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Subject: TALKING POINTS: President Bush: "America did the right thing in Iraq"
[Charleston Speech Excerpts 2-5-04.pdf](#)

President Bush: "America did the right thing in Iraq."

Excerpts from President Bush's Speech in Charleston, South Carolina 2/5/04

America also confronted a gathering threat in Iraq. The dictatorship of Saddam Hussein was one of the most brutal, corrupt, and dangerous regimes in the world. For years, the dictator funded terrorists and gave reward money for suicide bombings. For years, he threatened and he invaded his neighbors. For years, he murdered innocent Iraqis by the hundreds of thousands. For years, he made a mockery of United Nations' demands that he account for his weapons. For years, Saddam Hussein did all these things. But he won't be doing any of them this year. Instead, he's sitting in a prison cell. And he will be sitting in a courtroom to answer for his crimes.

America and our friends have shown the world that we are serious about removing the threats of weapons of mass destruction. And the facts are becoming clearer. In Iraq, our survey group is on the ground, looking for the truth. We will compare what the intelligence indicated before the war with what we have learned afterwards. As the chief weapons inspector said, we have not yet found the stockpiles of weapons that we thought were there. Yet, the Survey Group has uncovered some of what the dictator was up to.

We know Saddam Hussein had the capability to produce weapons of mass destruction. He had the scientists and technology in place to make those weapons. We know he had the necessary infrastructure to produce weapons of mass destruction because we found the labs and dual use facilities that could be used to produce chemical and biological weapons. We know he was developing the delivery systems, ballistic missiles that the United Nations had prohibited. We know Saddam Hussein had the intent to arm his regime with weapons of mass destruction, because he hid all those activities from the world until the last day of his regime. And Saddam Hussein had something else -- he had a record of using weapons of mass destruction against his enemies and against innocent Iraqi citizens. **Knowing what I knew then, and knowing what I know today, America did the right thing in Iraq.**

We had a choice: either take the word of a madman, or take action to defend the American people. Faced with that choice, I will defend America every time. September the 11th, 2001 was a lesson for America, a lesson I will never forget, and a lesson this nation must never forget. We cannot wait to confront the threats of the world, the threats of terror networks and terror states, until those threats arrive in our own cities. I made a pledge to this country; I will not stand by and hope for the best while dangers gather. I will not take risks with the lives and security of the American people. I will protect and defend this country by taking the fight to the enemy.

When you're the Commander-in-Chief, you have to be willing to make the tough calls and to see your decisions through. America is safer when our commitments are clear, our word is good, and our will is strong. And that is the only way I know how to lead.

If some politicians in Washington had their way, Saddam Hussein would still be in power. All of the Security Council resolutions and condemnations would still be issued and still be ignored, scraps of paper amounting to nothing. Other regimes and terror networks, had we not acted, would have concluded that America backs down when things get tough. Saddam would still have his weapons capabilities, and life would sure be different for the Iraqi people. The secret police would still be making arrests in the middle of the night. Prisons and torture chambers would still be filled with victims. More innocent Iraqis would have been sent to mass graves. Because we acted, Iraq's nightmare is over. Their country, our country and the entire world are better off because the regime of Saddam Hussein is gone, and gone forever.

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