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*Politics and Current Events with
 More Thought, Less Bluster*
 Hosted by Sebastian James
 and Carl Nyberg

**Navigation:**

- [Click Here To Listen Now](#)
- [Collective Interests](#)
- [Daily Topics & Commentary](#)
- [The Archive—New updates 2/8!](#)
- [The CI Center to Preserve Social Security](#)

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- [Please report bad links here](#)







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"...The biggest lie that people like me tell people like you at election time is that if you vote for me, I'll solve your problems. The truth is, the power is in your hands, not mine. Abraham Lincoln said a government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from this earth. You have the power to take back the Democratic party and make us stand up for what's right again, allow us to fulfill the dream of Harry Truman in 1948 that he laid out when we would no longer be the last industrial country on the face of the earth without health insurance, allow us to stand up again for the rights to organize for ordinary men and women, allow us to stand again for the principles of equal rights under the law for every single American. You have the power to take our country back so that the flag of the United States of America no longer is the exclusive property of John Aschcroft, and of Dick Cheney and Rush Limbaugh and Jerry Falwell, that it belongs to all of us again...."

—Howard Dean, soon to be Chairman of the Democratic National Committee

"Brand Democrat" Screen Wallpaper, courtesy of Oliver Willis

<p style="text-align: center;"> The Four Freedoms Freedom of Speech Freedom to Worship Freedom from Want Freedom from Fear FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT, DEMOCRAT.  <small>since 1794</small> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> "If by a 'Liberal' they mean someone who looks ahead and not behind, someone who welcomes new ideas without rigid reactions, someone who cares about the welfare of the people -- their health, their housing, their schools, their jobs, their civil rights, and their civil liberties -- someone who believes we can break through the stalemate and suspicions that grip us in our policies abroad, if that is what they mean by a 'Liberal', then I'm proud to say I'm a 'Liberal.'" JOHN F. KENNEDY, DEMOCRAT.  <small>since 1794</small> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> Let it be our cause that we give this child a country that is coming together, not coming apart, a country of boundless hopes and endless dreams, a country once again lifts its people and inspires the world. Let that be our cause, our commitment, and our New Covenant. BILL CLINTON, DEMOCRAT.  <small>since 1794</small> </p>
<p style="text-align: center;"> Ownership Society = Cutting Social Security This is <i>NOT</i> Democrat Math  <small>Since 1794</small> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> Since When Did Borrowing \$2 Trillion Solve <i>Anything?</i> This is <i>NOT</i> Democrat Math  <small>Since 1794</small> </p>	<p style="text-align: center;"> If the goal is to expand private investment, why not make it easier to open an IRA instead of cutting Social Security benefits? This is <i>NOT</i> Democrat Math  <small>Since 1794</small> </p>

Download 'em all. Send them to your friends. Let them read why you're a Democrat!

Media Bloggers Association Announces Tsunami Video Hosting Initiative

The Media Bloggers Association, in partnership with Zubr Communications, launched today the Tsunami Video Hosting Initiative, a public service offered in response to concerns over bandwidth issues facing bloggers doing a tremendous public service by providing video of the tsunami to the world.

The Tsunami Video Hosting Initiative is a "distributed content-broker" system that matches web hosts willing to donate server space and bandwidth with bloggers and other Tsunami video sources looking to defray their cost of hosting Tsunami video. ZubrCom has led the way by donating its services in development of the Content-Broker system as well as server space and transfer capacity.

"When the word went out that bloggers needed help dealing with the high cost of bandwidth from hosting Tsunami video," said Robert Cox of the Media Bloggers Association, "the MBA saw an opportunity to fulfill its mission by supporting citizen's media and hyperlocal news reporting by bloggers. Rather than leave it to bloggers to beg for cost reductions from their ISPs, the MBA is matching willing ISPs with willing bloggers and other video sources."

Web Hosts can donate specified amounts of storage and bandwidth. All donors will receive a mention on the [Tsunami Video Hosting Initiative home page](#).

