Perspectives on the Legacy of George W. Bush

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Edited by

Michael Orlov Grossman
and Ronald Eric Matthews Jr.

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PREFACE

Across the board, the presidency of George W. Bush raises questions that both invite challenges to political scientists and pique the general interest. On March 1, 2008, just days away from Super Tuesday, more than 100 political scientists, college students and presidential scholars assembled at Mount Union College not to debate the upcoming primary season—which very well may have been the topic of many of the conversations—but to discuss the leadership and legacy of President George W. Bush. For many, it seemed to be premature. For others, it couldn't come soon enough. But no one was surprised by the controversy as the legacy of President Bush was deliberated.

As Campbell, Rockman and Rudalevige (2008, preface) point out: "President Bush has left big footprints in the sands of time that may not easily be erased," and from that vantage point, this text seeks to examine not the grains of sand but the footprints themselves— that undoubtedly will be remembered for decades to come. This is truly not an easy task. President Bush himself noted "that trying to write the history of this administration before it's even over" is futile at best, and with that notion we would somewhat concur. History may yet rewrite the legacy of this president, and the events his administration set into motion will certainly continue to develop. But to fail to begin to assess his presidency and the legacy that will follow may very well be a bigger miscarriage of justice than doing nothing at all.

As we begin this assessment, we would like to acknowledge the work and help of many people and groups. To begin with, it is necessary to note the contribution of all the participants in the symposium on the legacy of George W. Bush. While we could not include all of the papers presented, their participation is appreciated, and they are noted in the back of this book.

We would also like to acknowledge the support of Mount Union College, especially Dr. William Cunion, Chairman of the Political Science Department, Dean Patricia Draves and President Richard Giese for their support, the Mount Union College Department of Political Science, for helping to organize the symposium, and the Ralph and Mary Regula Center for Public Service for the financial backing for the symposium.

Most importantly, we want to note the contribution of all the volunteer students who helped with organizing this symposium.

We would be amiss if we did not recognize the wonderful contributions of Amber Jaeb, our outstanding undergraduate assistant at Mount Union College. Her work ethic and dedication to the project have made all our jobs easier and rewarding. Finally to Liza and Sharon, our spouses and confidants, your patience throughout this project with us is the attribute that legacies are truly made of.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

MICHAEL ORLOV GROSSMAN,
RONALD ERIC MATTHEWS, JR.
AND WILLIAM CUNION

Opinions of George W. Bush and his presidency seem to exist only at the extremes. From the contentious outcome of the 2000 election, to the attacks on September 11, to the ongoing War in Iraq, to the efforts to transform major domestic policies, and culminating with the elections of 2004 and 2006, it is little wonder that the name George W. Bush tends not to evoke lukewarm opinion. During his time in office he obtained the highest approval ratings of any sitting president, but also the lowest. President Bush has been a lightning rod for controversy from the inception of his administration. From perceived weapons of mass destruction to his "born-again" Protestant evangelical references and from contentious nominations to the judiciary and the executive branch, President Bush has carved out his own place in history, albeit his legacy may not be what he wanted it to be.

Scholars and other observers of the Bush Presidency have been similarly divided. Future historians will surely focus most of their attention on the Bush legacy in the area of foreign policy. Bush was generally praised for his actions after September 11th, when he responded with a war against al Qaeda in Afghanistan. But he has been widely criticized for launching a war in Iraq based on dubious intelligence. His approach has been unilateral and unapologetic, driving supporters and critics into opposite corners. He has advanced aggressive anti-terrorism measures here in the United States, as well, most notably, the USA Patriot Act, passed only a few weeks following the attacks.

Domestically, the President has also been equally bold and just as controversial. Has the No Child Left Behind Act helped to increase the accountability of public schools, or has it harmed public education by

placing excessive burdens on teachers? Were his tax cuts the key to economic growth, or did they add irresponsibly to the national debt, and increase economic inequality in the process? Was his attempt to reform Social Security a farsighted effort to promote the public good, or a foolish idea that risked the nation's most popular government program?

His public leadership has also been noteworthy in many respects. Scholars of the presidency have argued that "going public" is the key to successful presidential leadership. Bush has employed some of the techniques of that strategy, including the use of emotionally charged rhetoric such as the term "Axis of Evil." On the other hand, Bush's overall style is much less public than most of his immediate predecessors, preferring to engineer narrow congressional victories by maintaining party discipline. So attempting to assess and determine his legacy it a daunting task to say the least.

So where do we begin? It may be necessary to ask ourselves two foundational questions as we begin just as those who have examined and authored other texts on presidential legacies (Campbell, Rockman and Rudalevige 2008): What exactly is a President's legacy and who interprets it?

