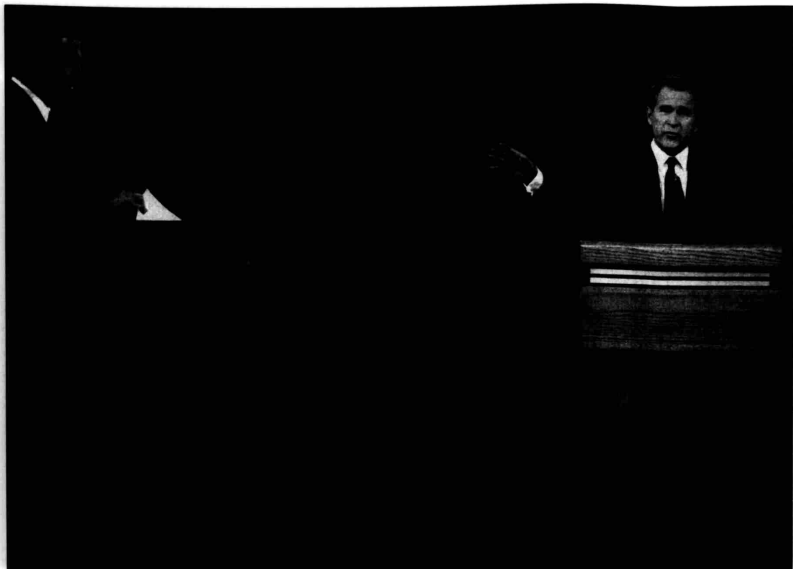


US outcome debatable



Two presidential debates over, and after much rhetorical fumbling, both candidates have still failed to deliver the promised knockout punch

TWO debates down and two to go, and so far the much anticipated knockout punch has eluded the presidential candidates and their running mates. As Gore and Bush prepare for this Tuesday's debate, the stakes are raised dramatically for both parties. Polls taken in the past week suggest Gore has once again pulled ahead of Bush, but the effect of a series of, fresh allegations that he has mis-stated facts and twisted has yet to be factored in. Bush's camp are desperately hoping their "Liar, Liar, Poles on Fire" refrain will convince voters that neither Gore nor the myriad of polls that are spewed out daily can be trusted. During a series of post-debate campaign stops this week, Bush repeatedly hammered Gore for distorting the truth, coming up with the sort of rejoinders that shocked him on the podium. He referred to three occasions during last Tuesday's debate to illustrate his point; Gore claimed he accompanied

the director of the Texas disaster agency to federal to inspect wildfire damage in 1998. In fact he accompanied the deputy director to inspect flood damage.

More serious and more potentially embarrassing was his allegation that a school in Sarasota was so poorly funded, one of its pupils had to stand during class because she had no desk. The school responded that her desk had been shoved out of the way while technicians installed \$100,000 worth of new computer equipment. Then there was the little old lady who spent her days collecting tin cans with a five cent refund value to pay for her prescription drugs; it transpired she was simply an eccentric who was partial to a spot of recycling.

Taken in isolation, Gore's debate infractions are relatively minor, but the Bush camp, desperate to prove their mantra that the Democratic contender will "say anything" to get into the White House, is



Marlon McKee in NEW YORK

Gore has failed to convince voters he is trustworthy, nevermind likeable, while Bush has failed to convince them of his credentials as a leader

making the most of the meagre ammunition he has handed them. Gore's post-debate roll-backs suggest two things; either researchers who are charged with sniffing out heart-wrenching tales of woe so Gore can appear sympathetic to Earthlings, are woefully inept or Gore is the sort of chap who'll never let the facts get in the way of a good story; is Gore simply sloppy with his research or has his determination to win made him reckless? Either way he's on shaky ground. Individually, these and other liberties with the facts are hardly hanging offences - unless you happen to be the Governor of Texas - but what of their incremental effect? Have his various fibs and exaggerations reached a critical mass where they could become a deciding factor? Certainly there is evidence to suggest Americans feel a certain unease about his cavalier attitude to facts, and the Bush camp has seized on this slight quinquiness, hoping to hype it into a fully blown case of collective nausea. Bush has been frantically trying in these lesser moments to bring Gore's responses to questionable fund-raising activities in a bid to establish a consistent pattern which proves Gore cannot be trusted.

