

# LEADING TO WAR

SEE WHERE THE TRUTH LIES

*a film and website that chronicle the path to war in Iraq*

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## FILM TRANSCRIPT for LEADING TO WAR

[text on screen]

-- September 11, 2001 --

Four American planes are hijacked, then crashed,  
destroying New York's World Trade Center,  
damaging the Pentagon and causing 2,973 deaths.

-- September 20, 2001 --

In a speech to Congress, President Bush  
identifies al-Qaeda, based in Afghanistan and  
led by Osama bin Laden, as the organization  
responsible for the attack on America.  
He accuses the Taliban rulers of Afghanistan  
of "aiding and abetting" al-Qaeda.

-- October 7, 2001 --

The United States begins bombing  
Taliban and al-Qaeda sites in Afghanistan.

-- November 11, 2001 --

The Taliban leader, Mullah Omar,  
facing repeated military setbacks, orders  
thousands of Taliban to retreat to Pakistan.

-- December 22, 2001 --

With the Taliban defeated,

a new government assumes power in Afghanistan.

Thus, by the end of 2001, the United States had destroyed the al-Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan, killed and captured numerous al-Qaeda and Taliban fighters and driven the rest, including Osama bin Laden, into exile and hiding in the remote mountain regions along the Pakistan/Afghanistan border.

How, then, did America's attention turn to Saddam Hussein and military action in Iraq?

To gain insight into what happened, consider the statements of President Bush and members of his administration...

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LEADING TO WAR

A Chronicle for Future Generations

*January 29, 2002*

*State of the Union Address*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**SERGEANT AT ARMS (VOICEOVER):** Mr. Speaker, The President of the United States. [APPLAUSE]

**PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH:** Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax and

nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens, leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children.

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They can provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States.

In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic. We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events while dangers gather. I will not stand by as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons. [APPLAUSE]

*January 30, 2002*

*Pentagon Press Room*

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**REPORTER:** But is military action imminent? That's the real thing. He was suggesting it would be military action, as opposed to something else.

**SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DONALD RUMSFELD:** He said exactly what he said. He said it well. He didn't suggest anything. If there was anything about last night's speech, it was that it had near-perfect clarity.

**REPORTER:** But a senior administration official after the speech said he didn't necessarily mean to say "military action," but it could be other action.

**RUMSFELD:** What do you mean, "necessarily mean to say"? He didn't say. He not only didn't necessarily say, he did not say. He said exactly what he said.

**REPORTER:** He seemed to suggest, and therefore, perhaps it isn't that clear. You see, if it's perfect clarity, it isn't clear, is it?

**RUMSFELD:** Oh I think it is.

*February 4, 2002*

*The News Hour*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**JIM LEHRER:** You made a speech last week, in which you said, "The best, in some cases, the only defense is a good offense." Now that's a major change of U.S. defense policy, is it not? Have we ever taken a preemptory strike against another country without them first attacking us?

**RUMSFELD:** If you think about it, we have no choice. A terrorist can attack at any time, at any place, using a range of techniques. It is physically impossible to defend, at every time, in every location, against every conceivable technique of terrorism. Therefore, if your goal is to stop it, you cannot stop it by defense. You can only stop it by taking the battles to the terrorists where they are, and going after them.

*March 21, 2002*

*White House Oval Office*

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**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Good morning. Thank you all for coming. We just had a breakfast with Vice President Cheney who, as you all know, has returned from a lengthy and successful trip to the Middle East.

**INTERVIEWER:** Mr. Vice President, on Iraq, you said we have a lot of allies out there. But I haven't noticed any of the Arab states supporting strong action against Iraq. They seem to want diplomacy to be given a chance. What kind of response did you get?

**VICE PRESIDENT DICK CHENEY:** Well I think just the way I would characterize it, is that they are uniformly concerned about the situation in Iraq, in particular about Saddam Hussein's failure to live up to the U.N. Security Council resolutions that said he'd get rid of all of his weapons of mass destruction.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** I think one other point that the Vice President made, which is a good point, is that this is an Administration that, when we say we're going to do something, we mean it, that we are resolved to fight the war on terror. This isn't a short-term strategy for us, that we understand history has called us in action. And we're not going to miss this opportunity to make the world more peaceful and more free.

*March 21, 2002*

*The News Hour*

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**JIM LEHRER:** Vice President Cheney came back from his trip. He said that many Arab leaders could share the concern about weapons of mass destruction, but did not share the U.S. desire to get rid of Saddam Hussein, said it would cause instability in the region. How do you read that?

**DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE PAUL WOLFOWITZ:** I would not expect Saddam's neighbors to be the first people to raise their hands to say, "You've got to take tough action against them." I think they look to the United States to lead, and I think the President is leading very clearly.

*March 24, 2002*

*Meet The Press*

*Face the Nation*

*CNN Late Edition*

[\[link to source\]](#) (MTP)

[\[link to source\]](#) (FTN)

[\[link to source\]](#) (CNN)

**TIM RUSSERT:** The Arab League announced today that at their meeting on Wednesday, they will say the United States should *not* preemptively attack Iraq, to take out any weapons of mass destruction. Reports from your trip around the Middle East: that Arab country after Arab country said to you, "Don't do that, Mr. Vice President. Don't you dare attack Iraq."

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** That's not the way that I would describe, first of all, their opinions. I had private confidential meetings at nearly every stop. And those meetings, obviously, were and need to remain confidential. They're all very concerned about Iraq. They live in the neighborhood. They know Saddam Hussein better than we do. Many of them know that right after us, they're high on his list of governments he'd like to do in.

**BOB SCHIEFFER:** Did you leave that region feeling that Arab leaders would basically oppose an American action against Saddam Hussein?

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** No, not at all. What I came away with, Bob, is the sense that they share our concern.

**BOB SCHIEFFER:** I ask that because the public reaction was, if one just read what those leaders said in public, it was "We're unified against any kind of action against Saddam Hussein. Is that a correct interpretation of the public reactions?"

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** It was mixed, I think, in terms of their public reactions.

**WOLF BLITZER:** On your most recent trip to the region, most of the moderate Arab leaders with whom you met were not very enthusiastic about a U.S. strike against Iraq. King Abdullah of Jordan said, "To attack Baghdad now would be a disaster." Crown Prince Abdullah said, "I do not believe it is in the United States' interest, or the interest of the region or the world's interest, to do so."

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** What I would say is that our friends in the region are equally concerned about the problems we see in Iraq, specifically the development of weapons of mass destruction by Saddam Hussein.

This is a man of great evil, as the President has said. And he is actively pursuing nuclear weapons at this time. And we think that's cause for concern for us and for everybody in the region. And I found, during the course of my travels, that it is, indeed, a problem of great concern.

