

**THE TRANSLATION OF A CRUCIAL POLITICAL
SPEECH: G.W BUSH' STATE OF THE UNION
ADDRESS 2003 IN LE MONDE**

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Abstract:

This paper aims at emphasizing the translation process of foreign political speeches in newspapers and its relation with the constraints of the target-culture trends. It focuses especially on excerpts from George W. Bush' s 'State of the Union 2003' (01-28) related to Iraq and WMD. This speech was partly translated in the French newspaper "Le Monde" and widely commented during the following month: the main trend in France being a strong opposition to a war in Iraq at this time, the commentaries of the French newspapers generally were quite biased. The paper analyzes how the French journalists selected the sentences that they wanted to quote from the original speech and how they translated them. It points out the crucial part played by translation in this process through both a semantic and an oratorical point of view. The latter aspect is the most studied in this paper, particularly through its relations with phonetics: it shows how a sentence or a phrase can be acoustically distorted in order to produce a definite effect.

Keywords: Translation, G.W Bush, Political Speech, French, Rhetoric, Media discourse.

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Introduction

The translation of a political speech is a kind of very specific challenge for a translator, since the degree of semantic accuracy requested on behalf of the translator is rather low, but on the other hand her/his translation is very sensitive to social and ideological norms, hence to historical context. Furthermore, it is deeply sensitive to stylistic constraints, since the main goal of a speech is to convince at any cost.

G.W. Bush's State of the Union Address delivered in 2003 has been one of the most important political speeches of the beginning of the twenty-first century, for it has played a key-role on the international scene. Paradoxically, his speech was expected by the whole world, in spite of the fact that the message it should convey had been known for months (to declare war on Iraq).

Given the strong anti-Bush feeling in his country at this time, the French translator had thus to abide by many constraints depending on the destination of his/her work: a newspaper (Le Monde) or an American institution (the Internet site of the US State Department): producing a translation which should match the expectations of an "already-made" opinion about President Bush and his administration, or producing a rhetorically and stylistically convincing text.

We will thus examine the normative constraints which have weighed on the translation process: the political context in which this address has been delivered, the position of Le Monde during these events, the stylistic choices of the two translators, and the translation project which may have underlain their work.

1- G.W. Bush and the War Attitude

Among the explanations why G.W. Bush was re-elected in 2003, his determination to fight terrorists by bombing their hideouts and, to a large extent, by using the military by way of a solution not only to eradicate them but also to establish democratic regimes in the Middle East (what was called "nation building"), made him appear to be a man with the spirit of a leader, unyielding in his resolve, not afraid to fight, heaping scorn on the criticisms, even the international ones, maybe as the Winston Churchill that he cheered so much. He appeared as the man of the situation who goes out into the field, personally and physically involved in this war against terror. A picture which symbolizes particularly well this self-involvement combined with the strongest expression of war manliness is the one showing G.W. Bush in a flying suit getting out of a S-3B Viking, after having landed on the USS Abraham Lincoln on May 1, 2003. In the background, the grade and name of the pilot under the cockpit as it is usual in the US Navy, but unusual for a President of the USA: "GEORGE W. BUSH – COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF."

This "commander-in-chief attitude" may have been cleverly put on by the communication staff of the White House. Whatever we may think of G.W. Bush and his international politics, the result of what may have been *in fine* more a "president building" than a "nation building" turned out to be a very effective strategy at the

national level. But, as Margaret Thatcher suggested to G.H.W. Bush, foreign affairs are mostly dedicated to support the national image of a leader – and especially wars: “Remember, George, I was almost to be defeated in England when the Falkland conflict happened.” No doubt that somebody in the White House has not forgotten those highly strategically inspired words. This strategy inspires deeply his State of the Union Speech, more generally his speeches, and more generally all the speeches of the Bushes, and any attack against this image of war manliness is severely punished (see what happened to John Kerry who claimed to be a “real” hero of Viet-Nam during the 2005 campaign).

This was all the more surprising in the case of G.W. Bush since at first he did not appear as a notable warrior: among other facts, he was enlisted as a second lieutenant in the Texas National Guard during the Viet-Nam War (where he didn’t draw attention for his brilliant results: 25 percent at the pilot-aptitude test – Kelley 292) and specified on his application form that he did “not volunteer for overseas services,” while his own father fully supported President Johnson on this issue. Thirty-three years later, after the 09/11 terrorist attacks, he went directly from Sarasota to Barkdale Air Force Base and Offutt Air Force Base where he hid while New-York City’s mayor Rudolph Giuliani appeared to be the real man of the situation, and the one who was involved where G.W. Bush was expected to be involved. The image of the war president was shaped afterwards, thanks to wise advisors like Carl Rove.

