

AMERICAN CENTURY NOW

A TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY LOOK AT THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
POLICIES OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION GUIDED BY

PROJECT FOR THE NEW AMERICAN CENTURY

Historically, a key principle of American government has been accountability to the public. With flagrant disregard for this fundamental American value, the Bush administration has operated with an unparalleled level of secrecy and disregard for standard legislative processes. Although occasional references are made to Democratic or Republican positions here, the key points outlined in this document are meant to avoid partisan attack, and rather focus on a traditional, Constitution-based call for accountability.

Bush Administration Accomplishments 2001-2008: Undoing The Reagan Legacy?

In 2001, George W. Bush entered office with a \$237 billion budget surplusⁱ, a Republican majority in both houses, and a relatively peaceful international scene. In 2008, George W. Bush will be leaving office with a \$407 billion budget deficitⁱⁱ, a Democratic majority in both houses, and an America mired in a poorly-executed war and entangled in a massive military occupation that has achieved few of its stated goals.

Additionally, the administration has:

- Been party to unprecedented corruption involving special-interest/lobbying scandals
- Been implicated in massive war-profiteering schemes and mismanaged defense funds
- Upended citizen's rights in the name of domestic security
- Disregarded numerous international treaties including the Geneva Convention
- Witnessed massive failures in the banking and mortgage industries
- Displayed a flagrant disregard for established legislative processes and the rule of law
- Routinely suppressed simple scientific facts that disagreed with their agenda

All of this with an opaqueness and air of secrecy that even former Nixon staffer John Dean has referred to as "...truly scary and, given the times we live in, frighteningly dangerous..."

Is The Bush Administration Culpable For Any Actual Crimes?

The simple answer is "yes". Primarily for deceiving the American public and congress to justify the administration's plans to invade Iraq. Although House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared impeachment "off the table" in 2006, a number of congressional reports are continuing to address the various offenses of the Bush administration, including, in their wordsⁱⁱⁱ, how the administration has:

- Countenanced torture and cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment in Iraq
- Permitted inappropriate retaliation against critics of their Administration
- Approved domestic surveillance that is both illegal and unconstitutional

Simple Presidential Accountability

- Nixon perpetrated a burglary, and resigned in shame to avoid impeachment
- Clinton had an affair with a young staffer and narrowly avoided impeachment

Can the Republican OR Democratic parties maintain any semblance of integrity or public trust if they fail to address the obvious and profound abuses of office engaged in by the Bush administration?

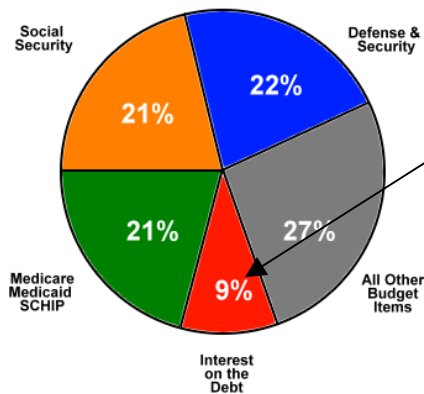
We hope the information outlined on the following pages regarding the more obvious negative results of the Bush administration's policies will, regardless of one's partisan leanings, help one consider carefully their choices regarding elected leaders moving forward. The information is summarized in three basic areas of concern:

- Economy
- Security
- Governance

Additional references and an extensive selection of web resources can be found at AmericanCenturyNow.org

ECONOMY

Under the Bush administration, debt held by the **public has swelled by \$2.0 trillion**, an increase of **59 percent**. The current Administration has already accrued more debt than all of the presidential administrations from **Washington to Reagan combined**.^{iv}



Foreign-owned government debt has **more than doubled** during this Administration, increasing from \$1.0 trillion in January 2001 to \$2.4 trillion by the end of 2007.^v

The **interest alone** on the present public debt as we enter 2009 is essentially **10% of the entire budget**.

The cost of oil has risen from **\$28 a barrel** in 2000 to over **\$100 a barrel** in spite of stable or low oil prices being a key selling point for the Iraq war.^{vi}

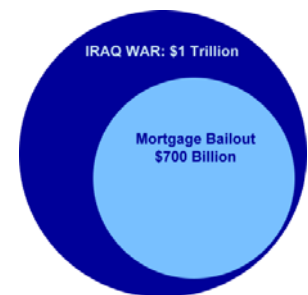
Since 2000, **median annual household income has decreased in real dollars by almost \$1,000, or by 2 percent**. This may seem like an insignificant figure, but

consider that these are typical American working families with an income of \$49,158 who were probably already struggling to make ends meet.^{vii}

The number of Americans living below the poverty line has **increased by more than 17%** since 2000, in part because **outsourcing** caused America to **lose 3,066,000 manufacturing jobs** between 2000 and 2006.^{viii}

Dick Cheney repeatedly stated that the cost of the war in Iraq would **not likely exceed \$100 billion**, and Iraq would soon be paying for its own reconstruction through oil revenue. The war has already cost nearly **\$1 Trillion dollars**^{ix}, and is projected to cost **\$3 Trillion by 2017**^x.

