

## **Bush Fears for Nation's Soul**

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**Highlight:** President **Bush** said yesterday he **fears** that the backlash against immigration being incited by opponents of his legalization proposal could result in the nation losing its **soul**.

### **Body**

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President **Bush** said yesterday he **fears** that the backlash against immigration being incited by opponents of his legalization proposal could result in the nation losing its **soul**.

His comments came in an intense interview aboard Air Force One with McClatchy Newspapers. "I'm deeply concerned about America losing its **soul**," **Bush** said. "Immigration has been the lifeblood of a lot of our country's history." He added: "If we don't solve the problem it's going to affect America. It will affect our economy and it will affect our **soul**."

My earlier doubts that **Bush** would not fully engage in this heated debate now appear to have been unfounded. (See my May 22 column, Has **Bush** Given Up on Immigration? Answer: No.)

In a speech yesterday at a law-enforcement training facility in Georgia, **Bush** promoted the compromise legislation worked out between the White House and a bipartisan group of senators. He charged opponents of the bill in his own party with **fear**-mongering and said they "don't want to do what's right for America."

But in his interview with McClatchy's Ron Hutcheson, a fellow Texan, **Bush** spoke about the issue in even more personal and metaphysical terms.

"I feel passionate about the issue," **Bush** told Hutcheson.

"Q Where does the passion come from?

"THE PRESIDENT: Look, when you grow up in Texas like we did, I did -- leave you out of the story here -- like I did, you recognize the decency and hard work and humanity of Hispanics. And the truth of the matter is a lot of this immigration debate is driven as a result of Latinos being in our country. . . .

"My only point is, is that I have seen firsthand the beautiful stories of people being able to take advantage of opportunity and make solid contributions to our society.

"Secondly, I'm deeply concerned about America losing its **soul**. Immigration has been the lifeblood of a lot of our country's history. And I am worried that a backlash to newcomers would cause our country to lose its great capacity to assimilate newcomers. And I believe that a newly arrived adds to the vigor and the entrepreneurial spirit, and enhances the American Dream. . . .

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"Q How invested are you on it?

"THE PRESIDENT: I'm going to work it hard.

"Q How?

"THE PRESIDENT: Well, obviously, speak out publicly on the issue. But I'm working the members a lot, too. So is the whole administration."

**Bush** also spoke about the political courage required to back his proposal -- implicitly calling his opponents cowards. He mentioned courage six times in his speech, and seven times in his interview.

"The question is, is there a mind-set that says, I'm willing to make the courageous decisions necessary to solve the problem? If so, we'll get a bill passed," he told Hutcheson.

Here is Hutcheson's story on the interview. Here is the text of **Bush**'s speech.

Peter Baker writes in The Washington Post: "President **Bush** lashed out at critics within his own party Tuesday, accusing Republican opponents of distorting the immigration deal he negotiated with leading congressional Democrats and playing on the politics of **fear** to undermine public support.

"In stern tones normally reserved for the liberal opposition, **Bush** said conservatives fighting the immigration proposal 'haven't read the bill' and oppose it in some cases because 'it might make somebody else look good.' Their 'empty political rhetoric,' he said, threatens to thwart what he called the last, best chance to fix an immigration system that all sides agree is broken. . . .

"**Bush**'s trip to Georgia opened a campaign intended to undercut the criticism that has consumed conservative talk shows and Web sites and to educate the public about a complicated bill."

Jim Rutenberg writes in the New York Times: "President **Bush** took on parts of his conservative base on Tuesday by accusing opponents of his proposed immigration measure of **fear**-mongering to defeat its passage in Congress. . . .

"'If you want to kill the bill,' he said, 'if you don't want to do what's right for America, you can pick one little aspect out of it. You can use it to frighten people.'

"A senior official said later, 'In no way was he questioning anyone's patriotism or desire to do what's right.'

"It was a rare case of the president's taking on the coalition that helped him win and keep the Oval Office, the same conservative radio hosts, bloggers, writers and members of Congress who contributed significantly to the defeat of immigration measures last year."

