

BUSH WRONG 39 WAYS

by Edward Jayne

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Conservative pundits lash out against Democrats and liberals in general about such issues as affirmative action, racial preferences, illegal immigration, and campus speech codes. All of these require finding an appropriate balance between freedom and regulation, often with different standards relevant to different circumstances. Excesses are possible, and at times there is room for criticism, even ridicule. On the other hand, such pundits refuse to scrutinize President Bush's current foreign and domestic agenda, which is far more deserving of critical assessment. For most of his supposedly conservative policy decisions are not debatable, as if one might reasonably support or reject them at one level or another. Time and again they have simply been wrong and nothing but wrong.

1. Bush was wrong, for example, to disregard the terrorist threat before 9/11. He ignored Clinton's warning on Inaugural Day, 2001, and on August 6, 2001, a month before 9/11, he cut short his only meeting about al-Qaeda in order to be able to go fishing early at his Crawford ranch. He also revised his staff hierarchy to exclude Richard Clarke, his anti-terrorism coordinator, from continuing to serve in the White House with the same accessibility as with President Clinton. Moreover, just a day or two before the 9/11 attack, Attorney General Ashcroft actually sought to reduce the projected 2002 FBI budget for anti-terrorism. Why all these measures? One suspects that Bush sought to minimize terrorism as a national cause in order to divert as much of the federal budget as possible to the subsidization of Star Wars, an expensive boondoggle with no direct connection to the problem of terrorism.
2. Bush was wrong to let Osama bin Laden escape at Tora Bora. U.S. troops attacked bin-Laden's cave complex with U.S. troops from three sides, but on the fourth side Afghan troops were stationed in steep valleys where reduced air support might have led to heavy casualties. As a result bin Laden could escape and the war against terrorism went on.
3. Bush was wrong to refuse U.S. participation in international treaties such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Convention on the Prohibition of Land Mines, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Kyoto Global Warming Accords, and the International Criminal Court. Within a few months of Bush's ascent to the White House, the U.S., ostensibly the leader of the free world, also became its first and foremost rogue nation.
4. Bush was wrong to bring into his administration such dubious Cold War leftovers as Elliott Abrams, John Negroponte, and John Bolton. Especially provocative was Bolton's recess appointment as the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. without the consent of the Senate. Bolton has actually advocated the abolition of the U.N. and suggested with transparent irony that the elimination of the top ten stories of the U.N. building would be beneficial. His incessant criticism of the U.N. for corruption and inefficiency also seems cynical, given the present performance of the U.S. Congress linked with K Street and

corporate donors. Too many of Bolton's best friends in Congress are almost as dishonest as his most visible targets at the U.N.

