December 25, 2017

Trump’s Available Means of Persuasion

Writing in the Rhetoric, Aristotle suggested that there are always the available means of persuasion.

Putting aside my own partisan beliefs and engaging as a more detached rhetorical critic, Donald Trump will be able to put forward a potentially persuasive case that he not only salvaged his first year as president but that it was a success: historic tax legislation passed, repeal of the Affordable Care Act individual mandate, a conservative judge placed on the Supreme Court, record numbers of conservative judges approved for the federal judiciary, Islamic State defeats, repeal of many government regulations, a soaring stock market, low unemployment.

Whether this case resonates with most Americans and whether this record offsets the Russia investigation, the crumbling support for and confidence in America by foreign leaders, the deliberate undermining of government institutions, Trump’s persistent lying and his racist behavior is another question. The 2018 elections will tell the story.

RICHARD CHERWITZ, AUSTIN