2. Le Monde: between anti-Americanism and neutrality

It surprised most foreigners that the Americans could have chosen G.W. Bush for President a second time, in spite of their very strong protests. It surprises especially, perhaps more than others, the French who had just awarded Michael Moore in Cannes and who had filled up all their bookshops with anti-Bush and anti-American literature [see annex A]. Unfortunately for the French, they couldn’t elect the president of the USA, and the American people made another choice mostly because they considered themselves as the citizens of a threatened country, which they actually were, and because John Kerry didn’t appear to be a convincing alternative to G.W. Bush, the commander-in-chief. This strategy pervades the State of the Union speech in 2003, one if not the most important speeches uttered by the President during his first term, but most of the French didn’t get the point: they didn’t understand how this could go straight to the heart of millions of American people.

The anti-American feeling is deep-rooted in the French society, and this is neither the place nor the time to analyze such a phenomenon with such complex causes. During the Second Gulf War period, the French media which encouraged this alacrity were at the same time puzzled and tried to figure out the phenomenon. It has been much written about the “culture gap” between a pragmatic society ruled mostly by money without any concern for the indigents and another, fossilized in its conservatism and ruled by politicians disconnected from the realities of their own country but willing to tell the Americans (and not only them) what to do.

Le Monde, which is a left-oriented social-democrat newspaper, was not completely pervaded by this anti-American feeling, it depended in fact on the journalists or on the editorial writers. Even if the editorial line was mostly anti-Bush, the specialists of the USA who usually write in this newspaper, Patrice Jarreau (Correspondent for Le Monde in Washington) and Alain Frachon (Chief of the International section for Le Monde and specialist on the USA) were much more prudent and cautious. They did their best to explain, to put the French reader in the picture, rather than to criticize the Americans who don't read Le Monde anyway. Besides, the two above mentioned specialists illustrated well the newspaper's reputation of neutrality. But that was not the case for all of them, and in a context of violent anti-Americanism in Europe in general and in France in particular, it was rather delicate to resist temptation. An editorial by Dominique Dhombres published in Le Monde on January 31, 2003, shows accurately this: "*ils feront la guerre de toute façon. Le mot désormais tabou de "croisade" n'a pas été prononcé par le président américain, mais l'esprit y était. Les Etats-Unis sont décidés à mener ce combat, seuls au besoin.*" ("In any case they will go to war. *Crusade*, a taboo word, was not uttered by the US President, but the spirit was there. The USA has decided that they would lead this battle, alone if necessary.")

The translation of the State of the Union Speech 2003 is clearly submitted to these two opposite forces: desire of neutrality and anti-Americanism (some prefer to talk of "anti-Bushism" but the difference is much more unclear in reality than it seems to be in words).

3. The Speech of the Union 2003:

Each year, generally at the end of January or the beginning of February, the President of the USA delivers his State of the Union Speech to the Congress. It is more a tradition than an obligation as the Constitution suggests it: He shall from time to time give to the Congress Information of the State of the Union.

This political American tradition was completely ignored in France where one did not have the faintest idea of what a State of the Union Speech could be, but the speech George W. Bush should deliver this January 27, 2003, was highly expected because he would clarify his intentions about Iraq – and probably confirm his determination to go to war and thus the image of a stubborn man unable to listen to any criticisms (especially not the French ones, delivered a few months earlier by Dominique de Villepin, Foreign Affairs Minister at the Security Council of the UN). The general content of his speech was already known and the anti-Bush feeling in France already strong. Then, the most expected aspect of this speech was the way it would give some more reasons to believe that G.W. Bush was a simple-minded politician, a religious Manichean and an incompetent diplomat who believed that war was the solution to all the problems of the world.