Legacy

Utilizing the definition of Rockman (2008), a presidential legacy is "something durable left by an administration that others will benefit by or have to deal with as a set of problems well into the future (326). It can be positive and/or negative, somewhat controversial or somewhat non-existent to outsiders but every president leaves something behind, whether intentional or not. A classic example of this is the economic policies of Hebert Hoover handed off to Franklin D. Roosevelt. In the election of 1928, the country was enjoying high levels of economic prosperity and optimism, leading to a landslide for Hoover over the Democrat candidate Al Smith. However with the onset of the Great Depression, Hoover made several tactical mistakes that would not only define his legacy but thrust Roosevelt into the spotlight. Hoover deeply believed in the Efficiency Movement arguing that all aspects of the economy, society and government were riddled with waste and inefficiency. Everything would be better if experts identified the problems and fixed them. This position came under strict scrutiny as soup lines became longer, food banks became crowded and banks failed. Hoover tried to combat the Depression with volunteer efforts and government action, none of which produced economic recovery quickly enough during his term. The consensus among

historians is that Hoover's defeat in 1932 had more to do with his inability to end the economic crisis in a quick efficient manner than it did his concerns for long-term solutions for other social issues such as prohibition. His legacy was dropped into the lap of Franklin Roosevelt as he set out to create a legacy of his own. Franklin Roosevelt used Hoover's misfortunes to create the New Deal programs and many argue that it is those programs, not Roosevelt's handling of World War II that he is most remembered for. However, as Rockman (2008) notes, "big achievements do not necessarily translate into legacies, especially if political fortunes reverse themselves".

Such is the case with President George H.W. Bush who enjoyed perhaps the highest presidential approval ratings in the history of the United States following Desert Storm in 1991 only to see them evaporate quickly leading up to his 1992 electoral defeat. Known for his famous proclamation of "read my lips, no new taxes" which was followed by a tax increase, President Bush was never able to shake the statement and his legacy has more to do with his sudden reversal on the tax issue than his Desert Storm success.

Legacies can also be defined not by what the president does or doesn't do but by external events that they have no control over. Both President Johnson's were handed the presidency following the assassinations of their predecessors. Lincoln had to deal with the slavery issue and the succession of states from the Union from the onset. George W. Bush never saw 9-11 coming and the same can be said for Roosevelt and Pearl Harbor. Thus, we can conclude that a presidential legacy is complicated and complex, often taking a life of its own fueled by external and internal forces left to interpretation of the masses.

Interpretation

We often say that history tells a story but in truth, it is people that write the histories and people by their very nature have conflicting views. Ask people to name the greatest president and you will get pretty much the same answer: Lincoln, Washington, Roosevelt or Jefferson. Ask them to name the worst president and for many they have to view it within the context of the present. And in so doing they look to "long-standing coalitions that help to institutionalize outcomes or make them difficult to reverse" (Rockman 2008, 329). Franklin Roosevelt will be remembered for the creation of Social Security, Lyndon Johnson for Food Stamps, and Woodrow Wilson for increased emphasis in public administration. But as important as long standing coalitions are to the legacy of a President, so

too, is the increased role of the President in building, sustaining or attempting to weaken the coalition. The ability or inability of a president to exert his executive power on a specific institution goes a long way in the development of a legacy. George W. Bush's ability to engage in a series of executive orders and/or decisions through key administrative and cabinet positions, such as John Ashcroft as Attorney General, helped to define his first term. As Skowronek (1997) and others have noted, changes are powered by political coalitions and if these coalitions solidify, the changes are likely to become institutionalized (Rockman 2008).

Whether intentional or not, President George W. Bush has worked incredibly hard to create and institutionalize his legacy using a plethora of domestic and international policies. From No Child Left Behind and efforts to reform social security to the war on terror, typified by a stated policy of preemption and regime change, to the expansion of presidential power through the use of signing statements and a much observed increase in secrecy, George W. Bush actively sought to leave his mark on America's political landscape and to transform the world.

Yet, as the contributors to this volume illustrate, his legacy remains, at best, mixed. Domestically, his agenda while initially showing much promise, with the passage of No Child Left Behind and tax cuts, soon stalled and collapsed with the failure of social security reform and the disastrous response to Hurricane Katrina. In foreign policy, his efforts at transforming the Middle East became mired in Iraq and unraveled in Afghanistan, and the much heralded Bush Doctrine (see Gaddis 2002) has been discredited. Yet, his greatest impact may be on the institution of the presidency, where he has, undoubtedly expanded the imperial presidency, increasing the power of the executive office.