We could have paid for an economic bailout...



If it takes you one second to read this sentence, **the U.S. just spent \$3,816** on the war in Iraq^{xi}.

Ignoring the classic "guns or butter" partisan arguments, the cost of war has astronomically exceeded even the wildest early estimates, while achieving virtually none of the stated goals.

SECURITY

Few of the stated goals of two wars of aggression have been met.

In Afghanistan, the administration's stated intent was to **eliminate Osama bin Laden** and his al-Qaeda network and **to remove the Taliban from power**. In Afghanistan's current state of instability and porous borders with Pakistan, it is generally acknowledged that **the Taliban has not been wiped out**, and we **never located**

Osama bin Laden. Probably the most dramatic result of removing the Taliban from power is the **increased Opium production**: from 185 tons in 2001 under the Taliban to 6100 tons in 2006^{xii}. An **increase of 3400%**

Troops killed in Iraq before "Mission Accomplished" speech in 2003: **139**



Number of U.S. troops killed in Iraq as of Jan. 2008: **3,907**

In Iraq, the stated goals were to **locate and eliminate WMD's**, institute **regime change**, install a **democratic government**, and **eliminate more terrorist groups**. There were no WMD's, terrorism is more prevalent than before the U.S. presence, and Iraq has failed to create a democratic government of its own.

Additionally, the **overextension of the existing military**, combined with the strain on the reserves and National Guard forces, has left U.S. forces in general under-manned and ill-equipped, while leaving the **continental U.S. more vulnerable** to attack. **In the words of two generals**: "We've virtually destroyed our own ground forces, they're so overextended, our equipment is so rundown and un-repaired right now" (Lt. Gen. (Ret.) William Odom), and: "Right now we don't have the forces we need, we don't have them trained, we don't have the equipment" (Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Arnold L. Punaro).

Regarding domestic security, **the GAO states** that after the largest government merger in more than half a century and a budget of \$241 billion, **the DHS has met fewer than half** of its performance objectives, or **78 of 171 directives** identified by President Bush, Congress and the department's own strategic plans^{xiii}.

Although George Bush announced the **Corporate Accountability Act in 2002**, largely in response to the **unprecedented corruption at companies like Enron**, has he held his own organization to the same standards?

According to the **Center for Public Integrity**, President Bush's administration made a total of **935 false statements between 2001 and 2003** about Iraq's alleged threat to the United States.^{xiv}

When Cheney's chief of staff, I. Lewis "Scooter" Libby received a **30-month prison sentence for perjury and obstruction of justice**, Bush **ignored federal standards for commutations**^{xv} (by which it is customary that the convicted person serve some time before being eligible) and **immediately commuted** Libby's sentence.

The administration's more egregious offenses regarding accountability include **Halliburton and KBR's war profiteering in Iraq**, which are under investigation by several committees and agencies. The Senate Democratic Policy Committee for example, includes in their "Top Twenty Iraq Oversight Outrages"^{xvi} such items as:

- Halliburton **billed taxpayers \$1.4 billion in questionable and undocumented charges** under its contract to supply troops in Iraq, as documented by the Pentagon's own auditors.
- **Halliburton allowed our troops in Iraq** to shower, bathe, and sometimes brush their teeth with **water that tested positive for e. coli and coliform bacteria**. One expert has said that the troops would have been better off using water straight from the highly polluted Euphrates River.

In March of 2008, the inspector general for the Defense Department announced that the **Pentagon couldn't account for almost \$15 billion** worth of goods and services that were bought from contractors in the Iraq reconstruction effort.^{xvii}

These are only a few examples of the **documented** gross mismanagement and potential corruption in Iraq under the current administration's watch. There is wealth of on-the-record anecdotal evidence of mismanagement as well. For instance, under the **Coalition Provisional Authority**, set up by the Pentagon to govern the country under Ambassador Paul Bremer, there was so much **untracked cash floating around** that CPA staff referred to the plastic-wrapped bundles as "footballs... because we passed them around in little pickup games in our office", according to Frank Willis, who was second in command at the CPA's Ministry of Transportation.^{xviii}

At home, the administration has **repeatedly abused devices of executive authority** to impede investigations into administration activities that congress sought to investigate:

The "State's Secret Doctrine" –

Originally intended to protect national security by withholding sensitive government information from court cases, the Bush administration has used it repeatedly to have entire cases dismissed. They in fact invoked the doctrine 23 times in four years. The doctrine was previously only asserted 55 times between 1954-2001^{xix}.