5. Bush has been wrong to impose "regime change" on other nations for relatively inconsequential reasons. There was no compelling need to overthrow President Aristide in Haiti and to attempt the same with President Chavez in Venezuela. These illegal and undemocratic takeovers (the second of them lasting a day or two) helped to provoke today's substantial backlash in Latin America against U.S. policies. Similarly, it was counterproductive for Bush to promote and subsidize a "democratic" revolution in the Ukraine, Belarus, and other nations adjacent to Russia that were once part of the Soviet Union. This opportunistic "democracy promotion" strategy has predictably antagonized Russia, accelerating its retrogressive trend as well as its closer diplomatic relationship with Iran, China, and the European Union independent of the United States.
6. Bush was wrong to invent the notion of an "Axis of Evil" among North Korea, Iraq, and Iran. There has never been a supportive economic and/or military relationship consisting of these three nations. It was especially mistaken to junk President Clinton's negotiations with North Korea that had almost been brought to their completion just before Bush took office. To the embarrassment of Secretary of State Powell, the White House abruptly made new and unacceptable demands and began vilifying North Korea as part of the Axis of Evil. As a result, North Korea completed its development of nuclear weapons, forcing Bush to shift to a hostile neutrality inferior to Clinton's original arrangement. Bush's double reversal helped to convince Iran's leadership to ignore U.S. demands on the assumption that it enjoys the same opportunity as North Korea, especially since the U.S. is overextended in Iraq. To prevent a similar outcome, Bush is now on the verge of activating contingency plans to bomb nuclear production plants in Iran as well as its airfields, radar installations, navy bases, land missiles, coastal missile sites, etc. [see Seymour Hersh's article, "The Iran Plans," in *The New Yorker*, April 17, 2006]. However, such an attack can only compound U.S. problems in Iraq and the rest of the Near East. All of this has been the product of botched diplomacy.
7. Bush was wrong to offer India almost full support of its atomic program despite its not having signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Again, the wrong signal has been sent to other nations in the region. India's arms race with Pakistan has been given new impetus, and Pakistan finds additional cause to identify its needs with the Muslim world.
8. Bush was wrong to invade Iraq as a preventive "war of choice" supposedly to thwart its attack on other nations. There was no threat whatsoever at the time. Without exception, all evidence of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and Saddam Hussein's connection with al-Qaeda was fabricated by disreputable figures such as Chalabi and "Curve Ball," of the Iraqi National Congress (INC) in order to help the Pentagon's Office of Special Plans (OSP), led by Douglas Feith, undermine legitimate CIA data that indicated no such threat. As later confirmed, there was no hidden stash of WMD, no aluminum tubing for atomic bombs, and no yellow cake uranium contract with Niger. There were no mobile biological laboratories, no secret meetings with al-Qaeda agents in Prague, and certainly no drones that might fly over the U.S. loaded with atomic bombs,

as Bush himself warned in his October 7, 2002, speech in Cincinnati. Moreover, U.S. intelligence knew of the absence of WMD as early as 1995, when Saddam Hussein's son-in-law, Hussein Kamel, former director of Iraq's bio-weapons program, fled Iraq and disclosed to UN inspectors and personnel of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) that he himself had been responsible for the destruction of all WMD in 1991. The CIA was provided a full report of this debriefing, which was later selectively (and dishonestly) quoted by Vice President Cheney to support the thesis that such weapons continued to exist. If any material survived possibly useful to a renewed development of WMD, it was later destroyed in the 1996 and 1998 air attacks launched by President Clinton based on Kamel's information. Preceding the invasion, Paul Wolfowitz, the principal architect of the invasion, confided to associates that Iraq would be a quick and easy target exactly because it lacked WMD. This was at the same time as he publicized the supposed threat of WMD to justify the invasion.

9. Bush was wrong to break international law when he mounted the invasion of Iraq. Based on Article 41 of the U.N. Charter, Resolution 1441 mandated U.N. inspections for WMD in Iraq, after which, according to Article 42, a second vote by the Security Council was needed to proceed with an invasion. In other words, once Article 41 was invoked as specified by Resolution 1441 relevant to Iraq's case, Article 42 necessitated a final Security Council vote to launch an invasion. However, no WMD could be found, and secret U.S. wiretaps of delegates and U.N. officials indicated a second vote would be negative. So the U.S. and U.K. delegations withdrew their motion to invade, and our two nations attacked Iraq in defiance of both the U.N. Charter and the Supremacy Clause of Article 6 in the U.S. Constitution, to say nothing of the Geneva Conventions and Nuremberg Tribunal. Too often it is overlooked by members of our government that Article 6 of the Constitution obliges the acceptance of all foreign treaties, necessarily including the U.N. Charter in its entirety, on the same basis as the Constitution itself.
10. Bush was wrong to insist that Saddam Hussein's crimes against humanity justified the invasion. Saddam's career began as a CIA hit man, he was probably brought to power with the cooperation of the CIA. Also, he was a close U.S. ally when the majority of these crimes occurred. Our government provided most of his WMD, and about sixty U.S. advisors were stationed in Iraq at the time he was using them [NYT, Aug. 18, 2002]. Soon afterwards, President Reagan actually sent Rumsfeld as a special emissary to double U.S. aid to Iraq as a reward for Hussein's successful operations against Iran. Now we blame Hussein alone for what he did to preserve Iraq's national unity, something we ourselves have not been able to sustain despite comparable levels of violence during our occupation of Iraq.
11. Bush was wrong to treat the invasion of Iraq as an effective deterrent to terrorism throughout the rest of the world. "Let's fight them over there," the argument went, "rather than here at home." Unfortunately the battlefield "over there" has become a useful training ground for terrorists toward their involvement in mounting later attacks elsewhere, possibly including the U.S. This was exactly what happened in Afghanistan when the U.S. government supported the insurgency against the U.S.S.R. in which bin-Laden himself played a major role helpful to the United States. In contrast, there were no

