

ambition because there are serious doubts he was ever elected to a first term). Bush, like Nixon, plainly does not possess the range of talents of a Jefferson, whom a contemporary described as a person who could "calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a cause, break a horse, dance the minuet and play the violin." Nor does Bush, as Sidey wrote also of Nixon (and which could be applied to Bush's father, George Herbert Walker Bush) "have the mastery of language that historian Benjamin Thomas calls the 'ultimate factor' which made Lincoln successful. There is little of Teddy Roosevelt's exuberance" to be found in Bush (though much of his noted bellicosity), "nor is there Wilson's deep philosophical strain. The joy of life that was part of Franklin Roosevelt's remarkable ability to capture and hold the public esteem emerges seldom ... (and) the public rarely sees signs of the human grace that John Kennedy revealed."

Sidey wrote that Nixon's talents seemed to be "stamina and control and visceral identity with the vast majority of people who live beyond the range of *The New York Times* and the Ivy League." Nixon's ability to make so much of his mundane talents, which gave him in 1972 one of the largest majorities of any Presidential candidate was, Sidey wrote, "itself a virtuosity."

Nixon at least "achieved a philosophical identity with some deep American values," Sidey wrote in his 1972 *Life* magazine article, "but he did not have enough faith in the people to be candid with them."

G. W. Bush is often compared to Adolf Hitler in his rise and swift takeover of government. People say "it can never happen here," Sinclair Lewis' classic title of a homegrown despot — but it is happening here despite laws that are in place to prevent such an usurpation of power. These laws are useless if not applied; and at this moment too many of the citizenry make the takeover possible because they are either complicit or afraid to prevent the safeguards from being superseded by new laws that overrule them.

George W. Bush, who says "I believe God wants me to be President" and also says "our rights (as Americans) were derived from God," is a fervent believer in "American exceptionalism" and a theocratic/nationalism. He veils his discussion of the war on terrorism as a "divine mission" and the "language of righteous empire." He thinks he can camouflage his oligarchical demeanor by cutting a cloth of Stars & Stripes for a priestly gown.

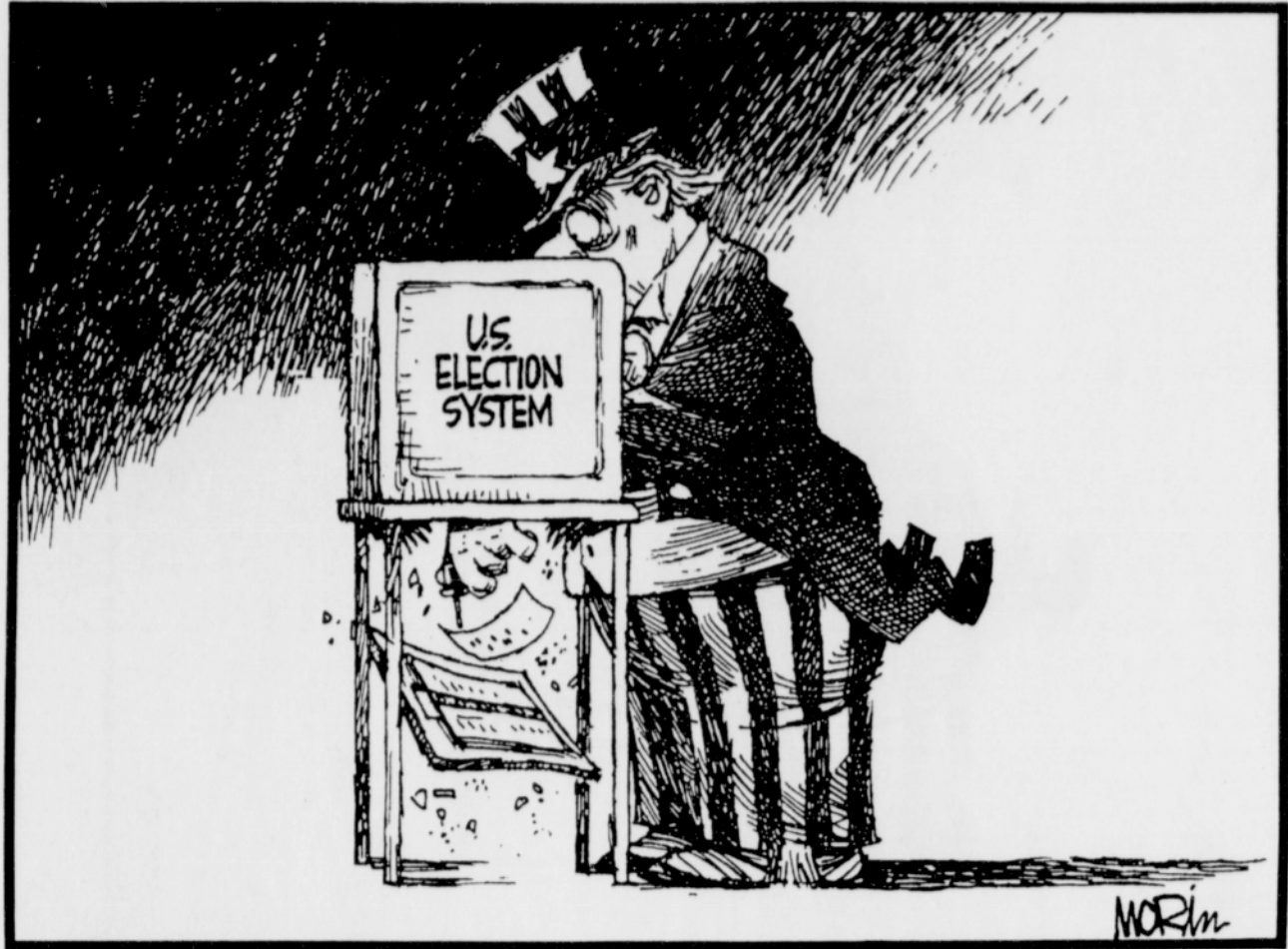
Wrapping God and the Presidency in the flag is as inappropriate as declaring a nation under God. The pathological fusion of government and religion results in unspeakable crimes against humanity as well as proscription of freedoms and personal rights, and elevation of a political priesthood into dictatorial governance.