"When a request for a video arrives, the Content-broker matches it with a list of those willing to provide the video, keeping track of usage," says Alex Yuriev, CTO of Zubr Communications, "when the usage exceeds the contributor's donation, Content-broker stops using that path. A client code had been written for contributors to validate requests against the quotas that we maintain to prevent unauthorized hotlinking so bandwidth does not go out of control. Ideally, hosts would let us run Perl CGI to prevent hotlinking."

Bloggers or other video sources with questions can get more information or e-mail Robert Cox of the Media Bloggers Association at info-at-mediabloggers.org.

Network providers, web hosting companies and those who would like to donate server space and transfer capacity with questions can get more information or e-mail Alex Yuriev of Zubr Communications at alex-at-corp.zubrcom.net.

For more information, please visit the [Tsunami Video Hosting Initiative home page](#).

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Collective Interests

Hotel Union Chief Eyes Bid to Lead AFL-CIO

Saturday, February 19 (Washington Post)—John W. Wilhelm, president of the hotel workers union, is telling colleagues that he is committed to challenge John J. Sweeney for the presidency of the AFL-CIO, according to sources close to him.

Wilhelm, his allies said, does not yet have the votes to prevent Sweeney, 70, from winning another term. Sweeney remains popular and well liked, even by his critics within organized labor. For Wilhelm to succeed, his supporters said, other union presidents will have to be convinced first that major changes in the AFL-CIO are necessary to stanch the steady loss of union members, and second that a leadership change is necessary if the institution is to be successfully restructured. [More](#)

Poorest Face Most Risk on Social Security

Bush Plan's Success May Hinge on Perceived Safety

Saturday, February 19 (Washington Post)—No group of Americans would be affected more by President Bush's Social Security plan than those earning the least. Just ask 46-year-old Brent Allen.

Allen, who recently lost his job at a Massachusetts paper mill, faces a retirement financed exclusively by the money he has been paying into the Social Security system for the better part of 30 years. Like nearly half the U.S. population, he has no pension or savings to speak of. And his brief flirtations with the stock market have largely flopped.

So Allen, who lives on less than \$15,000 a year in disability payments from Social Security and income from his live-in girlfriend, is distrustful of Bush's plan to allow workers to divert a portion of their payroll taxes into personal investment accounts.

"I have had stocks, and have had them for six years, and I have lost money continually," Allen said this week. "What's going to happen to people when they retire when the market is down? There is no guarantee [Bush] can make. There is a guarantee now," under the current system. [More](#)

Bush May Raise Payroll Tax Cap to Pay for Social Security

Wednesday, February 16 (New York Times)—President Bush says he has not ruled out raising taxes on those who earn more than \$90,000 a year to help bolster Social Security's finances.

Under the current system, payroll taxes are paid only on the first \$90,000 in wages. Bush has repeatedly said that he opposes raising taxes, but his advisers have been intentionally vague about whether he would also rule out subjecting a greater share of pay to the existing tax.

Asked directly, Bush said that he would not rule out raising that cap, though he does not want to see the payroll tax rate go up. The rate is now 12.4 percent of pay, split between workers and employers. [More](#)

N.H.L. Commissioner Cancels Rest of Season

Wednesday, February 16 (New York Times)—Saying this was a "sad, regrettable day," Commissioner Gary Bettman announced today that the National Hockey League was canceling the season because negotiators had failed to come to an agreement with the players' union on salary caps.

"It is my sad duty to announce that because the solution has not yet been attained, it is no longer practical to conduct even an abbreviated season," Bettman said at a news conference today in New York City. "Accordingly, I have no choice but to announce a formal cancellation of play for 2004-2005."