terrorists whatsoever in Iraq preceding the 2003 invasion except in a small portion of the northern zone patrolled by U.S. aircraft. Now the insurgency against U.S. occupation draws thousands of devout young Muslims from throughout the Middle East, some of whom can be expected to survive the conflict and become terrorists elsewhere in the world.

12. Bush has been wrong to claim that the U.S. invaded Iraq to promote American-style democracy abroad. Instead, he wants to install a puppet regime in Baghdad, just as was done in Iran five decades ago and sought in Vietnam four decades ago. Moreover, Bush takes little interest in democracy abroad unless it profits U.S. interests promoted by his administration. He supports the military autocracies in Indonesia and the Sudan, and indeed worked cooperatively with Karimov's brutal full-scale dictatorship in Uzbekistan until Karimov himself terminated the connection. On the other hand, as already indicated, Bush sponsored insurrections against President Aristide of Haiti and President Chavez of Venezuela, both of whom were elected by large majorities. Today Bush is no less hostile toward the democratically elected leaders of in Palestine and Iran. Obviously, the pursuit of democracy is not Bush's paramount goal in his foreign policy.
13. Bush was wrong to think the invasion would ultimately secure U.S. popularity in the Near East. Instead, it has ignited an enormous reaction against U.S. involvement across the entire region, indeed throughout the rest of the world. Ironically, the best potential breakthrough toward democracy in the Near East has been in Iran, where a progressive democratic movement was gaining momentum before Bush launched his invasion. Bush did almost nothing to support this movement and instead demonized Iran, providing its orthodox mullahs with the patriotic issues needed to regain power in a democratic election. The invasion and occupation of Iraq, adjacent to Iran, also contributed to the revived popularity of these mullahs. As a result, Iran's trend toward liberalization has ended and there is little hope for democracy in the near future.
14. Bush has been wrong to deny his "real reasons" to invade Iraq: (1) to take control of its oil reserves, second largest in the world; (2) to establish a permanent military presence in the region with Iraqi bases; and (3) to support Israel's territorial expansion by neutralizing border states. In all three instances competent diplomacy would have better served our nation.
 - (A) It was wrong, for example, to invade Iraq in order to help U.S. and U.K. oil corporations take possession of Iraqi oil fields. In the late 1990s Saddam Hussein had offered \$1.1 trillion in oil concessions as soon as U.N. sanctions were lifted to more than sixty firms from thirty nations, mostly of France, Russia and China. Excluded were oil firms from the U.S. and Britain, probably as retribution for the embargo against Iraq. Moreover, Hussein sought to shift oil payments from the dollar to the Euro, jeopardizing the value of the dollar and thus the U.S. economy. This demand by Hussein seems to have been Bush's primary reason to invade Iraq, not WMD, the need for democracy, or anything else. The redistribution of Iraqi oil turns out to have been a primary concern of Cheney's 2001 National Energy Policy Development meetings, and, not surprisingly, the first major

building to be secured by American troops in Baghdad was the Iraqi Oil Ministry. The problem, however, was that this economic “grab” was not worth the bloodshed it produced. Effective diplomacy would have been the better alternative toward a compromise outcome. [see Kevin Phillips, *American Theocracy* (Viking, 2006), pp. 75-78, 87-94].

