



## Overcoming the Bush Legacy in Iraq and Afghanistan

By John Tirman, Deepak Tripathi

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**Overcoming the Bush Legacy in Iraq and Afghanistan** By John Tirman, Deepak Tripathi

The military adventure that George W. Bush embarked on within months of his inauguration in 2001 was to eclipse everything else in his presidency. His name will forever be synonymous with the “war on terror.” What started as a military response to al Qaeda’s attacks in New York and Washington on 9/11, with the goal of neutralizing al Qaeda and its Taliban hosts in Afghanistan, quickly fused with the neo-conservative agenda to dominate and reshape the Middle East. Al Qaeda’s terrorism was answered by the terror of American military power, which has destroyed or blighted the lives of millions in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Pakistan.

Deepak Tripathi, a former BBC correspondent who has kept a keen eye on the region for more than three decades, identifies systematically the naive calculations, strategic and operational blunders, disregard for history and for other cultures, and even downright prejudice that have brought so much harm to so many. The legacy of Bush’s foreign policy will take years to overcome, Tripathi argues. His war on terror provoked resentment and violent opposition, opened up sectarian divisions, and created Hobbesian conditions of war of all against all. The long-term price tag for America has been estimated at a colossal \$3 trillion, but as Tripathi seeks to demonstrate, the overall cost, in human and economic terms, will be incalculable.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“Tripathi has done a superb job in addressing the significance of G.W. Bush’s Sept. 11, 2001 declaration of unreserved violence and political imprudence against the world. Tripathi’s successful approach is largely owed to his ability to locate the book within a most suitable historical and intellectual, as opposed to purely political or event-driven context.”

“[This book] gives us a well structured understanding of a seemingly chaotic legacy, and answers many of the innumerable unanswered questions. It is an honest and formidable attempt at understanding one of the darkest periods in the history of America and the world.”

“A thoughtful look at the legacy of two increasingly unpopular wars, focusing especially on the human toll.”

“Finally, a pithy critical assessment of the disastrous Bush foreign policy legacy written in a highly readable form that is knowledgeable, persuasive, and best of all forward looking.”

“Deepak Tripathi provides a clear-eyed analysis of how George W. Bush’s foreign policy, especially his wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, have made us more vulnerable to terrorism. A must-read for all who wish to reverse the dangerous Bush legacy.”

“Western politicians seem to misunderstand their role--which is to make their society, and the world in general, safer, not simply start wars against those they don’t like. Tripathi collates the facts and demonstrates how the Bush administration spent vast sums of money making our world far more dangerous. This story is critically important because we cannot learn from history if we do not know what that history is.”

“This is a painful, yet indispensable read for people of conscience throughout the world. Tripathi’s book comes second to none in terms of narrating perhaps one of the darkest eras in U.S. history with reason and candor. A fantastic book—the kind that you would read . . . and then want to read again.”

#### About the Author

DEEPAK TRIPATHI, PhD, FRHistS, is a British historian and former journalist whose career (1974–2000) was spent primarily with the BBC, where he was a correspondent, editor, and commentator. In the early 1990s, Tripathi set up the BBC bureau in Kabul and was the resident correspondent in Afghanistan. He has also reported from Syria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and India. He is the author of *Overcoming the Bush Legacy in Iraq and Afghanistan* and *Breeding Ground: Afghanistan and the Origins of Islamist Terrorism*. Tripathi received his PhD from the University of Roehampton, where he is an honorary research fellow. He lives near London.

John Tirman is the executive director of the MIT Center for International Studies.

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