On the plus side it may call a halt to Gore's obsession with "true-life" sob stories. Either that or he'll have to start vetting these "poor decent folk" like vice-presidential candidates.

For more than six weeks

now Bush has failed to inch ahead of Gore, but Gore's lead has evaporated on several occasions as swing voters switch sides on a near daily basis.

Essentially, Gore has failed to convince voters he is trustworthy, nevermind likeable, while Bush has failed to convince them of either the merits of his tax plan or his credentials as a leader. Gore came across last Tuesday as supercilious and condescending, but he did underscore the gap in knowledge and experience. While he casually lobbed Vojislav Kostunica's name in his response to the Balkans issue, Bush was still scrambling for a new way to mispronounce Milosevic.

There is a feeling that Bush may have to "go nuclear" this Tuesday if he is to shake off the ennuil that seems to have settled around his ratings. He has also lost the advantage afforded to him by the first debate, what he, or rather his scribes, might term the "soft bigotry of low expectations". The Bush camp had hyped Gore's debating skills into the stratosphere, knowing that if expectations of Gore were sufficiently high, Bush could claim a victory if he simply held his own.

Such was the level of low expectation generated by the Bush camp that all Dubyah had to do was turn up and he was ahead on points, proving beyond doubt the truth of Woody Allen's quip that 80 per cent of success is just turning up. Bush turned up, albeit

Gore and Bush have yet to deliver the spectacular speeches that pundits predicted would win the presidency

reluctantly, and after weeks of protraction and when he managed to topple to fall off the podium or mangle every sentence, well, the Republicans were ready to carry him aloft from the hall. Despite the whoops of triumph on both sides, Tuesday's spectacle was less than edifying. Gore looked like he had smeared his face with the remnants of Barbara Cardland's make-up bag. Pink eye-drops and apple red cheeks did little to counter his nerdy-robot image, while you couldn't help thinking that radical surgery may be the only way to remove Bush's perpetually smug expression.

Make up aside their audible breathing quirks spoke volumes about their former drug preferences. Bush sniffled. Gore sneezed. It would be presumptuous to assume these reflex actions stemmed from their habits of old but if so, they certainly dispelled the prevailing wisdom on recreational drugs. As Gore illustrated, dope doesn't make you stupid and a Bush so convincingly proved, cocaine sure as heck doesn't sharpen you up. But perhaps by mutual agreement, the drugs issue wasn't raised; Gore has admitted to being partial to the occasional joint during his reckless youth and Bush has conceded that the past - but he was so out of it for two decades he can't remember for sure.

The Dick Cheney/ Joe Lieberman encounter on Thursday was an altogether classier affair. Running mate debates have long been regarded as the forum where the real attacks take place, where would-be vice presidents can attack the opposing ticket leader and each other with impunity while the candidates proper watch from a safe distance. Lloyd Bentsen's withering attack on Dan Quayle when Quayle compared himself to John F Kennedy, never mind rip limbs from their sockets. In fact, their meeting was also a case of the hardhats chat, Tuesday's style. Both set out their stalls and traded the traditional animosity for respectful and occasionally humorous exchanges.

Despite claims of victory, insider Republicans lambasted Clinton's "no nukes" speech to hammer Gore, while Lieberman remained curiously silent on Bush's record as Governor of Texas, something he has doggedly pursued on the stump. But the two made it clear at the outset that gutter-fighting was beneath them. They are, after all, the warm-up act; it's up to the prize fighters to deliver the knockout punches and this Tuesday the pressure is on Bush to deliver.

ONCE again, Lech Walesa is looking to topple the head of state. His midriff is wider, his moustache whiter but otherwise the former trade union leader remains the same enigmatic and combative figure who 20 years ago began rolling Poland's communist government as the leader of the region's first independent labour union. Elections will be held on 8 October, and the 57-year-old Nobel Peace Prize winner wants to oust Aleksander Kwasniewski - the man who ended his own presidency after one term, in 1995.

