

President George W. Bush

2001-2009

Introduction



The **election of 2000** was one of the most **extraordinary** in the history of the United States.

The governor of Texas, George W. Bush (son of former president George H.W. Bush) ran against Al Gore, Clinton's Vice President.

Gore won the popular vote, but in Florida the vote tally was so close that it was not clear who had won the **electoral vote**.

Intro. Cont.

After several weeks of indecision. Election officials in **Florida certified Bush as the winner**, giving him Florida's electoral votes.

Gore disputed this result in the Florida Supreme Court and won the right to have the votes in several counties recounted. However, Bush's attorneys went to the US Supreme Court to stop the recount.

In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court agreed, thus making Bush the winner.

Bush's Domestic Policy

- **Recession.** A recession began in 2001, and the President pushed a series of tax cuts to stimulate the economy. In addition, the Federal Reserve Board lowered interest rates to levels not seen in decades. Slowly the economy began to recover.
- **Education.** President Bush introduced the NO Child Left Behind Act, which required states to give standardized tests in English and math, starting in the third grade. Students who fail the tests are to be given special help to catch up with their classmates.





Terrorists Attack the U.S.

On the morning of **September 11, 2001**, nineteen **Islamic Fundamentalists** hijacked four different planes in Boston and Washington D.C. Once airborne, they hijacked the airliners and took control. **Two of the planes flew into the World Trade Center Towers in N.Y.C**, and **one plane hit the Pentagon in Washington**. On the **fourth plane**, the hijackers were **fought by passengers** who had learned of the other attacks by cell phone. The plane crashed in a field in Pennsylvania, killing all those on board.

Almost 3,000 people died at the hands of terrorists that day – the worst attack ever on American soil.



Constitutional Issues Raised After 9/11

The attack led to **important changes in the policies of the Federal government**. Many in the government wanted to see **government powers expanded** to accomplish this goal.

New laws raised **constitutional issues**.

The struggle is to **balance the need for security on the one hand and the freedoms of the people on the other**.

Constitutional Issues:

Patriot Act: This law greatly expanded the authority of law enforcement and intelligence agencies to monitor private communications and obtain personal information.

Many Americans feel that this law has given the Federal government **too much power, threatening individual liberties.**

The law's warrantless wiretaps were later held to be unconstitutional.

Constitutional Issues cont.

The TSA. Since 9/11, **security at American airports has been greatly increased.** These new procedures raise several constitutional questions:

What authority does the TSA have to search a person or luggage?

How can Americans protect themselves against unreasonable and overly intrusive searches?

Bush's Foreign Policy

1. The War on Terrorism. President Bush launched a **worldwide “war” on terrorists**, and declared that **nations harboring or financing terrorists would be targets as well.**

President Bush ordered **air and ground assaults that toppled the Taliban(the Islamic Fundamentalist government of Afghanistan) and destroyed al-Qaeda(terrorist)training bases.**

Bush's Foreign Policy cont.

2. The Iraq War.

Bush feared, without credible evidence, that dictator Saddam Hussein had biological and chemical weapons of mass destruction.

Bush feared Hussein might sell them to terrorists and got a UN resolution forcing Hussein to submit to inspections.

In March of 2003, Bush gave Hussein 24 hours to leave Iraq. Coalition forces but **mostly the US and Britain launched airstrikes and an invasion.** The goal was to destroy possible Iraqi WMDs and introduced democracy to Iraq.

Bush's Foreign Policy cont.

Hussein was captured and tried by an Iraqi court and **executed** for crimes against humanity.

In 2005, Iraqi voters elected a new government, the **first Arab democracy**.

Despite this progress, the US found that **ending a dictatorship was easier than bringing peace to Iraq**. A **strong resistance movement** consisting of many different groups rose up against US forces. **Iraq's population was divided** ethnically and religiously and the government was therefore **unstable**.