The unelected President has as a base constituency of wealthy and corporate sponsors whom he gives breaks at the cost of scrapping essential programs that are the glue of society, which leaves the main responsibility to maintain the democracy upon those who are its least benefactors.

Bush claims he is in line with the thinking of the American people, and he might be at least half right. There is strong evidence the country is indeed conservative, slow to change and in constant reaction to it. The problem is that blacks and the poor (which includes all other racial minorities in the U.S. as well as a significant number of women) are shoved aside by the rightward politicians and party hacks and they drop away, either too disillusioned or too angry to register or vote.

So a conservative minority rules in its claim as a majority. Almost 50% of eligible voters did not vote in 2000. A slim majority of those did vote voted for Democratic candidate Al Gore. The Green Party and Ralph Nader in particular are blamed for taking crucial votes away from Gore, but the real reason the Democrats were flimflammed was that they did not have the courage or intelligence to register the vast numbers of eligible unregistered voters.

The Reagan and father/son Bush administrations have managed to take away essential political powers of the common, people through nonvoted-upon policies that not only enrich



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the already wealthy but have pared down to nearly nothingness the economic potential of everybody else, including the very glue of capitalist democracy, the middle class.

Incessantly claiming to uphold traditional values, Bush and his disciples don't seem to respect such fundamentals of our civilization as the Bill of Rights, appended to the Constitution in wary suspicion future segments of society would attempt to dismantle the democracy in the name of traditional values.

The 2004 election will determine for at least the immediate future whether indeed our democracy is able to withstand the ravages of the usurpers and that constitutional government will survive as it has in the past, most remarkably in 1800 when the original Federalists attempted to impose their own unelected President on the country by tying up the popular vote in Congress. The Bush administration has acted as if opposition doesn't exist and doesn't matter if it does — it has been devising policies as well as mendacious dirty tricks and character assassinations to cope with anyone who disagrees with the administration's arrogation of the nation's rights and liberties, labeling dissent as treachery and unpatriotic.

