bin Ladin: Who's Chasing Whom? Gina Bennet, CIA analysis, declassified 7/21/05](#)
- [Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001, Steve Coll](#)
- ["Pakistani man executed for CIA killings," CNN](#)
- [U.S. Policy on Counterterrorism, PDD 39, June 21, 1995, secret](#)
- ["\[Title Excised\]" "Planning for the UBL Rendition is Going Very Well," To: Michael F. Scheuer, From: \[Excised\], Central Intelligence Agency Email. Cited in 9/11 Commission Report as "Capture Op," "\[Gary\] Schroen to Mike," 9/11 Commission Report \(Chapter 4, Endnote 22\)](#)

Preparation

Prior to this lesson, students will be assigned an excerpt from *Ghost Wars: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the Soviet Invasion to September 10, 2001*, written by Steve Coll and published in 2004. The excerpt is entitled "You Are to Capture Him Alive" (Pgs. 371-396). Students will answer the following questions after reading:

1. How and why did Bin Laden come to be viewed as a threat by elements in the CIA?
2. Explain the failure of the CIA to capture Bin Laden at Tarnak Farm. What factors led to the abandonment of this plan?

Activity

1. Discuss connection to the Mir Kazi CIA shootings (2 killed, 3 wounded) at Langley, and the connection between the hunt for him and the hunt for UBL (CIA acronym for Usama bin Laden).
2. Short lecture/discussion on the origins of Alec Station using a PowerPoint presentation.
3. Document analysis. Students review Gina Bennet document and discuss: What core idea is Gina Bennet trying to convey through her analysis? What impact do you think that this document had on its consumers? – Emphasis on covert action, legal issues, gender?

Assessment/Reflection

Students learn how to interpret government documents and how to understand them in terms of historical events. Students reflect upon fallout from failure of a particular CIA operation and how the agency applied its lessons learned?



Common Core Alignments

These alignments were written for the 11th-12th grade level. However, this lesson can easily be adjusted for use in other grades and corresponds to the following Common Core Standards. Student assessments and expectation may vary depending upon grade level and ability.

Reading Standards for Informational Text

Key Ideas and Details

Standard 1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain

- Students will be using primary and secondary source documents to analyze the role the CIA played in pursuing terrorists. Students will be analyzing the texts explicitly, but since these documents deal with covert operations, many of which are still classified, students will also have to use the text to make inferences beyond what the text says explicitly in order to develop an understanding of the CIA's role.

Standard 2: Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text

- Students will be examining Gina Bennett's document in order to determine the central idea that she is trying to convey. They will be exploring the themes of covert action, legal issues and gender in their analysis of her document.

Standard 3: Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.

- Students will be analyzing the complex nature of the CIA's actions pursuing terrorists through primary and secondary source documents and will be exploring how the themes of covert action, legal issues, and gender among others develop over the course of the text.

Reading Standards for Literacy in History/ Social Studies

Key Ideas and Details

Standard 3: Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

- Students will be trying to form an explanation for how the CIA's role in pursuing terrorists prior to September 11th may have influenced the events of September 11th and beyond. They will be evaluating explanations given in order to form their own.

Craft and Structure

Standard 5: Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

- Students will be examining government documents and analyzing their structure. Students will closely examine how these documents are put together in order to best interpret these documents.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

Standard 9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

- Students will be integrating information from a variety of sources including Gina Bennett's document and their previous homework assignment in order to develop a coherent understanding of the history leading to the events of September 11th and their impact.