*April 6, 2002*

*Novak Hunt & Shields*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**ROBERT NOVAK:** General Myers, Kenneth Adelman has written that if the United States were to go into Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein, militarily, it would be a "cakewalk." Is that the view here at the Pentagon?

**GENERAL RICHARD MYERS:** When we put our young sons and daughters of this country in harm's way, I don't think you can ever call that a "cakewalk." But what we know is that the situation since Desert Storm and today has changed dramatically, both for U.S. and coalition forces, and for Iraqi forces. The Iraqi armed forces is about 40%, in terms of numbers, of what it was in the Gulf War.

*May 9, 2002*

*Ashleigh Banfield: On Location*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**WOLFOWITZ:** In hindsight, one might have wished we might have done more to anticipate a September 11<sup>th</sup> and prevent it. Although if we'd gone to war against Afghanistan before September 11<sup>th</sup>, people would have said we had no justification. We can't wait for a nuclear, chemical or biological attack to go and find the people who did it.

**ASHLEIGH BANFIELD:** Is it fair to say Saddam Hussein's days are numbered?

**WOLFOWITZ:** I would hope so.

**BANFIELD:** Is it fair to say so?

**WOLFOWITZ:** I think so.

*May 23, 2002*

*Wolf Blitzer Reports*

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**BLITZER:** There doesn't seem to be a whole lot of support among the allies in Europe for another U.S. military strike at Iraq, with the aim of regime change or getting rid of Saddam Hussein. Can you go it alone?

**RUMSFELD:** I'm not going to get into that. You can be sure the United States isn't going to do anything that it's not capable of doing. And if we do something, we'll be capable of doing it. But it's not for me to make those judgments.

**BLITZER:** You saw the story in today's *USA Today* on the front page, suggesting that your military chiefs are not enthusiastic about going after Iraq right now, that the military might be stretched too thin already in Afghanistan.

**RUMSFELD:** I meet with those folks all the time. I have no reason to give credence to that.

*June 1, 2002*

*West Point*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** For much of the last century, America's defense relied on the



Cold War doctrines of deterrence and containment. In some cases, those strategies still apply. But new threats also require new thinking. Containment is not possible when unbalanced dictators with weapons of mass destruction can deliver those weapons on missiles or secretly provide them to terrorists' allies.

We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge. [APPLAUSE]

In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act.

*June 10, 2002*

*Kuwait*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**REPORTER:** Mr. Secretary, what do you make of the statement made by the Iraqi government yesterday that Iraq has no weapons of mass destruction, and is not developing any?

**RUMSFELD:** They're lying. Next. [LAUGHTER]

*July 8, 2002*

*White House Press Room*

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**REPORTER:** We continue to see reports on the state of planning to get rid of Saddam Hussein in Iraq. I know it's unlikely that you'll share any details with us, though we'd be delighted to hear them, sir.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Somebody else thinks they are.

[LAUGHTER]

**REPORTER:** But I wonder, Mr. President, regardless of when or how, is it your firm intention to get rid of Saddam Hussein in Iraq?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Yes.

**REPORTER:** And how hard do you think it will be?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** It's the stated policy of this government to have regime change, and it hasn't changed. And we'll use all tools at our disposal to do so.

*August 1, 2002*

*White House Press Room*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESS SECRETARY ARI FLEISCHER:** When Saddam Hussein violates his word that he gave when the Persian Gulf War ended, by saying he would allow for unfettered inspections by international inspectors and does not keep his word, that's a real cause of concern for the United States and for the United Nations.

**REPORTER:** It's a cause of concern, but is it a cause to go to war and kill a lot of people?

**FLEISCHER:** I'm not going to speculate about what the future may or may not hold.

*August 20, 2002*

*Pentagon Press Room*

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**REPORTER:** Is there evidence? What kind of evidence is there that the government of Iraq is, in any way, hosting, supporting, sponsoring Al Qaeda or any other terrorists inside Iraq?

**RUMSFELD:** Well, I suppose at some moment, it may make sense to discuss that publicly. And it doesn't today. But what I have said is a fact, that there are Al Qaeda in a number of locations in Iraq. And the suggestion that those people who are so attentive in denying human rights to their population aren't aware of where these folks are or what they're doing, is ludicrous.

*August 21, 2002*

*Crawford Ranch, Texas*

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**REPORTER:** One thing that has to factor in is the growing number of U.S. allies-- Russia, Germany, Bahrain, now Canada, who say that if you go to war with Saddam, you're going to go alone. Does the American military have the capability to prosecute this war alone?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Are you asking about Iraq? The subject didn't come up in this meeting. But having said that, we take all threats seriously. And we will continue to consult with our friends and allies. I know there's this, kind of, intense speculation that seems to be going on. I don't know how you would describe it, it's kind of a churning.

**RUMSFELD:** Frenzy--

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Frenzy is how the Secretary would describe it. But the subject didn't come up. The American people know my position and that we will look at all options, and we will consider all technologies available to us, and diplomacy, and intelligence. But one thing is for certain, is that this administration agrees that Saddam Hussein is a threat.

*August 26, 2002*

*Veterans of Foreign Wars Convention*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** 9/11 and its aftermath awakened this nation to danger, to the true ambitions of the global terror network, and to the reality that weapons of mass destruction are being sought by determined enemies who would not hesitate to use them against us. Under the Bush doctrine, a regime that harbors or supports terrorists will be regarded as hostile to the United States.

As President Bush has said, time is not on our side. Saddam has perfected the game of cheat and retreat, and is very skilled in the art of denial and deception. A return of inspectors would provide no assurance whatsoever of his compliance with the U.N. resolutions.

On the contrary, there is a great danger that it would provide false comfort that Saddam was somehow back in his box.

Armed with an arsenal of these weapons of terror and seated atop 10% of the world's oil reserves,. Saddam Hussein could then be expected to seek domination of the entire Middle East and subject the United States or any other nation to nuclear blackmail.

Simply stated, there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction. There is no doubt that he is amassing them to use against our friends, against our allies, and against us.

The Middle East expert, Professor Fouad Adjani, predicts that after liberation, the streets in Basra and Baghdad are sure to erupt in joy, in the same way throngs in Kabul greeted the Americans.

*September 3, 2002*

*White House Press Room*

*Pentagon Press Room*

[\[link to source\]](#) (Fleischer)

[\[link to source\]](#) (Rumsfeld)

**REPORTER:** In Vice President Cheney's speech a week ago today, he said inspection was actually dangerous, because it would create a false sense of comfort. So which is it? Do we believe that inspections should go forward, even though they are dangerous? Or are we supposed to believe that they are dangerous; and therefore, they shouldn't go forward?

