

President Bush: Flip-Flopper-In-Chief

From the beginning, George W. Bush has made his own credibility a central issue. On 10/11/00, then Governor Bush said: "I think credibility is important. It is going to be important for the president to be credible with Congress, important for the president to be credible with foreign nations." But President Bush's serial flip-flopping raises serious questions about whether Congress and foreign leaders can rely on what he says.

1. OPEC

BUSH PROMISES TO FORCE OPEC TO LOWER PRICES "What I think the president ought to do [when gas prices spike] is he ought to get on the phone with the OPEC cartel and say we expect you to open your spigots... And the president of the United States must jawbone OPEC members to lower the price." [President Bush, 1/26/00]

BUSH REFUSES TO LOBBY OPEC LEADERS With gas prices soaring in the United States at the beginning of 2004, the Miami Herald reported the president refused to "personally lobby oil cartel leaders to change their minds." [Miami Herald, 4/1/04]

2. Iraq Funding

BUSH SPOKESMAN DENIES NEED FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR THE REST OF 2004 "We do not anticipate requesting supplemental funding for '04" [White House Budget Director Joshua Bolton, 2/2/04]

BUSH REQUESTS ADDITIONAL FUNDS FOR IRAQ FOR 2004 "I am requesting that Congress establish a \$25 billion contingency reserve fund for the coming fiscal year to meet all commitments to our troops." [President Bush, Statement by President, 5/5/04]

3. Condoleeza Rice Testimony

BUSH SPOKESMAN SAYS RICE WON'T TESTIFY AS "A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE" "Again, this is not her personal preference; this goes back to a matter of principle. There is a separation of powers issue involved here. Historically, White House staffers do not testify before legislative bodies. So it's a matter of principle, not a matter of preference." [White House Press Secretary Scott McClellan, 3/9/04]

BUSH ORDERS RICE TO TESTIFY: "Today I have informed the Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States that my National Security Advisor, Dr. Condoleeza Rice, will provide public testimony." [President Bush, 3/30/04]

4. Science

BUSH PLEDGES TO ISSUE REGULATIONS BASED ON SCIENCE "I think we ought to have high standards set by agencies that rely upon science, not by what may feel good or what sounds good." [then-Governor George W. Bush, 1/15/00]

BUSH ADMINISTRATION REGULATIONS IGNORE SCIENCE "Sixty leading scientists including Nobel laureates, leading medical experts, former federal agency directors and university chairs and presidents issued a statement calling for regulatory and legislative action to restore scientific integrity to federal policymaking. According to the scientists, the Bush administration has, among other abuses, suppressed and distorted scientific analysis from federal agencies, and taken actions that have undermined the quality of scientific advisory panels." [Union of Concerned Scientists, 2/18/04]

5. Ahmed Chalabi

BUSH INVITES CHALABI TO STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS President Bush also met with Chalabi during his brief trip to Iraq last Thanksgiving [White House Documents 1/20/04, 11/27/03]

BUSH MILITARY ASSISTS IN RAID OF CHALABI'S HOUSE "U.S. soldiers raided the home of America's one-time ally Ahmad Chalabi on Thursday and seized documents and computers." [Washington Post, 5/20/04]

6. Department of Homeland Security

BUSH OPPOSES THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY "So, creating a Cabinet office doesn't solve the problem. You still will have agencies within the federal government that have to be coordinated. So the answer is that creating a Cabinet post doesn't solve anything." [White House spokesman Ari Fleischer, 3/19/02]

BUSH SUPPORTS THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY "So tonight, I ask the Congress to join me in creating a single, permanent department with an overriding and urgent mission: securing the homeland of America and protecting the American people." [President Bush, Address to the Nation, 6/6/02]

7. Weapons of Mass Destruction

BUSH SAYS WE FOUND THE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION "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." [President Bush, Interview in Poland, 5/29/03]

BUSH SAYS WE HAVEN'T FOUND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION "David Kay has found the capacity to produce weapons. And when David Kay goes in and says we haven't found stockpiles yet, and there's theories as to where the weapons went. They could have been destroyed during the war. Saddam and his henchmen could have destroyed them as we entered into Iraq. They could be hidden. They could have been transported to another country, and we'll find out." [President Bush, Meet the Press, 2/7/04]

8. Free Trade

BUSH SUPPORTS FREE TRADE "I believe strongly that if we promote trade, and when we promote trade, it will help workers on both sides of this issue."
[President Bush in Peru, 3/23/02]

BUSH SUPPORTS RESTRICTIONS ON TRADE "In a decision largely driven by his political advisers, President Bush set aside his free-trade principles last year and imposed heavy tariffs on imported steel to help out struggling mills in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, two states crucial for his reelection."
[Washington Post, 9/19/03]