With his announcement, the N.H.L. becomes the first major pro sports league in North America to lose an entire season to a labor dispute. "Everyone associated with the National Hockey League owes our fans an apology for the situation in which we find ourselves," a sad-faced Bettman said at the conference. "We are truly sorry." [More](#)

Medicare drug program's cost climbs to \$1.2 trillion

Wednesday, February 9 (Seattle Times)—The White House released budget figures yesterday indicating that the new Medicare prescription-drug benefit will cost more than \$1.2 trillion over the coming decade, a much higher price tag than President Bush suggested when he narrowly won passage of the law in late 2003.

Last night, Medicare chief Mark McClellan acknowledged the \$1.2 trillion figure, but said several major savings and offsets would reduce the federal government's bottom-line cost to \$720 billion.

The projections represent the most complete picture to date of how much the program will cost after it begins next year. The expense of the new drug benefit has been a source of much controversy since the day Congress approved it, with Democrats and some Republicans complaining that the White House has consistently low-balled the expected cost to the government. [More](#)

Praise the Lord and Shut 'em Down.

Tuesday, February 8 (BullMooseBlog)—The Moose recommends that the donkey both seek budget guidance from the Good Book and emulate the '94 revolutionaries.

The fervent Bible believers in the White House have produced a budget that is contrary to the Judeo-Christian tradition. By hiding the costs of the war and social security privatization, the Bushie budget violates the injunction against bearing false witness. By comforting the comfortable with tax cuts and afflicting the afflicted with cutbacks in food stamps and other services, the spending plan is contrary to Jesus' teachings to put the poor first.

However, don't expect the Falwells, Dobsons and Robertsons to condemn this anti-Biblical document. They have made their piece with Mammon.

Moses and Jesus can't be pleased with their erstwhile followers. [More](#)

Meet the Nats

Tuesday, February 8 (Eschaton)—Consider Bobo's ideal couple, Roger and Mary Natal. Roger and Mary get married the day after high school graduation, on Roger's 18th birthday. Roger was born in 1974. Roger, due to his supreme intelligence and skills, skips college and begins working the day after their marriage at a generous \$50,000 annual salary. He's on a good career track, and his salary increases by \$2,000 every year. Mary does what Bobo says she should do, and starts cranking out babies, remaining a nonworking stay at home mother. She has 6 children over 10 years or so.

Sadly, on his 30th birthday, Roger dies in a tragic golfing accident. Most of their money went into their house and their SUVs, and Roger never bought any life insurance, but he did manage to save \$1200 per year, putting it into a mutual fund which earned a fairly healthy 5% real annual rate of return. This money is still there for Mary and the brood, providing them with about \$20,000 to live on until she gets off her slacker ass and finds a job.

Mary's rather distraught. [More](#)

Trim Deficit? Only if Bush Uses Magic

Monday, February 7 (New York Times)—The economy is growing. Tax revenues are climbing. But can these factors rescue President Bush from a federal deficit that seems stuck above \$400 billion?

The answer, unfortunately, is almost certainly no, analysts say.

For all the programs that Mr. Bush is expected to slash in his budget proposal on Monday - from health care and housing aid to Amtrak - the cuts would total less than \$15 billion next year and barely dent the deficit.

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By far the biggest parts of the budget - Medicare, Social Security and military spending - would be immune from cuts and are expected to grow rapidly for years to come.

On top of that, Mr. Bush's plan to replace part of Social Security with private savings accounts could require additional trillions of dollars in borrowing over the next several decades.

The cornerstone of Mr. Bush's budget strategy is a belief that vigorous economic growth, spurred by supply-side tax cuts that were designed to provide incentives for upper-income Americans to produce more wealth, will generate big jumps in tax revenue that gradually reduce the deficit.

At first glance, he would seem to have grounds for optimism. After all, surging tax revenue did come to Washington's rescue during the economic boom of the 1990's, pushing the budget from the red to the black. Republican and Democratic budget analysts, however, say that such an event is much less likely this time around. The contrasts are stark: [More](#)

Bush Budget Raises Drug Prices for Many Veterans

Monday, February 7 (New York Times)—President Bush's budget would more than double the co-payment charged to many veterans for prescription drugs and would require some to pay a new fee of \$250 a year for the privilege of using government health care, administration officials said Sunday.