- (B) It was also wrong to try to establish a permanent military presence in Iraq as confirmed by the effort to build at least a dozen fixed bases as well as the largest embassy complex in the entire world. This network would reduce the supposedly sovereign state of Iraq to little more than an occupied puppet democracy on top of enormous oil reserves limited to extraction by U.S. and U.K. oil corporations. Our nation already has more military bases than needed in the Near East and, indeed, in the entire world. In September, 2001, the Pentagon admitted our nation maintained at least 725 such bases abroad. Whether intended or not, this extended military presence provides a global sphere of influence exceeding the British Empire a century ago. It is also a recipe for the same geopolitical fate as Britain suffered because of “imperial overstretch” early in the twentieth century [see Chalmers Johnson, *The Sorrows of Empire* (Metropolitan, 2004), pp. 4, 215, 226, and 242].
- (C) And it was wrong to put foreign policy in the Near East under the direction of Neoconservatives who treat U.S. policy objectives as being almost entirely identical with those of Israel. These include Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz along with Elliot Abrams, Douglas Feith, John Bolton, John Hannah, Scooter Libby, and David Wurmser. In 1996, three of these--Perle, Feith, and Wurmser--actually co-authored for the Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu the report, “A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm,” which proposed the invasion of Iraq for the benefit of Israel [see Robert Fisk, *The Great War for Civilization* (Knopf, 2005), p. 931]. However, this choice has turned out to be disastrous for the United States. A better option for helping Israel would have been to encourage the restoration of the 1967 border such as was sought and almost achieved during Taba negotiations before General Sharon’s election in 2001. Also useful would have been a more inclusive regional plan for the Mideast permitting a three-way transaction whereby, among other things, the U.S. rewarded Israel for restoring most of the 1967 border, and Iraq gave the U.S. and U.K. access to a suitable portion of its trillion dollar oil reserves. One suspects such a multiple quid pro quo might have been possible with Saddam Hussein involved in the tradeoff.

But to the list again:

15. Bush was wrong, once victorious in spring, 2003, to dissolve Iraq’s political infrastructure as well as its armies and police. At least three hundred fifty thousand Iraqi troops were released without further pay, and as many as 120,000 Baathists in government positions during Hussein’s reign, including teachers, were excluded from further government service. This provided a substantial base of disaffected citizens who

could be recruited to join the insurgency. Paul Bremer, in charge of Iraq's occupation, seems to have imposed this policy with the assent of Rumsfeld, and Rumsfeld himself might have consulted Bush and Cheney. Whoever was finally responsible for the decision made a catastrophic mistake that led to the insurgency that followed.

16. Bush was wrong to permit roughshod tactics against Iraq's civilian population (described insultingly as "Hajji") by our occupation army. Too often the "shock and awe" treatment of civilians has been brutal, for, as Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld explains, "stuff happens" during invasions. Cars and houses have been demolished, entire families have been eradicated, and whole cities have been flattened, most notably Falluja, which was devastated by napalm and white phosphorus bombs. As a result, insurgents are being recruited as fast as they can be killed, and the level of animosity against Americans has risen. This is reflected by recent polls, indicating that at least 83 percent of the Sunni population want U.S. troops withdrawn within six months, and at least 71 percent of the Shi'ite population prefer withdrawal within two years [see NYT Magazine, April 9, 2006, p. 11]. On the other hand, it seem in retrospect that armed rebellion might have been completely averted if American soldiers were better disciplined during the few weeks of relative peace following our capture of Iraq.
17. Bush was wrong to downplay the importance of casualties. To date over 2,300 American troops have been killed and there have been seven times as many who were seriously wounded. Though no statistics have been kept for the Iraqi, estimates range from 30,000 to upwards of 100,000, many of them mothers and children. The number of Iraqi with severe injuries is beyond calculation.
18. Bush was wrong to permit the use of depleted and non-depleted uranium-tipped munitions in both Afghanistan and Iraq. In 2003 alone, four million pounds of uranium were dropped in Iraq [see projectcensored.org, 2006]. Quite aside from the obvious military advantage obtained by the use of uranium in tank shells, missiles, smart bombs, cruise missiles, and even bullets, the repeated exposure to its radioactivity in the civilian population of these and surrounding countries, to say nothing of our own troops, can be expected to produce a long-term carcinogenic effect too severe to justify its use. Pentagon sources vigorously deny this, but there is too much evidence of increased cancer levels resulting from the use of these munitions. Like atom bombs, poison gas, and biological weapons, both depleted and non-depleted uranium shells should be banned from warfare.
19. Bush was wrong to establish concentration camps at Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib, Camp Nama, Baghram, and other sites. These lie outside U.S. territory and are therefore supposedly immune to habeas corpus appeals. There is no clear indication how many prisoners they contain, or even how many such prisons exist. Many prisoners are entirely innocent of the acts for which they have been charged, especially those turned over to U.S. troops by bounty hunters. In any case, all military prisoners should be treated according to the Geneva Conventions, and all non-military prisoners should be given fair trials in which testimony under torture is excluded from consideration. The protection of habeas corpus rights was one of the primary goals of the American Revolution, and it should not be abandoned by our current government in its occupation of other nations.

