

How Bush Screwed Us All (the 1st Term)

January 2001

20 On the day of George W. Bush's inauguration, Chief of Staff Andrew Card issues a sixty-day moratorium halting all new health, safety, and environmental regulations issued in the final days of the Clinton administration.

23 On the twenty-eighth anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision, Bush reinstates the "global gag rule" barring U.S. funding for abortion counseling abroad.

February 2001

5 Bush suspends Clinton's "roadless rule" protecting nearly sixty million acres of forests from logging and road-building.

17 Bush signs four anti-union executive orders, including measures to prohibit "project labor agreements" at federal construction sites and to remove job protections for union employees whose companies lose federal contracts.

26 Senate Republicans introduce a bill to open up the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil exploration.

March 2001

7 At the urging of President Bush, Congress repeals ergonomic regulations designed to protect workers from repetitive-stress injuries.

9 Bush issues an executive order to prevent mechanics at Northwest Airlines from going on strike.

14 Bush abandons his campaign pledge to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from power plants.

20 Bush administration moves to overturn a Clinton regulation reducing the allowable level of arsenic in drinking water.

28 Bush backs out of Kyoto treaty on global warming.

April 2001

4 United States Department of Agriculture proposes lifting a requirement that all beef used in federal school lunch programs must be tested for salmonella; the proposal is dropped two days later.

9 Department of Interior proposes a limit on lawsuits seeking protection of endangered species.

May 2001

11 **Bush administration abandons international effort to crack down on offshore tax havens.**

16 Vice President Dick Cheney's task force releases its "National Energy Policy" report, calling for weaker environmental regulations and massive subsidies for the oil and gas, coal, and nuclear power industries.

26 **Congress passes \$1.35 trillion tax cut.**

29 Bush meets with California governor Gray Davis but refuses to impose federal price controls to curtail California's energy crisis.

June 2001

19 Cheney refuses to release records of energy task force meetings to the General Accounting Office.

21 Bush threatens to veto McCain-Kennedy patients' bill of rights legislation.

28 Attorney General John Ashcroft announces a policy that would require gun records be destroyed one day after a background check rather than ninety days later.

July 2001

9 Bush administration opposes UN treaty to curb international trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

26 Bush administration rejects international treaty on germ warfare and biological weapons.

August 2001

6 Presidential Daily Briefing warns "Bin Ladin [sic] Determined to Strike in U.S."

9 Bush limits stem cell research to "existing lines."

September 2001

6 Justice Department drops effort to break up Microsoft, hoping to speed settlement of antitrust lawsuit.

11 Terrorists crash hijacked airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, killing thousands.

22 Bush signs \$15 billion airline bailout.

October 2001

26 Bush signs the USA Patriot Act.

29 Justice Department acknowledges but won't identify more than one thousand individuals, mostly immigrants, detained since September 11 attacks.

31 Ashcroft authorizes monitoring of attorney-client conversations in terrorism investigations.

November 2001

1 Bush issues executive order blocking the release of presidential records.

13 Bush orders that "enemy combatants" be tried in military tribunals.

14 Justice Department issues regulations allowing illegal immigrants to be detained indefinitely if their release could pose "serious adverse foreign-policy consequences."

December 2001

11 White House commission recommends privatizing Social Security.

12 Bush informs congressional leaders that he intends to pull out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty unilaterally.

18 Congress passes \$26.4 billion "No Child Left Behind" Act.

27 Bush repeals "responsible contractor rule" that had required scrutiny of safety and environmental law violations in the awarding of federal contracts.

January 2002

11 First Afghan prisoners arrive at "Camp X-Ray" in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba; Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld declares them "unlawful combatants" with no rights under the Geneva Convention.

16 Cheney refuses to provide details of his multiple meetings with Enron officials.

25 In a memo to the president, White House counsel Alberto Gonzales writes that "the new paradigm" of the war on terror "renders obsolete" the Geneva Conventions' "strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions."

February 2002

14 White House unveils its "Clear Skies" initiative calling for voluntary reductions of three major pollutants; the plan would delay by a decade reductions required under existing law.

15 Bush approves Yucca Mountain—located ninety miles northwest of Las Vegas—as the nation's lone repository for high-level nuclear waste.

28 IRS records reveal increases in audits of the working poor; audits of large corporations and the rich drop to all-time lows.

