



***PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH:
A NATIONAL SECURITY LEGACY OF FAILURE***

***A REPORT FROM THE
NATIONAL SECURITY NETWORK***

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	2
Chapter 1: Iraq	7
Chapter 2: Afghanistan and Pakistan	11
Chapter 3: Terrorism	15
Chapter 4: U.S. Military	19
Chapter 5: National Security Infrastructure	24
Chapter 6: Detention and Interrogation	29
Chapter 7: Energy and Environment	33
Chapter 8: The Economy	37
Chapter 9: Nonproliferation	41
Chapter 10: Geopolitics and Diplomacy	44



BUSH'S BOMBS: A NATIONAL SECURITY LEGACY OF FAILURE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The sorry national security legacy of the Bush administration can be measured in in the President's failure to meet his own rhetorical objectives: "victory" in Iraq, an Afghanistan cleansed of terrorists, a Middle East transformed and democratic, a US military strengthened, a global economy rejuvenated and a world in which democracy and freedom are "on the march." It can also be charted in the renewal of terrorism, religious extremism and violence emanating from Central and South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Central Asia about which the administration can or will do little; the disintegration of our closest alliances and the rise of states openly hostile to us in our own hemisphere. Perhaps most starkly it is marked in domestic and world public opinion, where President Bush plummeted from the highest – to lowest-ranked President in the history of public opinion research, and took global regard for the US to uncharted lows. This dramatic decline, the largest in history, can be attributed first and foremost to the President's failed national security policies. While economic failure will undoubtedly mar the Bush's legacy, it is his foreign policy which will define George W. Bush as one of the worst presidents in American history.

In reviewing traditional national security issues such as Iraq, Afghanistan, military policy and geopolitics, as well as domestic issues like energy policy and the economy, which intersect with core national security concerns, NSN extracts five core failures of leadership from which a new administration – and leaders of both parties – must learn if the US is to move forward:

- 1) Ignoring reality in favor of ideology;
- 2) Systematically running roughshod over our government institutions;
- 3) Weakening America's global leadership;
- 4) Disregarding and undermining basic American values and traditions; and
- 5) Failing to govern competently.

Bush's Bombs explores these themes in 11 chapters covering Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, terrorism, military policy, the national security infrastructure, detainees and torture, energy and the environment, international economics, proliferation, geopolitics and diplomacy. The chapters encompass years of work by the National Security Network and our many partners to hold the Bush administration accountable for its missteps. We have translated this effort into an exhaustive list of the national security impact of the Bush years.

1. IGNORED REALITY IN FAVOR OF IDEOLOGY

BUSH'S BOMB: The Al-Qaeda Iraq Connection and Justification for War: The Bush administration was so ideologically set on waging war with Iraq that it alleged a relationship between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda. Only days after 9/11, Paul Wolfowitz was drawing links between Iraq and the World Trade Center attacks. When intelligence analysts found no proof of this relationship, Bush administration officials set up an office in the Pentagon to look at raw intelligence on the al-Qaeda Iraq connection. This office was staffed with ideologues, instead of objective intelligence analysts. Dubious reports, such as Mohammad Atta's supposed meeting with Iraqi intelligence officials, and bad information obtained through the torture of Ibn al-Shaykh al-Libi were used to make the case for war. The result was a false link between al-Qaeda and Iraq that helped lead the United States into a disastrous war that should never have been fought. [Chapters 1 and 5]

Other Duds:

- **Postwar Iraq:** Ignoring dissenting voices such as General Eric Shinseki, the administration argued that Iraq could be rebuilt on the cheap. It assigned inexperienced political appointees who knew little about post-conflict reconstruction to run Iraq while excluding professionals like Tom Warrick who actually ran the State Department's comprehensive "Future of Iraq" program. [Chapter 1]
- **John Bolton to the UN:** President Bush appointed a man who doesn't believe in the UN as Ambassador to the United Nations. [Chapter 11]
- **Refusing to acknowledge Global Warming:** Despite consensus amongst the scientific community, for years the Bush administration refused to acknowledge that man had contributed to global warming. [Chapter 7]

2. DESTROYED GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND INSTITUTIONS

BUSH'S BOMB: FEMA and Hurricane Katrina: In 2001, FEMA was a world model of crisis response. Katrina made it a global laughingstock. President Bush took a well functioning agency and immediately politicized it by appointing as its head first the man who'd helped him win Florida, Joe Albaugh, and then the unqualified Mike Brown. The organization was demoted from Cabinet level and lost much of its budget, causing many of its best personnel to leave. As a result, when Hurricane Katrina made landfall, FEMA lacked the resources, manpower, leadership and knowledge it needed to respond. Americans' most basic trust that government would aid fellow-citizens in their greatest hour of need was violated, replaced by images of Secretary Rumsfeld watching a baseball game and President Bush uttering those famous words: "Brownie, you're doing a heck of a job." Then, instead of taking responsibility for this blunder, Bush attempted to blame overwhelmed state and local authorities. [Chapter 5]

Other Duds:

- **Military readiness:** Eight years of negligence, lack of accountability, and a reckless war in Iraq have left our ground forces and National Guard facing shortfalls in both recruitment and readiness, while repeated deployments have taken a terrible personal toll

on those who serve – spiking PTSD and mental illness for which the military infrastructure was left largely unprepared by its political masters. [Chapters 4 and 5]

- **Intelligence Community:** President Bush ignored and misrepresented the assessments of the Intelligence Community to advance his goals of invading Iraq. He then brought in a highly political CIA Director in Porter Goss, further damaging the agency’s credibility and causing many long serving civil servants to leave. [Chapter 5]
- **The Interagency Process:** Bush’s appointment of Condoleezza Rice, a weak national security advisor who was apparently unable or not empowered to referee among three Washington heavyweights – Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, and Dick Cheney – resulted in a breakdown of the foreign policy decision making process. This lack of coordination had catastrophic consequences, especially in the planning for the postwar phase in Iraq. [Chapter 5]

3. WEAKENED AMERICAN GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

BUSH’S BOMB: The Financial Crisis: The failure of the Bush administration to see the financial crisis coming, or do anything to avert it, has called American global leadership into question. American capitalism has been at the center of the global economy since the end of the World War II, but now that system is in jeopardy. Bush’s slow and disjointed response has further damaged American credibility. It was British Prime Minister Gordon Brown who led the way by pursuing the bank recapitalization strategy that has become the blueprint for international response. It was French Prime Minister Nicholas Sarkozy who took the lead in organizing the international response through the G20 Summit. And it is the Chinese to whom many countries are now looking for financial help. Overall, America’s economic influence and credibility have dropped dramatically. [Chapter 8]

Other Duds:

- **Alienating Allies:** President Bush and his advisors have undermined our relationships with key allies by stating after 9/11 that they must be “with us or against us,” referring to them as “Old Europe,” and building a “coalition of the willing” for the invasion of Iraq that did not include many key allies. [Chapters 1, 10 and 11]
- **International Treaties:** The Bush administration has undermined its relationships and credibility abroad by refusing to enter, or withdrawing from, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to name a few. [Chapters 9 and 11]
- **Energy/Global Warming:** There is broad international consensus that global warming is one of the most serious challenges facing the world. The Bush administration undermined American credibility by refusing to seriously work with other countries to tackle global warming. [Chapter 7]

4. UNDERMINED AMERICAN VALUES AND TRADITIONS

BUSH’S BOMB: Abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib: The abuse of prisoners held in American custody at Abu Ghraib and CIA secret prisons has violated core American values and traditions. Rather than bring in intelligence professionals to conduct effective interrogations that used

techniques in line with our values, the Bush administration made things up on the fly, condoned torture and found ways around the Geneva Convention. The photographs of abuse taken at Abu Ghraib have become the billboards for perceptions of American power, especially in the Middle East, reversing an image of compassion and fairness dating back to the Civil War and World War II of American treatment of prisoners in time of war. America's claim as a force for democracy and human rights was dramatically undermined. Rather than hold senior leadership accountable, the Bush administration claimed that this was simply the work of a few "bad apples." But a bipartisan Senate Armed Services Committee report, released by John McCain and Carl Levin, concluded that "senior officials in the United States government solicited information on how to use aggressive techniques, redefined the law to create the appearance of their legality, and authorized their use against detainees." [Chapter 6]

Other Duds:

- **Illegal detention and military commissions at Guantanamo:** The unprecedented parallel legal structure is neither fair, nor up to the standards of American constitutional traditions. The trials so far have allowed the use of hearsay testimony, required only four out of six jurors for conviction, and even allowed evidence procured from torture. They have not even resulted in meaningful successful prosecutions and have been ruled against three times by Bush's own conservative Supreme Court. [Chapter 6]
- **Checks and Balances:** From Vice-President Cheney's perverse view of executive powers to the administration's constant invocation of executive privilege, the Bush administration has marginalized Congress and shown nothing but contempt for our constitutionally required system of checks and balances. [Chapter 5]
- **Redefining democracy promotion as simply elections:** From Iraq to Lebanon to the Palestinian territories, the Bush administration gave democracy promotion a bad name by placing emphasis solely on elections, while ignoring liberal institutions, individual rights, rule of law, and the role of civil society that are necessary to build long-lasting democracy. [Chapters 1 and 3]
- **Keeping our promises to veterans:** The Bush administration did not anticipate prolonged conflicts in either Afghanistan or Iraq, and was unprepared for the influx of wounded veterans. Bush administration officials were aware of the horrible conditions at Walter Reed and did little to fix them, and stood against efforts to keep our promises of healthcare, dwell time, and educational benefits to our troops. [Chapter 4]

5. FAILED TO GOVERN COMPETENTLY

BUSH'S BOMB: Osama bin Laden's Escape: The Bush administration's incompetence has cost the U.S. its best shot at catching Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda's senior leadership. Seven years ago, American officials cornered bin Laden and his followers in the caves of Tora Bora. However, through a series of negligent decisions, President Bush allowed bin Laden to escape. The administration deemed that only three dozen Special Forces units were necessary for hunting down bin Laden, in spite of Tora Bora's reputation for being dotted with miles of caves and tunnels. Just as damaging was the administration's choice to rely on local militias to weed out bin Laden, as later evidence found that these groups colluded in his escape. Despite offers of assistance from the Pakistani government, the Bush administration refused to help the Pakistani military transport troops to the region to seal off escape routes to Pakistan. And President Bush

allowed Gen. Tommy Franks to direct the operation from Tampa, Florida, rather than sending senior leadership into Afghanistan to confront the challenge directly. The result: Osama bin Laden, and a cohort of al-Qaeda's leadership eluded U.S. capture, reconstituting a safe-haven in nearby Pakistan, where they continue to plot against the U.S. [Chapters 2 and 3]

Other Duds:

- **Iraq postwar planning:** The Bush administration failed to plan for Iraq's reconstruction, a process that devolved into a free-for-all, marked by looting, violence, and the beginnings of an insurgency that would bedevil the U.S. for years. [Chapters 1 and 5]
- **Katrina:** The Bush administration failed to act swiftly to reduce the consequences of Hurricane Katrina, mismanaging every aspect of its response, from the initial rescue operations to the plan for recovery. [Chapter 5]
- **Destabilizing the Middle East:** The Bush administration completely miscalculated the impact the war in Iraq would have on the broader region – making bold proclamations about the road to Jerusalem going through Baghdad. As a result, Iraq is divided, Iran is empowered, and the Arab-Israeli peace process, neglected for eight years, is in dire straits. [Chapters 1 and 3]



IRAQ

“Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.” - President Bush, [5/1/03](#)

It has been more than five years since the President declared victory in the battle for Iraq. Since that day, more than 4,200 American troops have been killed and Iraqi civilian casualties number in the hundreds of thousands. The financial costs of the war have been staggering, with direct costs running over \$600 billion and long-term cost projections in the trillions of dollars.

Sadly these great sacrifices have failed to achieve the President’s initial goals of ridding Iraq of WMDs it did not have, eliminating a terrorist threat that did not exist, and bringing liberal democracy to the Middle East.

Instead, Bush’s decision to invade, and the subsequent chaos and violence introduced unprecedented instability, turning Iraq into a “cause célèbre” for international terrorism and empowering Iran. A further legacy of the Bush administration’s disastrous war has been a steep decline in U.S. global prestige in the Muslim world and among allies the U.S. had counted as its closest supporters. Even as a change in tactics helped produce dramatic reductions in violence, progress toward a stable Iraq continues to be undercut by conservative incompetence, which dates back to the war’s planning and the days that followed the invasion. In sum, the war and the ideology that informed it have compromised U.S. security, damaged U.S. broader interests, undercut our best principles, and violently altered the lives of countless Iraqis.

NONE OF THE INITIAL GOALS OF THE WAR HAVE BEEN MET

“The British Government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa.” - President Bush [1/28/03](#)

There were no weapons of mass destruction. The rationale for launching a preventive war against Iraq was based on the premise that Saddam Hussein had and was actively seeking WMDs that would threaten the United States. Due to a combination of political pressure, cherry-picking of facts, and poor intelligence, these assertions turned out to be wrong and dramatically undermined America’s credibility around the world. [George Bush, [10/7/02](#)]

There was no substantive relationship with al Qaeda. The bipartisan 9/11 Commission found that there was “no operational relationship” between Iraq and al Qaeda. Claims that 9/11 hijacker Muhammad Atta met with Iraqi agents in Prague turned out to be false. [[9/11 Commission Report](#)]

Liberal democracy has not spread throughout the Middle East. Iraq was supposed to be a model for the rest of the region, but instead it has experienced a sectarian civil war and is still riddled with corruption and instability. After some initial movements in 2004 and 2005 towards democracy in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon, those positive steps have been reversed. [George Bush, [2/26/03](#)]

THE COMPLETE LACK OF POSTWAR PLANNING LED TO DISASTER

“My belief is we will, in fact, be greeted as liberators.” – Vice President Dick Cheney, [3/16/03](#)

The Bush administration invaded Iraq with insufficient troops, and without garnering strong allied support. Despite warnings from General Erik Shinseki that the U.S. would need “several hundreds of thousands” of troops to occupy and invade Iraq, Bush administration planners sent only a fraction of that, partially a result of President Bush’s failure to build a robust UN coalition to fight the war. [USA Today, [2/25/03](#). AP, [3/17/03](#)]

Post-war planning was completely inadequate. The Administration did little to prepare for post-war contingencies in Iraq and left the American military with the dangerous job of keeping the peace in a nation that was increasingly breaking apart along sectarian and ethnic lines. It exacerbated a dangerous situation by disbanding the Iraqi army and putting in place harsh de-Baathification standards, failing to secure massive weapons caches, misreading the dangerous insurgency at an early stage in the conflict, neglecting to train Iraqi security forces, and failing to produce significant quality of life improvements for the Iraqi people despite spending billions in American taxpayer dollars.

