



THE AGE

ESTABLISHED IN 1854

No beating about the Bush, President loves most of his mates, just not Kevin

Dan Harrison and Michelle Grattan
November 17, 2008 - 12:00AM

IF THESE two were on a date, you wouldn't give the relationship a lot of hope.

The suitor looks anxious, as well he might. Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was meeting President George Bush for the first time since an account of a telephone conversation between the pair found its way on to the front page of *The Australian* newspaper.

Three words in that account were particularly damaging — "What's the G20?" — the suggestion that the leader of the free world did not know what the grouping of developed and developing countries was, a suggestion since repeatedly denied by both nations.

If indeed a picture tells a thousand words, all eyes were on this moment, to see what thousands of words this picture would tell about the wounds left by those three.

Speech and body language expert Michael Kelly says the pair appear "stiff" and "frozen".

"Rudd looks sheepish. Bush looks prickly," Mr Kelly says.

Bush's right arm is down, a barrier between himself and Mr Rudd. The President is playing hard to get.

Mr Rudd's arm is not visible. "He might be wanting to put it around Bush, but Bush is not open to it," Mr Kelly suggests.

Mr Kelly says the lack of eye contact is telling. The President looks at Mr Rudd out of the corners of his eyes, without turning his head. "It's a sly look, taking a peek at someone you don't like," he says.

Mr Kelly says in the video footage of the encounter, President Bush appears startled