**FLEISCHER:** Well, the history of the inspections, when they took place, did lead to a lot of question marks. That's why I said that inspections in and of themselves, inspectors in and of themselves, are not a guarantee that Saddam Hussein is not developing weapons of mass destruction.

**REPORTER:** Does the President think inspectors should go into Iraq, or not?

**FLEISCHER:** The President does.

**REPORTER:** If Saddam does allow those inspectors in, does he avoid regime change?

**FLEISCHER:** The policy of the United States is regime change, with or without inspectors.

**REPORTER:** Tariq Aziz said this morning -- he characterized you and several other people in the Bush administration as warmongers, as using the issue of inspections as a pretext to try to topple the regime. And he said he *is* willing to sit down and talk about all of the issues involving Iraq.

**RUMSFELD:** Well I've met with Tariq Aziz a number of times, both in Baghdad and in Washington and elsewhere. And clearly, he does the bidding of his master, Saddam Hussein. They have, over a good many years, demonstrated wonderful talent and skill at manipulating the media, and international organizations in other countries. When it's the right moment to lean forward, they lean forward. When it's the right moment to lean back, they lean back. And it's a dance, it's a dance they engage in.

*September 7, 2002*

*Camp David*

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**TONY BLAIR:** The point that I would emphasize to you is that the threat from Saddam Hussein and weapons of mass destruction-- chemical, biological, potentially nuclear weapons capability-- that threat is real. We only need to look at the report from the International Atomic Energy Agency this morning, showing what has been going on at the former nuclear weapons sites to realize that. And the policy of inaction is not a policy we can responsibly subscribe to do.

**GEORGE BUSH:** We just heard the Prime Minister talk about the new report. I would remind you that when the inspectors first went into Iraq and finally denied access, a report came out of the Atomic-- the IAEA-- that they were six months away from developing a weapon. I don't know what more evidence we need.

*September 8, 2002*

*CNN Late Edition*

*Face the Nation*

*Fox News Sunday*

*Meet the Press*

*This Week*

[\[link to source\]](#) (Powell)

[\[link to source\]](#) (Cheney)

[\[link to source\]](#) (Myers)

[\[link to source\]](#) (Rice)

[\[link to source\]](#) (Rumsfeld)

**BLITZER:** Is Iraq's regime of President Saddam Hussein a clear and present danger to the United States?

**CONDOLEEZZA RICE:** There is no doubt that Saddam Hussein's regime is a danger to the United States and to its allies, to our interests. It is also a danger that is gathering momentum. And it simply makes no sense to wait any longer to do something about the threat that is posed here. As the President has said, the one option that we do not have is to do nothing.

**RUMSFELD:** The President has, I think, put it exactly right. He has said that the one choice we don't have is to do nothing.

**COLIN POWELL:** As the President has said, and as Prime Minister Blair said yesterday, doing nothing is no longer an option.

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** He has aggressively sought to acquire chemical, biological and nuclear weapons over the years.

**RICE:** This is a man who has attacked his neighbors twice, who represses his own people.

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** He used chemical weapons, both against the Kurds, and against the Iranians during the 1980s.

**RUMSFELD:** -- Who is continuing to develop weapons of mass destruction, has not disarmed--

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** He's launched ballistic missiles against four of his neighbors over the years.

**RICE:** -- Who's tried to assassinate a former American President, who pays \$25,000 dollars to Hamas bombers, by the way, some of whom blew up a Hebrew university and with it, five Americans.

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** Before the Gulf War, back in 1990, we had reason to believe then that he had establish a program to try to produce a nuclear weapon.

**RUMSFELD:** We went in and were able to find out that they were within six months

to a year of having a nuclear weapon.

**RICE:** History shows that you are always surprised about how quickly someone acquires a terrible weapon. We were surprised that the Soviet program was as far along as it was. We thought it would be 1955, it was 1949.

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** We have to assume there's more there than we know. What we know is just bits and pieces we gather through the Intelligence system. But nobody ever mails you the entire plan.

**GENERAL RICHARD MYERS:** Our intelligence is always imperfect, and we usually find out that what we don't know is the most troublesome.

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** He now is trying, through his illicit procurement network, to acquire the equipment he needs to be able to enrich uranium to make the bombs--

**TIM RUSSERT (OFF SCREEN):** -- Aluminum tubes--

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** -- Specifically aluminum tubes. There was a story in *The New York Times* this morning.

**POWELL:** -- Reporting just this morning that he is still trying to acquire, for example, some of the specialized aluminum tubing one needs to develop centrifuges that would give you an enrichment capability.

**BLITZER:** Scott Ridder, a former United Nations weapons inspector, today addressed the Iraqi National Assembly and basically made the point that there are no problems, as far as Iraq is concerned. Listen specifically to what he said.

**SCOTT RITTER (VIDEO):** The rhetoric of fear that is disseminated by my government and others has not, to date, been backed up by hard facts that substantiate any allegations that Iraq is, today, in possession of weapons of mass destruction or has links to terror groups responsible for attacking the United States.



**POWELL:** We have facts, not speculation. Scott is, certainly, entitled to his opinion. But I'm afraid that I would not place the security of my nation and the security of our friends in the region on that kind of an assertion by somebody who is not in the Intelligence chain any longer.

**BLITZER:** Is there any hard evidence directly linking the Iraqi government to Al Qaeda and the 9/11 terror attacks against the United States?

**RICE:** There is certainly evidence that Al Qaeda people have been in Iraq.

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** We've seen, in connection with the hijackers, of course, Mohammed Atta, who was the lead hijacker, did apparently travel to Prague on a number of occasions. And on at least one occasion, we have reporting that places him in Prague with a senior Iraqi intelligence official a few months before the attack on the World Trade left.

**RICE:** It's just more of a picture that is emerging, that there may well have been contacts between Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein's regime. There are others, and we will be laying out the case.

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** Again, I want to separate out 9/11 from the other relationships between Iraq and the Al Qaeda organization. But there is a pattern of relationships, going back many years.

**GENERAL MYERS:** One of the things we learned from September 11<sup>th</sup> was that the intent of the terrorists, and those who would supply them with weapons of mass destruction, is very, very clear. They're to wipe out our way of life.

**RICE:** The problem here is that there will always be some uncertainty about how quickly he can acquire nuclear weapons. But we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.

*September 11, 2002*

*9/11 Commemoration*

*New York*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Our generation has now heard history's call, and we will answer it. America has entered a great struggle that tests our strength, and even more, our resolve. Our nation is patient and steadfast. We continue to pursue the terrorists in cities and camps and caves across the earth. We are joined by a great coalition of nations to rid the world of terror. And we will not allow any terrorist or tyrant to threaten civilization with weapons of mass murder.

*September 12, 2002*

*United Nations General Assembly*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** The conduct of the Iraqi regime is a threat to the authority of the United Nations and a threat to peace. Iraq has answered a decade of U.N. demands with a decade of defiance.