Structure of the Book

The contributors to this volume examine George W. Bush's legacy in domestic policy, foreign policy, and on the institution of the presidency. While George W. Bush worked to influence all three areas, the sheer volume of policies and presidential directives, would make a truly thorough review difficult. With this limitation in mind, the editors of this book sought to compile an examination of a broad range of policies, that while still limited, would provide a strong argument for the legacy left behind by this president. While certain topics are left out, such as education reform and No Child Left Behind, the authors cover a broad range of issues. Some topics will be quite familiar to most people as a result of the wide coverage given to them in the news media and in

political debates such as social security reform, the use of signing statements, and the Bush Doctrine. At the same time, many of the topics covered are fairly esoteric, focusing on Bush's federalism and his interpretation of the "Freedom Agenda". Together, these chapters provide a clear picture of the very mixed legacy of the Bush presidency.

Arguably, the administration of George W. Bush had one of the greatest long-term impacts on the institution of the presidency. Will Miller examines George W. Bush's personality and leadership style, noting that President Bush is often thought of as being a CEO and not a world leader. Miller notes that while President Bush is one with a strong character, this strong character and leadership style can also be his Achilles heel. Miller concludes that Bush's determination can lead to chaos and confusion and that the inner voices in his mind can become delusional. His legacy, according to Miller, may not be the decisions that he made but the idiosyncrasies behind those decisions.

Jennifer Mercieca and Justin Vaughn's chapter marks an attempt to situate Bush's rhetorical legacy within an on-going paradigmatic shift away from the era of the rhetorical presidency and into a new era, one that they define as the post-rhetorical presidency. Building upon theoretical foundations supplied in Jeffrey Tulis's (1987) seminal text, *The Rhetorical Presidency*, their central contention is that, if the rhetorical presidency was about using communication to mobilize public support and achieve policy and political goals, the post-rhetorical presidency is about using presidential speech and other communicative tools to distract and stymie the mass public. Conceptually, the post-rhetorical presidency refers communication strategies designed to confuse public opinion, prevent citizen action, and frustrate citizen deliberation. Mercieca and Vaughn examine post-rhetorical patterns in three key areas Bush's presidential communication: his public speeches, his relationship with the press, and the increased practice of accompanying legislation with signing statements, a practice that Karlyn Kohrs Campbell and Kathleen Hall Jamieson (2008) have referred to as a de facto item veto. Acknowledging the controversial nature of Bush's rhetorical approach, they argue that Bush's experience will both enable and constrain the rhetoric of future presidents. They note in particular that despite widespread opposition to the apparent disingenuousness of Bush's rhetoric and a mass public more wary of presidential deception, future presidents will follow similar patterns of communication because the same external forces that shaped Bush and his immediate predecessors' relationships with the public—growing public expectations, ambition, and technological change—lie in store for the them, as well.

Harry C. "Neil" Strine examines the use of signing statements within the Bush administration comparing George W. Bush to Bill Clinton and other former presidents arguing that he references virtually the same inherent executive authority exercised by his predecessors. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. (1973) referred to this as the Imperial Presidency. After coding all presidential signing statements from the George W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations, Strine concludes that President George W. Bush has claimed constitutional authority more often than President Clinton to either ignore laws passed by Congress or substitute saving language in the statute to make the law constitutional, thus sustaining the Imperial Presidency.

Turning to domestic politics, President Bush's legacy is less clear. While policies such as No Child Left behind and the tax cuts implemented early in his administration will certainly outlive his tenure and their impact will be long debated, other efforts will certainly not survive beyond his administration. Michael W. Hail examines his domestic policy of new federalism, comparing it with the preceding presidencies of Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, and Clinton across a range of formal executive powers utilizing a regulatory model and a historical, comparative methodology. Focusing on the use of some of the central tools of executive federalism: regulatory policy, public management of the grant-in-aid programs, vetoes, executive orders, and presidential rhetoric, Hail evaluates Bush's federalism with a comparative policy framework that examines the powers of the presidency to articulate policies of federalism: vetoes, executive orders, regulatory enactments, and the powers of the rhetorical presidency. Hail concludes that that George W. Bush represents the end of the devolution revolution and the beginning of a period of new nationalism for federalism and intergovernmental relations. He further argues that Bush's transitional federalism represents a silent paradigmatic shift in public dialogue rather than a re-alignment and ultimately, Bush leaves the next era of federalism relatively undefined even if more nationalist in character.

Turning to the debacle that was the effort to reform social security, Weller shows how after President Bush won a second term in 2004, he decided to use his political capital to push for an ambitious reform of Social Security, in particular, to establish a system of private accounts within the existing social insurance system. The intense national Social Security debate lasted for much of 2005 highlighted two separate visions for Social Security's future as either insurance or investment program, centered on Social Security's long-term solvency and on the lack of retirement wealth for many Americans. President Bush's proposal failed

because its basic economic flaws were ignored by President Bush himself and because the public did not support the conversion from insurance to investment program and the included benefit cuts. The discussion over Social Security privatization in 2005 laid the ground for the subsequent retirement debate during the 2008 presidential campaign.

