

# The INDEPENDENT

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## Opinion

### President Bush is far more than a bully

There are many ways to bully people – name calling, physical intimidation, bragging about how much you have and how little they have, knocking down someone's little sister while knowing they aren't big enough to do anything about it, ignoring the legitimate concerns of others because they aren't your concerns, shoving everybody aside while you swagger down the street knowing that your daddy's money will take care of anyone who has the temerity to object.

There is nothing new about any of this, but calling George W. Bush a bully – while he orders the killing of innocent civilians and puts our sons and daughters in danger – is too easy; he is far more complex than that.

While he makes the nation focus on Iraq, what is happening here?

The September 11 tragedy brought together an international coalition that has been cooperating against the threat of terrorism. Instead of building on that, the selfish political self-interest of this administration promoted terror and confusion in the public, deliberately fabricating links between Al Qaeda and Iraq.

The result (the motive?) has been gross misallocation of shrinking public funds to the military, while systematically weakening the safeguards that protect American citizens from government.

The economy was damaged by 9-11 so the president provided tax relief for the wealthy, thereby further damaging the economy and helping the nation slide into a recession. Now that there is a recession, he wants to stimulate the economy by again providing tax relief for the wealthy. The little problem of how to finance a war he has not included in either his proposed budget or his economic forecasts, is being solved by raiding the Social Security and Medicare trust funds.

If people get too loud about these skewed priorities, the administration can fall back on their latest homeland "security" overtures by declaring that certain folks are security risks and tossing them in jail...without charges, without bail, without legal representation, without even notifying their families. It has already happened.

Some people have expressed the opinion that oil is the reason this administration wants war with Iraq, but that is simplistic. The reason is power, political power,

YOU KNOW SPRING  
HAS SPRUNG,  
WHEN THE  
BLOSSOM'S  
ON THE



TREE ...



AND THE  
DUCT TAPES  
ARE  
FLYING  
NORTH.

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### Opinion, continued

economic power, absolute power. Remember the adage: Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely.

*"Of course the people don't want war. But after all, it's the leaders of the country who determine the policy, and it's always a simple matter to drag the people along whether it's a democracy, a fascist dictatorship, a parliament or a communist dictatorship. Voice or no voice, the people can always be brought to the bidding of the leaders. That is easy. All you have to do is tell them they are being attacked, and denounce the pacifists for lack of patriotism, and exposing the country to greater danger."*

*Hermann Goering,  
Nazi Reichsmarshal  
at the Nuremberg trials*

Goering didn't mention the word "falsehood" because it was unimportant to him. It should not be unimportant to us. In his State of the Union address, Jan. 28, 2003, the president said:

"We will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, to other presidents, and other generations."

Reviewing Bush's proposed budget

on Feb. 3, 2003, the Associated Press noted: "Even though hundreds of other government programs would be squeezed, the president projects the deficit will still hit record highs of \$304 billion this year and \$307 billion in 2004. Over the next five years, the deficits would total \$1.08 trillion... Taken together, the new stimulus measure and making the tax cut permanent would add up to \$1.3 trillion in new tax relief, on top of the \$1.35 trillion tax reduction" passed in 2001.

No, George W. Bush is no simple bully. In just two years he has done more damage to our country than our enemies have accomplished in decades – he has destroyed working, effective coalitions that date back as long as 40 years. He has destroyed a budget surplus and replaced it with long-term debt. He has destroyed surpluses arduously built up in Social Security and Medicare to handle the needs of the baby boomer generation. He hasn't yet totally destroyed habeas corpus, but he has two more years to work on it.

When this administration sets policy, we now know there are two important questions to ask:

Who profits? Who pays for it?