If the Iraqi regime wishes peace it will immediately and unconditionally foreswear, disclose and remove or destroy all weapons of mass destruction.

If Iraq's regime defies us again the world must move deliberately, decisively, to hold Iraq to account. But the purposes of the United States should not be doubted. The Security Council resolutions will be enforced. The just demands of peace and security will be met, or action will be unavoidable.

*September 19, 2002*

*White House Oval Office*

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**REPORTER:** Mr. President, are you going to send Congress a proposed resolution today?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** I am.

**REPORTER:** Are you asking for a blank check, sir?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** I am sending suggested language for a resolution.

I've asked for Congress's support to enable the administration to keep the peace. And we look forward to a good, constructive debate in Congress. I appreciate the fact that the leadership recognizes we've got to move before the elections. And I look forward to working with them.

**AIDE:** Okay, thank you all.

**REPORTER:** How important is it that the resolution give you an authorization for use of force?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** That will be part of the resolution, the authorization to use force. If you want to keep the peace, you've got to have the authorization to use force.

*September 19, 2002*

*Homeland Security Building*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** I didn't hear it. I didn't hear it. Let me guess. The United States is guilty. The world doesn't understand. We don't have any weapons of mass destruction. It's the same old song and dance that we've heard for 11 long years. And the United Nations Security Council must show backbone, must step up, and hold this regime to account. Otherwise, the United States and some of our friends will do so.

*September 25, 2002*

*White House Oval Office*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**REPORTER:** Mr. President, do you believe that Saddam Hussein is a bigger threat to the United States than Al Qaeda?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** That is a interesting question. I'm trying to think of something humorous to say. [LAUGHTER]

But I can't when I think about Al Qaeda and Saddam Hussein. They're both risks, they're both dangerous. Now the difference, of course, is that Al Qaeda likes to hijack governments. Saddam Hussein is a dictator of a government. Al Qaeda hides. Saddam doesn't.

But the danger is, is that they work in concert. The danger is, is that Al Qaeda becomes an extension of Saddam's madness and his hatred, and his capacity to extend weapons of mass destruction around the world. Both of them need to be dealt with. The war on terror, you can't distinguish between Al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror.

*September 25, 2002*

*The News Hour*

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**MARGARET WARNER:** Secretary Rumsfeld, in Europe today, when asked if there was evidence tying Iraq to Al Qaeda, said, "Yes." He did not elaborate. Are you prepared to elaborate?

**RICE:** Several of the detainees, in particular, some high-ranking detainees, have said that Iraq provided some training to Al Qaeda in chemical weapons development. So yes, there are contacts between Iraq and Al Qaeda. We know that Saddam Hussein has a long history with terrorism, in general. And there are some Al Qaeda personnel who found refuge in Baghdad.

No one is trying to make an argument at this point that Saddam Hussein somehow had operational control of what happened on September 11<sup>th</sup>. So we don't want to push this too far. But this is a story that is unfolding. And it is getting clearer, and we're learning more.

*September 26, 2002*

*Pentagon Press Room*

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**REPORTER:** If an inspection team goes in now and finds nothing because, perhaps, Iraq is very good at hiding it or, perhaps, they have nothing, but you all are of the belief that they have it, if they find nothing, does it make your job more difficult, in trying to assemble in your national coalition?

**RUMSFELD:** Goodness, gracious. That is, kind of, like looking down the road for every conceivable pothole you can find, and then driving into it. I just don't-- I don't get up in the morning and ask myself that. We know they have weapons of mass destruction. We know they have active programs. There isn't any debate about it. So the idea that if you had an appropriate inspection regime, that they'd come back and say you were wrong, is so far beyond anyone's imagination, that it's not something I think about.

*September 26, 2002*

*White House Rose Garden*

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**PRESIDENT BUSH:** We've just concluded a really good meeting with members of the United States Congress, to discuss our national security and discuss how best to keep the peace. We are moving toward a strong resolution. And all of us, and many others in Congress, are united in our determination to confront an urgent threat to America.

According to the British government, the Iraqi regime could launch a biological or chemical attack in as little as 45 minutes, after the order were given.

*September 30, 2002*

*Pentagon Press Room*

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**REPORTER:** Is the U.S. in any way exaggerating or misleading the American public, in regard to the potential threat posed by Iraq?

**RUMSFELD:** Is the U.S. government-- You mean the senior members of the administration? Not to my knowledge. And if I knew of an instance, I would certainly correct it.

*October 7, 2002*

*Cincinnati, Ohio*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Saddam Hussein is a homicidal dictator who is addicted to weapons of mass destruction.

We agree that the Iraqi dictator must not be permitted to threaten America and the world with horrible poisons, and diseases, and gasses, and atomic weapons.

We've also discovered, through intelligence, that Iraq has a growing fleet of manned and unmanned aerial vehicles that could be used to disburse chemical or biological weapons across broad areas. We're concerned that Iraq is exploring ways of using these UAVs for missions targeting the United States.

Saddam Hussein has held numerous meetings with the Iraqi nuclear scientists, a group he calls his "Nuclear Mujahidim," his nuclear holy warriors.

If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy or steal an amount of highly-enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, he could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year.

Facing clear evidence of peril, we cannot wait for the final proof, the smoking gun, that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.

The dictator of Iraq is a student of Stalin, using murder as a tool of terror and control-- within his own Cabinet, within his own army, and even within his own family. On Saddam Hussein's orders, opponents have been decapitated. Wives and mothers of political opponents have been systematically raped as a method of intimidation. And political prisoners have been forced to watch their own children being tortured.

Failure to act would embolden other tyrants, allow terrorists access to new weapons and new resources, and make blackmail a permanent feature of world events.

Later this week, the United States Congress will vote on this matter. I have asked Congress to authorize the use of America's military if it proves necessary to enforce U.N. Security Council demands.

*October 9, 2002*

*Larry King Live*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**POWELL:** I hope the United States Congress will act promptly on its resolution, because that will show that America is united behind this effort. And with that Congressional resolution, then I think our efforts to get a U.N. resolution are strengthened. And I hope that this will all come about in the not-too-distant future, within a matter of days, or perhaps a week or two.

*October 16, 2002*

*White House East Room*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** The resolution I'm about to sign symbolizes the united purpose of our nation, expresses the considered judgment of the Congress and marks an important event in the life of America. The 107<sup>th</sup> Congress is one of the few called by history to authorize military action to defend our country and the cause of peace.

Congress has now authorized the use of force. I have not ordered the use of force. I hope the use of force will not become necessary, yet confronting the threat posed by Iraq is necessary of whatever means that requires.