Although he promised to undertake a more humble foreign policy, without a doubt George W. Bush's greatest impact has been on the foreign policy of the United States. Whether it is the "war on terror" or the war in Iraq, this president has worked hard to paint himself as a "war president", tying most of his legacy to a foreign policy that sought to transform the Middle East and ensure American hegemony for the foreseeable future. Yet as the contributors in this section argue, his contribution to the nature of America's future foreign policy will be limited, focusing mostly, as Steven Hook seems to argue, on correcting this administration's policies. Hook notes that one of the key legacies of the Bush Doctrine has been the nation's isolation in the international community, and that any future administration will be faced with the task of remedying this central by-product of Bush's foreign policy. He identifies a variety of alternative grand strategy that may be adopted by any future White House, and concludes that a policy of liberal internationalism is both the most likely and most advantageous course, one that better exploits the "soft power" of the United States and will begin the process of correcting the damage done to US standing in the world.

Under the administration of George W. Bush, a new term came into the American foreign policy lexicon: neoconservative. Driven by an unwavering belief that individual liberty is a moral absolute and that US power can, and should, be used to promote a more stable international order based on the spread of democracy, neo-conservatives have been blamed for the unilateral turn in US foreign policy, the invasion of Iraq, and international isolation of the United States. Glen Duerr examines the long-term impact of neoconservatism on US foreign policy, arguing that the decision, to overthrow Saddam Hussein, rid the country of weapons of mass destruction and democratize Iraq, may long be considered the truest test of neo-conservative foreign policy; yet, this theory does not fully explain Bush or his administration. He argues that Bush, himself, is not a neo-conservative but rather an evangelical realist and that the only reason why neo-conservatives were allowed to operate in the administration was because they aligned with Bush's evangelical views on foreign policy. While noting that neo-conservatism has been discredited and will likely not survive the Bush administration, evangelical realism will, and it is in

this vein that the legacy of George W. Bush should be remembered, and properly categorized.

In a theoretical analysis of Bush's "freedom agenda", Shane J. Ralston connects Bush's vision to the ideas of two philosophers: Isaiah Berlin's notion of positive-negative liberty and John Dewey's concept of freedom as a function of culture. He notes that the legacy of George W. Bush will probably be associated with the President's infallibly certain style of visionary leadership and his specific vision of a 'Freedom Agenda'. According to this vision, the United States must spread democracy to all people who desire liberty and vanquish those tyrants and terrorists who despise it. Freedom is universally valued, and the United States is everywhere perceived as freedom's protector and purveyor. So, the mission of the Freedom Agenda is to guard existing freedoms as well as spread the democratic political system to those countries lacking comparable freedoms. His central claim is that when compared with the ideas of Berlin and Dewey, the Freedom Agenda is a faulty construct, both conceptually and practically, for understanding America's role in global affairs. The Freedom Agenda proves to be neither conservative nor universal. Nevertheless, it constitutes an essential element of George W. Bush's legacy, a vision of American purpose in a threatening and divisive world.

Moving to a more substantive examination of Bush's foreign policy in the Middle East, Marc J. O'Reilly examines U.S. policy toward the Persian Gulf in the last eight years, examining America's efforts to maintain a formal empire in the region. He argues that by ordering an invasion of Iraq in March 2003, a crusading Bush sought to overthrow an American as well as family nemesis, Saddam Hussein. Bush succeeded, but the ensuing U.S. occupation proved agonizing, as Iraq exploded into ethno-sectarian conflict. As the Iraq occupation deteriorated, the United States was faced with a classic imperial quandary, which jeopardized the U.S. informal empire in the Arabian Peninsula. With Iran emboldened by repeated American blunders in Iraq, global disapproval of U.S. foreign policy, and skyrocketing oil prices, Bush desperately tried to reverse his country's fortunes in the Gulf. Fortunately for him, the "surge" he authorized in early 2007 helped stem Iraqi violence and appreciably improved the American position in Iraq and the region. Although Washington's informal empire in the region remains intact, its future hinges on the uncertain outcome of the U.S. misadventure in Mesopotamia.

Conclusion

By all accounts, the Bush Presidency has been highly consequential, and interest in analyzing and evaluating his decisions and policies is to be expected. The main objective of this collection is not to criticize excessively but rather to provide an even-handed, scholarly examination of the current administration as it leaves office, and to explore some of the impact of the Bush presidency on America and the world. In the end, history will decide what legacy George W. Bush will leave behind. Iraq may yet become a Jeffersonian democracy on the Persian Gulf and a model for other Middle Eastern states, Bush's social security reform efforts may prove prescient, and his "freedom agenda" may yet be seen as guiding a truly visionary foreign policy. But for now, we must conclude his legacy remains at best mixed.

