

US politics & policy

Devil is in the detail with "Satan" Soros



Compiled by Joanna Chung in Washington and Jeff Pruzan in New York SEPTEMBER 28, 2004

If you ask George Soros a trick question, you are likely to get a trick answer.

Asked on Tuesday whether he would trade in his entire \$7bn fortune to unseat President George W. Bush, the financial mastermind-turned-philanthropist said: "If you could guarantee it, I would do it."

He then added: "Of course no one could guarantee it."

But Mr Soros, who has emerged as a potent one-man mission against Mr Bush's re-election, is doing what he can. With a \$12.6m contribution so far this year, Mr Soros has become the second-largest individual donor to the so-called 527 pro-Kerry groups.

On Tuesday Mr Soros kick-started an intense campaign, arguing against Mr Bush's foreign policy and the war in Iraq.

In an impassioned speech at the National Press Club, Mr Soros laid out his case for a change in administration, a message he plans to take across the country in a speaking tour.

He said he wants Americans to listen to his argument and not simply write him off as Satan. "That's what I am generally described as," he said.

Perhaps Republicans didn't know that. Before his speech was even finished, a Republican operative lurking in the back of the audience was passing around a statement calling the philanthropist the "Daddy Warbucks of the Democratic party".

Bush to be assailed by power of rock

The Boss is angry. Having avoided party politics for many years, Bruce Springsteen is leading an entourage of musicians on a tour dedicated to throwing the other chief, George W. Bush, out of office.

Backed by MoveOn.org, the pro-Kerry group, a coalition of 21 artists including R.E.M., Pearl Jam, James Taylor, the Dave Matthews Band and the Dixie Chicks embarks this week on an 11-day tour through battleground states to rock the "Vote for Change". They will hit important Midwest states including Ohio and Michigan and of course, Florida (Mr Springsteen will start in Philadelphia) before bringing the show to Washington for the finale.

“I knew after we invaded Iraq that I was going to be involved in the election,” Mr Springsteen told Rolling Stone last week. “It made me angry...I felt we had been misled. I felt they had been fundamentally dishonest and had frightened and manipulated the American people into war.”

Describing the presidency as a “heavyweight championship”, he said: “they don't give it to you, you have to take it”. But whether music can help swing the contest remains to be seen.

Tribe's tribulations could hurt Kerry

Is it too early to start handicapping the post-election fight? No one knows if Florida 2004 will resemble Florida 2000, but partisan legal teams are already preparing.

Both George W. Bush and Al Gore had teams of lawyers working the state to try to force, stop or prevent vote recounts. Four years on, both sides are preparing for a tight Florida outcome and possibly more controversy.

Democrats may now be even more anxious, after one of their strongest legal advocates, Laurence Tribe of Harvard, admitted he had once quoted another constitutional expert's work without attribution.

His admission followed the revelation that passages in his 1985 God Save This Honorable Court had been lifted from Henry Abraham's 1974 Justices and Presidents.

Mr Tribe called his errors “unacceptable”. Mr Abraham accepted the apology, but he also told the Weekly Standard magazine that Mr Tribe was a “big mahatma [who] thinks he can get away with this sort of thing”.

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