As a fierce insurgency grew, the Bush administration failed to adequately respond with a new strategy for more than three years. As CSIS expert Tony Cordesman explained, “The US aid effort behaved for nearly a year and a half as if insurgency was truly a small group of diehards or ‘terrorists.’ Even in late 2005, top US civilian policymakers split hairs over semantics to try to even avoid the word insurgency, fail to perceive that many Sunni Arab Iraqis see such an insurgency has legitimate causes, and choose to largely publicly ignore the risks of civil conflict and the developing problems in Shi’ite forces and political structures.” [CSIS, [12/9/05](#)]

TRAGIC HUMAN COST

“The idea that it's going to be a long, long, long battle of some kind I think is belied by the fact of what happened in 1990. Five days or five weeks or five months, but it certainly isn't going to last any longer than that . . . It won't be a World War III.” - Donald Rumsfeld, [11/15/02](#)

Costs of Iraq War to American troops has been high. More than 4,200 American troops have lost their lives participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and roughly 30,000 have been wounded in action. [ICasualties.org, [12/16/08](#)]

Iraqi civilians have borne the brunt of the violence in their country. The World Health Organization (WHO) concludes that 150,000 Iraqi civilians were killed between April 2003 and the summer of 2006. Trend lines from other data suggest that the total casualty figure is well over 200,000 people and more than one percent of Iraq's total pre-war population. [New England Journal of Medicine, [1/31/08](#). Financial Times, [1/10/2008](#). Brookings Institution, [12/11/08](#)]

The Iraq war has spawned a refugee crisis of unprecedented scope. According to the United Nations Human Rights Agency (UNHCR), the number of Iraqis displaced from their homes numbers close to 4.7 million. 2.7 million are believed to be internally displaced, and roughly 2 million have fled to Iraq's surrounding countries, destabilizing the region. [UNHCR, [2008](#)]

FINANCIAL IMPACT HAS BEEN STAGGERING

“Well, the Office of Management and Budget has come up with a number that's something under \$50 billion for the cost.” - Donald Rumsfeld, [1/19/03](#)

Direct war costs amount to over \$600 billion. [Center for National Priorities, [2008](#)]

Even the White House's most realistic analysis was far lower than the actual costs of the war. Before the war many conservatives argued that Iraqi oil revenues would pay for much of the war. White House Economic Adviser Lawrence Lindsay's aggressive pre-war estimate stated that the war would cost \$100 billion to \$200 billion. He was asked to resign. [MSNBC, [3/17/06](#)]

The war has cost the overall economy \$1.3 trillion (\$16,500 per family of four) thus far and Nobel Prize winning economist Joseph Stiglitz estimates that it could rise to \$3 trillion (\$35,000 per family of four). The cost of war estimate from Stiglitz adds to conventional estimates, the value of losses in military readiness, increased recruitment costs, the cost of medical treatment for returning veterans, and other impacts on the economy. [Congressional Joint Economic Committee, [2/28/2008](#)]

BUSH ADMINISTRATION DISASTROUSLY BUNGLED IRAQ'S RECONSTRUCTION

Bush administration's planning for Iraq's reconstruction was beset with problems. A “yearlong State Department study predicted many of the problems that have plagued the American-led occupation of Iraq,” but the report's findings were “ignored by Pentagon officials.” The “military office initially charged with rebuilding Iraq did not learn of it [the State Dept. plan] until a major government drill for the postwar mission was held in Washington in late February, less than a month before the conflict began.” [NY Times, [10/19/03](#)]

\$8 Billion in reconstruction funding disappeared under the Bush administration's watch. According to Iraq's Public Integrity Commission, roughly \$8 billion of the country's reconstruction funds were “wasted or stolen” between 2007 and the beginning of the invasion. [AP, [4/04/07](#)]

Haliburton, after receiving no-bid reconstruction contracts from the White House, wasted hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. A 2005 report by Senator Byron Dorgan and Congressman Henry Waxman cited internal Pentagon audits that questioned “more than \$1 billion of the company's bills for work in Iraq.” [NY Times, [6/28/05](#)]

THE DECISION TO INVADE IRAQ HAS HARMED U.S. INTERESTS IN THE REGION

“Success in Iraq could also begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace, and set in motion progress towards a truly democratic Palestinian state.” – President Bush [2/26/03](#)

Failed policies in Iraq have strengthened Iran. According to a Brookings Report by Ray Takeyh and Suzanne Maloney, because of the instability introduced by the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the country is no longer a “bulwark against Iranian influence,” and “Tehran now has acquired the means to influence all of the region’s security dilemmas.” [Brookings Institution, [12/08](#)]

The region has been profoundly destabilized. Widespread sectarian violence combined with the movement of millions of Iraqi refugees has had a destabilizing effect on the entire region. Millions of Iraqi refugees have strained governments in Syria and Jordan, introducing instability that fuels unrest and challenges US relationships in the region. [IRIN, [6/28/07](#). Washington Post, [7/27/07](#)]

Terrorism in the region is on the rise. The nation’s 16 intelligence agencies agree that the war in Iraq has made al Qaeda stronger by creating a recruiting tool and “cause celebre” for terrorists. Terrorism experts Dan Byman and Ken Pollack assert that “Iraq has fostered a new brand of jihad, providing a place where budding Salafi insurgents gain combat experience and forge lasting bonds that will enable them to work together in the years to come.” [National Intelligence Assessment, [7/06](#). Annals of American Political Science, July 2008]

THE WAR IN IRAQ HAS BEEN A DISASTER FOR AMERICA’S IMAGE

Global respect for the United States is evaporating, even among our closest allies. In 2007, only 30 percent of Germans had a positive view of the United States, down from 78 percent before Bush took office in January 2001. In Turkey, a Muslim democracy and NATO ally, only 9 percent had a favorable view, down from 52 percent in late 2001. Just 51 percent of Britons – our partner in Iraq and our most reliable ally - held favorable views of the United States, down from 75 percent before the Iraq invasion. [IHT, [6/27/07](#). Pew Global Attitudes Project, [6/27/07](#)]

Our image in the Muslim world is hurting our ability to fight al Qaeda. In countries across the Muslim world, from Pakistan to Morocco, our image is so tainted that local politicians who work closely with the United States are viewed with suspicion or simply discredited, making it far more difficult for us to win the ideological struggle against al Qaeda. [Rand Beers, Testimony Before the Congressional Joint Economic Committee, 2/28/08]



AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN

"Coalition forces, including many brave Afghans, have brought America, Afghanistan and the world its first victory in the war on terror... Afghanistan is no longer a terrorist factory sending thousands of killers into the world." – President George W. Bush, [July 15, 2004](#)

Afghanistan is in serious trouble. An initial victory over the Taliban in 2001 was squandered, as the Bush administration drastically underestimated the commitment that would be needed to stabilize the country and lost al-Qaeda and Osama bin Laden in the mountains of Tora Bora. While the Administration turned its attention to Iraq, al Qaeda and the Taliban reconstituted, leading to the formation of a vicious insurgency that now poses a grave threat to Afghan civilians and coalition efforts in the region. Violence in Afghanistan has increased every year since 2003. This has led the nation's 16 intelligence agencies to conclude that the country is in a "downward spiral." The region remains home to al Qaeda and other terrorists, whose safe-haven along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border constitutes the greatest threat to the American homeland, according to two National Intelligence Estimates. In Pakistan, the Bush administration exercised the same neglect by blindly outsourcing counter-terrorism efforts to an ineffectual autocrat. Fixated on Iraq, the Bush administration never developed the comprehensive strategy necessary for reducing the extremist threat in northwest Pakistan, or addressing Afghanistan's debilitating opium trade or its host of development and reconstruction challenges. In the region that served as the staging ground for the worst attacks on the U.S. homeland, the Bush administration has left a legacy marked by incompetence and neglect.

UNDER THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION, THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND PAKISTAN HAS GROWN DIRE

Casualties in Afghanistan have risen dramatically during Bush's final years in office. NATO-ISAF casualties have risen 21%, to more than 280 deaths, up from a record 232 casualties in 2007, and civilian casualties have risen 39% to 1,445 in the first eight months of 2008, from 1,040 in that same period in 2007. [iCasualties.org, [12/16/08](#). UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, [9/16/08](#)]

Violence in Afghanistan has worsened every year since 2003. Coalition casualties have risen every year in Afghanistan since 2003. "Beginning in 2003, the United States began transferring intelligence assets, Special Forces, and equipment to Iraq; and the insurgency in Afghanistan began to rebuild, steadily increasing in strength every year." [iCasualties.org. Center for American Progress, [November 2007](#)]

The Taliban, allowed to reconstitute by the Bush administration, has now intensified its insurgency. Insurgent attacks have risen across the board in Afghanistan, including by 40% along the eastern border with Pakistan. According to estimates by the International Council on Security and Development, the Taliban now has a presence in 72% of Afghanistan. [LA Times, [6/25/08](#). ICOS, [12/08/08](#)]

New National Intelligence Estimate finds country in a “downward spiral.” A draft National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Afghanistan found that the country is in a “downward spiral.” A range of factors have contributed to the deteriorating situation, but the NIE’s “conclusions represent a harsh verdict on decision-making in the Bush administration.” [NY Times, [10/9/08](#). Washington Post, [10/9/08](#)]

THE AFGHANISTAN- PAKISTAN REGION HAS BECOME A TERRORIST SAFE HAVEN

“I would ask the skeptics to look at Afghanistan, where not only this country rout the Taliban, which was one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind, but thanks to our strength and our compassion, many young girls now go to school for the first time.” – President George W. Bush, [December 4, 2002](#)

Bush administration has neglected the region identified by 16 intelligence agencies as the “greatest threat” to the U.S. homeland. Both the 2006 and the 2007 NIE’s concluded that terrorists operating the volatile Afghanistan-Pakistan region posed “the greatest threat to the Homeland and U.S. interests abroad.” [NIE, [4/06](#). NIE, [7/07](#)]

Administration did little to address the growing terrorist safe-haven along Afghanistan-Pakistan border. Intelligence analyst Ted Gistaro reported that Pakistan’s tribal zone has become a “stronger, more comfortable safe haven” for al Qaeda than it was a year ago. Moreover, “there is also a growing recognition among senior officials that the Bush administration for years did not take the Qaeda threat in Pakistan seriously enough.” [NY Times, [8/13/08](#).]

The Bush administration’s failure to commit ground troops in Tora Bora enabled bin Laden to escape and develop a terrorist enclave in Pakistan. “The Bush administration has concluded that Osama bin Laden was present during the battle for Tora Bora... and that failure to commit U.S. ground troops to hunt him was its gravest error in the war against Al Qaeda... In the fight for Tora Bora, corrupt local militias did not live up to promises to seal off the mountain redoubt, and some colluded in the escape of fleeing Al Qaeda fighters. [Tommy] Franks did not perceive the setbacks soon enough, some officials said, because he ran the war from Tampa with no commander on the scene above the rank of lieutenant colonel.” Barnett Rubin observes that “in the 2001 Afghan war, the U.S.-led coalition merely pushed the core leadership of Al Qaeda and the Taliban out of Afghanistan and into Pakistan, with no strategy for consolidating this apparent tactical advance.” [Washington Post, [4/17/02](#). Foreign Affairs, [1/07](#)]

AFGHANISTAN HAS LONG BEEN NEGLECTED BY THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

We didn't drive al Qaeda out of their safe haven in Afghanistan only to let them set up a new safe haven in a free Iraq.” – President George W. Bush, [January 23, 2007](#)

From the beginning, the Administration underestimated the required force levels necessary to secure Afghanistan. “The problems began in early 2002... when the United States and its allies failed to take advantage of a sweeping desire among Afghans for help from foreign countries. The Defense Department initially opposed a request by Colin L. Powell, then secretary of state, and Afghanistan's new leaders for a sizable peacekeeping force and deployed only 8,000 American troops, but purely in a combat role, officials said.” [NY Times, [9/06/06](#)]

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Iraq has consistently diverted attention from the greatest danger in Afghanistan and Pakistan. While the war in Iraq has received \$608 billion over the past five years, Afghanistan has received just \$140 billion over the past seven. On average Iraq receives over \$120 billion per year, while Afghanistan receives just \$20 billion. [NY Times, [6/30/08](#). CRS, [2/08/08](#)]

Iraq distracted the U.S. and siphoned off resources from rebuilding Afghanistan. While Iraq has received a total of \$34.2 billion in reconstruction funding over five years, Afghanistan by comparison has received just \$11.5 billion over the more than seven years that U.S. forces have been on the ground and just \$1.1 billion for 2008. [CRS, [02/08](#)]

BUSH ADMINISTRATION OUTSOURCED ITS PAKISTAN POLICY

“When [Musharraf] looks me in the eye and says there won’t be a Taliban and won't be Al Qaeda, I believe him.”- President George W. Bush [Washington Quarterly, Spring 2007]

For years, the Bush administration had a Musharraf policy, not a Pakistan policy. The Bush administration’s policy toward Pakistan has been “built around one person – and that is Musharraf,” said Teresita C. Schaffer, a Pakistan expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington. [NY Times, [10/20/07](#)]