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CHAPTER TWO

THE EFFECTS OF LEADERSHIP STYLE ON THE BUSH PRESIDENCY

WILL MILLER

I. Introduction

Teaching an undergraduate level American Presidency and Congress class has led me to find that many undergraduate students typically speak of a president in one of three ways: with great pride and support, with unabashed hatred, or with a complete ignorance to having any opinion. Thus, at the beginning of the current semester, while discussing the class' opinion on the Bush presidency, I was pleasantly surprised by the response of a particular student. This student, undoubtedly an above average performer with an innate ability to clearly reason, explained that while he personally was disgusted by many of the actions taken by the Bush administration, he never felt that Bush acted out of anything but what he perceived to be the best interests of our nation. A proclaimed anti-Bush liberal, the student further expanded by saying that he truly believed Bush loves this country and merely does what he feels is in its best interests.

In modern day politics, the fact is that few political elites or pundits seem to take the time to remember this simple lesson: that whether an individual agrees with the political actions of an elected official or not, that the elected official continually acts in the manner s/he perceives to be best for the nation. The case of Bush is clearly no different. When researching, only one book or article emerged that shared my student's sentiment. James Hoopes (2008, 5) points out that "for all [he] know[s], George Bush, is, at heart, as decent a person as many of us." While one can easily dismiss the War in Iraq, the War on Terror, the income tax refunds, and his response to Hurricane Katrina as politically motivated, it is imperative to remember that the proper intent did exist, even if we personally do not agree with it. Clearly, it is more imperative to policy-makers to examine the outcomes and impacts of whatever course of action

a leader takes. Yet for academics and citizens, there is no reason to simply neglect the intention of any given action. Presidents, as leaders with elaborate information mechanisms surrounding them, should be held to higher levels of prospect that good intentions will lead to good outcomes, but to merely assume such an ending can lead to shattered expectations.

Different variables unquestionably affect the ability of a president to be publicly seen as doing what s/he feels is truly right and just. The remainder of this paper will focus on examining how leadership style can present the decisions and actions of a president in a way that leads undergraduate students of a dramatically opposing view to believe that leaders like Bush do what they feel is best for the country they love.

II. Presidential Leadership: A Common Context

Fred Greenstein, in the late 1960s, outlined a number of situations under which personal factors have the potential to influence presidential behavior (Greenstein 1969). In short, Greenstein saw a number of areas in which the individual could influence the presidency. For the purposes of this paper, Greenstein's model will serve as a building block on which to analyze Bush's leadership style. Greenstein begins by noting that personal attributes are likely to have an impact when the environment can potentially be restructured (Greenstein 1969, 42-44). By restructuring the environment, Greenstein is speaking to the idea of altering the context that they face. The process of structuring the White House staff is a perfect example. A president like Reagan preferred to delegate responsibility, while someone like Nixon chose to maintain strict control over every facet of operations. The second point brought forth by Greenstein is that an actor's location is important in determining whether personal attributes and leadership characteristics will be important (Greenstein 1969, 44-45). By sitting atop the executive branch, the president has a tremendous amount of power at his dispersal. Further, the ambiguity of Article II allows for vast interpretations and the potential for increased power.

Greenstein next moves to the point that individual presidents can have different levels of impact based on the strengths and weaknesses of the person (Greenstein 1969, 45-46). The key to this point is that each president will have different strengths and weaknesses. For example, while Clinton possessed a sharp intellect, Reagan possessed a tremendous understanding of rhetoric. Each president will have his own skill set with varying degrees of strengths and weaknesses unique to the leader's background, educational training, and previous job experience. Lastly, Greenstein notes that more ambiguous circumstances tend to evolve into

opportunities for the individual to showcase personal attributes (Greenstein 1969, 50-51). New situations are the most likely to lead to ambiguity. The events after September 11th show how a new situation, never experienced in politics before, can lead to a president being given the support to do whatever s/he deems necessary to protect the nation. Bush was given elaborate powers merely because America was looking for him to provide leadership in a novel state of affairs.

Greenstein consequently presents a theoretical framework from which to judge whether an individual president has the requisite circumstances present in which to leave a personal legacy on the office. For Bush, many can argue that the doors were open for his leadership style to shine through and directly shape the events of his presidency. What Greenstein assures, unlike some other leadership scholars, is that the individual plays a large role in leadership style. Rather than casting prototypical groupings of leadership styles, Greenstein instead shows how different contexts bring forth the possibility of an individual leader having a major impact on the presidency. According to Barber's typology, Bush would most likely be an active-positive president. He shows obvious self-esteem, invests significant positive energy in discharging his duties, and obviously enjoys serving as president.

