

Do the Debates Matter? Why Bush May Lose the Battle and Win the War

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The third and final presidential debate was in Tempe, AZ, on October 13. It wrapped up a series of four debates, three presidential and one vice-presidential, which lead us into the final two weeks of campaigning before the election. For the most part, Senator John Kerry, the Democratic candidate, has been called the winner of all three debates. In fact, until after the third debate, polls were essentially tied. However, in the first poll after the last debate, President Bush has the same lead he had going into the debates, with Bush having a 52-44 edge as of October 18 in the CNN/USA Today/Gallup poll. On the surface, this really makes no sense. However, let us look at the facts.

Many people have criticized President Bush for being too conservative. However, as an electoral move, playing a candidate to the right does have its advantages. First

of all, more people - about 10 to 20 percent - identify themselves to be conservative rather than liberal. Therefore, the Democratic candidate in an election has more of a need to appeal to the independent swing voters than a Republican. In fact, Republicans in the past, namely former President Bush, have lost elections due to their swing more towards the middle. Therefore, it would be considered a better decision for Bush to appeal to his conservative base. This is even more important in this election year, in which many members of the left are already mobilizing against Bush.

Another point to con-

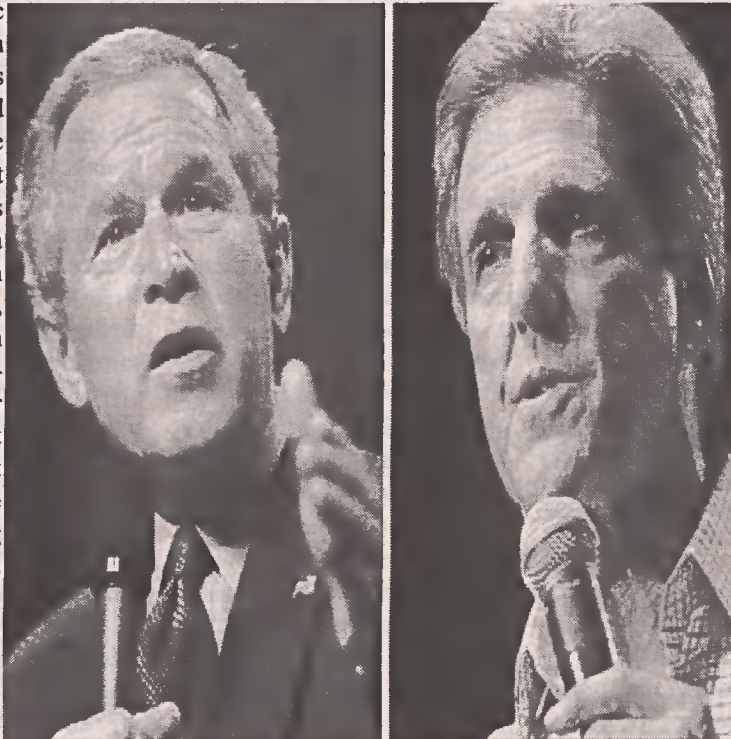
sider in this election is what the public wants from the candidates. Traditionally, the main guide in elections tends

of the appearance of leadership, at least according to the public, is the decisiveness of the candidate. The Bush campaign has done a very good job of selling John Kerry to the American public as a person with more waffles than Belgium, especially in regards to the war in Iraq. Furthermore, President Bush has maintained his position on several controversial issues, such as Iraq and the war on terrorism, even in the face of dropping opinion polls. If the American public is looking for decisive leadership, Bush definitely has the upper hand on his opponent.

In the actual debates,

the candidates presented two different styles. President Bush spoke in a plain style straight into the camera, while Senator Kerry tended to speak to the moderators in a more refined, eloquent style. However, during the second debate, especially at the beginning, Kerry seemed to be out of place in the town-meeting format of the debate; he was not as "human" as Bush was in answering questions. Even though both candidates are Yale graduates, Bush seems to be a person one could with which to sit down and talk, while Kerry has a much more aristocratic air around him.

Overall, the presidential debates gave us the expected result: Kerry, a 20-year veteran of the Senate, is a much stronger orator than Bush, who has been in politics for around 10 years. However, it appears that the American public doesn't consider the debates to have been important for this election. (Poll is from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/content/?ci=13657>)



The Other Side of Outsourcing

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The issue of outsourcing jobs has come to the forefront in Campaign 2004. The Charlotte Observer even ran a series of front-page articles titled "There Go Our Jobs". Prominent politicians from both parties have criticized the outsourcing of jobs to other countries; to them, supporting it is bad for the US economy and even worse for their political careers. And the effects of outsourcing are distorted by politicians eager to get elected. But outsourcing jobs makes a lot of economic sense.

Outsourcing jobs not only benefits businesses and consumers, but also leads to job creation. If an Indian software programmer is paid a tenth of an American's salary, a company that develops software in India will save money and - provided competitors do the same - the price of its software will fall, productivity will rise, the technology will spread, and new jobs will be created to adapt and improve it. So although outsourcing may cause a loss of jobs in the short term, it is good for the economy over the long term.

It's not just manufacturing jobs and call centers that are moving abroad. Delta Airlines sends reservations jobs to the Philippines. Oracle (a software company) and

Ericsson (the telecommunications equipment manufacturer), have moved product and software development jobs to India. This allows Delta to reduce its ticketing expenses, which means lower prices for passengers. Ericsson can also reduce its costs, which allows

countries can do something cheaper we ought to let them do it, and concentrate on what we can do best."

Exactly. And it's not just cheaper labor that drives corporations to move jobs abroad. Governments of countries like India and China offer

Bangalore software office, they use Dasani water, IBM computers, GE lighting, and Folgers Coffee - all American products. That's just another example of how American companies gain from outsourcing.

The notion that out-

Included in that number are 800,000 management positions that disappeared - including executive jobs that are not easily outsourced. But business and financial service occupations - professions considered at risk of outsourcing - added more than 600,000 jobs during the period. Given these data, it seems unreasonable to blame the loss of jobs on outsourcing.

Let's see where the major candidates stand on outsourcing. John Kerry is strongly opposed to the idea of outsourcing jobs, claiming that it increases unemployment in the United States. He would offer tax credits to companies that do not outsource jobs. While this seems like a reasonable strategy, it is intended to reduce outsourcing of jobs by replacing the savings of outsourcing by tax credits; however, it does not offer the other benefits of outsourcing like healthcare savings and new markets, and it may not significantly reduce outsourcing of jobs. George W. Bush, on the other hand, does not oppose outsourcing, and still claims that he is committed to protecting American workers. While this may seem like a contradiction to the average worker, it's not - we really can have it both ways!

Source: New York Times: 2/15/04



it to offer you cheaper cellular phone services. This will in turn allow the company to grow and create more jobs here in the states.

"Outsourcing does not reduce the total number of jobs in America," said Robert Reich, labor secretary under President Clinton. "If other

huge tax credits to companies that set up operations there. Plus, many countries have some sort of a national health insurance system, removing that liability for the corporations.

An added benefit is the profit for other American companies. For example, at a

sourcing is causing the large job losses over the past four years is simply a common myth that can be dispelled by simply examining the statistics. The reason behind the job losses is simply that the economy was in recession. From 1999 to 2003, 1.3 million non-agricultural jobs were lost.