

"Welcome to Earth, young man," I said. "It's hot in the summer and cold in the winter. It's round and wet and crowded. At the outside, Joe, you've got about a hundred years here. There's only one rule that I know of: Goddamn it, Joe, you've got to be kind!"

[-Kurt Vonnegut](#)

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Who's Counting Bush's Mistakes?

By [Stephen Pizzo](#), [News for Real](#). Posted [February 19, 2006](#).

Given how ambitious and wide-ranging the incompetence of this administration has been, it's high time we started keeping track of its many failures.

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Ralph Waldo Emerson said it best, "The louder he spoke of his honor, the faster we counted our spoons." And no administration in U.S. history has spoken louder, or as often, of its honor.

So let us count our spoons.

Emergency Management: They completely failed to manage the first large-scale emergency since 9/11. Despite all their big talk and hundreds of billions of dollars spent on homeland security over the past four years, this administration proved itself stunningly incompetent when faced with an actual emergency. ([Katrina Relief Funds Squandered](#))

Fiscal Management: America is broke. No wait, we're worse than broke. In less than five years these borrow and spend-thrifts have nearly doubled our national debt, to a stunning \$8.2 trillion. These are not your father's Republicans who treated public dollars as though they were an endangered species. These Republicans waste money in ways and in quantities that make those old tax and spend liberals of yore look like tight-fisted Scots.

This administration is so incompetent that you can just throw a dart at the front page of your morning paper and whatever story of importance it hits will prove my point.

Katrina relief: Eleven thousand spanking new mobile homes sinking into the Arkansas mud. Seems no one in the administration knew there were federal and state laws [prohibiting trailers in flood zones](#). Oops. That little mistake cost you \$850 million -- and counting.

Medicare Drug Program: This \$50 billion white elephant debuted by trampling many of those it was supposed to save. The mess [forced states to step in](#) and try to save its own citizens from being killed by the administration's poorly planned and executed attempt to privatize huge hunks of the federal health safety net.

Afghanistan: Good managers know that in order to pocket the gains of a project, you have to finish it. This administration started out fine in Afghanistan. They had the Taliban and al Queda on the run and Osama bin Laden trapped in a box canyon. Then they were distracted by a nearby shiny object -- Iraq. We are now \$75 billion out of pocket in Afghanistan and its sitting president still rules only

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within the confines of the nation's capital. Tribal warlords, the growing remnants of the Taliban and al Qaeda call the shots in the rest of the county.

Iraq: This ill-begotten war was supposed to only cost us \$65 billion. It has now cost us [over \\$300 billion](#) and continues to suck \$6 billion a month out of our children's futures. Meanwhile the three warring tribes Bush "liberated" are using our money and soldiers' lives to partition the country. The Shiites and Kurds are carving out the prime cuts while treating the once-dominant Sunnis the same way the Israelis treat the Palestinians, forcing them onto Iraq's version of Death Valley. Meanwhile Iran is increasingly calling the shots in the Shiite region as mullahs loyal to Iran take charge. [\(More\)](#)

Iran: The administration not only jinxed its Afghanistan operations by attacking Iraq, but also provided Iran both the rationale for and time to move toward nuclear weapons. The Bush administration's neocons' threats to attack Syria next only provided more support for religious conservatives within Iran who argued U.S. intentions in the Middle East were clear, and that only the deterrent that comes with nuclear weapons could protect them.

North Korea: Ditto. Also add to all the above the example North Korea set for Iran. Clearly once a country possesses nukes, the U.S. drops the veiled threats and wants to talk.

Social Programs: It's easier to get affordable -- even free -- American-style medical care, paid for with American dollars, if you are injured in Iraq, Afghanistan or are victims of a Pakistani earthquake, than if you live and pay taxes in the good old U.S.A. Nearly 50 million Americans can't afford medical insurance. Nevertheless the administration has proposed a budget that will cut \$40 billion from domestic social programs, including health care for the working poor. The administration is quick to say that those services will be replaced by its "faith-based" programs. Not so fast...

"Despite the Bush administration's rhetorical support for religious charities, the amount of direct federal grants to faith-based organizations declined from 2002 to 2004, according to a major new study released yesterday....The study released yesterday "is confirmation of the suspicion I've had all along, that what the faith-based initiative is really all about is de-funding social programs and dumping responsibility for the poor on the charitable sector," said Kay Guinane, director of the nonprofit advocacy program at OMB Watch.." [\(More\)](#)

The Military: Overused and over-deployed.

