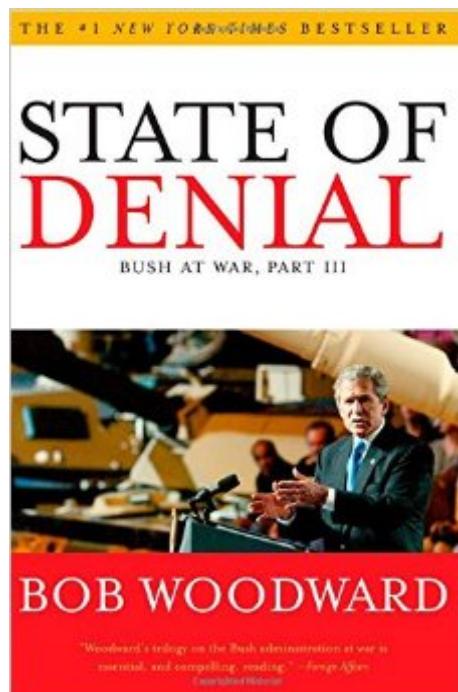


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State Of Denial: Bush At War, Part III



Synopsis

Bob Woodward's third # 1 New York Times bestseller on President George W. Bush's wars tells the detailed, behind-the-scenes story of how the Bush administration failed to tell the truth about the Iraq War.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I couldn't put this book down. And what I read inside it last night scared me. In short the message of this 600-page expose is this: we are being led by an administration that is unapproachably isolated from reality, our troops are facing unrelenting violence from guerilla fighters abroad, things are growing more violent, and even the Iraqi people wish we'd leave. I emerged from reading *State of Denial*, the follow-up to Woodward's two previous books concerning the Bush administration, not only shaken and depressed but renewed in my sympathy for those American troops enduring the nightmare that is my nation's ongoing and misguided military presence in the crumbling, nominal country of Iraq. This book is beyond pessimistic but its message that things will only get worse in the future is backed up by data and testimony that seems all but undeniable. Here Woodward has interviewed top policy makers and those who were or are involved in running our shallow national policy on the Iraq War. As a result Donald Rumsfeld is exposed as a dictatorial yes-man whose frequent careless mistakes have cost many lives. It is revealed that a number of insiders, including the First Lady pleaded with the President to replace Rumsfeld with someone else: preferably an old guard GOP figure like James Baker. Tommy Franks and other generals are shown as short-sighted

and clueless figures, often hamstrung by Washington, unable to plan for those long-term goals that should have followed an apparently easy victory in 2003.

"State of Denial" documents the Bush administration's Iraq debacle from the beginning. First there are Bush's initial rationale for becoming (our least-prepared modern-day) president prior to completing his first term as Texas' governor - basing his entire rationale on tax cuts, modernizing the military (eg. missile defense), education reform (Bush's major Texas "success" in Houston turned out to be a fraud), and helping faith-based initiatives (no thoughts whatsoever about foreign policy). Another Bush motivation to run, per Prince Bandar, Saudi Arabia's Ambassador, was to get revenge for his father's defeat by Clinton/Gore; then there was the smoldering need for finishing the job on Saddam Hussein. (Needless to say, these do not total to good rationale for becoming U.S. President, nor are they indicative of a serious thinker.) Selecting Cheney as V.P. running-mate also helped set things in the wrong direction - his bias towards finding evidence of WMD (eg. digging into unverified intelligence cables), focus on secrecy and regaining executive powers underlay much of the Iraq War marketing. Then there was Bush's selection of Rumsfeld for Secretary of Defense - partly based on the idea of proving Bush #1 wrong (didn't trust Rumsfeld, thought him too self-sure and arrogant), and Rumsfeld's subsequent selection of Joint Chiefs Chairmen that were easy to roll over (eg. reduce requested Iraq troop strength; fail to take their issues directly to Bush, per Nichols-Goldwater). (Failing to send enough troops into Iraq probably is the single most disastrous mistake made in Iraq War II, other than invading in the first place.

Being right about this administration's 'direction' in Iraq has not been a good experience; dissent seriously gets portrayed as opposing national security--as if the two principles cannot ever and do not ever coexist. Even as the evidence literally piles up to indicate otherwise, the president and his *remaining* cronies continue insisting their way is THE way which America must follow. The current ideological impasse is the consequential end result from their honest inability to work in reality! One of America's most venerated (if not also infamous) investigative journalist succinctly restates our case in his most recent book. At this point, it's not that he is making the case that Bush is a dangerous incompetent; it's at this particular point in this specific administration and pulling all of the information together with his conclusion. Their elaborate house of cards now rapidly falls down, but the Bush administration officials honestly continue on believing that their public policy is totally workable because they have constructed policy which intentionally does not require functioning in a state of reality. Since one of the general criticisms of Bush and his administration is their being

locked away in 'fantasy world' reading this work filled me with both a sense of comedic relief and ironic dejavu. How much further will America have to slide into chaos before we finally leave Iraq? Interviews conducted with Former White House Press Secretary Andrew Card drive home the point that Iraq was an operation just waiting to be bungled and the Administration knew how badly things were going all while feeding the American people spin otherwise.

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