The following is a composite list of reasons why Bush should not continue in the Presidency. Any such list has to begin with the fact that although he insists he was chosen by God to be President, he was not elected President by the people; and his "selection" was a distinct corruption of the process set up by the ancestors to untangle disputed elections. Another frame on the issue might be a question not asked: If the Presidency of G.W. Bush violates Constitutional law because of an illegally conducted campaign in 2000, would taking the Presidential oath have automatically made him eligible for impeachment?

Bush squandered the world's goodwill and sympathy following 9/11 by his arrogant and bullying bellicosity, using 9/11 to claim himself commander-in-chief of the world, breaking all major treaties, declaring preemptive right to invade any other country in the world for any reason, which has made the USA the currently most despised country in the world — a primary cause of 9/11 in the first place.

Bush has severely curbed American freedoms with the Patriot Act, which was rammed through Congress just after 9/11,

and is nearly a blueprint of the infamous Huston Plan of Nixon's era of surveillance and wiretaps of American citizens. He has virtually abrogated the Bill of Rights through administrative policies that avoid Congressional vote or oversight, and has cloaked the executive branch of government in the deepest web of secrecy in the nation's history.

Bush misled the American public about WMDs in Iraq, manipulated and falsified intelligence to justify invasion of Iraq, which has caused more than 1,000 U.S. deaths and thousands more wounded, perhaps 100,000 more innocent civilian deaths (more than 30 times 9/11 deaths) — by this action has not only created a quagmire for American tax money, stretched the U.S. military too thin to adequately respond to terrorism but also through invasion, occupation and usurpation of power in Iraq, tarnished the concepts of liberation and democracy, words he flogs over and over as if selling cars.

Bush failed to follow-through in Afghanistan where Taliban, Al Qaida and northern warlords are tearing the country apart once again (not to mention regrowth of opium production, the only cash producer in the country).

Bush has escalated nuclear weapons development in the USA, insisting that "Star Wars" guard the high frontier of space while so-called low-yield tactical nuclear weapons are planned for front-line use. Developing new nukes ostensibly for the war on terrorism while insisting every other country limit their stockpiles is a dangerous contradiction that brings the world closer to the long anticipated millennial annihilation.

Bush turned a \$230 billion surplus into a \$500 billion deficit (which rapidly approaches his father's 1992 deficit of \$290 billion), and he has presided over the losses of nearly three million American jobs, the worst domestic job loss since Hoover. The stock market suffered its worst decline during his first two years as President since the Great Depression.

Bush has cut taxes that benefit the wealthy three times and "reclassified" money obtained through stocks as worth more than money earned by work.

"The abuse of patriotism and trust of the American people is even worse than everything else this President has done," Historian Robert S. McElvaine has written. McElvaine and other historians rank him as one of the worst Presidents in U.S. history, comparing him with Nixon, Warren Harding, James Buchanan, Calvin Coolidge, Andrew Johnson, U.S. Grant and William McKinley.

A second Bush administration will probably carry out an Orwellian deconstruction of democratic governance. People will simply be denied power as well as any voice in its use or intent, and if history provides an insight, they will become helplessly or angrily apathetic rather than revolt. Rearranging the democracy to suit a small ruling clique will most likely result in dismantling the electoral process.

It seems probable that Bush is pushing the country into a bloodless civil war, thinking that perhaps he and his cohorts are powerful enough to repress the half of the nation that does not support them.

The risk of this election for the New Federalists (*aka* neocons) is, of course, that Bush will lose. Perhaps that is why the prevailing Venetian-style council of doges, who do not wish to relinquish the power they have stolen, insinuate the current terrorist situation might call for a postponement of the November election — but only of course if a major terrorist attack occurs or is threatened. So far this idea is a seed blown into the wind to test its popularity; or it might simply be what it appears to be on the surface: "We are seizing perpetual power, stop us if you can!" An arrogant power-pulsed gauntlet thrown to the floor by an unelected Presidential administration that has little concern about the legitimacy of its power — Yet it might be from serious miscalculation that nationwide fraudulent computerized voting would be a "cake walk" with little furor of opposition (the voters perceived as herds of trusting beef). So the velvet glove seems to be taken off the iron fist, a crucially apt and ancient expression of true power however frilly its disguises.