Following previous research, the keys to examining leadership are a leader's need for control and a leader's sensitivity to context. Is the president power hungry or does s/he understand his/her place in the political arena? Does s/he operate in a manner appropriate for the particular context or merely act as s/he wishes without paying due diligence to external situations? Such questions allow us to determine in many ways the leadership style of a particular leader. The leadership style of a president will play an important role in determining their administration's decision-making process. Leadership style is defined in this paper as "a way of conducting the entire decision-making process, from considering alternative policies, through deciding among them and having them executed, to assessing policy outcomes" (Weinstein 2004). Much research has been conducted to show that leadership characteristics of individual leaders have a great impact on styles of management, use of advisers, foreign policy decision-making, and crisis response (Preston and 't Hart 1999; Preston and Hermann 2004; Dyson and Preston 2006).

The degree of control or direct involvement that an individual desires within the policy process has been repeatedly shown to be directly related to their need for power (Winter 1973; McClelland 1975; Hermann 1980; House 1990). Those individuals who desire large amounts of power typically want to be directly involved in policy-making, oftentimes

holding most, if not all, of the control. They tend to strongly push for their own personal agendas and to frame issues. They possess a fixed inner circle of advisers and rarely delegate important decisions to subordinates (Preston and 't Hart 1999; Preston 2001). A perfect example of such a leader would be Richard Nixon, who we will address in more detail later.

When considering sensitivity to context, leadership scholars have repeatedly noted that some presidents value diverse advice while others merely collect only that which is likely to adhere with their own personal views (George 1980; Hess 1988; Preston 2001; Taysi and Preston 2001). As Preston (2001) found, presidents with high cognitive complexity tended to engage in broad information search routines, which sough alternative points of view, varied information, and multiple options. These leaders also were less likely to see policies in black-and-white terms or employ simplistic analogies when making a case for a given policy. While such an approach comes with many strengths, it also involves far less decisive, more deliberative decision-making and leadership.

For the purposes of this paper, we will be focusing heavily on crisis management. In many ways, the Bush presidency can be broken down into time series that exist between major crises. September 11th, the War in Iraq and Hurricane Katrina have all occurred under his watch. Sustained and balanced leadership is the key to preventing, preparing for, and responding to these crises (Boin et al. 2005). The research on crisis leadership tends to focus on how leaders cope with stress, determine appropriate strategic and operational decisions under difficult situations, how they coordinate inter-organizational response networks, and handle dealing with the media (Flin 1996; Ulmer et al. 2007).

Ultimately, the key finding in previous research has been that each president comes into office with a personal background and history that ultimately shapes the kind of leader they become. The context of the political system at the time of election works either to enhance a leader's predisposed understanding of leadership or to stifle the manner in which one had hoped to lead. How a leader handles the context they inherit will ultimately shape the assessment of their leadership abilities.

III. The Bush Leadership Style

A cursory look at the Bush leadership style recalls to mind two different leadership styles that have become infamous in presidential studies for the crises that emerged under their rule. In terms of personality, Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan were about as different as two could be. Nixon's character and intense fear of defeat directly led to the events of Watergate. Nixon resented the "Eastern establishment elite," intellectuals in general, the media, the Democratic National Party, the democratically controlled Congress, the bureaucracy of career civil servants, think tanks, antiwar protesters, and civil rights activists (Pfiffner 2003, 425). Giving these enemies greater powers than they previously possessed, Nixon set himself up to inevitably fall. His obsession bordered on psychotic and his fear led him to throw away the presidency.

Reagan, on the other hand, did not resent "the establishment" or fear his political enemies in the same manner as Nixon. His personal motives and predispositions did, however, contribute to the Iran-Contra affairs that seriously tarnished his presidential image. Trusting his top officials, Reagan found it relatively easy to delegate power (Pfiffner 2003, 428-429). Even in matters of major state and foreign policy, the president would trust his aides to handle the situation and carry out his preset objectives. In many ways Reagan was Machiavellian, adhering to strong political convictions and rarely considering the implications of the actions necessary to carry them out. Consequently, Iran-Contra occurred under his watch, but he was able to avoid implicating himself by claiming he was unaware of exactly what was being done in his name. The explanation was completely plausible given his leadership style.

The fact is that Bush, unlike other many other presidents, combines elements of both previous leaders in his personal management style. Bush seeks to control all of the big picture ideas that exist within his administration—yet he fails to follow Nixon's micromanaging control style of detail. Further, he does not fear political enemies, as God is on his side. Thus, Bush seeks to only control the big picture by choice, not out of a sense of impeding doom or fear. At the same time, Bush has no problem delegating authority to subordinates as he has in many cases recruited these individuals to his administration. Unlike Reagan, however, Bush maintains enough oversight and offers sufficient guidance to assure he knows what is being done in his name. Whereas Reagan, in retrospect, appears to have been far too trusting with his administration and Nixon not nearly trusting enough, Bush appears to ride the fence between the two styles. His hybrid model of leadership has unquestionably been blamed by

enemies for some of the outcomes of his administration, but the style has not directly led to any presidential-level scandals comparable to Watergate or Iran-Contra.

