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What a Moronic Presidential Press Conference!

IT'S CLEAR BUSH DOESN'T UNDERSTAND IRAQ, OR LEBANON, OR GAZA, OR ...

By Fred Kaplan

Posted Tuesday, Aug. 22, 2006, at 5:48 PM ET



George W. Bush at a press conference

Among the many flabbergasting answers that President Bush gave at his [press conference on Monday](#), this one—about Democrats who propose pulling out of Iraq—triggered the steepest jaw drop: "I would never question the patriotism of somebody who disagrees with me. This has nothing to do with patriotism. It has everything to do with understanding the world in which we live."

George W. Bush criticizing someone for not understanding the world is like ... well, it's like George W. Bush criticizing someone for not understanding the world.

It's sui generis: No parallel quite captures the absurdity so succinctly.

This, after all, is the president who invaded Iraq [without the slightest understanding](#) of the country's ethnic composition or of the volcanic tensions that toppling its dictator might unleash. Complexity has no place in his schemes. Choices are never cloudy. The world is divided into the forces of terror and the forces of freedom: The one's defeat means the other's victory.

Defeating terror by promoting freedom—it's "the fundamental challenge of the 21st century," he has said several times, especially when it comes to the Middle East. But here, from the transcript of the press conference, is how he sees the region's recent events:

What's very interesting about the violence in Lebanon and the violence in Iraq and the violence in Gaza is this: These are all groups of terrorists who are trying to stop the advance of democracy.

What is he talking about? Hamas, which has been responsible for much of the violence in Gaza, won the Palestinian territory's parliamentary elections. Hezbollah, which started its recent war with Israel, holds a substantial minority of seats in Lebanon's parliament and would probably win many more seats if a new election were held tomorrow. Many of the militants waging sectarian battle in Iraq have representation in Baghdad's popularly elected parliament.

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