20. Bush was wrong to encourage torture both in American prisons and foreign prisons to which suspected terrorists are sent by “extraordinary rendition.” Government apologists such as John Yee and Alberto Gonzales, now our Attorney General, advocated “lite-torture” by means of sensory deprivation combined with “stressed body positions”; and experienced practitioners led by General Geoffrey Miller have promoted this approach first at Guantanamo Bay and later Abu Ghraib. However, this new version of torture turns out to be as harmful as outright violence, and in some instances worse. As many as a hundred prisoners are now estimated to have been killed by torture in our prison camps and secret interrogation sites across Asia. [see Al Gore’s speech, “Restoring the Rule of Law” (January 16, 2006)]. It is especially disturbing that Rumsfeld himself was in frequent contact with General Miller and others regarding the torture of Mohamed al-Katani (the so-called twentieth hijacker) at Guantanamo Bay in order to fine-tune the torture techniques to be used against him. [see Michael Scherer and Mark Benjamin, “What Rumsfeld Knew,” salon.com, April 14, 2006]
21. Bush was wrong to censor the press about events in Iraq. The use of “embedded” reporters linked with particular units of our military was soon recognized to bias coverage to the extent that it was useless. On the other hand, violence against “unimbedded” reporters (especially those connected with al-Jazeera) has been even more counterproductive. At least 66 reporters and media workers have been killed in Iraq since 2003, many of them by U.S. troops, and sometimes with ample evidence their killings were intended.
22. Bush has been wrong to stretch the military budget beyond an acceptable level. A \$550 billion defense budget has been requested for 2007, and with a total amount of \$783 billion in order to include payment for all past and present military activities. This comes to 42 percent of our total federal budget over the same period and costs as much or more than the military expenditures for the entire rest of the world. The original estimate for the cost of the impending Iraq invasion was \$60 billion, a small fraction of the amount that has been spent by now. According to the House Budget Committee’s Democratic staff, Bush will have spent more than \$445 billion (including next years’ funds) on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars since 9/11. Presently it is estimated that the war is costing the U.S. taxpayer \$150 million per day. Another estimate easy to remember is \$10 billion per month. Moreover, other, less visible expenditures need to be taken into account. For example, as disclosed by Negroponte, the director of national intelligence, the annual cost of global spying, including the CIA, is now \$44 billion, involving nearly 100,000 employees [NYT, April 21, 2006].
23. Bush was wrong to reduce taxes during the war. Here neo-Keynsian manipulation to enhance aggregate demand has been taken to a new and unprecedented level. President Clinton’s 2000 federal surplus of \$236 billion has been reversed to become a \$371 billion deficit, and Congress has actually been forced to increase the debt limit four times over the past five years. It is estimated that sixty-two percent of this loss results from lower tax revenues, mostly from the wealthiest portion of our population, and with insufficient trickle-down benefits to justify such a gesture. Moreover, our national debt has doubled

under Bush to almost \$8.4 trillion at a rate approaching \$1 trillion per year, \$220 billion to China alone. Our debt is more than two-thirds of our \$11 trillion GDP, and it continues to expand at \$2.42 billion per day. Significantly, total interest payments are \$352 billion this year, more than half of this year's defense budget. And the 2005 trade deficit is \$805 billion in its official count, more than \$900 billion once unreported profits are taken into account [see Krugman, NYT, April 24, 2005].

