

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
THE WAY FORWARD

■ **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

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

■ **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



■ **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

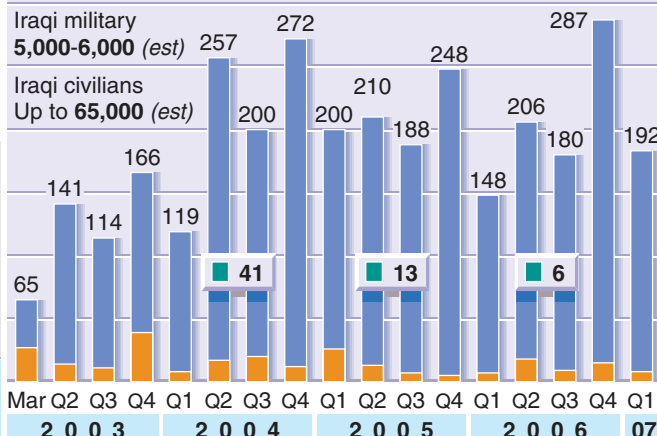
ACT 3 Nov 2005: White House publishes 35-page **Strategy for Victory** which rejects widespread calls for exit-strategy timetable



■ **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

FATALITIES: Mar 2003 – Mar 2007

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



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



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

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