*October 20, 2002*

*This Week*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**POWELL:** Any resolution that comes out of the United Nations, I'm sure, will contain an indictment against Iraq, which we asked for. It will contain a new tough inspection regime, and it will make clear that Iraq will face consequences if they frustrate and violate this new inspection regime.

*October 24 - November 4, 2002*

*Charlotte, North Carolina*

*Auburn, Alabama*

*St. Charles, Missouri*

*Dallas, Texas*

*Sioux Falls, South Dakota*

[\[link to source\]](#) (NC)

[\[link to source\]](#) (AL)

[\[link to source\]](#) (MO)

[\[link to source\]](#) (TX)



[\[link to source\]](#) (SD)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** You know, I laid out a doctrine. You just got to know it still stands. It says, "Either you're with us, either you love freedom, and with nations which embrace freedom, or you're with the enemy." There's no in between, and that doctrine still stands. [APPLAUSE]

If we get any kind of hint, any evidence whatsoever that somebody might be thinking about doing something to America, we're moving. We're disrupting. We're denying. We're doing everything we can to protect the homeland. . [APPLAUSE]

It doesn't matter how long it takes. When it comes to the defense of our freedoms, we will stay the course. . [APPLAUSE]

I believe, I believe, out of the evil done to America, is going to come some incredible good. I believe that we can achieve peace if we are strong, and focused, and diligent. If we stay tough when we need to be tough, stay strong when we need to be strong, speak clearly about good and evil-- I know that if we remember our values, remember that freedom is not America's gift to the world, freedom is a God-given gift to the world-- if we remember that values. . [APPLAUSE]

And that's why I went to the United Nations. I said to that August body, for the sake of keeping the peace, we want you to be effective. For the sake of keeping the world free, we want you to be an effective body. It's up to you, however. You can show the world whether you've got the backbone necessary to enforce your edicts, or whether you're going to turn out to be just like the League of Nations, your choice to make.

And my message to Saddam Hussein is that, for the sake of peace, for the sake of freedom, you must disarm like you said you would do. But my message to you all, and to the country, is this: for the sake of our future freedoms, and for the sake of world peace, if the United Nations can't act, and if Saddam Hussein won't act, the United States will lead a coalition of nations to disarm Saddam Hussein.  
[APPLAUSE/CHEERING]

**AUDIENCE CHANTING:** USA! USA! USA! USA! USA!

*November 7, 2002*

*Presidential Hall*

*Eisenhower Executive Office Building*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** And so, the next step will be to put an inspection regime in there. After all the declarations and after all the preamble to inspections, that he's got to show the world he's disarming. And that's where we'll be next. Judy--

**REPORTER:** Thank you Mr. President. You said this afternoon that the U.N. Security Council vote tomorrow would bring the civilized world together against Iraq. But broad opposition remains all over the world to your policy. Will you continue to try and build support? If so, how will you do that? Or do you think the Security Council vote would be all the mandate you need?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Yeah, first of all, you know, broad opposition around the world, not in support of my policy on Iraq? Well, I think most people around the world realize that Saddam Hussein is a threat. And no one likes war, but they also don't like the idea of Saddam Hussein having a nuclear weapon. Imagine what would happen. And by the way, we don't know how close he is to a nuclear weapon right now. We know he wants one, but we don't know.

*December 2, 2002*

*Air National Guard Leadership Conference*

*Denver, Colorado*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** As the President has said, this is a fight to save the civilized world. This is a struggle against evil, against an enemy that rejoices in the murder of innocent, unsuspecting human beings. President Bush has often spoken of how America can keep the peace by redefining war on our terms. But for all the progress we've made in the war on terror, one thing is abundantly clear. Our nation

is still in danger. There is also a grave danger that Al Qaeda or other terrorists will join with outlaw regimes that have these weapons to attack their common enemy, the United States of America. That is why confronting the threat posed by Iraq is not a distraction from the war on terror. It is absolutely crucial to winning the war on terror.

December 3, 2002

Pentagon Press Room

[\[link to source\]](#)

**REPORTER:** Does the United States have the evidence to know when Iraq presents its declaration? Will you be able to look at that and tell whether they're telling the truth and being forthcoming? Or will you be able to tell, right away, that you're on the path to war with Iraq?

**RUMSFELD:** Well, the latter is, of course, a decision for the President, the Security Council, other countries, to make judgments about, it's not for me. The United States knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction. The U.K. knows that they have weapons of mass destruction. Any country on the face of the earth with an active intelligence program knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction.

**REPORTER:** The President has said that Iraqi cooperation is not encouraging yesterday, and Kofi Annan, today, says cooperation seems to be good by the Iraqis.

**RUMSFELD:** Well, is the glass half empty or half full? I don't see that that's a big deal.

**REPORTER:** You don't?

**RUMSFELD:** No.

**REPORTER:** Mr. Secretary, they seem to be doing what is being asked of them by inspectors. And by that, Kofi Annan says cooperation seems to be good. Why is cooperation not good?

**RUMSFELD:** You'd have to ask the President.

**REPORTER:** They're letting people in.

**RUMSFELD:** Maybe he's looking at intelligence that somebody else isn't seeing. I don't know.

*December 31, 2002*

*Crawford, Texas*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** This government will continue to lead the world toward more peace. And we hope to resolve all the situations in which we find ourselves in a peaceful way. That's my commitment, to try to do so, peacefully. But I want to remind people that Saddam Hussein, the choice is his to make, as to whether or not the Iraqi situation will resolve peacefully.

You said we're headed to war in Iraq. I don't know why you say that. I hope we're not headed to war in Iraq. I'm the person that gets to decide, not you. And I hope this can be done peacefully. We've got a military presence there to remind Saddam Hussein, however, that when I say we will lead a coalition of the willing to disarm him if he chooses not to disarm, I mean it.

*January 3, 2003*

*Fort Hood, Texas*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** The use of military force is this nation's last option; yet, if force becomes necessary to secure our country, and to keep the peace, America will act deliberately. America will act decisively. And America will prevail, because we've got the finest military in the world.

[AUDIENCE CLAPPING]

*January 7, 2003*

*Pentagon Press Room*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**GENERAL MYERS:** As we begin the new year, our military forces are poised around the world, ready to meet any threat. Specific to the Persian Gulf, the flow of forces to the region continues. We've seen a few units depart for the Gulf and can expect that deliberate force flow to continue. And while there has been no decision about Iraq, we want to ensure that we are prepared to provide the President as much flexibility as possible.

*January 19, 2003*

*Face the Nation*

*This Week*

[\[link to source\]](#) (Powell)

[\[link to source\]](#) (Rumsfeld)

**BOB SCHIEFFER:** Yesterday, we saw tens of thousands of demonstrators converge on Washington. They say we should not go to war against Iraq. I would just like to ask you this morning, what do you say to those people?