Moreover, the politic situation between France and the USA was very strained at this time: if the Clinton administration was renowned for its good diplomatic relations with France, it was not exactly the case with G.W Bush and his so-called "hawks", especially not with his secretary of defense, Donald Rumsfeld nor with his National Security Advisor, Condoleeza Rice; the first having said the US should *forgive Russia, forget*

Germany and punish France and the latter having condemned the “Old Europe” (e.g. France and Germany) for its possible intention to veto the US war initiative at the UN Security Council. On the other side, Dominique de Villepin, the French Foreign Affairs Minister warned one week before the State of the Union Speech should be delivered, that “military intervention would be the worst possible solution”, supported on this issue by the Russian Foreign Affairs Minister Igor Ivanov. When three months later G.W. Bush decided to go to war without resolution of the UN Security Council, he did nothing else, once again, than following once again Margaret Thatcher’s real politic statement about the international institutions: “*The international bodies, on which our hopes were reposed anew after 1989 and 1991, have given us neither prosperity nor security*” (Neo-conservatism, New Threats for Old, p.92), referring to the Yugoslavian war. All the US politics about the matter of war in Iraq can be explained by this assertion, which obviously underlies Bush’s State of the Union Speech, much more than any apparent western-like parading effects or any kind of caricatures portraying President Bush: whatever we may think of his intellectual capabilities, the “hawks” behind him were, in any case, far from stupid and far from inexperienced.

4. The Speech and its translation :

Three days after G.W. Bush had delivered his speech, Le Monde proposed on its internet page a translation as opposed to the official one published by the US Department of State. This is only a partial translation which focuses on the section devoted to Iraq with an important amount of cuts. In spite of Le Monde’s wish to remain objective, the translation is not free of anti-Bush undertones as we will now see.

4.1. Translation problems

Here are some examples of translation with comments (see the original speech in annexes B). It compares the source-text with its two translations: the official one and the one published in Le Monde.

- a- **To date, we’ve arrested or otherwise dealt with many key commanders of Al Qaeda**, translated into French by “*Jusqu’à présent nous avons arête ou réglé le sort de nombreux chefs d’Al-Qaïda.*” The translation of “*dealt with*” as “*réglé le sort*” is quite significant since it refers to a manner of speech specific to western movies when it was never intended to sound like John Wayne in the source speech, as the official translation shows: “*nous les avons neutralisés.*” This reinforces the idea according to which G.W. Bush acts like a cow-boy rather than like a wise politician, that he is only able to use strength to the detriment of diplomacy.
- b- On the other hand, the “**key-commanders**” of Al-Qaeda look like they have been demoted through the translation process: they are only “*chefs*” in French. The official translation proposed “*grands chefs,*” it appears then clearly that there was a willingness to under evaluate the result of the American campaign against Al-Qaeda. Moreover, there is a list (which does not specifies names) of six commanders which is cut in Le Monde’s translation: “*a man who directed logistics and funding for the September the 11th attacks; the chief of al Qaeda operations in the Persian Gulf, who planned*

the bombings of our embassies in East Africa and the USS Cole; an al Qaeda operations chief from Southeast Asia; a former director of al Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan; a key al Qaeda operative in Europe; a major al Qaeda leader in Yemen."

- c- **[...] to guard our people.** Translated by Le Monde into: "*pour défendre notre peuple*" where the word "*defend*," with obvious military connotations was chosen instead of "*protéger*" ("protect"), which was selected in the official translation and which sounds more accurate.
- d- **"The budget I send you will propose almost \$6 billions to quickly make available effective vaccines"** translated in Le Monde as "*Le budget comptera 6 milliards de dollars pour obtenir rapidement des vaccins*": even if he is not aware of how the decisions about the budget are taken in USA, the reader of Le Monde is likely to suspect that a given democratic entity (to be specific: the Congress) should vote for or against it, which is the case in USA as in all the other democracies. Then the president Bush cannot decide that the budget "will be of \$6 billions" and would not utter anything like that. In such a case, he would be considered in his own country as disrespectful towards the democratic institutions – that is to say, completely out of his mind. But this matches the way the French people look at Bush, and probably the way they want to see him, under his most caricatured appearance. The official translation is much closer to the political reality: "*La proposition de budget que je vous ai soumise prévoit près de 6 milliards de dollars.*"
- e- **The Homeland Security**, is the office, and later the department, created September 20, 2001, after the terrorist attacks against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon by the Bush administration in order to *prevent terrorist attacks within the United States, reduce America's vulnerability to terrorism, and minimize the damage and recover from attacks that do occur* (National Strategy for Homeland Security p.14). The fact that this department could deal with security in a way which is not completely transparent and democratic could be a matter of discussion, but there is still no certainty about that. Homeland Security was translated by Le Monde into "*Sécurité intérieure*" which is absolutely correct from a semantic perspective. But "*Sécurité intérieure*" has some connotations which imply a relation with police institutions under authoritarian governments (the East German Stasi, for example). The official translator who was apparently aware of this connotation softened the negative impact of the direct word-to-word translation by specifying "*ministère de la sécurité intérieure.*" But this is ambiguous, and the best word would have been "*sûreté d'état*" which is currently in use in Belgium for example.
- f- **"[S]et out to dominate the weak and intimidate the world"** was translated by Le Monde into "*mis en campagne pour dominer le monde faible et intimidé.*" The translation of "*set out*" by "*mis en campagne*" ("*set on campaign*"), revealing once again the tendency of the translator to "militarize" Bush's speech. The official translation was "*entrepris de dominer le monde,*" which is the most common translation for "to set out."
- g- À reprendre sur le ressac
- h- **Iraq's ongoing defiance:** translated by Le Monde into "*la défiance persistante de l'Irak*" (*Iraq's ongoing distrust*), the translator having mistaken "defiance" in English and in French. It is not possible to know if it was a mere mistake of the translator (probably) but it has the effect to