Walesa's new political party - Christian Democracy of the Third Republic - formally nominated him as their presidential candidate in June. Walesa's first political manoeuvre was to call on right-wing voters to treat the first round of voting as a primary and to rally around one conservative candidate - him. President Kwasniewski, however, said he expects to win the election in the first round. The new campaign slogan for Walesa, "Black is black, white is white", shows there is no grey in his world. During a recent interview, he talked in guttural and contradictory terms about his political career and Poland's economic needs. In 1980, Walesa was elected president in the aftermath of communism's collapse. Now, as then, many Poles are unhappy with their government and the economic situation in the country. But the similarities end there. Martial Law is now a distant memory, the Soviet Union no longer exists and the last Russian soldier left Poland nearly a decade ago. In its place, a fledgling democracy has taken root, and such dramatic changes are not lost on Walesa. "If I knew then that I'd be living in such a Poland - with the opportunities that exist today - I would be the happiest person in the world."

But these days, Walesa is not a happy man. He wants a second term in office but has been started on getting Soviet troops out of his homeland and developing good relations with Poland's neighbours, Walesa says voters turned him into a term of office. He has become accompanied the radical transformation to a market economy.

Walesa's first political party - Christian Democracy of the Third Republic - formally nominated him as their presidential candidate in June. Walesa's first political manoeuvre was to call on right-wing voters to treat the first round of voting as a primary and to rally around one conservative candidate - him. President Kwasniewski, however, said he expects to win the election in the first round. The new campaign slogan for Walesa, "Black is black, white is white", shows there is no grey in his world. During a recent interview, he talked in guttural and contradictory terms about his political career and Poland's economic needs. In 1980, Walesa was elected president in the aftermath of communism's collapse. Now, as then, many Poles are unhappy with their government and the economic situation in the country. But the similarities end there. Martial Law is now a distant memory, the Soviet Union no longer exists and the last Russian soldier left Poland nearly a decade ago. In its place, a fledgling democracy has taken root, and such dramatic changes are not lost on Walesa. "If I knew then that I'd be living in such a Poland - with the opportunities that exist today - I would be the happiest person in the world."

Walesa tries to stir up a new Polish revolution

Now, as before, Walesa says he represents the disenfranchised - those who have been left behind during Poland's economic boom. "There is too much freedom. There has to be a wider fairer, privatisation. The companies that remain in Polish hands should be distributed fairly among the citizens. Every revolution has a counter-revolution and that's why we have to do it again."

Yes, in Walesa's quizzical world that Poland needs today is a counter-revolution against the system he himself brought to power: a system of democracy and pluralism. Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski, a sociologist and chairman of the academic board of the Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences, says such romanticised talk is vintage Walesa. "No one denies his past merits, but as president he couldn't be a source of national capital," said Wnuk-Lipinski. "Walesa's personality is very good in a struggle. He is good at destruction, but is much worse at construction."

An '80s hero, a '90s bust, Walesa is lionised in Poland for his crusade against communism but he is reviled for his subsequent stint as president. When in power, Walesa made a bunch of wild promises he couldn't keep, paralysed the parliamentary process and proceeded to degrade the presidency.

Despite the rising economic tide, many Poles still feel left behind. Former trade-union members, farmers, pensioners, and the unemployed are the people Walesa wants to attract. "When I go to talk, they jeer me. But when I leave they say 'Long live Walesa'." He said, "Workers are angry at the wrong people." Perhaps, but the public's wrath is not directed toward Kwasniewski, who enjoys a 70% approval rating. Few voters see Walesa as the answer to Poland's problems - less than 10% support him. Konstanty Gebert, a former dissident, and a regular contributor to Gazeta Wyborcza, the country's largest newspaper, aptly summed up the prevailing attitude when he said, "Lech Walesa is always welcome at my dinner table, but I wouldn't vote for him."



Quotix: Polish presidential candidate, Lech Walesa

EU to gather weapons traders in move to create common defence

SUSPICIONS harboured by human rights and disarmament campaigners that the arms industry is driving moves to create a common EU defence, have been confirmed during the week by the European Commission's announcement that it will shortly host a gathering for some of the world's richest weapons manufacturers. In early November, EU industry chief Erkki Liikanen will welcome the heavyweights of the arms trade to Brussels, including representatives of British Aerospace, Thomson CSF of France and Finmeccanica of Italy. The conference's programme suggests that it will be swamped by incomprehensible Euro-speak. They will talk of how the industry's competitiveness can be bolstered and of how "harmonised standards" can be applied for new weapons systems entering the market. But the London-based Campaign Against the Arms Trade (CAAT) has detected a more sinister hidden agenda. In May last, hardly anyone noticed when a key decision about the arms trade's future was reached. The defence ministries of six EU states - Britain, France, Germany, Sweden and Italy - signed a "framework agreement", stating that whenever a joint venture between their arms companies is embarked on, they will compile a common list of destinations to which the resulting weapons may be exported. All such lists will be kept secret and an agreed destination could only be deleted in the most exceptional cir-