The proposals, they said, are in the \$2.5 trillion budget that Mr. Bush plans to unveil on Monday. White House officials said the budget advanced his goal of cutting the deficit, which hit a record last year.

"We are being tight," Vice President Dick Cheney said on "Fox News Sunday." "This is the tightest budget that has been submitted since we got here."

The proposals to increase charges to veterans face stiff opposition from veterans organizations, Democratic members of Congress and some Republicans.

Mr. Cheney said the White House had judiciously identified scores of domestic programs to be cut or eliminated. "It's not something we've done with a meat ax, nor are we suddenly turning our backs on the most needy people in our society." [More](#)

CIA Corrects Itself on Arms

* A report, the first of its kind, says Baghdad ended its chemical weapons program in '91.

Wednesday, February 2 (Los Angeles Times)— In what may be a formal acknowledgment of the obvious, the CIA has issued a classified report revising its prewar assessments on Iraq and concluding that Baghdad abandoned its chemical weapons programs in 1991, intelligence officials familiar with the document said.

The report marks the first time the CIA has officially disavowed its prewar judgments and is one in a series of updated assessments the agency is producing as part of an effort to correct its record on Iraq's alleged weapons programs, officials said.

The CIA's decision to distribute the report — titled "Iraq: No Large-Scale Chemical Warfare Efforts Since Early 1990s" — in classified channels underscores the awkwardness the agency faces as it continues to reconcile its prewar reporting with postwar realities in Iraq. Before the war, the CIA asserted that Iraq had stockpiled biological weapons and was reconstituting its nuclear weapons program.

A U.S. intelligence official said the document was "not a high-level report," meaning it was designed to supplant outdated assessments still on classified computer networks and was not meant to be called to the attention of President Bush or other senior government officials. [More](#)

Kurdish party says self-rule inevitable

Wednesday, February 2 (Aljazeera English)—Kurdish self-rule is inevitable if not imminent, according to Kurdistan Barzani. Commenting on an almost independence in an unofficial referendum held on 30 January, Masud Barzani said on Wednesday that "when the right time comes it will become a reality". "Self-determination is the natural right of our people, and they have the right to express their desires," he added. Barzani heads one of the two main Kurdish groups which control Iraq's northern Kurdish zone.

The KDP leader was speaking three days after more than 1.9 million Iraqi Kurds - some 95% of those asked - voted for independence in an informal survey conducted by volunteers. Iraqi Kurds have long pushed for independence, but Turkey, Iran and Syria - all with substantial Kurdish minorities - oppose the establishment of Kurdish state on their borders. [More](#)

Democrats Claim Votes to Halt Social Security Plan

Bush Faces Pressure to Outline Restructuring Amid Senate Opposition to Personal Accounts

Wednesday, February 3 (Washington Post)—Senate Democrats said yesterday that they have more than enough votes to block President Bush's bid to allow private accounts in Social Security, increasing pressure on the president to begin outlining a plan tonight that might offer enough compromises or incentives to win over at least a handful of Democrats.

"President Bush should forget about privatizing Social Security. It will not happen," Senate Minority Leader Harry M. Reid (D-Nev.) told reporters. He initially said all 44 Senate Democrats had made commitments to oppose personal accounts. Later, acknowledging he had not spoken with all 44, Reid said: "I don't know of a single Democratic senator" who will back the plan. [More](#)

