

ACT 1 Sep 11, 2001:

Al-Qaeda

attacks on United States kill almost 3,000 people

■ **Oct:** U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan topples **Taliban**. White House wants to send broader message

■ **Nov 29:** **Paul Wolfowitz**, deputy secretary of defence under Rumsfeld, commissions **Delta of Terrorism** report which concludes U.S. faces **two-generation battle with radical Islam**. Report suggests threats can be countered by regime change in Iraq and spread of U.S.-style democracy throughout Middle East

■ **Jan 2002:** Bush brands Iraq, Iran and North Korea members of **axis of evil** for developing weapons of mass destruction

■ **2002:** Bush administration and Britain's Prime Minister **Tony Blair** make case for war with Iraq, citing imminent threats from weapons of mass destruction



■ **Aug 26:** Vice president **Dick Cheney** claims **"there is no doubt that Saddam Hussein now has weapons of mass destruction"**

■ **Jan 28, 2003:** President Bush announces **"our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein [has] the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent"**



■ **Mar 19:** U.S.-led invasion of Iraq begins

■ **Apr 9:** After six-week **shock and awe** campaign, jubilant crowds greet U.S. troops in Baghdad

■ **Apr 21:** Rumsfeld sends General **Jay Garner** to Baghdad to oversee post-war occupation and reconstruction. Garner painstakingly assembles an **Iraqi governing group**

■ **May 1:** Bush declares in nationally televised address that **major combat has ended**

■ **Oct 2:** **David Kay** – head of **Iraq Survey Group** – briefs House and Senate Intelligence committees that no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq

■ **Dec 13:** **Saddam captured**

Iraq – tragedy in four acts

The issue of regime change in Iraq was a central topic at President **George W. Bush's** first National Security Council (NSC) meeting in January 2001. Defence Secretary **Donald Rumsfeld** favoured making the removal of **Saddam Hussein** a "demonstration model" to deter rogue states from threatening the U.S. or flouting its authority



Dramatis personae: George W. Bush (main picture; top row – left to right) Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz; (bottom row – left to right) Colin Powell, Condoleezza Rice, Saddam Hussein

ACT 2 Apr:

Secretary of State **Colin Powell** warns Bush that National Security Advisor **Condoleezza Rice** and the NSC have been sidelined. NSC analysis and policy decisions about Iraq are being filtered through Rumsfeld, Cheney, CIA chief **George Tenet**, and strategist **Karl Rove**

■ **May 2:** **L. Paul Bremer** replaces Garner as head of U.S. interim administration. Bremer reports directly to Rumsfeld



■ **May 11:** Bremer's **Order 1** bans Saddam's **Baath Party** – some 50,000 most powerful, elite Iraqis go underground

■ **May 12:** Bremer's **Order 2** disbands entire 300,000-strong Iraqi military, Garner's Iraqi governing group also fired. In two days U.S. has made 350,000 new enemies

■ **2003-04:** Violence, rioting and looting of Saddam's weapons stores spreads throughout Iraq as America's 140,000 troops look on.

Rumsfeld's plan to withdraw all but 25,000 troops within four months is torn up



■ **Apr 2004:** Infamous **Abu Ghraib** scandal. Photos published showing U.S. soldiers abusing Iraqi prisoners

■ **May:** Militant group releases video showing beheading of U.S. citizen **Nicholas Berg**

■ **Nov:** Colin Powell resigns as secretary of state. Bush appoints Rice in his place

■ **2004-05:** Rice sends trusted friend, historian **Philip Zelikow**, to Iraq. He reports that despite spending billions of dollars and sacrificing thousands of lives, Iraq is a **failed state** – Rumsfeld is furious

ACT 3 Nov 2005: White House publishes 35-page **Strategy for Victory** which rejects widespread calls for exit-strategy timetable



VICTORY IN IRAQ

■ **Nov:** **Haditha killings**. Squad of U.S. Marines allegedly massacres 24 Iraqis, including 11 women and children, in reprisal for roadside bomb attack which kills one of their troops

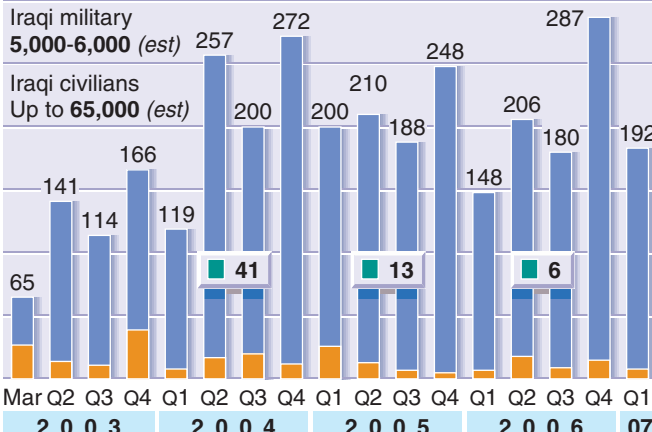
■ **Dec:** Eight in 10 of Iraq's voters elect new 275-seat parliament. Top two winning parties, which together win more than 70% of vote, are Iran's closest allies in Iraq – last thing Bush expects

■ **Feb 2006:** Sunni attack on **al-Askari Mosque** in Samarra enrages Shia community. Militias of **Muqtada al-Sadr**, radical anti-U.S. cleric, go on rampage of revenge killing. Sectarian violence escalates massively



FATALITIES: Mar 2003 – Mar 2007

■ U.S. 3,193 ■ Coalition 256 ■ Foreign hostages killed 60



ACT 4 Oct 18, 2006:

Pressed over a pull-out, Cheney replies, **"We're not looking for an exit strategy. We're looking for victory"**

■ **Nov 7:** Deeply weary of war, U.S. voters inflict a "thumping" political defeat on Bush in mid-term elections. Democrats win control of Congress, ending Republicans' 12-year reign.

Rumsfeld is sacrificed. He is replaced by **Robert Gates**



IRAQ STUDY GROUP REPORT

■ **Dec 6:** **Iraq Study Group** publishes its long-awaited report. Key recommendations include withdrawal of combat troops and opening of direct talks with Iran and Syria. **Bush admits for first time that situation is "bad"**

■ **Dec 30:** **Saddam Hussein** executed



■ **Jan 10, 2007:** Bush presents his new Iraq plan – a surge of 21,500 additional troops. The President aims his toughest language at Iran and Syria, accusing them of supporting attacks on U.S. troops. Bush fires his top military advisers, General **George Casey** and General **John Abizaid**, for voicing doubts over his plan



■ **Feb 15:** **USS John C. Stennis Carrier Strike Group** joins flagship of Fifth Fleet, **USS Dwight D. Eisenhower**, in Arabian Sea. Administration is accused of putting military pieces in place to attack Iran's military and nuclear installations

■ **Mar 11:** Bush announces he will send a further 4,700 troops to Iraq