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Bob Woodward , Alice Mayhew (Editor)

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Plan of Attack is the definitive account of how and why President George W. Bush, his war council, and allies launched a preemptive attack to topple Saddam Hussein and occupy Iraq. Bob Woodward's latest landmark account of Washington decision making provides an original, authoritative narrative of behind-the-scenes maneuvering over two years, examining the causes and consequences of the most controversial war since Vietnam.

Based on interviews with 75 key participants and more than three and a half hours of exclusive interviews with President Bush, *Plan of Attack* is part presidential history charting the decisions made during 16 critical months; part military history revealing precise details and the evolution of the Top Secret war planning under the restricted codeword Polo Step; and part a harrowing spy story as the CIA dispatches a covert paramilitary team into northern Iraq six months before the start of the war. This team recruited 87 Iraqi spies designated with the cryptonym DB/ROCKSTARS, one of whom turned over the personnel files of all 6,000 men in Saddam Hussein's personal security organization.

What emerges are astonishingly intimate portraits: President Bush in war cabinet meetings in the White House Situation Room and the Oval Office, and in private conversation; Dick Cheney, the focused and driven vice president; Colin Powell, the conflicted and cautious secretary of state; Donald Rumsfeld, the controlling war technocrat; George Tenet, the activist CIA director; Tommy Franks, the profane and demanding general; Condoleezza Rice, the ever-present referee and national security adviser; Karl Rove, the hands-on political strategist; other key members of the White House staff and congressional leadership; and foreign leaders ranging from British Prime Minister Blair to Russian President Putin.

Plan of Attack provides new details on the intelligence assessments of Iraq's alleged weapons of mass destruction and the planning for the war's aftermath.

Plan of Attack Details

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From Reader Review Plan of Attack for online ebook

Timothy R. says

My favorite memory of this book has nothing to do with what's written. When I was going through security at the Frankfurt airport a guard took my book off the X-ray conveyor belt and said in English, with a thick German accent, "Plan of Attack. It's not a real plan, is it?"

Ben says

The only reason this book didn't get one star was because the behind-the-scenes accounts were kind of interesting. Of course, people present themselves in the best possible light when interviewed. The endless dialogue could've been summed up to one page:

Bush: What's our war plan for Iraq?

Gen. Franks: Long build up, long war. 18-24 months.

Rumsfeld: Make it shorter.

Franks: OK.

Bush: What do we have on Iraq intel?

Tenet: Nothing.

Bush: Saddam's crazy and may become a threat. They must have WMDs.

Everybody Else: OK.

Powell: We are going about this the wrong way.

Cheney: We are totally doing this correctly. War is what we need.

Everybody Else: OK

Bush: Where are we on our war plan?

Franks: After many planning iterations, we have it down to 3 months.

Bush: Perfect!

The end.

Ty Powers says

Fantastic book. It's disturbing enough to be led to the slaughter, but to be taken there by a self-serving idiot is terrifying.

Daniel says

This book was good when I first read it, but later when I read Suskind's "One Percent Doctrine" and saw

subsequent interviews with the official involved, I felt betrayed by the sensationalism that Woodward made of the situation. The characters and events are not so cut-and-dry as he makes them. Unfortunately, Woodward traded accurate journalism for cheap entertainment. That said, it still has some value, as long as one can tell the fact from the fluff.

Nay Lin Soe says

It is a good read. As an outsider, I learned a thing or two about the Iraq Invasion Version 2.0. I'm a little dissatisfied that I just have to take Woodward's words for it, as he hasn't supplied how he obtained much of the information included in the book.

Erik Graff says

I've read at least seven of Bob Woodward's instant history books so far. Like sugar candies, they go down easy. Like sugar candies they aren't satisfying.

Read Woodward with caution. His background raises an eyebrow. He comes out of Naval Intelligence, having been, among other things, General Alexander Haig's briefer. His contacts there, and the very figures he relies on for his insider accounts of events qualify his objectivity and his candor. Were he to be open, frank and honest, he would lose sources and the possibility of another off-the-assembly-line book.

Bill Shannon says

I try to read all of Bob Woodward's "Bush at War" series, and this one was especially fascinating because it goes right from the aftermath of 9/11 -- America's government having gotten caught with its pants firmly around its ankles -- and the brutal retaliation.

This book specifically outlines the specious and spurious plan theory that Saddam Hussein not only had something to do with the Sept. 11 attacks, but that he was housing Weapons of Mass Destruction. (Let's face it, part of it was Hussein's own fault, because he wanted to play coy with the other Middle Eastern countries and pretend he had nukes to keep them in line.)

What struck me most about this book, however -- told in a very straightforward, largely objective manner -- is the way that President Dick Cheney and his figurehead George W. lost all semblance of skepticism when the narrative of Hussein having WMDs fit their objective, which had been from DAY ONE of Bush's term, to get rid of Saddam at all costs. Dick Cheney clearly had a hard-on for Saddam since the first Gulf War, and would do anything to shoehorn a quick war into his schedule.

Colin Powell is one of the only voices of dissent and reason in the entire thing, and he is roundly mocked for it by Cheney, Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and the other clowns who needlessly cost thousands of American lives. And yet, even he is not held harmless in this tale, because despite his conscience, he capitulated to the Neo-cons eventually anyway, ruining his career and his own credibility.