The extremist threat has grown worse under President Musharraf, while US acts as his “ATM machine.” Since the attacks on 9/11, the U.S. has given more than \$10 billion in assistance to help President Musharraf wage Pakistan’s campaign against terrorism. However, according to Pakistan expert Steven P. Cohen, the U.S. has “wasted several billions of dollars, becoming Musharraf’s ATM machine, allowing him to build up a military establishment that was irrelevant to his (and our) real security threat.” [NSN, [7/24/08](#). GAO, [4/17/08](#). NY Times, [8/18/08](#). Brookings Institution, [11/05/07](#)]

The Bush administration lacked Pakistan experts. The Washington Post reported that there has been a “dramatic drop-off in US expertise on Pakistan. Retired American officials say that, for the first time in US history, nobody with serious Pakistan experience is working in the South Asia bureau of the State Department, on State's policy planning staff, on the National Security Council staff or even in Vice President Cheney's office.” [Washington Post, [6/17/07](#)]

NO COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY FOR STABILIZING THE REGION WAS EVER DEVELOPED

The Bush administration never had a plan to address the region posing the greatest threat to the U.S. A GAO report titled *The United States Lacks a Comprehensive Plan to Destroy the Terrorist Threat and Close the Safe Haven in Pakistan's Federally Administered Tribal Areas* found that, “The United States has not met its national security goals to destroy the terrorist threat and close the safe haven in Pakistan...” and that, “No comprehensive plan for meeting U.S. national security goals in the FATA has been developed.” [GAO, [4/08](#)]

Afghanistan's opium trade undercut all efforts to introduce stability, but has never been addressed by the Administration. Afghanistan produces roughly 90% of the world's opium, a trade that funnels millions into the coffers of insurgents. In spite of this serious threat, the U.S. response has been ineffective and has alienated Afghanistan's people. [NSN, [5/13/08](#)]

Though we face greater challenges in Afghanistan than we did in any of the US engagements of the 1990s, reconstruction funding is shamefully absent. “According to one Afghan expert, ‘Aid per capita to Afghans in the first two years after the fall of the Taliban was around a tenth of that given to Bosnians following the end of the Balkan civil war in the mid-1990s.’” [Center for American Progress, [11/07](#)]

Despite lofty rhetoric, non-military objectives, like education, have not received their due attention. Afghanistan's education system continues to struggle, a problem that has had serious consequences, especially for women. According to the Christian Science Monitor, “[g]irls account for only one-third of school pupils. Few females hold political positions of real power. And in the economic arena, women still struggle to move beyond low-margin handicrafts businesses.” This has led increasingly more Afghan women to say that the “development process is far removed from their needs, and hampered by foreign donors' focus on short-term wins.” [CSM, [12/18/08](#)]



TERRORISM

“Wanted, Dead or Alive.” – George Bush, [September 17, 2001](#)

In recent weeks, President Bush and members of his administration have been touting Bush’s legacy by arguing that there have been no terrorist attacks on American soil since 9/11. Yet this administration has a legacy of downplaying terrorist threats and missing chances to weaken or destroy key terrorist groups, especially al Qaeda. Before 9/11 the Administration ignored warnings from terrorism experts such as Richard Clarke in the run up to 9/11 and did not make al Qaeda a top priority.

After initial success in Afghanistan, the Administration became distracted by Iraq, allowing those who attacked us on 9/11 to reconstitute a new terrorist safe haven on the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and once again threaten the United States. The invasion of Iraq and its disastrous consequences have acted as a terrorism recruiting, training and fundraising vehicle causing an overall increase in terror attacks worldwide. Extremist forces in Yemen, Algeria, Lebanon, and Gaza have all become more powerful. A number of bipartisan commissions have concluded that the Bush administration has not done nearly enough to address the threat of WMD terrorism or implement the 9/11 Commission recommendations. In short, the President’s policies since 9/11 have failed to make America as safe as it needs to be.

BY TURNING FROM THE REGION THAT POSED THE GREATEST TERRORIST THREAT, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS ALLOWED AL QAEDA TO RECONSTITUTE

“So I don't know where he is. You know, I just don't spend that much time on him.” ~George Bush, [March 13, 2002](#)

America’s 16 intelligence agencies say that al Qaeda is growing stronger and that the threat emanating out of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border is the most direct threat to American security. The 2006 and 2007 National Intelligence Estimates both concluded that al Qaeda “will continue to pose the greatest threat to the Homeland and US interests abroad.” The GAO, in concert with the unclassified 2007 NIE and State and embassy documents, found that “al Qaeda’s central leadership, based in the border area of Pakistan, is and will remain the most serious terrorist threat to the United States...” and “...is now using the Pakistani safe haven to put the last element necessary to launch another attack against America into place.” [NIE, [4/06](#). NIE, [7/07](#). NY Times, [9/24/06](#). GAO, [4/08](#)]

There is a consensus among experts that the Bush administration did not treat the threat “seriously enough.” According to the New York Times, there is “growing recognition among

senior officials that the Bush administration for years did not take the Qaeda threat in Pakistan seriously enough...” As National Intelligence Officer Ted Gistaro has testified before Congress, this inattention has meant that the region has become a “stronger, more comfortable safe haven” for al Qaeda. [NIE, [07/07](#). NY Times, [8/13/08](#)]

Rather than focus on the greatest threat, the Bush administration has consistently diverted resources away from Afghanistan to Iraq. The New York Times reported that “the White House shifted its sights, beginning in 2002, from counterterrorism efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan to preparations for the war in Iraq... Current and former military and intelligence officials said that the war in Iraq consistently diverted resources and high-level attention from the tribal areas. When American military and intelligence officials requested additional Predator drones to survey the tribal areas, they were told no drones were available because they had been sent to Iraq.” [NY Times, [6/30/08](#)]

IRAQ LEGACY HAS UNDERMINED U.S. STRATEGY FOR COMBATING TERRORISM

Bush: There have been no attacks since I have been president, since 9/11. One of the major theaters against al Qaeda turns out to have been Iraq...

Raddatz: But not until after the U.S. invaded.

Bush: Yeah, that's right. So what?

When the Bush administration took its eye off the ball and invaded Iraq, it created a recruiting tool and “cause célèbre” for extremist groups. The nation’s 16 intelligence agencies agree assessed that “the Iraq conflict has become the ‘cause célèbre’ for jihadists, breeding a deep resentment of U.S. involvement in the Muslim world and cultivating supporters for the global jihadist movement.” [NIE, [07/07](#)]

Experts do not believe that the Bush administration’s policies have made us safer. Today, only 21 percent of experts agree with the statement that the U.S. is making headway in the fight against terrorism. Overall, 71 percent of terrorism experts believed that “the world was growing more dangerous for Americans and the United States.” [CAP Terrorism Index, [8/19/08](#)]

Fighting in Iraq has allowed extremist operatives to gain hands-on experience and export their deadly skills. Terrorism experts Dan Byman and Ken Pollack assert that “Iraq has fostered a new brand of jihad, providing a place where budding Salafi insurgents gain combat experience and forge lasting bonds that will enable them to work together in the years to come.” [Annals of American Political Science, July 2008.]

The U.S. invasion of Iraq solidified and intensified worldwide unfavorable views of the United States, particularly in Muslim nations. In its most recent survey on this topic, the Pew Global Attitudes Project reports that the U.S. image remains abysmal in most Muslim countries in the Middle East and Asia. Favorable views of the U.S. are in single digits in Turkey (9%) and have declined to 15% in Pakistan. [Pew Global Attitudes Project, [6/27/07](#)]

TERRORISM AROUND THE WORLD HAS INTENSIFIED UNDER THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

“You are either with us or against us” – George Bush, [11/6/01](#)

Al Qaeda affiliates are gaining ground in Algeria and North Africa. Since 2007, al Qaeda in the Maghreb (AQIM) - a Sunni group that previously called itself the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) - has been raising its profile in Algeria. The group was responsible for multiple coordinated attacks against targets in Algeria this past August that killed more than 60 people. [BBC News, [8/20/2008](#). NPR, [8/20/08](#). Council on Foreign Relations, [7/31/08](#)]

Attacks on the U.S. embassy in Yemen serve as chilling example of al Qaeda’s reach in the Middle East. In September, “heavily armed militants opened fire on the United States Embassy in Sana, Yemen... and detonated a car bomb at its gates, in an attack that left at least 16 people dead including six of the attackers.” The attack is the latest sign of a growing al Qaeda-inspired Islamic insurgency against the Washington-allied regime on the strategic southern tip of the Arabian peninsula.” [NY Times, [9/17/08](#). TIME, [9/17/08](#).]

The terrorist attacks in Mumbai are a reminder that not only al Qaeda has been neglected. The New York Times reports that "evidence unearthed by investigators in India indicated that the Mumbai attacks were stage-managed from at least two Pakistani cities by top leaders of the militant group Lashkar-e-Taiba." These attacks have thrown U.S. policy in the region into disarray. [NY Times, [11/05/08](#)]

Gaza has become a haven for extremists. “Gaza is the latest evidence that most of the trends are pointed in the wrong direction. It’s yet another gain for radical forces. It's another gain for Iran. It's another setback for the U.S., Israel and the Sunni regimes,” said Richard Haass, head of the State Department’s policy planning staff in President Bush’s first term and President of the Council on Foreign Relations. [Washington Post, [6/16/2007](#)]

Failed U.S. policies in Lebanon have contributed to the rise of new terrorist groups and the ascension of Hezbollah. For the past year, Lebanon has been wracked with instability and extremist violence. The Cedar Revolution is a distant memory, new terrorist organizations have emerged, and Hezbollah is ascendant. In 2007, Fatah Al Islam – a group of Islamic militants from various Arab nationalities occupied the Nahr al Bared refugee camp in Tripoli, using it as a base to attack army positions and resulting in the destruction of the majority of the camp. Worst of all, “Hezbollah today stands unquestioned as the single most powerful force in Lebanon.” [AFP, [1/20/08](#). Washington Post, [5/18/08](#)]

BUSH FAILED TO CLOSE THE SECURITY GAPS AT HOME

The Bush administration is not doing nearly enough to implement the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission. A report released by the House Homeland Security Committee and House Foreign Affairs Committee found that the Bush administration has not done nearly enough to implement the provisions of the Implementing the 9/11 Commission Recommendations Act of 2007. [House Homeland Security and Foreign Affairs Committees, [9/08](#)]

Despite funding and public support, the Bush Administration has failed to make America as safe as it needs to be. “Emergency responders are still unable to communicate reliably or securely across jurisdictions or in large buildings and tunnels. Chemical plants in major metropolitan area continue to pose an unmitigated risk. Americans ride commuter rail and subway systems that are vulnerable to the kinds of attack that have already happened in Paris, Moscow, Madrid, Tokyo and London. Few cities are prepared to deal with the mass casualties that would accompany a pandemic or a biological attack. Radiological materials are poorly accounted for and secured, and making a “dirty bomb” that would contaminate large parts of a city are a very real possibility. The agency charged with finding terrorists in the United States is unable to deploy a modern information technology system and the intelligence community remains incapable of translating the material it collects. Funds to address homeland security have not been allocated on the basis of security needs or as part of a multi-year plan to achieve a specific level of risk and capability. Block grants for homeland security in many places have been squandered, allocated to regions facing little risk or spent without any goal or overall risk mitigation strategy.” [The Forgotten Homeland, [2006](#)]

A recent bipartisan report warns that, absent action, WMD attack in the next five years is “more likely than not.” The report, issued by the Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism chaired by former Senators Bob Graham and Jim Talent, states that, “unless the world community acts decisively and with great urgency, it is more likely than not that a weapon of mass destruction will be used in a terrorist attack somewhere in the world by the end of 2013.” [World at Risk, [12/08](#)]

BUSH ADMINISTRATION ACTIONS HAVE DAMAGED THE LEGITIMACY OF U.S. COUNTERTERRORISM POLICY

Post 9/11 consensus on need to address terrorism has been squandered by the Bush administration’s “with us or against us” attitude. After 9/11 the world stood united by the understanding that terrorism was everyone’s problem, with the French newspaper *Le Monde* famously declaring “we are all Americans.” But as time went on, the Bush administration squandered this historic opportunity, through its misguided invasion of Iraq, its dismissal of European allies, and its detention and interrogation policies. [NSN, [9/11/08](#). AP, [12/05/05](#)]

The Administration’s indifference to rule of law and basic American values has undermined efforts to curb extremism. Under President Bush, the White House has trod on some of America’s best principles, doing serious damage to US counterterrorism policy in the process. Scandals like Abu Ghraib have not only hurt the overall prestige of the U.S., but have delegitimized our counterterrorism policies and aided extremism. [Washington Post, [10/15/04](#)]



U.S. MILITARY

"The president must remember that the military is a special instrument. It is lethal, and it is meant to be. It is not a civilian police force. It is not a political referee. And it is most certainly not designed to build a civilian society." – Condoleezza Rice, [July 2000](#)

Our military is second to none, but eight years of misguided military strategy, negligence, and a reckless war in Iraq have left our ground forces facing shortfalls in both recruitment and readiness. The "transformation" strategy advocated by the Bush administration, namely Secretary Rumsfeld, held that future warfare would involve high tech fights between states; large ground forces were unnecessary because high-tech precision weapons would obviate the need for boots on the ground. As a result, not enough U.S. troops were initially sent to Iraq and Afghanistan to secure the countries and billions were spent on outdated weapons systems with little relevance to 21st century challenges. Every service is out of balance and ill-prepared to deal with the challenges of the 21st century. The war in Iraq, and the Administration's failure to adequately prepare the military for it, has pushed our ground forces to the brink: recruitment and retention in crucial areas are down while low readiness and response levels are threatening our troop safety abroad, and impairing our National Guard at home. Additionally, the Bush administration's failure to plan for the possibility of a drawn out conflict meant it failed to keep the promises made to those who have served. This misguided defense strategy has had severe implications for our military, and has left the U.S. dangerously exposed and strategically adrift.

