

Kyle Wingfield (<http://blogs.ajc.com/kyle-wingfield>)

Why does Obama keep doing the things he blames Bush for?

5:03 am June 21, 2012, by Kyle Wingfield

There's one big reason Barack Obama is getting nowhere by blaming his predecessor for all that ails us today, and it's not because Americans have short memories. No, it's because we have long memories — long enough to recognize Obama has been doing many of the very same things he and his supporters on the left criticize George W. Bush for doing.

The pattern has been obvious for some time, but the latest examples came with yesterday's news that Obama was claiming executive privilege to **withhold certain documents** from a House investigation of the "Fast and Furious" gun-running scandal.

In that 2009-10 operation, federal agents allowed about 2,000 firearms to be smuggled into Mexico. But rather than tracking down the recipients in drug cartels, the feds lost track of them — until, that is, the weapons showed up on murder scenes. The guns have been connected to the deaths of scores of Mexican citizens and a border patrol agent, Brian Terry.

Not only did then-Sen. Obama **slam** Bush in 2007 for "try[ing] to hide behind executive privilege" to keep information under wraps when there was "something a little shaky that's taking place." (That case involved no deaths, just the firing of eight U.S. attorneys, whose service at the pleasure of the president was evident when Bill Clinton **fired all 93** of them upon taking office in 1993.)

But, what's more, documents the Obama administration has released indicate Fast and Furious was **similar** to a smaller operation federal agents tried in 2006-07. They **ended it** after realizing their gun-tracking methods didn't work. The Obama administration didn't just ignore those bad results; it quadrupled-down on the bad blueprint.

If that reminds you of our national debt problems, join the club.

Once upon a time — call it July 3, 2008 — Obama **said** it was "irresponsible" and "unpatriotic" for a president to add "\$4 trillion [in debt] all by his lonesome."

Maybe he found Bush's profligacy irresponsible and unpatriotic because it took him eight years to accomplish, whereas Obama has pulled it off in just three (not counting the 2009 fiscal year that covered the first eight months of his presidency and included the first part of his "stimulus" and hundreds of billions in other spending he OK'd).

Of course, Obama blamed Bush's large deficits in part on "tax cuts for the rich." Then he extended those same tax cuts in 2010 as the economy was recovering from a recession, which was also the situation when Bush signed the cuts in 2001.

Then there was the "off the books" war spending. Obama moved the war spending on the books, all right. Now Obama requests the money not via supplemental budgets, but through the regular budgets Harry Reid's Senate has ignored the past three years.

And defense spending is, by the way, more than it was even during the final Bush years.

Maybe that's because Obama kept the Bush timeline for withdrawing our soldiers from Iraq. After trying to negotiate an extension to keep them there longer. Just as Bush had.

And maybe it's because he ordered a troop "surge" in tribally fractured Afghanistan. The same kind of surge he said wouldn't work in ethnically fractured Iraq. Which Bush ordered.

Even comparatively smaller things get the blame-but-copy-Bush treatment.

Lose billions of taxpayer dollars on job-creation "investments" at private alternative-energy firms such as Solyndra? **Tell Congress** you were just making loans under a Bush-era program.

Workers from the General Services Administration blow \$840,000 on a lavish Las Vegas conference? **Answer** that the trend started under the previous administration.

Blame, copy, repeat.

In fact, Google returns more than 5.6 million results for “Obama blames Bush.” I didn’t have time to check whether the president followed his predecessor’s lead in each instance.

The ship of state may turn only slowly, but three and a half years is time enough for a president to plot his own course. It’s long enough to stop doing things he describes as mistakes by the old regime.

If he hasn’t stopped repeating mistakes by now, it tells us something about his judgment, competence or both.

The last three and a half years might not quite amount to “Bush’s third term.” But they have repeated the worst of Bush’s years in a way that offers no confidence for another go-round.

– By Kyle Wingfield

Find me on **Facebook** or follow me on **Twitter**

1 [2](#) [3](#) [4](#) [5](#) [Next »](#) [Show All](#)

Tell us what you think about the site

Send us your suggestions about this page.

Send a feedback technical issue

Your e-mail address (will

[Subscribe »](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

[Customer Care »](#)

Vacation stops, manage subscriptions and more

AJC Services

- [Staff contacts](#)
- [Reprints and permission](#)
- [Contests](#)
- [Submit event listings](#)
- [Send us news tips](#)
- [Careers at AJC](#)
- [Careers at Cox](#)
- [AJC Store](#)
- [AJC Conversation](#)

Sections

- [News](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Travel](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Lifestyle](#)
- [Obituaries](#)

Other Editions

- [Sign up for newsletters](#)
- [Digital Products](#)
- [AJC for iPad](#)
- [Sign up for ajcMobile](#)

- [RSS and Widgets](#)
- [Today's news](#) | [A1 image](#)
- [Archives](#)

Guides

- [Best of Atlanta](#)
- [School Guide](#)
- [Neighborhood Guide](#)
- [AJC in Education](#)
- [Atlanta Home Sales](#)
- [Atlanta Topics](#)
- [Travel Guide](#)
- [Atlanta Holiday Guide](#)
- [Atlanta Crime & Safety](#)
- [Find Atlanta Jobs](#)
- [Graduate/MBA Education](#)

Affiliates

- [Cars at Autotrader](#)
- [Local Services at Kudzu](#)
- [Coupons at Valpak](#)

Advertising

- [About our ads](#)
- [Advertise with us](#)
- [E-Sheets](#)

AJC Sites

- [ajc.com](#)
- [AccessAtlanta](#)
- [Atlanta Jobs](#)
- [Atlanta Homes](#)
- [Atlanta Apartments](#)
- [Atlanta Cars](#)
- [Atlanta Classifieds](#)
- [Mundo Hispánico](#)



[Visitor Agreement](#) | [Privacy Statement](#)

© 2012 The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

 