March 2002

1 News reports reveal that Bush activated a "shadow government" after September 11 attacks without telling Congress; civilian administrators are being sequestered in underground bunkers in case of a terrorist attack.

5 Bush's welfare reform proposal advises paying "workfare" recipients less than the minimum wage.

10 Pentagon's "Nuclear Posture Review" calls for new, "low-yield" nuclear weapons and lists seven "rogue" nations as possible targets for a nuclear attack.
27 Bush signs McCain-Feingold bill banning soft money behind closed doors, then departs immediately for a fund-raising trip.

April 2002

2 Bush administration opposes the reappointment of climatologist Robert Watson as head on the UN Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change.
5 Office of Management and Budget prevents the EPA from declaring a public health emergency over dangerous asbestos fibers that come from a Montana mine and are used in insulation throughout the country.
12 Bush officials express support for the ouster of Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez; a day after Chavez returns to power, White House admits that U.S. officials had met with coup plotters.
17 Administration insiders admit military tactical errors allowed Osama bin Laden to escape December 2001 battle at Tora Bora.

May 2002

3 EPA alters its definition of "fill material" to allow coal companies to dump rubble from "mountaintop removal" mining into valleys and streams.
6 Bush voids the U.S. signature on the treaty to establish an International Criminal Court.
23 Senate joins the House in approving "fast-track" trade authority for the president.
30 Ashcroft removes restrictions on domestic spying by the FBI in counterterrorism investigations; new guidelines permit monitoring of political and religious groups without probable cause.

June 2002

1 President unveils "Bush doctrine" of preemptive war in a speech at West Point.
5 National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration weakens standards on under-inflated tires despite problems at Firestone that caused hundreds of deaths.
10 Ashcroft announces that alleged "dirty bomber" José Padilla, an American citizen arrested a month earlier at Chicago's O'Hare airport, is being held indefinitely as an "enemy combatant."

July 2002

14 SEC Chairman Harvey Pitt says he'll release the entire files on the investigation into Bush's sale of \$800,000 in Harken Energy stock if asked by the president; the president doesn't ask.
15 Bush administration unveils the "Terrorism Information and Prevention System," or Operation TIPS, a toll-free hotline encouraging meter readers and truck drivers to report "suspicious activity."
22 State Department announces it will withhold \$34 million in international family planning funds from the United Nations.
25 Bush threatens to veto Homeland Security bill unless workers in the new department are stripped of civil service protections.

August 2002

9 Bush administration issues new medical privacy regulations that don't require patient consent to share records with insurance and pharmaceutical companies or restrict use of medical information for marketing purposes.
26 In a speech to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Cheney says there is "no doubt" Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction and that Iraq could have nuclear weapons "fairly soon."

September 2002

5 Bush administration presents "Healthy Forests Initiative" that would allow more logging of old-growth forests by limiting environmental impact reviews and public comment.
19 Bush asks Congress for authority to use "all means that he determines to be appropriate" against Iraq.

October 2002

5 North Korea admits to having secret nuclear weapons program; Bush officials don't publicly disclose the news until Oct. 16.

8 Bush invokes the Taft-Hartley Act to end an 11-day lockout of longshore workers that has shut down West Coast ports.

November 2002

5 Harvey Pitt resigns after failing to disclose that newly appointed accounting oversight board chairman William Webster had headed the audit committee of a firm accused of accounting improprieties and fraud.

20 Pentagon defends development of the "Total Information Awareness" system, a scheme developed by Iran-contra veteran John Poindexter to mine private data for terrorism clues.

27 Bush names Henry Kissinger to head independent commission investigating September 11 attacks.

December 2002

6 Bush dismisses treasury secretary Paul O'Neill and economic adviser Lawrence Lindsey as the unemployment rate hits 6 percent.

17 Bush orders initial missile defense system to be in place by 2004.

19 Office of Management and Budget instructs Environmental Protection Agency to value the lives of senior citizens at 63 percent that of younger Americans in a cost-benefit analysis of imposing new air pollution regulations.

January 2003

9 Transportation Security Administration bars 56,000 airport screeners from unionizing.

10 Bush administration issues guidelines that could exempt up to twenty million acres of "isolated" wetlands and seasonal streams from protection under the Clean Water Act.

15 Bush denounces affirmative action policies at the University of Michigan as an unconstitutional "quota system."

29 Bush claims in his State of the Union speech that Saddam Hussein "recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa."