The New Boss

Wednesday, February 2 (New York Times Magazine)—Purple is the color of Andrew Stern's life. He wears, almost exclusively, purple shirts, purple jackets and purple caps. He carries a purple duffel bag and drinks bottled water with a purple label, emblazoned with the purple logo of the Service Employees International Union, of which Stern is president. There are union halls in America where a man could get himself hurt wearing a lilac shirt, but the S.E.I.U. is a different kind of union, rooted in the new service economy. Its members aren't truck drivers or assembly-line workers but janitors and nurses and home health care aides, roughly a third of whom are black, Asian or Latino. While the old-line industrial unions have been shrinking every year, Stern's union has been organizing low-wage workers, many of whom have never belonged to a union, at a torrid pace, to the point where the S.E.I.U. is now the largest and fastest-growing trade union in North America. Once a movement of rust brown and steel gray, Big Labor is

increasingly represented, at rallies and political conventions, by a rising sea of purple. [More](#)

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Daily Topics & Commentary:

Saturday, February 19

2:06 pm--Atlas Unmasked, Vol. 1

Law on class action suits a triumph for Bush

Marking the first legislative victory of his second term, President Bush on Friday signed a measure steering class action lawsuits out of state courts, which have a track record of high-dollar verdicts, and into federal courts historically less friendly to them.

Business groups praised the measure as long overdue. Consumer groups criticized it as an onerous example of an administration too cozy with business groups.

Bush praised lawmakers for approving the measure and urged them to send him more like it as he works to dismantle what he calls "the lawsuit culture in our country."

Class action lawsuits frequently are used in cases - such as product liability - in which a large number of plaintiffs are aggregated into a single case. Bush said such suits "can serve a valuable purpose in our legal system," but also can "be manipulated for personal gain."

The above means that we'll have the opportunity to see another pillar of modern Republican thinking come crashing down. Once they put the ideas they've had since the time of Goldwater, we've seen nothing but failure. But, like any Darwin Award winner, they persist. Supply-side economics is leaving our country saddled with debt for the second time. When will we learn?

Social Security "reform" is laughable. The theory of moving away from Social Security as reasonably painless has been rendered false. Popular support for it does not come from genuine enthusiasm; it comes from cleverly worded poll questions. I still don't understand why Republicans, who for some reason are seen as financially responsible, don't make it easier to invest in existing financial vehicles like 401ks and IRAs.

6-9 months from now stories of how cases aren't going to court because of jammed federal court dockets will start coming out. Cases that are not frivolous will be held up with this new law. The hidden upside is, that by their nature class action suits involves lots of people. Which increases the probability that these stories will won't be isolated, but in local newspapers and on local TV on a recurring basis.

I've written that perhaps the nation needs a few years really exploring what it is that Republicans and Movement Conservatives are really all about. We've haven't been this far down the conservative path in a century or so. Now it's becoming pretty clear that these policies sound better in a speech than implemented on a society.

Thursday, February 17

5:39 pm--It's About Damn Time

From [The Hill](#), good news about the basics of being politically competitive. Anytime a consultant can say he's 0-8 in Presidential races means he's been in 6 too many. That's 32 years of the same thinking. 32 years of losing. 32 years of futility.

Nancy Pelosi and Harry Reid announced a shake-up in the way the Democratic party chooses consultants. Like I said, it's about damn time. Politics is part public policy, part theater, and part bloodsport. Losing is the part that sucks. Winners make history. It's that simple. You need to win in order to set the agenda and get things done. All else doesn't matter.

Read the story. This job is turning my brains to mush....

Wednesday, February 16

4:33 pm--More Good Ideas on Social Security

[Here's a great report](#) on options to solve Social Security's funding problem. The 2001 piece is from the Social Security Advisory Board, and has a wealth of solid information and analysis on the effects of a number of methods to strengthen the system. Check out this snippet:

Extend Social Security coverage to all new employees of State and local governments. Social Security coverage is virtually universal, with the largest excluded group being employees of a number of State and local governments (those employees who are covered by their own pension system). About 30 percent of State and local government employees are not now covered by Social Security. A proposal to cover non-student State and local employees hired after January 1, 2002, would eliminate 11 percent of the deficit. The impact of this change would fall on those State and local governments whose employees are currently outside the Social Security system and on all individuals hired by these entities after the effective date of the change.