considerably weaken the rhetoric of the passage: if it is only a question of distrust, not of defiance, there is no reason to be that upset against Saddam Hussein.

The translator can be accounted for not having translated the last paragraph

4.2 Rhetoric perspective (sounds + metric)

The most important aspect of the source text which has been lost here and which is often lost in the mists of the translation process is the musical one. And yet this aspect is highly significant but not directly linked to meaning, hence the fact that it is often neglected. In the translation of political speeches, the meaning is so diluted in the collateral effects like rhetoric, elocution, pronunciation and so on, that its scrupulous respect shouldn't be considered otherwise than a secondary matter. Political speeches are to a large extent similar to empty boxes: in his speech, and especially in the part devoted to the matter of Iraq, G.W. Bush does not express anything that we did not already know or at least suspected. Like most politicians, he is neither aiming at delivering information nor sharing personal considerations about a hazy foreign affair problem the American citizens would not have heard about; he is trying to convince them that it is the moral duty of the USA to go there and to "deal with" Saddam Hussein in the same way they dealt with the above mentioned Al-Qaeda commanders. In other words, he wants to convince them that USA has to go and to wage war against Iraq in order to overthrow its dictator. At that time, a majority of Americans were favorably disposed towards an intervention in Iraq, his goal was then nothing else than securing their support with some words of encouragement, and possibly to increase this supporting majority.

As far as foreign nations were concerned, among them France especially, the support was rather discreet. At this time, France was, or considered itself, as the leader of the anti-war (more generally anti-Bush, if not merely anti-American) trend on the international scene. Were Bush and his team aiming at convincing France remains unclear, probably would they try to isolate it by comforting a thin majority of support in some countries of Eastern Europe and, of course, in England and Spain were they had the full and devoted backup of Tony Blair and Jose-Maria Aznar. In short, what Donald Rumsfeld called the "New Europe." But the citizens of this "New Europe," at least of its Western components, were not completely convinced of the fully justified grounds of a military intervention in Iraq. And that's euphemistic: according to the polls at this time no less than 80 percent of Spanish citizens were opposed to this project. It was thus also Bush's goal to broaden the supporting grass roots of his allies: the speech was addressed to them too, if not to them first. The semantic density of this speech in particular and of most political speeches in general is thus quite poor: what really matters is the rhetoric, of course, and the musicality of the speech above all. Even if it is just read, a political speech is supposed to be uttered, so its acoustic aspects are of prime significance. And that's what Le Monde did not translate. Let's see how:

What I call the musical features of a political speech focuses on the idea of rhythm and repetition: repetition of phonemes (assonances and alliterations: melodic effect), repetitions of syntactic patterns (incantatory

effect), phrase and clause patterns within a paragraph (undertow effect). Those musical features are, in the case of political speeches, closely linked to rhetoric.

The incantatory effect is one of the easiest to spot, one of the easiest to reproduce through translation and one of the less translated. The reason why this effect is not translated comes probably from the fact that, from a semantic point of view, the information it contains is either redundant or absent. The incantatory effect can be a mere repetition of a phrase or a clause, a repetition of an idea with different words or a repetition of a rhetoric pattern. The following example shows how G.W. Bush uses them in combination.

