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How did the U.S. government lead its people to war?

A Mechanism for War

'We Have No Choice'

Saddam's Choice

In the months before the war, the Bush administration contended that war would be Saddam's choice. Yet, with a severely diminished military due to the 1991 Gulf War, followed by a decade of strict sanctions, there was little indication that Iraq either wanted or was capable of war with the United States.

In reality, saying it was 'Saddam's choice' was a device used by the Bush administration to shift responsibility for its aggressive military policy toward Iraq.

The Bush administration backed Hussein into a corner. Not wanting to appear as the aggressor, the logic they developed was that if Hussein disclosed his weapons of mass destruction, he could avoid war. If he did not, he would be 'choosing war.'

A Mechanism for War

Manufacturing a Problem

Dismissing Other Policy Options

'We Have No Choice'

Saddam's Choice

If the UN Won't Act the US Will

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Rhetoric and Spin

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Abuses and Misuses of Intelligence

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Items of Note

Bush Administration Claims vs. The Facts

Video: SADDAM'S CHOICE



POWELL: ...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.**

BUSH: 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.

If the U.N. Won't Act, the U.S. Will





military action against Iraq. It argued that the U.N. "must show backbone" and hold Hussein to account for his defiance of U.N. resolutions.

A vast majority of nations and their peoples – not accepting the Bush administration's arguments – opposed a war with Iraq, favoring instead continuing inspections and diplomacy.

In March 2003, recognizing that it did not have enough U.N. Security Council votes for a resolution to authorize the use of force, the Bush administration withdrew the resolution before it could be voted down, and accused the U.N. of

"not living up to its responsibilities." Despite effective, ongoing U.N. inspections, and despite diplomatic efforts by various countries to resolve the Iraq crisis, the U.S. proceeded to war with Iraq without a resolution from the U.N. authorizing military action.

Video: IF THE UNITED NATIONS WON'T ACT...

BUSH: 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.

...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.

In fact, the United Nations was taking action: on November 18, 2002, the U.N. began a new inspections regime in Iraq. One reason that the U.N. Security Council would not support a resolution for military action was that these new inspections were progressing.

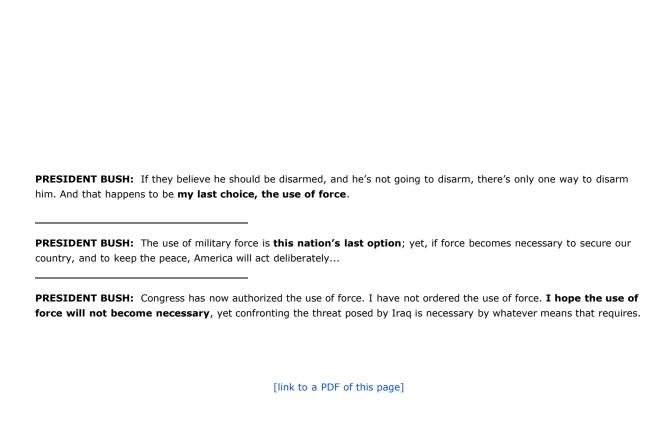
The Bush administration never satisfactorily answered *why* it would not wait for these inspections to be completed – especially in light of the fact that no WMD had been found during the 4 months of inspections.

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan later said that the invasion of Iraq was "not in conformity with the U.N. charter from our point of view, from the charter point of view, it was illegal."

War Is Our Last Option

Bush administration officials often repeated the theme that military force was their *last option*. Yet they actively condemned other options that had historically been successful, such as inspections, containment and diplomacy – effectively making war *the only option*.

Video: WAR IS OUR LAST OPTION



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