



Losing America: Confronting a Reckless and Arrogant Presidency

Robert C. Byrd

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In the months and years following September 11, Senator Robert C. Byrd has viewed with alarm what he considers to be a "slow unraveling of the people's liberties," when all dissenting voices were stilled and awesome power swung suddenly to the president to fight a "war on terror." This path violates historic American principles—it shows no regard for the balance of powers or the role of the Congress; it invades our privacy; and it eliminates public participation in and understanding of government. Swept along, we have entered a war without proper consideration and rushed dangerous legislation through Congress. Now is the time to regain the Constitution, to return to the values and processes that made America great. Byrd does not shrink from speaking the truth to an ever more aggressive and imperial White House. Byrd has written a new postscript for the paperback edition.

Losing America: Confronting a Reckless and Arrogant Presidency Details

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Craig says

If you think al goes the assult on reason was amazing (or even just good) then this book should blow you away. I wish we could clone this man and make him a massachusetts senator. This book is insightful to how this republic works. his speaches, in the back of the book, are moving in ways that obama's can only dream to be. Read it.

Deena Scintilla says

Such a great review of the Constitution and government structure from an articulate statesman. Sadly, "Losing America" confirmed many of my ideas that I had early on during the last administration regarding the bastardization of our "law of the land". The ones who should read this book will most likly never pick it up.

Karen Floyd says

A valuable, and scary, look at the early years of the GW Bush presidency. The tax cuts from his first budget are now coming home to roost and the results can been seen in the disastrous state of our present economy. Also detailed are the rush to war in Iraq, and the rights that were taken away in the name of homeland security. And how did Bush and his administration know their were chemical and biological weapons in Iraq? Because the US sents apalling amounts of the stuff to Iraq during the Reagan and GHW Bush administrations. Right up to ten days before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait!
Byrd knew his history and the Constitution, though he did tend to blow his own horn.

Austin ReBrook says

Robert Byrd proves his wisdom as one of America's greatest senator's. His words, written in the middle of the Bush Era, establish a conservative Democrats views on the President. Byrd warned against many of the Bush policies, especially the tax cuts, stating they would bankrupt the nation. Byrd's colloquial elegance is one to be admired.

Shira says

Now reading Obama's 2007 book and he cites Senator Byrd several times. Great dedication.

Frederick Bingham says

This is a book by one of the elders of the US Senate. He clearly articulates the sins of the Bush administration. He talks about the USA Patriot act, the war in Iraq, the appropriations process, tax cuts and a number of other such items. The bottom line is that Byrd thinks that Bush is reckless and arrogant and most of all utterly incompetent. Byrd is very well-spoken and states his position clearly.

Katie says

Although this book was written ten years ago, it gives good insight into how the balance of power has been manipulated by the president and his advisors along with the idea that elected officials must always vote along party lines or be considered disloyal.

Jerry says

If someone were to tell you they were reading a book subtitled Confronting a reckless and arrogant presidency you'd probably think it was written by a right-winger, rather than a short-sighted beltway insider who can't see out of the beltway box to save his own reputation.

All political memoirs should be read after the pendulum shifts. Senator Byrd begins his book decrying the lack of background on the current president:

Presidential leadership requires much, much more than an expensive pollster and God-given charisma... gifted speechwriters... are not enough... [His] power has been wielded with arrogance, calculation, and disdain for dissenting views.

Pam says

Senator Byrd of W. Virginia realized that after 9/11 our country was enduring an unraveling of the people's liberties. The way down this path violates historic American principles. He documents how the Bush administration has operated under a cloak of secrecy with little regard for the balance of powers or the role of Congress. He shows how this makes no attempt to educate the public or build consensus; it invades our privacy, shows little regard for our environment, does not deal with the realities of people who have to work for a living. He informs us how we have entered a war without proper consideration under a new and dangerous doctrine - how we have a White House that favors the rich, lavishes tax cuts on big businesses, and pushes through unfair tax legislation. Losing America is a call to action by one of our country's most respected legislators and warns us of the sinister agenda of this power seeking administration. Senator Byrd embodies what our Founding Fathers expounded when this country was started - we'd do well to have more government leaders like him.