The United Nations concluded in 1999 that Saddam Hussein had *biological weapons sufficient to produce over 25,000 liters of anthrax -- enough doses **to kill several million people**. He hasn't accounted for that material. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed it.*

The United Nations concluded that Saddam Hussein had *materials sufficient to produce more than 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin -- enough **to subject millions of people to death by respiratory failure**. He hadn't accounted for that material. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed it.*

Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had *the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent. In such quantities, these chemical agents **could also kill untold thousands**. He's not accounted for these materials. He has given no evidence that he has destroyed them.*

The translation in Le Monde was:

Les Nations unies ont conclu, en 1999, que Saddam Hussein a de quoi produire plus de 25 000 litres de bacille de charbon. [...] Les Nations unies ont conclu que Saddam Hussein a de quoi produire plus de 38 000 litres de toxine botulique. [...] Nos services de renseignement estiment que Saddam Hussein a de quoi produire jusqu'à 500 tonnes de sarin, de gaz moutarde et d'agent VX. [...] Des renseignements américains indiquent que Saddam Hussein a 30 000 munitions capables de transporter des agents chimiques. [...] L'Agence internationale de l'énergie atomique a confirmé, dans les années 1990, que Saddam Hussein avait un programme de développement des armes nucléaires avancées. [...] [De tous ces matériels] Saddam Hussein n'a pas rendu compte. Il n'a donné aucune preuve qu'il les avait détruits. [...]

- The phrase repetition was translated (i.e. "*Les Nation's unies ont conclu*"). It should be stressed that this is one of the rare cases where the translator reproduced an incantatory effect, but the large cuts within the speech concentrate the effect and exaggerates it. In that case, the result sounds quite different in the translation, like a scratch on a plate.

- The Undertow effect consists of distributing the long and the short sentences within the paragraphs, and the clauses within a sentence. They generally alternate. In Lincoln speeches, for example, long and short

sentences alternate (e.g. the Gettysburg Address), and within each long sentence with several clauses, the last one is the shortest one. Within Bush speeches, most paragraphs begin with one or several long sentences and end with a short one, as it is the case here. It produces a quite persuasive effect of determination and reasoning strength. Contrary to Lincoln, the last clause of a long sentence is generally the longest, which equilibrates the whole paragraph which ends with a short sentence. All these effects were lost since the translator translated only the first sentence of each paragraph.

- The rhetorical effect which consists of using an argument followed by an example is widely used by G.W. Bush: in this case it is used systematically; as a matter of fact, it is systematically used through the whole speech: this is the most simple rhetorical scheme in a political speech. But the simplest is often the most effective. The translator cut almost all the examples and here not one of them remains. The problem is not necessarily that the translator made these cuts intentionally, but the childish speech which results from the expelling of all musical and rhetorical features necessarily orientates the reader.

Conclusion:

In both translations, there is no distortion of the information (whose density is actually quite thin, given the original text), but an orientation: the translator in *Le Monde* remains fairly accurate as the one who wrote the official translation, but their results sound rather different. The choice of words, the cuts, and especially the care granted to the stylistic and phonetic features makes all the difference. And whatever the original translation project may have been, the result is that each translation closely matches the intention they are expected to carry: on one side a speech delivered by a simple-minded cow-boy, on the other a fair and logical explanation of the reasons why the U.S.A are about to declare war on Iraq.

There couldn't be any better illustration of the fact that a translation is not a simple matter of lexical accuracy, and that the concept of fidelity/infidelity to the source-text is not the main criterion to evaluate a translation: for these two, it is not even a criterion at all.

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<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030128-19.html>

French Translations at:

<http://www.lemonde.fr>

<http://www.usembassy.be/fr/frpolicy/fr.bush.012803.htm>

Annex A

Non-exhaustive list of books available at the American Civilization Section of a famous bookshop in Paris (august 2005).

