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Bush's Shifting Rationale for Iraq War

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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President Bush's shifting rationale for why the U.S. is in Iraq. The U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq on March 20, 2003:

"States like these (Iraq, Iran and North Korea), 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 could 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." -- State of the Union address, Jan. 29, 2002.

"My nation will work with the [U.N. Security Council](#) to meet our common challenge. If Iraq's regime defies us again, the world must move deliberately and decisively to hold Iraq to account." -- speech Sept. 12, 2002, to the [U.N. General Assembly](#).

"If we know [Saddam Hussein](#) has dangerous weapons today -- and we do -- does it make any sense for the world to wait to confront him as he grows even stronger and develops even more dangerous weapons?" -- speech in Cincinnati, Oct. 7, 2002.

"We will consult, but let there be no misunderstanding: If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him. ... Secretly, without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists or help them develop their own." -- State of the Union address, Jan. 23, 2003.

"I am happy to see you, and so are the long-suffering people of Iraq. America sent you on a mission to remove a grave threat and to liberate an oppressed people, and that mission has been accomplished." -- speech to U.S. troops in Qatar, June 5, 2003.

"It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in the world." -- second inaugural address, Jan. 20, 2005.

"I've come to not only look you in the eye. I've also come to tell you that when America gives its word, it keeps its word -- that it's in our interest that Iraq succeed." -- meeting in Baghdad with Iraqi [Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki](#), June 13, 2006

"I sense something different happening in Iraq. The progress will be steady toward a goal that has clearly been

defined." -- to reporters in the Rose Garden about the Baghdad trip, June 14, 2006.

"Not only do terrorists try to stop the advance of democracy through killing innocent people within the countries, they also try to shake the will of the Western world by killing innocent Westerners. They try to spread their jihadist message, a message I call -- it's totalitarian in nature -- Islamic radicalism, Islamic fascism. They try to spread it as well by taking the attack to those of us who love freedom." News conference on his ranch in Crawford, Texas, Aug. 7, 2006.

"We're not going to leave before the mission is complete. I agree with General Abizaid: We leave before the mission is done, the terrorists will follow us here." White House news conference, Aug. 21, 2006. Gen. John Abizaid is the commander of all U.S. forces in the Middle East.

"And now the central front in the war on terror, the central front in this struggle to protect ourselves is Iraq." -- at a GOP fundraiser in Nashville, Tenn., Aug. 30, 2006.

"You hear people in Washington, D.C., say that Iraq is a distraction from the war on terror. I believe it is a central front in the war on terror, and I believe we must defeat the enemy and help that young democracy succeed in order to make sure this homeland is more secure." -- at a GOP fundraiser in California, Oct. 3, 2006.

"We can't tolerate a new terrorist state in the heart of the Middle East, with large oil reserves that could be used to fund its radical ambitions, or used to inflict economic damage on the West. By helping the Iraqis build a democracy -- an Iraqi-style democracy -- we will deal a major blow to terrorists and extremists, we'll bring hope to a troubled region, and we'll make this country more secure." -- at Rose Garden news conference, Oct. 11, 2006.

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