Linda says

certainly gave me a different perspective from some of my thinking and knowledge. I thought it extremely interesting. But honestly, why not take a picture of the roses and then donate them to hospitals, retirement homes etc, instead of using tax payer money to fly them to the Byrds on vacation.

Kylene Jones says

What a disturbing book. I was not surprised by much in the book but it was interesting reading an "insiders" view on this dangerous administration. I am sending this book to my mom who expressed an interest in reading it. She is not a bookcrosser but I will encourage her to pass it on to someone else that would enjoy reading this. Thanx again for sharing with me. It was a faster read than I expected once I got into it. It was my bedside read but I wanted to finish it before I mailed packages to my mom in Denver so brought it to work tonight.

Will Byrnes says

Byrd's primary theme is that the executive has removed much if not all of the power of the purse from Congress, and this way lies tyranny, and that it has done so dishonestly. He also chides the member of Congress who have allowed this to happen, who have allowed themselves to be bullied by fears of Republican administration name-calling. He sees dark days ahead.

This is a cogent, pointed position that merits our attention.

Brandon says

While the subject matter held within this book is pretty spot on, it's been a problem that has been brewing for a long time. Although President Bush has carried the power of the Executive branch on to the next level, he alone is not to blame. For example, congress gave the president the ability to wage a war - it's THEIR responsibility to declare war and raise an army, the president is the commander in chief. Likewise, the system of Government we hold dear and are taught to embrace from a young age in this country stresses checks and balances - and there just isn't a lot of that going on. The other thing that detracted from the value of this book was the author himself. I can't really get behind a former Klu Klux Klan member who refused to serve his country as a soldier in a time of war (WW2) because he couldn't get past his own color based prejudice.

Chris says

I really enjoyed re-reading this book. One of my heroes, Robert Byrd (Senior Senator from West Virginia)

wrote this in the midst of the Bush Presidency. It breaks down the Patriot Act and other unconstitutional acts carried about by the Executive Branch and pleads for a return to the traditional system of checks and balances. Senator Byrd proves prophetic the second time around as many of his predictions involving the economy, etc... have come true. Not the most current of books to pull off the shelf, but a good book none-the-less. Senator Byrd knows his shit.

Gregg Wingo says

With Decision 2016 floating in the air I cannot help reflect on the late Senator Robert C. Byrd's "Losing America: Confronting a Reckless and Arrogant Presidency". Not as good or abstract as his "The Senate of the Roman Republic: Addresses on the History of Roman Constitutionalism" which he originally delivered as a series of addresses from the Senate, "Losing America" focuses not on the general hazard of the growth of presidential but specifically on the abuses by George W. Bush and the U.S. Congress in the aftermath of 9/11.

Senator Byrd explains how the rhetoric of the War on Terrorism was utilized to silence resistance to the Presidential agenda not only in arena of foreign policy but in domestic policies and, perhaps, most critically in budgetary matters. A strong constitutionalist, the Senator feels that the balance of powers between the branches of the Federal government is not just a function of our organizational structure but most importantly a guarantor of our individual freedoms. In his own words, the Capitol "...houses the people's branch, the sacred temple of free and open debate....the vessel of liberty that has safely carried us through every storm." In contrast, his disdain for Bush II is undisguised: "George W. Bush, a child of wealth and privilege...did not pay his dues....offered no vision..." Senator Byrd guides us through the collapse of governance that was born in these years and still haunts our country to this day. One of the few senators to oppose the invasion of Iraq and the Patriot Act, he gives us an inside look at the politics of Washington and the Congress. He also correctly warns of the dangers of special interests and their money on elected officials.

Senator Byrd was certainly the last of the great American orators and it is especially wonderful that this book includes eight of his speeches from the floor of the Senate. Much of his wisdom and love of his country and the institution that he dedicated his life to are captured in this little volume. Born impoverished in the West Virginia coalfields, the Senator's life is the embodiment of the American dream of democracy and liberty for all.