9. Osama Bin Laden

BUSH WANTS OSAMA DEAD OR ALIVE "I want justice. And there's an old poster out West, I recall, that says, 'Wanted: Dead or Alive.'" [President Bush, on Osama Bin Laden, 09/17/01]

BUSH DOESN'T CARE ABOUT OSAMA "I don't know where he is. You know, I just don't spend that much time on him...I truly am not that concerned about him."
[President Bush, Press Conference, 3/13/02]

10. The Environment

BUSH SUPPORTS MANDATORY CAPS ON CARBON DIOXIDE "[If elected], Governor Bush will work to establish mandatory reduction targets for emissions of four main pollutants: sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, mercury and carbon dioxide."
[Bush Environmental Plan, 9/29/00]

BUSH OPPOSES MANDATORY CAPS ON CARBON DIOXIDE "I do not believe, however, that the government should impose on power plants mandatory emissions reductions for carbon dioxide, which is not a 'pollutant' under the Clean Air Act." [President Bush, Letter to Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-NE), 3/13/03]

11. WMD Commission

BUSH RESISTS AN OUTSIDE INVESTIGATION ON WMD INTELLIGENCE FAILURE "The White House immediately turned aside the calls from Kay and many Democrats for an immediate outside investigation, seeking to head off any new wide-ranging election-year inquiry that might go beyond reports already being assembled by congressional committees and the Central Intelligence Agency." [NY Times, 1/29/04]

BUSH SUPPORTS AN OUTSIDE INVESTIGATION ON WMD INTELLIGENCE FAILURE "Today, by executive order, I am creating an independent commission, chaired by Governor and former Senator Chuck Robb, Judge Laurence Silberman, to look at American intelligence capabilities, especially your intelligence about weapons of mass destruction." [President Bush, 2/6/04]

12. Creation of the 9/11 Commission

BUSH OPPOSES CREATION OF INDEPENDENT 9/11 COMMISSION "President Bush took a few minutes during his trip to Europe Thursday to voice his opposition to establishing a special commission to probe how the government dealt with terror warnings before Sept. 11." [CBS News, 5/23/02]

BUSH SUPPORTS CREATION OF INDEPENDENT 9/11 COMMISSION "President Bush said today he now supports establishing an independent commission to investigate the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks." [ABC News, 09/20/02]

13. Time Extension for 9/11 Commission

BUSH OPPOSES TIME EXTENSION FOR 9/11 COMMISSION "President Bush and House Speaker J. Dennis Hastert (R-Ill.) have decided to oppose granting more time to an independent commission investigating the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks." [Washington Post, 1/19/04]

BUSH SUPPORTS TIME EXTENSION FOR 9/11 COMMISSION "The White House announced Wednesday its support for a request from the commission investigating the September 11, 2001 attacks for more time to complete its work." [CNN, 2/4/04]

14. One Hour Limit for 9/11 Commission Testimony

BUSH LIMITS TESTIMONY IN FRONT OF 9/11 COMMISSION TO ONE HOUR "President Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney have placed strict limits on the private interviews they will grant to the federal commission investigating the Sept. 11 attacks, saying that they will meet only with the panel's top two officials and that Mr. Bush will submit to only a single hour of questioning, commission members said Wednesday." [NY Times, 2/26/04]

BUSH SETS NO TIME LIMIT FOR TESTIMONY "The president's going to answer all of the questions they want to raise. Nobody's watching the clock." [White House spokesman Scott McClellan, 3/10/04]

15. Gay Marriage

BUSH SAYS GAY MARRIAGE IS A STATE ISSUE "The state can do what they want to do. Don't try to trap me in this state's issue like you're trying to get me into." [Gov. George W. Bush on Gay Marriage, Larry King Live, 2/15/00]

BUSH SUPPORTS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT BANNING GAY MARRIAGE "Today I call upon the Congress to promptly pass, and to send to the states for ratification, an amendment to our Constitution defining and protecting marriage as a union of man and woman as husband and wife." [President Bush, 2/24/04]

16. Nation Building

BUSH OPPOSES NATION BUILDING "If we don't stop extending our troops all around the world in nation-building missions, then we're going to have a serious problem coming down the road." [Gov. George W. Bush, 10/3/00]

BUSH SUPPORTS NATION BUILDING "We will be changing the regime of Iraq, for the good of the Iraqi people." [President Bush, 3/6/03]

17. Saddam/al Qaeda Link

BUSH SAYS IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN AL QAEDA AND SADDAM "You can't distinguish between al Qaeda and Saddam when you talk about the war on terror." [President Bush, 9/25/02]

BUSH SAYS SADDAM HAD NO ROLE IN AL QAEDA PLOT "We've had no evidence that Saddam Hussein was involved in Sept. 11." [President Bush, 9/17/03]

