

The Adulation of Ignorance

by [Paul Craig Roberts](#)

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After three years of war in Iraq, reporting and debate continue to ignore the key fact: The US invasion was a mistake.

President Bush himself acknowledges this. He says the war was based on intelligence and the intelligence was wrong. So, then, what is right about the war? If we believe Bush, he would not have taken America and Iraq to war if he had been given correct, instead of incorrect, intelligence about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and connections to al Qaeda.

In view of this, why is Bush intent on continuing the war? Why is it important to win a war that should not have happened and only happened because US intelligence was mistaken?

The war is extremely expensive. It has cost thousands of dead and maimed Americans and tens of thousands of dead and maimed Iraqis. The war has already cost \$200–\$300 billion and is being financed by foreign borrowing. Distinguished economists put the long-term cost of the war to the US in the \$1–\$2 trillion range.

This is an enormous sum to spend on a war that President Bush says is based on mistaken intelligence. Why, then, does Bush continue to fight the war?

The mistaken war has damaged America's reputation, harmed our alliances, enraged Muslims against us, and radicalized Middle Eastern politics. The CIA reports that the war has provided al Qaeda with recruitment and a training ground. The US military is trying to ascertain whether its attempted occupation of Iraq is creating insurgents faster

than they are being killed.

In view of the available facts, how can Bush in his state of the union address tell Congress and the world that the US is winning in Iraq? Why did Congress stand and applaud? What does it mean to win a war that should not have been started?

Having admitted that his invasion of Iraq is based on incorrect intelligence, why did Bush claim in his state of the union address that his war in Iraq is central to the war against terrorism? He must mean that his mistake created terrorism where it did not exist, and, having created the terrorism, he must now fight it even if doing so creates yet more terrorists.

A rational response to Bush's mistake would be to remove the cause of the insurgency by apologizing for the mistake and withdrawing US military forces. Neoconservatives say that the US cannot withdraw because Iraq would fall into civil war. This is an admission that by removing Saddam Hussein, Bush created the conditions for civil war in Iraq. How, then, was removing Saddam Hussein a good thing?

The US invasion and occupation of Iraq have destroyed Iraq's infrastructure, entire villages and towns, families, careers, and public safety. What America has done to Iraq is a monstrous crime. And Bush says it is because of a mistake in intelligence.

A mistake in intelligence in more ways than one.

It is extraordinary that after admitting to erroneously starting a war, Bush wants to do it all over again – this time against a more formidable foe, Iran.

America's adulation of ignorance gives Bush a free hand to repeat his mistake on a larger scale. Karl Rove used 9/11 to recast Bush as the archetypal hero vowing retribution on those who struck at innocent America. Enamored of this role, Americans have ceased to think.

There is no sign of intelligence or accurate reporting on Iran in the newspapers, on television or even over PBS radio. It is never made clear that Iran's "defiance" is one orchestrated by the US government, or that the "defiance" is limited to Iran's development of nuclear energy, not a weapons program. When Americans hear "nuclear defiance" over and

over, they conclude that Iran is making nuclear weapons. Instead of informing the people, the media drive them toward acceptance of another war.

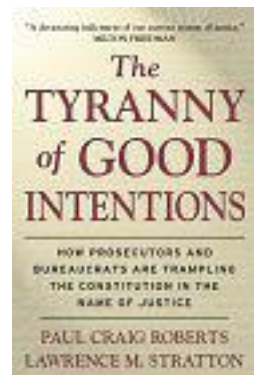
Bush has been picking a fight with Iran for a long time. He declared Iran to be part of an "axis of evil." He constantly demonizes Iran and threatens Iran with sanctions and military attack. Israel announced that if Bush doesn't attack Iran, Israel will. Bush disrupted Iran's cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, whose inspectors have found no weapons program in Iran. The media misreport it all as Iran's bad behavior, bad behavior that reflects bad intentions.

The explosive situation in the Middle East needs to be defused, not aggravated. The United States gains nothing by confirming its image as the hegemonic Great Satan.

Nothing is gained by the deaths and maiming of thousands and tens of thousands more people whose lives are thrown away to the purposes of blind propaganda.

Nothing is gained by the US wasting more hundreds of billions dollars that are desperately needed for important and legitimate purposes.

Nothing is gained by the US pressuring with threats and bribes other countries to line up with what they know to be a wrong and dangerous policy.



Nothing is gained by endangering oil flows and a western transportation system dependent on the internal combustion engine.

Bush's approach is insane. It serves no legitimate purpose. There is no reason for it.

Why is it happening?

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Dr. Roberts [[send him mail](#)] is Chairman of the Institute for Political Economy and Research Fellow at the [Independent Institute](#). He is a

former associate editor of the Wall Street Journal, former contributing editor for National Review, and a former assistant secretary of the U.S. Treasury. He is the co-author of [The Tyranny of Good Intentions](#).

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