Empire; M. Hardt & A. Negri

L'empire du chaos; A. Joxe

Après l'empire : essai sur la décomposition du système américain ; E. Todd

Géopolitique du chaos ; I. Ramonet

Guerre à l'Irak : ce que l'équipe Bush ne dit pas ; S. Ritter & W. Pitt

L'ennemi américain : généalogie de l'anti-américanisme français ; P. Roger

Naissance et déclin des grandes puissances ; P. Kennedy

Le nouveau désordre mondial : réflexions d'un européen ; T. Todorov

Le désarroi de la puissance : les Etats-Unis vers une « guerre permanente » ? ; A. Blin

Dieu aussi se plaindrait aux Etats-Unis ; G. Blaise

La nouvelle machine de guerre américaine ; P. Boyer & P. Rozenberg

Etats-Unis : la manipulation planétaire ; M. Bugnon-Mordant

Bush l'imposteur : le passé d'un voyou devenu président ; J. Hatfield

Délires à Washington : les citations les plus folles des faucons américains ; J. Guisnel

+ 8 books about American politics by Noam Chomsky and several others by Michael Moore

+ Several titles about the Ku-Klux-Klan, the extermination of the Indians, Puritanism in the U.S., etc.

On the contrary, very few books seem to consider the question from an objective historical perspective: the only one I was able to found this day was: Histoire de la pensée politique américaine.

Annex B

The State of the Union Address 2003 (part devoted to Iraq)

President Delivers "State of the Union"

The U.S. Capitol

9:01 P.M. EST

There are days when our fellow citizens do not hear news about the war on terror. There's never a day when I do not learn of another threat, or receive reports of operations in progress, or give an order in this global war against a scattered network of killers. The war goes on, and we are winning. (Applause.)

To date, we've arrested or otherwise dealt with many key commanders of al Qaeda. They include a man who directed logistics and funding for the September the 11th attacks; the chief of al Qaeda operations in the Persian Gulf, who planned the bombings of our embassies in East Africa and the USS Cole; an al Qaeda operations chief from Southeast Asia; a former director of al Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan; a key al Qaeda operative in Europe; a major al Qaeda leader in Yemen. All told, more than 3,000 suspected terrorists have been arrested in many countries. Many others have met a different fate. Let's put it this way -- they are no longer a problem to the United States and our friends and allies. (Applause.)

We are working closely with other nations to prevent further attacks. America and coalition countries have uncovered and stopped terrorist conspiracies targeting the American embassy in Yemen, the American embassy in Singapore, a Saudi military base, ships in the Straits of Hormuz and the Straits the Gibraltar. We've broken al Qaeda cells in Hamburg, Milan, Madrid, London, Paris, as well as, Buffalo, New York.

We have the terrorists on the run. We're keeping them on the run. One by one, the terrorists are learning the meaning of American justice. (Applause.)

As we fight this war, we will remember where it began -- here, in our own country. This government is taking unprecedented measures to protect our people and defend our homeland. We've intensified security at the borders and ports of entry, posted more than 50,000 newly-trained federal screeners in airports, begun inoculating troops and first responders against smallpox, and are deploying the nation's first early warning network of sensors to detect biological attack. And this year, for the first time, we are beginning to field a defense to protect this nation against ballistic missiles. (Applause.)

I thank the Congress for supporting these measures. I ask you tonight to add to our future security with a major research and production effort to guard our people against bioterrorism, called Project Bioshield. The budget I send you will propose almost \$6 billion to quickly make available effective vaccines and treatments

against agents like anthrax, botulinum toxin, Ebola, and plague. We must assume that our enemies would use these diseases as weapons, and we must act before the dangers are upon us. (Applause.)

Since September the 11th, our intelligence and law enforcement agencies have worked more closely than ever to track and disrupt the terrorists. The FBI is improving its ability to analyze intelligence, and is transforming itself to meet new threats. Tonight, I am instructing the leaders of the FBI, the CIA, the Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense to develop a Terrorist Threat Integration Center, to merge and analyze all threat information in a single location. Our government must have the very best information possible, and we will use it to make sure the right people are in the right places to protect all our citizens. (Applause.)

Our war against terror is a contest of will in which perseverance is power. In the ruins of two towers, at the western wall of the Pentagon, on a field in Pennsylvania, this nation made a pledge, and we renew that pledge tonight: Whatever the duration of this struggle, and whatever the difficulties, we will not permit the triumph of violence in the affairs of men -- free people will set the course of history. (Applause.)

Today, the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation.

This threat is new; America's duty is familiar. Throughout the 20th century, small groups of men seized control of great nations, built armies and arsenals, and set out to dominate the weak and intimidate the world. In each case, their ambitions of cruelty and murder had no limit. In each case, the ambitions of Hitlerism, militarism, and communism were defeated by the will of free peoples, by the strength of great alliances, and by the might of the United States of America. (Applause.)