18. U.N. Resolution

BUSH VOWS TO HAVE A UN VOTE NO MATTER WHAT "No matter what the whip count is, we're calling for the vote. We want to see people stand up and say what their opinion is about Saddam Hussein and the utility of the United Nations Security Council. And so, you bet. It's time for people to show their cards, to let the world know where they stand when it comes to Saddam." [President Bush 3/6/03]

BUSH WITHDRAWS REQUEST FOR VOTE "At a National Security Council meeting convened at the White House at 8:55 a.m., Bush finalized the decision to withdraw the resolution from consideration and prepared to deliver an address to the nation that had already been written." [Washington Post, 3/18/03]

19. Involvement in the Palestinian Conflict

BUSH OPPOSES SUMMITS "Well, we've tried summits in the past, as you may remember. It wasn't all that long ago where a summit was called and nothing happened, and as a result we had significant intifada in the area." [President Bush, 04/05/02]

BUSH SUPPORTS SUMMITS "If a meeting advances progress toward two states living side by side in peace, I will strongly consider such a meeting. I'm committed to working toward peace in the Middle East." [President Bush, 5/23/03]

20. Campaign Finance

BUSH OPPOSES MCCAIN-FEINGOLD "George W. Bush opposes McCain-Feingold... as an infringement on free expression." [Washington Post, 3/28/2000]

BUSH SIGNS MCCAIN-FEINGOLD INTO LAW "[T]his bill improves the current system of financing for Federal campaigns, and therefore I have signed it into law." Meanwhile the Bush Administration was working to overturn McCain-Feingold in the Federal Courts as an infringement on free speech. [President Bush, at the McCain-Feingold signing ceremony, 03/27/02]

BUSH NOW OPPOSES FREE SPEECH AS REPRESENTED BY THE 527s and would like to prohibit them from raising campaign money and spending it on campaigns or on behalf of the positions of candidates.

21. New head for the CIA

BUSH SAID HE WOULDN'T QUICKLY REPLACE TENET After Tenet resigned, Bush was in no hurry to replace him.

BUSH NOMINATED PETER GOSS After being criticized for his slow go approach, Bush switches course and appoints Peter Goss.

22. Can we win the war on terror?

Bush said: "I don't think you can win it, ... But I think you can create conditions so that those who use terror as a tool are less acceptable in parts of the world." His comments were made to Matt Lauer of the NBC News program "Today," conducted on Saturday, August 28th, 2004 but shown on the opening day of the Republican National Convention, when Mr. Bush was asked if the United States could win the war against terrorism, which he has made the focus of his administration and the central thrust of his re-election campaign.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/31/politics/campaign/31bush.html?ex=1094964343&ei=1&en=5600cfcc6f1b057a>

Bush had said: "One of the interesting things people ask me, now that we are asking questions, is, 'Can you ever win the war on terror?' Of course you can." At a prime-time news conference in the East Room of the White House on April 13, 2004 and on April 14, 2004 **he said: "I have a clear vision and a strategy to win the war on terror."**

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/08/31/politics/campaign/31bush.html?ex=1094964343&ei=1&en=5600cfcc6f1b057a>

Then Bush flip-flopped again and said this: "We meet today in a time of war for our country, a war we did not start yet one that we will win." He was speaking at the American Legion National Convention at the Opryland Hotel Tuesday, Aug. 31, 2004 in Nashville, Tenn.

http://story.news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&cid=514&e=1&u=/ap/20040831/ap_on_e1_pr/cvn_bush_27

23. Gun Control

Bush said four years ago when running for President and under pressure from moderates: That he did support the renewal of this highly popular law [ban on assault weapons].

Bush now with ban on assault weapons set to expire on Sept. 13, 2004: As president, Mr. Bush has never once demanded that his G.O.P. leaders cease playing first responder to the demands of the gun lobby and take the initiative on this public safety issue. The ban will thus expire.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2004/09/11/opinion/11sat1.html>

24. Social Security

Bush pledged not to touch social security surplus: "We're going to keep the promise of social security and keep the government from raiding the social security surplus." [Pres. Bush 3/3/01]

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/03/20010303.html>

Bush spends social security surplus: The New York Times reported that the "President's new budget uses Social Security surpluses to pay for other

programs every year through 2013, ultimately diverting more than \$1.4 trillion in Social Security funds to other purposes. [The New York Times 2/6/02]

25. Abortion

Bush supports a woman's right to choose: "Bush said he . . . favors leaving up to a woman and her doctor the abortion question." [The Nation 6/15/00, quoting the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal, 5/78]

<http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20000703&:s=corn>

Bush opposes a woman's right to choose: "I'm pro-life." [Governor Bush 10/3/00]

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