It's an unusual position for **Bush** in many ways. As Rutenberg explains: "Mr. **Bush** and his allies have faced an important rhetorical disadvantage, particularly from the right. Conservative opponents can use one word, amnesty, against the bill.

"Supporters, the president included, are forced into the complex weeds of policy and the nuances of legislative language."

Jon Ward of the Washington Times reports on response from opponents of the legislation: "'That's hurtful language,' said Sen. Jeff Sessions, Alabama Republican. 'If the bill did what they promised it was going to do, I'd support it. I'm for comprehensive reform, but it has to serve the national interests, not political interest.'

"'I don't think it's courage to support this flawed bill. I think sometimes it takes a bit of courage to resist this kind of short-term reform, so we can create a system that can actually work,' Mr. Sessions said. . . .

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"Paul Weyrich, founder of the conservative Free Congress Foundation, said that 'there are legitimate reasons to oppose this legislation, and I don't think that it behooves the president to call people names or make accusations against them if they disagree with him.'

"He is angering people beyond belief to the point that the Republican Party is going to split in two, thanks to him. If this bill passes, the Republicans will not recover from it,' Mr. Weyrich said.

"An aide to one Republican senator who is usually a close White House ally said that Mr. **Bush** had questioned the patriotism of lawmakers who are concerned about granting amnesty to illegal aliens.

"[It] not only stretches the bounds of credibility with conservative Republicans but in fact, it further erodes their confidence in this administration,' said the aide, who asked that his name not be used."

White House Watch reader Stephen Neuman of Chicago writes: "The immigration debate reminds me of the Dubai port deal. Those are the two situations where President **Bush** had the position that was more difficult to explain, and his opponents were better able to use demagoguery and sound bites....

"Regardless of how I might feel about the immigration debate (or the Dubai ports deal), it's nice to see the President get a taste of his own medicine....

"I hope some Senators who are usually **Bush** allies, but who are on the receiving end of his criticism on this one, take a minute to consider how much they like being accused of not wanting to do what's right for America. Perhaps those Senators will reflect on that before they lob their next criticism at Democrats for wanting to hurt our troops."

Peter Baker filed a pool report to his colleagues about **Bush's** tour of the training facility: "After a uniformed officer showed POTUS around the fake border crossing . . . he was taken inside the building to a fake airport passport control station, complete with six lanes, computers and uniformed officers. POTUS was given fake documents to hand to the man in uniform, who greeted him with a jaunty, 'Welcome to the United States, sir.' The officer then appeared to question the president about who he was, why he was coming into the country, where he had visited before landing here and why he has such a funny name. . . . The agent dutifully took POTUS's fingerprint and his photograph. POTUS evidently passed any instant check because the officer then stamped his fake documents and allowed him in. POTUS, more grateful than most, then shook the officer's hand and posed for pictures with him and a partner. He then posed for pictures with others as the pool was led back to the vans to wait for him to complete the tour."

Here are some of the photos.

Peter S. Goodman writes in The Washington Post: "President **Bush** today plans to name Robert B. Zoellick, a career diplomat and trade negotiator, to head the World Bank, seeking to dispatch the leadership crisis that has gripped the institution under Paul D. Wolfowitz, senior administration officials said last night.

"In selecting Zoellick, 53, to serve a five-year term as bank president, the White House opted for a familiar choice, a former member of the **Bush** Cabinet and a figure widely respected in foreign capitals, the officials said. Zoellick is a former U.S. trade representative and deputy secretary of state who went to work last year as an executive at Goldman Sachs. . . .

"But the insider credentials that make Zoellick favored in the **Bush** White House, where loyalty carries enormous weight, could work against him at the bank as they did with his predecessor. . . .

"People think Zoellick is highly intelligent and has a pragmatic mind-set,' said a senior World Bank official who spoke on condition that he not be named for **fear** of alienating his new boss. 'But he's still from the same people who brought you the Iraq war, the same people who brought you Paul Wolfowitz and Donald Rumsfeld. There's immediate jaundice about his country of origin. Any American appointed by this president would carry that stigma.'"