David Green

stances, such as if it became regulated by a civil war. Over the past weeks, CAAT has written to all MPs in Westminster, complaining that the accord has never been subject to parliamentary scrutiny in Britain. The campaigners believe that the six governments concerned have capitulated to pressure from arms dealers, who are disgruntled at how the existence of different licensing systems for weapons in different EU states discourages joint ventures across national boundaries and puts the European arms industry at a competitive disadvantage to the US. "It is also strange that, just as some progress towards transparency is being made, the UK becomes party to an agreement that keeps the list of permitted export destinations secret," said CAAT's Ann Feltham. A detailed knowledge of how the arms industry functions isn't required to understand why it would want to prevent such lists from being divulged. For example, British Aerospace, for example, has suffered the indignity of having peace activists break into its factories to destroy its cherished Hawk jets for household hammers when numerous reports emerged of how the firm's military jets in Indonesia authorised the aircraft's use to terrorise civilians in East Timor. Another participant in Liikanen's conference, Thomson-CSF, has more recently signed an agreement with the Indonesian air force to supply

it with three warplanes, equipped with state-of-the-art radar, computer and surveillance equipment.

Furthermore, the Amsterdam Treaty commits the EU to developing a common arms policy to underpin its embryonic efforts to create a defence force to be credible internationally. Although leading EU figures have cast doubt on the merits of the union's planned eastward enlargement, arms dealers have no such reservations. They are just turning up to sell up to 80 combat aircraft to Greece. The companies have made it clear that they are determined to continue their project so that they can use Athens' contacts in Eastern Europe to secure deals there.

In 1997, Norman Augustine, the former chief of weapons giant Lockheed Martin, undertook a visit to several of those states with the declared objective of "drumming up business and support for the largest possible expansion of Nato". A similar message has emerged from the companies in the Eurofighter consortium, who have recently been trying to sell up to 80 combat aircraft to Greece. The companies have made it clear that they are determined to continue their project so that they can use Athens' contacts in Eastern Europe to secure deals there.

TONY QUINN'S SUCCESSFUL LIVING 6 WEEK COURSE

IT HAS BEEN DISCOVERED THAT MANY PEOPLE THINK IN A DIVIDED WAY AS FOLLOWS:
"I want to be successful, there's no way I'll succeed"
"I want to give up smoking but I've tried so many times before"
"I'd like to get into shape but I haven't got the time"

As long as your mind is divided in this way you will never succeed in any great degree because there are too many opposing negative thoughts - you must learn to think in one direction

You own one of the most powerful, natural resources on our planet, your whole mind. It is unlikely that you have ever experienced the truly awesome power that it can yield. What would happen if you were to focus, not just some, but all of your mind, on a goal?

- CONTENTS OF NEW 6-WEEK SUCCESSFUL LIVING COURSE.**
- Learn to unleash the power within •
 - How to lead, influence and take action •
 - Focus, super-concentration, relaxation •
 - Displace your weaknesses and overcome limitations •
 - Achieve peak performance in all areas •
 - Visualisation, personal power and confidence •

Venue:	Radisson Hotel (Shepherd Road)	The Shelbourne Hotel	Jurys Hotel (Shepherd)
Date:	Wed Oct 18th	Tues Oct 10th	Tues Oct 24th
Time:	8.00-9.30pm	6.15-7.45pm	8.00-9.30pm
Cost:	£100.00	£100.00	£100.00

For Credit card Booking Contact:
Tony Quinn Health Centre
Tel: 01 478 5404 / 01 487 4234 Yvonne on 087 229 8878
Or Dave on 086 8300575

MEADOWS & BYRNE
THE HOMESTORE
Cork • Bunnratty • Dublin • Galway

Tomorrow 10am