**POWELL:** What I would say to them is that the President is trying every means not to go to war. But the decision to go to war is in the hands of Saddam Hussein.

**SCHIEFFER:** Well, Mr. Blix has said that it may take several months more to come to some sort of definitive conclusion about whether he has disarmed it or not. President Chirac of France said yesterday-- and these are his words-- "Wisdom requires that we grant the inspectors' requests for more time."

**POWELL:** What we have to make a judgment on, now, is whether or not Saddam Hussein is serious about disarming. And is he cooperating with the inspectors in that disarmament process?

**SCHIEFFER:** So just to make sure I understand what you're saying, you're saying a lack of cooperation would be reason enough to take military action?

**POWELL:** What I'm saying is that Iraq has an obligation under 1441 and earlier resolutions to disarm. And one way to demonstrate that they are disarmed or are going to disarm is to cooperate with the inspectors and help the inspectors do their job. Time is running out.

**GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS:** What should the public know right now about what a war with Iraq would look like, and what the costs would be?

**RUMSFELD:** Cost in dollars? Or costs in lives?

**STEPHANOPOULOS:** In dollars and human costs.

**RUMSFELD:** Well, the lesser important is the cost in dollars. Human life is a treasure. The Office of Management and Budget estimated it would be something under \$50 billion dollars.

**STEPHANOPOULOS:** Outside estimates say up to \$300 billion.

**RUMSFELD:** Baloney.

*January 28, 2003*

*State of the Union Address*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Almost three months ago, the United Nations Security Council

gave Saddam Hussein his final chance to disarm. He has shown, instead, utter contempt for the United Nations, and for the opinion of the world.

The 108 U.N. inspectors were not sent to conduct a scavenger hunt for hidden materials across a country the size of California. The job of the inspectors is to verify that Iraq's regime is disarming. It is up to Iraq to show exactly where it is hiding its banned weapons, lay those weapons out for the world to see, and destroy them as directed. Nothing like this has happened.

The United Nations concluded in 1999 that Saddam Hussein had biological weapons sufficient to produce over 25,000 liters of anthrax; enough doses to kill several million people. The United Nations concluded that Saddam Hussein had materials sufficient to produce more than 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin, enough to subject millions of people to death by respiratory failure.

The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.

Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production.

The dictator of Iraq is not disarming. To the contrary, he is deceiving.

Intelligence sources indicate that Saddam Hussein has ordered that scientists who cooperate with U.N. inspectors in disarming Iraq will be killed, along with their families.

International human rights groups have catalogued other methods used in the torture chambers of Iraq-- electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues, and rape. If this is not evil, then evil has no meaning.

Before September the 11<sup>th</sup>, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained. But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other plans, this time armed by Saddam Hussein. Take one vial, one canister, one crate, slipped into this country to bring a day of horror like none we have ever known. We will do everything in our power to make sure that that day never comes.

[APPLAUSE]

*February 5, 2003*

*United Nations Security Council*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**POWELL:** One of the most worrisome things that emerges from the thick intelligence file we have on Iraq's biological weapons is the existence of mobile production facilities used to make biological agents.

We have diagramed what our sources reported about these mobile facilities. Here, you see both truck and rail car-mounted mobile factories. As these drawings, based on their descriptions, show, we know what the fermenters look like. We know what the tanks, pumps, compressors and other parts look like. We know how they fit together. We know how they work. And we know a great deal about the platforms on which they are mounted.

We know, from Iraq's past admissions, that it has successfully weaponized not only anthrax, but also other biological agents, including botulinum toxin, Aflatoxin, and ricin. Saddam Hussein has investigated dozens of biological agents, causing diseases such as gas gangrene, plague, typhus, tetanus, cholera, camelpox, and hemorrhagic fever. And he also has the wherewithal to develop small pox.

In May, 2002, our satellites photographed the unusual activity in this picture. Here, we see cargo vehicles accompanied by a decontamination vehicle associated with biological or chemical weapons activity.

This photograph of the site, taken two months later in July, shows that this previous site, as well as all of the other sites around this site, have been fully bulldozed and graded in order to conceal chemical weapons evidence that would be there from years of chemical weapons activity.

Saddam Hussein is determined to get his hands on a nuclear bomb. He is so determined, that he has made repeated covert attempts to acquire high specification aluminum tubes from 11 different countries, even after inspections resumed.



It goes on and on and on. Clearly, Saddam Hussein and his regime will stop at nothing until something stops him.

*February 6, 2003*

*White House*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Iraq has developed spray devices that could be used on unmanned aerial vehicles, with ranges far beyond what is permitted by the Security Council. A UAV launched from a vessel off the American coast could reach hundreds of miles inland.

And we have sources that tell us that Saddam Hussein recently authorized Iraqi field commanders to use chemical weapons, the very weapons the dictator tells the world he does not have.

*February 7, 2003*

*Department of Justice Press Room*

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**JOHN ASHCROFT:** After conferring this morning with the Homeland Security Council, the decision has been made to increase the threat condition designation currently classified at "elevated risk," to increase that threat condition designation to the "high risk" category. This decision for an increased threat condition designation is based on specific intelligence received and analyzed by the full intelligence community.

*February 9, 2003*

*Meet the Press*

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**TIM RUSSERT:** The Germans and the French have a proposal, which they talked about again today, which would put United Nation troops in Iraq, triple the number of inspectors, and give inspections a longer time. Could you accept that proposal?

**POWELL:** The issue is not more inspectors, the issue is compliance on the part of Saddam Hussein. If he complies, if he does what he's supposed to do, and tells us where the anthrax went-- Where did the botulinum toxin go? Where did all the missiles go? Where is the mustard gas? Where are all of the documents you've been hiding? If he complies, then that can be done with a handful of inspectors. But if he is not complying, tripling the numbers of inspectors doesn't deal with the issue.

**RUSSERT:** As you remember in 1991, the Persian Gulf War, the Kuwaiti ambassador to the U.S.'s daughter came forward with a fake story. There were suggestions of satellite photos showing 250,000 Iraqi troops on the Saudi border, which the *St. Petersburg Times* demonstrated was not correct. And now, this headline about Britain's intelligence dossier, Britain admits that much of its report on Iraq came from magazines. Are you concerned that there is a sloppiness with evidence and a rush to war?

**POWELL:** No, I don't think so. I think Britain stands behind its document. They have acknowledged that they use other sources that they didn't acknowledge or attribute. But I think the document stands up well, because it describes a pattern of deceit on the part of the Iraqis, that is not just a pattern of deceit that exists today, but has existed for many years.

*February 11, 2003*

*Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Hearing*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**JOHN WARNER:** In the event that force is used, and after the dust settles, and the world press and others can go in and assess the situation, is it your judgment that there will be clearly caches of weapons of mass destruction which will dispel any doubt that the United States and such other nations that joined in the use of force did the right thing at the right time?