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Deb Riechmann writes for the Associated Press: "It has taken President **Bush** nearly three years to match his impassioned rhetoric about what he decries as genocide in Darfur with tougher U.S. action against some of those blamed for the suffering.

"When **Bush** announced sanctions on Tuesday, advocacy groups and lawmakers wished the president had been harsher and wondered whether it was a case of too little, too late for Darfur. The violence has killed 200,000 people and forced 2.5 million more from their homes since it began in February 2003."

Michael Abramowitz and Colum Lynch write in The Washington Post: "The administration's strong rhetoric and new plan to squeeze Sudan was greeted with immediate roadblocks yesterday. At the United Nations, China and Russia displayed little interest in joining the U.S. drive to isolate Khartoum economically and coerce its leaders into cooperating with international efforts to stop the violence in Darfur.

"On the other end of the spectrum, lawmakers and advocacy groups that have campaigned for tougher action on Darfur voiced disappointment with the president's plan as being too little, too late. They questioned whether the steps are tough enough to cause the Sudanese president, Lt. Gen. Omar Hassan al-Bashir, to abandon tactics that have delayed the arrival of thousands of additional U.N. peacekeeping troops."

Michael A. Fletcher writes in The Washington Post: "President **Bush** will call on Congress today to provide \$30 billion toward battling the global AIDS crisis over the first five years after he leaves office, according to senior administration officials, a doubling of the current U.S. commitment. . . .

"**Bush** will issue his request this afternoon, the officials said, during a Rose Garden ceremony in which he is scheduled to be joined by supporters and beneficiaries of the program, including a caregiver and an AIDS patient."

Scott Shane and Mark Mazzetti write in the New York Times: "As the **Bush** administration completes secret new rules governing interrogations, a group of experts advising the intelligence agencies are arguing that the harsh techniques used since the 2001 terrorist attacks are outmoded, amateurish and unreliable. . . .

"The psychologists and other specialists, commissioned by the Intelligence Science Board, make the case that more than five years after the Sept. 11 attacks, the **Bush** administration has yet to create an elite corps of interrogators trained to glean secrets from terrorism suspects. . . .

"The science board critique comes as ethical concerns about harsh interrogations are being voiced by current and former government officials. The top commander in Iraq, Gen. David H. Petraeus, sent a letter to troops this month warning that 'expedient methods' using force violated American values.

"In a blistering lecture delivered last month, [Philip D. Zelikow,] a former adviser to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice called 'immoral' some interrogation tactics used by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Pentagon. . . .

"The **Bush** administration is nearing completion of a long-delayed executive order that will set new rules for interrogations by the Central Intelligence Agency. The order is expected to ban the harshest techniques used in the past, including the simulated drowning tactic known as waterboarding, but to authorize some methods that go beyond those allowed in the military by the Army Field Manual."

Law professor Marty Lederman blogs that the Times story buries the lede -- namely Zelikow's previously unreported statements and the imminent executive order.

Andrew Sullivan blogs for the Atlantic that "the interrogation methods approved and defended by this president are not new. Many have been used in the past. The very phrase used by the president to describe torture-that-isn't-somehow-torture -- 'enhanced interrogation techniques' -- is a term originally coined by the Nazis. The techniques are indistinguishable. The methods were clearly understood in 1948 as war-crimes. The punishment for them was death."

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John Ward Anderson writes for The Washington Post: "The U.S. military announced Tuesday that 10 American soldiers were killed in Iraq on Memorial Day, making May the deadliest month for U.S. troops in 2 1/2 years, as insurgents continued attacks on government and civilian targets. . . .

"U.S. officials have warned that the strategy of putting more American troops on the streets and in small combat outposts, part of a security plan launched in February, would lead to higher U.S. casualties. But Tuesday's carnage suggested that the effort had not created a safer security environment."

CBS reports: "In his first American television interview since the U.S. troop surge began in February, Iraq's prime minister told CBS News chief foreign correspondent Lara Logan on Tuesday that the additional forces have prevented an even greater catastrophe in Iraq.

"If the Baghdad security plan had not been implemented, we would have a true civil war in Iraq,' Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki said."

