

'Run, Al, run!' The Gore campaign is on

Cheering crowds greet Al Gore at each stop he makes on his US tour to promote his new book 'The Assault on Reason', described as a gloves-off expose of President George W. Bush, the media and everything wrong with America's political culture. Then, suddenly, somebody in the crowd holds up a placard that says: 'Run, Al, run!'

And a mediaperson asks: 'Are you running for president?'

He is not running, he says for the nth time, preferring to focus on the larger points raised by his book. The main point of the book, in his own words, is: 'Why do reason, logic and truth seem to play a diminished role in the way America now makes important decisions?'

The man who received the popular vote but lost the presidential race in 2000 is perhaps suffering from the 'once burnt, twice shy' syndrome.

That has not stopped, however, the 'Draft Al Gore for President 2008 Campaign'. And websites and online petitions to marshal support for the campaign have mushroomed.

They flaunt developments like the results of a recent poll of Iowans published in the Des Moines Register. The poll indicated that contrary to what the mainstream media suggests, Democrats are not satisfied with the current field of candidates.

While 44 percent of those polled want Al Gore to run, only 23 percent would like John Kerry (unsuccessful candidate in 2004) to join the race. Another poll in the same paper showed that from among declared Democrat candidates, John Edwards is in the lead, with Barack Obama in second place and Hillary Clinton in third, but each polling under 30 percent.

Many party elders too think Gore is Democrats' best bet to wrest the presidency back from the Republicans. Former President Jimmy Carter told ABC News earlier this year: 'If Al should decide to run - which I'm afraid he won't - I would support him.'

Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple, told Time magazine: 'If he ran, there's no question in my mind that he would be elected. But I think there's a question in his mind, perhaps because the pain of the last election runs a lot deeper than he lets most of us see.'

Gore, 59, who served as vice president from 1993 to 2001 with Bill Clinton has certainly added more weight to his resume since then.

He has been nominated for the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize for his wide-reaching efforts to draw the world's attention to the dangers of global warming. His documentary 'An Inconvenient Truth', about global warming, based on the slide show that he has taken around the world, won an Oscar earlier this year.

Yet, ironically, the changed shape of the public and media discourse Gore so despises may have made him unsuitable for running or winning the presidential race.

Arianna Huffington, creator of the eponymous online Huffington Post explains in a May 24 posting:

'I'd love Al Gore to be president. But how does he, or someone like him, actually run for president? Does he engage, say, in the ludicrous useless gauntlet of exchanging sound bytes with a gaggle of other candidates on a TV stage? ... What's the model for not getting manipulated into the forms of mass media, which are essentially hostile to reasoned discourse?'

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