BUSH-RUMSFELD HAD BANKRUPT MILITARY STRATEGY

"As you know, you go to war with the Army you have. They're not the Army you might want or wish to have at a later time." – Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, [December 8, 2004](#)

The Bush administration has never had a defense strategy designed to meet current threats and challenges. The Bush administration, led by Secretary Rumsfeld, entered the Pentagon with a strategy that misjudged the threats confronting America. It believed future warfare would involve high tech fights between states and that large ground forces were unnecessary, because high-tech precision weapons would obviate the need for boots on the ground. Unfortunately, 9/11 did not alter their belief. As a result, not enough U.S. troops were initially sent to Iraq and Afghanistan to secure the countries. The Bush administration's failed and misguided defense strategy has had severe implications for our military, and has left the U.S. dangerously exposed and strategically adrift. [NSN, [05/08](#)]

Without a coherent strategy, the Bush administration failed to make hard choices; now our defense budget is lopsided and out of touch with new challenges. Instead of reassessing

America's security needs when faced with a new global conflict, the Bush administration continued to over-invest in weapons meant for fighting a traditional adversary much like the extinct Soviet Union. This spending spree on advanced weaponry has done little for our troops, who battle today against small arms, suicide bombers, and internet-recruited terrorists. Today's defense spending exceeds even levels at the heights of the Cold War. Currently, the U.S. spends more on defense than the rest of the world combined – we outspend China six to one – yet we don't have the troops or equipment we need for the conflicts we are actually fighting. As the Center for American Progress noted, "The failure to shift budget priorities after 9/11 was not merely a case of inept management but was more a byproduct of the administration's ideological and strategic vision of military transformation." [NSN, [05/08](#), Issues in Science and Technology, [Fall 2008](#)]

Troops were sent to war without proper body armor and equipment. Despite the high levels of spending, basic needs went unmet. Veteran Paul Rieckhoff explains, "During Operation Iraqi Freedom, inadequate body armor was issued to thousands of troops. I know -- I was one of them. I commanded thirty-seven infantrymen who rode into Baghdad in the spring of 2003 with outdated, inferior flak jackets. Later I learned that as many as 40,000 other Troops went to Iraq with the same substandard gear." [Huffington Post, [9/29/05](#)]

BUSH HAS LEFT THE GROUND FORCES ILL-PREPARED TO HANDLE NEW CHALLENGES

"I can promise them now, help is on the way. Soon, our men and women in uniform will once again have a commander in chief they can respect, one who understands their mission and restores their morale." - Richard Cheney, Republican Convention, [August 2, 2000](#)

Joint Chiefs of Staff: Iraq hampers ability to respond to other threats. "Members of the Joint Chiefs have also told the president that the continued troop commitment to Iraq means that there is a significant level of risk should another crisis erupt elsewhere in the world. Any mission could be carried out successfully, the chiefs believe, but the operation would be slower, longer and costlier in lives and equipment than if the armed forces were not so strained. Members of the Joint Chiefs also acknowledge that the deployments to Iraq, with the emphasis on counterinsurgency warfare, have left the ground forces no time to train for the full range of missions required to defend American interests." [NYT, [4/6/08](#)]

Army Chief of Staff: Iraq is hurting the Army's ability to sustain itself and plan for future contingencies. Gen. George Casey stated that "The cumulative effects of the last six-plus years at war have left our Army out of balance, consumed by the current fight and unable to do the things we know we need to do to properly sustain our all-volunteer force and restore our flexibility for an uncertain future." [AP, [2/26/08](#)]

Marine Corps training has suffered as a result of Iraq overstretch, endangering its expeditionary tradition. "We are not doing that kind of multi-capable training that we historically do in order to be that swing force and arguably the first to fight... We now have a generation of men and women who do not have a complete understanding of what expeditionary is... That people now believe that three square meals a day courtesy of KBR and a cot is

expeditionary, that is just not true in most of the environments where we would expect to find ourselves in the early going of a contingency.” [Marine Corps Times, [2/4/08](#)]

The National Guard will have limited capability to respond to natural or man-made disasters, one of its primary missions. Since 2001, more than 410,000 National Guard and Reservists or about 80 percent of the members of the Guard and Reserve have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, with an average of 18 months per mobilization. Of these, more than 84,000, or 20 percent, have been deployed more than once. [Center for American Progress, [March 2007](#)]

BUSH HAS PUSHED OUR GROUND FORCES TO THE BREAKING POINT

“But even the highest morale is eventually undermined by back-to-back deployments, poor pay, shortages of spare parts and equipment, and rapidly declining readiness.” - George W. Bush, Citadel, [September 23, 1999](#)

Bush administration’s use of military posed “significant risk” to all-volunteer army. Fmr. Vice Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. Richard Cody said that the “heavy deployments are inflicting ‘incredible stress’ on soldiers and families and that they pose ‘a significant risk’ to the nation’s all-volunteer military. ‘When the five-brigade surge went in, that took all the stroke out of the shock absorbers for the United States Army.’” [Washington Post, [4/2/08](#) , NYT, [4/6/08](#)]

Marine Corps overstretched by fighting wars on two fronts. Marine Corps Commandant James Conway said last February, “We can’t have one foot in Afghanistan and one foot in Iraq. I believe that would be — an analogy would be having one foot in the canoe and one foot on the bank. You can’t be there long... The point that we have made... is that we can’t continue to do it without relief elsewhere.” [Marine Corps Times, [2/4/08](#)]

Billions are needed to rebuild military after Iraq. Estimates of the cost of resetting the army’s forces and replacing or repairing war damaged equipment runs to 240 billion dollars, according to congressional leaders. “The Air Force estimates that it will need \$10 billion for reset, while the Marine Corps projects a \$15.6 billion price tag. Army equipment has borne the major part of the damage in Iraq and will require \$17 billion per year for up to three years, or more than \$50 billion, after the end of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. This year’s defense authorization act did suggest some funding for reset, including \$8.6 billion for the Army, \$1.8 billion for the Marine Corps, and \$800 million in funding for the Reserve and Guard’s reset priorities.” [AFP, [3/16/08](#). Center for American Progress, [12/08](#)]

Bush failed to heed the warning that the U.S. military growing weary of combat in Iraq. “Five years after the US-led invasion of Iraq, the US military is flagging under long and repeated deployments that have taken a toll on troops and hurt its readiness to deal with other crises. ‘People are tired,’ is the way Admiral Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, summed it up at a congressional hearing.” [AFP, [3/16/08](#)]

GROUND FORCES FACE SEVERE PERSONNEL CHALLENGES

“Resources are over-stretched. Frustration is up, as families are separated and strained. Morale is down. Recruitment is more difficult. And many of our best people in the military are headed for civilian life.” – George W. Bush, Citadel, [September 23, 1999](#)

The Army has missed its educational attainment goals for new recruits the last four years. “DOD’s goal is for at least 90 percent of recruits to have a high school diploma... only since the onset of persistent conflict has the Army failed to reach its educational objective for recruits. This trend is directly related to the difficulty of recruiting an all-volunteer force during a war that has become increasingly unpopular with the American people. From 2000 to 2004, the Army had 90 to 94 percent Tier I recruits (high school graduates, homeschoolers who score between I-III on aptitude tests, or 15 hours of college credit)... The Army has failed to achieve the 90 percent goal since 2005.” [Center for American Progress, [12/08](#)]

The Army has increased the number of “moral waivers” every year since 2003 (in 2004 12 percent of new recruits needed moral waivers, in 2008 the number had more than doubled to 26 percent). “The Army has had to increase the percentage of recruits with so-called “moral waivers” such as conduct, medical, and drug and alcohol problems every year since 2003, more than doubling from 12 percent in 2004 to nearly 26 percent this year.” [Center for American Progress, [12/08](#)]

The Army is experiencing a shortage of officers. “The active duty Army suffers a shortage of about 3,700 officers right now, particularly captains and majors, and by 2009, the Army projects a combined shortage of 5,000 captains and majors.” [Center for American Progress, [12/08](#)]

The Bush administration encouraged the expansion of the military’s use of private contractors, yet failed to regulate. Michael Cohen and Maria Figueroa Küpçü wrote in the Washington Post “that an astounding 100,000 private contractors are supporting the U.S. military effort in Iraq... It's a virtual army of largely unregulated individuals working on behalf of U.S. national interests...with little to no congressional oversight or investigation. Not only are contractors training police, cooking meals, and transporting weapons they are being asked to provide security services that were once the sole purview of the military, including convoy protection and at times, even engaging the enemy... And as the situation in Iraq has deteriorated, the cost of this ‘private security’ has skyrocketed... There is real question as to the level of savings that taxpayers are receiving from these groups...The privatization of national security blurs the once clear line where public authority ends and private initiative begins. Many firms continue to operate in a legal gray zone. Contractors are not bound by the Uniform Code of Military Justice and while some international human rights conventions apply to armed civilians, enforcement of these rules in Iraq has been virtually non-existent. Civilian contracting also creates operational challenges as private security contractors operate separately from the U.S. military yet are still seen as part of the nation's military force.” [Washington Post, [12/7/06](#)]

PROMISES NOT KEPT

"I will renew the bond of trust between the American president and the American military." -
George W. Bush, *Citadel*, [September 23, 1999](#)

Walter Reed scandal exposed Bush administration's inability to keep its promises to America's vets. "The common perception of Walter Reed is of a surgical hospital that shines as the crown jewel of military medicine. But 5 1/2 years of sustained combat have transformed the venerable 113-acre institution into something else entirely -- a holding ground for physically and psychologically damaged outpatients. Almost 700 of them -- the majority soldiers, with some Marines -- have been released from hospital beds but still need treatment or are awaiting bureaucratic decisions before being discharged or returned to active duty." In Building 18 at Walter Reed, there was discovery of mouse droppings, belly-up cockroaches, stained carpets, cheap mattresses, black mold, rotting walls and ceilings, among other health and sanitary issues. [Washington Post, [2/18/07](#)]

Veterans' Administration left unprepared for wave of injured vets returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, as the Bush administration failed to plan for the possibility of a drawn out conflict. The unexpected duration of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq has placed tremendous strain on the Veterans' Administration, as more and more veterans returned home needing care. The Bush administration did not anticipate protracted conflicts in either Afghanistan or Iraq, as projections within the Pentagon at the onset of the Iraq war believed that a significant drawdown of troops would happen in the first few months following the invasion. When each war began to take a greater toll the administration and the VA were caught off guard. "Another surge is putting pressure on the nation's military. It is the surge of veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan returning home with physical and psychological wounds, and the question is: Are the nation's veterans hospitals equipped and staffed to handle it?" [Buffalo News, [3/4/08](#)]

Multiple deployments are taking a heavy toll on our troops. "More than a quarter of U.S. soldiers on their third or fourth tours in Iraq suffer mental health problems partly because troops are not getting enough time at home between deployments, the Army said. 'Soldiers are not resetting entirely before they get back into theater,' said Lt. Col. Paul Bliese, who led the Army's Mental Health Advisory Team survey for 2007." [Reuters, [3/06/08](#)]

According to estimates by the RAND Corporation, approximately 300,000, or one in five, Iraq or Afghanistan combat veterans suffer from PTSD or depression. "Assuming that the prevalence found in this study is representative of the 1.64 million service members who had been deployed for OEF/OIF as of October 2007, we estimate that approximately 300,000 individuals currently suffer from PTSD or major depression and that 320,000 individuals experienced a probable TBI [Traumatic Brain Injury] during deployment. About one-third of those previously deployed have at least one of these three conditions, and about 5 percent report symptoms of all three." [RAND Corporation, [4/17/08](#)]



NATIONAL SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Without strong, effective, and coordinated government institutions, it is impossible to execute an effective U.S. national security policy. Unfortunately, under the Bush administration, the national security apparatus which includes the State Department, Department of Defense, multiple intelligence agencies, the Department of Homeland Security and other U.S. agencies has grown dysfunctional.

The Administration opted for a broad executive power grab, systematically neutering oversight mechanisms that traditionally maintained our systems of checks and balances. The inter-agency process meant to coordinate our national security institutions broke down – especially in the run up to Iraq and the postwar planning phase. The Bush administration disregarded the advice of Intelligence Community (IC), misrepresented its findings for political purposes, and continues to use the IC as a scapegoat for its own failures in Iraq. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security, intended to protect the country from disasters like 9/11, has been horribly executed resulting in the incompetent and tragic response to Hurricane Katrina. The damage that was done will set dangerous precedents, take years of painstaking and unglamorous work to undo, and have lasting detrimental impact across the institutions that manage our relations with the rest of the world.