The book ends right as the Cheney Administration starts realizing how badly they fucked up the war, and it

ends with a kind of unintentional cliff-hanger: the Bushies were clearly feeling nervous, but they had no idea how badly they would end up destroying all sense of checks and balances in the Mideast. It's a fascinating book about groupthink and the perils that follow it.

Clinton Sweet says

To be read with a grain of salt, i was intrigued to read behind the scenes of the decisions that lead to a war that was very real in my lifetime. It helps me understand it more. Whether I agree or not, I now have perspective. As the world again looks a little shaky at this moment, I think it's a good thing to read a few books like this at this time

Ira Livingston says

Woodward again jumps into W. Bush administration, however I feel he seems to be to respectful of the upper levels of our government. Unlike *All the President's Men*, this book gives us too much of W's gut feeling and his need to prove his father's war wasn't finished and his advisors wanted to finish it this time.

I have a problem with that because it's apparent that pre 9-11 they were toying with ideas, and that became the catalyst for a war that he, Cheney, Rumsfeld and Rice really had no exit strategy for. The plan of the attack, is that there is no plan... And like bullies on a playground the administration doesn't wait for the UN and official WMD inspectors, but feeds the U.S. Public and its allies blatant lies, which the CIA even wants stricken from speeches and leads us into one of the longest confrontations in U.S. history.

I really want this group of individuals held responsible for their actions on this, but unlike *All the President's Men* it seems that W and Cheney are above reproach, despite coming out on the record for these books admitting that Iraq was on their minds long before the election of 2000 and the known lies told to the American people to take us to war. And unlike the rebuilding of Europe and Asia after World War II, we had no idea how to rebuild Iraq once the regime fell.

This book just added to my frustration of the policies of this country at that time period.

Rusty Henrichsen says

First off, let me warn readers of occasional bad language, particularly of the "F" word.

As I read the book, I was alternately angered and saddened that our leaders could be involved in the tragedy that has been the Iraq war. Bob Woodward is usually attacked as a sell for the left, maybe rightly so, but after reading "The Agenda" about Clinton's first year in the White House, it is difficult for me to see him as other than a reporter of the facts - you know, "We report, you decide."

It is pointed out that Dick Cheney began pushing for action on Iraq from January 21, 2001 - nearly eight months before the Sept 11 attacks in New York and Washington. It is a real stretch to say that the invasion of Iraq was in response to 9/11. The military was pushed to update and strengthen plans for a war in Iraq from early in GWB's days at the White House. There seems to be no push for similar plans for North Korea,

Libya, Iran, Venezuela or any place else.

The failure of the CIA to get good information is clearly pointed out. But the real problem is the overselling of the poor information and the bandwagon approach to grasping at very subjective information concerning Iraq's WMD and ties to al-Qaeda. In other words, I have to agree with war critics that say we should never have gone to war in the first place.

I have been continually told that congressional leaders had access to the same intelligence that the president had seen and therefore the war was justified. There at least four instances cited in the book where those leaders questioned what was being presented to them, and with good reason.

In my opinion, every American who can stand the language should read this book.

Will Byrnes says

How much of what the White House interviewees told Woodward was true? How much was spin? It remains clear from this telling that plans were afoot very early to invade Iraq, and the ploy of saying that "there is no plan on my desk" was pure spin. Colin Powell seems to be a voice of caution.

It has a mixed message on who is actually in charge. On one hand people say that Bush always has the final word, and is referred to as "the Man" by White House folk, but decisions are only final after he clears them with Cheney.

It details the many iterations of a war plan that were considered, from the Powell 1991 plan, calling for massive force, to various lighter plans. Rumsfeld comes across as a pain in the ass who will never offer his own opinion but rules by constantly asking questions and seeking to have all conceivable concerns addressed. This seems to come from Powell. Cheney comes across mostly as the behind-the-scenes power, eager to remain in the shadows. There is a lot here on the diplomatic dealings. It was clear to any who paid attention that the decision for war was a foregone conclusion. It is also clear from the book that planning for the war began shortly after 9/11.

Henry Soderberg says

Read this book for a political science class. I found the almost romantic like imagery hilarious. Look for lines like, "Donald Rumsfeld entered the room, his broad shoulders jetting out..."

Though honestly it did give a very good understanding of what really went on in the Bush administration before the Iraq war. It scared me too, since you think of the government as this all powerful being that clear objectives but really you see that America was lead by a frat boy who was easily misled by his emotions.

Zebardast Zebardast says

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Barbara says

I have read 3 of the books this author wrote about Pres Bush and the Iraq War. I was thirsty for any insight for what may have been going on in Bush's mind during this period. As might be expected, there was some overlap between the 2 books. I found Mr. Woodward to be open minded and even respectful as he began these books but could sense his feelings of frustration and unbelief as more and more revelations came out. I too felt frustration and disbelief. Could this (Bush) person who I voted for twice possibly be so arrogant, delusional and negligent in his duties to the people of this country? I think the author made his case for me, sadly.

Emiliano Orenca says

Mirrors and probably authenticates the numerous books regarding the War in Iraq and the missteps of this administration to take America there.
