

Candidate 2 evidence

Politics Higher Resource Sheet	
Candidate Name	Scottish Candidate Number
Source A - President George. W. Bush's Address to the Nation (11/09/01) 'Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature. And we responded with the best of America' 'Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America' Source B - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMlZR5EqbRg "He sat down, and before anybody could say anything, he looked at us, and said, 'I am coming back to Washington. Don't argue with me'." Source C https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/infocus/defense/enduringfreedom.html 'With the coalition's help, Afghanistan is moving forward to rebuild their country and restore civil government' Source D - Bush's address to the nation announcing entering Iraq (19/03/03) 'We have no ambition in Iraq except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people.' 'The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder' Source E https://www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/03/14/a-look-back-at-how-fear-and-false-beliefs-bolstered-u-s-public-support-for-war-in-iraq/ 62% of Americans said [the Iraq War] was not worth fighting Source F https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/5540-majority-think-iraq-war-was-wrong 53% of Brits think the decision to invade [Iraq] was wrong Source G https://www.usnews.com/news/the-report/articles/2015/08/28/hurricane-katrina-was-the-beginning-of-the-end-for-george-w-bush "He never recovered from Katrina," says a former Bush adviser and Republican strategist. Source H 'Decision Points' Education reform was one of [his] most important domestic priorities, aimed at ending what [he] viewed as a culture of low expectations in American schools.	

George Walker Bush was the 43rd President of the United States and served from 2001-09. He was the nominated as the Presidential Republican candidate for the 2000 election following two successful terms as the Governor of Texas during the 1990s. Bush was elected in both the 2000 and 2004 Presidential elections, defeating both then Vice President Al Gore in 2000, and Senator John Kerry in 2004. He was known for his compassionate conservatism and his strong stance on educational reforms following the divisive Clinton years. However, Bush's Presidency is largely characterised by the events on September 11, and the following War on Terror, which indirectly led to the controversial invasion of Iraq in 2003. Despite not being in office since 2009, Bush's legacy lives on, with the Department of Homeland Security still active as of 2026, and his reputation improved following terms of his successors as President. This essay will evaluate the effectiveness of both of President Bush's terms, by discussing the events of 9/11, the invasion of Afghanistan, the invasion of Iraq, internal crises and his education policies.

George Bush's presidency is largely associated with an event which occurred 8 months into his first term, on the 11th of September 2001. Four commercial US airliners were hijacked by Al Qaeda terrorists, and deliberately flown into the Twin Towers of the then World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and one plane was crashed into a field in Pennsylvania after its passengers bravely stood up to the terrorists on board. September 11th resulted in the death of around 3000 innocent people, and was one of the darkest days in modern US history. On the evening of 9/11, President Bush addressed the nation, as seen in source A, which shows that Bush said "Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of human nature. And we responded with the best of America." This shows the effectiveness of President Bush as he made a clear distinction between the American people and those who attacked them, in a means of unifying the nation against a common enemy. The way he described the terrorists as 'the very worst of human nature' to contrast them with 'the best of America' shows that he sees the American people as a collective community, and that now, more than ever they needed to be together against this 'very worst of human nature'. Furthermore, source A shows that Bush also went on to say that 'Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America' which shows his effectiveness in being able to deliver a powerful metaphor to reassure his people and the world that although the attacks had a physical impact, they by no means undermined the core values of America and its people. During the events of 9/11, the President was mainly on board Air Force One, and was taken to a secure location, where he insisted on coming back to the White House, despite the Secret Service seeing it as unsafe. This is seen with source B that says "He sat down, and before anybody could say anything, he looked at us, and said, 'I am coming back to Washington. Don't argue with me'." This shows his effectiveness as it shows his authority and integrity, as he wanted to be in the capital to talk to his people, as he wanted to be a symbol of security and reassurance of safety to the American people. Furthermore, the fact he addressed the nation from the White House, which was entirely the President's decision, shows that he wasn't the type of leader to hide away from terrorists, and that he could prove to his people and the international stage that he was going to stand up to the terrorists. President Bush also set up the Department of Homeland Security following 9/11, to be certain that something like it couldn't happen again. This could be seen as effective as in late 2001, another attack seemed inevitable, but never happened due to increased security measures and improved security. Furthermore, the Department Homeland Security is still active as of 2026, which shows effectiveness as something President Bush implemented still functions and stands, so it clearly was effective in its purpose. Finally, shortly after 9/11 President Bush's approval rating reached around 90%, which shows his effectiveness as the vast majority of the American people clearly supported him and were largely united behind him after horrific