THERE HAS BEEN A SYSTEMATIC EFFORT TO DESTROY THE GOVERNMENT’S OVERSIGHT MECHANISMS AND MOVE POWER TO THE WHITE HOUSE

The Bush administration shrouded the executive branch in secrecy, keeping policy decisions out of the public eye. According to Jane Mayer, the Bush administration’s deliberations over policies were kept in the dark, including a memo sanctioning the use of “inhumane treatment of foreign prisoners held by the CIA outside the U.S.” “These decisions, according to many Administration officials who were involved in the process, were made in secrecy, and the customary interagency debate and vetting procedures were sidestepped.” [New Yorker, [7/03/06](#)]

Inspectors general (IG), charged with independent government oversight, including in areas of foreign policy, have been politicized under the Bush administration. A 2005 report by Rep. Henry Waxman’s committee on Government Reform found that “IG appointments have become increasingly politicized during the administration of President Bush. Whereas President Clinton typically appointed nonpartisan career public servants as IGs, President Bush has repeatedly chosen individuals with Republican political backgrounds. Over 60% of the IGs appointed by President Bush had prior political experience, such as service in a Republican White House or on a Republican congressional staff, while fewer than 20% had prior audit

experience.” The Intelligence Community provides an extreme case. CIA director Michael Hayden order an internal inquiry into the conduct of the agency’s Inspector General, a move that “would threaten to undermine the independence of the office,” according to current and former officials. Moreover, “Almost 32 years to the day after President Ford created an independent Intelligence Oversight Board made up of private citizens with top-level clearances to ferret out illegal spying activities, President Bush issued an executive order that stripped the board of much of its authority.” [Committee on Government Reform, [1/07/05](#). NY Times, [10/11/07](#)]

During the Bush years, the Office of Legal Counsel went from an independent agency to a “political instrument,” with significant negative effects on mechanisms designed to limit and oversee executive national security prerogatives. In a piece for the *New Yorker*, Jane Mayer reported that the White House had turned the turned “the Justice Department's Office of Legal Counsel into a political instrument, which they used to expand their own executive power at the expense of long-standing checks and balances.” An Office of Legal Council Memo written by John Yoo days after September 11th, demonstrated this broad expansion of executive authority: “On September 25th, the Office of Legal Counsel issued a memo declaring that the President had inherent constitutional authority to take whatever military action he deemed necessary, not just in response to the September 11th attacks but also in the prevention of any future attacks from terrorist groups, whether they were linked to Al Qaeda or not.” Questionable OLC memos were also used to authorize detentions, torture and surveillance. [New Yorker, [8/04/08](#). New Yorker, [7/03/06](#)]

DYSFUNCTIONAL INTER-AGENCY PROCESS HURT OUR ABILITY TO BRING ALL ELEMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER TO BEAR ON NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES

Bush’s appointment of Condoleezza Rice, a weak national security advisor whose job was to referee between three Washington heavyweights – Colin Powell, Donald Rumsfeld, and Dick Cheney, resulted in a breakdown of the foreign policy decision making process. One State Department official told the Washington Post that “[t]he NSC is not performing its traditional role, as adjudicator between agencies...You never knew quite what you were supposed to be doing and with whom.” Another former NSC staffer observed that in Rice, “you've never really had a national security adviser who's ready to discipline the process, to drive decisions to conclusions and, once decisions are made, to enforce them” and that Rice “will never discipline Don Rumsfeld” [Washington Post, [10/12/03](#)]

In the decision to go to war, and subsequent post-war planning, there was little coordination between the White House, State Department and Department of Defense. In just one of the many examples, “a yearlong State Department study predicted many of the problems that have plagued the American-led occupation of Iraq, according to internal State Department documents and interviews with administration and Congressional officials.” The report’s findings were “ignored by Pentagon officials,” and “the military office initially charged with rebuilding Iraq did not learn of it until a major government drill for the postwar mission was held in Washington in late February, less than a month before the conflict began.” [NY Times, [10/19/03](#)]

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS MISUSED AND MISMANAGED THE TRUST OF OUR INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY

The Bush administration pressured the IC on pre-war intelligence, ignored its analysis, and then blamed it for failures. In *Foreign Affairs*, Paul Pillar, the national intelligence officer responsible for the Middle East from 2000 to 2005, detailed the sources of that mutual mistrust, rooted in the Administration's plans to invade Iraq. Pillar noted that "the conflict between intelligence officials and policymakers escalated into a battle, with the intelligence community struggling to maintain its objectivity even as policymakers pressed the Saddam – al Qaeda connection. The Administration's rejection of the intelligence community's judgments became especially clear with the formation of a special Pentagon unit, the Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group. The unit... was dedicated to finding every possible link between Saddam and al Qaeda, and its briefings accused the intelligence community of faulty analysis for failing to see the supposed alliance." In fact, "Vice President Cheney and his most senior aide made multiple trips to the CIA... to question analysts studying Iraq's weapons programs and alleged links to al Qaeda, creating an environment in which some analysts felt they were being pressured to make their assessments fit with the Bush administration's policy objectives." Yet despite the role that President Bush's political appointees played in the battle over U.S. intelligence on Iraq – the President continues to publicly scapegoat the IC for the Iraq prewar intelligence. [Washington Post, [6/5/03](#). *Foreign Affairs*, [March/April 2006](#). ABC News, [12/1/08](#).]

The Intelligence Community has been badly mismanaged. Porter Goss's tenure dramatically undermined the CIA's morale and its ability to function effectively. Goss brought in a set of highly political aides and pushed out a number of long-time CIA professionals. Moreover, despite creating a Director of National Intelligence, President Bush allowed Donald Rumsfeld to keep roughly 80% of the IC's budget inside the Pentagon, where it had been originally. As a result, "It [the Bush administration] did nothing to fix the real weakness of the old system, which was that the DCI had little control over the sprawling Pentagon intelligence archipelago." In the last couple of years, DNI Mike McConnell and new CIA Director Michael Hayden have worked to repair the damage, and move the IC's budgetary authority to DNI. [Washington Post, [6/18/08](#)]

The Bush administration misrepresented the assessments of the IC. In the lead up to the Iraq War, the Administration deliberately made statements suggesting a strong relationship between al Qaeda and Iraq that were "not substantiated by intelligence." A Senate Intelligence Committee report states in its conclusion, "multiple CIA reports and the November 2002 NIE dismissed the claim that Iraq and al Qaeda were cooperating partners." The 9/11 Commission also concluded that there was no operational relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda. [[Senate Intelligence Committee Report](#). [9/11 Commission Report](#)]

THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY HAS SUFFERED FROM A LACK OF REAL LEADERSHIP

Department of Homeland Security was "set up to fail." In 2005, the Washington Post gave this grim assessment of the early history of DHS: "Born out of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, DHS was initially expected to synthesize intelligence, secure borders, protect infrastructure and prepare for the next catastrophe. For most of those missions, the bipartisan Sept. 11 commission

recently gave the Bush administration D's or F's. To some extent, the department was set up to fail. It was assigned the awesome responsibility of defending the homeland without the investigative, intelligence and military powers of the FBI, CIA and the Pentagon; it was also repeatedly undermined by the White House that initially opposed its creation. But the department has also struggled to execute even seemingly basic tasks, such as prioritizing America's most critical infrastructure.” [Washington Post, [9/22/05](#)]

FEMA, once considered among the soundest government agencies, is now foundering due to Bush Administration mismanagement. “Under the Bush administration, and inside the Department of Homeland Security, (FEMA) degraded into a patronage-ridden weakling” said the New York Times. No incident made this point more apparent than Hurricane Katrina, which “exposed FEMA as a dysfunctional organization, paralyzed in a crisis four years after the supposedly galvanizing attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.” In an example of FEMA’s incompetence, and in a reversal of decades of successful policy, Administrator David Paulison declared, in the wake of the Katrina crisis, that “FEMA shouldn’t be in the housing business.” [NY Times, [11/24/08](#). Washington Post, [12/22/05](#). Tallahassee Democrat, [04/19/07](#)]

NATIONAL SECURITY INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN HURT BY MIS-MANAGEMENT

Bush administration opted to conduct most foreign policy through the Pentagon, leaving other foreign policy agencies, most notably the State Department, to wilt. Despite fighting two counterinsurgencies, which by definition necessitate large investments in non-military solutions, the imbalance between the Department of Defense and the rest of the national security apparatus has only grown under the Bush administration. Nothing illustrates this more than the difference between the Department of Defense and the State Department’s budget. In 2001, the year Bush took office, the Department of Defense budget was \$302 billion, whereas the State Department's budget was roughly \$21 billion. Yet, by 2008, Defense spending soared to more than \$510 billion, leaving out the cost of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, while the State Department's budget rose to only \$32 billion. This monetary imbalance became so dire in 2006 that, according to Civil-Military relations expert Lorelei Kelly, “the Defense Department wanted \$200 million for State's post conflict reconstruction activities.” [OMB – DOD, [FY 2003](#). OMB – State Department, [FY 2003](#). OMB – DOD, [FY 2009](#). OMB – State Department, [FY 2009](#). Lorelei Kelly, [5/28/07](#).]

Due to Bush’s reckless Iraq war, the U.S. military is overstretched, understaffed and under-equipped. According to former Assistant Secretary of Defense Lawrence Korb, “[i]t will take years for the Army and Marine Corps to recover from what some officials privately have called a ‘death spiral,’ in which the ever more rapid pace of war-zone rotations has consumed 40 percent of their total gear, wearied troops and left no time to train to fight anything other than the insurgencies now at hand.” And, in a sign of the withering effect the war has had on the officer corps, the Army has projected a “shortage of several thousand officers as wartime demands grow increasing disillusionment.” [Lawrence Korb, Testimony Before House Armed Services Committee, [7/27/07](#). Washington Post, [2/12/06](#)]

Bush administration encouraged conformity at the Pentagon, stifling objectivity. Beginning with General Eric Shinseki’s dismissal for stating that the U.S. would need as many as 200,000

troops to occupy Iraq, the Bush administration, particularly Donald Rumsfeld suppressed dissent in the Pentagon. According to an active-duty Army General, the Pentagon's brass "grew silent, disgruntled and demoralized. The Pentagon was veering toward the dysfunctional." [Frontline, [8/12/04](#). NY Times, [2/10/08](#)]

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY BUDGET HAS GROWN DANGEROUSLY OUT OF BALANCE

The U.S. foreign policy budget has failed to emphasize all elements of national power. Under the Bush administration, spending on foreign policy has failed to harmonize all elements of national power, with the Defense Department receiving between \$400 and \$500 billion in a given year, but the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security receiving less than \$100 billion combined. [Foreign Policy in Focus, 09/08]

Bush administration has complicated appropriations process by hiding expenditures in "supplementals." President Bush has been able to obscure the true cost of his foreign policies to the American people through the use of emergency supplemental funding requests, a measure that greatly complicates the regular appropriations process and allows official budget tallies to remain well below actual expenditures. [Gordon Adams, [3/13/07](#)]

The Bush administration paid for the Iraq War through irresponsibly running up the debt. "Rather than raising taxes, the administration has proposed, and Congress has implemented, significant tax cuts. This marks the first time in American history that taxes have been cut while the country was involved in a major war. Nor have major reductions in spending been implemented in non-defense portions of the budget to help pay for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan...Presently, about 40 percent of Treasury bonds are purchased by foreigners, suggesting that roughly 40 percent of the interest associated with financing the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will be paid to foreigners." CBS news reported in September of 2008 that the national debt had grown by \$4 trillion under the Bush administration, the "biggest increase under any president in U.S history." [Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, [2008](#). CBS News, [9/29/08](#)]



DETENTION AND INTERROGATION

"This government does not torture people." - George W. Bush, [October 5, 2007](#)

Since 9/11 our society has faced difficult choices about how to reconcile the need to bring terrorists and extremists to justice while staying true to the constitutional values at the bedrock of our democracy. The Bush administration's response has ignored more than 200 years of history and imposed a false choice between our Constitution and our security. This approach has not worked. Experts have documented case after case: torture fails to elicit useful information; civilian courts have convicted terrorists; and secret prisons destroy America's image as a beacon of freedom. The Administration's paradigm has made us less secure and caused institutional and moral damage, which will take decades to undo.

The Administration used the post 9/11 environment to dramatically expand executive power and undermine the system of checks and balances which has served us for more than 200 years. Rather than carefully and selectively detaining suspected militants, it chose instead to classify them all as "enemy combatants" and send them to Guantanamo Bay, Bagram Prison, and other sites where they are still in legal limbo. Rather than bring in intelligence professionals to conduct effective, legal interrogations, it made things up on the fly and condoned torture. Rather than using our legal system, which has been so effective at meting out justice in times of great difficulty, it chose instead to create an entirely new system outside of the jurisdiction of our courts, violating basic American principles such as habeas corpus. The Administration's approach has failed. It has violated basic American values, created a legal limbo for hundreds of detainees, hurt our ability to gather intelligence, created a propaganda victory for terrorists, and undermined our standing around the world.

DETAINEE POLICY VIOLATES AMERICA'S VALUES AND FAILS TO PUT TERRORISTS BEHIND BARS

The Bush administration's military commission system violates American values and constitutional traditions. The military commission in Guantanamo Bay was neither fair nor up to the standards of American values. For example, Salim Hamdan's trial allowed the use of hearsay testimony and evidence procured from torture, and only required four out of six jurors for conviction. Such practices are far beneath American values. [LA Times, [8/4/08](#)]

The Bush administration's military commissions system is failing to achieve the objective of convicting and jailing dangerous terrorists. After seven years of the "War on Terror," the Administration's military tribunal system has managed to convict only two terrorists – one of whom, Salim Hamdan, even the government admits was only a driver and not a senior level

operative. Perpetrators of terrorist attacks against America, such as 9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed, could have been in federal court long ago, like Zacharias Moussaoui or the World Trade Center 1993 attackers, each of whom received life in prison without the possibility of parole. Instead, they remain in the limbo of Guantanamo Bay, glorified as enemy combatants instead of prosecuted as criminals. [Wall Street Journal, [7/24/08](#). NY Times, [11/3/08](#)]

Confession of 9/11 mastermind represents a legal and international mess that the Bush administration leaves for the incoming Obama administration. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four other defendants said that they will confess to masterminding the 9/11 attacks, daring the Pentagon to give them death sentences and fulfill their quest for martyrdom. Ken Gude of the Center for American Progress says that "It could have serious ramifications for the incoming administration. Most observers expect President-elect Obama to scrap the military commissions and use established US courts for the trial of any Guantánamo detainees. Yet, if the military commission accepts this guilty plea, it could place the Obama administration in a box. It is an unresolved question whether the prohibition on double jeopardy would preclude a separate trial in criminal court, but many legal analysts believe that it does. If so, any move to cancel the military commissions would call into question the validity of Mohammed's conviction, adding an extra layer of risk and uncertainty to the difficult decisions over the military commissions. Furthermore, carrying out the likely death sentence from such a flawed process would only enhance Mohammed's martyrdom in the eyes of his followers." If the trials are seen as illegitimate in the eyes of the world this will only make future terrorism trials more difficult and efforts to protect America more problematic. [The Guardian, [12/8/08](#). Washington Post, [12/10/08](#)]

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S USE OF TORTURE UNDERMINES AMERICA'S CREDIBILITY AND HELPS OUR ENEMIES

Reporter: "And on Khaled Sheikh Mohammad, one of those tactics, of course, widely reported was waterboarding. And that seems to be a tactic we no longer use. Even that you think was appropriate?"