24. Bush has been wrong to promote an unsound economic policy. The export of labor (hence industry) persists unabated, so recovery from the 2001-02 recession has been primarily obtained through the reduction of prime interest rates to an unprecedented 1 percent. As a result, debt itself has become our nation's single most lucrative commodity, dependent on overlapping "bubbles" in credit, mortgages, hedge funds, money supply, and, not least, credit cards. By the end of 2004 consumer debt achieved a record 85.7 percent of GDP, and financial firms earned 40 percent of total U.S. profits, almost four times as much as in 1990, when they had earned only 11 percent. Most tellingly, household debt during Bush's first term in office increased by 39 percent, and mortgage debt skyrocketed from \$4.4 billion in 2000 to \$7.5 trillion in 2004 [Phillips, 284, 289, 324, 327]. On the other hand, profits in manufacturing have dropped to only 10 percent of the total for the U.S. economy, far lower than anywhere else in the advanced industrial world. And now it seems that even debt itself is being exported to such nations as Japan, China, and India. Eventually a major economic catastrophe can be expected, probably when the dollar has lost too much of its value against foreign currencies.
25. Bush has been wrong to reduce or eliminate domestic programs to offset his tax cuts and war costs. Among programs and services whose budgets have been cut since Bush came to office are vocational and after-school services, school lunches, public housing, community service grants, and revenue sharing with states. This February almost a hundred programs were chosen to be axed, including 9 in agriculture (worth \$511 million); 47 in education (worth \$3.468 billion); 8 in health and human services (worth \$866 million); 1 in housing and urban development (worth \$198 million); and 6 in justice (worth \$1.116 billion). Another 50 programs are slated to be significantly reduced, including Amtrak by \$394 million.
26. Bush was wrong to reduce funding for the maintenance of New Orleans levees throughout his first term in office despite the increased threat of hurricanes caused by global warming. One degree warmer than before, the Gulf of Mexico has become a lethal hurricane machine as recognized by most meteorologists not connected with the Bush administration. Obviously, better levees were needed sufficient to withstand a level 4 or 5 hurricane.
27. Bush was wrong to spend two or three days completely ignoring the ruinous consequences of Hurricane Katrina on New Orleans. Aides could only bring him to his senses by insisting that he watch video clips of ongoing TV news coverage. Now, six months later, 15 out of 22 hospitals are still closed, only twenty of 117 schools are functioning, and 125,000 homes remain damaged and unoccupied. It is unfortunate that Bush has failed to spearhead an effective campaign to restore New Orleans.

28. Bush has been wrong to put the White House almost entirely in the service of the energy industry. Americans are paying by far the highest energy rates in our nation's history at the same time as gas and oil corporations are amassing their biggest profits in modern history. It seems more than coincidental that gasoline now costs \$3 per gallon at the pump while major oil corporations expect to make something on the order of \$80 billion in profits this year additional to \$15 billion in federal oil subsidies. Obviously, consumers are insufficiently protected from oil profiteers by a President and Vice-President who were linked with the oil industry preceding their service in the White House.
29. Bush has been wrong to give countless no-bid contracts to Halliburton, Bechtel, Carlyle Group, and other such corporations both in Iraq and at home. The federal government has also been negligent to fall short of collecting adequate penalties when these corporations are caught padding their bills.
30. Bush was wrong in his effort to privatize Social Security. This would have transferred several trillion dollars to Wall Street brokerages to play with, thus inflating stock market speculation.
31. Bush was wrong to allocate \$50 billion per annum to a Medicare Drug Program primarily to benefit the pharmaceutical industry. This is a pale substitute for the genuine comprehensive national health insurance program so desperately needed today.
32. Bush has been wrong to install executives and lobbyists of major industries in the leadership of federal regulatory agencies meant to oversee these industries. Corporate beneficiaries of this strategy include all industries, but especially in energy, mining, forestry, chemicals, and pharmaceuticals.
33. Bush has been wrong to force the resignations of high administration figures who possessed the courage to disagree with him. Most notably, he terminated Paul O'Neill, his Secretary of the Treasury, for having opposed his second tax cut, Christie Whitman, his EPA director, for having actually sought to protect the environment, and General Shinseki, his Army Chief of Staff, for having recommended an Iraq occupation force of several hundred thousand U.S. troops. All three of these top officials were better informed and more potentially useful to Bush's presidency than obsequious members of the administration who have collaborated in Bush's erratic policies, for example John Ashcroft, Paul Bremer, and "slam dunk" George Tenet, all of whom Bush has awarded with the Medal of Freedom.
34. Bush has been wrong to censor scientists who reject scientific theories and assumptions that presumably dictate his policies. This censorship extends from stem cell research to climatology and studies relevant to the safety of over-the-counter drugs. Most notably, James Hansen, Director of the Goddard Institute for Space Studies in the NASA, has been denied access to the press by the NASA Public Affairs Office because his opinion about global warming conflicts with Bush's official position. Bush rejects the notion of

