

Former President George HW Bush, Died at Age 94. Here Is His Legacy That the Media Ignores

written by GEG | December 3, 2018



Both Republicans and Democrats are heaping praise on George HW Bush despite his record, which no one wants to discuss. Bush Sr. lied in order to entangle the US in the first Gulf War against Iraq and he ordered 88,500 tons of bombs to be dropped on that country under false pretenses. Additional war crimes include destroying infrastructure in Iraq in order to make that country dependent on the US for re-building. He escalated the war on drugs that wasted hundreds of billions of dollars and led to the incarceration of hundreds of thousands of Americans, especially blacks, while utterly failing to reduce drug use. Bush attended Yale and was a member of the Skull and Bones secret society. He became the Director of the CIA in 1976 and was involved in the Iran Contra weapons-for-drugs scandal and many other adventures. The Bush family were friendly with the Hinckley family, whose son shot President Reagan, which would have handed the presidency to Bush Sr if Reagan had died. The Franklin scandal, involving sex parties with underage boys and girls inside the White House, happened during Bush's term in office.

The tributes to former President George H.W. Bush, who died on Friday aged 94, have been pouring in from all sides of the political spectrum. He was a man "of the highest character," said his eldest son and fellow former president, George W. Bush. "He loved America and served with character, class, and integrity," tweeted former U.S. Attorney and #Resistance icon Preet Bharara. According to another former president, Barack Obama, Bush's life was "a testament to the notion that public service is a noble, joyous calling. And he did tremendous good along the journey." Apple boss Tim Cook said: "We have lost a great American."

In the age of Donald Trump, it isn't difficult for hagiographers of the late Bush Sr. to paint a picture of him as a great patriot and pragmatist; a president who governed with "class" and "integrity." It is true that the former president refused to vote for Trump

in 2016, calling him a “**blowhard**,” and that he eschewed the white nationalist, “alt-right,” conspiratorial politics that has come to define the modern Republican Party. He helped end the Cold War without, as Obama **said**, “firing a shot.” He spent his life serving his country – from the military to Congress to the United Nations to the CIA to the White House. And, by all accounts, he was also a beloved grandfather and great-grandfather to his **17 grandkids and eight great-grandkids**.

Nevertheless, he was a **public, not a private, figure** – one of only 44 men to have ever served as president of the United States. We cannot, therefore, allow his actual record in office to be beautified in such a brazen way. “When a political leader dies, it is irresponsible in the extreme to demand that only praise be permitted but not criticisms,” as my colleague Glenn Greenwald has **argued**, because it leads to “false history and a propagandistic whitewashing of bad acts.” The inconvenient truth is that the presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush had far more in common with the recognizably belligerent, corrupt, and right-wing Republican figures who came after him – his son George W. and the current orange-faced incumbent – than much of the political and media classes might have you believe.

Consider:

He ran a racist election campaign. The name of **Willie Horton** should forever be associated with Bush’s 1988 presidential bid. Horton, who was serving a life sentence for murder in Massachusetts – where Bush’s Democratic opponent, Michael Dukakis, was governor – had fled a weekend furlough program and raped a Maryland woman. A notorious television ad called “**Weekend Passes**,” released by a political action committee with ties to the Bush campaign, made clear to viewers that Horton was black and his victim was white.

As Bush campaign director Lee Atwater **bragged**, “By the time we’re finished, they’re going to wonder whether Willie Horton is Dukakis’s running mate.” Bush himself was quick to **dismiss** accusations of racism as “absolutely ridiculous,” yet it was clear at the time – even to right-wing Republican operatives such as Roger Stone, now a close ally of Trump – that the ad had crossed a line. “You and George Bush will wear that to your grave,” Stone **complained** to Atwater. “It’s a racist ad. ... You’re going to regret it.”

Stone was right about Atwater, who on his deathbed **apologized** for using Horton against Dukakis. But Bush never did.

He made a dishonest case for war. Thirteen years before George W. Bush **lied** about weapons of mass destruction to justify his invasion and occupation of Iraq, his father made his own set of false claims to justify the aerial bombardment of that same country. The first Gulf War, as an investigation by journalist Joshua Holland **concluded**, “was sold on a mountain of war propaganda.”

For a start, Bush told the American public that Iraq had invaded Kuwait “**without provocation or warning**.” What he omitted to mention was that the U.S. ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, had given an **effective green light** to Saddam Hussein, **telling** him in July 1990, a week before his invasion, “[W]e have no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait.”

Then there is the fabrication of intelligence. Bush deployed U.S. troops to the Gulf in August 1990 and **claimed** that he was doing so in order “to assist the Saudi Arabian Government in the defense of its homeland.” As Scott Peterson **wrote** in the Christian Science Monitor in 2002, “Citing top-secret satellite images, Pentagon officials estimated ... that up to 250,000 Iraqi troops and 1,500 tanks stood on the border, threatening the key U.S. oil supplier.”

Yet when reporter Jean Heller of the St. Petersburg Times acquired her own commercial satellite images of the Saudi border, she found no signs of Iraqi forces; only an empty desert. “It was a pretty serious fib,” Heller **told** Peterson, adding: “That [Iraqi buildup] was the whole justification for Bush sending troops in there, and it just didn’t exist.”

He committed war crimes. Under Bush Sr., the U.S. dropped a whopping **88,500 tons of bombs** on Iraq and Iraqi-occupied Kuwait, many of which resulted in horrific civilian casualties. In February 1991, for example, a U.S. airstrike on an air-raid shelter in the Amiriyah neighborhood of Baghdad killed at least **408 Iraqi civilians**. According to **Human Rights Watch**, the Pentagon knew the Amiriyah facility had been used as a civil defense shelter during the Iran-Iraq war and yet had attacked without warning. It was, concluded HRW, “a serious violation of the laws of war.”

U.S. bombs also **destroyed** essential Iraqi civilian infrastructure – from electricity-generating and water-treatment facilities to food-processing plants and flour mills. This was no accident. As Barton Gellman of the Washington Post **reported** in June 1991: “Some targets, especially late in the war, were bombed primarily to create postwar leverage over Iraq, not to influence the course of the conflict itself. Planners now say their intent was to destroy or damage valuable facilities that Baghdad could not repair without foreign assistance. ... Because of these goals, damage to civilian structures and interests, invariably described by briefers during the war as ‘collateral’ and unintended, was sometimes neither.”

Got that? The Bush administration deliberately targeted civilian infrastructure for “leverage” over Saddam Hussein. How is this not terrorism? As a Harvard public health team **concluded** in June 1991, less than four months after the end of the war, the destruction of Iraqi infrastructure had resulted in acute malnutrition and “epidemic” levels of cholera and typhoid.

By January 1992, Beth Osborne Daponte, a demographer with the U.S. Census Bureau, **was estimating** that Bush’s Gulf War had caused the deaths of 158,000 Iraqis, including 13,000 immediate civilian deaths and 70,000 deaths from the damage done to electricity and sewage treatment plants. Daponte’s numbers contradicted the Bush administration’s, and she was threatened by her superiors with dismissal for releasing “**false information.**” (Sound familiar?)

[Read full article here...](#)