Dick Cheney: "I do." [12/15/08](#)

A bipartisan panel of senators concluded that the abuse of prisoners under American custody is the fault of senior Bush administration officials. The Senate Armed Services Committee report, released by Senators Carl Levin (D) and John McCain (R), says "The abuse of detainees in U.S. custody cannot simply be attributed to the actions of 'a few bad apples' acting on their own... The fact is that senior officials in the United States government solicited information on how to use aggressive techniques, redefined the law to create the appearance of their legality, and authorized their use against detainees." [Washington Post, [12/12/08](#). AP, [12/12/08](#). Senate Armed Services Committee, [12/08](#)]

Torture is against the basic values of this country and hurts our struggle against terrorism. The Administration's "Enhanced Interrogation Techniques" include sleep deprivation, standing for 24 hours at a time, and water boarding - a simulated drowning. By all international standards they are considered torture and cause extreme physical distress. They have done little to make us safer, while providing our enemies with recruiting and propaganda vehicles. As Navy General

Counsel Alberto Mora, who investigated allegations of torture and tried to stop the practices recently explained, “Serving U.S. flag-rank officers... maintain that the first and second identifiable causes of U.S. combat deaths in Iraq – as judged by their effectiveness in recruiting insurgent fighters into combat – are, respectively the symbols of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo.” Moreover, the Senate Armed Services Committee report finds that “Al Qaeda and Taliban terrorists are taught to expect Americans to abuse them. They are recruited based on false propaganda that says the United States is out to destroy Islam. Treating detainees harshly only reinforces that distorted view, increases resistance to cooperation, and creates new enemies.” [Senate Armed Services Committee, [12/08](#). Washington Post, [6/17/08](#)]

Torture doesn’t work. As Richard Clarke says, “I don't know about you, but I'm sure if I were tortured, I think I would come to the same conclusion — that the way to stop the torture would be to say whatever they want.” Retired CIA agents have alleged that the repeated and brutal torture of Khalid Sheikh Mohammed was done in vain. “As for K.S.M. himself, who was waterboarded, reportedly hung for hours on end from his wrists, beaten, and subjected to other agonies for weeks, Bush said he provided ‘many details of other plots to kill innocent Americans’... But according to a former senior C.I.A. official, who read all the interrogation reports on K.S.M., ‘90 percent of it was total fucking bullshit.’ A former Pentagon analyst adds: ‘K.S.M. produced no actionable intelligence. He was trying to tell us how stupid we were.’” [Vanity Fair, [12/16/08](#). CBC, [10/27/08](#)]

Bush administration “interrogation techniques” were modeled after discredited torture methods by totalitarian countries. The tragic irony of the Bush administration’s interrogation techniques is that the abuses it systematically perpetrated are deeply flawed and not designed to extract useful information. The Administration used interrogation techniques from the military’s Survival Evasion Resistance and Escape (SERE) training, which is under the Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA), “an agency whose expertise was in training American personnel to withstand interrogation techniques considered illegal under the Geneva Conventions.” However, “the techniques used in SERE school, based, in part, on Chinese Communist techniques used during the Korean war to elicit false confessions...” The techniques are specifically designed to extract false confessions, rather than useful information. The SERE instructors are also not trained to extract information. “Typically, those who play the part of interrogators in SERE school neither are trained interrogators nor are they qualified to be. These role players are not trained to obtain reliable intelligence information from detainees. Their job is to train our personnel to resist providing reliable information to our enemies.” [Senate Armed Services Committee, [12/08](#)]

BUSH’S POLICIES HAVE UNDERMINED AMERICA’S CREDIBILITY AROUND THE WORLD

“A new Iraq will also need a humane, well-supervised prison system. Under the dictator, prisons like Abu Ghraib were symbols of death and torture.” - George W. Bush, [2004](#)

The policies of the Bush administration have destroyed America’s image, particularly in Muslim nations. The Pew Global Attitudes Project reports that the U.S. image remains abysmal in most Muslim countries in the Middle East and Asia. Favorable views of the U.S. among

important Muslim allies include declines to 9% in Turkey and 15% in Pakistan. [Pew Global Attitudes Project, [6/27/2007](#)]

Foreign reaction to the Abu Ghraib scandal and Guantanamo Bay has had a terrible impact on America's international image, particularly in the Muslim World. Summarizing the foreign press's reaction for Harvard's Nieman Center, John Burke wrote, "Foreign reaction, be it from pro or anti-American nations, was overwhelmingly united. Apart from the disgust over the violent images from the Iraqi prison, the most common sentiment was one of disbelief that the United States stubbornly refuses to discontinue its methods of incarceration by closing the Cuban penitentiary. The foreign press didn't necessarily claim a higher moral ground for their respective nations. But it was universally understood that the image of freedom, democracy and honor that the world's sole superpower portrays is seriously compromised by its prison practices." [Nieman Foundation, [2/20/06](#)]

The abuses have undercut America's message of liberty and democracy. "Prominent Syrian human rights lawyer Anwar al-Bunni said the new photos undermine US credibility in the region, even if they are three years old. 'The interest of the United States lies in promoting democracy and human rights in Syria. The pictures make the US calls sound hollow.'" [CS Monitor, [2/16/06](#)]



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

“Conservation may be a sign of personal virtue, but it is not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy.”- Vice President Richard Cheney, [May 1, 2001](#)

President Bush came into office questioning the existence of climate change and staffed his administration with many climate change deniers. His administration pursued a regressive energy policy that advanced oil interests, undermined the environment, failed to modernize infrastructure, increased U.S. dependence on foreign oil every year, and undermined environmental concerns. On the global stage, the Bush administration made the United States the chief obstacle to establishing an international plan to tackle climate change. This harmed America’s image but also served to send the message that the United States was indifferent to concerns other than its own. Meanwhile, the potential catastrophic effects of climate change have become readily apparent. Catastrophic storms, like Hurricane Katrina, droughts affecting the southeastern United States, flooding in the midwest, and forest fires in the west all have links to climate change. While the president frequently set forth lofty goals in his more recent State of the Union addresses, little action was ever taken and no strategy was developed to address climate change and reduce America’s fossil fuel dependence. Additionally, the disastrous foreign policy of the Bush administration, especially toward the Middle East has created instability in oil markets and placed a security premium on the price of fuel. We have lost time over the last eight years – and we are more dependent on fossil fuels than ever.

BUSH’S OBSTINATE APPROACH TO CLIMATE CHANGE HAS DAMAGED AMERICA’S RELATIONSHIP WITH ITS CLOSEST ALLIES

“Kyoto would have wrecked our economy. I couldn't in good faith have signed Kyoto.”- George W. Bush, [June 30, 2005](#)

A staged walk out at the UN Climate Change Conference in Montreal in 2005 epitomizes the Bush administration’s approach to climate change. In Montreal, the Bush administration orchestrated a walk out from a round of informal discussions aimed at finding new ways of curbing greenhouse gas emissions. “The walkout was widely seen here as the capstone of two weeks of American efforts to prevent any fresh initiatives from being discussed.” [NY Times, [12/9/05](#)]

On the Kyoto Protocol, U.S. is the “Rogue Nation.” “President Bush may have spoken loftily about American leadership on global warming, but the reality is that he has missed the boat — instead, the international community will now be focusing its efforts on bringing Washington on

board, as unlikely as that may look right now.” The U.S. is now the only industrialized nation not to have signed the treaty. [TIME, [7/21/01](#). BBC, [4/6/01](#)]

Bush damages relations with allies over Kyoto. “US President George W Bush's refusal to be part of the Kyoto accord to slow down global warming has insulted his European allies and caused a serious cooling down of transatlantic relations.” [BBC, [4/6/01](#)]

European Parliament condemns Bush on climate change. The European Parliament issued a severe condemnation of the Bush administration’s stance on the Kyoto Protocol. In the resolution it said the EP was, “appalled that the long-term interests of most of the world's population were being sacrificed for short-term corporate greed in the US.” [BBC, [4/6/01](#)]

AMERICA IS DEPENDENT ON FOREIGN OIL AND VULNERABLE TO THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE

“America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world.” - George Bush, State of the Union Address 2006

We are more vulnerable to natural disasters and terrorist attacks because the Bush administration failed to modernize our energy infrastructure and diversify distribution channels. The August 2003 blackouts served as a stark reminder of the vulnerable and antiquated nature of our energy infrastructure, yet no steps have been taken to modernize it. Also, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita exposed the risk of storing all our strategic petroleum reserves in the Gulf Coast area, but no steps have been taken to diversify away from this region. [NSN, [5/08](#)]

National Intelligence Council warns of the dangers from climate change. Due to concerns over “climate refugees,” unilateral resource wars, and an increase in destructive weather events the National Intelligence Council (NIC) warns America and the new President about the impact climate change can have on national security. The “Global Trends 2025” report finds that “Many scientists worry that recent assessments underestimate the impact of climate change and misjudge the likely time when effects will be felt. Scientists currently have limited capability to predict the likelihood or magnitude of extreme climate shifts but believe—based on historic precedents—that it will not occur gradually or smoothly. Drastic cutbacks in allowable CO2 emissions probably would disadvantage the rapidly emerging economies that are still low on the efficiency curve, but large-scale users in the developed world—such as the US—also would be shaken and the global economy could be plunged into a recession or worse.”[Global Trends 2025, [11/08](#)]

Despite east coast and midwest blackouts, the Bush administration has done little to fix vulnerabilities to America’s energy infrastructure. In 2003, Vice President Cheney said, “For the sake of our economic security and our national security, we must modernize our energy infrastructure.” However, according to the U.S. Senate Democratic Policy Committee, “The Administration has not fully funded programs that will make our electrical grid more reliable. The budget request for electricity reliability research and development for Fiscal Year 2007 is just over half the authorized level of \$240 million.”[DPC, [2/8/06](#)]

A RECKLESS FOREIGN POLICY HURTS AMERICA'S ENERGY SECURITY

The Bush administration's decision to invade Iraq and its failure to manage the security situation has hurt our energy security. Since the invasion, there have been repeated attacks on Iraqi oil pipelines, facilities, and personnel, and production has stagnated at prewar levels. The invasion of Iraq also increased the threat of terrorism by creating a training, recruiting, and fundraising magnet for Islamic terrorists in the heart of the world's most vital energy producing region. In addition, there have been frequent terrorist attacks on oil installations in the Middle East. These often spur mini-spikes in oil prices, increasing fears of vulnerability and driving-up the security premium. [Institute for Global Security, [3/27/08](#). NY Times, [5/11/08](#). Senate Joint Economic Committee, [11/11/07](#). CSIS, [11/30/04](#). Reuters, [5/31/08](#). Yemen Observer, [4/05/08](#). Fox News, [9/15/06](#). BBC, [2/24/06](#)]

Ceaseless confrontation with Iran has raised costly speculation about a future oil shock. John Kilduff observed: "Well, I think at this point, the problem we have... is statements from the President and the Vice President, almost on a daily basis lately, really raising the rhetoric, raising the temperature on the situation... And this is the mother of all supply fears, the mother of all supply threats. Not only the Iranian oil, but the Strait of Hormuz, where 25 percent of the world's oil flows, that's 100 percent Western-friendly, could easily be blocked by the Iranians." [NewsHour, [10/26/07](#)]

BUSH BLOCKED DOMESTIC ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND DID LITTLE TO INVEST IN RENEWABLE ENERGY

Reporter: "Does the President believe we need to correct our lifestyles to address the energy problem?"

Ari Fleischer: "That's a big no. The President believes that it's an American way of life, and that it should be the goal of policy makers to protect the American way of life." – Ari Fleischer, White House Press Briefing, [May 7, 2001](#)

Bush administration interferes with states to stop action on climate change. EPA administrator Stephen Johnson refused "to let California set limits on the greenhouse gas emissions of automobiles, the head of the Environmental Protection Agency insisted before a Senate committee Thursday that climate change posed no 'compelling and extraordinary' risk to the state." [Washington Post, [1/28/08](#)]

EPA administrator left because of Bush administration's efforts to ease pollution controls. Bush's first EPA administrator, Christine Whitman, left her position because of Vice President "Cheney's insistence on easing air pollution controls, not the personal reasons she cited at the time." [Washington Post, [6/27/07](#)]

Cheney's energy task force reflected interests of oil companies and ignored environmental concerns. Documents obtained in 2005 show that, "officials from Exxon Mobil Corp., Conoco (before its merger with Phillips), Shell Oil Co., and BP America Inc. met in the White House complex with the Cheney aides who were developing a national energy policy, parts of which

became law... The task force's activities attracted complaints from environmentalists, who said they were shut out of the task force discussions while corporate interests were present. The meetings were held in secret and the White House refused to release a list of participants.” [Washington Post, [11/16/05](#)]

The top climate scientist at NASA says the Bush administration tried to stop him from speaking out on climate change. James Hansen “says the administration tried to silence him after he gave a speech last month with this warning: ‘We're getting very close to a tipping point in the climate system. If we don't get off our 'business as usual' scenario and begin to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, we're going to get big climate changes.’” [Washington Post, [1/29/06](#). ABC, [1/29/06](#)]

Courts reject Bush administration policies on energy and environment. “A three-judge federal appeals panel in Washington struck down... the Environmental Protection Agency limits on mercury emissions from coal-fired power plants.” [Washington Post, [2/9/08](#)]

The Bush administration has been all talk and no action. The day after President Bush pledged in his State of the Union Address to “replace more than 75% of oil imports from the Middle East by 2025,” Secretary of Energy Samuel Bodman quickly backed away from the pledge, saying it “was purely an example: and should not be taken literally.” Instead, the U.S. has become more dependent on foreign oil each of the last eight years. [NSN, [5/08](#)]



THE ECONOMY

REPORTER: *“What's your advice to the average American who is hurting now, facing the prospect of \$4 a gallon gasoline, a lot of people facing --*

THE PRESIDENT: *Wait, what did you just say? You're predicting \$4 a gallon gasoline?... That's interesting. I hadn't heard that.” ~George W. Bush, [February 28, 2008](#)*

America’s economic performance and its position as a world leader are inextricably linked. Our success in two World Wars and the Cold War was largely due to America's industrial might at home and our ability to mobilize the world's largest manufacturing power for wartime production. In peacetime, our economic growth and innovation were the envy of the world and underscored the American promise of personal and societal liberty and opportunity for all.

When President Bush came to office, he enjoyed a significant surplus and a strong economy. Eight years later the administration leaves an economic legacy that has undermined America’s strength and competitiveness. After helping plunge the United States into its worst financial crisis in more than half a century, President Bush failed to show international leadership, undermining America’s position in the world. Moreover, President Bush failed to address healthcare reform, energy security, broadband policy, or education funding doing grave damage to America’s competitiveness. There is no question that the President’s economic policies have made us weaker both at home and abroad.

