

Children today are increasingly aware of such events as the war in Iraq in 2003 and the terror attacks of September 11, 2000, not least due to their high media presence. In this day and age, attempting to shield them from these topics, the approach advocated in the USA during the war in Iraq, is an unrealistic aim. For in an increasingly global world even crises and catastrophes that take place in countries thousands of miles away do become a topic in children's daily lives. What is the meaning of this development? Children hear about, see and must cope with these frightening, worrying events, which were once the preserve of adults alone. The picture they develop of events is clearly influenced by the political environment they live in. The constancy with which American children supported the attack on Iraq, Israeli children wanted Saddam Hussein to die and German children opposed the war was astonishing. However, the fact that at such a young age children conjured up images of people having their throats cut, of underhand tricks or of American soldiers with smiles on their faces while shooting at Iraqi children demands consideration. From an analytical perspective the above scenarios underline how hard children endeavour to assimilate the fragments of information they receive, how limited the resources they have to tackle the problem with are. Yet how is it possible to give children an understanding of war or terror attacks without emotionally overburdening them? In this issue of "TelevIZion", committed editorial staff report on how they approach this challenge and make these complex issues comprehensible to children. Current studies on the war in Iraq in 2003 analyse how the topic was handled by the media and how children perceived it. From the point of view of educational science it is obvious that competence and co-operation are required from all those involved – because this war is certainly not the last which will occupy the thoughts of children worldwide.



Head of the
Internationales Zentralinstitut für das
Jugend- und Bildungsfernsehen (IZI)