

Bush Administration Convicted of War Crimes and Crimes against Humanity

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Former U.S. President George W. Bush recently dedicated his Presidential Library in Dallas. The ceremony included speeches by President Obama, ex-President Bush, and every other living ex-president. But none of the speeches so much as mentioned to Iraq war — the undertaking that dominated George W. Bush's presidency, and will define his historic legacy.

This omission might be due, at least in part, to the fact that Mr. Bush is now a convicted war criminal who dares not travel abroad out of fear of being arrested.

In February 2011, Bush was forced to cancel a scheduled appearance in Geneva, Switzerland after human rights groups filed a criminal complaint charging him with violating international treaties against torture.

His trouble increased dramatically a year ago when Bush — along with former Vice President Dick Cheney, former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and several other top Bush administration officials — were convicted of war crimes in absentia by a special war crimes tribunal in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal was convened and conducted according to internationally recognized procedures and rules of evidence, and the week-long hearing ended with the five-member panel unanimously delivering guilty verdicts.

What is the significance of that tribunal? Is its verdict legally binding? Are there troublesome aspects to the idea that a foreign tribunal can sit in judgment of a U.S. President — whatever we may think of his actions? We will discuss these vitally important questions with Dr. Francis Boyle, a professor of international law at the University of Illinois College of Law. He served as a prosecutor at the tribunal.

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