BUSH ADMINISTRATION OVERSAW THE WORST ECONOMIC CRISIS SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION

The United States is currently dealing with the worst economic crisis since the 1930s. Mark Gertler an NYU economist discussed the current economy saying, "This has been the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression. There is no question about it." [WS Journal [9/18/08](#).]

Bush’s poor policies and his personnel choices aggravated the financial crisis. “Bush's early personnel choices and overarching antipathy toward regulation created a climate that, if it did not trigger the turmoil, almost certainly aggravated it.” Moreover, the administration ignored warning signs. “The Bush administration backed off proposed crackdowns on no-money-down, interest-only mortgages years before the economy collapsed, buckling to pressure from some of the same banks that have now failed. It ignored remarkably prescient warnings that foretold the financial meltdown...The administration's blind eye to the impending crisis is emblematic of its governing philosophy, which trusted market forces and discounted the value of government intervention in the economy. Its belief ironically has ushered in the most massive government intervention since the 1930s.” [AP via FOX News, [12/01/08](#). IHT, [9/20/08](#)]

The Bush administration's ineffective and inconsistent response to the crisis has failed to calm capital markets or improve the economy. As late as 2007, the President publicly quoted Treasury Secretary Paulson saying, "This is far and away the strongest global economy I've seen in my business lifetime." Following the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the President said, "In the long run, I'm confident that our capital markets are flexible and resilient and can deal with these adjustments." Once the president and the administration realized that there was a problem, their response was inconsistent and poorly managed. When a financial rescue package was first being discussed, President Bush opposed it, only to turn around days later and call for \$700 billion. According to a GAO report, once an agreement was reached there was no accountability as the bailout money was distributed without an adequate "oversight and monitoring function." [CNN, [8/8/07](#), Washington Post, [9/15/08](#). USA Today, [2/28/08](#). IHT, [9/25/08](#). Fox Business, [12/2/08](#). GAO, [12/08](#)]

BUSH'S ECONOMIC POLICIES HAVE REDUCED AMERICA'S INFLUENCE IN THE WORLD

America's economy reinforces its position in the world and the recent financial crisis is undermining our strength. "America's economy underpins our position as the world's most powerful nation. Our success in two world wars and the Cold War was largely due to America's industrial might at home and our ability to mobilize the world's largest manufacturing power for wartime production." However, for eight years the Bush administration allowed our financial markets to leverage themselves toward disaster. At the same time, its profligate military spending on a war in Iraq that should never have been waged has left us in a tenuous global position. [IHT, [9/20/08](#). Cincinnati Enquirer, [10/18/08](#). AP via FOX News, [12/01/08](#)]

The Bush administration's inability to balance budgets has weakened our position vis-à-vis China. "The run-up of U.S. debt testifies to the shift of the global economic center of gravity. The \$127 billion budget surplus Bush took over will melt into what is projected to be a record deficit of \$482 billion in the year starting Oct. 1." "During the same span, China's holdings of U.S. government securities mushroomed to \$504 billion from \$62 billion. China is now the second-biggest U.S. government creditor behind Japan, with \$584 billion." [Bloomberg, [9/15/08](#). Reuters, [9/09/08](#). NY Times, [9/14/08](#)]

There are national security elements to failed industries, such as the auto industry. As Former NATO Commander Wesley Clark wrote in the *New York Times*, "aiding the American automobile industry is not only an economic imperative, but also a national security imperative. When President Dwight Eisenhower observed that America's greatest strength wasn't its military, but its economy, he must have had companies like General Motors and Ford in mind." [NY Times, [11/17/08](#). NSN, [10/6/08](#)]

In the age of American capitalism, global leadership during the economic crisis has come from elsewhere, undermining America's credibility. The contours of what became the global consensus response appear to have originated with the UK government and were initially opposed by the U.S. "The sweeping measures began early Monday as Britain pledged to spend billions in taxpayer money to shore up battered banks. The British Treasury said the initial steps could be worth \$64 billion to three banks. In effect, the moves mean the partial nationalization of

those institutions: the Royal Bank of Scotland, HBOS and Lloyds TSB.” “As recently as Sept. 23, senior officials had publicly derided proposals by Democrats to have the government take ownership stakes in banks. The Treasury Department’s surprising turnaround on the issue of buying stock in banks, which has now become its primary focus, has raised questions about whether the administration squandered valuable time in trying to sell Congress on a plan that officials had failed to think through in advance.” The Bush administration’s inability to lead the globe has been evident for the past seven years. It was most evident during the invasion of Iraq but has been evident in other critical issues such as crafting an international response to global warming. The financial crisis is simply the latest example. [NY Times, [10/13/08](#). NY Times, [10/12/08](#)]

BUSH’S POLICIES HAVE UNDERMINED AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS

Lack of health care reform is affecting the U.S. economy, and hurting our global competitiveness. James Kvaal at the Center for American Progress assesses that American healthcare is “far and away the most expensive health care system in the world” and has consumed “an increasing share of our nation’s resources,” a share that is expected to grow larger in years to come. The report also finds that “rising health care costs put a particular burden on U.S. businesses, which have been the primary source of health coverage for nearly 75 years. Today, the majority of Americans—158 million people—receive health coverage from their job or a family member’s job. Higher health insurance premiums translate directly into higher labor costs, forcing employers to cut back their workforces. A 20 percent increase in health insurance premiums would cost 3.5 million workers their jobs.” Additionally, “[r]ising health care costs will drive up taxes and premiums, eating up 95 percent of the growth in per capita gross domestic product between 2005 and 2050.” These findings have clear and troubling implications for the U.S.’s global economic position, making the need for reform all the more important. [CAP, [12/09/08](#)]

The president’s policies have led to unpredictable and high-spiking energy prices, which have hurt our economy. The U.S. has become more dependent on foreign oil each of the last eight years. The president’s foreign policy has also had a direct effect on gas prices. Since the invasion of Iraq, there have been repeated attacks on Iraqi oil pipelines, facilities, and personnel, and production has stagnated at prewar levels. The invasion of Iraq also increased the threat of terrorism by creating a training, recruiting and fundraising magnet for Islamic terrorists in the heart of the world’s most vital energy producing region. In addition, there have been frequent terrorist attacks on oil installations in the Middle East. These often spur mini-spikes in oil prices, increasing fears of vulnerability. [NSN, [5/08](#). Institute for Global Security, [3/27/08](#). NY Times, [5/11/08](#). Senate Joint Economic Committee, [11/11/07](#). CSIS, [11/30/04](#). Reuters, [5/31/08](#). Yemen Observer, [4/05/08](#). Fox News, [9/15/06](#). BBC, [2/24/06](#)]

The U.S. is the only industrialized state without national broadband policy, falling behind other countries. “In the first three years of the Bush administration, the United States dropped from 4th to 13th place in global rankings of broadband Internet usage. Today, most U.S. homes can access only “basic” broadband, among the slowest, most expensive, and least reliable in the developed world, and the United States has fallen even further behind in mobile-phone-based Internet access. The lag is arguably the result of the Bush administration’s failure to make

developing these networks a priority. In fact, the United States is the only industrialized state without an explicit national policy for promoting broadband.” [Foreign Affairs, [May/June 2005](#)]

An educated population is critical to maintaining American competitiveness. John Podesta and Cynthia Brown of the Center for American Progress write that “The intense competition of the global economy demands that all of America’s young people receive the kind of education they need and deserve.” The system is plagued by inequality. Fareed Zakaria writes that “This will, over time, translate into a competitiveness problem, because if the United States cannot educate and train a third of the working population to compete in a knowledge economy, this will drag down the country.” President Bush’s only major education initiative, No Child Left Behind, generated controversy for its emphasis on testing, and failed to receive sufficient funding. “Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (N.Y.), who voted for the bill in 2001, has since criticized its impact and vowed to ’end the unfunded mandate known as No Child Left Behind.’” In the midst of the current financial crisis, it is critical that education remain a priority. Without it, America’s competitiveness will decrease over time, undermining our place in the world and eventually threatening our security. [CAP, [8/1/08](#). Foreign Affairs, [May/June 2008](#). Washington Post, [1/8/08](#)]



NONPROLIFERATION

“The greatest threat before humanity today is the possibility of secret and sudden attack with chemical or biological or radiological or nuclear weapons.” – President George W. Bush, [February 11, 2004](#)

After eight years in the White House, President Bush leaves behind a nonproliferation legacy marked by incompetence and neglect that has left America more vulnerable. When the President came to office, North Korea had no nuclear weapons and Iran’s nuclear development was in its infancy. But Bush will leave office with North Korea having developed nuclear weapons and Iran rapidly developing its nuclear capabilities. The Bush administration slowed funding and pursued an ideological agenda that has undermined nonproliferation and arms reduction efforts with Russia. The Bush administration’s attempts at addressing nuclear terrorism have been similarly flawed. While the President himself has called nuclear terrorism the most serious threat to the U.S., his administration has neglected warnings from think tanks, commissions, and members of both political parties, failing to shore up critical weaknesses identified by the 9/11 Commission that leave our country vulnerable to an unconventional nuclear attack. Finally, President Bush’s policies undermined specific treaties and institutions as well as international consensus in favor of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. Bush’s policies made the world more dangerous at home and abroad and endangered the nonproliferation regime, one of the most successful instances of international cooperation aimed at risk reduction.

LITTLE PROGRESS IN REDUCING STATE-BASED NUCLEAR THREATS

“The gravest danger our Nation faces lies at the crossroads of radicalism and technology. Our enemies have openly declared that they are seeking weapons of mass destruction, and evidence indicates that they are doing so with determination.” – President George W. Bush, September 9, 2002

Saber rattling toward Iran from the Bush administration has done nothing to halt Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons. Iran has drawn closer to reaching nuclear “breakout” capability, now operating as many as 5,000 centrifuges at its central enrichment plant in Natanz. Iran’s steady progress has led Mohammed El Baradei, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, to call the last five years of efforts to contain Iran’s nuclear ambitions a “failure.” [AP, [11/26/08](#). LA Times, [12/06/08](#)]

The Bush administration abandoned the Clinton-era framework for curbing North Korea’s nuclear ambitions; today North Korea has nuclear weapons. For the first 6 years of his administration, President Bush reversed the Clinton-era policy of engaging directly with

North Korea – a policy that was working. By the time the Bush administration had belatedly opted to re-engage, North Korea had developed enough material for approximately 10 nuclear bombs and even tested a device in 2006. [Washington Post, [10/9/06](#)]

Insistence on Missile Defense has undermined vital cooperation on nuclear arms reduction. The New York Times assessed that the Bush administration’s “relentless drive for missile defense” has “made Mr. Putin’s job even easier, feeding nationalist resentments.” Heightened animosity between the U.S. and Russia manifested itself this summer, when Russia pulled out of a critical nuclear arms control deal following the Russia-Georgia crisis. Yet the threat from ballistic missiles has, according to nonproliferation expert Joe Cirincione, “steadily declined over the past 20 years. There is no imminent, new ballistic missile threat. The threat from a North Korean or Iranian long-range missile is still largely hypothetical. The GAO reports that while there has been some progress [on missile defense], overall ‘costs have grown and less work is being completed than planned.’ In other words, we are spending more and getting less.” [NY Times, [8/11/08](#). Washington Post, [9/07/08](#). Center for American Progress, [5/8/07](#)]

U.S. REMAINS DANGEROUSLY VULNERABLE TO NUCLEAR TERRORIST ATTACK

Bipartisan Report: Bush administration has fallen short when it comes to protecting the nation from nuclear terrorism. A bipartisan commission, led by Lee Hamilton, Warren Rudman, and Thomas Kean, gave the bush administration a C for its efforts to prevent catastrophic nuclear terrorism. [Partnership for a Secure America, [8/25/08](#)]

Lack of Bush administration urgency to reduce threat of nuclear terrorism has made attack “more likely than not.” A report by the Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism found that the U.S. has not treated the threat of nuclear terrorism with sufficient urgency, a course, which if continued, makes it “more likely than not that a weapon of mass destruction will be used in a terrorist attack somewhere in the world by the end of 2013.” [Report of the Commission on the Prevention of WMD Proliferation and Terrorism, [12/08](#)]

Bush administration intransigence has even undermined its own attempts to reduce the threat of nuclear terrorism. In 2003, the Bush administration introduced the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) intended to combat the illegal transport of nuclear devices at sea. But by refusing to ratify the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, they failed to provide the legal basis for the type of intervention that the PSI demands, undermining its own initiative. [Larry Korb, [1/04/05](#)]

BUSH ADMINISTRATION HAS REPEATEDLY SCUTTLED ATTEMPTS TO STRENGTHEN NONPROLIFERATION REGIME

“We need a new framework that allows us to build missile defenses to counter the different threats of today’s world. To do so, we must move beyond the constraints of the 30 year old ABM Treaty. This treaty does not recognize the present, or point us to the future. It enshrines the past. No treaty that prevents us from addressing today’s threats, that prohibits us from pursuing

promising technology to defend ourselves, our friends and our allies is in our interests or in the interests of world peace.” – President George W. Bush, [May 1, 2001](#)

The Bush administration withdrew from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. In 2001 the Bush administration withdrew from the Anti Ballistic Missile Treaty in order to build a missile defense system, a move that “has already provoked Russia to increase its nuclear capabilities and may well provoke China to do the same.” [Center for American Progress, [8/9/04](#)]

Withdrawal from Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty sent a dangerous signal to the rest of the world. The Bush administration made clear that it had “no intention of seeking ratification of the 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty,” a move that helped to “paralyze one of the most hopeful products of the post-World War II era: the global arms control and disarmament movement.” [San Francisco Chronicle, [4/06/03](#)]

President Bush’s support for tactical nuclear weapons has further undermined the legitimacy of the nonproliferation regime. The Bush administration has continually sought funds to develop tactical nuclear weapons or “bunker busters,” a plan that Strategic Forces Chairperson Rep. Ellen Tauscher called “a waste of money on a weapon commanders in the field have not asked for,” which “may trigger a new global nuclear arms race.” [Washington Post, [2/09/05](#)]

By stonewalling the 2005 review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Bush administration put global nonproliferation efforts in jeopardy. “Though President Bush has repeatedly declared that nuclear proliferation, including the risk of terrorists' obtaining a nuclear weapon, is the biggest single threat to the United States, the administration decided against sending Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the conference, leaving arguments to midlevel diplomats,” a move that helped doom the talks to failure. [NY Times, [5/28/05](#)]



GEOPOLITICS AND DIPLOMACY

“If we're an arrogant nation, they'll resent us; if we're a humble nation, but strong, they'll welcome us. And our nation stands alone right now in the world in terms of power, and that's why we've got to be humble, and yet project strength in a way that promotes freedom.” – George W. Bush, [October 12, 2000](#)

In 2000, then-Governor Bush ran for president on a foreign policy agenda that pledged to refocus on the great power relationships and traditional geopolitical challenges. Over the last eight years, however, America's image and its geopolitical influence have declined together. Relations with Europe, Russia, and Latin America remain strained. Where the President has sought to forge new strategic relationships, few have emerged with fewer concrete results.