global warming because of the costs that might be incurred by U.S. corporations in reducing their hydrocarbon emissions.

35. Bush has been wrong to pander to his red-state fundamentalist conservative base, arguably the most backward and ill-educated portion of the U.S. electorate. Their evangelical faith actually entails belief in a God who tolerates greed, torture, and killing women and children in an illegal war. Such domestic issues as abortion, the morning-after pill, assisted suicide, stem-cell research, the teaching of evolution, and educational subsidization cannot be ignored or suppressed by the federal government to gratify the demands of this benighted minority of our nation's electorate.
36. Bush has been wrong to expand domestic surveillance beyond the limits of the Patriot Act. Specifically, Bush should not have installed an illegal NSA surveillance net for domestic spying without FISA warrants. This spying was supposedly limited to monitoring telephone calls abroad, but now we learn it might also include strictly domestic telephone calls through "dragnet" telephone surveillance. Also in widespread use, it seems, are wiretaps, mail and e-mail intercepts, "sneak and peek" intrusions into private homes, the violation of attorney-client privacy laws, the confiscation of records at banks, libraries, bookstores, and grocery stores, and the infiltration of anti-war organizations deemed unpatriotic. The full extent of this spying remains unclear at this point as much as anything because the Republican majority of Congress refuses to permit an official investigation that features public testimony.
37. Bush has been wrong to have imposed secrecy to an excessive extent in the federal government. Paradoxically, too much of its business has been classified at the same time as the lives and careers of American citizens have been probed at an unprecedented level. This imbalance is no recipe for a healthy democracy. Thousands of government documents, for example, are no longer accessible to public scrutiny, and there has been sustained effort to expose and punish anybody who leaks their contents. This obsession with secrecy first became an issue when Dick Cheney's insisted on classifying the proceedings and membership of the Energy Task Force, whose primary concern later turned out to be the management and distribution of Iraqi oil. Two recent examples may also be recounted: (1) The high-level CIA agent Mary O. McCarthy was fired and publicly rebuked for supposedly leaking information to the press about the CIA's "black sites" (secret detention centers) in eastern Europe, while the CIA leadership and the staff who operate these sites, probably for the most part in torturing prisoners, totally escape critical scrutiny by both the press and government spokesmen for their egregious excesses against international law. And (2) the Federal Reserve Board's new chairman, Ben Bernanke, who is noted for his inflationist predilections, has chosen to hide all new M-3 additions to the money supply. This is apparently to help prevent a crash or a run on the dollar by foreign speculators, but it also provides the opportunity pump up the money supply without producing immediate inflationary results, thus risking even more severe consequences if and when a crash finally occurs.
38. Bush is wrong to manipulate news coverage at an unprecedented level for every issue, not just Iraq. He has set a record for holding the fewest press conferences, but at the same

time his staff repeatedly leaks favorable stories to a coterie of sympathetic journalists. The White House has gone so far as to invent fake journalists such as Armstrong Jones and Jeff Gannon, the latter with a pass to White House press briefings until his lack of press credentials was discovered. Blatant news control also occurs when Bush makes televised public appearances before carefully pre-selected audiences in order to give the impression of enthusiastic support among Americans. And, amazingly, the press cooperates, as much as anything by suppressing the bad news. The prime-time news media is thus to be noted more for the stories it avoids or bowdlerizes than the stories it features. Just yesterday, for example, the CBS evening news neglected to mention that Bush had reached a new low of 32 percent public support in the CNN poll and that nine GIs had been killed in Iraq during the previous weekend.

