

Pentagon analysts are continuing their investigation into the rumor that President Bush was killed or severely wounded, perhaps as a result of massive citizen demonstrations against his Iraq war plan. Although recent photographs and even video clips of the president have appeared on national media, analysts studying the photographs, videos, and presidential comments wonder if the American public is seeing the real president or someone (or some "thing") that just looks and talks like him. The investigation is focused on the following concerns:

-- When he was running for election, George W. Bush identified himself as a "compassionate conservative." Since neither the "president" nor his administration have shown any sign of compassion, and, in fact, have gone out of their way to legislate cruel and harsh measures that penalize the poor while rewarding the rich, some analysts suspect that Mr. Bush has been replaced by someone pursuing goals that are the exact opposite of what the real George Bush promised while a presidential candidate.

-- Similarly, candidate Bush expressed concern for preserving the environment, yet his administration wants to change long-standing environmental policies and replace real enforcement with cute sounding initiatives that allow cutting national forests, oil drilling in protected and sensitive environments, snowmobiles in Yellowstone National Park, and so on.

-- Candidate Bush expressed his genuine faith in God, but whoever is currently impersonating the president acts in a manner opposed by every major religious organization in the world, including his own.

-- Candidate Bush appeared to be a rather simple good old boy who easily mingled with common people and shared their thoughts and concerns. President "Bush", on the other hand, seems totally insensitive to the concerns of people who aren't already wealthy and powerful. He appears unable to suppress a nasty smirk when a smile and kindness would seem more called for; and he seems to devote more time and energy to exercise and sleep than to resolving -- or even thinking about -- the tanking stock market, skyrocketing national debt, growing joblessness, crippled state budgets, and other problems that hurt ordinary citizens.

These, along with other observations that are all too familiar to Washington observers, have led to the truly frightening speculation that George W. Bush is either (a) dead, (b) brain dead, (c) kidnapped and replaced by a body double or animatronic robot, (d) or a totally different person from whom he represented himself to be during the election campaign. Because this final possibility would require corruption and cynicism on a scale unimaginable in all of American history it isn't seriously considered. Unfortunately, that leaves America to deal with either a brain-dead or imposter president.

There is one other explanation that is only mentioned in whispers, and which we repeat here just because we have heard it from multiple sources. This is that the actions or policies of this

"president" are not those of a rational person, and hint that the U.S. Government may have been taken over, in a silent coup d'etat, by a secret cabal of ultra conservative, religious fanatics. Some have even whispered the possibility that Osama bin Laden, the only other world leader whose views are as fanatical as the president's, may have somehow found a way to take over the U.S. government. As evidence for this even more alarming possibility, analysts note that George H. W. Bush, the current "president's" father, has long conducted oil business as head of the Carlyle Group with Osama's father, Mohammed bin Laden, head of the Saudi Bin Laden Group. They also note this administration's embarrassing inability to hunt down Osama, the most wanted man in the world, and the "president's" inexplicable silence about bin Laden in recent months.