Instead of pursuing his initial more realist vision, following the attacks of September 11th President Bush sought to advance a “freedom agenda” of transforming the world by promoting democracy and capitalism. The invasion of Iraq was supposed to be the central element of this new vision. Instead, it destroyed the massive international support for the U.S. that had developed following 9/11, damaged America's image in the world, and tainted the very ideals he claimed to be advancing. Moreover, the decline in America's international standing was exacerbated by the Bush administration's exceptionally poor use of diplomacy to advance U.S. national interests. As former Republican Secretary of State James Baker said, it is important “to understand the need to use all of the elements of national power. And that means diplomacy and the political elements and the economic elements.” Unfortunately, the Bush administration has consistently failed to achieve tangible “deliverables” in international summits and negotiations.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH GREAT POWERS HAVE STAGNATED OR DECLINED

“I looked the man in the eye. I found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy. We had a very good dialogue. I was able to get a sense of his soul.” – George W. Bush, [June 16, 2001](#)

“Now, you're thinking of Europe as Germany and France. I don't. I think that's old Europe.” – Donald Rumsfeld, [January 22, 2003](#)

The Bush administration has had a woeful approach toward Russia. Seven years after he looked into Vladimir Putin's soul, President Bush's Russia policy is in tatters. From its outset, the Bush administration adopted a personality driven approach toward relations with Russia that sought to ensure the warm relationship between Bush and Putin above all else. This strategy has backfired greatly as Putin used the support to oppose and block U.S. interests – by suppressing civil society and democratic institutions in Russia, intimidating Western-leaning neighbors, and

expanding economic and energy ties with Iran. Last summer's crisis in Georgia exposed the U.S. failure to build influence over Russia – and was partially precipitated by Bush's careless security assurances. President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations Les Gelb observed that "Bush thinks when he calls Putin, they are soul mates, and when he expresses a desire for Putin to do something, he will do it. [Putin] had other reasons for going into Georgia than the personal relations with the president of the United States." [President Bush, [6/16/01](#). Freedom House, [7/27/06](#). NTI, [February 2003](#). Reuters, [8/26/08](#). Washington Post, [8/27/08](#)]

The Bush administration has greatly damaged the U.S.-European relationship. President Bush has mismanaged our relations with some of our closest European allies. Former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's infamous reference to France and Germany as "old Europe" in the lead up to the Iraq war was emblematic of the Bush administration's dismissive approach. From the unilateral decision to invade Iraq, to the treatment of Guantanamo Bay detainees, to its lack of concern for climate change, the Bush administration has driven numerous wedges between the U.S. and Europe, leaving the relationship in disarray. The poor state of the relationship has negatively affected America's ability to advance Bush administration priorities such as a securing a new global trade agreement, countering Iranian nuclear development, and expanding NATO. The Administration's abrasive and dismissive treatment of our allies has hastened the collapse of support for NATO's mission in Afghanistan. This past year the Bush administration was unable to obtain additional troop commitments from Europe. "Referring to American pressure on Germany, Peter Schmidt, a security analyst at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs in Berlin, said, 'Partners in an alliance have to also understand the domestic debates in a partner country like Germany.' He added: 'The Americans quite often show up in Europe and the President tells us, "Look I'll never get that through Congress." Something similar is happening here.'" [Donald Rumsfeld, [1/23/03](#). NY Times, [11/16/03](#). Foreign Affairs, [July/August 2008](#). Washington Post, [7/2/05](#). NY Times, [2/07/08](#)]

After eight years, the Bush administration has little to show for its approach toward China. Not only has the Bush administration failed to forge a new strategic understanding with China, but it has also failed to make progress in advancing basic U.S. interests. On key issues, including China's currency and trade imbalance, its human rights record, its stance on food and product safety, its support for dictators in Zimbabwe and Sudan, the Bush administration has little or nothing to show after seven years in office. On energy and the environment, China has overtaken the U.S. as the world's largest polluter further worsening the climate crisis, but the Bush administration instead of leading on this issue has obstructed international action. [The Guardian, [6/13/8](#). NY Times, [10/30/07](#). [NSN China Policy Paper](#)]

Bush's travels to international summits and meetings achieved few deliverables and little but photo-ops. Prior to President Bush's 2005 tour of Asia, National Security Advisor Stephen Hadley "predicted to reporters in the back of the plane that the four-nation trip would yield no 'headline breakthroughs.' He turned out to be right." The Washington Post confirms that "On a wide variety of issues, from trade to security to human rights, Bush won no concrete agreements from any of his summit partners." The trip "designed as a grand tour of Asia to highlight President Bush's international stature" turned out to be an "odyssey of frustration," largely due to "growing criticism of the war in Iraq." [BBC, [11/15/05](#). Washington Post, [11/20/05](#). US News and World Report, [11/20/05](#). Ted Koppel, [11/14/08](#)]

LITTLE ADVANCEMENT IN RELATIONSHIP WITH RISING POWERS AND DEVELOPING WORLD

“I will look South, not as an afterthought, but as a fundamental commitment of my presidency.”
– George W. Bush, [August 25, 2000](#)

Despite promising to focus on Latin America, President Bush has left U.S. policy toward the region adrift. During the 2000 Presidential campaign, George W. Bush vowed to focus on Latin America. President Bush did not match his campaign promise with action. Instead, U.S. policy toward Latin America has been plagued by neglect. At the 2005 Summit of Americas, Latin America heads of state met him with complaints about “his administration’s neglect of and indifference to the region for five years.” Anti-Americanism in the region has festered, and the U.S. has lost trade ground to China and Europe. Sebastian Edwards, a UCLA professor and former Latin America economist at the World Bank summed up the Bush record: “The Bush administration has virtually no legacy in Latin America.” Riordan Roett, of the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies shared Edwards’ assessment, saying “Certainly, there is no consistent pattern of interest or concern in the administration for Latin America.” [NPR, [11/5/05](#). NY Times, [11/2/05](#). LA Times, [11/13/08](#). McClatchy, [3/1/08](#)]

While the Bush administration has made progress on health and development issues in Africa, it lacks a broader comprehensive strategy for the continent. Jeffrey Sachs, a professor at Columbia University in New York explained that “He’s [President Bush] accomplished one thing, which is the scaling up access to AIDS treatment” and that has “made a big difference... Everything else about Africa, we’ve done nothing.” Joel Barkan, a scholar at the Center for Strategic & International Studies in Washington argues that despite this progress the Bush administration has shown both an “inability to move on any international solution on Darfur and a slackening of support for democratization on Africa.” [Bloomberg, [2/15/08](#)]

Despite overtures, the Bush White House has not succeeded in forging a new relationship with Brazil, the world’s 9th largest economy, and its relationship with India, the world’s largest democracy, has not led to broad or reliable regional gains. Some notable successes have marked the Bush administration’s policy toward Brazil, including a 2007 agreement on ethanol and alternative fuel production. However, Bush’s efforts to translate these victories into a broader strengthening of the U.S. – Brazil relationship have fallen short. For instance, in 2003, Brazil, one of the world’s leaders in steel production, along with several other countries, successfully forced a repeal of a Bush administration steel tariff, an embarrassing reversal for the White House. Brazil spurned the U.S. again in 2007, when Brazil’s President, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, “flatly rejected President Bush’s proposals for parallel global negotiations to combat climate change, insisting that countries come to agreement at the United Nations, and not under US leadership.” Additionally, Realist scholar Stephen Walt faults the Administration’s engagement with India as “paying too high a price” with little or no pay off on Iraq, Iran, trade, and other issues of key importance to the U.S. [Fox News, [3/09/07](#). Washington Post, [12/01/03](#). The Guardian, [6/04/07](#). Foreign Policy, [1/8/09](#)]

BUSH RECORD ON TRADE AND DEMOCRATIZATION – THE CRUCIAL ELEMENTS OF HIS “FREEDOM AGENDA” – WAS DISASTROUS

“So it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.” President George W. Bush, Second Inaugural Address, [January 20, 2005](#)

Bush administration policies have tainted America’s democracy promotion agenda. The Bush administration, by giving only insubstantial and inconsistent support for democracy promotion, has done great damage to one of America’s best exports. From Iraq to Lebanon to the Palestinian territories, the Bush administration gave democracy promotion a bad name by placing emphasis solely on elections, while ignoring liberal institutions, individual rights, rule of law, and the role of civil society that are necessary to build long-lasting democracy. However, Bush has kept silent on the various illiberal policies of nations like Russia and Pakistan when their leaders offered lip service to some of Bush’s favored policies and has even refused to increase the budget for democracy promotion programs over Congress’ insistence. [Washington Post [8/20/08](#). Washington Post, [8/27/08](#)]

Doha round of the WTO collapsed because of a lack of diplomacy. The current Doha Development Round of the WTO negotiations was intended to tear down trade barriers – a fundamental objective of the Bush administration. However, the negotiations broke down this summer after the United States and India could not reach a compromise on agricultural import rules, resulting in the failure of an agreement that the Bush administration wanted. At the summit, “Trade ministers failed in a marathon nine-day session to agree to trade-offs that would make a Doha deal palatable to leading economies, with India and the United States unable to resolve their differences over barriers to farm markets.” As C. Fred Bergsten, Director of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, states in Foreign Affairs, “The failure of Doha has terminated the Bush administration's key multilateral trade initiative.” [WSJ, [2/2/07](#). Reuters, [7/30/08](#). Foreign Affairs, [8/27/08](#)]

Bush sought to expand trade through bi-lateral free trade agreements, but expert economists say these have little value. “Although the amount of activity involved in pursuing FTAs was certainly impressive, economists had serious doubts about their value. ‘Nearly all scholars of international economics today are fiercely skeptical, even hostile, to such agreements,’ the Columbia University economists Jagdish Bhagwati and Arvind Panagariya argue in the *Financial Times*.” [WSJ, [7/30/08](#)]

UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE BEEN UNDERCUT

“John Bolton is personally committed to the future success of the United Nations and he will be a strong voice for reform.” – Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, [March 7, 2005](#)

Bush administration claimed it was in favor of UN reform, but U.S. became the principal obstacle as Ambassador John Bolton torpedoed the reform process. The Bush administration was publicly very supportive of the UN efforts to implement reform. But through his

appointment of John Bolton – a man who could not be confirmed by a Republican controlled Senate and who once said “If the U.N. secretary building in New York lost 10 stories, it wouldn't make a bit of difference” – the President ensured that little progress on reform would occur. The Washington Post reported that “Some U.N. officials privately blamed Bolton for sabotaging the organization's reform initiative by stirring differences between poor and rich countries.” South Africa's ambassador, Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo, chairman of a coalition of developing nations, told the Washington Post that it appeared that “Ambassador Bolton wants to prove nothing works at the United Nations.” The Guardian noted that “the [UN] secretariat hold him responsible for the fissure. Bolton's idea is to go in and say this is what we want, and when people don't immediately agree, he says the UN is unreformable.” [Department of State, [3/21/05](#). NY Times, [3/8/05](#). Guardian, [7/28/06](#). Washington Post, [12/5/06](#)]

President Bush refused to engage on U.N. conventions that have been universally accepted.

There are a number of important U.N conventions that the Bush administration has either chosen not to sign, or in the case of the Law of the Seas Treaty. Such conventions include: the Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. As Spencer Boyer of the Center for American Progress noted, “None of these agreements are perfect, yet each agreement was painfully negotiated for years, has been ratified by the vast majority of U.N. member states, and is on balance in the American interest. It is worth noting that the United States is the only industrialized country not to have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, while Somalia is the only other member of the United Nations who has refused to ratify the Children's Rights Convention.” [Center for American Progress, [2007](#)]

AMERICA'S IMAGE AROUND THE GLOBE HAS DETERIORATED

*“Our coalition is strong. It'll remain strong, so long as I'm the president.” –
President George W. Bush, [September 30, 2004](#)*

Global respect for the United States is evaporating, even among our closest allies. Only 30 percent of Germans now have a positive view of the United States, down from 78 percent before Bush took office in January 2001. In Turkey, a Muslim democracy and NATO ally, only 9 percent now have a favorable view, down from 52 percent in late 2001. Most alarming is that just 51 percent of Britons – our partner in Iraq and our most reliable ally - now hold favorable views of the United States, down from 75 percent before the Iraq invasion. [IHT, [6/27/07](#). Pew Global Attitudes Project, [6/27/07](#). NY Times, [2/07/08](#)]

In Iraq, the Bush administration's “coalition of the willing” has crumbled. Now, “Five years after the invasion of Iraq, the United States is finding it harder than ever to garner international support for military operations in the country, as even staunch allies such as Britain have pulled out much of their forces.” The Washington Post reported that “The Coalition of the Willing appears to be going out of business” and “a senior administration official... said the number of coalition members will shrink to a ‘handful’ in the next few months.” CBS reports that “the alliance is crumbling.” [Reuters, [9/9/08](#). Global Security, [3/20/08](#). Washington Post, [9/10/08](#). CBS, [10/9/08](#)]