As James Pfiffner (2007, 6) points out, Americans tend not to "think of the president of the United States primarily as a public administrator." Rather than administering, s/he is seen as the political leader of our country and the symbolic head of state. Ultimately, Bush has achieved numerous policy victories during his two terms as president; however, many of the successes have come through "secrecy, speed, and tight control" (Pfiffner 2007, 7). As he explained himself, Bush sees his job as setting the agenda, laying out the principles by which his administration operates, and delegating. He is not a textbook player, he is a guy player.

David Gergen assessed the Bush leadership style by relating it to a W.H.D. Koerner painting entitled "A Charge to Keep" which hangs in the Oval Office. Bush describes the painting as a "horseman determinedly charging up what appears to be a steep and through trail. This is us" (Gergen 2003). Those who agree with Bush's leadership theory see a "brave, daring leader riding fearlessly into the unknown, striking out against unseen enemies, pulling his team behind him" (Gergen 2003). On the other side of the coin, critics see "a lone, arrogant cowboy plunging recklessly ahead, paying little heed to danger, looking neither left nor right, listening to no voice other than his own" (Gergen 2003). Gergen's use of the picture as the governing metaphor of Bush's leadership style ultimately proves to be more useful than even he may have imagined. Views on Bush's leadership have distinctly separated scholars and Americans alike. What is exemplary and groundbreaking to one appears to be draconian and risky to another. Many individuals agree on how Bush leads; where they fundamentally differ is on how they frame these actions.

Most commentators agree that Bush is big on delegating, that he runs a tight ship, that he likes to decide quickly while not looking back, that he favors a short agenda of big things over a long agenda of small items, and that he is willing to push big, controversial policies before they have broad support (Gilbert 2003). To Bush, unquestionably, "the decision is the central presidential act" (Kettl 2003, 185). Decisions are a critical part of a president's job; and their quality typically plays a large role in determining a president's legacy (Rudalevige 2008). Where commentators have failed to reach agreement, however, is on the merits of such an approach to leadership. The Bush style has largely been assumed to either reap big rewards or cause large problems. The particular approach to each topic mentioned above ultimately determines its potential for success.

Delegation can be wise when intelligent individuals who have the freedom to do what is necessary are planning a policy or disastrous when unqualified individuals take charge of national policies. Tight ships can be well-oiled machines, unless a leader micromanages to an extent that nothing gets accomplished. Quick decisions can lead to decisive, sound policies as long as the leader did not overly-suffice when gathering background information. Short agendas can benefit policy as long as important issues are not neglected merely because of their sheer volume. Lastly, leaders can push policies that lack popular support as long as they are eventually willing to admit defeat if the policy flops during implementation. Whether Bush's approach has been a positive or negative in this regard remains largely debated.

The Bush leadership style at its most fundamental roots combines a low need for personal control and involvement with the policy process with a low general sensitivity to context and a limited need for vast amounts of information when making decisions (Preston and Hermann 2004). Bush tends to delegate, express confidence, and ignore details. He has been labeled a "CEO President" by some and an "MBA President" by others. Such an image involves "a smartly dressed executive who lives by synchronized watch and day planner, who delegates tasks where appropriate, and who works out regularly, eats right and gets plenty of bed rest" (Oliphant 2003). His entire "pedigree conotates privilege—Andover, Yale, Harvard—yet his manners are decidedly populist" (Pike and Maltese 2008, 186). Scholars have suggested that his administration suffers from "groupthink" and that he serves as his own "yes man." He is seen as delegating powers, expressing confidence, and happily ignoring details. He has "gathered a small circle of trusted advisers, listens to brief debates and then offers swift, gut-based solutions to problems" (Allen and Broder 2004). On a personal level, he is "gregarious, unpretentious, persistent, and highly adaptable…his interpersonal skills are outstanding" (Pika and Maltese 2008, 185).