circumstances. President Bush's ability to maintain some manner of composure and reassurance to his people on September 11th proved to be effective as it gained him a large approval rating and unified support.

In the following weeks of 9/11, President Bush entered Afghanistan, on the 7th of October 2001, with the intention of removing the Taliban regime, which actively trained and harboured the Al Qaeda network who were responsible for 9/11. The Taliban regime was removed by December 2001, which could be seen as effective by the Bush Administration as they were decisive and efficient, which proved the Administration's ability to cope with an entirely new style of warfare. Furthermore, the invasion of Afghanistan could be seen as effective by President Bush as their main intentions were met; to remove the Taliban regime from power, to disrupt Al Qaeda networks and training camps, and to stop Afghanistan from being a safe haven for terrorists. The fact these goals were met and quite swiftly shows that the Bush Administration was able to execute its goals decisively, along with working with other countries in the UN coalition, such as the UK, Canada and Australia to name a few. Furthermore, source C says that 'With the coalition's help, Afghanistan is moving forward to rebuild their country and restore civil government' which shows the effectiveness of the Bush Administration to not only meet its military goals, but to also handle Afghanistan carefully, setting up a free government, which allowed women to be educated, to leave the home without being accompanied by a male, and not have to publicly cover up if they left home. This was effective as it was clearly a positive step forward for the Afghan people. However, critics would argue that the peace in Afghanistan was never truly kept, as following the Biden Administration's withdrawal in 2021, the Taliban rose to power again quickly which could be seen as ineffective handling of Afghanistan as the peace was only for the short term during coalition intervention. Furthermore, critics would also argue that the death toll was high, of around 3400 coalition soldiers, which could be seen as ineffective as once the Taliban rose to power again, the war was virtually meaningless. Critics would also argue that the cost of the Afghanistan war was too high, as by 2009, the US had spent USD\$ 650 billion on Afghanistan, which some would argue could've and possibly should've gone elsewhere.

Another aspect in which Bush's presidency comes under a lot of controversy was the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Bush decided to enter Iraq out of suspicions of the dictator Saddam Hussein developing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and planning to use them on America and its people. Source D shows that Bush said to his people that 'We have no ambition in Iraq except to remove a threat and restore control of that country to its own people' which could be seen as effective as Bush was justifying the invasion by wanting to free the Iraqi people from the tyrannous regime under Hussein, who had been ruling for almost three decades. The fact he said that the US 'have no [other] ambition' shows that their main goal was just, and that the Bush Administration's intentions were to free Iraq and destroy any threats of WMDs. Source D also says that Bush said 'The people of the United States and our friends and allies will not live at the mercy of an outlaw regime that threatens the peace with weapons of mass murder' which could be seen as effective as he was using emotive language to justify the invasion, using the idea that the US were simply being law enforcers, and the war was just as they weren't going to 'live at mercy' to these regimes, which again, like with the initial war on terror, rallied the people against a common enemy, that being Saddam Hussein's regime. Following the invasion of Iraq, Bush's approval rating also improved by around 15%, which could be seen as effective as the American people's opinion on the President did improve, and that they generally supported him and his decisions to enter Iraq. However, the invasion of Iraq has a lot