39. And Bush is wrong to violate his own insistence on leak prevention on occasions when he chooses to misinform the press. As disclosed a couple weeks ago, Bush authorized Scooter Libby through Vice President Cheney to leak classified information to Judith Miller of the NYT on June 23, 2003, that presumably justified the Iraq invasion. True, the President enjoys the right to disclose whatever information he pleases, thereby automatically terminating its classified status. However, the information provided to Miller remained a top secret not to be disclosed elsewhere. Miller could do anything she wanted with it; anybody else who used it could have been prosecuted.

But the problem goes deeper. Libby also told Miller of Joseph Wilson's CIA-sponsored trip to the African nation Niger in order to unearth evidence of Saddam Hussein having tried to purchase yellow cake uranium. A Niger connection had been of crucial importance at the time in the effort to prove Hussein's was trying to develop an atomic bomb. However, the story turned out to be false, thus eliminating the primary casus belli for invading Iraq. In cherry picking his evidence supportive of an invasion, Libby seems to have excluded most if not all of Wilson's report from his leak to Miller, but he did mention Wilson to discredit his upcoming NYT op ed piece of July 6, in which Wilson would recount his findings. In doing this, Libby also seems to have "outed" Wilson's wife, Valerie Plame, as a CIA agent who supposedly steered the choice of her husband for leading the crucial mission to Niger. It turned out, unfortunately, that Plame played a top-secret role in the CIA and had many secret contacts abroad regarding the development of WMD in other nations. The usefulness of these agents (and even their lives) was necessarily jeopardized by Libby's disclosure of Plame's connection with the CIA, since she had often visited these agents in the guise of a business agent. Miller never published Libby's story, but Robert Novak later did, based on a White House leak whose identity is yet to be disclosed. Libby denies he can remember having mentioned Plame at his meeting with Miller, and, beyond that, he has not admitted having been authorized to mention Plame by either Bush or Cheney. However, Miller's notes for her meeting with Libby do include the misspelled name "Flame," confirming the topic had indeed been raised. So the question remains whether this information was also authorized from above. If Bush added Plame's role to the package of leaked facts to be shared with Miller, he was both committing a crime and severely damaging the CIA, quite aside from his right as President to declassify any information he pleases.

And why such an angry overreaction in response to Wilson's disclosure? Partly because it helped to discredit the invasion, but also, one suspects, to cover up the embarrassment that the Hussein connection with Niger was supposedly proven by nothing more than a forged document. The memorandum of agreement between Hussein and the Niger government turned out to be a clumsy forgery provided by SISMI (Italian Secret Service) at about the same time as SISMI was in contact with the White House. The authorship of this forgery has yet to be disclosed, though it now seems to be under investigation by Patrick Fitzgerald, the Special Prosecutor for the CIA leak case. Meanwhile, until hard evidence can be produced, one cannot ignore the unthinkable possibility that somebody in the White House might have been involved in producing the forgery in order to justify going to war.

Almost everything has gone wrong in the Bush administration. Time and again Bush takes the presumably high moral ground while using trickery and misdirection to promote unacceptable policies. He seeks to benefit his "real" base, the wealthiest segment of the U.S. population, while remaining mostly indifferent to less affluent Americans. He harasses his opponents as enemies of the state, while staffing his administration at all levels with political hacks whose only qualification is their undiluted loyalty to his leadership. And he actually takes pride in being a "war president" in direct contact with God, able to obtain God's permission to invade Afghanistan and Iraq. Insisting on his conservative agenda, he has become a "radical" president, probably the worst and most incompetent in U.S. history.

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