



## The Wordchipper<sup>SM</sup>

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## Go figure

Maybe I'm just slow and not all that bright, but this confuses me: besides the ultimate sacrifice of 4,414 American lives (to date), the Iraq war has cost this country over \$3 trillion so far—and we're still counting. Along with that, there are many other costs one can tack onto the decision by President George W. Bush and his Republican majority in Congress to launch an *elective* war against a country that had nothing to do with the 9-11 attacks on us. Oil, of course, was one of those extra costs: a barrel went from \$25 prior to the Iraq invasion, to \$140 in 2008—and you know where it is today. This fact alone triggered an economic slowdown and several crises from which America still hasn't recovered.

**The Iraq war was *not* funded.** War costs were placed by the Bush administration into a "supplemental" budget so they wouldn't make the real budgets for those years look "too bad" and cause Americans to question the war even more. These costs went straight to the deficit we have now. When he was questioned about those "supplemental" costs for Iraq, that they would require deficit spending, Vice President Dick Cheney told then Treasury Secretary Paul O'Neill: "Reagan proved that deficits don't matter." President Reagan raised the "debt ceiling" 18 times.

Previously, when Presidents took America to war, they not only ordered young people to sacrifice through a draft, they dared to ask Americans to pay for the additional costs involved in waging war. In some cases, they increased taxes (when you decide to "buy" something you have to pay for it) or they robbed from a *healthy* Social Security Trust Fund. Congress told the then seniors of tomorrow—who are post-65 years today—that "we'll pay it back." Never did.

**The following question should have been put clearly** to the American people: *do you think launching a war in Iraq is worth 4,414 lives and over \$3 trillion?* If that question had been asked, the answer from the majority of thinking Americans would have been "NO!" And that's the way one of the Senators from North Dakota voted on that war. It's too bad that not only North Dakota but America is losing Senator Kent Conrad at the end of his current term. So many others were lap dogs to a hell-bent-on-war President. "Shock and awe" *now* (remember?) and pay *later*.

**But now that the bill has arrived**, contributing to a substantial current deficit, all of a sudden those self-righteous members of Congress who still think their deficits-don't-matter President was God, have been overcome with fiscal responsibility. These Tea-party boys and girls and their Republican cohorts would destroy the full faith and credit in the American financial system by refusing to honor this country's obligations, debts incurred by their support of a President who launched a thoughtless war. They want big oil, ethanol, rich farmers with acres and acres of CRP subsidies, and corporations that send American jobs overseas to continue to receive huge tax breaks. Cut those subsidies to help pay America's bills? No sir! In fact, our current tax rates, launched during the Bush administration, are the lowest since the 1950s. And those rates, in effect over the past decade, were supposed to create all kinds of jobs. Where are they? "Trickle down" didn't work, never has. Now, the Republicans who enacted that "remedy" for unemployment keep asking President Obama: "Where are the jobs?" What? They want *government* to create jobs? Hey, you "no government" Tea-partiers: you can't have it *both* ways. One can't even do that at Burger King.

**And before you blame President Obama for everything** but the heat wave, read the article in the July 25th issue of *Fortune* magazine (not exactly a commie, liberal, socialist, Democrat publication). It's entitled *Surprise! The Big Bad Bailout is Paying Off!* This well-documented piece by Allan Sloan with Doris Burke details how "the U. S. government's often maligned \$14 trillion intervention not only staved off global collapse, but is making money."

Instead of giving the President a little credit for this positive outcome, the Republican and Tea-party leadership in Congress, the Hannity's, Limbaugh's, and Beck's continue to bash Mr. Obama every day. Their hatred of our current President—who was elected *without question*, unlike their most recent occupant of the White House—is disrespectful, uncompromising and a blatant attempt at pure politics. As Senator Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky and the current minority leader, said: "My main goal is to make sure President Obama *fails*." Now there's a statesman-like goal for a United States Senator. Go figure.

**So, run up the bills from *unfunded wars***, and pay for them by cutting critical programs for seniors (present and future), the disabled, health care, veterans, education, infrastructure, and the poor, while preserving every break imaginable for large corporations, "Daddy Warbucks," and big farmers. I'll say it again: go figure.