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## Earth to Trump: It's About the Warfare State, So Blame Bush

| [More](#)<sup>[1]</sup>

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[Malou Innocent](#)<sup>[2]</sup>

When running for public office, it is customary to criticize the incumbent, especially if he or she represents the opposing political party. Such tactics can be advantageous, albeit opportunistic. But occasionally, like a misdirected heat-seeking missile, these fulminations can get confused and miss their target. So begins the 2012 possible presidential campaign of [aspiring](#)<sup>[3]</sup> candidate and popular "[birther](#)<sup>[4]</sup>," real estate mogul, Donald Trump.

Long before Trump was trotting out [his](#)<sup>[5]</sup> [stellar](#)<sup>[6]</sup> [mercantilist](#)<sup>[7]</sup> [credentials](#)<sup>[8]</sup>, he embarked on a one-man publicity stunt crusade to [restore](#)<sup>[9]</sup> America's tarnished image abroad. But rather than lay blame for America's decline at the feet of President George W. Bush, whose disastrous eight years drove us into the ditch we're in, the aforementioned world of politics demanded Trump attack the incumbent: Barack [Hussein](#)<sup>[10]</sup> Obama, whose relentless militarism makes him a [carbon copy](#)<sup>[11]</sup> of [Bush](#)<sup>[12]</sup>.

Last November, Trump [told](#)<sup>[13]</sup> MSNBC's Morning Joe,

Well, you know, I respect him [Obama]; I like him; I think he is wonderful in many ways. I think he has been not been good for business, and honestly, and very sadly, the world does not respect this country, and therefore I assume the world does not respect our leader.

Trump [elaborated](#)<sup>[14]</sup> on those sentiments at this year's CPAC convention, "[T]he United States has become a whipping post for the rest of the world. The world is treating us without respect. They are not treating us properly." In perhaps his most revealing interview, Trump [told](#)<sup>[15]</sup> "Fox and Friends," "Let's face it. We are no longer respected the way we used to be respected, and if we keep going like this, within 10 to 12 years, China will overtake us easily."

Interestingly enough, the invasion of Iraq precipitated the diminution of American power Trump full-throatedly laments. The quagmire may very well go down as one of the biggest strategic [blunders](#)<sup>[16]</sup> in [American history](#)<sup>[17]</sup>. In February, when CNN's Piers Morgan asked Trump about

his views on the Iraq War, Trump insisted [18]:

Iraq did not knock down the World Trade Center... You could not be a terrorist and last a day in Iraq. Now it's the Harvard—it's the breeding ground for terrorists. I mean everybody that [sic] wants to be a terrorist they go to Iraq, they go to Afghanistan, *they go to the places where we are*. The fact is Bush I thought was not good.  
[Emphasis mine.]

Yet, when Bush was in office, Trump failed to decry America's abysmal standing in the world. For instance, a June 2003 BBC international survey [19] of 11,000 people in eleven nations found that 57 percent had a very negative view of America's leadership. In some Muslim countries, when asked what was the greater danger to world peace, the United States rated higher than al Qaeda.

Perhaps Trump was lured by the collectivist siren calls of the "rally 'round the flag" effect. But by the end of Bush's presidency, when his failure was obvious to liberals, conservatives (not neo-cons), and anti-war libertarians, a 2007 BBC poll [19] of 26,000 people in twenty-five nations found that 49 percent believed America was playing a negative role in the world. A whopping 68 percent felt America's ongoing military presence in the Middle East provoked more violence than it prevented.

I'm all for criticizing Obama and his never-ending trail of lies [12]. But for Trump to blame only Obama for an outcome largely of Bush's making reveals either a glaring lack of integrity or a profound sense of self-deception. If Trump wants to level charges of America's decline, he should look no further than the Bush team's contribution to that very outcome.

Many Americans seem to have forgotten about Iraq—the war purportedly waged in democracy's name and for non-existent WMD. If Trump wants to measure the full scope of America's waning prestige, it spans from the horrid episode of Abu Ghraib to the despicable and embarrassing measures of intrusive domestic surveillance. In this respect, I have a few questions for Mr. Trump, and I ask them with all sincerity:

- Why would foreign countries respect our government after it marginalized, delegitimized, and so thoroughly compromised the values it ostensibly champions?
- Did our government not diminish itself in the eyes of the world?
- Was Bush ever a credible spokesperson for our country's founding principles?

Tragically, Trump could have used his gold-encrusted pulpit to lead a renaissance within the GOP, connecting his conclusions about America's current sorry state not just to Obama, but also to his predecessor. And, much like Ron Paul, Trump could have gained traction. Most Republicans already believe the Iraq War was a mistake [20], while poll after poll show that most Americans believe the invasion of Iraq was not worth it. [21]

In short, Trump and others must remember this about Bush's war:

- Over 100,000 Iraqis are have been killed [22]
- Over 4,000 American servicemen and women are dead [23]
- Over 2 million Iraqis displaced [24]

- It spawned a civil war [25]
- According to the 2006 National Intelligence Estimate [26], “[J]ihadists, although a small percentage of Muslims, are increasing in both number and geographic dispersion. If this trend continues, threats to U.S. interests at home and abroad will become more diverse, leading to increasing attacks worldwide.”
- It exposed America's weakness [27] in fighting asymmetric conflicts
- It greatly expanded [28] Iranian influence in the Gulf

To readers who doubt the profundity of that last point regarding Iran, look no further than America's prestige in Baghdad, the city that America "liberated." What's more embarrassing: Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmanedinejad making a triumphant entrance into that city and getting red carpet treatment [29], or U.S. leaders making unannounced visits and remaining ensconced on heavily-fortified bases?

As a side-note, Bush & Co. are now taking credit [30] for the recent uprisings sweeping through North Africa and the Middle East. The paradox, of course, is that if Iraq did indeed have anything to do with these revolts, it was because Washington's allies became associated with a deeply unpopular war, one that severely weakened the underpinnings of American power.

So, in conclusion: Earth to Trump: it's about the Warfare State [31]. So direct blame at Obama *and* Bush.

More by

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