Susan Saulny writes in the New York Times about interviews with voters, elected officials and others in Illinois, Minnesota, New York and Pennsylvania -- home to 4 of the 11 Republican congressmen who recently met with **Bush** and delivered a warning that conditions in Iraq needed to improve soon because public support of the war was crumbling.

Those interviews "suggest that more Republican voters are opposing the war, and that independents who might have voted Republican are moving toward supporting a Democrat."

Harold Meyerson writes in his Washington Post opinion column: "Of all the absurdities attending our unending war in Iraq, the greatest is this: We are fighting to defend that which is not there.

"We are fighting for a national government that is not national but sectarian, and has shown no capacity to govern. We are training Iraq's security forces to combat sectarian violence though those forces are thoroughly sectarian and have themselves engaged in large-scale sectarian violence. We are fighting for a nonsectarian, pluralistic Iraq, though whatever nonsectarian and pluralistic institutions existed before our invasion have long since been blasted out of existence. . . .

"Every day, George W. **Bush** asks young Americans to die in defense of an Iraq that has ceased to exist (if it ever did) in the hearts and minds of Iraqis."

Over the weekend, Andrew J. Bacevich, a prominent anti-war historian, wrote in the wake of the death of his son in Iraq: "The people have spoken, and nothing of substance has changed. The November 2006 midterm elections signified an unambiguous repudiation of the policies that landed us in our present predicament. But half a year later, the war continues, with no end in sight. Indeed, by sending more troops to Iraq (and by extending the tours of those, like my son, who were already there), **Bush** has signaled his complete disregard for what was once quaintly referred to as 'the will of the people.'"

Politicians, he wrote, listen only to money.

"Money buys access and influence. Money greases the process that will yield us a new president in 2008. When it comes to Iraq, money ensures that the concerns of big business, big oil, bellicose evangelicals and Middle East allies gain a hearing. By comparison, the lives of U.S. soldiers figure as an afterthought."

Michael Isikoff and Mark Hosenball write for Newsweek: "In new court filings, special counsel Patrick Fitzgerald has finally resolved one of the most disputed issues at the core of the long-running CIA leak controversy: Valerie Plame Wilson, he asserts, was a 'covert' CIA officer who repeatedly traveled overseas using a 'cover identity' in order to disguise her relationship with the agency. . . .

"Libby's lawyers, and many conservative partisans of his cause, have argued that Libby should be spared prison in part because there was no underlying crime in the disclosure of Valerie Wilson's identity. . . .

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"A major theme of Libby's defenders has been that, at the time of her outing, Valerie Wilson was little more than a desk analyst who was not covered by the Intelligence Identities Protection Act--the 1982 law making it a crime to disclose the identity of a covert officer. Fitzgerald was originally appointed to investigate whether this statute had been violated. But in two memos -- and in a document entitled, 'Unclassified Summary of Valerie Wilson's CIA Employment and Cover History' -- Fitzgerald attempts to shoot down the idea that the agent's job was mostly analysis."

Salon blogger Glenn Greenwald links to some of the previous insinuations from the "right wing noise machine" that Plame was not covert. "Many people who listen to right-wing commentators such as these get their 'news' about the world primarily, even exclusively, from these sources," Greenwald notes. "And these sources, knowing that, routinely create their own self-affirming though wildly warped realities, in the process denying the most established facts or asserting propositions for which there is no factual basis."

Even as the Libby case was about to go to the jury, the Washington Post published a scathing opinion piece by Victoria Toensing in which she charged Fitzgerald "with ignoring the fact that there was no basis for a criminal investigation from the day he was appointed" because he "should have known (all he had to do was ask the CIA) that Plame was not covert, knowledge that should have stopped the investigation right there."

McClatchy's Hutcheson got one question in to **Bush** about the U.S. attorney firings in yesterday's interview. **Bush's** answer, not surprisingly, was entirely nonresponsive.

"Q How central a role did Rove play in the U.S. attorney business? That's what everybody wants to know. Was he the main guy drawing up the list?

"THE PRESIDENT: Just look at the facts as they've come out.

"Q It's unclear.

