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Bush Flip Flop Over War On Terror

by Michael in New York on 8/31/2004 01:22:00 AM

By now, everyone has heard Bush's awkward, politically stupid comment that **you can't win the war on terror**. Does anyone doubt that if Kerry had said this that Bush would have ripped him for it and there'd be an ad on the air in every battleground state within hours? Of course not. The White House has been desperately backpedaling and coming up with all sorts of excuses. (Our favorite was on 'Nightline' where a Bush spokesperson started off by saying well, hey, he was being interviewed on a moving bus!)

But the New York Times does a good job of showing how Bush's new, nuanced view of the war on terror flatly contradicts many statements he's made in the past. Then they twist the knife by saying his stance is now close to that of Europe.

"In the interview with Matt Lauer of the NBC News program "Today," conducted on Saturday but shown on the opening day of the Republican National Convention, Mr. Bush was asked if the United States could win the war against terrorism, which he has made the focus of his administration and the central thrust of his re-election campaign.

"I don't think you can win it," Mr. Bush replied. "But I think you can create conditions so that those who use terror as a tool are less acceptable in parts of the world."

"As recently as July 14, Mr. Bush had drawn a far sunnier picture. 'I have a clear vision and a strategy to win the war on terror,' he said.

"At a prime-time news conference in the East Room of the White House on April 13, Mr. Bush said: 'One of the interesting things people ask me, now that we are asking questions, is, 'Can you ever win the war on terror?' Of course you can.'

"It was unclear if Mr. Bush had meant to make the remark to Mr. Lauer, or if he misspoke. But White House officials said the president was not signaling a change in policy, and they sought to explain his statement by saying he was emphasizing the long-term nature of the struggle. Taken at face value, however, Mr. Bush's words would put him closer to the positions of the United States' European allies, who have considered Mr. Bush's talk of victory simplistic and unhelpful."



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