The country seems divided as in civil war — yet the half that does not vote are the ones who will really swing the election if indeed they do vote. This is one of the primary elections of our history and could very well determine if we continue the experiment of democracy or slip down into something quite sinister.

THE WAR PRESIDENT

Since September 11, 2001, George W. Bush has reestablished the Imperial Presidency. Election of a President has always been choosing a wartime dictator; the most important role of the Presidency is as Commander-in-Chief, which is decorous in peacetime but Caesarean in wartime. "In time of war it's all power to the President," a newspaper headline declared just after 9/11. Presidents consolidate their power in wartime and the impulse is to quell dissent, which is barely tolerated during normal times and quickly repudiated in periods of national crisis when it is especially necessary.

Presidents are given great powers during crises not covered in the Constitution. Abraham Lincoln, the first Republican President, suspended *habeus corpus* during the Civil War, which allowed military arrest of persons without formally charging them with violating the law. During World War 2 the U.S. interned thousands of Japanese Americans (FDR's infamous Executive Order 9066). President Bush has set up military tribunals for suspected terrorists both domestic and foreign — which includes Afghan and Iraqi prisoners whom he refuses to grant POW status — and especially immigrants, not unlike the Alien & Sedition Acts of 1798-1799 and the McCarran Act of 1950 (also against aliens). During the present emergency Muslim individuals and organizations in particular are targets of surveillance, wiretaps and inquiry as well as imprisonment for even the remotest links to terrorist groups.

Patriotism is the key word and justification for suspension of civil liberties — which points out a flawed weakness of democracy: the "tyranny of aroused public opinion," which if adroitly protracted under the rubric of patriotism might well lead to broad suppression of civil liberties. Yet it should be understood first of all that our original patriots were not only traitors against their "Mother Country" (or Homeland) but would be regarded today as terrorists: a small determined group attempting liberty from a massive overseas empire through terrorism and murder of government officials and supporters before and during the Revolution. Their opponents most likely called them "cowardly" and "evil," which contemporary terrorists are accused of being.

It might be worth considering how suitable it seemed when subjected peoples revolted against communist Russia — Hungary, Poland, Czechoslovakia — and our collective righteous anger when those revolts were crushed; and how happy we were the Soviet Union turned upside down in 1989, followed two years later by the final collapse of the decrepit Russian empire — the 'Evil Empire' — which gave the world a much appreciated Christmas present in 1991.

So we are at a point where we must wonder if the attacks on the USA on 9/11 might be in a similar vein as the revolts against the didactic rule of the USSR — the differences of methods and purpose are major, yet there are distinct and obvious similarities.

Our Cold War policies of 'real politick' did not endear us to much of the emerging world which has suffered heavily under puppet despots we supported in our half century conflict for world supremacy with the Soviet Union, nor does it make us popular today as we use the same methods to control the supply of resources that sustain the 'American Way of Life' our political leaders proclaim as the mandate of God and Christianity.

Ever since the first Persian Gulf War the U.S. has put an iron umbrella over the Middle East to guard our oil lines, striking with aircraft and missiles at targets in countries that dispute our virtual monopoly over their most lucrative regional product.

It was not our values but the abandonment of them the terrorists attacked on 9/11. Terrorism has become synonymous with anti-Americanism and its rise has greatly to do with our zealously arrogant efforts to subdue liberties and freedoms we claim to exemplify.

The U.S. government has rushed from an undeniable truth to a false conclusion — that because 3,000 or more Americans were killed on 9/11 we must declare a world war on terrorism and retaliate with greater violence than that we have incurred as well as strongarm every nation that does not sympathize with our unilateral declaration of war.

With the Bush administration's preeminent invasion of Iraq, its gutting of environmental restrictions, granting double-dipping corporations huge tax breaks as well as huge military contracts paid for by taxes, blatantly rejecting fuel conservation while putting American troops in harms way to protect and exploit world oil reserves for our national use; and collaterally killing innocents whose only crimes are to be where they are — it is now more than ever necessary to reopen the inquiry into Bush's legitimacy as President.

He and his associates are not unlike the Hitler regime that once it got power it had to race to control everything before anyone could recover or gain enough strength to successfully resist them. Bush's father had a word for it: *Momentum*. "The Mighty Mo."

~MICHAEL McCUSKER

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