Executive Privilege –

The administration has asserted executive privilege on several occasions. Most notably: 1.) To ignore subpoenas to have Karl Rove testify regarding politicized firings of U.S. attorneys, and 2.) To protect Vice President Cheney from investigations that may have directly implicated him in the Valerie Plame affair.^{xx}

Office of the Vice President –

Richard Cheney has made the remarkable assertion that he is not a part of the executive branch when it comes to complying with rules and regulations regarding the maintenance of executive office records because his office is not an "agency" or "entity" within the executive branch.^{xxi}

To list *all* of the tools and methods utilized by the Bush administration to **maintain secrecy** and **re-shape executive power** would literally take volumes. Representative Henry A. Waxman summarizes this well in the house report "Secrecy In The Bush Administration" when he says:

"...there has been a consistent pattern in the Administration's actions: laws that are designed to promote public access to information have been undermined, while laws that authorize the government to withhold information or to operate in secret have repeatedly been expanded. The cumulative result is an unprecedented assault on the principle of open government..."

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- ⁱ White House - The Budget Surplus and Fiscal Discipline - <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2002/guide04.html>
- ⁱⁱ Congressional Budget Office http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/97xx/doc9706/Selected_Tables.pdf
- ⁱⁱⁱ House Democratic Judiciary Staff Report "Constitution in Crisis" <http://www.afterdowningstreet.org/downloads/finalreport.pdf>
- ^{iv} United States House of Representatives COB Report - The Bush Administration's Failed Economic and Fiscal Record http://budget.house.gov/doc-library/2008/2008-0731bush_econ_fiscal_rec.pdf
- ^v United States House of Representatives COB Report - The Bush Administration's Failed Economic and Fiscal Record http://budget.house.gov/doc-library/2008/2008-0731bush_econ_fiscal_rec.pdf
- ^{vi} US Energy Information Administration - <http://tonto.eia.doe.gov/dnav/pet/hist/wtotusaw.htm>
- ^{vii} United States House of Representatives COB Report - The Bush Administration's Failed Economic and Fiscal Record http://budget.house.gov/doc-library/2008/2008-0731bush_econ_fiscal_rec.pdf
- ^{viii} United States House of Representatives COB Report - The Bush Administration's Failed Economic and Fiscal Record http://budget.house.gov/doc-library/2008/2008-0731bush_econ_fiscal_rec.pdf
- ^{ix} WAR AT ANY PRICE? The Total Economic Costs of the War Beyond the Federal Budget A Report by the Joint Economic Committee Majority Staff Chairman, Senator Charles E. Schumer Vice Chair, Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney February, 2008
- ^x Nobel Prize Economist Joseph E. Stiglitz - Repeated in Various Sources, see: <http://threetrilliondollarwar.org>
- ^{xi} CONGRESSIONAL RECORD - HOUSE H7684 July 12, 2007
- ^{xii} United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime report - Illicit Drug Trends in Pakistan - http://www.unodc.org/documents/regional/central-asia/Illicit%20Drug%20Trends%20Report_Pakistan_rev1.pdf
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- ^{xiv} The Center for Public Integrity - Iraq – The War Card: Orchestrated Deception on the Path to War - <http://projects.publicintegrity.org/WarCard>
- ^{xv} The New York Times, - July 4, 2007 - Commuting Prison Term Is Implicit Critique of Sentencing Standards - <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/07/04/washington/04commutecnd.html?hp>
- ^{xvi} Senate Democratic Policy Committee Report - Top Twenty Iraq Oversight Outrages Uncovered by the DPC - http://dpc.senate.gov/dpc-new2.cfm?doc_name=inv2
- ^{xvii} House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform - Committee Holds Hearing on Accountability Lapses in Multiple Funds for Iraq - <http://oversight.house.gov/story.asp?ID=1967>
- ^{xviii} CBS News, 60 Minutes - July 9, 2006 - Billions Wasted In Iraq? U.S. Official Says Oversight Was "Nonexistent" - <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2006/02/09/60minutes/main1302378.shtml>
- ^{xix} Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press <http://www.rcfp.org>
- ^{xx} Reuters News August 1, 2007- <http://www.reuters.com/article/topNews/idUSN0141867220070801> ; House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform - oversight.house.gov/documents/20080716104027.pdf oversight.house.gov/documents/20080716104053.pdf oversight.house.gov/documents/20080716101908.pdf
- ^{xxi} House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform - <http://oversight.house.gov/story.asp?id=1371>