

Is George W. Bush Intelligent and Competent Enough to be President of the United States?

By: Anthony J. Sacco, Sr. © Copyright 2000

TOWSON, MD □ With most polls showing George W. Bush edging to a lead over Al Gore, Bush's opponents are resorting to a tired tactic; disseminating disinformation that he is neither intelligent enough nor competent enough to be president of the United States.

What are the facts regarding George W. Bush's intelligence? Bush graduated from Yale University in 1968. Seven years later, in 1975, he earned a Masters Degree in Business Administration from Harvard Business School. His records at both schools indicate that he was a good student. Neither of those schools admits dummies. And while it is difficult to be accepted at Yale, it's even more difficult to gain admittance to the Harvard Business School, which admits only students with exceptional qualifications. It's well known that success in college and graduate school, although not the only one, is a strong indicator of intellectual excellence.

Al Gore graduated from Harvard University. After a brief tour of duty as an enlisted man in the Army, he entered Vanderbilt's Divinity School. There's some evidence that he obtained his discharge from the Army in order to attend that school. He flunked out shortly thereafter, which raises the question: did he ever have a real commitment to the ministry or did he simply used this as an excuse to apply for an early discharge from the military? Gore also attended law school, but withdrew due to low grades, prior to being asked to leave. He then held a white-collar job as an investigator for a Tennessee newspaper, before moving on to politics and elected office. Based on

these facts, it's not George W. Bush who merits the label "intellectual lightweight."

As for general competence, consider these items. First, while serving a six-year stint as an officer in the Texas Air National Guard, George W. Bush flew jet fighters. Anyone familiar with them knows it takes brain power to learn the capabilities and non-capabilities of these highly technical, complex and extremely sensitive aircraft. In addition, pilots must have quick and flexible minds in order to survive the occasional emergency that inevitably arises while in the cockpit. That's *real* competence, when it's all on the line. Why is that important? Because it's the kind of quality that a president needs during a national security crisis. And, assuredly, if he's elected, at least one will occur during Bush's tenure as President.

Second, Bush also worked in the Texas oilfields as part of a small wildcatting team, prospecting and drilling for oil amid the heat and dust of the Central Texas desert. Unlike Al Gore, George W. Bush knows what it means to work hard every day, to come home with clothes soaked in sweat and, sometimes, with hopes dashed.

Third, later he was an extremely effective Managing General Partner of the Texas Rangers Professional Baseball Club.

As for competence in politics and public office, let's not forget that George W. Bush was elected governor of the second largest state in this Nation. Twice. He's the first Texas governor to ever be elected to consecutive terms by Texas voters.

The vast majority of our Presidents received their training and experience as governors prior to serving as President. Among recent presidents, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton all came from the ranks of state governors. But the experience of Carter and Clinton, who both governed small southern states, is hardly comparable to that of Reagan or Bush, who governed states which, if they were independent countries, would have economies ranking among the top twenty-five, and,

of course, the problems which accompany a country of that size. In addition, unlike either Carter or Clinton, Bush, as governor of a border state, had to deal with international cross-border problems such as legal and illegal immigration, health problems and drug smuggling. He's personally acquainted with the new President of Mexico. Considering these factors, it seems strange to hear claims that George W. Bush is incompetent to be president because he was only a governor, though as recently as 1992, we heard that this same attribute somehow made Bill Clinton a highly qualified candidate.

While Governor of Texas, Bush displayed a great deal of political courage, especially in environmental matters. He supported and signed into law a Bill that requires older "grandfathered" utility companies to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions by 50%, and sulphur dioxide emissions by 25% by 2003. In an era where most states either ignore the problem posed by grandfathered industries or attempt to solve it by permitting industries to adopt voluntary plans for reducing toxic emissions, this was an innovative and courageous move. Texas is now only the third state in America to *mandate* reductions from grandfathered utilities.

As Governor, George W. Bush displayed a high level of executive ability, along with a quiet self-confidence and a lack of political ego. His record amply demonstrates that he can bring people from both political parties together to accomplish goals. Unlike Republican Senator John McCain, who was significantly unpopular among his Senate colleagues, Bush is wildly popular in Texas with legislators of both political parties. And unlike Bill Clinton and Al Gore, Bush is a man who neither seeks nor takes total credit for accomplishments, tending instead to share credit with others, regardless of party

affiliation. This has positioned him as a wise leader; someone who can govern effectively.

Both Al Gore and George W. Bush were keynote speakers at the Al Smith Annual Dinner in New York during the week of October 16th. Those who were fortunate enough to hear Bush's remarks heard a man who was both humble and humorous, with a great sense of presence and timing, and the capacity to poke fun at himself, reminiscent of Ronald Reagan. While talking about Yugoslav leader Slobodan Milosevic, Bush said, "I'm especially pleased that Milosevic has now stepped aside. That's one less foreign leader with a polysyllabic name that I'll have to remember." The audience, recalling his problem in a media interview early in the campaign, roared with laughter.

In addition to these attributes, George W. Bush seems to be a man of high moral character and integrity. He'll bring these qualities with him to Washington. After watching the antics of morally challenged Bill Clinton for the past eight years, *that* will be a refreshing change.

Mr. Bush has displayed a vision for America founded on faith, hope and compassion. He seems to understand that Americans want a change in the poisonous atmosphere in their Nation's capital, where an excess of partisanship has, in the past, hindered accomplishing the Nation's business.

*Mr. Sacco, a licensed private investigator, is the author of *The China Connection and Little Sister Lost*. He holds a B.S. degree in Political Science from Loyola College and a Doctorate in Law from the University of Maryland. E-mail him at anthonyjsacco@hotmail.com and visit his web site at www.saccoservices.com.*