of controversy, and ended up resulting in Bush receiving a lot of criticism. Firstly, their initial intentions weren't met, as no WMDs were found, and no evidence of them being produced was found either. This could be seen as ineffective as it completely undermined the credibility of the Bush Administration and its intelligence, as their main justification for an invasion was proven to be false. Furthermore, the Iraq War also strained transatlantic relations, particularly with NATO, who saw the invasion as unjust, and many refusing to cooperate, unlike Afghanistan. This could be seen as ineffective as it made the US look bad on an international scale, with only the UK willing to send troops to Iraq in support, with some of the closest US allies deciding not to get involved in Iraq. Public support also dropped following the withdrawal of Iraq, with many feeling it was futile. For example, Source E shows that 62% of Americans think that the Iraq War was not worth fighting, and Source F shows that 53% of Brits think the decision to invade Iraq was wrong. This shows ineffectiveness as majorities of the main countries involved in the invasion of Iraq thought it was the wrong thing to do, with public support largely opposed to the invasion.

President Bush could be seen as effective on an international scale, but often faces criticism for how he dealt with internal domestic crises. For example, in 2005, Hurricane Katrina devastated the South Eastern coast, whilst the President was on vacation in his ranch in Crawford, Texas. The lack of decisiveness and involvement resulted in a lot of criticism of the Bush Administration, and when they did eventually provide support, people felt it was underfunded and nowhere near the amount of aid needed to recover from the wreckage. Source G shows that a former Bush adviser and Republican strategist, who remained anonymous, said that 'He never recovered from Katrina'. This shows ineffectiveness as even his advisors and people in his own party saw it as a catastrophe, which hugely damaged his approval rating, and what many consider to be the beginning of the end of Bush's approval. The President did however visit some devastated areas, and spoke to the victims of Katrina, and wanted to be there for them, similar to the symbol he was on 9/11, which shows effectiveness in showing the people that he truly cared for them. However, critics would argue that that was the very least the President could've done. Another example of a domestic crisis would be the financial crash of 2008. It resulted in thousands of Americans being made redundant, and the housing markets became ludicrously expensive. Bush implemented policies to combat unemployment, for example in Georgia, where 35,000 people in Atlanta were able to keep their jobs thanks to government intervention. This could be seen as effective as although many were put out of work, the Administration actively tried to improve the lives of the people and reduce them from going into poverty.

Another means in which President Bush's effectiveness can be evaluated were his educational reforms. A large part of his 2000 election campaign was to improve education for young people, and to raise the standards of education in schools. Source H says that Education reform was one of President Bush's most important priorities, aimed at ending what he viewed as a culture of low expectations in American schools. This could be seen as effective as he wanted to focus on giving better futures for young people, and the first step to that is by improving education, and showed that his top priorities were to domestically improve the lives of millions of young Americans. Furthermore, Bush passed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001, which standardised testing, improved support for students, and increased accountability for schools and teachers. This could be seen as effective as it increased the expectations and standards of the school system, and it made it

easier to see if a child was struggling or succeeding in schools. However, some would argue that it added unnecessary pressure on teachers, and that it was ineffective as some teachers merely taught the test, rather than the curriculum. Bush's focus on education was effective however as it significantly improved the standard of education for many young people.

Overall, to conclude, the two terms of George W Bush's presidency were very effective, despite its controversies. His domestic handling and becoming a symbol of unification and safety during the horrific 9/11 attacks was hugely effective in reassuring the American people that they wouldn't kneel to terrorists and that they were not going to accept defeat. The subsequent invasion of Afghanistan was swift and effective, as many saw it as actively fighting back from the acts of terror, and the main objectives were met, and Afghanistan was maintained and controlled by a new, democratic government. The invasion of Iraq, while controversial, partly proved to be effective, as it removed a tyrannic regime and freed many Iraqi people from decades of oppression. While no WMDs were found, it still showed the US and UK strength and cooperation on an international scale. However, although his handling of domestic crises such as the financial crash and Katrina were poor, they failed to undermine his effectiveness internationally and how he could reassure his nation and his people. Overall Bush's presidency was effective, with his legacy and reputation lasting to this day.