**GEORGE TENET:** Sir, I think we will find caches of weapons of mass destruction, absolutely.

*February 20, 2003*

*The News Hour*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**LEHRER:** Is US military ready to go against Iraq?

**RUMSFELD:** Yes

**LEHRER:** Are you planning, are you and your folks planning for a ferocious war, I mean, an all-out defense by the Iraqi military?

**RUMSFELD:** The task of war planners is to plan for every conceivable contingency, and they are doing that, from the most pessimistic to the most optimistic.

*February 26, 2003*

*The American Enterprise Institute Annual Dinner*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** America's interests in security and America's belief in liberty, both lead in the same direction: to a free and peaceful Iraq. [APPLAUSE]

**A** new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region. [APPLAUSE]

America will seize every opportunity in pursuit of peace, and the end of the present regime in Iraq would create such an opportunity. [APPLAUSE]

We will make this an age of progress and liberty. Free people will set the course of history, and free people will keep the peace of the world. [APPLAUSE]

*February 27, 2003*

*House Budget Committee Hearing*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**WOLFOWITZ:** Some of the higher end predictions that we have been hearing recently, such as the notion that it will take several hundred thousand U.S. troops to provide stability in post-Saddam Iraq are wildly off the marks.

These are Arabs, 23 million of the most educated people in the Arab world, who are going to welcome us as liberators. And when that message gets out to the whole Arab world, it is going to be a powerful counter to Osama bin Laden.

*March 5, 2003*

*Center for Strategic and International Studies*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**POWELL:** The question is not how much more time should be allowed for inspections, the question is not how many more inspectors should be sent in. The question simply is, has Saddam Hussein made a strategic decision, a political decision, that he will give up these horrible weapons of mass destruction and stop what he has been doing for all these many years? That's the question. There is no other question. Everything else is secondary or tertiary. That's the issue.

*March 6, 2003*

*White House East Room*

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**DAN RATHER (VOICEOVER):** President Bush is about to meet with reporters in the East Room of the White House. This is only the second time he's scheduled a formal news conference in prime time, and it comes as pre-invasion operations are underway by U.S. military forces on the ground and in the air, inside Iraq.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Good evening. I'm pleased to take your questions tonight, and to discuss with the American people the serious matters facing our country and the world.

**REPORTER:** Sir, if you haven't already made the choice to go to war, can you tell us what you're waiting to hear or see before you do make that decision? And if I may, during the recent demonstrations, many of the protestors suggested that the U.S. was a threat to peace, which prompted you to wonder out loud why they didn't see Saddam Hussein as a threat to peace. I wonder why you think so many people around the world take a different view of the threat that Saddam Hussein poses than you and your allies.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** I recognize there are people who don't like war. I don't like war. I wish that Saddam Hussein had listened to the demands of the world and disarmed. Nobody likes war. The only thing I can do is assure the loved ones of those who wear our uniform that if we have to go to war, if war is upon us because Saddam Hussein has made that choice, we will have the best equipment available for our troops, the best plan available for victory, and we will respect innocent life in Iraq.

**REPORTER:** Mr. President, you and your top advisors, notably Secretary of State Powell, have repeatedly said that we have shared with our allies all the current up-to-date intelligence information that proves the imminence of the threat we face from Saddam Hussein. If all these nations, all of them our normal allies, have access to the same intelligence information, why is it that they are reluctant to think that the threat is so real, so imminent, that we need to move to the brink of war, now?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** We do share a lot of intelligence with nations which may or may not agree with us and the Security Council as to how to deal with Saddam Hussein and his threats. I think the threat is real, and so do a lot of other people in my government. But I meant what I said. This is the last phase of diplomacy. A little bit more time, Saddam Hussein has had 12 years to disarm.

**REPORTER:** Sir, how would you answer your critics who say that they think this is

somehow personal? As Senator Kennedy put it tonight, he said your fixation with Saddam Hussein is making the world a more dangerous place.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** My job is to protect America, and that's exactly what I'm going to do. People can ascribe all kinds of intentions. I swore to protect and defend the Constitution. That's what I swore to do. I put my hand on the Bible and took that oath. And that's exactly what I *am* going to do.

**REPORTER:** In the past several weeks, your policy on Iraq has generated opposition from the governments of France, Russia, China, Germany, Turkey, the Arab League, and many other countries, opened a rift at NATO and at the U.N., and drawn millions of ordinary citizens around the world into the streets in anti-war protests. May I ask, what went wrong, that so many governments and peoples around the world now, not only disagree with you very strongly, but see the U.S. under your leadership as an arrogant power?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** I think you'll see, when it's all said and done, if we have to use force, a lot of nations will be with us. Iraq will serve as a catalyst for change, a positive change. So there's a lot more at stake than just American security and the security of people close by Saddam Hussein. Freedom is at stake, as well. And I take that very seriously.

**REPORTER:** Mr. President, there are a lot of people in this country, as much as half by polling standards, who agree that he should be disarmed, who listened to you say that you have the evidence, but who feel they haven't seen it, and who still wonder why blood has to be shed if he hasn't attacked us.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** If they believe he should be disarmed, and he's not going to disarm, there's only one way to disarm him. And that happens to be my last choice, the use of force.

**REPORTER:** Mr. President, millions of Americans can recall a time when leaders from both parties set this country on a mission of regime change in Viet Nam. Fifty thousand Americans died. The regime is still there in Hanoi, and it hasn't harmed or threatened a single American in the 30 years since the war ended. What can you say tonight, sir, to the sons and the daughters of the Americans who served in Viet Nam, to assure them that you will not lead this country down a similar path in Iraq?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** That's a great question. Our mission is clear in Iraq. Should we

have to go in, our mission is very clear-- disarmament. And in order to disarm, it will mean regime change. I'm confident we'll be able to achieve that objective in a way that minimizes the loss of life. No doubt, there's risks with any military operation. I know that. But it's very clear what we intend to do.

**REPORTER:** Mr. President, are you worried that the United States might be viewed as defiant of the United Nations if you went ahead with military action without specific and explicit authorization from the U.N.?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** No, I'm not worried about that. When it comes to our security, we really don't need anybody's permission.

**REPORTER:** Mr. President, as the nation is at odds over war, with many organizations like the Congressional Black Caucus pushing for continued diplomacy through the U.N., how is your faith guiding you?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** My faith sustains me, because I pray daily. I pray for guidance and wisdom and strength. If we were to commit our troops, *if* we were to commit our troops, I would pray for their safety. And I would pray for the safety of innocent Iraqi lives, as well.

