

Bush Beast Bites Back

The self-correcting rough justice of bad policy and demagogic politics

By Terry Michael, March 24, 2006

Bushed Bushies? No. It's the president, stupid.

Enough of this nonsense about White House staff fatigue and bad communications strategy leaving "W" misunderstood by the masses. Leave the six-year-curse-for-two-term-presidents to the fertile imaginations of sound-bite historians. And discount the President's own suggestion (at his March 21st press conference) that he may call in a late-inning relief pitcher (as one newspaper headline aptly characterized it.)

George Bush's approval ratings are in the toilet for a very simple reason: the self-correcting rough justice, in a transparent democracy, of bad policy and demagogic politics.

Dr. Frankenstein would understand. Dr. Bush's beast is biting back.

Set yourself up as the only reliable defense against terrorist evil-do'ers. Deride the opposition party as aiding and abetting suicide bombers, and failing to support our troops if they question your efforts to make the world safe for theocracy. Then see what happens when something like the Dubai ports deal comes along and has the appearance, even though not the reality, of doing just the opposite of what you promised.

Establish a Dept. of Homeland Security, a super-nationalistic moniker reminiscent of the first verse of the old German anthem favored by Hitler ("Homeland, Homeland uber alles" plays in my brain every time I hear it.) Demand public allegiance to a "Patriot Act," the modern version of the Alien and Sedition monstrosities that disgraced some of our otherwise intelligent founders. And then ask yourself why a public you have mid-led into xenophobia refuses to embrace immigration reform.

Conjure up a marketing term like "Weapons of Mass Destruction" to sell an elective war you already decided to wage, based on neo-conservative hallucinations. Politically frighten the opposition party into submission by scaring them with the ghosts of their Cold War and Vietnam-era shadows, and thus preclude any serious debate about the wisdom of waging the wrong war in the wrong place, albeit the right time. And then scratch your head and wonder why about three-fifths of the American people have concluded that going to Iraq was a mistake, now that the easily predictable reality of civil war has displaced the chimera of "Mission Accomplished."

It is unsurprising that the Washington political and media establishments have lately been enthralled with silliness about exhausted and over-worked staffers as the explanation for W's problems. To see the obvious reasons the public has turned against this president and his war would require uncomfortable admissions of guilt in every sector of these ten square miles of surreality.

Democrats who didn't do their job, who didn't engage an honest debate about Iraq continue to collude with the war policy, and hope to regain power by default rather than by providing a way out of the morass. The Beltway press corps, which suspended its disbelief in the tissue of lies that built a case for Iraq, continues to disallow any mainstream discourse about ending it. Instead, they treat as serious only those voices of the status quo who blivate on the Sunday talk shows about how best to muddle on through, while marginalizing a handful of war opponents like John Murtha and Russ Feingold.

The people are way ahead of the politicians and the press in their verdict on the policies of this Administration.

If only the congressional Democratic leadership were alive and the Washington media could see beyond the Beltway, we might be able to have an intelligent debate about ending rather than mending this atrocious war and returning to our pre-9/11 senses.

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