Former Defense Secretary William Perry and former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright warned in a 15-page report that the Army and Marine Corps cannot sustain the current operational tempo without "doing real damage to their forces." ... Speaking at a news conference to release the study, Albright said she is "very troubled" the military will not be able to meet demands abroad. Perry warned that the strain, "if not relieved, can have highly corrosive and long-term effects on the military. [\(More\)](#)

With military budgets gutted by the spiraling costs of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the administration has requested funding for fewer National Guard troops in fiscal 2007 -- 17,000 fewer. Which boggles the sane mind since, if it weren't for reserve/National Guard, the administration would not have had enough troops to rotate forces in and out of Iraq and Afghanistan. Nearly 40 percent of the troops sent to those two countries were from the reserve and National Guard.

The Environment: Here's a little pop quiz: What happens if all the coral in the world's oceans dies? Answer: Coral is the first rung on the food-chain ladder; so when it goes, everything else in the ocean dies. And if the oceans die, we die.

The coral in the world's oceans are dying ([called "bleaching"](#)) at an alarming and accelerating rate. Global warming is the culprit. Nevertheless, this administration continues as the world's leading global warming denier. Why? Because they seem to feel it's more cost effective to be dead than to force reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. How stupid is that? And time is running out.

Trade: We are approaching a [\\$1 trillion annual trade deficit](#), most of it with Asia, \$220 billion with just China -- just last year.

Energy: Record high energy prices. Record energy company profits. Dick Cheney's energy task force meetings remain secret. Need I say more?

Consumers: Americans finally did it last year -- they achieved a negative savings rate. (Folks in China save 10 percent, for contrast.) If the government can spend more than it makes and just say "charge it" when it runs out, so can we. The average American now owes \$9,000 to credit card companies. Imagine that.

Human Rights: America now runs secret prisons and a secret judicial system that would give Kafka fits. And the U.S. has joined the list of nations that tortures prisoners of war. (Shut up George! We have pictures!)

I could go on for another 1,000 words listing the stunning incompetence of the Bush administration and its GOP sycophants in Congress. But what's the use? No seems to give a fig. The sun continues to shine in this fool's paradise. House starts were up in January. The stock market is finally back over 11,000.

But don't bother George W. Bush with any of this. While seldom right, he is never in doubt. Doubt is Bush's enemy. Worry? How can he worry when he has no doubts?

Me? Well, I worry about all the above, all the time. But in particular, I worry about coral.

Stephen Pizzo is the author of numerous books, including "Inside Job: The Looting of America's Savings and Loans," which was nominated for a Pulitzer.

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Stunning

Posted by: Tom Degan on Feb 20, 2006 1:51 AM [\[Report this comment\]](#)

Can a president be impeached for sheer stupidity? This really is a question worth pondering. What has always amazed me is the fact that even his most severe critics, Molly Ivins for instance, insist that George W. Bush is a fairly sharp guy. With all due respect, Miss Molly, you're dead wrong. As you once said of another Texas politician: If this stupid bastard's IQ gets any lower we'll probably have to water him twice a day.

This forces me to ask another question: What does the fact that this idiot is sitting in the oval office say about the intelligence of the American electorate? There was a headline in a British newspaper a day or two after the 2004 election that framed the issue perfectly. "How can 58 million people be so stupid"?

How, indeed?

All one has to do is scan the AM radio dial for twenty minutes on any given day to see the level to which we've sunk. It really is disgusting to hear these proud "dittoheads" (I'm serious!) proclaim their loyalty to the twisted ideologies of a Rugh Limbaugh or a Sean Hannity. It's enough to make you want to cry, vomit or laugh. Take your pick.

Ten years from now, once we've all sobered up, we'll look back on photos and videotape of George W. Bush. We'll look back on the grotesque smirk he gives whenever someone asks him a question he doesn't like. We'll look back on that hideous Beavis and Butthead giggle of his. We'll look back on his eighth grade level syntax (Apologies in advance to all eighth graders). We'll look back, with benefit of historical hindsight, on the jaw dropping level of incompetence and stupidity of this administration. We'll look back on all of these things and we'll all be asking the same question: What were we thinking? What the hell were we thinking?

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