

Worldwide Commentary

On Bush: ‘He’s Nuts’

On Sept. 27, the LaRouche PAC issued a mass leaflet, “LaRouche: ‘The Number One Issue in the Presidential Debates Is George W. Bush’s Mental Illness.’ This theme is now being picked up by analysts around the world. Here are some highlights.

***Atlantic Monthly*, September-October 2004**

Historian James Fallows, in a July-August article on the recent history of Presidential debates in *Atlantic Monthly*, noted that President Bush had suffered “a decline in sentence-by-sentence speaking skills over a decade.” Dr. Joseph W. Price of Michigan commented in a letter published in the September-October issue: “Slowly developing cognitive deficits, as demonstrated so clearly by Bush, can represent only one diagnosis, and that is pre-senile dementia. . . .”

***Al-Quds al-Arabi* (London), Oct. 2, 2004**

The London-based Arabic newspaper reported that Prince Hassan of Jordan, the late King Hussein’s brother, spoke about President Bush at a conference in France, on Oct. 1:

“Prince Hassan saw an opportunity during a visit to France on Friday, to criticize the way the U.S. was dealing with Jordan. He expressed his doubts about American President Bush’s mental capabilities. Prince Hassan said, we need mutual respect and intellectual tolerance, Mr. President, and the meetings of the minds.”

Katharine Mieszkowski, “Is the President Losing It?” *Salon.com*, Oct. 15, 2004

“First it was pre-senile dementia. Now it’s a stroke. A rash of armchair-diagnosis speculation about President Bush’s health, based on his faltering speech in the first debate to his drooling and drooping Wednesday night, is flying around the Web. . . .

“But it was Bush’s less-than-lucid performance in the first presidential debate against Senator John Kerry that sparked the creation of a short video montage juxtaposing footage from that debate with video from George W. Bush sparring with then-Texas Governor Ann Richards, ten years ago. . . .

“ ‘In the 1994 video he was going along and having no trouble having a nice flow of language. But now he’s so faulting and labored and limited,’ says Robert McInerney, a retired internist in Pittsfield, Mass. ‘He’s getting as inarticulate as I am, and I’m in my senior years,’ adding this caveat: ‘[But] I think it would be foolish to make a diagnosis over a one-minute video clip.’

“Bush’s insistence on tightly-controlled appearances has other doctors wondering, too. ‘I think he’s deteriorating in

terms of his problem with word-finding, repetition of phrases and understanding what other people are saying,' said Dr. Justin Frank, a professor in the Department of Psychiatry at George Washington University Medical Center, who is the author of *Bush on the Couch*. But Dr. Frank also stressed: 'He would need to be tested to see if he has dementia. This is all speculation without testing. . . .'

"Still, Dr. Frank said that during his book tour this summer from L.A. to Philadelphia, seven or eight different physicians and psychologists came up to him at readings to discuss their concerns about the President's mental health: 'Four people said they thought he reminded them of their patients in the early state of Alzheimer's. Several people wondered if there is a gradual deterioration from chronic substance abuse.'

"... After Bush's performance in the third debate, Dr. Frank changed his own at-arm's-length diagnosis: 'I think that the reason he looked demented in the past debates is that Kerry figured out how to make him anxious. And when he's anxious he gets disorganized. But Kerry did not make him anxious this time. So, the issue for him is trying to manage anxiety. That's his main concern.'

"Now that still doesn't explain Wednesday night's spitting. . . ."

**Andrew Stephen, "Has Bush Lost His Reason?"
The Observer (London) Oct. 17, 2004**

"The President's apparent mental fragility should give U.S. voters pause for thought at the ballot box.

"... [The] momentous decision awaiting Americans is not whether they return to power a President who is uniquely qualified to protect the U.S. against terrorism, as Cheney et al. would have us believe. It is whether they re-elect a man who, it is now clear, has become palpably unstable. . . .

"The 43rd U.S. President has always had a much-publicized knack for mangled syntax, but now George Bush often searches an agonizingly long time, sometimes in vain, for the right words. His mind simply blanks out at crucial times. He is prone, I am told, to foul-mouthed temper tantrums in the White House. His handlers now rarely allow him to speak an unscripted word in public. . . .

"By the time of the third debate . . . Bush had adopted yet another baffling persona. This time, he was peculiarly flushed, leading a colleague to speculate whether he was on something. He had clearly been told to look positive—that was his main thrust of the evening, with frequent assertions that 'freedom is on the march'—and spent the evening with a creepy, inane grin on his face. . . . li 150

"It is . . . hard to avoid the conclusion that Bush's cognitive functioning is not, for some reason, what it once was. I am not qualified to say why this is so. . . .

"But I have heard wild speculation in Washington that he is suffering from a neurological disorder, or that the years of alcoholism might finally be taking their toll on his brain. . . .

"It does not help that Bush now lives in a positively Nixonian cocoon. He does not read newspapers; he sees television

only to watch football; he makes election speeches exclusively at ticket-only events, and his courtiers consciously avoid giving him bad news. When he met John Kerry for their first bout on the debating platform, it was almost a new experience for the President to hear the voice of dissent.

"A senior Republican, experienced and wise in the ways of Washington, told me last Friday that he does not necessarily accept that Bush is unstable, but what is clear, he added, is that he is now manifestly unfit to be President.

"... Either way, the choice voters make on Tuesday fortnight should be obvious: whether he is unstable or merely unfit to be President—and I would argue that they amount to much the same—he should speedily be turfed out of office.

"Whether the American electorate choose to see the mounting, disturbing evidence about their President or whether they rally to Cheney's obscenely manipulative appeals for their patriotic support is still up in the air."

Ron Suskind, "Without a Doubt," *The New York Times Magazine*, Oct. 17, 2004

The author quotes Bruce Bartlett, who was a domestic policy advisor to Ronald Reagan, and a Treasury Department official in the Bush 41 Administration.

"If Bush wins, there will be civil war in the Republican Party. . . . Just in the past few months, I think a light has gone off for people who've spent time up close to Bush: that this instinct he's always talking about is this sort of weird, Messianic idea of what he thinks God has told him to do.

"This is why George W. Bush is so clear-eyed about Al-Qaeda and the Islamic fundamentalist enemy. He believes you have to kill them all. They can't be persuaded, that they're extremists, driven by a dark vision. He understands them, because he's just like them. . . .

"This is why he dispenses with people who confront him with inconvenient facts. He truly believes he's on a mission from God. Absolute faith like that overwhelms a need for analysis. The whole thing about faith is to believe things for which there is no empirical evidence.' Bartlett paused, then said, 'But you can't run the world on faith.' . . .

"[Author Suskind continues:] In the summer of 2002, after I had written an article in *Esquire* that the White House didn't like about Bush's former communications director, Karen Hughes, I had a meeting with a senior adviser to Bush. He expressed the White House's displeasure, and then he told me something that at the time I didn't fully comprehend—but which I now believe gets to the very heart of the Bush presidency.

"The aide said that guys like me were 'in what we call the reality-based community,' which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality.' I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. 'That's not the way the world really works anymore,' he continued. 'We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. . . .'