

A video sermon from war criminal George W. Bush on compassion, empathy and kindness

Jacob Crosse
7 May 2020

The Twitter account of the George W. Bush Presidential Center released a video May 2 in which the former president, responsible for war crimes in Iraq, Afghanistan and many other countries and the deaths of millions people, called for “compassion” and “kindness” in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and a lessening of partisan political warfare.

Bush recited the words he certainly didn’t write over soft music, as generic stock photos and short video clips of healthcare workers, farmers and food bank volunteers cycled through. The former president, as he did *ad nauseam* throughout his presidency, invoked the imagery of 9/11 and the theme of “shared sacrifice” in an attempt to soothe the growing popular outrage over the Trump administration’s handling of the coronavirus pandemic which has killed nearly 70,000 as of this writing.

The video is one of the more pathetic efforts by the ruling class to invoke “national unity” in an American society torn apart by class divisions. Class tensions, already simmering before the pandemic, expressed themselves in the comments made by thousands of users, who replied to Bush’s platitudes with healthy anger and derision.

After the video received fawning coverage in the corporate media, Donald Trump took to Twitter and expressed his displeasure. He did not express anger over the hypocritical and sugary character of Bush’s messaging, but because the former president remained silent during Trump’s impeachment and Senate trial. Trump said of Bush, “He was nowhere to be found speaking up against the greatest Hoax in American history!”

As usual with the narcissist-in-chief, Trump evidently finds a global pandemic that has taken a quarter of a million lives less important, and certainly less

personally distressing, than his own sufferings at the hands of the right-wing Democratic Party campaign over Russia and Ukraine.

Bush’s empty message of unity struck a chord within sections of the political and media establishment who abhor Trump for his crudeness, vulgarity, and inability, unlike his predecessors, to pretend to care very much whether working people die.

But thousands of social media users denounced the video as the latest hypocritical attempt by the mass media and the political establishment to “rehabilitate” Bush, who prior to Donald Trump, was the most hated US president in modern history, ending his presidency with an approval rating below 30 percent.

One tweeted: “‘Our’ politicians in D.C. just gave away the store to American-based international corporations while tens of millions of American citizens & small businesses won’t be able to pay rent or their mortgages this month.”

Another said, “The worst president in history (Trump) makes the second worst president in history (Bush) seem not so bad by comparison”

Condemning Bush’s call for national unity, one person commented, “Just like we rallied to defeat that country with nonexistent WMDs.”

“Let us remember empathy and simple kindness,” said another, attaching photographs of Iraqi prisoners tortured at Abu Ghraib.

Eulogized by Obama in 2013 at the opening of his presidential library as “compassionate,” George W. Bush earned the title “torturer-in-chief” for personally approving the CIA’s use of novel “enhanced interrogation techniques,” such as waterboarding, which the agency implemented on a broad scale following the events of September 11, 2001.

Besides the water torture, these methods included

sexual humiliation and assault, sleep deprivation, abdominal striking, shaking, shoving, stress positions and hypothermia. Several prisoners died in CIA custody as a result of such treatment, while others were permanently damaged, mentally and physically.

Mehring Books, the publishing arm of the Socialist Equality Party (US), is proud to announce the publication in epub format of Volume 1 of *COVID, Capitalism, and Class War: A Social and Political Chronology of the Pandemic*, a compilation of the *World Socialist Web Site's* coverage of this global crisis.

As for decrying excessive “partisanship,” Bush and his top political aides like Karl Rove and Vice President Dick Cheney were notorious for smearing all critics of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq as terrorist sympathizers, along with anyone who objected to the USA Patriot Act, mass wiretapping and other surveillance operations.

In addition to manufacturing lies which were spun to sell the Iraq war, Bush also displayed his “kindness” for his fellow countrymen following the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. The Category 3 storm destroyed the outdated levee system protecting New Orleans and killed over 1,800 people while inundating entire swathes of the city, some of which remain uninhabitable to this day.

In phrases that could today come out of the mouth of Trump (or any state governor), Bush’s White House aides for months urged the public to “not play the blame game” by pointing out the administration’s incompetence, neglect and malfeasance in handling the crisis. The Democratic Party, which held office in both the city of New Orleans and the state of Louisiana, was equally implicated in the preventable deaths of hundreds of US citizens.

The social anger following two terms of the Bush presidency found distorted expression with the election of Barack Obama. Upon assuming the presidency in 2008, Obama sought to “turn the page” on the previous administration’s numerous crimes and never charged anyone associated with the torture program. That is one reason why the military-intelligence apparatus, and its corporate media apologists, continue to look back on Obama with favor.

Demonstrating that class unity rises above “partisan politics” Obama reneged on campaign promises to

prosecute torturers, which was authorized at the highest levels by Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Instead Obama’s Justice Department went after whistleblowers and publishers such as Chelsea Manning and Julian Assange, while expanding the use of illegal drone assassinations throughout the globe.

The call for “national unity” by the former president is only one more attempt by the ruling class to smother all critical reflection as to why the US, the richest and most militarily powerful country on the planet, has more cases and deaths from COVID-19 than any other. Bush’s slick social-media packaging will be no more successful than Trump’s endless lies and self-promoting press “briefings” and rallies.



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)