

Soon the SS-18s will all be gone. The nuclear terror that gripped my generation will be ancient history by the time my child studies it in school. The exhilarated relief of the West mirrors the exultation in Russia and its former captive nations, where the KGB is swept into history's dustbin and freedom—real freedom, not the cosmetic reforms of the Gorbachev era—begins, almost unthinkably, to flourish. It is a time for dancing in the streets, and a time for solemn remembrance. As we celebrate the disintegration of the most inhuman regime in history, let us never forget the final outrage: *George Bush was opposed to all this.*

If George Bush had had his way, the tyrant Gorbachev would continue to rule what would still be the Soviet Union, while the slaughter in the Baltics continued, while the long-suffering Ukrainians, taking Bush's advice, foreswore their "reckless" nationalism, and while communism continued on its murderous and oppressive course. Speaking of Gorbachev's last-ditch attempt to preserve his despotic empire, Bush spoke the most chilling words that I have ever heard from an American president: "I want perestroika to succeed, not fail". The failure of perestroika is the single best thing that has happened in the world since the second world war, and George Bush was against it.

And why shouldn't he have been? The only victims of perestroika were people, and people have never ranked high on George Bush's list of priorities. Haitians know this. With courage and in desperation, they abandon all they have and put their lives at risk to seek a better world in America, the land of immigrants—and George Bush turns them away. In the U.S., they could reasonably aspire to see their grandchildren in college, preparing to advance human knowledge as scientists or to cure human suffering as physicians. Instead

they are consigned to lives of crushing poverty and infant mortality. Their only sin is their skin color. (If you doubt that Mr. Bush's policy is racially motivated, ask yourself whether you really believe he could get away with this if the Haitians were, say, Jews.) A man capable of such heartlessness should not be accepted in polite society, let alone be in a position of actual power.

The Kurds of course know what manner of man George Bush is, as do the Nicaraguan freedom fighters whom Mr. Bush sought to abandon in their struggle against the minions of his beloved Mr. Gorbachev. Even today, the genocidal Sandinistas continue to share power in the coalition government that Mr. Bush's policies helped to create.

At home, Mr. Bush has been a patsy for the two great contemporary hysterias: environmentalism and the war on drugs. He was an accomplice to the passage of the Clean Air Act, which by most estimates will cost the average American family between \$300 and \$400 per year, for dubious benefits. He chose to attend the recent conference in Rio, lending legitimacy to the kind of yahoos who dominate such gatherings. He has accelerated the schedule for regulating the use of CFCs (buy your new refrigerator now, before it is too late), and has done so in the middle of an alleged "moratorium" on new regulations. In the name of fighting drugs, he is prepared to jail Americans by the hundreds of thousands and to murder foreign nationals.

The great advantage of being an environmentalist or a drug warrior is that you can feel morally superior to everybody else without actually having to know anything about your subject. If you are sufficiently tenacious, you might even get to control people's lives. Bush gravitates always and everywhere to the high ground of moral superiority

and mines it for dictatorial authority. He has signed legislation denying workers the right to decide what wages they will accept (the minimum wage increase), legislation denying businesses the right to decide whom they will hire (the “civil rights” act, which Mr. Bush derided as a “quota bill” right up until the day that he decided to sign it), and legislation requiring costly renovations to provide handicapped access to locations that are almost never accessed by the handicapped. He has allowed the execrable David Kessler of the FDA to force consumers to pay for excess information on food packages and to dictate the circumstances under which a woman can purchase silicone breast implants. At no level does the Bush administration risk being misinterpreted as supporting a woman’s right to choose.

Both at home and abroad, George Bush’s policies invariably tilt away from freedom. This single observation accounts for his otherwise inscrutable mix of policies toward the corrupt socialist state of Israel, whose domestic economy he would prop up with aid, but whose efforts to defend against the far more malignant socialism of Assad and the Palestinians he attempts to undermine. It explains why he would allow American auto executives to accompany him on a trip to Japan, signaling a clear intent to foster a conspiracy against the American consumer. It explains his willingness to tax Americans to support art that they do not approve, and to attack the *critics* of this policy as censors who would limit freedom!

Mr. Bush’s lack of compassion for the American taxpayer shows up more generally in his legendary appetite for federal spending. This is a man capable of approving a \$150 billion pork-barrel transportation bill and announcing before the week is out that he has

“discovered” and eliminated about \$4 billion worth of waste in the federal budget. I have lost count of the number of times he has acquiesced in extensions of unemployment benefits designed to prolong the recession and justify further government interventions. The first time he raised the income tax, he claimed that it was because he could not bear the thought of shutting down the Washington monument. (Did you not know that there have been *two* income tax increases in this administration? The second was hidden in one of those unemployment extension bills.)

Like the dictators he so admires, Mr. Bush feels no qualms about spending his nation’s wealth on his own behalf. Shortly before the New Hampshire primary, he announced a half billion dollar Head Start appropriation, which bought him several seconds of valuable air time on the national news, posing with children. It was one of the most expensive campaign commercials ever made.

George Bush is guilty of high crimes and of misdemeanors. His acquiescence to the slaughter of the Kurds is one of the great moral failures of the century. He would have acquiesced to far worse in the Soviet Union had history not stayed his hand. We in the United States are lucky; we sacrifice only wealth and freedom to Mr. Bush’s megalomania; foreigners sacrifice their lives.

The alternatives to Mr. Bush do not seem promising, and he might very well be the least pernicious of the three. He still should be defeated. A president who has fallen below minimum acceptable standards ought not be reelected, even if the alternatives are worse.