It's a good report. I'll also post it at the CI Center to Preserve Social Security.

Tuesday, February 8

3:38 pm--We Look to Our Neighbors to the North....

Needless to say, I think Ann Coulter's an idiot. Well, I think she's something worse, but I've got to have some decorum at this blog. Anyway, here's a link to a great piece CBC (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation) did on how conservatives control our media. Coulter appeared on the show. What she was doing in a part of the world where they practice this technique called critical thinking, I'll never know. But I'm happy.

[Check the link](#). Laugh at Coulter. Cry for our media, as they'd never think to correct her.

Monday, February 7

10:22 am--Means-testing Comes to the GOP

In "Collective Interests," I point you to a [story on the proposed cuts the Bushies want to make to the Veterans Administration](#). Here's a little something that caught my eye:

The president would increase the co-payment for a month's supply of a prescription drug to \$15, from the current \$7. The administration says the co-payment and the \$250 "user fee" would apply mainly to veterans in lower-priority categories, who have higher incomes and do not have service-related disabilities.

This is "means-testing," a method of using need and income to apply benefits to a eligible party. It was a popular phrase in the 90's during the conversation on Social Security reform. It didn't fly because it is inherently unfair to have people pay into a system, then when it is time for them to recoup their benefits, give them nothing out of it. GOPer's and Dems alike were against means testing.

But apparently means-testing is now good enough for veterans. Stay tuned, as this may be a message "test." If there is not a lot of noise on means-testing of veterans, perhaps the Bushies will try to make it a part of their Social Security "reform" package.

9:33 am--Great Site to Track Legislators and their Bills

It's called [GovTrack.us](#), and they're new. You can enter information on a particular legislator or district, and they'll send you email updates on legislation they introduce, as well as other legislation they're a part of. Thanks to future MBA member blog [Iverson's Current Buzz](#).

Thursday, February 3

9:02 am--SOTU Editorial Roundup

A veritable cornucopia of reactions to Bush's latest list of things to propose and do next to nothing about. Click for the full editorial....

From the New York Times:

Mr. Bush is going to be judged on the way he delivers on his biggest thoughts, and the first State of the Union speech of his second term is almost certainly going to be remembered for his call to stay the course in Iraq and change the course of Social Security.

On both counts, Mr. Bush fudged the most critical points. When it comes to the invasion of Iraq, everyone has already agreed that the turnout for last weekend's election was very encouraging - though we can't really fault the president for wanting to go over it one more time. The voting, however, was only a first step. It made the journey to establishing a stable and reasonably democratic government appear possible, but not necessarily likely. The election did not bridge over the fact that a vast majority of Iraq's people think of themselves as Shiites, Sunnis, Kurds or members of smaller ethnic groups rather than as part of an Iraqi nation.

From the Washington Post:

LAST NIGHT'S State of the Union address was to be the moment, so the country was told, when President Bush would spell out his plans for Social Security. That turned out to be true, in part. Mr. Bush's speech, combined with additional information put out by the White House, for the first time described the size and structure of the private retirement accounts the president envisions. But Mr. Bush and his aides offered no specifics on the more difficult question of what changes would be made elsewhere in Social Security to make the program solvent. Mr. Bush acknowledged that hard choices will have to be made. But rather than leading on that central issue, he simply offered a list of what he described as other people's ideas. He made a persuasive case that the Social Security program needs to be put on a stronger financial footing, but he wouldn't say how that should be done.

The personal accounts Mr. Bush advocated are intelligently structured in many ways. The requirement that workers, on retirement, use at least part of their money to buy annuities to keep them above the poverty level; the prohibition on workers withdrawing money before retiring; the default investment plan of a "lifestyle account" that would shift workers, as they age, into less risky investment blends -- all of these are sensible approaches.