30 Bush administration seeks exemptions to international treaty banning the ozone-depleting chemical methyl bromide for use on golf courses, among other things.

February 2003

5 Secretary of State Colin Powell appears before the UN Security Council to make the case for war with Iraq. March 2003

7 U.N. official exposes as fakes documents showing Iraq attempted to buy uranium from Niger.

8 **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers awards no-bid contract with a \$7 billion limit to a Halliburton subsidiary for fighting possible oil well fires in Iraq.**

19 War on Iraq begins. 27 Department of Labor proposes new overtime rules that could strip millions of extra pay by increasing the number of exempt "white-collar" workers.

April 2003

7 Education Secretary Rod Paige says he prefers schools that have a "strong appreciation for the values of the Christian community."

12 **Congress approves Bush's request for \$79 billion to fund the Iraq War and reconstruction.**

28 Bush administration refuses to sign international anti-tobacco treaty without a "reservation clause" allowing any country to opt out of portions it doesn't like.

May 2003

1 Aboard an aircraft carrier—with a banner touting "Mission Accomplished" as his backdrop—Bush declares victory in Iraq.

22 Bush issues an executive order shielding oil companies in Iraq from legal liability.

27 One third of the prevention funds in the \$15 billion AIDS bill signed by Bush are earmarked for abstinence education.

28 Bush signs \$350 billion tax cut-half the size of his original proposal-slashing tax rates on dividends and capital gains.

29 On a trip to Poland, Bush says: "We found the weapons of mass destruction. We found biological laboratories ... for those who say we haven't found the banned manufacturing devices or banned weapons, they're wrong, we found them."

June 2003

2 FCC increases media ownership cap, allowing one company to own TV stations reaching up to 45 percent of the country, and lifts the ban on a single company's owning newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations in the same city.

2 Inspector General finds that the Justice Department violated the civil rights of hundreds of immigrants detained after 9/11.

25 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rejects California's request to cancel \$12 billion in long-term contracts signed during the state's energy crisis despite evidence of market manipulation by energy companies.

July 2003

1 Bush administration suspends military aid to thirty-five countries that refused to grant U.S. citizens immunity before the International Criminal Court.

14 Columnist Robert Novak outs the wife of retired ambassador Joseph Wilson as a CIA agent after discussions with "two senior administration officials."

15 SEC chairman William Donaldson endorses House bill seeking to limit the ability of state regulators to oversee the securities industry.

24 Congress publishes report on September 11 attacks, but the White House omits major portions (reportedly about Saudi Arabia) for "national security" reasons.

28 Congress exposes Pentagon plans to create a futures trading market to forecast terrorist attacks.

August 2003

9 EPA inspector general finds that the agency downplayed health risks from the collapse of the World Trade Center under pressure from the White House.

20 Ashcroft begins nationwide tour to promote the Patriot Act.

27 EPA repeals "New Source Review" rule that had required electric utilities to install anti-pollution equipment when making major upgrades at coal-fired power plants.

September 2003

1 Job losses over the past three years top 2.7 million. 7 Bush asks Congress for another \$87 billion to fund the occupation of Iraq.

17 Bush admits there is no evidence tying Saddam Hussein to September 11 attacks.

22 FCC approves the merger of Univision and Hispanic Broadcasting, handing over 80 percent of the Spanish-language radio and television market to one company.

October 2003

21 Congress bans late-term abortions.

29 U.N. official warns of "a palpable risk that Afghanistan will again turn into a failed state, this time in the hands of drug cartels and narco-terrorists."

31 13,000 Arab and Muslim immigrants are in deportation proceedings as a result of special registration programs; none has been charged in connection to terrorism.

November 2003

21 Senate blocks energy bill, a massive boondoggle that traces its origins to Cheney's secretive energy task force and would provide billions of dollars in subsidies to some of Bush's biggest supporters in the oil and gas, coal, and electric utility industries.

23 FBI admits collecting intelligence on antiwar protesters.

24 Congressional Republicans and the White House agree to a “compromise” media ownership cap of 39 percent—ensuring that neither Viacom nor News Corp. will be forced to sell any television stations.

25 **Senate passes \$400 billion, Bush-backed Medicare bill, which guarantees a prescription drug benefit starting in 2006 but prevents the government from negotiating lower prices with pharmaceutical companies.**

December 2003

3 Medicare chief Tom Scully announces he's stepping down to consider job offers from three lobbying and two investment firms.