**REPORTER:** As you know, not everyone shares your optimistic vision of how this might play out. Do you ever worry, maybe in the wee, small hours, that you might be wrong and they might be right, in thinking that this could lead to more terrorism, more anti-American sentiment, and more instability in the Middle East?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** I think, first of all, it's hard to envision more terror on America than September the 11<sup>th</sup> of 2001. We did nothing to provoke that terrorist attack. It came upon us, because there's an enemy which hates America. They hate what we stand for. We love freedom, and we're not changing. I think of the risks. I've calculated the cost of inaction versus the cost of action, and I'm firmly convinced if we have to, we will act, in the name of peace and in the name of freedom.

**REPORTER:** Mr. President, as you said, the Security Council faces a vote next week on a resolution, implicitly authorizing an attack on Iraq. Will you call for a vote on that resolution, even if you aren't sure you have the votes?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** Well first, it basically says that he is in defiance of 1441, that's

what the resolution says. And it's hard to believe anybody saying he isn't in defiance of 1441, because 1441 said he must disarm. And yes, we'll call for a vote.

**REPORTER:** No matter what?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** No matter what the whip count is, we're calling for the vote. We want to see people stand up and say what their opinion is about Saddam Hussein and the utility of the United Nations Security Council. And so, you bet.

*March 16, 2003*

*Meet the Press*

*CNN Late Edition*

[\[link to source\]](#) (Cheney)

[\[link to source\]](#) (Powell)

**TIM RUSSERT:** During the 2000 campaign, you were on the program. And we were talking about the Persian Gulf War and looking back. And I asked whether you had any regrets about taking Saddam out at that time. And you said no. And then, you added this, and I want to talk about it. Let's watch.

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY (VIDEO):** The conversations I had with leaders in the region afterwards, they all supported the decision that was made not to go to Baghdad. They were concerned that we not get into a position where we shifted-- instead of being the leader of an international coalition to roll back Iraqi aggression, to one in which we were an imperialist power, willy-nilly moving into capitals in that part of the world, taking down governments.

**RUSSERT:** "Imperialist power, moving willy-nilly, taking down governments." Is that how we're going to be perceived this time?

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** Well I hope not, Tim. And, of course, in '91, there was a general consensus that we'd gone as far as we should, that we had achieved our objectives when we liberated Kuwait.



**RUSSERT:** If your analysis is not correct, and we're not treated as liberators but as conquerors, and the Iraqis begin to resist, particularly in Baghdad, do you think the American people are prepared for a long, costly and bloody battle with significant American casualties?

**VICE PRESIDENT CHENEY:** I don't think it's likely to unfold that way, Tim, because I really do believe we will be greeted as liberators.

**BLITZER:** Why not just keep the pressure on? Keep the troops there, keep the threat going, and continue to let the inspectors destroy weapons?

**POWELL:** No, because we know you can't keep the troops there forever. And right now, without a strategic decision on the part of Saddam Hussein to comply, I'm as sure as of anything I've ever been sure of, if the pressure comes off, he will go back to his old pattern of behavior.

**BLITZER:** Have you effectively given up trying to get nine affirmative votes among the 15 members of the Security Council?

**POWELL:** I don't want to rule out any option that might be available to us right now, because this is what the leaders are discussing in the Azores this afternoon.

**BLITZER:** So is it still possible there might yet be another U.N. Security Council vote?

**POWELL:** It is one of the options that is available.

*March 16, 2003*

*The Azores, Portugal*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** We've had a really good discussion. We concluded that tomorrow is a moment of truth for the world. Many nations have voiced a

commitment to peace and security. And now, they must demonstrate that commitment to peace and security in the only effective way, by supporting the immediate and unconditional disarmament of Saddam Hussein.

**TONY BLAIR:** From the perspective of the security of the world, we cannot simply go back to the Security Council for this discussion to be superceded by that discussion, to be superceded by another discussion.

**INTERVIEWER:** When you say "Tomorrow is the moment of truth," does that mean tomorrow is the last day that the resolution can be voted up or down, and that the end of the day tomorrow, one way or another, the diplomatic window has closed?

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** That's what I'm saying.

**INTERVIEWER:** Thank you, Sir.

*March 17, 2003*

*White House*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**DAN RATHER (VOICEOVER):** Earlier today, Britain and the U.S. gave up their bid to win new authorization action against Iraq, rather than face defeat from the U.N. Security Council. We now take you live to the White House for the President's address.

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** My fellow citizens, events in Iraq have now reached the final days of decision. The United Nations Security Council has not lived up to its responsibilities, so we will rise to ours. In recent days, some governments in the Middle East have been doing their part. They have delivered public and private messages, urging the dictator to leave Iraq, so that disarmament can proceed peacefully. He has thus far refused.

All the decades of deceit and cruelty have now reached an end. Saddam Hussein and his sons must leave Iraq within 48 hours. Their refusal to do so will result in military conflict, commenced at a time of our choosing. For their own safety, all foreign

nationals, including journalists and inspectors, should leave Iraq immediately.

*March 19, 2003*

*White House*

[\[link to source\]](#)

**PRESIDENT BUSH:** My fellow citizens, at this hour, American and coalition forces are in the early stages of military operations to disarm Iraq, to free its people, and to defend the world from grave danger. On my orders, coalition forces have begun striking selected targets of military importance to undermine Saddam Hussein's ability to wage war. These are opening stages of what will be a broad and concerted campaign.

[MUSIC]

TEXT ON SCREEN

After failing to gain Security Council  
authorization for the use of force,  
and before UN weapons inspectors  
could complete their work,

the United States and its allies  
launched a military campaign in Iraq.

Although the invasion succeeded  
in toppling the regime of Saddam Hussein,  
it unleashed a chain of violence and  
turmoil that continued unabated  
for more than four years.

Despite pre-war claims

by the Bush administration . . .

No weapons of mass destruction  
of any kind were found in Iraq.

No mobile biological weapons labs  
were found in Iraq.

Iraq did not seek to acquire  
yellowcake uranium from Africa.

The aluminum tubes were not suitable  
for nuclear weapons development.

Mohamed Atta, the lead 9/11 hijacker,  
did not meet with Iraqi intelligence in Prague.

Iraq did not provide  
chemical weapons training to al-Qaeda.

There was no collaborative relationship  
between Iraq and al-Qaeda.

And the implication that Iraq  
was involved in the attacks of 9/11  
was untrue.

After four years, the American invasion  
and occupation of Iraq has brought with it  
more than 100,000 civilian and military deaths.

Millions of Iraqis

have been displaced from their homes.  
Nearly 2,000,000 have fled the country.

Untold numbers of people have been  
mentally and physically wounded.

War expenditures have exceeded \$400 billion.

Documentation  
of the preceding information  
is available at

[www.leadingtowar.com](http://www.leadingtowar.com)

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