"THE PRESIDENT: There has been plenty of testimony, plenty of hearings, plenty of statements. And one thing is for certain, that there was no wrongdoing done."

The USA Today editorial board writes today: "While the department has never been entirely insulated from politics, its backbone of career lawyers and 93 U.S. attorneys, whom once appointed are rarely fired, can ensure a high level of independence -- but only if the attorney general and the president keep political meddling in check. Gonzales and President **Bush** have failed to do this.

"Despite bipartisan calls for Gonzales' resignation, he clings to his job, supported by **Bush**, who says the attorney general hasn't done anything wrong. So far as is known, Gonzales hasn't broken any laws, but to say he has done no wrong is to say that it's fine to treat the Justice Department as an agent of White House political operations. The **nation's** chief law enforcement officer should be held to a higher standard than that."

The Sacramento Bee editorial board wrote over the weekend that "it seems more and more apparent that behind the U.S. attorney scandal is a blatant effort of the Justice Department to tamper with the U.S. election process, trumping up voter fraud as an issue to intimidate voters and suppress voting in the United States.

"The mention of voter fraud conjures up images of deceitful voters knowingly and willingly voting illegally, or of sleazy political operatives stuffing ballot boxes and paying voters for toeing the party line. But in this instance, the phrase seems to refer to high-level officials in the **Bush** administration using the machinery of government to corrupt the electoral process.

"This is a serious matter calling for investigation by an outside special counsel. But there's the rub. Since the independent counsel act expired in 1999, it's up to the attorney general to order an investigation. . . .

"If the attorney general and the White House can't put such an appointment in motion, Congress will have no choice but to consider all the tools at its disposal -- including the impeachment of the attorney general."

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Democratic Rep. Silvestre Reyes, chairman of the House intelligence committee, responds to a May 21 Washington Post op-ed by Mike McConnell, the director of national intelligence, which was full of falsehoods about the **nation's** wiretapping laws.

( Glenn Greenwald exposed McConnell's dishonesty that same day.)

Here are two follow-up questions for McConnell: How did those falsehoods appear in your article? What does this episode do to your credibility?

Pete Yost writes for the Associated Press: "A lawyer for Vice President Dick Cheney told the Secret Service in September to eliminate data on who visited Cheney at his official residence, a newly disclosed letter states. . . .

"The Justice Department filed the letter Friday in a lawsuit by a private group, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, seeking the identities of conservative religious leaders who visited Cheney at his official residence. . . .

"The letter regarding the vice president's residence was in addition to an agreement quietly signed between the White House and the Secret Service a year ago when questions were raised about visits to the executive compound by convicted influence peddler Jack Abramoff.

"That agreement, which didn't surface publicly until late last year, said White House entry and exit logs were presidential records not subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act."

ThinkProgress notes that it's been exactly two years since Cheney declared that the insurgency in Iraq was in its "last throes" and predicted "the level of activity that we see today from a military standpoint, I think, will clearly decline."

So what is Cheney, the ace prognosticator, predicting these days?

From a speech on April 27: "The reality is that if our coalition withdrew before Iraqis could defend themselves, radical factions would battle for dominance in that country. The violence would spread throughout the country, and be very difficult to contain. Having tasted victory in Iraq, jihadists could look for new missions. Many would head for Afghanistan to fight alongside the Taliban. Others might set out for capitals across the Middle East, spreading more sorrow and discord as they eliminate dissenters and work to undermine moderate governments. Still others could find their targets and victims in other countries on other continents."

Laura McGann writes for TPM Muckraker: "When a presidential directive appeared on the White House's Web site on May 9, seemingly expanding the president's powers after a catastrophic attack, readers began emailing us asking why there had been no uproar in the media or amongst civil liberties groups.

"The consensus amongst experts seems to be that the directive, aimed at establishing 'continuity of government' after a major disaster, is not new nor does the policy seem to expand executive power.

"In fact, Mike German, the policy counsel to the ACLU's Washington office told me that an executive continuity plan actually might 'not be that bad of an idea.'"

Ann Telnaes on the Libby-Cheney connection (see yesterday's column); Tom Toles on talking with Iran.

## Classification

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