23 Bush administration opens 300,000 acres of old-growth timber in Alaska's Tongass National Forest to logging.

30 After first case of “mad cow” disease is detected in the United States, USDA bans sale of “downer” cattle—a measure quashed by the agency just weeks earlier.

January 2004

5 Cheney and Justice Antonin Scalia go duck hunting together three weeks after the Supreme Court agrees to hear a case about the vice president's energy task force records.

16 During a congressional recess, Bush appoints Charles Pickering—whose nomination has been blocked twice by the Senate—to the U.S. Court of Appeals.

22 Interior Department opens nearly nine million acres of wilderness on Alaska's North Slope to oil drilling.

23 Chief U.S. weapons inspector David Kay resigns, saying he doesn't believe Iraq's weapons of mass destruction ever existed.

29 **Bush administration reports that the new Medicare law will cost at least \$530 billion over 10 years, 30 percent more than Congress was told it would cost.**

February 2004

6 Bush relents and appoints commission on pre-war intelligence, calls for it to report findings after the presidential election.

9 President's Council of Economic Advisers suggests positions at fast-food restaurants should be counted as manufacturing jobs.

18 A group of 60 top U.S. scientists, including a dozen Nobel Prize winners, accuses the Bush administration of “misrepresenting and suppressing scientific knowledge for political purposes.”

23 Rod Paige calls the National Education Association a “terrorist organization.”

March 2004

12 Medicare actuary says Bush administration threatened to fire him if he told Congress that the White House Medicare plan would cost more than \$400 billion.

24 At the Radio and Television Correspondents' dinner Bush presents slides of himself looking under tables and out the windows of the Oval Office while commenting “Those weapons of mass destruction must be somewhere!” and “Nope, no weapons over there!”

April 2004

1 Bush signs the “Unborn Victims of Violence Act.”

2 Bush and Cheney appear at a private retreat for the more than five hundred “Rangers” and “Pioneers” who have collected at least \$100,000 for the president's campaign.

10 After two years of stonewalling, Bush releases declassified version of the Aug. 6, 2001, Presidential Daily Briefing warning “Bin Ladin Determined to Strike in U.S.”

13 In just the third prime-time press conference of his term, Bush is stumped when asked to name one mistake he's committed since September 11. He replies, “I'm sure something will pop into my head here in the midst of this press conference, with all the pressure of trying to come up with an answer, but it hasn't yet.”

28 CBS television airs first images of torture and abuse of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison.

28 Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz tells Congress the number of U.S. soldiers who have died in Iraq is “approximately 500, of which—I can get the exact numbers—approximately 350 are combat deaths.” The actual figures: 722 soldiers killed, 521 of them in combat.
29 Bush and Cheney appear together behind closed doors in the Oval Office to answer questions from commissioners on the September 11 attacks panel.
30 Sinclair Broadcasting refuses to air “Nightline” broadcast reading the names of the U.S. dead in Iraq on its ABC affiliates.

May 2004

4 Army acknowledges it is investigating at least thirty-five cases of abuse or torture of prisoners in Iraq and Afghanistan.
6 FDA blocks RU-486, the “morning after pill,” from being sold over the counter.
19 General Accounting Office rules that taxpayer-funded “video news releases” touting the Medicare bill are illegal covert propaganda.
20 Bush campaign fundraising haul hits the \$200 million mark.

June 2004

3 CIA Director George Tenet resigns because of the “well-being of my wonderful family—nothing more, nothing less.”
8 John Ashcroft refuses to give the Senate Judiciary Committee a Justice Department memo outlining a legal justification for the torture of suspected terrorists.
16 U.S. commission investigating September 11 finds “no credible evidence” linking Saddam Hussein to the attacks; Dick Cheney continues to claim “overwhelming evidence” of a connection between Iraq and Al Qaeda.
24 Supreme Court rules that Dick Cheney doesn’t have to give up records of secretive energy task force, sends case back to a lower court.
28 In a secret ceremony—held two days ahead of schedule to thwart attacks—United States hands over formal sovereignty of Iraq to interim government; U.S. administrator L. Paul Bremer declares Iraq “a much better place” and immediately leaves the country.
28 Supreme Court rules against the Bush administration, insisting that “enemy combatants”—whether U.S. citizen or foreigners—must be allowed to challenge their imprisonment before an American judge.