But Mr. Bush and his aides also put out numbers that made the transitional costs of creating private accounts look artificially low, saying that the amount diverted from the Treasury during the next 10 years would be just \$754 billion, including interest costs. Because the accounts would be phased in beginning in 2009, that number is misleading. And Mr. Bush made private accounts look like a no-lose proposition, saying, "Your money will grow, over time, at a greater rate than anything the current system can deliver." That may be true for many account holders, but Mr. Bush didn't address what would happen to those who do not fare as well.

From the Los Angeles Times:

President Bush wasn't even on camera for his best moment in Wednesday night's State of the Union address. The emotional high point was provided by a heartfelt embrace in the balcony, between the mother of an American soldier killed in action in Iraq and the daughter of one of Saddam Hussein's victims, who proudly voted in last Sunday's election.

It was a triumphant moment for Bush, but also a reminder that the rationale for the war has changed. If the Iraqi people's freedom was once seen as merely a bonus from an unavoidable war, that freedom has moved to center stage as the war's primary justification. That's because contrary to what Bush said in a previous State of the Union speech, we now know the threat posed by Hussein was not imminent.

Given that history, Bush was wise in Wednesday's address to restrain himself in discussing Iran and North Korea, nations he memorably described as part of a three-country "axis of evil" three years ago.

This time he stressed diplomacy, nodding to efforts by France, Germany and Britain to persuade Tehran to forgo nuclear weapons, and saying the United States is "working closely" with other governments to get Pyongyang to abandon them. That's also a bow to realism; U.S. forces are stretched woefully thin in Iraq. Washington needs help in dealing with Iran and North Korea.

From the Guardian (UK):

President George Bush last night issued clear warnings to Syria and Iran that they were next in his sights in his declared mission to spread democracy around the world.

The state of the union address to Congress had been billed as reconciliatory, but, along with a series of references to alliances and international initiatives, there were some blunt words.

After recounting the fall of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam Hussein in Iraq, the president said: "There are still governments that sponsor and harbour terrorists, but their numbers have declined.

"There are still regimes seeking weapons of mass destruction, but they are no longer without attention and without consequence."

The president then singled out Syria, which he said "still allows its territory and parts of Lebanon to be used by terrorists who seek to destroy every chance of peace in the region."

"We expect Syria to end all support for terrorists and open the door to freedom," he said, to heavy applause from members of Congress.

He turned to Iran, which he said "remains the world's primary sponsor of terror" and he issued a direct message to Iranians to stand up to the clerical regime in Tehran.

From Pravda:

When is Bush going to concentrate on putting his own house in order?

As George Bush stated at the beginning of his State of the Union address last night, "we have been placed in office by the votes of the people we serve". Precisely. Finally we hear some truth coming from the President's mouth and not blatant lies. So, how about the President concentrating on solving the problems of those he claimed elected him, which was the people of the USA, not the rest of the world.

Why is it that the United States of America has a bigoted sense of its own importance and just exactly who does George Bush think he is? He is the President of the USA, period and has no jurisdiction whatsoever outside the frontiers of his country. The speech began with references to the Ukraine and Iraq and then a sickeningly arrogant claim that "I will set forth policies to advance that ideal (freedom) at home and around the world". Thanks, but we don't want your freedom, or your democracy, or your cluster bombs dropped on weddings, or the slaughter of six-year-old kids or the wholesale massacre of tens of thousands of civilians as you look for your elusive WMD.

The parts of the speech relating to the USA have no part in this article, since this is the business of the President and people of the United States of America and indeed, the State of the Union address is supposed to be about the Union. However, that a President can use an address to his nation about his policies for the Union to launch broadsides and tsunamis in international politics is unacceptable.

The President's claim that he is responsible to leave future generations with "an America that is safe from danger, and protected by peace" is perfectly legitimate. However, the word "responsible" should be underlined. Responsibility to create the conditions for America to be safe does not involve a witch hunt, an act of utter destruction and an act of butchery on a massive scale, such as that perpetrated in Iraq.

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