

# They Died So Republicans Could Take the Senate

By [Thom Hartmann](#)

Global Research, June 22, 2005  
22 June 2005

Region: [USA](#)

In-depth Report: [FAKE INTELLIGENCE, Prosecute Bush/Cheney](#)

Richard Nixon authorized the Watergate burglary and subsequent cover-up to advance his own political ambitions. Because Nixon's lies were done for the craven purpose of getting and holding political power, his lies – in the minds of the majority of the members of Congress – were elevated to the level of impeachable “high crimes and misdemeanors.”

Bill Clinton had sex in the White House with Monica Lewinsky, but Congress concluded he'd lied about it to maintain political power. Another impeachable crime.

The real scandal of the Downing Street Memos, with the greatest potential to leave the Bush presidency in permanent disgrace, is their implication that lies may have been put forward to help Bush, Republicans, and Blair politically. If Bush lied to gain and keep political power, precedent suggests he and his collaborators in the administration may even be vulnerable to impeachment.

Conservatives say the Bush claims of WMD and “mushroom clouds” were a “lie of ignorance.” Condoleezza Rice periodically does the talk-show circuit and repeats the “lie of ignorance” myth. “The entire world thought Saddam had WMD,” she and other Bush representatives suggest over and over again. “We had bad intelligence.”

This is a lie to cover up a more damaging lie. “The entire world” was, in fact, watching and listening to Hans Blix, who was telling us that he couldn't find any evidence of WMD – or any other sort of threat – in Iraq. Most of our allies were convinced that Saddam did not have WMD, or that if he did have some small stockpiles left they were so insignificant and degraded that they were irrelevant. This is why the only permanent member of the UN Security Council to join us in attacking Iraq was Blair's UK: China, France, and Russia didn't believe Iraq represented a threat to them, to us, or even to its neighbors.

Nonetheless, Bush keeps trying to push this lie-to-cover-up-a-lie. In his June 19, 2005 radio address, he suggested that the Saudis who flew the planes into the World Trade Center were actually Iraqis. “We went to war because we were attacked,” he said, hoping Americans' memories are short.

US media pundits, knowing the “WMD lie” and the “Saddam attacked us” lie for what they are, mostly suggest that Bush's use of WMD and terrorism to justify invading Iraq was a “lie of convenience.” The implicit assumption is that Bush did this because of a “greater good”; that even though he lied, he was doing so to advance America's interests. This helps pundits to feel like they're part of an in-crowd elite who know what's best for America, even if they can't tell the children – er – citizens.

The “lie of convenience” is based on the neocon argument that the US needed a “footprint”

in the Middle East to both secure our oil supplies and provide military security to Israel. But it ignores the many nations in the region where we now have military bases (some huge), the power and ability of our navy, and the power of Israel's military. And it doesn't explain how our getting bogged down in Iraq could possibly advance our interests at home or around the world.

Often included in the "lie of convenience" mix is the PNAC suggestion that for America to be safe, we must forcefully project military power all over the world and hold decisive control of the world's largest oil supplies. This flies in the face of most of America's history, starting with George Washington's farewell address warning against "foreign entanglements." It's not only un-American, but is the assumption used throughout history to justify empires, and in every single case has ended up bleeding dry those empires, consigning them to painful contraction or total collapse.

And neither the "lie of convenience" nor the "lie of ignorance" were demonstrably the reasons why Bush invaded Iraq.

So why then did George W. Bush lie us into invading and occupying Iraq?

We know that Bush wanted to massively cut taxes on his corporate sponsors and people, like himself, with substantial inherited fortunes. He wanted to weaken government protections of the environment, children, the poor, the elderly, the ozone layer, and our nation's forests. He wanted his oil-rig and mining-interest friends to have more access to public lands.

We know he wanted to undo Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal by stripping the American workplace (particularly government and schools) of unions, rolling back "socialist" unemployment and Social Security programs, and eliminating SEC and tort restraints on predatory corporate behavior. He'd even campaigned on this platform – particularly Social Security privatization – back in 1978 when he unsuccessfully ran for Congress from Texas.

We know he wanted to increase the police power of the federal government, gut the First and Fourth Amendments, and thus create a "safe and orderly nation" of people under constant surveillance, who never question those in power.

We know he wanted to give billions of our tax dollars to churches he approved of, and bring their leaders into the halls of government. He wanted to pass laws incorporating religious dogma about when human life begins, what is appropriate sexuality, and free churches to use tax-exempt dollars to influence politics.

It was an ambitious agenda. In order to bring about this neoconservative paradise, Bush knew he'd need considerable political capital. And that kind of capital didn't come from his being selected as President by the Supreme Court.

Such political capital – such raw political power – would only come, he believed, by his becoming a "war president."

Bush wasn't the first to realize how war strengthened a president in power, although the Founders saw it as a danger rather than an opportunity.

On April 20, 1795, James Madison wrote, "Of all the enemies to public liberty war is,

perhaps, the most to be dreaded because it comprises and develops the germ of every other. War is the parent of armies; from these proceed debts and taxes. And armies, and debts, and taxes are the known instruments for bringing the many under the domination of the few."