July 2004

8 Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge warns that Al Qaeda may strike on Election Day, seeks advice from Justice Department on necessary steps to postpone the election in case of a terrorist attack.
15 Republican-controlled National Labor Relations Board reverses earlier decision and rules that graduate teaching assistants at private universities do not have the right to organize unions.
20 Bush administration lawyers move to block lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies and medical device makers, arguing that consumers may not seek damages for injuries received from products approved by the FDA.
22 Congress passes resolution declaring that genocide is taking place in the Darfur region of Sudan; Washington Post characterizes action taken by the Bush administration to stop the killing as “murderously modest.”
28 After 24 years in Afghanistan, the humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders pulls out of the country; the group criticizes U.S. forces for endangering aid workers by using humanitarian assistance as “a support for its military and political ambitions.”
30 Republican Party requires a signed endorsement of the president before giving out tickets to New Mexico campaign rally starring Dick Cheney.
30 Bush issues 20 recess appointments, skirting Senate approval to install, among others, a new head of the Federal Trade Commission, a new manufacturing czar, and three new ambassadors—two of whom are major Bush fundraisers.

August 2004

1 Two days after the Democratic convention, Tom Ridge raises terror alert level to “orange” for New York and Washington; heightened security based on three- to four-year-old intelligence.

5 **At a ceremony to sign a \$417 billion Defense appropriations bill, Bush tells the assembled Pentagon brass: “Our enemies are innovative and resourceful, and so are we. They never stop thinking about new ways to harm our country and our people, and neither do we.”**

11 **With two months left in the fiscal year, federal deficit hits a record \$395.8 billion.**

15 FBI acknowledges interviewing dozens of people in at least six states about protests planned for the Republican National Convention; officials insist they’re only targeting crimes, not political dissent.

24 Bush-Cheney campaign’s top outside counsel admits advising the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

27 **For third consecutive year, more Americans in poverty and without health insurance; national poverty rate hits 12.5 percent, 45 million people lack health coverage.**

September 2004

7 Dick Cheney declares at a campaign stop in Iowa: “It’s absolutely essential that eight weeks from today, on Nov. 2, that we make the right choice, because if we make the wrong choice then the danger is that we’ll get hit again.”

8 1,001 U.S. soldiers killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

13 President Bush and House Republicans allow the federal ban on assault weapons to expire.

13 Iranian official announces that the country could resume uranium enrichment “within a few months”; Britain’s Royal Institute of International Affairs concludes “the real long-term geopolitical winner of the ‘War on Terror’ could be Iran.”

23 Donald Rumsfeld hints that Iraqi election may be limited to three-fourths of the country because of increasing violence. “If there were to be an area where the extremists focused during the election period, so be it,” he testifies before the Senate. “You have the rest of the election and you go on. Life’s not perfect.”

23 Standing beside Prime Minister Allawi in the Rose Garden, Bush claims “nearly 100,000 fully trained and equipped Iraqi soldiers, police officers, and other security personnel are working today”; Pentagon documents show only 8,169 have completed full, eight-week training.

25 Iraqi Health Ministry statistics show U.S. and allied forces and Iraqi police are killing twice the number of Iraqis—mostly civilians—as the insurgents; officials announce that Health Ministry will no longer provide casualty statistics to reporters.

October 2004

2 **One-third of “individual ready reserve” soldiers called up by the Army to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan fail to report for duty.**

6 **Chief U.S. weapons inspector Charles Duelfer reports that Iraq had no biological or chemical weapons and no nuclear program before the U.S. invasion; in fact, Duelfer finds no evidence that Iraq had produced any WMDs after 1991.**

11 International Atomic Energy Agency reports that equipment and low-level radioactive materials that could be used to build nuclear weapons have disappeared from Iraq during the U.S. occupation.

21 Program on International Policy Attitudes shows that vast majorities of Bush supporters believe Iraq had weapons of mass destruction and gave Al Qaeda “substantial support” or was directly involved in September 11. Bush backers also think the majority of the world supported the U.S. invasion.

22 **Aboard Air Force One, with no public ceremony, Bush signs \$136 billion corporate tax cut bill—which includes special pork-barrel earmarks for tobacco companies, oil refineries, SUV buyers, Home Depot ceiling fans and much, much more.**

24 Iraqi interim government announces that 380 tons of explosives vanished from the Al Qaqaa facility after the U.S. invasion, when the site was not secured despite warnings from U.N. weapons inspectors.

November 2004

2 Election Day.