A corporation's mission statement or corporate philosophy is almost always irrelevant compared to leadership philosophy and style—as evidenced by actual behavior (Kelly 2004). With the Bush White House we have found an ideologically driven administration with predetermined priorities. Consequently, what emerges is top-down, fractured communication and an environment in which problem solving is unable to occur without the leader's consent and support. He focuses on the big issues, decides the major strategy questions and delegates the details (Gilbert 2003). Although a seemingly irrelevant example, Bush's story regarding one of his first decisions in the White House is ultimately

telling. Seeing his job as being not to get his hands dirty in the details, but instead to lead in the light of his values, Bush has detailed the story of his Oval Office rug. On one of his first days in the White House a staffer asked the president what kind of rug he would like. He explained that the questioner should ask Laura "because he didn't do rugs" (Hoopes 2008, 6). He used this story to explain how his role is to use his core beliefs to guide big decisions. Allan Lichtman discusses the difference between foxes and hedgehogs when examining the goals of presidents. Foxes typically know lots of little things while hedgehogs know a few big things (Gilbert 2003). While Clinton was clearly a fox, Bush proves to be the classic hedgehog. The problem with Bush focusing on the big picture is that such visionary leadership typically neglects the policies and their implementation that put that vision into effect (Weinstein 2004). The ultimate success of the vision will depend on the operations that surround it.

Bush builds his approach on teamwork. He develops a clear strategy and business plan. He is focused on a small agenda and does not waver from the policies he wishes to see implemented. He "builds a team, he makes them master the complexities, he has them frame the issues—and then he decides, firmly and without second thoughts" (Gilbert 2003). Compared to previous presidents who served during times of war—specifically Lyndon Johnson—Bush is not obsessed by the war. He does not spend long nights strategizing the next move for the military. Instead, he typically is out of the office by 5 and asleep by 10. The White House has set out to assure that Bush does not become the face of the war like LBJ did for Vietnam (Oliphant 2003). Gergen (2003) describes Bush as a "top-down, no-nonsense, decisive, macho leader who sets his eyes on the far horizon and doesn't go wobbly getting there." As Bruce Bartlett told Ron Suskind (2004), Bush "believes he's on a mission from God. Absolute faith like that overwhelms a need for analysis. The whole thing about faith is to believe things for which there is no empirical evidence."

Bush's administration and appointees largely consisted of like-minded individuals whose personal loyalty to the president was paramount over professional qualifications (Preston 2001; Tumulty et al. 2005). Such a setup led to many like-minded individuals that cover a narrow range of the intellectual spectrum determining the policy direction of our nation. Individuals cannot stay on the team without demonstrating loyalty to the man, loyalty to the mission, and loyalty to the message (Gergen 2003). Information would be gathered from numerous sources, but the results received were typically the same. The internal discipline of the Bush administration is admirable, yet it allows for limited debate. When Bush

entered a room, "his staff rose to their feet with a snap that would have impressed a Prussian field general" (Frum 2003, 15). This system reduced the ability of the administration to actively and to accurately monitor the political environment for feedback or for further information (Allen 2005). Bush typically heard what he wanted to hear from those he valued and acted accordingly. Dissenting voices are effectively muffled. As Jackie Calmes explained, Bush "relies too much on like-minded advisers, too readily equates dissent with disloyalty and is too averse to admitting mistakes" (Calmes 2004). Yet, on the other hand, Bush's approach led to the occurrence of "relatively little of the infighting, backbiting, and leaks…that were common to most other administrations" (Pfiffner 2004, 7). Part of this is because many of the staffers genuinely like Bush, but the other side of the coin is that Bush puts a high premium in loyalty and aggressively enforces discipline.

Bush has been accused of existing in a bubble (Thomas and Wolffe 2005). When John Murtha made numerous attempts to reach out to Bush to discuss the war in Iraq, he was greeted by a form letter response from a deputy under secretary. Bush clearly has opted to ignore the Washington pundits, instead focusing on his own beliefs and agenda. Doing so has led Bush to be one of the most isolated presidents in modern history. Bush, unlike Clinton before him, sees no point is "endless, circular collegiate bull sessions" (Thomas and Wolffe 2005). There is no 360-degree leadership under Bush. He relies on his small circle of trust and typically sides with them in all policy debates. Bush prefers short conversations that provide a great explanation of the conclusions while not wasting too much time on the reasoning behind them. "He is brief. He uses simple words. He has a practiced steely resolve" (Oliphant 2003). Bush ultimately thinks in black versus white dichotomies with moral rhetoric typically framing all decisions.

When looking at leadership and international relationships, Bush's travel schedule has been calculated to involve as little contact as possible with countries he visits (Zakaria 2005). Bush's father and Clinton had both forged deep relationships with foreign leaders. Both took time out of travel schedules to visit with the people of the nation, garnering reputations as hero as a consequence. With Bush, on the other hand, we find a leader who has "brief, scripted, and perfunctory" conversations with foreign leaders (Zakaria 2005). Bush rarely takes the opportunity to get foreign opinions or assessment of events. This turn towards an imperial style democracy leaves foreign leaders feeling that Bush talks and they listen. Rather than assisting in formulating American foreign policy, the international community has simply been informed by the Bush