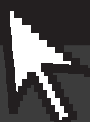


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A Public Interest Journal



The “L” Word

In Bush We Trust?

Is George W. Bush a liar?

People across America have the “L” word on their lips, but here in D.C. it’s been a hard one to mouth. Mr. Bush is a wartime president, and despite a catalogue of lies and distortions on many issues, his political opponents and most commentators have avoided the “L” word. Perhaps no more.

The AWOL WMD story could mark the end of the president’s post-9/11 free ride.

A full-page ad in *The New York Times* last week by **MoveOn.org** and **Win Without War** got to the heart of it. Under the headline “MISLEADER” the ad stacked up five of Mr. Bush’s pre-war whoppers and noted, “It would be a tragedy if young men and women were sent to die for a lie.” It put the issue of trust front and center and hoisted the president on his own pointed WMD – words of mass distortion.

Presidential Brain Karl Rove must be worried. He knows that any president’s popularity rests more on whether voters think he’s a believable and admirable leader than on the substance of issues. George W. Bush has

that going for him – people might not like his policies (if they understand them at all), but they like his swagger and certitude, and they trust him to do what he says.

But it’s a thin façade. And it’s been showing cracks from the strain between the rhetoric and the reality of Mr. Bush’s policies: endorsing Medicare while trying to undermine it; a “Clear Skies” plan that leads to more pollution; promising to “leave no child behind” but underfunding his own education plan; and Robin-Hood-in-reverse tax policies masked as “compassionate conservatism.”

Public trust in the president could crumble if questions linger about whether the White House deceived us into war. Few of the president’s allies could defend that – even GOP-TV (a.k.a. Fox News) would have trouble explaining away that one.

TomPaine.com – The “L” Word

Featuring “In Bush We Trust?” by John Moyers... and “All The President’s Lies” by Drake Bennett and Heidi Pauken, from www.PROSPECT.org.