

Delusional, aggressive: Bush vs Kerry Round 2

IT'S one of a college professor's nastiest nightmares – your worst student goes on to become “president” of the United States. And he hasn't changed one bit. This is the failure that George W. Bush's former Harvard Business School professor, Yoshi Tsurumi, faces every day.

Tsurumi, in a recent interview with Salon.com, says there are two types of students that you remember over the years. “One is the very excellent student, the type as a professor you feel honored to be working with – someone with strong social values, compassion and intellect – the very rare person you never forget. And then you remember students like George Bush, those who are totally the opposite.” According to Tsurumi, Bush “showed pathological lying habits and was in denial when challenged on his prejudices and biases. He would even deny saying something he just said 30 seconds ago.”

Perhaps Tsurumi is a partisan out to assassinate Bush's character. Or perhaps he's just a loser capitalizing on a decades-old brush with greatness in a last-ditch quest for the media spotlight and 15 minutes of fame. Yes, it's easy enough to dismiss Tsurumi's attacks on Bush – if it wasn't for Bush himself dedicating his career to proving Tsurumi right. Bush's debate performances so far (ArtVoice went to press before the third debate), perhaps his first major unscripted appearances since seizing the White House, have further bolstered Tsurumi's credibility.

“Bush is back!”

The corporate media again came out of the gate after debate number two, declaring that Bush and Kerry tied, or that Bush was at least “making up ground.” Former Clinton advisor Dick Morris, writing for The New York Post, reports, “Bush is back! The president finally showed the guts, determination and focus that earned him victories in the three

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debates with Al Gore." Pat Buchanan, stumping for MSNBC, reported, "I think the president was outstanding at times and he was spectacular at times. He did so much better than he did in Miami. It was a different man in the arena." Chris Wallace of Fox News said "George Bush came to play. He held John Kerry even at the very least."

What we're seeing here again, is the dual yardstick that has always favored Bush. Expectations for Bush are so low that any performance short of a seizure is commendable. For this debate, pundits praised Bush for being "forceful." Bull-headed is a better descriptive. If you paid attention to the words uttered, Bush seemed even more divorced from reality, and perhaps, delusional, than he was in the first debate.

Take this week's biggest headline: "No Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iraq." Those of us with functioning memories clearly recall, for example, Bush's justification for invading Iraq: the Bush administration claimed to have evidence that Saddam possessed weapons of Mass Destruction and could use them at any moment against the United States. According to this lie, we had no choice but to invade. Over 1,000 Americans and about 15,000 Iraqis are dead. Many times more are wounded and crippled.

After spending nearly a billion dollars searching all of Iraq for two years, however, a team of 1,625 U.S. and U.N. weapons inspectors concluded last week that prior to Bush's invasion, Iraq possessed NO weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Furthermore, they added that no WMDs existed in Iraq for years leading up to the invasion, and that Iraq's capacity for producing WMDs had been steadily diminishing during the years prior to the invasion. Put simply, Bush's own federal government ascertained that Saddam Hussein, no matter what else he was, was not a threat to the United States.

WMDs: Bush vs. reality

Now, fast forward to last Wednesday's presidential debate, which occurred shortly after the report determining that Iraq has no WMDs was released. The Bush administration never challenged the findings of its own government report. Bush simply chose to ignore reality, instead challenging Kerry for naively believing that the sanctions that did work, could have worked. Bush argued that the main problem with Kerry was that he suffered from "the kind of mindset that says sanctions were working." In fact, however, sanctions did work. Iraq was disarmed by U.N. inspectors. Bush went on to argue, however, "That's the kind of mindset that said, 'Let's keep it at the United Nations and hope things go well.' Saddam Hussein was a threat because he could have given weapons of mass destruction to terrorist enemies. Sanctions were not working."

This line alone clearly demonstrates that Bush is delusional. He has a disjointed relationship with reality, and clearly is not mentally competent to be president of the

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United States – not next year and not today.

When Bush finally cited the report showing Iraq had no WMDs, he argued that it just proved how cunning Saddam was. Under Bush logic, Saddam had disarmed in order to get rid of sanctions, so that he could then rearm and pose a future threat to the world. That's why we had to launch an immediate invasion – because the wily Saddam complied with our demands. Get it?

Never a mistake

When one audience member asked Bush to list three mistakes he had made while in office, the pathologically arrogant Bush listed none. Not even a slight error in judgment. He didn't even chide himself for trusting Ahmed Chalabi who his administration first embraced as a post invasion Iraqi leader, and then arrested as a suspected Iranian spy (see July 29 th, 2004 Getting a Grip). Nada. No mistakes. No regrets. Bush has proven himself unwavering in the face of reality – and the pro-Bush press has praised this arrogant steadfast stupidity as if it's a virtue. All Bush decisions are etched in stone like the ten commandments. Why not? This delusional little man likens himself to Moses, claiming that God speaks to him. How can his divinely inspired decisions be mistakes? And why should he let reality get in the way with his victory in Iraq, our booming economy and his immensely successful presidency?

The pro-Bush pundits seem to hear none of this. They didn't hear Bush when he asserted that the middle class pays a 10% income tax. They didn't hear him when he claimed to have created three million wetlands, they didn't hear him when he falsely claimed the Lackawanna Six were a terrorist cell. They didn't pay attention to John Kerry who anticipated and answered Bush's attacks before he made them, only to hear Bush repeat questions that were already answered. No. It's as if they had the sound turned off or were playing their Barry Manilow CDs too loud.

Instead they congratulated Bush for his body language – for being resolute, as if lunging forward and shouting nonsense constituted a victory if the shouter's volume was high enough. Yes, Bush was on the offensive. And I guess, by WWF standards, you could credit him with a debate win. He gave us the body language of the arrogant school boy Professor Tsurumi describes. But intellectually, he was a flea biting the ass of a tiger.

Bush was at his worst when he stepped forward and described himself as "human." He wasn't at all convincing.