Now, in this century, the ideology of power and domination has appeared again, and seeks to gain the ultimate weapons of terror. Once again, this nation and all our friends are all that stand between a world at peace, and a world of chaos and constant alarm. Once again, we are called to defend the safety of our people, and the hopes of all mankind. And we accept this responsibility. (Applause.)

America is making a broad and determined effort to confront these dangers. We have called on the United Nations to fulfill its charter and stand by its demand that Iraq disarm. We're strongly supporting the International Atomic Energy Agency in its mission to track and control nuclear materials around the world. We're working with other governments to secure nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union, and to strengthen global treaties banning the production and shipment of missile technologies and weapons of mass destruction.

In all these efforts, however, America's purpose is more than to follow a process -- it is to achieve a result: the end of terrible threats to the civilized world. All free nations have a stake in preventing sudden and catastrophic attacks. And we're asking them to join us, and many are doing so. Yet the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others. (Applause.) Whatever action is required, whenever action is necessary, I will defend the freedom and security of the American people. (Applause.)

Different threats require different strategies. In Iran, we continue to see a government that represses its people, pursues weapons of mass destruction, and supports terror. We also see Iranian citizens risking intimidation and death as they speak out for liberty and human rights and democracy. Iranians, like all people, have a right to choose their own government and determine their own destiny -- and the United States supports their aspirations to live in freedom. (Applause.)

On the Korean Peninsula, an oppressive regime rules a people living in fear and starvation. Throughout the 1990s, the United States relied on a negotiated framework to keep North Korea from gaining nuclear weapons. We now know that that regime was deceiving the world, and developing those weapons all along. And today the North Korean regime is using its nuclear program to incite fear and seek concessions. America and the world will not be blackmailed. (Applause.)

America is working with the countries of the region -- South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia -- to find a peaceful solution, and to show the North Korean government that nuclear weapons will bring only isolation, economic stagnation, and continued hardship. (Applause.) The North Korean regime will find respect in the world and revival for its people only when it turns away from its nuclear ambitions. (Applause.)

Our nation and the world must learn the lessons of the Korean Peninsula and not allow an even greater threat to rise up in Iraq. A brutal dictator, with a history of reckless aggression, with ties to terrorism, with great potential wealth, will not be permitted to dominate a vital region and threaten the United States. (Applause.)

Twelve years ago, Saddam Hussein faced the prospect of being the last casualty in a war he had started and lost. To spare himself, he agreed to disarm of all weapons of mass destruction. For the next 12 years, he systematically violated that agreement. He pursued chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, even while inspectors were in his country. Nothing to date has restrained him from his pursuit of these weapons -- not economic sanctions, not isolation from the civilized world, not even cruise missile strikes on his military facilities.

Almost three months ago, the United Nations Security Council gave Saddam Hussein his final chance to disarm. He has shown instead utter contempt for the United Nations, and for the opinion of the world. The 108 U.N. inspectors were sent to conduct -- were not sent to conduct a scavenger hunt for hidden materials across a country the size of California. The job of the inspectors is to verify that Iraq's regime is disarming. It

is up to Iraq to show exactly where it is hiding its banned weapons, lay those weapons out for the world to see, and destroy them as directed. Nothing like this has happened.

The United Nations concluded in 1999 that Saddam Hussein had biological weapons sufficient to produce over 25,000 liters of anthrax -- enough doses to kill several million people. He hasn't accounted for that material. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed it.

The United Nations concluded that Saddam Hussein had materials sufficient to produce more than 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin -- enough to subject millions of people to death by respiratory failure. He hadn't accounted for that material. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed it.

Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent. In such quantities, these chemical agents could also kill untold thousands. He's not accounted for these materials. He has given no evidence that he has destroyed them.

U.S. intelligence indicates that Saddam Hussein had upwards of 30,000 munitions capable of delivering chemical agents. Inspectors recently turned up 16 of them -- despite Iraq's recent declaration denying their existence. Saddam Hussein has not accounted for the remaining 29,984 of these prohibited munitions. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed them.

From three Iraqi defectors we know that Iraq, in the late 1990s, had several mobile biological weapons labs. These are designed to produce germ warfare agents, and can be moved from place to a place to evade inspectors. Saddam Hussein has not disclosed these facilities. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed them.