Reflecting on war's impact on the Executive Branch of government, Madison continued his letter about the dangerous and intoxicating power of war for a president.

"In war, too, the discretionary power of the Executive [President] is extended," he wrote. "Its influence in dealing out offices, honors, and emoluments is multiplied; and all the means of seducing the minds, are added to those of subduing the force of the people. The same malignant aspect in republicanism may be traced in the inequality of fortunes, and the opportunities of fraud, growing out of a state of war...and in the degeneracy of manners and morals, engendered by both.

"No nation," he concluded, "could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual warfare."

But freedom wasn't the goal of George W. Bush or his neoconservative Republican colleagues. It was political power. And they were willing to lie us into a war to achieve it.

Writer [Russ Baker noted in October, 2004](#), that Mickey Herskowitz, the man Bush had originally hired to write his autobiography ("A Charge To Keep: My Journey To The White House"), told Baker that George Bush was planning his Iraq invasion - to seize and hold political power for himself and the Republican Party - during his first presidential election campaign.

"He was thinking about invading Iraq in 1999," Herskowitz told Baker. "It was on his mind. He [Bush] said to me: 'One of the keys to being seen as a great leader is to be seen as a commander-in-chief.' And he said, 'My father had all this political capital built up when he drove the Iraqis out of Kuwait and he wasted it.' He said, 'If I have a chance to invade, if I had that much capital, I'm not going to waste it. I'm going to get everything passed that I want to get passed and I'm going to have a successful presidency.'"

Bush lied, and Americans died. And continue to die. But politically - at least so far - it has worked out well for Bush.

It was a lie of political expediency, with the war resolution carefully timed just before the 2002 elections to help the Republicans take back the Senate.

It was echoed and amplified and repeated over and over again to help him and other Republicans get elected in 2004.

It wasn't a war for oil - cheap oil was just a useful secondary benefit.

It wasn't a war against terrorism - that was just a convenient excuse.

It wasn't a war to enrich Bush's and Cheney's cronies - those were just pleasant by-products.

It wasn't a war to show Poppy Bush that Junior was more of a man than him - that was just a personal bonus for Dubya.

It was, pure and simple, well planned years in advance, a war to solidify Bush and the Republican Party's political capital.

It was a war for political power. That had to be first. Everything else – oil, profits, ongoing PATRIOT Act powers, easy manipulation of the media – all could only come if political power was seized and held through at least two decisive election cycles.

The Bush administration lied us into an invasion to get and keep political power. It's that simple.

The same reason Richard Nixon authorized Watergate and then lied about the cover-up. The same reason Nixon lied about his "secret plan" to get out of Vietnam.

When Americans – and the US media – finally realize that Bush's lie was just to get "political capital," to increase the "discretionary power of the President" so he could undo Roosevelt's New Deal and seal power across all three branches of government for his Party, they will turn on him and his Republican co-conspirators.

If it comes out in the open before the election of 2006, Republicans could even lose the House and the Senate, which would virtually guarantee investigations of the many other crimes of the Bush administration. (For example, "bribery" is one of two crimes cited in the Constitution as grounds for impeachment – and the Big Pharma/Medicaid and Big Tobacco/lawsuit settlement cases may qualify.)

Probably the only two things that could slow down the American electorate's growing realization of the magnitude and horror of Bush's political lies would be another attack on America or a new Bush-led war into Syria, Iran, or North Korea.

Bush has already shown, by lying us into Iraq, that he's at least capable of the latter. As Jefferson wrote in a letter to James Madison on February 8th 1776, "It should ever be held in mind that insult and war are the consequences of a lack of respectability in the national character."

And already the cons are working the talk-show circuit, threatening the US with a new attack, and recommending we strike now at Iran or Syria. "Be afraid. Be aggressive. Give us more political power."

But if Jefferson was right when he said that the best defense of democracy was an informed electorate, there is still a small window of opportunity for the American press to do the job they've been so carefully avoiding these past five years.

Instead of just reporting that the Downing Street Minutes and memos exist, they can highlight them against the timeline of Bush repeatedly lying during those days before the war. They can quote him saying that he had no plans for war, was working toward peace, and only wanted Congressional authorization to avoid a war, and point out that this was all after – months after – his administration had told the British that war was a sure thing.

Lying, in other words, to get us to go along with an invasion that would cement in Republican control of the Congress and the White House, and, thus, also the courts. Lying for nothing more than "political capital."

Let us hope our Fourth Estate is up to the task.

.....

Thom Hartmann ([thom at thomhartmann.com](mailto:thom@thomhartmann.com)) is a Project Censored Award-winning best-selling author, and host of a nationally syndicated daily progressive talk show and a morning progressive talk show on [KPOJ](http://KPOJ) in Portland, Oregon. [www.thomhartmann.com](http://www.thomhartmann.com) His most recent books are "[The Last Hours of Ancient Sunlight](#)," "[Unequal Protection](#)," "[We The People](#)," "[The Edison Gene](#)", and "[What Would Jefferson Do?](#)"

The original source of this article is Global Research  
Copyright © [Thom Hartmann](#), Global Research, 2005

---

**[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)**

**[Become a Member of Global Research](#)**

Articles by: [Thom Hartmann](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)  
[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)