The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed in the 1990s that Saddam Hussein had an advanced nuclear weapons development program, had a design for a nuclear weapon and was working on five different methods of enriching uranium for a bomb. The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production. Saddam Hussein has not credibly explained these activities. He clearly has much to hide.

The dictator of Iraq is not disarming. To the contrary; he is deceiving. From intelligence sources we know, for instance, that thousands of Iraqi security personnel are at work hiding documents and materials from the U.N. inspectors, sanitizing inspection sites and monitoring the inspectors themselves. Iraqi officials accompany the inspectors in order to intimidate witnesses.

Iraq is blocking U-2 surveillance flights requested by the United Nations. Iraqi intelligence officers are posing as the scientists inspectors are supposed to interview. Real scientists have been coached by Iraqi officials

on what to say. Intelligence sources indicate that Saddam Hussein has ordered that scientists who cooperate with U.N. inspectors in disarming Iraq will be killed, along with their families.

Year after year, Saddam Hussein has gone to elaborate lengths, spent enormous sums, taken great risks to build and keep weapons of mass destruction. But why? The only possible explanation, the only possible use he could have for those weapons, is to dominate, intimidate, or attack.

With nuclear arms or a full arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, Saddam Hussein could resume his ambitions of conquest in the Middle East and create deadly havoc in that region. And this Congress and the America people must recognize another threat. Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own.

Before September the 11th, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained. But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other plans -- this time armed by Saddam Hussein. It would take one vial, one canister, one crate slipped into this country to bring a day of horror like none we have ever known. We will do everything in our power to make sure that that day never comes. (Applause.)

Some have said we must not act until the threat is imminent. Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their intentions, politely putting us on notice before they strike? If this threat is permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, and all recriminations would come too late. Trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not a strategy, and it is not an option. (Applause.)

The dictator who is assembling the world's most dangerous weapons has already used them on whole villages -- leaving thousands of his own citizens dead, blind, or disfigured. Iraqi refugees tell us how forced confessions are obtained -- by torturing children while their parents are made to watch. International human rights groups have catalogued other methods used in the torture chambers of Iraq: electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues, and rape. If this is not evil, then evil has no meaning. (Applause.)

And tonight I have a message for the brave and oppressed people of Iraq: Your enemy is not surrounding your country -- your enemy is ruling your country. (Applause.) And the day he and his regime are removed from power will be the day of your liberation. (Applause.)

The world has waited 12 years for Iraq to disarm. America will not accept a serious and mounting threat to our country, and our friends and our allies. The United States will ask the U.N. Security Council to convene on February the 5th to consider the facts of Iraq's ongoing defiance of the world. Secretary of State Powell

will present information and intelligence about Iraq's legal -- Iraq's illegal weapons programs, its attempt to hide those weapons from inspectors, and its links to terrorist groups.

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. (Applause.)

Tonight I have a message for the men and women who will keep the peace, members of the American Armed Forces: Many of you are assembling in or near the Middle East, and some crucial hours may lay ahead. In those hours, the success of our cause will depend on you. Your training has prepared you. Your honor will guide you. You believe in America, and America believes in you. (Applause.)

Sending Americans into battle is the most profound decision a President can make. The technologies of war have changed; the risks and suffering of war have not. For the brave Americans who bear the risk, no victory is free from sorrow. This nation fights reluctantly, because we know the cost and we dread the days of mourning that always come.

We seek peace. We strive for peace. And sometimes peace must be defended. A future lived at the mercy of terrible threats is no peace at all. If war is forced upon us, we will fight in a just cause and by just means -- sparing, in every way we can, the innocent. And if war is forced upon us, we will fight with the full force and might of the United States military -- and we will prevail. (Applause.)

And as we and our coalition partners are doing in Afghanistan, we will bring to the Iraqi people food and medicines and supplies -- and freedom. (Applause.)

Many challenges, abroad and at home, have arrived in a single season. In two years, America has gone from a sense of invulnerability to an awareness of peril; from bitter division in small matters to calm unity in great causes. And we go forward with confidence, because this call of history has come to the right country.

Americans are a resolute people who have risen to every test of our time. Adversity has revealed the character of our country, to the world and to ourselves. America is a strong nation, and honorable in the use of our strength. We exercise power without conquest, and we sacrifice for the liberty of strangers.

Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity. (Applause.)

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